

10-2021

Preface to SSL 47.1

Patrick Scott
University of South Carolina - Columbia

Tony Jarrells
University of South Carolina

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl>



Part of the [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Scott, Patrick and Jarrells, Tony (2021) "Preface to SSL 47.1," *Studies in Scottish Literature*: Vol. 47: Iss. 1, v–viii.

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol47/iss1/1>

This Front Matter is brought to you by the Scottish Literature Collections at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Studies in Scottish Literature* by an authorized editor of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact digres@mailbox.sc.edu.

PREFACE TO *SSL* 47:1

This issue returns to our regular-issue pattern, with a symposium of shorter essays, full-length articles on several literary periods, a section of shorter notes, and a review section. The opening symposium on writing about the Solway Firth, guest-edited by Gerard McKeever, might seem narrower than previous symposium topics, but the papers connect with wider current critical interest in Scottish literary topography, border cultures, ecocriticism, and spatial humanities (on which see also the symposium in *SSL* 42:2). Partly because Scotland is (relatively) compact, readers, writers, and scholars from one region can travel around the country, recognizing the otherness of elsewhere and the role that the literature of place has played in fostering, not just local chauvinism, but transregional and transcultural understanding. A passage quoted in the preface to *SSL* 42.2 from Edward de Soja bears repeating: “renewed geographical interest should help us break from the ‘carceral historicism’ of conventional critical theory.”¹ Localism, or regionalism, like cosmopolitanism, the topic of an *SSL* special number planned for next year, can be in productive tension with the necessary focus on a core or central canon of a subject defined by a national literary tradition.

The main body of the issue includes articles on eighteenth-century political newspaper essays, a James Boswell poem, newly-identified periodical tales by the Sobieski Stuarts, David Lindsay’s philosophical interests, and a novel by Muriel Spark. Notes and documents include items on Thomas Campbell and Joanna Baillie and on the use made of a Campbell epigram by leading American antislavery orators, including William Wells Brown and Frederick Douglass. Reviews discuss Zoë Wicomb’s recent novel about the Scottish-South African writer Thomas Pringle, the evasions of biography, and the nature of transnational

¹ Edward de Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), 1.

authorship, and the final volume of the William Sharp-Fiona Macleod letters.

This is the fourth issue to be largely produced since library stack access closed in March 2020, altering options for last-minute checking. We are grateful to our contributors for their extra efforts in their proof correction and in answering last-minute editorial queries.

* * *

Shortly before this issue was published, the counter on *SSL*'s front page passed the 400,000 mark: that is, there have now been more than 400,000 separate full-text downloads of articles or complete volumes since the journal went open-access in 2012-2013.

The statistics provide a useful insight into what is being taught and studied. Much Scottish literature teaching, in Scotland and around the world, relates to literature from the last three centuries. The same would be true of the *SSL* articles that attract the greatest use. The most heavily-used articles since the 2012 relaunch, each with over 3000 full-text downloads, have been W.J. Overton on Scott's "The Two Drovers," Colin Manlove on *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Jonathan Glance on Hogg's *Confessions*, Kirsteen McCue on Burns's "Red, red rose," and Ronald Macaulay on Tom Leonard's language.

But this doesn't tell the whole story. Download totals depend on many factors, so download expectations play only a minor role in choosing what *SSL* should publish. Many *SSL* articles that are not obvious undergraduate click-bait have more than justified their publication, not by download total, but as the first, or the primary, modern scholarly reference on their topic. We aim to accept articles based on their longer-term scholarly contribution, rather than anticipated short-term usage. Articles that have now been downloaded more than a thousand times deal with literature from all periods, and on many less-taught authors or texts. We are not financially dependent on sales or web-traffic, but it is gratifying that so many articles attract such substantial use, year after year.

* * *

This year marks fifty years since the University of Glasgow established the first separate department of Scottish Literature, fifty-one years since the founding of the Association for Scottish Literary Studies, and fifty-eight since the first issue of *Studies in Scottish Literature*. Inevitably, this past year has brought news of deaths among those who during these 50 years, in different ways, helped build Scottish Literature into a distinctive scholarly field. None of the five remembered here held teaching posts in departments

or programs for Scottish literature, but all had ties with the journal and South Carolina.

The most senior, Michael Timko (1925-2021), of Queens College and the Graduate School, City University of New York, was, like Ross Roy, a World War II veteran. His wide-ranging interests included Thomas Carlyle; Patrick had known him a little in the late 60s and early 70s, through work on Arthur Hugh Clough. He contributed to *SSL* on Carlyle in 1985, 1992, and 1996, and he gave the opening paper at South Carolina's Carlyle bicentenary conference in 1995; his book *Carlyle and Tennyson* (1988, repr. 2014) includes a useful chapter on "Carlyle: the Scottish Dimension."

Priscilla Bawcutt (1931-2021), of the University of Liverpool, among the most distinguished of 20th-century medievalist editors, was best known for her authoritative texts of Gavin Douglas and William Dunbar, but she also edited or collaborated on influential teaching texts for A.S.L.S. and other publishers. Medievalists who have paid tribute to her extraordinary career of continuous scholarship, beginning in the 1950s, and carried through without ever holding a regular university appointment, include Sally Mapstone, Alasdair MacDonald, and Janet Hadley Williams.² Here one might note also that she and Nigel Bawcutt visited South Carolina for the Medieval and Renaissance conference in 1990; her paper was included in *SSL* 26, and she contributed also to Ross Roy's final *SSL* volume in 2007.

A younger medievalist also at that 1990 conference and in *SSL* 26 was Greg Kratzmann (1949-2021), an Australian who studied with Jack MacQueen in Edinburgh, who spent most of his career at La Trobe University. Before his scholarly interests moved to other fields, including Australian writers, he had published a notable monograph *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations 1430-1550* (Cambridge, 1978, reissued 2010) and two specialist editions, *Cokelbie Sow* (1983) and *The Dialoges of Creatures Moralyzed* (1988).

Alongside the scholars, Scottish literature has owed much to scholar-librarians. Dr. Robert Donaldson (1926-2021) was Keeper of Printed Books at the National Library of Scotland, editor of *The Bibliothek*, President of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, and a contributor to

² Sally Mapstone, ed., *William Dunbar, 'The Nobill Poyet': Essays in honour of Priscilla Bawcutt*, ed. Mapstone (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2001), with Elspeth Yeo's bibliography of Bawcutt's work through 2001 on pp. 211-217; Alasdair A. MacDonald, in *Scottish Literary Journal*, 12.1 (2021), 117-119; and Janet Hadley Williams's tribute on the Scottish Text Society web-site (March 26, 2021), at: <http://www.scottishtextsociety.org/tribute-to-priscilla-bawcutt/>.

SSL in its early days; he oversaw many major library acquisitions, and he fostered the researches of countless grateful library users.

It is right, too, that the history of the field should record those who assisted getting other people's scholarship into print. Thorne Compton (1944-2021) was Ross Roy's graduate assistant on *SSL* in the late 60s and early 70s: he did an MA with Ross on Home's *Douglas*, and a PhD on 18th century Scottish controversies about the stage, with an article on Home in *SSL* in 1983. Thorne stayed at South Carolina his whole career, as an associate dean and administrator, chairing several different departments and programs, teaching theatre history, and speaking at Ross's memorial.

Finally, the death in August of Dorothy McMillan (1943-2021), who taught in English Literature at Glasgow from the 1970s till her retirement, is a reminder that Scottish literary studies have not just grown, but changed, in ways now taken for granted. She was the first woman president of the Association for Scottish Literary Studies (1998-2002), and her many books included the co-edited *History of Scottish Women's Writing* (1997), an ASLS volume on Scottish women's travel writing (2000), and the anthology *Modern Scottish Women Poets* (2005).

* * *

Looking to the future: *SSL* 47.2 will be another general issue, but, instead of a symposium, it will open with two special essays to mark the 250th anniversary of Walter Scott's birth; followed by a very full complement of other articles. *SSL* 48.1 is scheduled for a special issue on *Scottish Cosmopolitanisms*, guest-edited by Matthew Creasy and Michael Shaw. The next regular issue will be *SSL* 48.2, in fall 2022, which is expected to include a symposium of selected papers from this year's 16th International Conference on Medieval & Renaissance Scottish Literature and Language. To maintain opportunity for a variety of articles and notes, we plan to keep at least one or more regular issues between further special-topic issues. Both for special issues and symposia, we usually need to plan a couple of years ahead. Because we aim to serve the wider scholarly community in Scottish literature, we welcome research-based articles, shorter notes and documentary items on all periods of Scottish literature, and on comparative or interdisciplinary topics where a significant focus and one of the disciplines is Scottish literature. For contact information, preferred length, and other guidelines, see links from the journal's home page.³

Patrick Scott
Tony Jarrells

³ See "Aims and Scope": <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/aimsandscope.html>; and "Rights," etc. : https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/rights_permissions.html.