New Publications: Criticism & Non Fiction

The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Drama
by Ian Brown
Edinburgh University Press, 2011
Combines historical rigour with an analysis of dramatic contexts, themes and forms. The 17 contributors explore the longstanding and vibrant Scottish dramatic tradition and the important developments in Scottish dramatic writing and theatre, with particular attention to the last 100 years. The first part of the volume covers Scottish drama from the earliest records to the late twentieth-century literary revival, as well as translation in Scottish theatre and non-theatrical drama. The second part focuses on the work of influential Scottish playwrights, from J. M. Barrie and James Bridie to Ena Lamont Stewart, Liz Lochhead and Edwin Morgan and right up to contemporary playwrights Anthony Neilson, Gregory Burke, Henry Adams and Douglas Maxwell.

Court Poetry in Late Medieval England and Scotland: Allegories of Authority
by Antony J. Hasler
Cambridge University Press, 2011
This book explores the anxious and unstable relationship between court poetry and various forms of authority, political and cultural, in England and Scotland at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Through poems by Skelton, Dunbar, Douglas, Hawes, Lyndsay and Barclay, it examines the paths by which court poetry and its narrators seek multiple forms of legitimation: from royal and institutional sources, but also in the media of script and print. The book is the first for some time to treat English and Scottish material of its period together, and responds to European literary contexts, the dialogue between vernacular and Latin matter, and current critical theory. In so doing it claims that public and occasional writing evokes a counter-discourse in the secrecies and subversions of medieval love-fictions. The result is a poetry that queries and at times cancels the very authority to speak that it so proudly promotes.
Collected Short Stories and Sketches Volume I: Photographed on the Brain R B Cunninghame Graham
deds. Alan MacGillivray, John C. McIntyre, Ronald W. Renton, James N. Alison, Stan Bell
Kennedy and Boyd, forthcoming 2011
Collected Short Stories and Sketches, split into five volumes, brings R.B. Cunninghame Graham’s separate collections of short stories, sketches and essays together for the very first time. Each collection is kept intact, and they appear in chronological order complete with Graham’s own footnotes, providing an essential tool for critical study. Graham’s diverse collection of short stories and sketches reveals a strong and generally sympathetic personality, a richly-stocked original mind and an ironic, realistic yet sensitive observer of the amazing variety of life in a very wide world. Graham’s works collected in this first volume were published between 1895 and 1899. Notes on the District of Menteith (1895), while not a collection of stories, is included because it was Graham’s first book. Father Archangel of Scotland (1896) is a collection of essays and sketches from the hands of both Robert and his wife Gabriela, their only joint literary venture. The Ipane (1899) is Graham’s first true collection of his own short stories and sketches.

White People, Indians, and Highlanders: Tribal People and Colonial Encounters in Scotland and America
by Colin G. Calloway
Oxford University Press, 2010
Both Highland clans and Native American societies underwent parallel experiences on the peripheries of Britain’s empire, and often encountered one another on the frontier. Indeed, Highlanders and American Indians fought, traded, and lived together. Both groups were treated as tribal peoples—remnants of a barbaric past—and eventually forced from their ancestral lands as their traditional food sources—cattle in the Highlands and bison on the Great Plains—were decimated to make way for livestock farming. In a familiar pattern, the cultures that conquered them would later romanticize the very ways of life they had destroyed. White People, Indians, and Highlanders illustrates how these groups alternately resisted and accommodated the cultural and economic assault of colonialism, before their eventual dispossession during the Highland Clearances and Indian Removals. What emerges is a finely-drawn portrait of how indigenous
peoples with their own rich identities experienced cultural change, economic
transformation, and demographic dislocation amidst the growing power of the
British and American empires.

**The History of Orkney Literature**
by Simon W. Hall
Birlinn, 2011
Since the middle ages, Orkney has proved remarkable for the
volume and the quality of its literary output. From the skalds and
sagamen of the Viking age, through to the colourful folklorists,
polemicists and translators of the Victorian era, and the
internationally acclaimed poets and novelists of the twentieth
century, Orkney has continually and self-consciously developed a
unique literary culture of its own. This clearly defined artistic territory resembles
a sub-nation at times, and is characterised not by insularity, but by what might be
termed a positive ‘insularism’—defining, reinventing and presenting itself to the
world. *The History of Orkney Literature* is the first full survey of literary writing
from and about the Orkney Islands. The book presents readings of
uncomplicatedly Orcadian writers such as Walter Traill Dennison, Edwin Muir,
Eric Linklater, Robert Rendall and George Mackay Brown. It also considers major
texts written by ‘outside’ authors which are nevertheless demonstrably Orcadian
in terms of their setting, style and influence. The History of Orkney Literature
charts the development of this distinctly Orcadian strand within Scottish
Literature, and shows how the archipelago, rather than the nation, can indeed be
the defining locus of a compact and vibrant literary tradition.

**Scottish Women’s Gothic and Fantasy Writing: Fiction Since 1978**
by Monica Germanà
Edinburgh University Press, 2011
Monica Germanà considers four thematic areas of the
supernatural—quests, dangerous women, doubles and
ghosts—each explored in one of the four main chapters. Being the first critical
work to bring together contemporary women’s writing and the Scottish fantasy
tradition, the volume pioneers in-depth investigation of some previously neglected
texts such as Ali Smith’s *Hotel World*; Alice Thompson’s *Justine*; Margaret
Elphinstone’s longer fiction, as well as offering new readings of more popular
texts including A.L. Kennedy’s *So I am glad*, Emma Tennant’s *The Bad Sister* and *Two Women of London*. Underlying the broad scope of this survey are the links—both explicit and implicit—established between the examined texts and the Scottish supernatural tradition. Having established a connection with a distinctively Scottish canon, Monica Germanà points to the ways in which the selected texts simultaneously break from past traditions and reveal points of departure through their exploration of otherness as well as their engagement with feminist and postmodernist discourses in relation to the questions of identity and the interrogation of the real.

*Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan*
by James McGonigal
Sandstone Press, 2010

The first biography of Scotland’s Poet Laureate, Edwin Morgan’s restless imagination moved easily between multiple worlds, voices and identities. His own life story, told here for the first time, also reveals a range of identities—as academic, cultural activist, radical writer, international traveller, gay man and national poet. These identities were sometimes in conflict, or kept hidden and apart. *Beyond the Last Dragon*, written with his full support, explores hitherto unknown archive resources and creative work. It recounts an amazing and sometimes troubled career, using the poet’s own letters, poems and plays from the 1930s to the present day to uncover the often local origins of his still remarkable—at 90 years—inventiveness and flair. All this is set against Edwin Morgan’s moving struggle against ‘the last dragon’ of cancer, and to remain creatively alive in the face of suffering.

*Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*
by Nigel Leask
Oxford University Press, 2010

*Robert Burns and Pastoral* is a full-scale reassessment of the writings of Robert Burns (1759-1796), arguably the most original poet writing in the British Isles between Pope and Blake, and the creator of the first modern vernacular style in British poetry. Although still celebrated as Scotland’s national poet, Burns has long been marginalised in English literary studies worldwide, due to a mistaken view that his poetry is
linguistically incomprehensible and of interest to Scottish readers only. Nigel Leask challenges this view by interpreting Burns’s poetry as an innovative and critical engagement with the experience of rural modernity, namely to the revolutionary transformation of Scottish agriculture and society in the decades between 1760 and 1800, thereby resituating it within the mainstream of the Scottish and European enlightenments. Detailed study of the literary, social, and historical contexts of Burns’s poetry explodes the myth of the ‘Heaven-taught ploughman’, revealing his poetic artfulness and critical acumen as a social observer, as well as his significance as a Romantic precursor. Leask discusses Burns’s radical decision to write ‘Scots pastoral’ (rather than English georgic) poetry in the tradition of Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson, focusing on themes of Scottish and British identity, agricultural improvement, poetic self-fashioning, language, politics, religion, patronage, poverty, antiquarianism, and the animal world. The book offers fresh interpretations of all Burns’s major poems and some of the songs, the first to do so since Thomas Crawford’s landmark study of 1960. It concludes with a new assessment of his importance for British Romanticism and to a ‘Four Nations’ understanding of Scottish literature and culture.

*Fantasy, Art and Life: Essays on George MacDonald, Robert Louis Stevenson and Other Fantasy Writers*

by William Gray


In part a sequel to his earlier *Death in Fantasy*, William Gray’s *Fantasy, Art and Life: Essays on George MacDonald, Robert Louis Stevenson and Other Fantasy Writers* examines the ways in which “Life” in its various senses is affirmed, explored and enhanced through the work of the creative imagination, especially in fantasy literature. The discussion includes a range of fantasy writers, but focuses chiefly on two writers of the Victorian period, George MacDonald and Robert Louis Stevenson, whose Scottish (and particularly Calvinist) backgrounds deeply affected their engagement with what MacDonald called “The Fantastic Imagination”.

Myths and the Mythmaker: A Literary Account of J.M. Barrie’s Formative Years.
by R D S Jack
Rodopi (SCROLL series), 2010
J.M. Barrie’s critical reputation is unusually problematic. Originally viewed as a genius to rank with Shaw and Wilde, Barrie soon fell victim to damaging psychological theories about his life and his patriotism. The few critics who have commented on Barrie have colluded with dominant myths about a figure who, like his most famous creation, never grew up, who abandoned Scotland and made light of his own people when serious social analyses of the nation’s condition were called for, and who scorned the opportunities of University learning when at Edinburgh. Myths and the Mythmaker attempts to challenge these myths and offer a just revaluation of Barrie’s genius. Through closely focused textual analyses, it dispels the popular images of Barrie as “escapist” writer and immature, mother-fixated artist. It seeks to replace the narrow prose canon on which the “Oedipal” and “Kailyard” myths are based with a thorough account of his Victorian apprenticeship. New research into Barrie’s early work and criticism show the enduring influence of his Edinburgh education on his creative writing, his academic articles, and his own complex views on artistic genius.

Scottish Art since 1960: Historical Reflections and Contemporary Overviews
by Craig Richardson
Ashgate Publishing, 2011
Providing an analysis and including discussion (interviewing artists, curators and critics and accessing non-catalogued personal archives) towards a new chronology, Richardson here examines and proposes a sequence of precisely denoted ‘exemplary’ works which outlines a self-conscious definition of the interrogative term ‘Scottish art.’ Among the artists whose work is discussed are John Latham, Simon Starling, Alan Johnston, Roderick Buchanan, Glen Onwin, Christine Borland, William Johnstone, Joan Eardley, Alexander Moffat, Douglas Gordon, Alan Smith, Graeme Fagen, Ross Sinclair and many others. The discussion culminates in a critically original demonstration of the scope for further research and practice within the subject, facilitating national cultural debate on the character of Scottish-national visual art.
Scottish Orientalists and India: The Muir Brothers, Religion, Education & Empire

by Avril A. Powell
Boydell and Brewer, 2010

Structured around the lives and careers of two Scottish scholar-administrator brothers, Sir William and Dr John Muir, who served in the East India Company and the Raj in North-West India from 1827-1876, this book examines cultural, especially religious and educational attitudes and interactions during the period. The core of the study centres on a detailed examination of the brothers’ seminal works on Vedic and Islamic history and society which, researched from Sanskrit and Arabic sources, became standard reference works on India’s religions during the Raj. The publication of these works coincided with the outbreak of the Indian Uprising of 1857, on the nature of which William’s correspondence with his brother and others allows some reconsideration, especially in respect of Muslim participation. Powell also examines the response of Indian Muslim scholars, particularly of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan, to William’s critiques of Islam and the brothers’ patronage of Oriental scholarship, comparative religion and education during their long retirement back in their native Scotland. The study contributes to current debates about the Scottish contribution to Empire with particular reference to India and to cultural issues.

The Scottish Middle March, 1573-1625: Power, Kinship, Allegiance

by Anna Groundwater
Boydell and Brewer, 2010

The Scottish Borders experienced dramatic change on James VI’s succession to the throne of England: where characteristically hostile Anglo-Scottish relations had encouraged cross-border raiding, James was to prosecute a newly consistent pacification of crime in the region. This volume explores his actions in the Middle March, the shires of Roxburgh, Peebles and Selkirk, by examining governmental processes and structures of power there both before and after Union. It suggests that James utilised existing networks of authority, with the help of a largely co-operative Borders elite that remained in place after 1603; kinship and alliance helped to form these networks, and government is shown to have used their associated obligations. The book thus overturns the traditional view of a semi-anarchic
region beyond the control of government in Edinburgh. Building on this account of the transformation wrought by Union, the volume also places the Middle March in the context of Scottish state formation and the intensification of administrative activity and political control, particularly within James’ determined efforts to suppress feuding. It therefore tests wider claims made by historians about the changing nature of governance and judicial processes in early modern Scotland as a whole, and within a nascent `Great Britain’.

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