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Scottish Literary Review

SCOTTISH LITERARY REVIEW (formerly *Scottish Studies Review*) is the leading international print journal for Scottish literary studies, committed to approaching Scottish literature in an expansive way through exploration of its various social, cultural, historical and philosophical contexts, and of literary forms, both traditional and new. We are interested in comparative work with literatures from beyond Scotland, the interaction of literature with expressive media such as theatre and film, and in encouraging debate on issues of contemporary significance related to Scottish literary studies, so that *SLR* is both responsive to, and creative of, new readings and approaches. The journal is listed in the MLA International Bibliography.

This issue of *SLR* is devoted to Edwin Morgan (1920-2010), celebrating, commemorating, and exploring the poet-*makar* whose lyric imprint emblazons every issue of this journal. This issue records his poetic imprint through a range of contributions which chart the indefatigable diversity of his writing life; its encounters (literal and artistic), friendships, influences, and embodiments. If there is an underlying motif, it is spun from the poem which Richard Price discusses – 'The Ropemaker's Bride', a lovely paean to the Lyonnaise sonneteer, Louise Labé, *la belle cordière*, whom Morgan deeply admired. Just like the poem's variously knotted 'strings and strands', the pieces in this issue interconnect or braid with one another. A significant number are concerned with processes of collection, transcription, and publication, and with the unearthing of new kinds of material held in repositories in Glasgow University Library (the extraordinary 'scrapbooks' in particular), Glasgow's Mitchell Library, and the Scottish Poetry Library in Edinburgh. This issue delves deeply in the archives in ways which remember the 'flowing serifs' of Morgan's distinctive handwriting and what Robyn Marsack in her essay calls the 'sheaf or thrave of proofs'. They also gather up the annotations, comments, and inscriptions of his books to understand better his interpretative and creative responses to the texts and words which shaped his writing life. Hamish Whyte describes the methods and means of sifting and winnowing through the multitudinous box files in Morgan's Glasgow study when compiling the bibliography of his work. Whyte remarks how these letters, notes, ephemera kept 'unfolding their life [. . .] bit by bit of paper'; this process comes full circle in Jim McGonigal and Sarah Hepworth's illumination of the '16-volume, 3,600-page' jigsaw of emblems, images, collages, and

fragments aptly graced by the term 'Morganiana'. All this unfolding comes full circle in Greg Thomas's detailed account of the Poetry Library's Morgan archive.

Appropriately, a sheaf of patterns, confluences, and congruences emerges out of these essays. What Price calls the 'catholicity of [Morgan's] technical accomplishment' is mirrored in the catholicity of influences, inspirations, and readings which shuttle through the long, complex trajectories of his life's work. McGonigal and Hepworth, for example, show how the visual and textual emblems of the scrapbooks shift from Renaissance poetry (Labé is there again) to Dada to surrealism to the Brazilian Noigandres poets. Thomas explores some intellectual and artistic straits of Morgan's work in the 50s and 60s which exemplify the currents of 'social conscience and internationalism'. These, too, pulse through Morgan's experimentalism of that 60s decade, as Eleanor Bell demonstrates in her essay on the concrete poetry; the poetic radicalism of those spatial, material word-shapes becomes socially and politically transformative, and a source of cultural renewal. John Corbett shows how Morgan's linguistic resurrection of Cyrano de Bergerac, that swashbuckling writer of seventeenth-century France, through demotic Glaswegian in his 1992 drama joyously parodies, subverts, and questions a variety of cultural assumptions and 'systems of power'; Morgan's twist in the cord of *Cyrano* reimaginings has a particular subversive brio.

David Kinloch returns to the kaleidoscopic opacity of 'The New Divan' sequence (1977), with its apparent roots in fourteenth-century Persian literature, to show how its lyrics 'court a poetry of sensation'. Perspectives from the work of Gilles Deleuze and the context of post-war European aesthetic innovations (including cinematography) help to locate the critically elided importance of homosexuality and homoeroticism within the 'Divan' poetry. The threshold between the articulated and unarticulated, the voiced and unvoiced, also informs Chris Jones's account of Morgan's personal and imaginative relationship with Old English poetry. Noting that this engagement defines both the beginning and the end of his creative life, Jones traces an arc and journey which suggests how cathartic and restorative were Morgan's readings, translations, and renderings of *Beowulf* and other sources. Through these texts, Jones argues, he negotiated the trauma of war experiences, the loneliness of his sexuality in 1940s Glasgow, and the vulnerabilities of old age; Old English, as Jones puts it, brought 'the poet back into voice, allowing him to strain to unbind himself, to sweat to speak'.

Eleanor Bell's essay discusses Morgan's concrete poem, 'Pomander', first published in 1973. Commenting on the object, and the text which mimics the shape and texture of this Renaissance artefact – which was filled with aromatic

herbs and substances so that their soothing, medicinal fumes spiralled through its apertures – Morgan wrote, 'I use this to bring out the theme of opening up the poem, opening it up spatially, and in a broader sense the theme of opening out life, life itself (or the round world) as a pomander, its secrets and treasures and rare things not to be hoarded but opened up and made visible'. We hope that this special issue affords an opening up, or an opening out, of some new and 'rare things', in the writing life of the poet whose work re-imagined the possibilities of poetry, within Scotland and beyond, across seven decades of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Sarah M. Dunnigan
Margery Palmer McCulloch
Editors

Edwin Morgan, 4 May 2001
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JAMES MCGONIGAL AND SARAH HEPWORTH

Ana, Morgana, Morganiana: A Poet's Scrapbooks as Emblems of Identity

The first and third items of our title are fairly easily explained. 'Ana' is a general term for books that record miscellaneous sayings, anecdotes and gossip about a particular person, as in 'Johnsoniana'. More recently it has tended to include the sense of the complete literature of a subject, as in 'Americana'. Here we will be considering one part of 'Morganiana', namely the Scrapbooks that form a substantial but largely unexplored aspect of a prolific poet's complete works. The word is not new: 'How I value my collection of Morganiana!' wrote his publisher, Michael Schmidt, on 13 December 1984, thanking the poet for a signed copy of his *Sonnets from Scotland*.[1]

Edwin Morgan clearly considered his detailed Scrapbooks, a 16-volume 3,600 page miscellany compiled from his early teens until his early forties, to be part of his complete works. Writing to Schmidt on 15 December 1988, he included photographs he had taken of several pages of the Scrapbooks before sending them to the University of Glasgow Library along with a substantial tranche of his Papers, and reminded his publisher of an earlier airy promise: 'The books are a mixture of autobiography, documentary, and art. I do not think there is anything quite like them, and I regard them as very much part of my "works" (which you are going to publish some day in several volumes, are you not!)'.[2] But Schmidt clearly considered them almost impossibly expensive to reproduce, as had other publishers before him. In June 1953, when asked by literary agents Christy and Moore to present them with a publishing idea, Morgan had offered them the Scrapbooks, putting the total number of pages then at 200. He described them as 'partly documentary/historical, partly aesthetic, partly satirical and partly personal . . . a Whitmanian reflecting glass of "the world" [as] refracted through one personality'. It included, he said, poems and prose in many languages (from Pitman's shorthand to Egyptian hieroglyphics), snatches of music, accounts of dreams, jokes and cartoons, speci-

mens of handwriting and newspaper cuttings from as far back as the 18th century.[3] But nothing came of this proposal.

The publishers' reluctance may have stemmed not merely from the sheer size of the project. These books are decidedly odd and difficult to read; they contain a mystery. Hence the middle term of our title, 'Morgana', which conjures up the Fata Morgana, a mirage often seen in the Straits of Messina between Italy and Sicily, and attributed locally to the enchantress Morgana the Fay, the sister of King Arthur. It is the mysteriously wavering effect of these thousands of pages upon the reader, and the uncertainty of his or her sense of the Scrapbooks' purpose and status as 'works', or possibly 'a work', that we want to explore here. What are readers to make of them? How are these striking entities to be understood? Why did the poet devote so many hours and years to the task? Are they a work of art or of literature? The one certain thing is that they possess a strangeness well beyond the cosy childhood world implied in the word 'scrapbooks'.

They began innocently enough, as a collection of pictures and strange facts that caught the poet's imagination from 1931 or 1932 onwards, when he was eleven or twelve years old. Reading children's magazines of general knowledge, collected in weekly parts, he loved especially the juxtaposition of subjects, flipping from archaeology to marine biology to Antarctic exploration, perhaps a dozen topics being unfolded from one issue to another. Considering the 1930s now, we tend to focus on the economic and political crises of a fraught decade, but for a bright boy growing up in favourable social circumstances this was equally a time of exciting technological, scientific and artistic change. Jet propulsion and the cyclotron for accelerating atomic particles, radio astronomy, colour film and television, as well as surrealism, constructivism, and the Bauhaus style in architecture, had all begun to change the world. Morgan responded to all of that with a sense of wonder already heightened by a love of words and a sensitivity to design. This new knowledge fed into early scrapbooks, begun in exercise books, where he would paste cuttings from magazines, journals and newspapers. These were re-edited in 1937 to include quotations from the literature he was reading in his final year at school and his first year of university study, and rehoused in substantial bound volumes (possibly blank ledgers from the office of Arnott, Young and Company, the firm of ship-breakers and metal dealers founded by the poet's maternal grandfather, where his

father now worked as accountant). Already they seem akin to 'commonplace books', repositories of useful knowledge and key extracts, unique to their creator and somehow vital to his sense of identity.

He continued to fill his Scrapbooks throughout the 1930s and much of the 1940s, adding photographs and other wartime material to ensure some continuity over his national service years in the Middle East. What is clear is his determination to ensure that the pre-war books would survive, even if he did not. Leaving to serve in the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1940, he assigned them to the care of his friend and fellow student at the University of Glasgow, Jean Watson, and retrieved them when he resumed undergraduate study in 1946. He shared his enthusiasm for the Scrapbooks with fellow students in his post-war Honours class, such as Tom Craig, who later helped him source more blank volumes from a printing firm in London, where he had taken up an administrative post in the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth in 1948.[4]

Into these Morgan pasted images of post-war developments in science, warfare, space exploration and politics. The Scrapbooks of the later 1950s and early 1960s appear, perhaps, to lack some of the aesthetic qualities of the earliest ones, composed as they were under his conflicted attitudes to Cold War politics and a near-despair at the atomic arms race, which is also evident in his collection *Dies Irae* (1952).[5] A documentary focus on scientific discoveries in the natural world persists, and on cultural variety with a focus on human behaviour and sexuality, but autobiographical elements remain obscure, perhaps deliberately so. An enthusiasm for kilted soldiers and for early Cliff Richard and Elvis Presley is persistent, and the satirical or humorous edge in juxtaposition of imagery and ideas is possibly more strained in these later volumes. He continued creating Scrapbook pages until 1966. The final volume is unfinished, but the rest are chock-full of whatever printed or visual material had caught his imagination.

So much care is put into the selection, juxtaposition and overall decoration and design of these volumes, however, that they can be regarded as among his most significant early work. They provide an eclectic guide to an eclectic mind: clever, responsive, visually acute, at once emotionally absorbed and coolly appraising. Later his involvement with the concrete poetry movement and the development of a more open poetry of urban experience in the early 1960s provided a fuller outlet for his creativity. But the Scrapbooks express, as nowhere else, the play or tension between various aspects

of his identity – the artistic, the literary, the intellectual and the sexual – and the poet himself persisted in his desire to see them published.

Few of Morgan's readers will have turned these crowded pages, however, so it is probably best to attempt to describe them here. Images from the Scrapbooks were used for the cover design of Hamish Whyte's *Nothing Not Giving Messages* (1990), giving a sense of their style but not of their sheer extent. From an archival point of view, they comprise a substantial holding, and were the first materials the University acquired from the poet, purchased in 1980 together with 900 holograph poems. The sixteen Scrapbooks range in size from the slender (3.5cm wide by 11cm high) to the mighty (10.5cm by 15cm).The latter, with its wide-eyed 'bush baby' on the cover, is genuinely hard to lift. The volumes were listed soon after receipt and the catalogue records (MS Morgan 917/1-16) have been discoverable online since the late 1990s. At the time of acquisition they were recorded as a 'major collection',[6] although until recently they were viewed mainly by students attending classes in the Department of Special Collections, for example postgraduates in Information Management and Preservation considering issues around digitisation. What is noticeable is how the Scrapbooks always elicit a strong response, people seeming drawn to their dense and puzzling surfaces.

From a critical or biographical viewpoint, these volumes are at first disconcerting, being a sort of collage of images, forms and discourses juxtaposed or contrasted, with care for the appearance or 'rhythm' of the double-page layout. Often there are little abstract patterns drawn in coloured ink, which decorate the gaps between cut-out texts and lead the eye on. He was by his own admission 'quite ruthless' in cutting up second-hand books and journals for the lines and images he wanted. The principles for selection reveal that same inclusive, interested, sometimes quirky approach to wide-ranging aspects of existence that readers now praise in Morgan's mature poetry.

The opening pages of Scrapbook 1 (so numbered with pagination by Morgan in 1937 and reworked, along with Scrapbook 2, from material previously collected in 'various small jotters') contain, among many other items, articles on Babylonian mathematical astronomy, Chinese mythography, quotations from *Beowulf*, newspaper clippings from, for example, the *Observer* of 25 September 1938 on 'The Ladybird in Folklore', technical

articles in zoology (the gynandromorph ant), and stray quotations that are aphoristic ('Lust and forgetfulness have been amongst us') or humorous ('Nous sommes les tendres Lapins / Assis sur leurs petits derrières'). Architecture and sacred imagery from different religions make an impact, with illustrations of statues and reliefs from churches and temples. Arcane aspects of language are noted, such as examples of the Tifinagh script from the Musée de L'Homme in Paris, as well as scientific discovery: 'the first natural colour photograph of an eclipse ever produced', from *National Geographic* of February 1937. Other cuttings show an interest in mental facilities: 'The Largest Human Brain on Record' from the *Bulletin* of 17 October 1936, or an article from *Chambers' Journal* in February of the same year, recording that a resident of New York 'committed to memory the 1,117 pages that make up the Manhattan Telephone Directory [. . .]'. Mandala-like examples of some of his own paintings remind us that he considered going to Art School. Thumb-nail photographic studies of muscle-men in various athletic poses appear from page to page, punctuating the non-narrative.

Although the Scrapbooks can appear to be an amalgam, a kaleidoscope, a random assortment, Edwin Morgan would later speak up for randomness as a 'structuring' principle. He referred here particularly to the 100 poems that make up 'The New Divan' (1977), the major work reflecting his wartime experiences, and argued that it does have 'a *kind* of structure' but that it also uses

> a kind of randomness in the sense that one is not following a story that really goes forward step by step. Characters appear and reappear. You're not certain whether the characters are autobiographical or not. That kind of randomness is something that did attract me. And, if you like, the idea of non-structure is almost a structural idea in itself – in a sense that a great deal of poetry of the Middle East (which I got to learn something about when I was in the Middle East) deliberately is anti-structural [. . .].[7]

While he admits that this procedure is not something a critic could easily analyse in structural terms, nevertheless there would be 'something that in a mysterious, subterranean sense would be structure, an emotional structure, a structure perhaps relating to the life of the person who had written it'. A

similar sort of deep relational structure makes the Scrapbooks a fascinating collection. They provided a creative outlet that he could not finally give up until his poetry came into its own in the 1960s.

The overall effect of the Scrapbooks, and possibly a shaping influence on them, is that they are somewhat surreal. Morgan specialized in Art and French at Glasgow High School and had access there to a library of art-works in reproduction. Surrealism interested him greatly, as did the poetry of Dylan Thomas who was also influenced by it, and whose work he first encountered in the *Faber Book of Modern Verse* (1936). Discussing this artistic movement with Colin Nicholson for his book *Poem, Purpose and Place*, EM reached down his own well-worn copy of Herbert Read's *Surrealism* (1936), containing the French poet Paul Eluard's essay 'Poetic Evidence' which states that every surrealist:

> strives to unite the imagination and nature, to consider all possibilities a reality, to prove to us that no dualism exists between imagination and reality, that everything the human spirit can conceive and create springs from the same vein, is made of the same matter as his flesh and blood, and the world about him.[8]

The Scrapbooks may be an attempt by a young poet to bring the fascinating multiplicity of nature and the technological world into a unity, at least within the covers of each Scrapbook, or the compass of each page – and also to set down his own experience within that space. For example, he includes photographs of the local trams that he travelled on between Rutherglen and Glasgow, and of people whom he loved, such as Jean Watson, W. S. Graham, Cosgrove (the soldier whose presence haunts the final sections of 'The New Divan'), and John Scott, the Lanarkshire store-man with whom Morgan fell deeply in love at the beginning of the 1960s, lightening both his emotional life and his poetry.

Yet such descriptive and biographical detail does not take us all that far into the strange form of the Scrapbooks. It is possible to draw analogies between their witty or disturbing use of cut-outs from newspapers and the poet's later poetic explorations of the media in his *Newspoems* (1965-71) and *From the Video Box*[9] or in the imaginary photo-journalism of *Instamatic Poems* (1972).[10] His science-fiction poetry of time-travelling may also have launched off from the Scrapbooks' evident fascination with simultaneity and

echoes in time.[11] Here, however, we want to want to look both more closely and more widely at what the volumes represent, firstly by attempting some 'readings' of single or double pages in their own right as compositions, and secondly by situating the artistic effort of scrapbook-making in a European (but also particularly Glaswegian) cultural context.

READING THE SCRAPBOOKS

Here are two individual openings contemplated in their own terms as 'compositions' or designs that carry psychological or political significance. If the Scrapbooks can indeed be viewed as an alternative to poetry at this stage of Morgan's life, then perhaps they can be 'read' as such, with a focus on motifs, connotations, repetitions and contrasts within a shaped and thought-provoking structure.

The heavy black mask-like head and the single eye on the left-hand page seem to be brooding on the same cataclysm: 'This is the Hydrogen Bomb' being exploded in 1952 near the Marshall Islands in the North West Pacific, a newspaper tells us. Administered by the United States from 1947 until 1986, the islands were an isolated testing ground for the development of atomic weapons. Newspaper cut-outs record the 'searing, burning, blinding ball of fire', and the description of the fireball as being like a crouching monster is juxtaposed to the apocalyptic headline summary: 'Thought end of the world had come'.

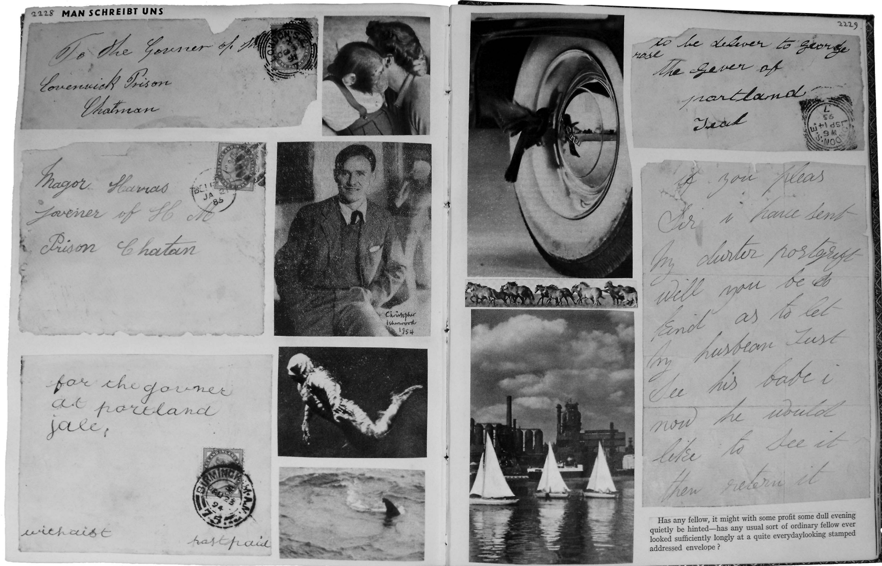
American use of scientific research for military purposes is ironically signalled in the title of the biochemical research laboratory: *The Armour Laboratories*. Possible victims of such advanced lab work might well include the unwitting all-American youth standing smiling beside the futuristic architecture which houses the scientists.

The all-seeing eye of judgement (which Edwin Morgan had learned about as a young boy from his conventionally religious parents), is set above a desert landscape. Beside it hangs the last trumpet's prophetic sign that the end of the world may be near. That was certainly the poet's mood in the 1950s.

Yet the world did not end then, and the trumpet blast was later transformed into the sound of national awakening that ends Morgan's significant collection *Sonnets from Scotland* (1984): 'a far horn blew to wake that people's sleep'.

This next page is about written communication, signalled by the diagonally linked messages at top left page and bottom right page.

'Man schreibt uns' strikes us at the top left. In German, someone is writing to us; we are being sent a letter. And the diagonally opposite passage from a version of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (one of Edwin Morgan's favourite novels) wonders whether 'any usual sort of ordinary fellow ever looked sufficiently longly at a quite everyday-looking stamped addressed envelope'. The double page then invites us to contemplate life stories hidden inside the envelopes addressed to prison governors in various Victorian gaols.



Calligraphy is a recurrent theme in the Scrapbooks, but the script and spelling on these envelopes speak of blighted lives. There is a letter, too, from inside one such envelope. A woman is asking the governor for permission to send her husband a photograph of his baby daughter ('my durter postgrift').

There are other ways of writing, too. The pictures arranged centrally in two vertical columns remind us that in Morgan's view there is 'nothing not giving messages'. Gesture, human-animal communication, the ripples of a shark's fin in water, wild horses as they gallop across the plains, sailing boats moving on a lake beside industrial workings – all of these make signs, leave trails that also hint at significance, as much as any writer does.

The gay writer Christopher Isherwood, best known for his 1930s novels based on his experience of decadent pre-Nazi Berlin, figures in a picture dated 1954. By then he had become an American citizen, having migrated to California in 1939 to work as a scriptwriter. His politically-inspired travels with W. H. Auden in China in 1938, and their prose-verse collaboration in war reportage had all been safely left behind. That sends a message too.

Some fifteen of the Scrapbooks' single or double pages read in similar terms and related to Morgan's life or poetry were put on-line on the University Library website to mark his ninetieth birthday in 2010, and he seemed pleased at this belated virtual publication. We do not regard these readings as definitive, of course, any more than a painting can have a final interpretation.[12] But it is an approach that, at the very least, appears to make sense of a strange occupation. The examples given here lack the flashes of humour that are also evident throughout the collection. It seems that Morgan himself was able to see the ironic side of his own obsession. In the inside cover pages of Scrapbook 11, created between 1953 and 1955, pp.2127b & c, he introduces the reader to yet another volume in the whole Scrapbook enterprise with ironic self-deprecation: '*It is not to exaggerate that this book is unpeered*', or '*a kind of occupational therapy*', or '*A typical Victorian schoolgirl's collection*'. The front cover is stamped Fanny, and Morgan picks up this old-fashioned name in one of his descriptions: '*Fanny's Farcate Fascicle*' (the botanical term for 'tight packed, solid as opposed to hollow' yoked with the printer's term for one section of a book that is issued in parts). But the childhood tale retold on these same pages from the Soviet writer Konstantin Pantovsky (1893-1968), about a poor man painstakingly gathering and refining grains of gold from the floor-sweepings of goldsmiths' workshops, might suggest that the still largely unknown poet, by engaging in this '*queer hobby*', felt that he was recasting images and ideas that, one day, would be transmuted into poetry.

SCRAPBOOKS AS EMBLEM BOOKS?

But are the Scrapbooks 'unpeered', in fact? An art historian might suggest that Morgan's artistic approach here runs parallel, or is even a precursor, to that of his almost exact contemporary Richard Hamilton (1922-2011), the painter whose 1956 collage 'Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?' is considered the first work of Pop Art to achieve wide recognition. It does have some similarities with the Scrapbooks in its satirical use of body builder and burlesque imagery, its cut-outs from American magazines and witty focus on the popular and transient in modern consumer culture. Both Morgan and Hamilton are perhaps responding to earlier developments, for example in Dada's use of assemblage and found

objects. From a Scottish perspective, the Leith-born Eduardo Paolozzi (1924-2005) could also be cited, a founder member of the Independent Group that met in London in 1952 and 1954 who kept scrapbook collages of imagery cut from American magazines.

At the visual end of the spectrum of literary culture, the Brazilian Noigandres group was also a contemporary development, centred around the creative and critical energies of the brothers Haroldo and Augusto de Campos and Décio Pignatari. By adopting the term 'verbovocovisual' from *Finnegans Wake*, they aimed to re-establish links between poetry and certain branches of painting and design. They had been at work since 1952. When Morgan encountered them ten years later, through the Portuguese concretist, E. M. de Melo e Castro, who had written to the *Times Literary Supplement* in May 1962, they made an immediate impact. These poets had translated some of his own favourites: Mayakovsky, Khlebnikov's *zaum* poetry of sheer noise and energy, James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, Mallarmé and e.e. cummings. There were political aspects to their poetic approach, turning the tables on empty or dissembling rhetoric and returning readers to the sign and semiotics in search of a purity of effect and maximum clarity of impact. There was also a post-colonial dimension, doubtless attractive to a nationalist in Scotland, as the Brazilians had a sense of exporting the movement back to Europe, to re-colonize their colonizer's culture. There was, finally, an emphasis on verbal play, on happiness and freedom, which was in tune with the social mood of the 1960s, if not of the troubled 1950s in which Morgan's Scrapbooks were expanding.

Yet neither of these movements seems to sit quite easily with the Scrapbook style. Brazilian concrete poetry was unknown to Morgan in the post-war period when he continued to build the Scrapbooks. Pop Art works are more clearly 'painterly' than the poet's pages, which present an odd combination of sometimes rough-edged imagery abutting often sophisticated information systems or taxonomies. And although Morgan was highly aware of contemporary artistic movements, he did not really like Paolozzi's work. Writing to Richard Price in September 2000, he declared: 'I'm not sure why I don't really take to Eduardo as warmly as you do, but I don't! [. . .] I think I sense something *destructive* about E.P., something that actually opposes the idea of sculpture'.[13] The Scrapbooks are not folios of discrete designs (although individual pages may be 'read') but something cumulative, with a weight of puzzling import. Their sheer scope also seems

to shift them beyond most 'artist's books', although Morgan was fascinated by such books produced by the Russian futurist Transrational (zaum) poets, notably Velimir Khlebnikov, Aleksei Kruchenykh and David Burliuk, and he also greatly admired William Blake's hermetic works of imagery and verse.[14]

Here we would like to widen the focus on Morgan's highly literate artist's books (if that is what they are) back towards the beginnings of print culture. Although the Scrapbooks respond to the modern world, it may also be possible to read them historically and culturally in terms of their collocation with University of Glasgow's extensive collection of emblem books. This would have the effect of making the Scrapbooks appear less idiosyncratic and obsessional, and instead lead us to view them as running in odd parallel to the Stirling Maxwell bequest to the Library of 1,200 emblem books, received in 1958. If emblem literature is increasingly seen as a key to understanding the Renaissance and Baroque mind, can Morgan's pages (and those of other contemporary Scottish writers and artists who work in word and image, such as Ian Hamilton Finlay and Alasdair Gray) be regarded as providing an oblique imagistic commentary on the moral complexities of modernity?

Morgan's interest in still and moving imagery, photography, painting and film is clear from his poetry, as in 'Five Poems on Film Directors', 'Instamatic Poems', 'Colour Poems', 'From The Video Box', and so on. In some of his poetry, but throughout these Scrapbooks, he works from journalism and the ephemera of things encountered. Yet here the media images and texts are constantly set against ancient archaeological findings, art works and historical or scientific detail and discourse in such a way as to set up an expressive tension, where meaning struggles towards articulation, and visual subtlety is set against plain or proverbial meaning. For instance, the presence of the eye, the trumpet, the letter and the moving animals in the pages sampled above are emblematic but also carry proverbial meanings within human culture. Sir William Stirling Maxwell (1818-78) early recognised that the emblem is a close relative of the proverb, the former sometimes being an illustrated version of the latter, and both expressing practical wisdom about ways of leading personal and social life.[15] In 1860 he privately published *An essay towards a collection of books relating to proverbs, emblems, apophthegms, epitaphs and ana*, a catalogue of books in his collection, which appear to be gathered around meaning, visual and verbal pithiness of expression, the passage of time and possibly consoling structures of knowledge.

Although emblems are often viewed singly, and their images impress the viewer as being fairly stark or self-contained, complexity was part of the practice from the start. Their early popularity derived from the *Book of Emblems* by Andrea Alciato (1492-1550), published in Augsburg in 1531. Its format of symbolic images with mottoes or epigrams proved immediately attractive. Setting pictures alongside brief words in riddling association appealed to the Renaissance mind, and within a few years the genre was standardised into a three-part structure of *motto* or heading, *imago* or picture, and *subscriptio* or longer explanatory text. This was to prove an extremely engaging and long-lasting combination. An exhibition in the University of Glasgow's Hunterian Art Gallery, *Breaking the Renaissance Code: Emblems and Emblem Books* (June–July 2011),[16] drew parallels between this three-part structure and present-day journalism, where an often ambiguous headline and a polysemantic image lead the mind into the explanatory 'story'. Contemporary advertising, too, can be seen to function as a sort of commercial 'emblematics', selling products rather than ideas – or rather the idea of the products – to consumers.

The persistence of the emblem form was also illustrated by such modern Scottish works as Alasdair Gray's photolithograph series *Inside the Box of Bone* (1970), Ian Hamilton Finlay's *Heroic Emblems* (1988), and *The Eloquence of Shadows: Emblemata Nova* (1994) by Hugh Buchanan and Peter Davidson. In each of these works, traditional emblematic elements are emphatically and sometimes disturbingly modernised, to provide moral reflection on the body and sexuality, or mechanised warfare, or the interplay of landscape, modern architectural features and classical values. If Morgan was moved to explore and problematize the meanings inherent in historical and contemporary images, he was clearly in advance of several modern Scottish artist-authors.

The prevalence of architectural forms and mysterious landscapes in the Scrapbooks, of visual echoes and writing systems, hieroglyphic and other obscure patterns or encodings, as well as the perplexities of relationships and destinies, is also typical of the concerns of those who first created emblems. For example, in *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* ('Strife of Love in a Dream') by Francesco Colonna (c. 1433-1527), one of the finest early printed books, Poliphilus dreams of pursuing his beloved and has adventures in symbolic gardens, buildings and landscapes. Its detailed woodcuts provided models of supposed classical architectural styles, often with quasi-hieroglyphic inscription, which came to define some of the emblematic fea-

tures of architecture for many decades. All of this suggests an affinity, at least, with what Morgan was engaged in in his Scrapbooks, where personal strife and intellectual and sexual questing is played out across imagined, fragmented or dream-like landscapes. He appears to be working out not only how he saw the world, but also perhaps how it saw him.

Morgan had been working in such an 'emblematic' way, of course, for many years before the Stirling Maxwell bequest arrived in the Library. The collection's antiquarian character, and the ethical focus of emblems generally, might at first sight seem to be at odds with his modernising inclination in politics and poetry. Yet readers whose impression of Morgan's poetry was formed by his more experimental and joyful work of the late 1960s and early 1970s can forget that his earlier poetic persona was a serious and even a moralizing one. For example, we find W. S. Graham in a letter to Morgan dated September 1943 reacting strongly against the sort of poetry that his friend in North Africa was espousing, a poetry that seemed to Graham overworked in order that 'something worthy and valuable to humanity [. . .] some comparative wisdom is tortured into the world [. . .]'.[17] So the moral import of emblem writing was not alien to his character as a young poet. For example, in one of the final poems written before enlisting, 'Lazarus Gate' (March 1939) the poet finds himself caught 'like a ghost' between his pity for the blighted lives of his industrial city and his own poetic silence or inadequacy.[18]

Moreover, in the post-war years he had already begun to explore and translate the work of one French poet, Maurice Scève, whose famous emblem book was in the new collection. When Morgan resumed civilian life and academic work in Glasgow, he began to keep a series of notebooks, which he called GNotelibriks 1-4, where he kept track of his reading and thinking through quotation and translation from a range of authors.[19] We find there many Renaissance sonnets copied out in French, from Ronsard, Du Bellay and Maurice Scève. The last named appears in the Stirling Maxwell collection in an edition of his *Délie* published at the Sulpice Salon in Lyons for Antoine Constantin in 1544.[20] Translated, these poems by Scève would appear with others by Petrarch, Garcilaso de la Vega, Tasso and Marino in Morgan's *Fifty Renascence Love-Poems* (1975).[21] For the young Scottish poet at this stage of his life, Scève seems to have been particularly significant in terms of self-identification, especially in his use of anonymity and veiled authorship, with poems being signed by initials only or by enig-

matic mottos or emblems – thus creating a hidden personality that must have seemed attuned to Morgan's necessary self-protective anonymity, at least in certain areas of his life.

In particular, he was drawn as a translator to Scève's ten-line decasyllabic 'dizains', which he found 'reminiscent of a sonnet in general effect', but seeming 'to pack more meaning into less bulk through involuted syntax'. In *Délie*, the 449 dizains are arranged in groups of nine, after each emblem, with the first five dizains possibly forming an 'emblem' at the beginning of sequence. These poems also seemed to enact a state of mind where the lover 'is dissolved, like his purely physical longings, into an abyss of nescience, a gulf of oblivion'.[22] Morgan also admired the way that Scève manages to bring his widely varying moods into the traditional Petrarchan structures, and so renew and extend these. For a gay person in search of 'an impossible perfect partner' (as Morgan once recalled Quentin Crisp describing his own quest), the Petrarchan convention of unattainable distance between poet and beloved must also have retained a particular resonance into the post-war decades.

Certainly his emotional and sexual life at the time of translating these poems enacted such a sense of distance, and of inner conflict. In the Introduction to his own copy of the *Oeuvres poétiques complètes* of Maurice Scève, he has marked in the margin the following comment: '*Cet étrange néo-platonisme semble donc avoir pour fin non pas tant un progrès vers un idéal, qu'un conflit douloureux avec celui-ci*' [This strange neo-platonism seems to have as its end not so much an advancement towards the ideal as a painful conflict with it]. Earlier, he has noted the editor's remark that the rather tedious contraries displayed by other Petrarchans (tears and joy, death and life, light and darkness, cold and heat and so forth) appear in Scève as '*un rapport d'opposition vécu de l'intérieur, la simultanéité dans l'esprit de deux éléments contraires*' [a relation of contradiction inwardly lived, the simultaneous presence within the spirit of two opposing elements].[23]

That is quoted from a more recent scholarly edition of the early 1970s, the poet probably revisiting Scève as he was considering his Renaissance translations for publication. But it is possible still to find on the University Library shelves the old editions that Morgan must have used in the 1940s as he was drawn into a Renaissance world that shared his delight in word play and anagrams (an enjoyment that is clearly evident in letters to friends as well as in, for example, his 'Emergent Poems').[24] The edition of *Délie*

from which he copied the dizains that he would later translate, the 1916 Hachette edition by Eugène Parturier, has been rebound, but two background works still have visible bookplates that date their acquisition: Albert Baur's *Maurice Scève et la Renaissance Lyonaise* (1906, acquired 1919) and Joseph Aynard's *Les Poëtes Lyonnais: Précurseurs de la Pléiade* (1924, acquired 1925).[25]

The subtitle of the latter gives a clue to its further impact on Morgan: (*Maurice Scève – Louise Labé – Pernette du Guillet*). The central figure in this trio was a delightful but also subversive figure, for her contemporaries and for Morgan too. An extraordinary lute player as well as a poet of great clarity and passion, who knew Latin, Italian and French, Labé had nevertheless a confused reputation. Public gossip accused her of being a courtesan, and of participating dressed as a soldier at the siege of Perpignan in 1542, as 'la belle amazone' who was also a sexualised Joan of Arc figure. She (or her alter ego) was known as 'La Belle Cordière', for she was the daughter of a wealthy rope-maker, and had married a merchant in that same trade. Morgan was drawn by that combination of poetic intelligence and possible cross-dressing ambiguity. His own copy of her work in the Mitchell Library collection is from an edition of 1952, *Elégies et Sonnets de Louise Labé* (Paris: Librairie Plon). One of the last poems Morgan wrote was 'The Ropemaker's Bride' in 2006, and he sent it to the young poet Richard Price for comment. Earlier he had encouraged Price to read and translate Labé's work.[26] Thus she had been in the poet's mind for sixty years, emblematic perhaps of the mysterious, possibly threatening and certainly ambiguous presence of female creativity and sexuality in these years when his own identity, both as a man and as a poet, was under pressure.

THE MORGANATIC SCRAPBOOKS

Related to such issues of sexual identity, was there also a hermetic, quasi-mystical dimension to this Scrapbook activity: the 'Morgana' element of our title? Morgana is a variant of Morgan le Fay, powerful sorceress of Arthurian legend, and an adversary of the Round Table. She possessed uncanny powers, but is specifically described as a human being. Her inspiration in Welsh mythology would have been attractive to someone who believed, mistakenly, that his family name of Morgan probably indicated Welsh origin.

On the imaginative inside cover of Scrapbook 11 already referred to (p.2127b), he presents that name in mirror writing and links himself to the magic of northern Eurasian shamans, who used mirrors in their rituals. Their mystical journeys involved imagined flight and also the reindeer that were central to that culture. Hence the declaration 'Morgan himself is a shaman' centrally on the page, and the nickname 'Eddie Reindeer'. The word 'fay' or 'fey' that is attached to Morgan(a)'s name, apart from its customary meanings of supernatural, fairy-like or fated to die, carries other meanings, especially in Scotland, of extravagant high spirits, and of seeing future calamity. These latter meanings echo the mood of many of the pages, where atomic warfare and sly humour jostle for attention. 'Fairy' also has homosexual connotations, of course.

Morgan occasionally used the words 'fay' and 'fey' to describe himself, as in a postcard he sent to W. S. Graham, dated 30 July 1951.[27] Graham had badly injured his leg and was in hospital when he received 'A Little Ballad of Morgan Lefay', in which the Morgan of the poem seems presented as both male and female, a male Brahan seer and also the duplicitous female Morgan of legend, trying to convince him that Graham is 'lying / In his grave . . . with a verse on his chest':

> 'You lie, Brahan seer, so fey and so feckless,
> Your gramary I deny, gramary I defy.
> He will come through the post with his love and his letters
> And a leg all broke and a shore in his eye.'

Through a sort of magical reshaping of materials, or a lonely kind of sorcery, the Scrapbooks may have represented for Morgan a powerfully consoling image of 'the poet' during a period of his own limited and unsteady artistic recognition. The pages build a repository of arcane knowledge, created by himself as the magus-figure that would later re-appear in his poetry in various guises. In an earlier letter to Graham, dated 30 April 1950, he describes himself as an isolated scientist in a mountain broch that is also an astronomical observatory.[28] Later there would be the space-explorers of the science-fiction poems, the star-gazing sages of the 'The New Divan', the time-travellers of 'Sonnets from Scotland' and the late appearance of Pelagius and Merlin in the Glasgow landscape of *Cathures* (2002). Reflecting in old age on gay writing, he noted that 'in so many

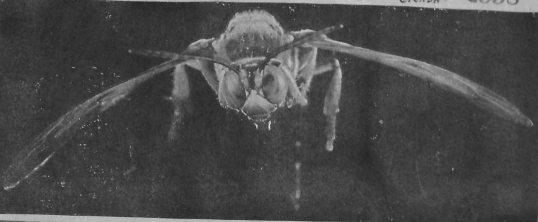
early societies there is a shaman, who gets a place in that society: a mysterious person, he might be a gay person'.[29] The shaman is a liminal figure, of unfixed identity, working between living and dead and beyond distinctions of gender. It is interesting that in that late uncollected poem, 'The Ropemaker's Bride', Morgan returns to dwell on the French Renaissance world of emblems, on the mysteries of heterosexuality and marriage, and on Louise Labé rather than Scève.

Regarding the Scrapbooks, the sexual meaning of 'morganatic' also comes to mind, signalling a marriage between persons of markedly differing rank. Morgan's sexual partners were almost always working class, and distant or distanced from his intellectual and creative activities. Photographs of scantily clad men in quasi-athletic poses, and of photogenic public figures gay or straight, decorate pages full of cultural and scientific import. This louche bravado was not matched by the actual isolation and loneliness that the poet experienced during the 1950s. Yet it is not to be airbrushed out. It is part of the picture. Striking a pose also poses questions, just as a deliberately ambiguous or troubling *imago* calls out for its subtle *subscriptio*. Here is one such page.

RUSSIAN tourists visiting the famous Moulin Rouge cabaret in Paris found the can-can "so strange," Moscow Radio reported to-day

One of the tourists told the radio in an interview: "It seemed so silly, those half-undressed, laughing girls lifting their legs above their heads and performing some extraordinary movements.

"We left the Moulin Rouge somewhat disturbed, asking ourselves: What sort of art is this?" ET 20-7-1956



Mr Kerr announced that the choir would sing:—"Life is but a melancholy flower." A hum emanated from the Glee Party as they got the key-note; then a subdued and mournful wailing broke out. Granpaw described it afterwards as the "Fruiterer's Anthem." The ladies and the tenors reiterated sadly:

"Life is but a melon
Life is but a melon."

"Cauliflower!" burst in the basses in stentorian unison.
"That doesna seem to mak' sense," said Granpaw critically.

We hope to give a garden party on Wednesday, July 13. We invite all (over 16 years of age) in the parish to come. It will be gin at 7.

> The large image of a cicada seems to preside over this page. It is, as the *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* (1972) informs us, a 'homopterous' insect, i.e. having its wings alike. 'Homopterous' sits next to 'homosexual' in this dictionary, although in the *Collins Concise* (1987) and also the *New Penguin English Dictionary* (2001), 'homo sapiens' intervenes.
>
> The theme of this page seems to be human sexuality as expressed through dance and theatrical display, and possibly some of the difficulties or ironies that these entailed for a gay man in the 1950s. The newspaper article from the *Evening Times* is dated 20 July 1956, and it recounts the confusion of Russian visitors to the West on their first encounter with the can-can: 'We left the Moulin Rouge somewhat disturbed, asking ourselves: What sort of art is this?'. This newspaper date might suggest that the picture of enthusiastic male dancers is from Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* (1957).
>
> But the main focus is on local displays of music and movement. There is Scottish ceilidh dancing, with both men and women displaying their similar wings of tartan kilts and checked skirts. There is a misprinted notice for a parish garden party ('It will be gin at 7'), and also a description of a local Glee Party, where the chorus is 'Life is but a lemon', with some audience reaction: ' "That doesna seem to mak' sense," said Granpaw critically'.
>
> To the edge of this simple jollification is a self-portrait of the kilted poet posed in a mirror, with a camera to his eye, and seeming to be 'showing a bit of leg'. More statuesque legs are displayed by the kilted soldier and male model, or possibly body-builder.

Here the Scrapbook-maker appears to be simultaneously hiding, observing and recording. Juxtaposed to the social groups, he seems to have retreated into another room, but is still 'centre stage' in his particular photo. The reference quoted above from Scrapbook 11 comes to mind, regarding the shamanic use of mirrors. And more could be said about the other self-portraits that Morgan selected for inclusion, e.g. as a baby in Scrapbook 1 (pp.227-8), or as a soldier in wartime Lebanon, or academic traveller in Russia in 1955. The baby photo seems to match the exuberance of the boar above it and the surrounding animal shapes perhaps create a

'nursery' feeling, yet it sits alongside such serious matters as a quotation from John Skeaping on invention and expression related to 'Animals in Art'. This is clearly a clever baby, of whom much might be expected.

But here we will focus on the poet's costume. The kilt as an emblem of both nationality and personal identity is made deliberately problematic in the Scrapbooks, and features frequently. Contemporary tartan images of Scottish culture as presented by the BBC's 'The White Heather Club', an early-evening television programme of traditional Scottish music and comedy that ran between 1958 and 1968, seemed outmoded even at the time, indeed almost self-parody. Yet Morgan often wore a kilt when on holiday abroad during those decades, as a mark of his Scottishness, certainly, but also of something more. For example, in one of the 'Pieces of Me' sequence that concludes Colin Nicholson's study, *Edwin Morgan: Inventions of modernity*, Morgan describes himself on a study tour of Russia in 1955, 'kilted in Kiev', when his fellow tour members abandon him for a joke:

> A crowd gathered
> from nowhere like filings
> to a magnet, muttering,
> whispering, pointing,
> man in a skirt –[30]

The kilt-skirt is at once warlike and feminine, emblematically Scottish yet also international. On a trip to Albania in October 1988, Morgan discovered that Byron's name was still held in respect there, since he had liked Albanian culture and had his portrait painted in their kilt-like native costume:

> White kilts and crimson jackets, curvy daggers
> and cloaks that might be plaids – a whole Levant of
> crypto-Scots [. . .].[31]

The poem goes on to compare Albania's independence of spirit with Scotland's lack of it, as judged by the Scottish failure of nerve to achieve a sweeping enough majority in the 1979 referendum on devolution. Yet Morgan also liked the way that Albanian males greeted each other with a kiss, and linked arms walking in the street.[32] Thus sexual and political

identities remained intertwined in his thinking, long after the Scrapbook-making had ceased.

Perhaps all of these Scrapbook materials were 'Pieces of Me', not fragmented but somehow to be made one, and this exercise was itself intrinsic to the poet's role in a complex jigsaw of a world, as Morgan perceived it. One of his personal emblems became the astonishing juggler Cinquevalli, 'Half faun, half military man [. . .] half handsome, half absurd [. . .]'.[33] Less well known, but equally admired by many poets, is Morgan's poem on the winner of 'that strange world jigsaw final' in *From the Video Box* (1986), 'a stateless person [. . .] small, dark, nimble, self-contained', who is able, after days and nights of almost super-human concentration, to complete a jigsaw of an aerial image of one featureless stretch of mid-Atlantic: 'to press that inhuman insolent remnant together'.[34]

Completing his Scrapbooks must also have taught Morgan precisely how to do that many years earlier, in page after page after page. It was not the 'inhuman' that interested him, however, but the humour and the horror and the heroic efforts, and the queerness and the questions that are all implicit in what it means to be a human being, in that century and in this one.

Notes

1 Letter in the Edwin Morgan Papers, Department of Special Collections, Glasgow University Library, Accession Number 4582, Box 56. (Hereafter referenced as, e.g., SpColl 4582/56.) Images from the poet's Scrapbooks are reproduced here by permission of the University of Glasgow Library, Special Collections.
2 Letter to Michael Schmidt, SpColl 4582/56.
3 Letter to agents, SpColl 4579/26.
4 Letter from Tom Craig, SpColl 4848/47.
5 Edwin Morgan, 'Dies Irae' in *Collected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet 1996), pp.21-40.
6 *University of Glasgow Library Annual Report*, 1980-81.
7 *Nothing Not Giving Messages*, ed. by Hamish Whyte, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990), p.136.
8 Colin Nicholson, *Poem, Purpose and Place: Shaping Identity in Contemporary Scottish Verse*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992), p.66.
9 Morgan, *Themes on a Variation*, (Manchester: Carcanet: 1988), pp.63-112, and 115-38. Originally published in Morgan, *From the Video Box* (Glasgow: Mariscat Press, 1986).
10 Morgan, *Collected Poems*, pp.217-29.
11 James McGonigal, *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan*, (Dingwall: Sandstone Press, 2010), pp.81-2. The earlier impressions of the Scrapbooks were drawn from work on this biography.

12 The pictures may be accessed on http://.flickr.com/photos/uofglibrary/sets/72157623915217656/with/5366846142 Another reading might well respond to an usual sense of unease here: the shark fin circling, the humanoid water alien (*Creature from the Black Lagoon*, 1954?),the vulnerable bird next to a huge car wheel, and the petitioning of 'authority' by powerless letter writers. The 1937 imprisonment and subsequent conscription of Isherwood's German lover, Heinz Neddermeyer, might also be relevant to this re-reading: 'Man schreibt uns'.
13 Letter to Richard Price, SpColl 4848/14.
14 We are indebted to Richard Price for comment on Pop Art and artist's books.
15 David Weston, formerly Head of Department of Special Collections, introduces the Stirling Maxwell Collection at http://www.gla.ac/media/media_197709_en.pdf
16 Exhibition curated by Peter Black and Laurence Grove.
17 *The Nightfisherman: Selected Letters of W. S. Graham*, ed. by Michael and Margaret Snow, (Manchester: Carcanet, 1990), p.14.
18 Morgan, 'Lazarus Gate'. Holograph poem MS Morgan 14. See McGonigal, *Beyond the Last Dragon*, pp.63-4.
19 SpColl 4580/42.
20 SpColl S.M. 727.
21 Morgan, *Fifty Renascence Love-Poems*, (Reading: Whiteknights Press, 1975); and *Collected Translations*, (Manchester: Carcanet, 1996), pp.159-82.
22 Morgan, Introduction to *Fifty Renascence Love-Poems*, 1975; and in *Collected Translations*, p.161.
23 Maurice Scève,*Oeuvres poétiques completes*, (St Amand: Bibliotheque 10/18, 1971), pp.14-15. Available in 'The Edwin Morgan Library', Mitchell Library, Glasgow. Morgan's academic awareness of emblems in literature can also be traced there, in particular through the publications of his friend Alastair Fowler, Regius Professor of Rhetoric and Literature at Edinburgh University.
24 Morgan, *Collected Poems*, pp.133-6, 159.
25 University of Glasgow Library: Parturier, French HS50.D3 1916-P; Baur, French HS51 BAU; Aynard, French D73 AYN.
26 See Richard Price, 'Lute Variations' in *Rays*, (Manchester: Carcanet, 2009), pp.15-20.
27 Postcard to W. S. Graham, SpColl 4848/102.
28 Ibid.
29 Morgan, 'Gay Writing in Scotland', in *Ethically Speaking: Voice and Values in Modern Scottish Writing*, ed. by James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), p.154.
30 'Kiev' in 'Pieces of Me', Colin Nicholson, *Edwin Morgan: Inventions of modernity*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p.199.
31 'October in Albania', in Morgan, *Hold Hands Among the Atoms*, (Glasgow: Mariscat Press, 1991), p.10, and *Sweeping Out the Dark*, (Manchester: Carcanet, 1994), p.37.
32 Letter to Peter McCarey, SpColl 4848/44.
33 Morgan, *Collected Poems*, 1996, p.432
34 Morgan, *From the Video Box*, (Glasgow: Mariscat Press, 1986), p.25-6; and *Collected Poems*, pp.497-8.

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HAMISH WHYTE

Sustenance Provided: the Bibliographical Morgan

My first contact with Edwin Morgan was by letter, on 24 July 1977, asking permission to include some of his poems in what became *Noise and Smoky Breath*, an anthology of twentieth-century Glasgow poetry which was eventually published in 1983 by the Third Eye Centre and Glasgow Libraries but at the time was projected by Duncan Glen's Akros Publications. (Dear Mr Morgan. Dear Mr Whyte.) He was happy about most of the poems being reprinted, but not so keen on having 'Northern Nocturnal' (from *New Poems 1957*) resurrected (it was admitted to his *Collected Poems* of 1990). He grudgingly allowed 'Night Pillion', another poem from 1957, which I felt anticipated his 1960s Glasgow poems. He offered some suggestions and I sent him a draft of the contents of the book. He replied: 'It looks as if it will be, overall, quite a strange and surprising book, which is as it should be, from the hilarious to the horrific with all steps in between.' (A kind statement immediately appropriated for the back cover of the book – with permission of course.) We continued to correspond about the anthology until May 1978.

I wrote again on 5 April 1980, this time about an exhibition in Glasgow's Mitchell Library (where I worked in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Department) to celebrate his 60th birthday (and his retirement from the English Department of Glasgow University). I intended to produce a selected bibliography of his work to accompany the display and wondered if I might 'pester [him] a little' with a few questions – such as, whether he was the Edwin Morgan who wrote a study of Baudelaire, *Flowers of Evil*. I added that I hoped to compile a full bibliography in due course. He replied, offering 'all the help I can'. 'The Baudelaire is not mine, though it has been attributed to me so often . . . I have almost come to believe I did write it.' He remembered one dealer saying it 'threw an interesting light on Morgan's early religious development.' (In a later letter he passed on 'the sad facts about the late Edwin Morgan' [he had been an American teacher]: 'He left this sphere of things in 1957, age 59 . . . R.I.P.!') He offered to discuss the

bibliography and suggested I 'could come out here sometime and check on anything you have not seen.'

What he didn't realise was that he was offering me the grail; a collector's, a bibliographer's, dream come true. I had been infected with the bibliography bug by Dr W. R. Aitken during my postgraduate librarianship course at Strathclyde University, when we had to compile a sample bibliography (I arrogantly produced a supplement to Fred Higginson's magisterial bibliography of Robert Graves). The book collecting bug I had caught in my teens among the street book barrows of Glasgow. Compiling a bibliography seemed the logical outcome – and useful justification – of collecting a favourite author – I had been a Morgan fan for several years by then.

And so I visited Edwin Morgan in his Whittingehame Court flat for the first time on 22 April 1980, for an evening chat. He took to the bibliography idea – as complete a survey as could be made of his work – with typical gusto (he was always an orderly soul) and over the next ten years continued happily to discuss the recording of his work, the different categories and under which to put the astonishing (to me) variety of items that he produced. 'The speech [. . .] is to be printed in the university Gazette, so I suppose that will be one more item to record – under what?' '"The Bridge" [1960] is actually the script of a film which was made by a scientist colleague of mine at the university [Crawford Robb], and shown there; he was a great film enthusiast and ran the University Film Society. Does a film-script poem go in a separate category? Problems, problems!'

I mentioned in a letter the lengths to which some fans and even biographers will go, even rummaging in their quarries' dustbins for letters or any scraps of interest, to which EM replied: 'Speaking of dustbins, I of course belong to the post-dustbin era, and all my rubbish is swept down a common chute to mingle with the ashes of 35 other houses, and who, as Sir Thomas Browne might say, will recompose into their separate individuations such a disjected and incoherent tohu-bohu and congeries of fragments? And then the great municipal remora comes and sucks it all away.' (EM's letters are full of such riffs.)

Work on the bibliography was continued mainly by correspondence. (Dear Hamish. Dear Eddie.) On 29 May 1981 EM sent me a bunch of cuttings and offprints of poems dating from 1952 to 1979 'which you might as well have if they are of interest.' They were. He also wrote: 'As regards the bibliography layout, I wonder whether the translations should be in a sepa-

rate section (I mean books translated, which are in "A" at the moment)? Or is it more usual to list all books together, whether original or translated? . . . As regards the concrete/visual material, I'm not sure how far it would be possible to treat it separately – but I must think about this. I suppose ideally one would want the bibliography to be helpful to someone who wanted information about the concrete/visual side of my work. By the way, will "C" include reviews? The number of reviews I've written over the years is horrible to contemplate!' The answer to the last question was yes and maybe at some point there will be a collection of the best of them – they make fascinating reading. EM made a point of reviewing genres he didn't specialise in himself: drama (for *Encore* and the *Times* – as the latter's 'Special Correspondent' – in the 1950s and 1960s) and fiction (for the *New Statesman* and the *Listener* in the 1960s and 1970s), although he reviewed almost anything for the *TLS* for thirty-five years. His output of literary journalism was prodigious. The translation issue took a while to settle, but eventually translated poems were listed along with original poems – translation being almost as important to EM as writing his own poems.

This was followed by another evening visit, on 29 June 1981, which I recorded in the bibliographical notebook I had begun to keep, as 'V. pleasant . . . mellow with Glenmorangie. Delicious crisps.' I asked EM if he had discovered that the last line of his poem 'Strawberries' was missing from the recent paperback edition of *The Second Life*. He said he had found out the hard way, at a poetry reading, using this edition – he read the poem and although something told him there was another line, completing the poem – 'we're so hypnotised by the printed word' – he just stopped at 'hills'. He had sent his dozen complimentary copies back to Edinburgh University Press and they returned them with the line reinstated. EM wasn't sure how they had done it. On examination it turned out that the leaf, pp.59-60, was a cancel (a part of a book substituted for what was originally printed) – almost. It looked like the leaf had been removed and the extra line printed on – the inking is not as black as the other lines. I would have to check public copies to see if the correction had been made – all grist to the bibliographical mill. (I went round bookshops examining copies; the correction had been made.)

I asked if he had had anything published in the school magazine while he was at Rutherglen Academy, before he went on to the High School of

Glasgow. He said yes, but had no copies or details. The earliest published poem I was later able to find was 'Song of the Flood' from the *High School of Glasgow Magazine* April 1936 (signed 'KAA', his youthful pseudonym – the name of the rock snake in Kipling's *The Jungle Book* – which he used until 1939). He also remembered that the very first poem he wrote was about nature, details now lost. He showed me where he kept large posters – in the top section of his wardrobe. I noticed Ian Hamilton Finlay's glass *waverock* on the window ledge (it's now in the Scottish Poetry Library). We looked at the view. 'It's a great place for birds, wood pigeons and magpies.' I asked if he had written a magpie poem. No (but he did later, 'A Defence'). He then took me to his study where there were eight or nine box files of cuttings and correspondence which I was welcome to look through – I would need a day at least, I thought. He lent me his own list of published work to compare notes with till the next time I came. And one last thing I learned that evening was that EM didn't alter or rewrite poems much if at all after their first printing, which would make listing changes in texts reasonably simple.

EM then went off to his summer time-share at Kinloch Rannoch (Studio Lodge No. 8, Loch Rannoch Hotel, for the biographically minded) and afterwards to Loughborough to receive an honorary DLitt and I pursued enquiries on my own. Things were going well. I was caught up in the bibliographic hunt and so was EM.

After EM had returned from his break I spent a whole day at Whittingehame Court on 5 August for what he called my 'big sift'. I was to come early and 'just carry on as long as it takes. Sustenance of some sort will be provided!' (letter, 27 August 1981) Which it was, in the form of a lunch nicely set out on a trolley in the sitting room. I was of course suitably grateful for the hospitality and said so in a letter, thanking EM for that and his submission to the bibliographic third degree (more pestering). I had completely lost track of time in the study among the papers and books, what seemed to me a whole lost literary under-jungle waiting for its explorer/archaeologist. The bibliography was well and truly under way. What I didn't realise until much later was the extent of the sacrifice EM made in letting me stay for so long. He was simply unable to work if someone else was in the flat. Even when he was with John Scott they never lived together (except at weekends and holidays). I could hear EM pacing about the house every now and then and, in my naivety, it just never occurred to me

he wasn’t about his creative business. He probably did admin, wrote letters, read for reviewing – I hope he didn’t waste his time.

19 August: another day with the box files. This time I started earlier [‘Come at 9 a.m. rather than 10 next Wednesday if you want to have a longer session (<*sedere*, to sit!).’] and worked faster. Instead of copying all details I just took brief notes – dates of periodical articles, for example, to be checked out in the library later. Lunch was Mexican rice and asparagus, a half bottle of white wine, biscuits and cheese and coffee. EM showed me a pre-1914 Russian futurist anthology (which included Mayakovsky). We discussed the Russian use of *tirage* as a publishing term for edition or impression. Apparently the Russians took a lot of similar terms from the French. Russian books give a lot more publishing details than British – number of copies printed, names of editor, designer, art editor, for instance – very useful for a bibliographer. I finished Box 8 about 5.30pm. Before I left EM gave me the typescript of Alasdair Gray’s novel *Lanark* (which the author had given him in return for his encouragement of its writing) as a donation to the Mitchell Library.

I finished the boxes on 29 September. I also looked at EM’s Russian file and the files of his ‘Preview’ column for *Radio Times* (at one time he had a column in the *Daily Express* as well). Lunch this time was stuffed peppers and potatoes, bread, carafe of rosé, biscuits and Port Salud and Arran cheese and coffee (Kenco coffee bags, he told me – ‘I’ve tried them all’). He was working on a review for the *TLS* of the poet Eugenio Montale, whom he had translated and who had just died.

There were lots of interesting titbits picked up by the way, such as a letter from the literary editor of the *Glasgow Herald* in 1964 saying they can’t print EM’s poem ‘An Addition to the Family’ as it was felt to be too much of a private joke between EM and Maurice Lindsay (it was published the following year in the *Glasgow Review*); or the information that the cover of *The Second Life* had been designed by George Mackie.

And so it went on, the exchange of information, the questions and answers, EM enjoying worrying over the technicalities of bibliography-compiling as much as simply seeing the record of his work taking shape: ‘Is it a publication or a “publication?” ’ and ‘I look forward to your next bout of speleology.’ Encouraged by EM I began writing to publishers to see if they would be interested in publishing the bibliography. None of them was. EM thought Edinburgh University Press might be interested, that they

'would enjoy the challenge of doing a good complex printing job, and of course the connection with my work is already there [*The Second Life*]. In addition, it would be pleasing to have it published in Scotland.' (letter, 19 September 1981) I didn't actually write to EUP until April the following year. Vivian Bone, for EUP, replied that they were unable to offer publication for the bibliography as they were not really doing any more on the poetry front, but hoped I might find a small poetry publisher: 'best wishes with it anyway.' When the bibliography was eventually published in 1990 (modified to 'Edwin Morgan: A Checklist') as Chapter Twelve of *About Edwin Morgan*, edited by Robert Crawford and myself and published by EUP, Vivian Bone laughingly accused me of getting it in by the back door.

There was the occasional creative result of my visits to EM's flat. Inspired by the view of the Anniesland gasometer from his kitchen window (immortalised by EM himself in 'Gasometer', *Cathures*, 2002), I wrote a poem, 'Gasometer Follies' and sent it to him. He thanked me, praised some of the lines and gently wondered 'if the last two lines need some kind of sharpening or tightening up?' Which of course they did. With his response he enclosed a couple of souvenirs of his recent trip to Israel, one of them being his Masada cable car ticket: it 'may be unimpressive, but the trip itself is spectacular.' This set a pattern – I became the happy recipient of all sorts of EM ephemera – posters, fliers, invitations, name tags – an unofficial archivist, or at least a proxy hoarder! ('kicking the cumber/ into others' vaults' as he wrote in the poem 'To the Librarians') A note with a poster says, 'The enclosed, for your collection, is where I was last night. Jimmy Reid was in the same dressing-room. While waiting for his time to go on stage, he sat at the table eating a banana and writing an article on the Polish crisis which he then had to phone through to a newspaper. There's something extremely engaging about him – Scotland's powerless Lech Walesa.' (Christmas card 1981). And I was able to repay a little of his hospitality by having him over for a meal in the new year.

On the 8th of May 1982 EM sent me a postcard suggesting I 'might be bibliographically interested to hear that George Newson, the composer for whom I wrote VALENTINE, has just finished what he calls "a big piece" based on the text of a selection (which I chose for him) from THE NEW DIVAN.' I probably was interested, but I don't think the piece was performed (there were hopes of the BBC broadcasting it) and, for whatever

reason, it didn't make the final cut of the checklist (unlike *Valentine*, which did). He ended by saying he had enjoyed a display at the Mitchell Library of contemporary Scottish manuscripts: 'Keep collecting!'

I sent him a revised layout of the bibliography before I went on holiday later that month to Arran, where I received a letter: 'thanks for the latest bibliographical arrangement, which I shall brood over. Where would the STV film about me, or the 7 Poets video, fit in? Don't answer that: you're on holiday!' But being on holiday didn't stop the bibliomill grinding. I decided to produce my own Edwin Morgan publication to add to the A section (books by, translated by or edited by EM). So with a manual typewriter (Imperial 2000 portable), paper, scissors and stapler, I printed and bound three copies of an edition of EM's one word poems. These had appeared in Ian Hamilton Finlay's magazine *Poor.Old.Tired.Horse.* on 25 November 1967 but had never been collected in book form (and weren't, properly, until *Dreams and Other Nightmares*, 2010). I gave it the imprint Mariscat Press after the street where we lived in Pollokshields, Glasgow, and sent the first two copies of the tiny booklet to EM on 20 May. In EM's letter of thanks (26 May 1982) he described it as his 'parvum opus' and expressed a hope that it would be the first production of many. 'Will you do more copies of the one-words – distribute them? – sell them? – or stop at three?' (I stopped at three.) 'Actually Mariscat would be a fine mysterious name for a small private press.' I replied saying I liked the name and so the Mariscat Press was born, not as a private press (we never printed our books, though we did have a few items printed letterpress for us) but as the proverbial small press. In July I sent him a copy of the first proper Mariscat publication, translations by David Neilson into Glaswegian of poems by the Roman poet Catullus. He replied 'Vivat Mariscat.' We were soon publishing EM himself: firstly a hand-printed card of his poem 'Grendel', then the following year a real book, *Grafts/Takes*. We gradually became his de facto Scottish publisher, bringing out pamphlets and books between his main collections from Carcanet, continuing until his last book before his death, the aforesaid *Dreams and Other Nightmares*.

As I mentioned above, I had tracked down the poems and stories EM had published in the *High School of Glasgow Magazine*, but I never did manage to get hold of any copies of the school magazine of Rutherglen Academy (now Stonelaw High School) which EM attended (and hated) from 1928 to 1934 before Glasgow High School. However, in a letter (17 September

1982) he sent me the text of one he had remembered ('at least I think I have') which was in French – and here it is:

Oui monsieur,
C'est le café –
Noir comme le diable
Et chaud comme l'infer.

He commented: 'The fact that I thought "café" rhymes with "enfer" shows the poem comes from my first year of learning French!' – probably 1932/33, making this his earliest recorded poem. He continued, 'Being determined to keep you busy, I have just finished a new sequence of 26 poems called AN ALPHABET OF GODDESSES.' And keep me busy he did, until the bibliography was published in 1990.

After the first flurry of bibliographical enthusiasm from 1980 to 1982 things settled down to a more regular routine of collecting material and exchanging information. EM had retired from the English Department at Glasgow University in 1980 and thrown himself into the life freelance: the number of readings and talks, the number of commissions, the amount of time for writing – all increased, with the consequent increase of appearances in print – and indeed, of ephemera flying around, all requiring recording. The arrangement of the bibliography (or checklist, as it was more properly called – the full descriptive bibliography would have to wait, although a fair amount of information was included in the checklist) was more or less agreed:

A Books, etc. by, translated by or edited by EM
B Books containing contributions by or co-edited by EM
C Contributions to periodicals and the press
D Interviews
E Ephemera
F Odds and Ends
G Manuscripts
H Recordings
I Musical settings
J Critical and biographical works about EM

Publication of the checklist of course didn't mean the end of bibliographing. I continued to collect and note material over the years with EM's help. (Love, Eddie. Love, Hamish.) There was always the intention of bringing out a supplement – it's a major regret that it never happened before he died. At the time of writing discussion is ongoing with the Scottish Poetry Library to put the checklist and a supplement online. Almost all of my Edwin Morgan collection is now housed in the SPL, splendidly organized and catalogued as their Edwin Morgan Archive. I add to it as and when I can. I still have a cache of cuttings, magazines, etc. to record, but ultimately everything will be absorbed by the Archive and become I hope a useful source for those who, as I said in my original introduction to the checklist, are determined to pursue Morgan's whittrick to its many and various bolt-holes. As Iain Sinclair put it in a recent review of a book about David Gascoyne, 'bibliography offers as powerful a storyline as biography.' (*Guardian Review*, 31 March 2012)

Here are a few examples to show how EM kept a self-interested eye on the ever-expanding list of Morganiana, sometimes giving a little nudge to the storyline. In 1984 I was checking out EM's contributions to the *Glasgow University Magazine* and came across a poem 'To Sandra' in the issue of 3 May 1939. I must have asked him 'Who is Sandra? What is she?' 'You're digging me up!' he complained, but good-humouredly. (The poem begins 'I am that city, granite of your tears' and is in fact a riposte to an earlier poem in *GUM*, 'This Sombre Evening' by 'Sandra', which begins 'Over the city pallid night is drawn'.) EM often liked to be mischievously mysterious, as in his continued refusal to reveal where the original location of 'In the Snack-Bar' was. In 1990 he sent me a copy of a poem about his visit to Charterhouse School written by one of the housemasters, 'For your entertainment, if not for the bibliography.' (30 September 1990). And on the 6th of December that year he wrote: 'Did you know that TAG Theatre Company are going to choreograph me (well, my work)? Do you have a bibliographical category for "Poems Danced"? Nonny no, probably.' À propos of this, after the performance the next year, EM sent me a review which referred to his poem 'Memories of Edith'. 'A hitherto suppressed chapter –?' he pseudo-tantalized. He loved this kind of misprint (but had a hawk's eye for them in his own published work) – such as the reference that cropped up every now and then to Edwina Morgan.

Things in a way came full circle, when the scholar Greg Thomas in

quest of material for his article on the Scottish Poetry Library's Edwin Morgan Archive visited me and I let him look through my correspondence files – while I prowled or pottered through the house looking for things to do. I made sure he had a mug of coffee and a plate piled with chocolate digestives. I hope EM would have appreciated the turn – and the sustenance provided.

In revisiting the bibliography I've been surprised by things I'd forgotten and by how many items were not included in the published listings (the latter probably for reasons of space – that's my excuse). Looking through the letters, postcards (we both had a postcard mania), notes, ephemera and all the rest, one realises that one didn't know what a treasury was being built up – someone unfolding their life to you bit by bit of paper – I suppose one doesn't at the time – but it's a wonderful legacy of a literary life and a dear friendship.

Edinburgh

ROBYN MARSACK

Publishing Edwin Morgan

Wi' the Haill Voice, Edwin Morgan's translation of twenty-five poems by Vladimir Mayakovsky, was the first of his collections to find their place in Carcanet's richly international list. Of the seventeen titles published by Carcanet from Pin Farm in 1972, five were translations (Celan, Gorbanevskaya, Hikmet and Pessoa were the others), and undoubtedly this suited Morgan's always internationalist outlook. It also gave the translation into Scots a linguistic equality that it would not have had if published by a Scottish press, where it would have been received as a statement. Writing from Dublin, Morgan reported:

> I have now sold 10 of the 22 [Mayakovskys] you sent, and will send you a cheque for these when I return to Glasgow on the 25th. I must also, when I get back, quote you some favourable comments received in letters, from Hugh MacDiarmid, Robert Garioch, and a Russian lecturer at Edinburgh U. Did you know there is going to be established a Scots Language Society (possibly à la Welsh Language Society)? I've been invited to their first meeting in June and this might be the occasion for selling some MacKovskies. (23 February 1972)[1]

This is characteristic of Morgan's correspondence with his publisher, Michael Schmidt: careful financial accounting, a keen eye on sales, word play.

Morgan is typical of his generation of Scottish poets in not having a single, steadfast publisher from the beginning of his career. Gradually, however, he developed such relationships. Morgan's British publisher became Carcanet Press, based in Oxfordshire when Morgan joined the list in 1972, then in Manchester; his Scottish one was eventually Mariscat, founded by Hamish Whyte in 1982, and based in Glasgow.

In his turn, Morgan's presence on Carcanet's list gradually drew other

Scottish poets to it, and enabled Schmidt to attract senior poets with chequered publishing histories. Robert Garioch's anthology of fourteen poets, *Made in Scotland*, appeared in 1974, and Maurice Lindsay's *Modern Scottish Poetry: an anthology of the Scottish Renaissance 1925-1975* in 1976; a paperback of Robert Garioch's *Collected Poems* in 1980; Iain Crichton Smith joined in 1984 with *The Exiles*, and Frank Kuppner the same year with *A Bad Day for the Sung Dynasty*, his first collection. Later came Sorley MacLean, and a huge edition of Hugh MacDiarmid's works, then a clutch of younger poets who were greatly influenced in their different ways by Morgan's example: David Kinloch, Richard Price, Peter McCarey.

The course of the poet-publisher relationship has been well charted by James McGonigal in his biography *Beyond the Last Dragon*. Schmidt and Morgan were in some ways an unlikely combination, yet a winning pair: Morgan's steady sales helped a small, independent publishing house remain viable. The company they are keeping is very much a part of what attracts poets to a list, and at Carcanet the choice of company was and remains a wide one. It was also the personality of the firm's founding director that kept Morgan engaged – even when there was an ideological distance between them. Very early in their exchange of letters, while discussing the contents of a volume of Morgan's essays, the poet remarks that 'The Fold-In Conference'

> probably would stand out too much by itself. You don't say whether you reject it for that reason, or because it is dedicated to William Burroughs, or because it is an example of Experimental Writing (which I gather you cannot be doing with in your present but I trust temporary Neo-Reactionary Poetry-Nation phase!)? (I am, as I'm sure you must have suspected, deeply suspicious of the aims of POETRY NATION.) (8 January 1974)

In his reply, Schmidt stated that he 'was happy at LAST to have extracted from you the PN tooth, which has doubtless been aching you as much as me.' They were arguing over the magazine Schmidt co-edited with C. B. Cox, first issued in 1973 as a 'provincial podium for non-provincial poets'. Professor Cox had arranged for Schmidt to join the Department of English at the University of Manchester, thus rescuing Carcanet; he was co-editor of the journal of English studies *Critical Quarterly*, and notoriously co-editor of the 'Black Papers' on education, first published in 1969 as 'an attack on the

excesses of progressive education and the introduction by the Labour Party of a system of 11-18 comprehensives to replace the grammar school'.[2]

Schmidt writes about his new magazine *Poetry Nation:*

> I am in no way averse to experimental writing. I admire serious experiment like Hill's Mercian Hymns, and Jones' Anathemata, and Carlos Williams . . . I think the drift of POETRY NATION expresses my most profound taste, however, and that is main-stream . . .
>
> It seems fair – to me – that there should be at least ONE poetry magazine consistently and intelligently (I hope) publishing a kind of poetry now unfortunately unmodish, but to my mind central and important. Durable – that other ugly word, but I am foreign and old-fashioned. Surely one is not to be left out in the cold by so catholic a reader as Morgan if one tries to assert and apply standards not entirely congenial to that gentleman? . . . If I may be frank, I don't see what you are objecting to about PN – unless it's my fellow-editor [C. B. Cox] – or unless you are an aficionado of rant and cant! (10 February 1974)

Morgan wrote on 23 June:

> [Parenthesis about PN. I am still unhappy about PN, and I am unhappy about being unhappy about it too, though that doesn't help very much. As you suggest, it isn't just the title, which is a small thing. It is the whole trend and motive of the magazine, which I cannot but associate with the ideas of your co-editor, and these ideas – I am thinking of course of the Black Papers – are deeply repugnant to me. . . . At the moment PN seems to be part of a campaign that I just can't go along with. Perhaps I will get out of these feelings or perhaps PN will change. Let's forget this paragraph. Put a square bracket round it all and hope for better days.]

A week later, Morgan wrote to assure Schmidt that 'Our dialogue will continue anyway', and to defend his sending poems to Ian Hamilton's *New Review*, by which Schmidt had been distressed.

> Unfortunately – to curve your argument back – I doubt if TNR will be ragbag-bold enough: I can think of a number of subjects and authors that I would be happily surprised to find in its pages:

> but at least it has not slammed its gates, manifesto-wise, as PN has (but not Carcanet), against such subjects and authors. (See Cox, CQ, Summer 1973.) But – a but again! – we shall no doubt both go on with internal mullings and communings – nothing is final – Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté, but not here yet, said the man. (29 June 1974)

Eight years and four books later, the bond between the two men had not broken over politics. I began work at Carcanet in the summer of 1982, understudying the sales and marketing manager, Helen Lefroy. *Poems of Thirty Years* was thus my stout introduction to Morgan's work, in its swirling blue and green cover – very expensive to send out for review, but we delivered on foot where we could. Helen was a determined recycler before it was fashionable and luckily Doughty Street, where she was based, offered quantities of discarded cardboard and string with which we could package up review copies.

'Handsome book, sir! The individual copy and the batch of six have both arrived. Does the colour represent both the sea and the depths of space?' Morgan wrote on 9 August 1982. It must be said that the paper quality was not up to Carcanet's later standards, and has yellowed badly. There were misprints too, of course, and Morgan always noted them – he was probably the best proof-reader of any poet I encountered at Carcanet. All the same, Schmidt promised to send a copy to the formidable Laura Riding, whom Morgan had picked out five years previously as 'one of the most difficult of modern writers in both verse and prose, but there is undeniably something impressive there . . .', urging him to 'become (pioneeringly) interested' in the poet.[3]

In 1982 Carcanet had not long moved offices in the Corn Exchange in central Manchester, and Morgan asks: 'Are your new premises more splendid than the old? I imagine the Corn Exchange as having a mysterious hierarchy of rooms, topped off with the residence of the Corn King (or Corn Queen) him/herself.' Perhaps with a view to the royalty cheque yet to come, he reported treating himself 'to volume 3 of the OED supplement. It is organogenous, panmictic, quanking, retrodictable and saucerian.'

By 1984 Schmidt was planning a series of selected poems of the most distinguished poets on the list: 'I mean to get them to a much wider audience than we have been able to do hitherto' (15 April 1984). This was the begin-

ning of an experiment to make Carcanet paperbacks recognisable as a publishing brand. While the foreign fiction was blocked in blue and yellow, and the English-language fiction in red and yellow, the selecteds were each red with a different design within a circle: Morgan's had Glasgow cranes, and perhaps looked slightly Russian. It remained a steady seller for years, but he may have been glad when the later selected came out in the more elegant image and grid design that Carcanet has since maintained. The first *Selected Poems* came out from Carcanet just in time for Morgan's 65th birthday, in 1985.

Meanwhile the relationship with Mariscat fructified. Mariscat published *Grafts/Takes* in 1983, the *Grafts* based on fragments of poems that Schmidt had abandoned; *Sonnets from Scotland* in 1984, and *From the Video Box* in 1986. Carcanet caught up with *Themes on a Variation* in 1988, launched with a reading at the People's Palace. I was living in Glasgow by then, and on a February visit to Morgan's Whittinghame Court flat he kindly gave me copies of the Mariscat publications and also of the *Newspoems* published by wacy! the previous year, signed 'with best Wacy! wishes'.

The *Newspoems* were published as a stapled pamphlet and included Morgan's note to the publisher about them, along with a list of other wacy! productions (there were six before Morgan's, including Bob Cobbing's *Portrayed*) and a special note from the publisher:

> It's about time somebody actually sent me some money for these damn wacy! books – I can't afford to send them out for free for ever you know.
>
> Send me as much money as you can, I will send you wacy! books till your money runs out.

Priced at 50p, the pink and white pages were stapled in a random order: in my copy (which seems to be number 1 of 58), the title page appears about two-thirds of the way through. The poems are 'inventions' made from headlines and extracts from newspapers and other ephemeral material, and in this production, they have titles written in Morgan's distinctive capitals, and sometimes the year of composition accompanied by his almost Japanese initial-gram: three short horizontal strokes next to three verticals.

It was hard to reproduce this collaged, underground, ephemeral quality in *Themes on a Variation*, where they form the second section of a collection

that includes 'Sonnets from Scotland'. I recall photocopying the individual pages as darkly as I could (the original print was very variable), and cutting them out to exclude the title and date, which were then typeset and the photocopies pasted into the spaces left for them on the camera-ready copy. The effect is bold but, even with the occasional speckled effect, inevitably constrained in a way that the original whacky production was not.

Morgan took great interest in the appearance of his publications. He canvassed with Schmidt the possibility of having his scrapbooks – fat volumes of 'autobiography, documentary, and art' – published, but the cost would have been prohibitive and the market uncertain. Later there was a protracted correspondence about the colour poems, but that proposal, too, foundered on cost.

The collection Morgan was pushing for, though, was a volume of his translations: 'Philip Hobsbaum and others have urged, why don't I bring out a COLLECTED TRANSLATIONS? Is there any chance of this, either for 1990 or for your later suggested series of WORKS . . .? It would be a good deal bigger than RITES OF PASSAGE . . . I think it could be a good book' (21 January 1989).

Schmidt replied five days later that the idea was 'a daunting one: would it not be almost as long as the "Collected Poems"?' He wondered whether it might be better as say three smaller volumes than a single, large one. 'I certainly think the translations should be monumentalised in some form; the question is, what would be the best form?' The question was left unanswered.

That year, 1989, saw the publication of a selection of *Letters to an Editor*. It celebrated twenty years of Schmidt's editing, from the earliest days at Pin Farm where there was no telephone and he lay in bed, 'opening submission after submission of poems by people from distant lands.' Morgan had written: 'opening letters in bed is surely le highlife in South Hinksey. It makes me think of Noel Coward for some reason. There must be some scene where the central character does this. A dressing-gown with quilted lapels is necessary' (20 September 1972). He was quite willing to give permission for a few of his own letters to be included, and remarked that 'People up here are assembling a sort of surrogate autobiography for me for 1990 (interviews, statements, true confessions, etc.), so I am in for a time of exposure in any case.' Schmidt suggested that he might visit Glasgow and chew over some projects: 'perhaps it is time I came North to visit you, Frank

Kuppner, Robyn and other points North.' The poet replied: 'Morgan, Kuppner and Marsack sounds like a firm with far-flung connections' (20 June 1989).

The plans for the new *Collected Poems* to mark Morgan's 70th birthday progressed, and there was also his substantial volume of essays on Scottish Literature, *Crossing the Border*. Schmidt wrote:

> It makes me so grateful to Mayakovsky to think how he played cupid to our long, sometimes turbulent but generally (as I see it) happy relationship, politics apart. May we have three more decades of it, by which time I will be able to send you books honouring me on my seventieth with covers saying things like: I Belang to Glasga, which in many ways I do, thanks to you! (30 May 1990)

It was a kind of *annus mirabilis* for Morgan, with these two big books published in 1990, and the two important collections *About Edwin Morgan*, edited by Robert Crawford and Hamish Whyte (EUP) and *Nothing Not Giving Messages*, edited by Whyte (Polygon). In June 1990, Morgan wrote to Schmidt a propos of the interview with Christopher Whyte, in which he officially came out as a gay man:

> Yes, I wondered about the interview too. It was in fact not done for publication, but only for the record, as a piece of true but submerged history. Once it was transcribed, we both thought it read well, and decided to lay it on Hamish Whyte's lap to see if he considered it worth including. He did, and the thing just rolled along from there. Whatever the reception, I feel it was worth doing. A time for everything under the sun!

A month later, he received a royalty cheque from Carcanet for the existing works in print: 'Thank you for this very agreeable surprise of a mid-year cheque. It will come in very apropos as my ancient Morphy-Richardson fridge has broken down irreparably and I must buy a new one asap before I am invaded by microorganisms'(30 July 1990). Schmidt replied (I am struck by the promptness of the exchanges, in this pre-email era, and wonder whether it was because both writers enjoyed their communication):

> The Poemproofs should be with you tomorrow, but won't. They will reach you Wednesday, God and Bryan Williamson willing. Your copiousness is taxing this typesetter, who all the same preserves a passionate respect for your oeuvre.
>
> We are getting some prepaid orders in. When people buy both books it's £50.00, not to be estornudado at. Buy a big fridge and a freezer, too. We will grow rich by the autumn. (6 August 1990)

Hamish Whyte remarks in his Editor's Note to *Messages* that Morgan 'followed the project closely as it has grown. He has corrected many a slip of tongue and pen . . .'; this close attention was also evident in his proofreading the Carcanet volumes. Even in the wacy! edition, I notice that he has hand-corrected a misprint in the copy he gave me, and in the Edwin Morgan Archive in the Scottish Poetry Library, there are numerous examples of corrections to printed work in Morgan's hand. Other authors might be annoyed but not bother once the work was in the public realm: not so Morgan, who was both annoyed and took the opportunity to correct finished copies as he could. Of course at this period, we are speaking of typesetting from scratch a volume of 600 pages, which Bryan Williamson managed single-handedly with remarkable accuracy. Faxing a request on 15 August 1990 for a page spread from the *Collected Poems*, Morgan writes: 'I really would like to correct this as it contains some slightly unorthodox presentation. Could you possibly send me a copy? I am into the last stretch of the proofreading. My eyes are popping like the late James Baldwin's.'

Before he could return to the matter of collecting his translations, a play intervened: Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Morgan translated this for Communicado in about three months, and it was premiered at Eden Court in August 1992, then moved to the Traverse for the Edinburgh International Festival. It was an 'enormous popular success . . . [it has] a punch and vigour that more po-faced versions lack', the *Observer* critic wrote. The director, Gerry Mulgrew, wanted to take it to the Tron in Glasgow for the winter season, and Morgan wanted it available in published form. Schmidt declined: 'we have been singularly unsuccessful with most of our drama texts'.

Morgan pressed on, sending on a Communicado fax about winning 'the first Edinburgh Fringe First' and a sheaf of positive reviews, with a note: 'you still don't want to publish my CYRANO? Where is your business nose?' (24 August 1992) Schmidt wrote on 26 August:

> Congratulations! Robyn was telling me what a massive success *Cyrano* has become. We have published play scripts in the past, before a production, on three occasions: Wyndham Lewis's E*nemy of the Stars*, Peguy's *The Mystery . . . Arc* and Schnitzler's *Plays*. . . . Some copies sold, but the marketing of theatre works is something we did not master. Methuen and Faber can do it; clearly Random Century can't because they've just fired their drama list.
>
> On the other hand, *Cyrano* is by Edwin Morgan, and Carcanet is Edwin Morgan's publisher. If we were to publish it, we would have a hell of a time squeezing it in, *hors de cerise* (strawberry roan – or strawcherry roan) as it would be. Are you confident that we should plunge? If so, is it on disc? Could we *briskly* generate CRC and go to press with a production photo for the cover? Could we get it out in Dec/Jan?
>
> What are the play's touring plans? You see, I bend, though it is precisely my *business sense* which you try to seduce which tells me not to do it. It's my editorial sense which is wavering towards the precipice.

Morgan replied gratefully on 26 August:

> Many thanks for your wavering-towards the precipice fax. Obviously I cannot but acknowledge your bad experience with previous plays, and I don't know how one could guarantee that Cyrano would be different . . . I want to encourage you to do it, though clearly it is a business operation and has to be thought about in that way. . . . I do hope I am not leading you by the horns or nose of a dilemma up a garden path, but I don't think so.

It was not on disc, as Morgan continued to use a typewriter, and I knew that Bryan Williamson was fully occupied and could not suddenly slot a play text into his typesetting schedule. I had met an Edinburgh typesetter, William Howes, on another project, and turned to him to see whether he could manage the book. The Carcanet Archive has his letter of 28 August: 'Robyn Marsack has asked me to confirm in writing our quotation for setting Edwin Morgan's new play, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, for which I also enclose a trial page set in Adobe Garamond – a face roughly contemporaneous with the subject, and well-supplied with ligatures, swashes, small caps, etc.'

Schmidt wrote to Morgan the same day, capitulating with puns: 'I

enclose a draft contract which will I hope generally fit the William. It is on my word processor and can be adjusted to suit your needs, fears and hopes. Witness how, when a publisher falls over the precipice, he does so precipitately' (28 August 1992). On the 30th, Morgan returned it:

> Lightning contract duly received, and signed; seems all right. Robyn will now have the typescript with various corrections but I hope legible. I shall run up an introduction in the intervals of judging a poetry competition and putting together a MacDiarmid cassette for schools and thinking up thoughts for a MacDiarmid Literary Lunch (what do people do at a literary lunch – I've never been to one). . . .
>
> The millennium begins to tremble like a veil – to be pulled back –

By September everything was in fast forward, Schmidt writing:

> The contract received. All systems go-ish. We'll aim to get it out during October.
>
> I need from you asap a blurb for AI sheet/press release (we must make noise, we must make music, we must make waves!) and a collation of the glowingest prominent reviews from the national press – British national – as well as Scotch. Say five juicy, not long commendations which say how brilliant you are. Your Gucci rhyme is worthy of Byron's Euxine/pukes in in *Don Juan*.[4]
>
> Robyn and I worked out the catch-phrase (I almost wrote 'the *Cats* phrase' – I see you doing for us what old Possum done for Faber) so that anyone who comes within spitting distance of the text will have to pay us loads of dosh. We should aim to stage it at the National in Jan, then transfer to the Adelphi for 37 years. . . .
>
> (this book had better make our fortunes!) (3 September 1992)

There was no time for leisurely production. EM and I went to Edinburgh for a proof-reading session at William's place, and he provided a delicious lunch to help us along. It was a day I recall with great pleasure. I was very happy about the setting of the play, and the care William had taken with the fonts.[5] After publication, though, I received a typed list of fourteen assorted corrections, with a note at the foot from EM: 'After all our proof-reading! (It must have been that Edinburgh hospitality.)' When a

reprint was being suggested, Morgan sent Schmidt a corrected copy of the play, writing: 'you may remember that the first edition came out against the clock and the errors are I think the word is legion' (11 May 1999).

The Tron production was brilliant, and Schmidt admitted that '*Cyrano*, despite having been propelled into the book world without benefit of clergy, is doing ok so far' (29 November 1992). Shades of that first volume of Mayakovsky, which had no reviews but sold better than Schmidt had expected: 'It is an amazing grace that Mayakovsky without benefit of DJ should be climbing the charts to the 400 mark', Morgan had agreed (23 July 1972).

Morgan had moved on from *Cyrano*. When Penguin was reviving its selected poems list in 1992, a volume of Morgan's was mooted. He would have really liked the Penguin imprimatur and prepared a contents list; it was discussed often in letters with Schmidt, but with a change of editors at Penguin the proposal did not go through. It is interesting to speculate whether Morgan's reputation would have been greatly enhanced by a separate Penguin publication: it had certainly helped him in 1974, when the superb anthologist Geoffrey Summerfield included him in his Penguin collection *Worlds: Seven Modern Poets*, alongside Causley, Gunn, Heaney, Hughes, MacCaig and Adrian Mitchell.

> The Penguin news is not very propitious, is it? . . . I must say I had been looking forward to the Penguin selected, and I am after all a Penguin author from the past (as I was pleasantly reminded at a Penguin-sponsored reception in New Zealand in March). Do my three previous Penguin publications cut no ice at all? Well, apparently not, 'in the present climate'. Of the other publishers you mention, I am very much in your hands as to the best one to try. Minerva might marginally be the best bet, as their Les Murray (which I bought yesterday – attractive book) is pretty likely to sell well (more than Vintage's Sorley), thereby leaving a gap for Morgan. If it was a fairly substantial selection (say 200pp plus) it would follow on quite interestingly – two 'periphery' poets, from north-west and south-east of this distracted globe . . .
>
> I am pleased that CYRANO is conquering the recession. May he continue. Gascons unite, etc. (3 December 1992)

The next volume published by Carcanet was *Sweeping Out the Dark* in

1995, a mix of his own poems and translations, and Schmidt reverted to the idea of a volume of collected translations in a letter of 20 February 1995:

> I think the *Translations* are especially called for at a time of growing xenophobia. Indeed the present political climate is making me reconsider the whole question of translation (I had gone cold on it after poor sales for some time). It seems to me necessary to insist on the discipline and what it can bring us.

There was discussion during a visit to Glasgow, and Morgan gave a considered reply on 7 May:

> I have been taking a first look at the *Collected Translations* and making a rough estimate (enclosed) of page numbers. It is going to be fat but manageable, like the Watson anthology we saw at Robyn's. It is also going to be a terrific book, he added enthusiastically.
>
> My strong inclination is to non-pamper the reader, i.e. omit the Mayakovsky glossary, don't include foreign titles or transliterations, and don't give poets' dates (as we didn't in Rites of Passage); in other words, as clean and uncluttered a text as possible.
>
> I would like the batch of uncollected poems to be arranged not by language or by date, but alphabetically. I have tried this out, and it really sparkles, from Ady to Yevtushenko. Imagine sequences like Khlebnikov-Leopardi-Michaux, Verlaine-de Viau-Voznesensky! It would be a great pan-European mosaic (with Brazil and Chile as honorary Euro-members), and there would be juxtapositions inviting readers to think and feel in new ways.
>
> The 'clean' text I have in mind would be almost like a Collected Poems II.
>
> When I set my mind to giving you the promised list of poems (and I'm extremely grateful that you have someone in mind to deal with permissions), will you need more information than poet/poem/language? And is it only for poets who are still alive or who died after 1925?
>
> 'Courage, my boat! Tomorrow's hero boards you.' (Ady)

Replying on 9 June, Schmidt held out for a glossary and also poets' dates (at least in the contents list) – 'they should appear somewhere so that inter-

ested readers can pursue the poems to their sources.' I agreed with this approach, but Morgan protested:

> . . . Obviously you want a more conventional book than I had optimistically envisaged, and I really do think it is a pity if readers have to be spoonfed in this kind of way. All those fussy information-bytes take away from the poetry which is the raison d'être. Can I not at least persuade you to drop the idea of a glossary? (21 June 1995)

Schmidt sent a conciliatory reply on 26 June:

> . . . I do not want a conventional book but I do want one which, should the reader wish to pursue the poet you are translating beyond the boundaries of the book, or the poem you are translating beyond the boundaries of the book, can do so. We do not need bio-crits or anything of that kind but I do think the dates of the poets are important (again, they indicate something of the strategies you have adopted, without commentary) and the titles. You can of course persuade me to draw up [drop?] the idea of a glossary and, if you want, we can drop the original titles though I do think this will reduce the value of the book. But there it is, I want you to be happy and I want the book to be as you want it yourself.

The volume – over 500 pages – contains a list of translated poets at the end, with their dates, and the original titles of the poems are included. The Mayakovsky glossary was also retained, at the foot of the page so that the text is not cluttered. The translations are in the order of publication, but the uncollected poems are in alphabetical order of author, as Morgan suggested.

Publisher's and poet's energies were well-matched, but Schmidt had admitted to finding the combined jobs of lecturer and publisher difficult to accommodate in the changed landscape of university requirements. Morgan, pushing on with his version of the epic of Gilgamesh, was bracing:

> Yes, Gilgamesh is in verse! It's in English this time, in rhyming couplets (but not sounding at all like Tony Harrison), with quite a number of interspersed songs, and one character speaking Glaswegian prose. It is somewhat Brechtian, and wants a large cast. . . .
>
> Two full-time jobs and he's complaining? These days? I don't

> know. Ah well, armbands and braces. I know you can do it. And think how you might bring the two together. In 1997 you could have seminars on Gilgamesh, copies readily available in paperback. 'Yes, actually, I know the author quite well. He once said the play is "somewhat Brechtian" – would you all agree?' (24 October 1995)

While the *Collected Translations* was being assembled, and the slow business of obtaining permissions pursued, Carcanet's offices in the Corn Exchange took the full brunt of the IRA bomb that exploded in central Manchester on 15 June 1996. A cease-fire had been broken in February, with a bomb in London's Docklands followed by five other devices planted in London, and this Manchester bomb was the second largest on the mainland, injuring 200 people, mostly from flying glass. Unusually, Schmidt was not in the office that Saturday morning, and the *Observer* reported his showing 'a laconic sort of Dunkirk spirit. "We have had crises before," he says. "This certainly is a change from cash-flow problems." '

> At first only rain, television cameras and pigeons got in. When Schmidt saw his office again, the wreck of 21 years lay under suffocating dust and pigeon droppings, books wet, letters buried. . . . In August he was allowed to take away salvage.[6]

Among the many things lost were contracts, and Schmidt sent out letters to authors to ask for copies of useful documents. Morgan promptly supplied his, with a sympathetic note. By 7 September he could write, with a combination of mild irritation and affection:

> Sitting on my balcony this very hot sunny day and watching the bees penetrate my nasturtiums, I thank you for your letter of the 5th and confirm that yes indeed I now have that sheaf or thrave of proofs I shall thread my way through with as urgent a diligence as I can muster. I think, however, you must have a certain post-traumatic dislocation still, in sending the CT contract for a second time! . . .
>
> Life is short and proofs are long. To work, to work!

And by November the book was ready, with its intriguing antique map on the cover: 'Thank you for the six copies of Collected Translations which arrived today. The cover is excellent and Stephen Raw has worked the trick

again. We now have the sky (Poems) and the earth (Translations), so the third Collected (Essays?) ought to be marine, don't you think?' (2 December 1996)

In December, Schmidt wrote to say how sorry he was to hear of Sorley MacLean's death: 'Part of your next contract is the "condition of immortality" which I intend to impose on all my authors in future: they are not permitted to die before I do' (9 December 1996). Morgan wrote back, pressing the claim for his next volume, *Virtual and other realities*:

> I do quite understand your problems about congestion on the assembly line, and I certainly don't want to add to them. But thinking – as you remind me – of the recent dark procession of Norman [MacCaig] – George [Mackay Brown] – Sorley – and the gaunt Predator peering closely at Scotland – I feel some preference for 1997 publication rather than 1998 stealing over me! . . .
>
> I like your 'condition of immortality' clause for contracts. Perhaps powers of attorney conditions would have to be inserted for any struldbrugs found incapable of signing. But we shall do our best, sir. Mens sana in corpore sano. Vorwärts. Excelsior. (13 December 1996)

Not only was he preparing that collection, he soon said that he would be happy to select poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins for the big anthology of out-of-copyright poetry that Schmidt was editing for a Carcanet/Waterstone's publication, *Poets on Poets*, published for National Poetry Day in October 1997: 'Ever since I first opened the Faber Book of Modern Verse, circa 1937, and saw The Wreck of the Deutschland going up like a rocket on the opening page (or like the mother of distress flares), he has been one of the talismans' (31 December 1996).

Schmidt called on a wide constituency of poets to make selections, but at the last minute his Shakespearian contributor let him down, and he faxed Morgan for help.

> Your fax was waiting for me when I got back by plane from Southampton this evening. It is a pity I missed the chance to ask the Earl of Southampton if he had any helpful insights to pass to me. I hope I can manage to do the Shakespeare selection for you, but it will be a *rush job* . . . Fortunately I know my sonnets and turtles fairly well

> and shall plunge into the pages tomorrow. I refuse to make any pun about saving your Bacon. (8 June 1997)

On 21 July Morgan was writing to thank Schmidt for the Carcanet catalogue for September 1997-August 1998, which included *Poets on Poets* and *Virtual and other realities* (scheduled for November 1997) amongst its 69 titles – a huge list for a small publisher, especially considering the upheavals of 1996: 'A catalogue that requires a spine! – that's really something. And congratulations on the list. I think you are right about the growth-after-catastrophe (Krakacatastrophe) phenomenon – it's like statistically more males being born after a great war – nature at her mighty works.'

Morgan, too, was at his mighty works, translating *Phaedra* and moving towards a series of plays for the millennium. The Edinburgh Book Festival had asked him to say a few words at the launch of its programme, and he did, 'briefly outlining what I meant by "Scotland and the World" (i.e. not Scotland and Europe, that's not enough!).' The first Scottish parliamentary election in 300 years took place in May 1999, and in answer to Schmidt's post-election adjuration – 'I hope you are feeling very National!' – Morgan continues: 'I am feeling half national. We've got our parliament, but it is still tied by a fraying umbilical to Westminster. Perhaps the next storm will tug it free' (11 May 1999).

The next storm, though, was personal: on 16 July 1999 Morgan wrote, 'My dear Michael' (the 'My' was uncharacteristic) 'A piece of bad news. Over the past couple of months I've been having all sorts of medical tests, which have now resulted in the diagnosis of prostate cancer.' Schmidt replied saying that his father had also suffered from this aged 70-something, and had been successfully treated.

> You must have the best treatment and I am ignorant of how the system works. Were you in any difficulties you would, I hope, tell me as not only your publisher but an old friend too.
>
> We have the new *Selected* in the catalogue, along with the Racine. I am sure we will want to do your *Beowulf*. We just want to watch the Heaney hit the stands, flare and fade. Yours is exceptionally readable. (23 July 1999)

By September, the undaunted Morgan was suggesting a change of plan:

> As regards your slotting scenario: could you postpone Beowulf till 2001, and put Jesus in the millennium year? I'd very much like it to be available for the production in December 2000, and the plays are devised very much as a millennium event. I hope this will be possible. (Beowulf, like King Arthur, can wait; he will come again in his good time!) (11 September 1999)

The three of us met on 11 November, at Rogano's (Schmidt: 'I have a passion for Rogano's!'). There is a postcard from Morgan in the archive, dated the same day:

> Thank you for a maist scrumptious lunch. It was good to see you and Robyn. I enclose a HERALD article which will keep you au fait with the Laureateship I mentioned! You'll have to add it to my biography. I'll let you know what adventures I meet, now that I have 'embarked on my epic journey' –

He closed the year as Poet Laureate of Glasgow.

The next year I had left Carcanet editing behind to join the Scottish Poetry Library; Michael Schmidt was soon to be made Professor of Poetry at Glasgow University; while Morgan still had five publications to come from Carcanet Press. In 2000, he sent a poem for inclusion in the Carcanet *Commonplace Book* to celebrate thirty years of publishing, playful as ever, riffing on Michael's Mexican birthplace:

> I ought to write this in Nahuatl
> And shake my feathered Aztec rattle
> To celebrate our Mex-man's trek
> Through Hinksey, Cheadle, and the wreck
> Of a bombed office in wet Man-
> chester, maturing his long plan
> Of luring words like flocks of birds
> To settle bookwards, readerwards,
> And oh – why not – eternitywards![7]

With gratitude, Schmidt replied: 'We will certainly toast you on the occasion because without you it is unlikely that we should have gone so far for so long.'

Notes

1 All the letters quoted in this essay are from the Carcanet Archive in the John Rylands University Library, and are reproduced by courtesy of the University Librarian and Director, The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester, and by kind permission of Michael Schmidt and the Estate of Edwin Morgan. I am very grateful to Fran Baker, Archivist, and to Eleanor Crawforth of Carcanet Press for their assistance. Ms Crawforth is editing a volume of letters to and from Michael Schmidt, including a selection of Morgan's, to be published by Carcanet in 2013.

2 Obituary of Brian Cox by Michael Schmidt: 'So successful did the first Black Paper prove that four more were published . . . Cox conceded that there had been errors: "I think that the Black Papers did harm to the status of the teaching profession." He lamented the way in which an essentially liberal programme was appropriated by the right. His later efforts as an educationist entailed repairing this damage while defending the principles of the campaign.' *The Guardian*, 28 April 2008.

3 Letter from EM, 13 March 1977. Carcanet indeed did become Laura (Riding) Jackson's UK publisher, beginning with a new edition of her 1938 collection, *The Poems of Laura Riding*, in 1980.

4 In Cyrano's bravura speech describing his nose, he says: '*Gracious*: "Ye're a right Saint Francis, ye wheedle / The burds o the air tae wrap their gentle tootsies / Roon yer perch and rest their weary Guccis!"': *Edmond Rostand's* Cyrano de Bergerac*, a new verse translation* by Edwin Morgan (Manchester: Carcanet, 1992), p.24.

5 Justin William Howes left Edinburgh a couple of years later, and pursued a parallel career in practical typesetting and typographical research. He was an outstanding and generous scholar, and a great loss to the art, dying of a heart attack aged only 41.

6 From a review of Radio 4's 'Dear Diary'series, featuring Michael Schmidt's account of the bomb's effect on Carcanet: Gillian Reynolds, 'Picking up the pieces', *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 December 1996.

7 *A Commonplace Book: Carcanet 1970-2000* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2000), p.41.

Scottish Poetry Library, Edinburgh

GREG THOMAS

From Edinburgh to Saturn: The Edwin Morgan Archive at the Scottish Poetry Library

The Scottish Poetry Library's Edwin Morgan Archive is, at one level, a testimony to Morgan's friendship and collaboration with Hamish Whyte. As the editor of Mariscat Press, Whyte was also one of Morgan's publishers, but it is his meticulous documentation of Morgan's creative life over three decades to which this collection attests. Morgan first came to Whyte's attention in the 1960s, when Whyte was a Classics undergraduate at Glasgow University, Morgan a guest lecturer on Aristophenes at The Alexandrian Society, the university classics society.[1] By the mid-1970s Whyte, by then trained in librarianship, was collecting and collating Morgan's work, his interest piqued further upon discovering Morgan's poem 'The Fifth Gospel', and his 1968 collection *The Second Life*. But he only contacted Morgan personally in July 1977, to ask him to contribute to *Noise and Smoky Breath*, the anthology of Glaswegian poetry, art, and photography which he was then compiling. In 1980, while planning an exhibition for Morgan's sixtieth birthday at the Mitchell Library, Whyte decided to consolidate his bibliographic work into a large checklist, published that April to coincide with the exhibition. He wrote to Morgan again, asking for some factual pointers, and from that point on effectively became his bibliographer, the two corresponding increasingly regularly. It was through Whyte's compilation of this checklist, and the expanded one included in *About Edwin Morgan* (1990), that he really began to collate the material that comprises the Edwin Morgan Archive, although the process ultimately continued well beyond 1990.[2] The library bought the collection from Whyte in the late 2000s – it had previously colonised a large stretch of shelf-space in his flat – and it was divided into books, periodicals, audio and video files, ephemera, broadsides and posters, and personal artefacts, essentially the same cataloguing system used for Whyte's earlier checklists.

One exception to that acquisition process concerns the books from Morgan's office at the University of Glasgow which now fill one section of

the archive, which Morgan sold to a Glasgow bookshop on retiring in 1980, Whyte buying back as many as he could find. Many were used for teaching, and they perhaps reflect Morgan's students' interests as much as his own. Another is the accrual of personal artefacts, many of which the poet donated to the library himself after moving from the Anniesland flat he had lived in for four decades into a nearby nursing home in October 2003. For some time, Whyte would also 'pick up and keep almost anything' related to Morgan, for which reason this section contains such oddities as a Strathclyde Transport Zonecard and, more poignantly, a hospital wristband (personal interview).

The archive opened in April 2009, on Morgan's eighty-ninth birthday. He attended the opening ceremony in a t-shirt emblazoned with a print of a Tunnocks Caramel Wafer bearing the slogan 'Glasgow', a more loaded gesture of civic allegiance, Whyte suggests, than many people realised. Morgan would have preferred the archive to have been in his home city, although he was certainly pleased that it was housed in a public rather than academic library. It seems to have been important to Morgan that his work be stored in publically accessible institutions – the other large Morgan archive is at the Mitchell Library, Glasgow – reflecting an egalitarian streak equally evident from the contents of the archive itself.

So what does the archive tell us about Morgan? In biographical terms, perhaps less than his collected correspondences at Glasgow University. This said, some of those personal effects might bear for some a kind of talismanic residue of character, most obviously the sleek, curved 1960s teak desk which Morgan purchased from Lewis's Department Store in 1962, a consciously modern furnishing for the modern high-rise he had just moved into. It was placed in the study, where ironically, it remained unused for poetry. Morgan preferred to write in his dining room, Whyte notes with its two large windows facing south and west, and views of Bingham Pond, Great Western Road, and the Kilpatrick Hills made famous in 'Strawberries'. Perhaps a false idol, then, but an undeniably seductive one.

As a whole, the archive perhaps evidences something more concrete about Morgan's character. That is, although Whyte sourced large amounts of material himself, Morgan became increasingly instrumental to the acquisition process, sending him copies of most new publications, and documentation of other projects, over several decades, often with dates and annotations

on accompanying postcards now indexed alongside them. This assistance, Whyte states, reflects an instinctively fastidious brain, and an interest in the dilemmas of bibliographic process, as did the filing system in operation in Morgan's flat: Scottish literature in the hall, gay literature and science fiction in the study, Americans and Russians in the spare room, periodicals in his bedroom bookcase. This zeal for preservation might seem surprising given that 'Morgan likes to present himself', as Robert Crawford has noted, 'as a poet of the new'. But, as that article adds, 'a strong archival sense' also permeates his poetry, though 'his science-fictioning may empoweringly conceal this'.[3] A meander through the archive's collection of print and audio interviews, many not included in the 1990 source-book *Nothing Not Giving Messages: Reflections on Life and Work*, complements such speculations of personality, as do those brief but sprightly postcard messages to Whyte.[4] But the archive's primary value is as a marker of Morgan's authorial character: an index of the creative projects he was involved with between the late-1930s and his death in 2010, encompassing, besides numerous flyers, invitations to readings, plays, conferences, seminars and birthdays, publishers' catalogues, press releases, and other tantalising ephemera, an extensive haul of creative and critical writing.

As a portfolio of creative work, the archive has three valuable features. Firstly, it contains almost all of those rarer collections – *The Vision of Cathkin Braes, The Cape of Good Hope, Starryveldt*, *Emergent Poems, Newspoems* – whose constituent poems are generally encountered, if at all, in one of Morgan's later selected or collected editions, allowing an intimacy with the original form and context of publication inevitably lost in engagement with, for example, Carcanet's 1990 *Collected Poems*. Secondly, it contains many of the journal issues to which Morgan contributed across his career, featuring poems collected neither for large-scale release nor the small-scale publication exemplified above, extending as far back as several 1930s editions of *Glasgow University Magazine*, or *GUM*, to which Morgan contributed under the pseudonym KAA, chosen 'after the rocksnake in Kipling's *The Jungle Book*'.[5] Thirdly, there are a small number of those still more elusive poems composed on the spur of the moment in letters or on publications posted to Whyte. The inside cover of a copy of *Haiku Quarterly* 7-8 (1992) containing Morgan's 'A Definition of Six' features 'one extra, for H.W.':

Welcoming Three Guests

'Haiku Haiku.' 'Hi!'
'Hai Kukai Kukai Ku.' 'Hi!'
'Haik Uhaik U.' 'Hi!'[6]

Some of these rare poems are markedly confessional in tone, others experimental – to forge a simplistic distinction. Morgan's contributions to *GUM* are of particular relevance to the first category for the contorted youthful voice they evidence. Written in a lavishly alliterative free-verse, peppered with high-impact adjectives, they were influenced, as Morgan has noted in interview, by Keats and Tennyson's 'splendid, luscious phrasing', and by the 'alliterative four-stressed lines' of the Anglo-Saxon poetry he read at university.[7] Gerard Manley Hopkins also seems a feasible reference point for their bold phonetic correspondences and irregular stress patterns. 'Dusty Flower' and 'Plainsong for a Lovely Lady', from a March 1939 issue, are typical. Interestingly, both evoke innocent, suffering female personas corrupted by insidious, ambiguous external forces. The conceit of the former is very similar to Blake's 'Sick Rose':

Dusty flower,
In the slumberous ashes of your vast petals
Cracking and crumbling over your leaves
A serpent writhes,
Rasps maddeningly round your velvet lips,
Lies like a dead thing heavy and still on your heart

The contrasting alliterative melodies and prescriptive adjectives used to offset the flower, 'faultlessly afloat in the forest', against the 'slant-eyed' serpent, 'sybarite of silken sepals', generates a sense of intense moral struggle, while the image of the flower's 'velvet lips', 'all silent and broken and spent', 'rotted and destroyed by the dark consumer', bears a clear subtext of sexual corruption.[8] The title figure in 'Plainsong for a Lovely Lady', more clearly seems a woman corrupted by carnal passion:

She lay upon the golden plain
with waves of light breaking around her.

Her splintered dream on the red horizon
burst into rocketing flowers of flame and ice
like a nest of sumptuous mandrepores doomed
by diver's boot.

Overhead, 'streamers of smoke, of blood, carmine, gam-|boge, grey', 'whispered to the aching sky the story':

of their birth and future that were as gar-
ments of glad day to them
but to the lady death.[9]

These poems partly suggest a self-alienation rooted in an unwarranted sexual awakening. The title characters seem like authorial foils, but second or third person narration eschews open confession. Along with their tendency to describe rather than generate desired emotive qualities, and a dense phonetic patterning which seems to allude to some submerged voice, they suggest a frustrated yearning for self-expression. Neither are successful poems by subsequent standards, although 'Dusty Rose' closes on a Miltonic image of cosmic flight, the story of the flower's destruction 'hurtling headling over the huge| and virgin fields of the heavens', which predicates the searching, regenerative energy and intergalactic imagery of Morgan's later work (311).

Chronologically speaking, the next poem held in the archive is 'A Warning of Waters at Evening', published in winter 1949,[10] at least part of the gap indicating Morgan's war service. The 1950s, as James McGonigal's biography *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan* has recently made clear, was a period of tortured self-scrutiny for Morgan. The poem 'Northern Nocturnal', first published in a PEN anthology in 1955, seems singularly indicative of this. Revised from an earlier draft, McGonigal states, in September 1954, a period denoting 'the nadir of EM's sense of his own worth as a poet and person' (118-20), its evocations of despair are stikingly frank. The poem describes a nocturnal walk along Glasgow's streets and riverbanks – 'Moonlight| Is silvering the stark Necropolis,| The pavement glitters like a river' –[11] the silent alleyways and gutters a metaphor for the 'gaunt arteries and walls of the heart' (104). In the final stanza, this allegorical depiction of despair unravels into an undisguised cry:

> When all is dark indeed: the whirl, the luminance
> Clouded from identity [. . .]
> When all is cold as cavern-flume, sea-floor,
> Jupiter, or Pluto in the Thule of the sun:
> And then to blackness, silence, cold, my sense
> Chokes blind in breaking death, death like this night will free
> My fire and shower of desire to the stone and the steel and the sea (104)

The final couplet expresses a longing for death whose candour is unmatched by the abstracted suffering of Morgan's contemporary collections. A sense of melodrama is retained from those adolescent verses, and again, much of the registered distress and self-alienation suggests repressed homosexual desire, the final line partly a lament that Morgan's 'fire and shower of desire' could not be expressed within the prescribed boundaries of his character. He would later speak of Kelvingrove Park's river walkways as prime 'trolling' spots,[12] granting the poem's imagery of nocturnal wandering further significance: 'Who walks its flashing roads? Who laughs and sings?'(104).

The poem also gives the kind of nightmarish portrayal of Glasgow for which Morgan would later criticise poets like Hugh MacDiarmid and Lewis Grassic Gibbon.[13] Notably, in a passage perhaps indebted to Thomson's 'City of Dreadful Night', the city-scape becomes a chain-mail grave-cloth, 'a mailed tomb where the full flood of bronze| Palls the million of the living in strong and perdurable folds' (103). It is possible that, besides its evocations of private angst, 'Northern Nocturnal' was held back from broader publication because of this portrayal of Glasgow, a city Morgan would later depict as multifariously alive, as a kind of golgotha.

By contrast, 'Night Pillion', published in *Saltire Review* in 1957, seems the first poem to indicate that shift of register through which Morgan's outwardly focused, cannily optimistic mature work emerges, both in its affectionate imagery of Glasgow and in its more open, happy expressions of private affection. The poem opens on a Marinetti-friendly paean to the visceral thrill of motorbike travel:

> ELEVEN struck. The traffic lights were green.
> The shuddering machine let out its roar
> As we sprang forward into brilliant streets[14]

But it develops into an affirmation of emotional connection to Glaswegian society contrary to both futurist egotism and Eliotic or Thomson-esque urban alienation:

> Shadow play? What we flashed past was life
> As what we flash into is life, and life
> Will not stand still until within one flash
> Of words or paint or human love it stops
> Transfixed, and drops its pain and grime
> Into forgetful time. (54)

Although this section's opening tone is muted by the subsequent description of aesthetic or romantic experience as an abatement of the 'pain and grime' of city life, the closing lines make social engagement the real source of joy:

> Joy is where long solitude dissolves.
> I rode with you towards human needs and cares. (55)

This newly discovered social conscience is complemented by another proleptic quality, the subtly suggested romantic energy between the back-seat narrator and his driver, based, McGonigal notes, on 'a young art student from Burnside', 'who would sometimes come to EM's house to discuss painting' (McGonigal, 126). In this poem the longed-for love is present, the teasingly genderless second person address – 'I rode with you' – familiar from the secret gay love poems of *The Second Life*.

The 1960s was a period of creative flowering for Morgan, heralding amongst other things, the birth of a natural-seeming, stirring voice of personal expression. The love poems in *The Second Life* (1968) are animated by a palpable sense of release, partly compelled by Morgan's relationship with John Scott. In 'From A City Balcony', the joy accelerated towards in 'Night Pillion' is poured 'like mountain water'.[15] Not all readers were happily immersed though, Iain Crichton Smith stating that 'Morgan's poetry of the immediacy of love breeds clichés'.[16] While we might not agree, the poems 'Phoning', published in *Lines* in 1966, and 'The Quarrel', in *Form* in 1969, are interesting in relation to this comment, as seemingly uncensured accounts of romantic episodes in which considerations of craft are, to

some extent, overridden by urgency of statement. 'Phoning' recounts an evening in, set amongst Glasgow's 'dark rain', 'roofs and cranes':

> we sat on the bed
> and I dialled Montreux
> [. . .]
> and we spoke to your sister
> Glasgow to the snows
> and the sunny funiculars
> and meetings by a lake
> reflecting her walk
> so far from Law and
> the pits and cones
> of worked Lanarkshire[17]

The poem typifies several themes of Morgan's 1960s poetry: the traversal of physical distance through communication technology, complemented by a perpendicular graphic suggesting a message strung along a phone-wire; an imagined journey bracketed by descriptions of Glasgow, mid-renovation, with looming cranes. At the same time, unselfconscious, intimate recollection is implied by the breathlessly clipped lines, fronted in informal lower case, and second person address:

> my arm on your shoulder
> held you as you spoke
> your voice vibrating
> as you leaned against me
> remembering this
> and your finger
> tapping my bare knee
> to emphasize a point
> but most of all
> in that dusky room
> the back of your head
> as you bent to catch the distant words
> caught my heart (22)

Such unbroken personal recollection is rare in *The Second Life*'s love poems, which tend to open out into broader thematic panoramas obscuring the nuggets of memory they grew from.

More disarmingly confessional is 'The Quarrel', a poem set, McGonigal states, during a holiday with John Scott in Northern Italy (162). Beneath 'the chill of the Dolomites', an argument unfolds, perhaps over infidelity:

> I turned on you. What I didn't understand
> I made painful, saying
> it had to be known.
> We were past caring who heard,
> who saw us on the stairs.[18]

Largely unembellished passages of physical description follow:

> You sat on the bed, I turned
> And pressed my forehead
> On the cold window, in the growing dark
> [. . .] I found I was in tears
> In silence, with my back to you,
> Hardly caring if you knew (24)

If such passages remain evasive in the sense that the protagonist is not characterised, another shows the class disparity between author and lover in a manner plainly based on the academic Morgan's relationship with the store-man Scott:

> – Give me the key you said
> I know I'm common as dirt.
> Go on with your fancy friends
> I know I'm nothing (24)

Some poems in Morgan's next collection *From Glasgow to Saturn* deal with similar themes – 'you are not faithful.| This Saturday on what corner will you meet your next friend?' – but none possess this kind of documentary frankness, or apparently direct correlation with personal experience.[19]

It would be glib to speculate too boldly on the reasons for certain poems' absence from collections, but this tone and detail of personal admis-

sion counteracts Morgan's tendency to disguise details of his private life within his poetry, at least until the mid-1980s – the shift partly to do with his more open admissions of homosexuality after Scotland decriminalised it in 1980. Personal revalations before this period are generally either drained of contextualising detail, or placed within long, fantastical sequences which repel the inference of biography. Take the references to Morgan's wartime lovers at the start and close of 'The New Divan' (1977), a poem sweeping disorientatingly between times and cultures, or the description of John Scott's funeral in 'Callisto' from *Stargate* (1979), the final of a series of poems set on Jupiter's moons.

The archive also contains much of that more experimental work which Morgan tended to reserve for fugitive presses and magazines congenial to adventurous forms. A veritable timeline of late 20th independent press activity can be constructed from the journals it contains: from the 1960s *Bo Heem E Um*, *Broadsheet*, *Extraverse, Joglars, Poor.Old.Tired.Horse*, *Tlaloc*, from the 1970s-1980s *Angel Exhaust*, *Second Aeon*, *Stereo Headphones*, from the 1990s-2000s *Gairfish*, *Object Permanence*, and more. Other iconic independent publishing ventures are attested to by some of Morgan's more elusive collections, notably *Starryveldt* (1965), a product of the Swiss concrete poet Eugen Gomringer's eponymous press, and *Scotch Mist* (1965), Morgan's contribution to the Ohio-based beat poet D.A. Levy's *Polluted Lake* series.

Of particular interest in this regard are Morgan's responses to the international concrete poetry movement formed in the mid-1950s, which brought visual form to the fore of poetic meaning. 'Dogs Round a Tree' and 'Original Sin at the Wateringhole', printed in Ian Hamilton Finlay's one-off 1963 journal *Fishsheet*, are Morgan's first published concrete poems. Playful picture poems comparable to some of Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*, they evidence Morgan's enthusiastic but irreverent engagement with concrete style, the former using permutations of a stereotypical canine yelp to visually represent dogs careering around exclamation-mark tree-trunks:

                    ow!
                   wow!
                bowwow!
               !bowwow
              w!bowwo
             ow!boww
            wow!bow
           wwow!bo
          owwow!b
         bowwow!
            wow!
             ow![20]

This use of 'graphic space as structural agent' affirms a vital tenet of concrete style as laid out in the Brazilian Noigandres group's 'Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry' (1958).[21] But the pictorial visual form, which seizes some of the referential power lost by semantics in such poetry, overrides that manifesto's endorsement of non-figurative graphics. 'Original Sin at the Watering-hole' is a snake-like coil of sibilant adjectives, describing the thrashing of hippopotamuses upon 's|pottingalittlefloatin|g|asp!':

asp
  on
    taneousobstreporousos
tentatiousstentorianosmos
isofhys
tericallysnortingposseofs
portingshehippopotamusses
pottingalittlefloating
                          g
                           asp[22]

Besides another pictorial graphic, this time suggesting the coils of a serpent, the poem's subtly incorporated linear narrative – it is to be read from start to finish – transgresses another key tenet of concrete, the purely spatial juxtaposition of language-forms characteristic of, for example, Finlay's 1960s work.

A technique presaged by the Noigandres poets was Morgan's use of concrete poetry as an unlikely tool for political commentary. This is evident in 'The Little White Rows of Scotland', first published in Hayden Murphy's Dublin-based *Broadsheet* in 1967. It is perhaps a concrete prototype for the more vitriolic 'The Flowers of Scotland' (1968), which attacks the apathy of Scottish culture to global politics, its own eroding socialist and industrial heritage, and the new challenge of 1960s counter culture: 'Yes, it is too cold in Scotland for flower people'.[23] 'White Rows' sends up the national emblem made famous by MacDiarmid, 'The little white rose of Scotland', 'that smells sharp and sweet – and breaks the heart', generating contrasting images of presbytarian drabness, subjugated humility.[24] That effect is nuanced by the poem itself:

whitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitemeigle
whitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitemacadamwhite
whitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhiterizziowhitewhite
whitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitefaslanewhitewhitewhite
whitewhitewhitewhitewhitenapierwhitewhitewhitewhite
whitewhitewhitewhiteduntulmwhitewhitewhitewhitewhite
whitewhitewhiteyarrowwhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhite
whitewhitecurlingwhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhite
whitemaxtonwhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhite
allowaywhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhitewhite[25]

This diagonally rising sequence of underlined words indexes the Scottish psyche both affectionately and critically while playfully altering the connotations of the surrounding white strips, most obviously into a curling court on the third line up. Also referenced are Robert Napier, innovator of Glasgow shipbuilding, the 'white row' suggesting the Clyde Canal; Faslane, location of the Clyde Naval Base and primary site of the UK's anti-nuclear defences, the white line a missile trail or decimated post-atomic cityscape; David Rizzio, the Italian private secretary of Mary Queen of Scots, murdered by religious rivals with the possible co-operation of Elizabeth I, the white strip as a tide of marauding puritan assassins. Such precise and diverse references reflect Morgan's ability to turn concrete poetry, itself often taken to stand for a certain pallid vacuity, into a witty and polemical medium, flush with topical references.

Also worth mentioning are the various single-poem publications Morgan produced in the same period, notably the aforementioned *Scotchmist* (1965), and *Sealwear* (1966). The former, hand-stamped in blue ink onto a squat paper booklet bound in luddite fashion, visually represents the easterly spread of fog over the Forth across a seven-page sequence:

FIRTH ROCK BUOY GULL BARGE FIRTH
FIRTH ROCK BUOY GULL BARGE HAAR
FIRTH ROCK BUOY GULL HAAR HAAR
FIRTH ROCK BUOY HAAR HAAR HAAR
FIRTH ROCK HAAR HAAR HAAR HAAR
FIRTH HAAR HAAR HAAR HAAR HAAR
HAAR HAAR HAAR HAAR HAAR HAAR[26]

Because of the time-lag between engagement with each page, the diagonal drift effect also used in 'Little White Rows of Scotland' more clearly represents movement. The engulfment of the panorama by the single word 'Haar', meanwhile, adapts the concrete poets' aims to pare language down to universals to ends both localising and comic, 'Haar' both a Scots term for mist and an irreverant burst of laughter.

Sealwear is a single-poem-booklet hand-produced by Morgan himself. Each copy of a tiny run was written in felt-tip, bound in gold card and circulated privately under the name Gold Seal Press. The title and its design mimic those of a rubber clothing company, indicating, perhaps bathetically, the extensive analogies between concrete poetry and the visual language of advertising. Inside, a series of multi-coloured two-word phrases, anticipating Morgan's later *Colour Poems* (1978), is strung together through a haphazard process of semantic association, grammatical fragmentation and homophonic replacement, loosely bound by associations of water and sky:

see here
sea ware
sea air
air wheels
we laze
lay ears
sway heel

sail where
eel's way
wet seal
silhouette[27]

The final, single-word phrase 'silhouette' brings the poem to a punning close on the apposite image of a black, perhaps rubber-clad figure.

Morgan's permutational poetry, a sub-category of concrete, uses the shuffled repetition of quotes to generate new and surprising meanings, a technique used in different contexts by, amongst others, Tristan Tzara, Bob Cobbing and William Burroughs. 'From an Old Scottish Chapbook', printed in Clark Coolidge's *Joglars* in 1966, re-arranges four folk song titles, 'The sorrowful lovers', 'The brown jug', 'The golden glove' and 'The blythsome bridal' into various surreal combinations: 'The glove lovers', 'The blythesome brown', 'The sorrowful golden'.[28] Their logical recalcitrance partly reduces the poem to a jumble of graphic units, but the phrases retain that peculiar quality of intimation typical of the best use of the form.

The 1982 poem 'A *Mot* and its Range' shows Morgan using permutation to ruminate on the challenges facing a second-wave avant-garde. Written in reaction to a questionnaire circulated amongst contributors to *Stereo Headphones* by the magazine's editor Nicholas Zurbrugg, in which he asked whether poetry had 'advanced significantly' since Dada, it is appended to Morgan's printed response. After noting that 'neodada must be more ludic than shocking', Morgan introduces the poem, which re-arranges a Duchamp quote criticising 1960s pop art aesthetics – 'I threw the bottle-rack and the urinal in their faces as a challenge and now they admire them for their aesthetic beauty' – as 'the poetic and oblique way out'.[29] His variations – 'I threw the bottle-rack and the aesthetic beauty into their faces as a urinal and now they admire them for their challenge', and so on – temper Duchamp's scorn, suggesting that neo-dada stances might recuperate rather than stultify the polemical energy of 1910s anti-art, admiring its 'challenge' while acknowledging its implicit 'aesthetic beauty'.[30]

Such experiments waned but did not cease after the 1960s-70s heyday of visual poetry. Further visual-linguistic adventures include Morgan's 1994 collaboration *Wurdwappinschaw/Palabrarmas* with Cecilia Vicuña, a typographically complex, post-concrete exericise in translating double-meanings

between Scots and Spanish, and his stamp designs with Linda Taylor for Alec Finlay's 1996 album of artist-and-poet-illustrated stamps.[31]

The release of many such works into commercially peripheral echelons of literary culture, alongside Morgan's presence within its corridors of power, suggests a complex attitude to the relative advantages of 'independent' and 'mainstream' publishing – another imperfect distinction. It might suggest ethical ambivalence. It might equally reflect what Robyn Marsack calls Morgan's ability to 'have it both ways', a formal and tonal range not amenable to any one house-style.[32] A postcard sent to Whyte with a copy of the 1987 collection *Newspoems*, composed 1965-71, reflects one aspect of a resulting dilemma regarding publication. The 'newspoems' are collage-poems, created from pages of newsprint partially eradicated to reveal the kind of momentarily encountered message generated by hurried mis-scanning. 'Levitation of the Trinity', for example, reads 'THREE| STANDING| ON| **BIRDS**'.[33] But the edition's formal adventurousness also extends to its binding. Each copy of the first edition, as Morgan wrote:

> [H]as the contents in a different order, including the title-page, which may in fact come at the beginning, but I thought you'd prefer one of the more eccentric ones! Do you think these poems would mix with the otherwise fairly straightforward contents of my next Carcanet book (cleaned up and clearly printed of course), or should they remain in the Wacy! Ghetto?[34]

Aleatoric pagination, a technique neatly enhancing the sense of chance encounter invited by the poems, was only possible within the 'ghetto' of independent publishing, although some newspoems were infact included in the 'next Carcanet book', *Collected Poems*.

Besides suggesting a considered approach towards different literary milieus, the range of publications in the archive also suggests that Morgan was keen to cultivate a readership beyond their shared confines, willing to submit to most projects requesting his involvement. There are a huge number of anthologies featuring Morgan's work, many aimed at children, or based around seemingly quotidian topics: food, gardens, rivers. Some throw up engaging lines of correspondence, or even inspired poems. One accompanying note to Whyte does, however, suggest mild bemusement

at the small roster of poems from which anthology contributions were continually selected: 'one more anthology for you (one more stretter-hawl)'.[35]

The breadth of topics which Morgan tackled as a critic, translator and editor of other authors suggests a similarly open-minded approach to themes and readerships. Having said this, critical writing from different stages of his career does reveal a distinct, shifting set of interests and values. That is evident in comparing a 1950 review of his friend W. S. Graham's *The White Threshold* with a 1956 letter to the editor in *London Magazine*, between which a clear development in Morgan's attitude to the poet's relationship to society can be traced. The first, printed in *Nine* magazine, suggests that Morgan's early thought was partly in thrall to Graham's voyages of inward discovery, and attendent ethos of social isolation:

> [T]he poet writes to find himself, not to integrate his idea of himself with his idea of the world, and in the act of finding the self he is stung and irradiated with feeling, drenched, 'drowned', assimilated in a sea-change, so that the voyager becomes a different voyager and the next discovery of the self is of a richer face, with its past in its eyes, and the reaction to it is again different, and (if honest) more significant.[36]

The dialectical artistic development described here would inhere throughout Morgan's career, but through a condition of mutual feedback with social environments rather than such solipsistic divinations. The emphasis on inward cognitive penetration also evident in Morgan's early poetry is betrayed by the review's verbose, tortuously darting sentences, while its taste for oceans, rivers, and engulfment – again also evident in early collections – seems indebted to Graham's sense of, in Morgan's words, '[t]he sea as a great natural symbol', 'its inhuman alienness and its infinite magnetism over the human heart'.[37]

The 1956 correspondence, critiquing an article by Colin Wilson, contrastingly reflects the imperative of social engagement associable with Morgan's later work. Quoting Wilson's lament at the demise of political engagement in Western literature over the last thirty years, Morgan states that '[t]here were plenty of writers, some of them very great and very human writers,

who were 'actively involved with the destiny of their times', and from whom much might have been learned, by both novelists and poets: let me mention no more than Gorky, Mayakovsky, Sholokhov.' Further, contemporary examples would be obvious, Morgan continues, to 'anyone who reads Russian', or even 'translations of post-war Russian books. Leonov, Panova, Granin, Chukovsky, Ehrenburg'.[38] The hectoring tone is youthful Morgan, but the thrust of his argument anticipates the empathy and engagement of his later 'social poems', as he called them. That Morgan felt social commitment could be learned from communist literature reflects the importance of the 1950s-1960s translations from such sources gathered in *Sovpoems* (1961) and *Wi' the Haill Voice* (1972) as a sort of intermediate register. Such a quality would not filter extensively into his own poetry until the early 1960s.

Morgan's criticism of other authors from the late-1950s to mid-1960s suggests a thawing of introspection, the gestation of a social conscience, and a new alertness to international writing. His 1962 essay 'The Beat Vigilantes' documents his sense of beat poetry as an admirably politically committed genre – in interviews he often referenced Ginsberg 'turning his queer shoulder to the wheel' as a source of inspiration – and influence upon his 1960s work.[39] 'The Fold-in Conference', a cut-up account of the 1962 Edinburgh International Writers Conference, pays formal homage to guest-speaker William Burroughs, while 'Jean Genet: "A legend, to be legible"', published the same year in the beat journal *The Outsider*, reflects another new interest.[40] The outsider status of Burroughs, Genet and Ginsberg as openly gay writers no doubt appealed besides the iconoclastic energy of their writing.

By the time Morgan was writing an April 1967 review of the *Selected Letters of Dylan Thomas*, his new-found aversion to self-involvement had extended into a guardedness regarding the New Apocalypse writers he had emulated in the 1950s: 'even an aware self-centredness has its dangers' Morgan writes. 'There is throughout these letters a remarkable absence of sympathy, consideration, tenderness – an absence often disguised by the verbal high spirits which offers some aesthetic compensation'.[41]

Much of Morgan's criticism bears a certain quality of sublimated self-analysis, through which similar inferences of interests and values can be made. As McGonigal's biography notes, one of his closest artistic and ethical allies was the Hungarian Sándor Weöres, whom he first met in Budapest in 1966

(166). Morgan's writing about Weöres exemplifies this kind of displacement. Introducing his translations of Weöres in *Penguin Modern European Poets: Sándor Weöres and Ferenc Juhász Selected Poems* (1970), Morgan notes that '[t]he basic sympathies of an unpolitical poet give his work a humanity which his immense technical gifts and wide reading in no way obscure'.[42] Morgan's own sense of a basic, universal set of human values, unobscured by technical virtuosity, broad reading, or commitment to particular social causes, comes across as clearly as Weöres's here, a stance which sets his criticism and poetry apart from much which might have been innervated by cut-up, concrete and the nouveau romain.

There are other examples in a similar vein. Assessing Gerard Manley Hopkins's love poetry in Michael Schmidt and Nick Rennison's *Poets on Poets* (1997), Morgan notes that 'the tincture of homoeroticism, which is today quite clear and does not have to be apologized for, is made all the more moving from the restraint of its distilling', a statement which might adequately describe the seductive reticence of his own love poetry.[43] His 1983 essay 'Voice, Tone and Transition in *Don Juan*' places upon Byron the primary critique made of his own whittrick-like voice. 'Eternal impressionability, the lack of patience with reason, the search for unknown links-forward rather than known links back, is certainly zestful and creative, and one of the keys to his poetic method, but it may at the same time be self-protective in a man who is loath to expose a central jostle of unresolved beliefs and counter-beliefs.'[44] Projection theories seem crass if over-stressed, but such passages are certainly disarming.

'Behind all great critics there stands a paradigmatic poet', Jack Rillie notes. 'For Morgan, in the foreground at least, it is MacDiarmid, conscious though he is of his mentor's limitations.'[45] Morgan was, finally, and pre-eminently, a prolific MacDiarmid scholar. The archive contains numerous essays engaging different elements of the older poet's work, notably 'Poetry and Knowledge in MacDiarmid's later Work', published in a 1962 festschrift, in which the poets' common fascination with technology is revealed. Morgan states that MacDiarmid's work from *Stony Limits* (1934) to *The Kind of Poetry I want* (1961) can be seen as an ongoing exercise in attempting to bring science and technology into the realm of poetic contemplation, thus exemplifying, sometimes clumsily, both aspects of the ideal outlined in Wordsworth's preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*:

> [N]ot simply the acceptance by poetry of facts or things or attitudes which science may unavoidably set within man's future environment (once they have become an intimate part of that environment), but also a more positive co-operation by which poets will be 'carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself'.[46]

The passage could equally be taken as a clarion call for Morgan's own science-fiction poetry. Given its publication context, that piece is unsurpisingly judicious in tone. A contemporaneous review of MacDiarmid's *Collected Poems* documents his mentor's limitations more unflinchingly (374-5):

> Generalization is hazardous in dealing with writing where so often the good lays down with the bad in happy promiscuity – and in dealing with a man in whom there are so many apparent (and some real) contradictions and incongruities: one who has reconciled his Scottish Nationalism with his Communism, whose materialism is at least as mystical as it is dialectic, who believes in a 'poetry of fact and science' without having a scholar's command of accuracy or care for the validity of evidence, who is at different times a voice of working-class aspirations and a deeply anti-democratic purveyor of élite thinking.[47]

The current of frustration coursing through this piece is less voracious than it was in the writing of many of Morgan's contemporaries about the divisive figurehead of the Scottish Renaissance, but it is palpable nonetheless. Morgan's criticism of MacDiarmid's marriage of nationalism and communism perhaps belies a comparable complexity in his own authorial character. That is, while Morgan's work frequently invokes anarchistic, perennially evolving communities, unbound to tribe or tradition – the science-fiction poem 'A Home in Space' springs to mind – he persistently used his critical writing as a platform to champion the cultural and social characters of his home country and city. This point, which could be extrapolated over a larger space, serves as an introduction to one of many areas of intrigue within a stirringly incongruous artistic and critical spirit, a spirit which the Scottish Poetry Library's new archive catches in full sight.

Notes

1 All information in the first five paragraphs concerning Whyte and Morgan's relationship and the archive's compilation, is taken from a personal interview with Hamish Whyte conducted on Monday 23 January 2012 at the Scottish Poetry Library. Only direct quotes from that interview are referenced hereafter in the body of the text.
2 See Hamish Whyte, *Edwin Morgan: A Selected Bibliography 1950-1980* (Glasgow: [Mitchell Library], 1980); Hamish Whyte, 'Edwin Morgan: A Checklist', in *About Edwin Morgan*, ed. by Robert Crawford and Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp.140-255.
3 Robert Crawford, 'Morgan's Ludic Explorations', *Cencrastus*, 37 (1990), 22-4 (p.24). I have only provided citations according to the Edwin Morgan Archive's classification system in the case of unpublished material, but a copy of every published item referenced in this article is held in the archive.
4 For print interviews see, for example, Michael Gardiner, 'Interview with Edwin Morgan', *Angel Exhaust*, 10 (1994), 52-63. Audio-interviews include a cassette recording of *Edi Stark Meets Edwin Morgan*, recorded on 29 December 1999 and broadcast on millennium eve on BBC Radio Scotland, a few months after Morgan was told he had prostate cancer: Edinburgh, Scottish Poetry Library, Edwin Morgan Archives 01/112/05.
5 James McGonigal, *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan* (Dingwall: Sandstone, 2010), p.51. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.
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7 Marco Fazzini, 'Edwin Morgan: Two Interviews', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 29 (1996), 45-57 (pp.45-6).
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'Is this a poem? Do not lose it.' – Edwin Morgan's 'The Ropemaker's Bride'

Early in 2006 I received a brief letter from Edwin Morgan. It consisted almost entirely of a twenty-line poem, 'The Ropemaker's Bride'. This was initialled with the three short horizontal lines of the poet's proud seal, Ξ, dated 12 January 2006, and appended with the shortest of notes:

> Dear R:
> Is this a poem?
> Do not lose it – an only copy!
> Best
> Eddie

This was confusing. It was unlike any other letter I had received in an unbroken correspondence of nearly twenty years. Eddie had been, for want of a better word, my mentor all that time.

Here is my transcription of the poem:

THE ROPEMAKER'S BRIDE

My friends, I was going to slip the ring on –
Seventeen, and there must be no slip
(Just as at night there must be no sleep!)
Burghers, all men at thirty are not bad husbands.
I've heard of brides counting the strands
To please their lord, each his chequerwork –
& only after he had checked his lattices –
To please their lord – ivory. What use is ivory,
Well-honed banker's booty, says click, says clack
And you may be free – well, where the servant's darker
Who says you're made to be

Anything like a servant, that's what's free
Isn't it?
What a mort of manuscripts we are carrying
And then we are free.
My husband is bound to ask me to play
Some day,
Such strings and strands,
More than ropes, more than hopes,
More than best instruments in gleggest of hands.

'Is this a poem?' On the face of it, this was an absurd question coming from 'Professor Morgan', 'Scotland's Makar', holder of the 'Queen's Medal for Poetry', and so on. While no-one should take such honours entirely seriously, of course Morgan's exceptional abilities were never in doubt. And after all Eddie, as he usually asked friends to call him, had opened up so much of poetry's possibility to so many, he could hardly be asking about the acceptability of a particular form.

In genre terms this poem is in any case a dramatic monologue, a favourite mode of his which warranted no query. Formally speaking, the poem is free but internally rhymed, with the jazz-like energy of his later work. There is nothing here that would make anyone think this was struggling to be a poem. I love its energy. It plays longer lines off against short ones; knotted erudite meanings against empassioned address; and it gently mutates its own creative repetitions. It displays those shuffling alliterations which propelled Morgan's poetry throughout his writing life, as if the exhilarating 'shuh' and spine-honey bass of 'Come Together' belonged to him as much as to his favourite band The Beatles.

'Is this a poem?' One of the things that confused me was that until relatively recently Eddie had never asked my advice and this was his most serious question to date. He shared news with me, told me what he was working on, where he was about to read, and, occasionally, he shared new poems. He quietly, as if casually, introduced me to all manner of poetry, fiction, art, history and politics. In return he hardly got the best of the bargain: I think most of my own correspondence was humdrum commentary on the English news of the day, reactions to his suggestions and enthusiasms, domestic ups and down, and irritable 'poetry biz' squawks. We shared some things of course – a technological imagination, for example, a

fascination with outer space (and a feeling that humankind should urgently step up space exploration). Although he cautioned patience over my frustrations with UK publishing he also had experienced its establishment retardants, the peculiarity of his breakthrough book, *The Second Life*, being only published when he was in his forties. Like my collection *Lucky Day* it is probably still mistaken as a 'debut' though it followed years of publication.

'Is this a poem?' Eddie was proud of his knowledge, of his quickness; of his ability to write with a catholicity of technical accomplishment. That little monogram of his, like Durer's, was a quality stamp. I think I first came across the EM mark on the full-colour abstracts he made from warped Polaroids. I collected and published four of them as *Colour Supplement* (he gave them to me for an issue of the cultural review *Southfields* in 1994). Usually this 'brand' had three parallel vertical lines following the 3 horizontal, an abstraction of EM of course; in this present letter it was simply reduced to the personal name's initial, a friend in haste, perhaps.

The flowing serifs of his handwriting are another aspect of that quiet confidence of his – they moved across the page with an enlivening zest, gentle flourish after flourish. 'The Ropemaker's Bride' has an underline beneath its title which is clearly written with a zooming lightness of touch. The manuscript poem was completed by a writerly-painterly gesture, too – another fluid long line, as if an S has stretched itself out to take flight.

So in what sense could Eddie be asking me if 'The Ropemaker's Bride' was a poem? I think those little signs of confidence were actually residual – learned behaviour which now lacked total conviction – because he was at a very low point in his life. He really was asking for my opinion of the poem. For at least the last six months his cancer, 'the crab' as he called it, had been ratcheting up the pain as it grew and spread, and it could suddenly 'attack': 'My crab has stuck its claws into me in the last few days with fearsome intensity in the right hip and leg – so debilitating that I can settle to do nothing at the moment. I will come back, I promise, if allowed to. But please don't let me stop you from writing, as I can rely on your letters to cheer me up enormously, and that truly is needed.' (EM to RP, 20 October 2005). The drugs regime was also disorientating, and in the last few months of 2005 I received only occasional very short cards. The stabs of darkness, nightmares, that Eddie appears to have suffered intermittently from all his life and had so brilliantly kept in check, had taken on another

form, a waking dread, a constant anxiety: 'Another little non-letter from your queasy drugged-up correspondent. One of these days there will be something proper – I hope. At the moment I am on tranquilisers because I had become so nervous and jingly that – that what? I was in terror of the telephone, put it that way.' (EM to RP, 14 November 2005).

However, right at the end of 2005 some of Eddie's strength returned. 'Is this a letter?' he said in an undated Christmas card, asking a question which again spoke to a range of existential doubts. It was. 'Can you read this I wonder?' Yes, though with some difficulty. Next, in January, within another Christmas card there was even a tone of good cheer, as if the message of the festive season had finally got through the pain and pharmaceuticals and could still be delivered, loud and clear, weeks later – 'One should always use up old Christmas cards, should one not?' he chirped. He had used an unsent card for a new poem, topping and tailing the printed Christmas greetings from around the world with lines of his own:

O many a muse
And many a muse
And merry a muse and all

Season's Greetings
Meilleurs Voeux
Felices Fiestas
[Russian Greeting]
Frohe Festtage
[Arabic Greeting]
[Chinese? Greeting]

And wherever is heaven
A hookah is leaven
And Christ receive thy soule

This is a bright piece of fun on one level, on another it's a jolly dance around what is in fact a knot of Morgan's traumas. There is the worry over inspiration (the 'muse'), especially not being able to transfer the products of a still fertile imagination to the page because of the barriers of physical frailty and failing concentration: there is frustration and sorrow in the sheer

abundance of those merry muses, rather than the traditional fear of 'writer's block'.. There are thoughts, clearly, of death, 'heaven' and 'soule'; and a reflection which once might have been an anti-establishment delight in hedonistic pleasure – the intoxication of the hookah – but which has now become a mark of the routine of medicated, institutionalised tranquillity, drugs to 'leaven' pain.

'– Now there's a piece of something or other,' Morgan writes after the poem, and then asks that question I'll read in a later letter, too: 'Is it poetry.' He adds 'Is it pastichoramic? Morgan, you must stop this! Give it its time. Medieval or not it will come when it has to, 'on extended wings' (like a poem I've been immersed in the last few days).'

Worries of commanding the right register were clearly there even in this spontaneous jeu d'esprit; perhaps he was also worried about repeating himself (though for very different poems, Morgan has very strong associations with Christmas).

As if to underline the complex mix of pleasure and anxiety, Morgan quotes Wallace Stevens's surprisingly apposite 'Sunday Morning' – the words 'on extended wings' close the poem. This describes and reflects on a middle-class woman enjoying some at least of the very unreligious pleasures of Sunday at home. It has a curious atmosphere, nevertheless, of just and only just fending off thoughts of death, especially as figured in Christian theology. The 'late / Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair,' and reflections on the joys of the natural world, need no recourse to religious mythmaking. They seem sufficient to our central figure but cannot banish what are after all only human anxieties concerning mortality. In fact, this poem is remarkably effective, through the delightful woman's *elective* state, a kind of willed yet happy-go-lucky hedonism, at suggesting Morgan's *in*elective state, forced by ill health into day after day of inert Sunday mornings; perhaps as if 'paradise' had come only too quickly. The last lines even manage to make pigeons carry a sense of forboding: 'And, in the isolation of the sky, / At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make / Ambiguous undulations as they sink, / Downard to darkness, on extended wings.'

I am not sure if 'The Ropemaker's Bride' was the poem to which he then refers – there is evidence in the letter that the mise-en-scène for the poem he had been mulling over was Turkey rather than France. The phrase 'on extended wings' has later been used in literary criticism as a phrase redolent of the long poem (Sunday Morning is long*ish*, about 120 lines), so

Morgan may also have been thinking a bigger project than the poem he sent. Nevertheless, the next poem that I saw would indeed fly with its own 'extended wings'.

When Morgan sent 'The Ropemaker's Bride' and asked me that chill question, was it a poem?, I wrote back quickly, saying simply I thought that indeed it was. I also said that were some words which I couldn't read: would he annotate a copy of the poem so I could be sure? No palaeographer, I had thought the safest way of resolving various mysteries was to send a copy back to him, marked with my queries – Eddie's now tiny, frail handwriting did not benefit from his naturally calligraphic style, attractive though it was in all other circumstances.

My writing to Eddie in this way, to my great regret, led to a final break in our correspondence, as such, although I still received a card at Christmas, that sort of occasion. This was not because he was offended but because my response suggested to him that all means of communicating clearly had now become too difficult (his typewriter had long ceased to be used, and Eddie was never an e-mailer). He wrote back, replying to some of my queries, but in a very dark mood, saying he was sorry that he simply couldn't keep on writing and so effectively closed the reciprocating correspondence between us. He encouraged me to continue to write to him even so. I am not sure whether, faced with a weekly letter of Price's Choice Reflections, he later regretted that suggestion, but I certainly didn't regret it. Writing, usually in the intermedial state of a Saturday morning, became a way of life for me, half reflective diary, half blether about topical subjects (we both liked, in Tom Leonard's phrase, 'a news'). I wrote to him in that 'Letter from London' way for nearly four years, until his death in August 2010. As it happens I was at the Edinburgh Festival on the morning he died, talking about my recent novel: when a member of the audience asked me where the link between poetry and fiction in my case came from I said, 'Through Edwin Morgan: there is so much and so many ways of trying to tell it'. He really was often in my thoughts. After all this time, Saturday mornings can still catch me not knowing quite what to do with myself now that my letter-writing days to Eddie are over.

The gestation of 'The Ropemaker's Bride' can be traced back to at least our correspondence in the preceding year, when we were discussing the sixteenth-century poet Louise Labé. Eddie had suggested I read her work as an accompaniment to a visit I was planning to Lyon, which had been

Labé's city. He held her poems in high regard and had intended, he told me, to translate her poems for his *Fifty Renascence Love-Poems* (Whiteknights Press, 1975). Perhaps he had lighted on her too far into the project for her to be included.

There are layers of contextual detail in the poem's association with Labé. Labé is said to have married a rope manufacturer and indeed may herself have come from a well-to-do ropemaking family. Her bridegroom is reputed to have been a much older man and this potential 'mismatch' is an element in the poem which Morgan reads with a characteristic challenge of conventions: the teenage bride tells her gathering that 'all men at thirty are not bad husbands.' Lyon was a major industrial town at this time, with rope a central product, – there is surely a read-across here from Lyon to Morgan's beloved industrial giant Glasgow. Lyon was also a publishing and freethinking centre, a read-across to what Glasgow *might* some day be.

Several of Labé's sonnets refer to the lute, which becomes the companion to the speaking voice of her poems, especially when unrequited or stormy love leaves her otherwise alone. There is a wit to these poems which complicates the longing in them, building a response to love which is both emotional and intellectual, as if the speaker is feeling the pangs of love at the same time as she is distancing herself from them. In this way they develop the sonnet, bringing a warmth to the Petrarchan form without losing its self-conscious rhetorical approach. Again, one thinks – very generally, of course – of Morgan's own development of the sonnet, redrawing the rules in *Glasgow Sonnets* and other sequences where a 'watcher approach' allows *overview* – a longitudinal survey approach in effect – giving the sonnet a sociological role which traditionalists are likely to have found hard to take: a leap from apparent intimacy to asserted history. There is the urban element, too, but contrast Morgan's middle and long distance viewpoints in his sonnet sequences (I am talking spatially, not temporally) with, say, Belli and Garioch, where the focus is closer, on actual situations and actual characters in the city). Although 'The Ropemaker's Bride' is not a sonnet it is a salute to and identification with an innovating sonneteer.

The rope and lute motifs are, to adopt loosely the metaphor of the strings they share, 'braided' in Morgan's poem. At times the braiding in the poem presents either an interpretive difficulty or a deliberate layering of meaning (or both). Lutes not only have strings but they can have a latticed aperture, for their resonating chamber, which may be inlaid with ivory and

other high value materials for decoration. Ropes are composites of threads or strings, perhaps laid out initially in lattices as part of the manufacturing process. The erotics of ties, of pluckable strings, of sensuous curves and gently guarded chambers hardly needs exposition: this is a teasing, sexy poem. At least, it is so to begin with. Soon enough, there is concern with the dynamic between man and wife, master and servant, which shifts the initially playful tone of the bride's address (no sleeping tonight, etc) into a much more political landscape. The bride seems to have been diverted by her own contemplation of ivory (the final uncovering of ivory-white skin) to an extempore outburst against the arid pointlessness of high finance and its life-denying qualities – 'what use is ivory, / Well-honed banker's booty.' Perhaps, in this mercurial poem, the click and clack are ivory counters, or beads in an abacus, used for calculations, but they also double as talking 'clique' and 'claque', reminding the reader of the small group of the self-special: the self-appointed and self-regarding super-rich who generate faux common-sense speech-acts as part of their enforcing governance.

La Belle Cordière, as Labé came to be known, appears to challenge the Burghers of Lyon not just on the equality of the sexes – lines 5-10 suggest that women have no time of their own until they have done their ropework – but on racism. Ivory's colour, simply speaking, is of course white and this leads by association to a further flash of anger as the Ropemaker's Bride exclaims – 'where the servant's darker / Who says you're made to be / Anything like a servant.'

Freedom is, briefly, the theme, or kinds of freedom. To be 'free': the poem moves from the governance of a wife's time by her husband, passes through the issue of servants and liberty, and stops at the thought of being free of a 'mort of manuscripts'. This is rather condensed – it is a very condensed poem. The manuscripts in question can be taken as the marriage licence and the husband's will (older and more likely to die before his wife), and there are also the commercial contracts of the successful magnate. The sigh, the weary but exclamatory tone, suggests these are a weight, a burden; they are life-impeding in contrast to the life of love the speech's occasion suggests should be the chief point of celebration.

Again there is a particular context in the production of the poem itself: Morgan's own estate, literary or otherwise, was surely in his thoughts as he wrote these lines. There is a feeling that transient life always trumps literature ('a mort of manuscripts'), a view diametrically opposed to Shake-

speare's sonnets and their papery offer of 'immortality' through writing; Morgan doesn't appear to have been so arid or so naïve, and so there is another flash of difference in the kinds of sonnets, the kinds of poetry, Morgan makes – so different from the norm.

The final five lines perform another mood shift in this complex, beautiful poem: if the bride had felt she was lucky not to have married a 'bad husband' she predicts the time, nevertheless, when her husband will be beholden to her, 'bound' in the sense of 'certain' but with a re-directed frisson of the compelling 'binding' we have already witnessed acting on servant and/or bride. Her 'lord', too, is not as free as he thinks he is since he will be tied to her through the greatest bond of all. He will surely request his wife (not compel – remember, this is the *guid* husband) to . . . to . . . but to do what?

Neither bride nor Morgan explicitly say, but a wedding poem is usually in the business of preparing its reader for this particular mystery: that bond will be beyond rope or lute, and yet there will be strands, music, vivacity, virtuosity. The word 'gleggest' is key here. In fact one of my transcription queries to Morgan concerned that word. I had actually transcribed it correctly but, because my understanding of Scots is limited, I hadn't recognised it for the Scots word it is and wanted him to make it a recognisable word. This speaks volumes about my grasp of Scots of course, but I should say that the whole poem is in otherwise standard English and it is quite risky to make that furrener 'gleggest' emphatically cap the poem.

It means most skilled, most lively and in this poem emphasises the superlative event or quality that bride and poet place above industrial or creative energies: life itself. The confidence of using a Scots word at that point! The Scottish praise poetry of that line! And so the poem finishes with the bride's acknowledgement of her immense power, her ability, all going well, to harbour life. The bridegroom is to ask her, in time, to bear their child. What was certainly one of Edwin Morgan's last poems finishes with this tremendous yes to the risk and gift of a woman bringing new life.

'Is this a poem? Do not lose it.'

hydrohotel.net

DAVID KINLOCH

The Case of the Missing War: Edwin Morgan's 'The New Divan'

Edwin Morgan's 'The New Divan' (1977) is a long poem that keeps stopping.[1] This is just one of its many paradoxical qualities that seem to have puzzled and frustrated critical appraisal over the last thirty-five years. For a work that some critics have referred to as 'major'[2] it has been less studied and discussed than most. But its difficulty and opacity has also been noted by others.[3] In his review of Morgan's *Collected Poems*, Patrick Crotty remarks that 'it only catches fire towards the end of the sequence'.[4] Crotty's assessment is useful because it directs attention to the most conventionally assimilable part of the poem, the point at which it becomes most explicitly personal and autobiographical, locating the action in the desert spaces of Lebanon and North Africa where Morgan saw out the Second World War.

It is this aspect of the work that has caused it to be described as Morgan's war poem.[5] Yet comparison of it with other Scottish war poems of the period suggests that it may only be tangentially about the war. In addition, if it is a 'war poem' then it is an extremely belated one, written in the 1970s. Morgan's manuscripts dating from the 1930s and 40s demonstrate that the young soldier struggled to find a style he was happy with and James McGonigal, his biographer, may be right to suggest that his 1950s' translation of *Beowulf* with its community of heroic warriors has more claim to the status of 'Morgan's war poem'.[6] That it might be a translation that fills this position foregrounds an obliquity that has often been the mature Morgan's preferred mode of approach and address. Nevertheless, the role of the Second World War in 'The New Divan' continues to intrigue and puzzle and the principal aim of this essay will be to try to elucidate its status and function more clearly.

'The New Divan' consists of one hundred short poems or stanzas, each between eleven and eighteen lines long. They revisit desert landscapes, histories, and possible futures that Morgan knows and intuits from both personal

experience and wide reading. The poem takes its cue and some aspects of its form from the *Divan* of the fourteenth-century Persian master, Hafiz of Shiraz. But it ranges widely and unpredictably, few of the Arabian nights and days recounted here lasting for more than two stanzas at a time. Unnamed characters appear and disappear in a variety of erotic and emotional clinches while voyages criss cross various desert times and spaces. Frequently though, we return to poems that depict alternately obscure or frank homosexual liaisons in which the narrator himself has taken part. They ground an otherwise bewildering kaleidoscope of oriental images that often dissolve into more familiar western and northern domestic scenes.

Initially, therefore, I should like to explore Morgan's own intentions in writing this work and how these have provoked and to some extent dictated the character of its critical reception before suggesting a different approach to the way war and sexuality are inscribed in the poem and in the collection as a whole which takes its title from that of 'The New Divan' itself.

What we know about the poet's aims in this work comes mainly from interviews given to Marshall Walker and others. Interestingly, Morgan links them to his practice as an experimental writer of concrete poetry:[7]

> [Concrete poetry] also affects things like the length of a poem, the feeling which is fairly general that it is extremely hard to write a long poem nowadays but nevertheless there's a hankering after doing it somehow, and it is a question of just seeing how you can bring together the idea of a lengthy work and the idea of quickness or simultaneity or modernity or something of that kind.
> [. . .]
> I suppose the series or the sequence is one possibility.
> That is the usual solution, I suppose. I am still thinking about a sequence myself in 'The New Divan' which is a hundred short poems very loosely linked together. It is supposed to be some sort of whole, though not one that is easily analysed and they don't form a sequence in a very strict sense of the term.

In a later interview given to Robert Crawford, he noted that '[i]n Arabic or Persian poetry they're rather fond of the idea that a 'divan' as they call it, a collection of poems, is something that you enter; you move around; you

can cast your eye here and there, you look, you pick, you perhaps retrace your steps'.[8]

These patterns and compositional principles have had an impact on critical reading of the poem. In the face of a long and difficult work, the strategy has consisted mainly in presenting Morgan's description, and then in attempting to demonstrate how the poem may be made to fit. Nevertheless, the most cogent analyses of 'The New Divan' to date are of two quite different types: on the one hand, dense summary accompanied by reflection on how this oriental pastiche implements postmodern literary theory; on the other, detailed close reading that attempts to make sense of each individual poem in the sequence. The former approach is that adopted by Colin Nicholson, while Rodney Edgecombe prefers the latter. Both these critics advance our understanding and appreciation of the poem. Nicholson's presentation, however, tends to foreground those lines / moments which may be read as metapoetically effective while Edgecombe, despite his clear and oft-repeated acknowledgement that the poem actively courts opacity, never stops trying to make it 'mean' in a coherent, assimilable way. In addition, Nicholson tends to simplify the homosexual thematic in the poem, claiming that by the time 'The New Divan' was published in 1977, Morgan had 'largely dispensed with coding for sexual encounters during military service in the Middle East'.[9] As I shall show later, this does not satisfactorily account for the extremely oblique way in which such 'encounters' are presented in the earlier part of the poem or interrogate how this links to the much franker exploration of gay relationships later in the sequence.

To begin with, however, I wish to argue that in this long poem Morgan's primary ambition was neither to give poetic representation to theory, nor to turn the reader into a literary detective forced to hunt down the clues to meaning. Instead, I believe that his poem intermittently reaches out to the more radical aesthetic that lies behind some types of so-called 'innovative' language-led poetry. But I shall be as interested in the possible reasons why Morgan always steps back from a full-scale adoption of such approaches. In making this argument I shall rely to some extent on the philosophy of the French writer, Gilles Deleuze. Deleuze, whose work offers a 'metaphysics in which the concept of multiplicity replaces that of substance, event replaces essence and virtuality replaces possibility' has been fundamental to much avant-garde art and poetry.[10] There is not space here to explore it in any detail but his focus on art that 'cannot be re-cognized, but

can only be sensed' was influential in the promotion of aesthetic work that – in the words of Jon Clay – 'is a real experience that proceeds by way of sensibility, the body and sensation'. Poems which take their lead from this type of philosophy are fundamentally non-representative in nature; they do not seek to produce 'a representation of a real experience that lies elsewhere . . .'.[11]

One of Nicholson's reading strategies is to examine 'The New Divan' through the prism of the poems that succeed it and he is correct in his implicit assessment that these subsequent poems offer a more explicit guide to some of what Morgan is doing in the long poem. It may well be that these shorter poems did in fact enable the author to understand his purpose better. As we move through the collection as a whole from 'Memories of Earth' onwards there is a growing sense of excited discovery, the playing of sometimes mischievous variations on the aesthetic and philosophical principles sketched out in 'The New Divan' which forms the first poem in the book.

This critical strategy can have the effect of obscuring the distinctiveness of 'The New Divan's' questing aesthetic but the general thrust of Nicholson's interpretation here is useful as he points to Plato as Morgan's nemesis in the collection, the 'big man, with big dogs' (*CP*, 359) who would police the republic of representation. In opposition, Morgan offers a poetry that appeals above all, through rhythm and metaphor, to the senses and in this context Nicholson quotes a passage from M. F. Burnyeat that might have pleased Deleuze: 'eyes and ears offer painter and poet entry into a relatively independent cognitive apparatus, associated with the senses, through which mimetic images can bypass our knowledge and infiltrate the soul'.[12]

At this point then, it is necessary to show how some of Morgan's *Divan* poems court a poetry of sensation, how he is more concerned to touch 'senses' – to use Burnyeat's term – than to conjure sense.

A key poem in this respect is 'Shaker Shaken', probably the most experimental in the collection as a whole. Nicholson mentions it in passing, saying that it 'teases sense out of mid-nineteenth century dissenters'.[13] Arguably, however, this does not go far enough. The final stanza coalesces out of Morgan's gradual addition of consonants and vowels to a Shaker sound poem of 1847 but is it really adequate to describe the conclusion as making 'sense'? Sense of a kind, perhaps, but the kind one expects from nonsense or surrealist verse. Sense is a key dimension of this poem but it is

not a 'given'; it has to be fought for and it emerges out of a poetry that emphasises bodily experience as a surer, more direct route to spiritual enlightenment.

Today, Shakers are perhaps best known for the plain but elegant style of furniture they made and the Shaker aesthetic is one that regarded the creation of carefully crafted objects as an act of prayer. Morgan's version, or translation, even, of the Shaker's act of glossolalia may be seen as satirical. The final stanza's semi-comic revelation of a 'tiger/yawning through a tuft of morning-glory' gives the lie to the original poem's religious aspiration. Nevertheless, he is interested in the way the material sounds of letters constitute a vibrant and real artistic experience for the listener. When performed aloud the effect is both amusing and moving as the poem conjures a tug of war between sound and sense that may have characterised the earliest human communities.

It is in poems like this that Morgan seems, then, to reach out towards a Deleuzian aesthetic. In his essay, 'The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy', Deleuze reflects on Plato's distinction between copies and simulacra and promotes the sensuous impact of the latter at the expense of the former.[14] 'Shaker Shaken' is primarily a language act concerned to produce sensation in the listener. It is followed immediately by a concrete poem 'Levi-Strauss at the Lie Detector' which is also a playful undermining of those – like Plato and the French structuralist, Claude Levi-Strauss – who value order over chaos. Morgan wrings the changes on the authoritarian sounding maxim 'any classification is superior to chaos' until – after three Scottish sounding 'och's – we discover that 'any class fiction is superior chaos.' (*CP*, 354)

The collection as a whole, indeed, represents a blistering assault on a western ontology that privileges sense and meaning over the playful and erotic 'jouissance' offered by bodily sensation. It is vital to note, however, that Morgan never entirely abandons the former. 'Shaker Shaken' finally gives us something approaching a lyric stanza we can understand in conventional terms. In this it repeats in more condensed and dramatic form the pattern of 'The New Divan'.

One other poem published later in the collection also facilitates the application of Deleuzian ideas and its emotional texture is strikingly similar to much of the long poem. This is the first of a series of 'Five Poems on Film Directors' and is entitled 'Antonioni' (*CP*, 362). Morgan was a particular fan of Antonioni's work – as for that matter was Gilles Deleuze – and Morgan's poem suggests an interesting coincidence of views.[15]

In his essay, 'Deleuze and Signs', André Pierre Colombat suggests that cinema's importance and fascination for Deleuze lay in the extent to which it

> is much more than a language. If it is to be compared
> to a language at all, it is very different from anything
> we usually call a language. In the case of cinema, narration
> and signification are only a consequence of an image, of
> an analogy between image and language. They are not given
> as such. The analogy between an image and language misses
> the specificity of the image itself and of the non-linguistic
> signs that compose it before it eventually becomes a narration.[16]

Morgan's poem about Antonioni generates an inconsequential and fragmented narrative about an apparently unsatisfactory relationship foundering on misunderstandings between two unnamed characters but only after foregrounding two enigmatic, disconnected images: 'Trees are drowning in salt. The keyhole whines.' Equally powerful is the evocation of the eerie sound made by tankers beyond the canal: 'their call lingers across the marches' (*CP*, 362). The poem refuses conventional narrative closure and ends by offering three alternative lines, each separated by an 'or', that purport to summarise the activity or life of the male character in the poem.

> He lives on peppermints and blues
> or
> He is tearing photographs for a living
> or
> He has been sent death, is opening it
> or (*CP*, 362)

Here, Morgan is not interested in making sense of the characters' story but is clearly concerned with 'the specificity of the image itself', what Colombat calls an 'assignifying sign' which does not find 'its ultimate condition of possibility in the necessary abstraction of a signified'.[17]

Indeed, it is worth comparing Morgan's poem to Antonioni's own commentary in a piece entitled 'The Event and the Image' in which the director writes about seeing a drowned man dragged up onto the beach at the beginning of the Second World War:[18]

> It was wartime. I was at Nice, waiting for a visa to go to Paris to join Marcel Carné [. . .]. They were days full of impatience and boredom, and of news about a war which stood still on an absurd thing called the Maginot Line. Suppose one had to construct a bit of film, based on this event and on this state of mind. I would try first to remove the actual event from the scene, and leave only the image described in the first four lines. In that white sea-front, that lonely figure, that silence, there seems to me to be an extraordinary strength of impact. The event here adds nothing: it is superfluous. I remember very well that I was interested, when it happened. The dead man acted as a distraction to a state of tension.

As John Marks comments: 'The actual event, the incident that occurred, can be dispensed with, in favour of a sort of immanent event which is contained in the waiting, the boredom, the emptiness of the landscape. Antonioni creates a bloc of percepts and affects'.[19]

Antonioni's description is resonant and reminds us – as does the film poem itself – of both the landscapes and characters of 'The New Divan', a poem described by some as Morgan's 'war poem' but from which, arguably, the central event of the War itself has been removed. As Colombat remarks, 'Deleuze's thought has been characterised [. . .] as an immanent thought of the multiple'.[20] In 'The New Divan' the War is the central event that is immanent, one whose effects and affects echo, sometimes intensely, through the vast spans of time and space traversed by the poem itself. It is mostly an eerily absent presence, like the sound of that tanker in the poem about Antonioni. Occasionally – as in the vivid poems towards the end of the sequence – it flares into memory or wavers uneasily into sight like a desert mirage, like an unexpected image from a film by Tarkovsky.

Indeed, the aesthetic innovations of post-war Europe, particularly those of the 'nouveau roman' and the films of Antonioni, are cited by Marks as the context in which Deleuze's work on the event in cinema must be read. 'War', Marks writes:[21]

> as an 'event' tends to reveal the inadequacies of conventional realism. Moments of conflict are inextricably linked with an immense network of effects, long-term causes and consequences

> (. . .) The event of war becomes associated with other, enigmatic 'events' such as the 'phoney war', and the Cold War introduces a new war of waiting and displaced conflict. The empty space, the tiredness of the human body, that which comes before and after, the story that can only be told *in filigree*, all find expression in the films of Antonioni.

And so we have here, perhaps, a more profound explanation for the linguistic textures and strategies of 'The New Divan', a poem that implicitly acknowledges the impossibility of adequately representing the Second World War in language and choreographs instead an evocation of its sensational reverberations through time and space.

Is it possible, therefore, to pick out specific poems from 'The New Divan' that point the way forward to the aesthetics of poems like 'Shaker Shaken' or 'Antonioni'? It is easier, certainly, to find examples of the latter but the sound-based gymnastics of the former may also be detected.

Poem 6 in the sequence, for example, opens with an exclamation remarkable for its awkwardness: 'What a tottering veil to call an expanse / of desire demure by!' (*CP*, 296). The sense, presumably, is that the 'tottering veil' or mosquito net inadequately obscures the bed on which two lovers have been engaged. But veils don't usually 'totter' and the colloquial syntax which forces a line ending with a preposition makes it more rather than less difficult to see what is actually depicted. These lines are as rumpled as the bed they seem to evoke. As in some of Antonioni's scenes, the main event that has brought the lovers together is missing and we are left with an aftermath traversed by haunting images: the 'engine hissing past the harvest' (why not a 'train' or a 'tractor'?) and the 'girl walk[ing] her dog in mist'. Both images make the location of this episode uncertain. This is compounded by the introduction of a parrot, lightning, a coffee-boy and grapeseeds which lightly colour in an oriental setting once more. Rodney Edgecombe relates the crouching figure of the final lines to the bear-like character of an earlier poem (no.4) in the sequence, identifying him as a disguised version of Morgan's lover, John Scott, but it is equally worth considering the extent to which the poem is simply language-led at this point, the addition of a single consonant, 'r', to the word 'couch' *shaking* the scene into a different position, possibly a different place.[22]

Critics such as Edgecombe might object that the 'main event' as I have

described it is much more forcibly presented in the previous poem and that it is quite possible to make the connections and read poems 4, 5 and 6 as a triptych. This is true, but the fact is that Morgan presents them as discrete entities, as if each one is a 'shot' he wishes us to savour or experience in its own right. This sequence of shots may be connected at this point in the poem but linkages will soon be broken, the narrative distances we have to travel over to keep the poem making a kind of conventional sense will become greater. The cumulative effect of this process is to force readers to live as intensely as the poet's language will allow in the moment of the individual poem, downgrading the business of sense making and upgrading the sometimes wayward sensations produced by difficult syntax and disconnected imagery. The reading experience is deliberately frustrating for us because 'sense' is always there, intermittently present within individual poems but often just beyond the bounds, the frame, of the one on which we are currently concentrating. As with 'Shaker Shaken' we keep wanting to add a syllable or a consonant here or there, notice a link, but when we do that the pay-off is not always enlightening.

Similarly, Edgecombe reads poem 48 as being about 'the origin of all religious feeling worship of power prompted by fear'[23] – but there are lines where the image coheres to make sense in ways that foreground opacity, difficulty and polysemy. Thus, in line 3 'only cracks broke in whipped thunder': the image may evoke the gods cracking the whip of thunder but it could also mean that the attempt to whip thunder was cracked / broken / unsuccessful. 'A cigarette adventuring / missed the swift gaff': one can see the glow of the cigarette and the fish hook cast swiftly into the lake but in what sense does it '*miss*' 'the swift gaff'? And 'gaff' has other meanings too. It can mean trick, swindle as well as mistake, thus the word prompts thoughts of the overall mistake the poem attacks, namely religious belief. The following line reads: 'The site / of grounded nightfishers glowed red as tracer.' What *exactly* is a 'nightfisher'? In what *precise* sense are they 'grounded'? The use of the word 'site' in this context is disorienting and the way it glows 'red as tracer' suggests military connotations. *Whose* 'Behaviour / grumbles but mocks black zodiacs yet.'? Why 'zodiacs' rather than 'stars'? And who is absent in the final lines of the poem, the lords or the villagers? (*CP*, 311) I make no apology for leaving these as questions in the face of Edgecombe's heroic attempts to answer them. This is a poem that *enacts* rather than simply *signifies* its subject matter.

Morgan himself suggested that poem 50, being the half way point, might be a significant one for the poem's overall sense.[24] And Robert Crawford, arguing for the poet's unquenchable optimism, extracts a positive message for the future from the image of the frail sycamore seed lying 'on the battered rim / of a tin bowl' near 'the grave of the sisters' discovered in a burnt-out village.[25] But is this the experience / sensation conveyed to the reader via the contracting lines, the sudden 'falls' brought about by line breaks?

Years
leave what, ashes? to put a stick into –
until we came to the grave of the sisters
and there on the battered rim
of a tin bowl war had disdainfully
spared we saw the winged
seed of a sycamore, all
their memorial, oh our loved and fated! (*CP*, 311)

The Second World War, perhaps, hoves into view again, briefly, at mid point – although it is generic enough to be any war – but it does not stay, offers no sense of resolution; it is again an aftermath that we witness, a Tarkovskian image of fragility, an *atmosphere* rather than a *meaning*.

In poem 56, where we are offered a metaphor for the Cheshire Cat-like behaviour of linguistic meaning in the poem as a whole, a waterfall simultaneously presents and withdraws the shapes of a hieroglyph. '[T]here was no legend to tell us' whose eyes and mouth momentarily coalesce from the water. Instead, we hear disconnected sounds – 'the hooting of far-away ships', 'crickets in the grass' – reminiscent of the engine going past the harvest in the earlier poem and anticipating the tanker call in 'Antonioni'. These sounds then give way in the imagination of the narrator to an undefined 'procession of scenes' that hesitate, 'rejected by the melancholy / of a frozen mile-off regard / signalling without sense from its shroud.' (*CP*, 313-14) The senselessness is key. One is reminded strongly here of Deleuze's recognition in Antonioni's work of 'the treatment of limit situations which pushes them to the point of dehumanised landscapes, of emptied spaces that might be seen as having absorbed characters and actions, retaining only a geophysical description, an abstract inventory of them'.[26]

The 'regard' of the unidentified, barely-present consciousness is simply there, an existence that signals, but what it signals beyond existence itself is not the point.

Other, later poems in the sequence offer glimpses of the guardians of an older order grasping in vain at a 'pattern / a swirling moment gave'. These 'disoriented angels hooked on sense' (*CP*, 319) give way hopelessly to the amoral, only partially competent inventories of computers that seem equally as capable of missing, of misrepresenting 'the injuries / of merely mortal times' as their celestial forerunners (*CP*, 327). This poem, number 92 in the sequence, is semi-concrete in style as it incorporates the apparently random 'voice' of the computer. This is important because it reminds us of Morgan's comment about the way concrete poetry makes the writing of traditional long poems a difficult business, suggesting implicitly that *this* long poem takes its cues from more contemporary sources of inspiration.

At this point it is worth turning to the complementary evidence provided by Morgan's private library, gifted to the Mitchell Library over the course of the 1990s. My analysis of these poems within 'The New Divan' suggests that in the 1970s Morgan was attracted by attitudes to language that lie at the heart of the experimental poetries typified by figures such as Charles Bernstein, Lyn Hejinian, Susan Howe and Michael Palmer. At some point in the early 70s he read and was extremely taken by the younger American experimentalist Rosemary Waldrop's thesis *Against Language?* which traces avant-garde attitudes to language over the course of the twentieth century.[27] His copy of this book is heavily annotated and it would be impossible to list all the passages he underlined that have clear parallels with the kind of techniques and principles I have been examining in 'The New Divan'. Yet what is perhaps most distinctive about Morgan's attitude to language poetries in general is the implied reservations and the limited acceptance of its techniques into his own poetry. In Waldrop's book, for instance, he carefully noted that André Breton 'does not want to destroy the cognitive aspect of language of which he is very aware'.[28] His own lecture on language poetries given at the University of Liverpool in 1989 is enthusiastic: 'Much language poetry', he writes

> has neither image clusters nor a recognisable syntax . . . this makes it harder, but does it make it worse? If there is no human situation, do we switch off, or on the contrary do we bend closer? Whether or not

> all this will stay in the mind is perhaps less important than whether the reader is going to be forced to bring forward a new kind of short term attentiveness.[29]

Perhaps he was thinking here, too, of the type he cultivates within the short individual lyrics of 'The New Divan'. Nevertheless, despite his openness to what writers like Silliman and Hejinian were doing and his astute close readings of their poems, the figure he prefers above all is the poet, Michael Palmer, who, as Morgan says 'would never belong to the purist rebarbative end of the language writing spectrum'.[30] Palmer is the language poet whose work is most represented in Morgan's library and towards the end of his lecture Morgan focuses attention on Palmer's 1988 collection, *Sun*, and notes how it closes 'with a remarkable and powerful poem, also called 'Sun', which kicks very hard against the traces of non-referentiality and seems to offer a new phase of development'.[31]

The fact is that Morgan always felt it necessary to return at some point to the 'human situation' and to trace its emergence or permit its re-emergence and I should like to end this essay by considering how his treatment of love and sex within 'The New Divan' is paradigmatic of precisely this pattern within his work as a whole and how it offers a way of understanding better the distinctive opacity of this long poem in particular.

I have already indicated my reservations regarding Colin Nicholson's description of the homosexual dimension in 'The New Divan' and it is worth looking in more detail at the way he approaches this topic because it takes us to the heart of the rather limited role sometimes accorded to homosexuality within Morgan's poetry. Nicholson opens the chapter that deals with 'The New Divan' by tracing Morgan's 'representations of sexuality' through the previous major collection, *From Glasgow to Saturn*, and the translations of *Rites of Passage*, right up to collections published during the 1990s.[32] 'The New Divan' figures in this trajectory as a poem that 'has largely dispensed with coding for sexual encounters during military service in the Middle East.' This statement is reinforced by a quotation from an interview Morgan gave which Nicholson uses to suggest that 'the range of Morgan's attention socialises by opening out homoerotic experience, and he is not attracted by the idea of writing for an exclusive readership'.[33] Nicholson notes that Morgan made his comments about these matters in 1988 but the way this information is presented glosses over the fact that this

was at least a full ten years after the writing and publication of 'The New Divan'.

There are two main points I should like to make here. First of all, Nicholson's description does not account for the specific trajectory of 'The New Divan' as far as representations of sexuality are concerned. 'The New Divan' is remarkable in that it contains poems where homosexual relationships are coded or hinted at in a very oblique manner as well as poems that are quite frank in their treatment. I shall return to this issue shortly. Secondly, Nicholson's critique is aimed at directing attention away from Morgan's depiction of homosexual experience in and for itself. Nicholson acknowledges it as an important element in Morgan's work but seems more interested in the gay love lyrics, for example, as 'Morgan's versions of subject-formation'[34] while the phrase 'opening out homosexual experience' is reminiscent of the way in which critics of John Ashbery's poetry, for example, often use homosexual themes mainly as a tool 'best deployed at the service of other, larger, more shared systems of meaning'.[35]

Roughly one quarter of the poems in 'The New Divan' are about love and / or sex. There are others where these are tangential issues. Our introduction to this theme is via an early poem where some knowledge of homosexual slang helps the reader to identify the participants. Here is poem 4 in its entirety:

> I suppose having a bear for sentinel
> you don't need passwords? In your grotesque
> courtyard a pot of honey's all we had
> for sesame, two salmon for shazam. Relations
> are excellent with a full bear. Also
> some wine, we left him dancing like
> a madman in a play. So you threw on
> your pyjamas for a chess party, got
> the cook roused up, who brought oiled paper
> hot with sweetmeats before checkmate. On
> the stroke of one the bear snored. (*CP*, 296)

Rodney Edgecombe reads the figure of John Scott into the 'bear' of this poem, justifying this by relating some details back to lyrics in *From Glasgow to Saturn* and pointing to the northern location of the bedside scenes pre-

sented in poems 5 and 6.[36] But it is not simply that the man is 'bear-like', as Edgecombe puts it. He is 'a bear', which is a term for a large, hairy, often older gay man. This helps to understand the reference to 'a full bear' which – although its primary sense here is simply 'full up' or 'sated' – may also imply the existence of 'cubs' and indeed of many other types of gay bear. This term has been in circulation since the 1970s at least and pre-Aids was used of primarily rural, blue collar masculine gay men. John Scott does not necessarily fade from view in this context but that is not really the point. Morgan is writing in code and he could scarcely give us a clearer hint than he does in the first two lines which ironically and mischievously suggest the lack of any need for 'passwords'.

I have already drawn attention earlier to the awkwardness of expression at the start of poem 6 and to the dislocating effects of its imagery. Other early poems in the sequence deploy non-gender specific pronouns in ways that we have come to recognise as markers of homosexuality, while in poem 12 there is a reference to 'the common rumpled bed' where the adjective 'common' is also a tell-tale signal that might be redundant in a heterosexual scene.[37] The fact remains, however, that Morgan is actually quite explicit about these modes of indirection which is one reason for believing that the nature of the trajectory I am in the process of describing was conceived by Morgan as one of his poem's main subjects. The first four lines of poem 26 plainly state the motive for writing as he does: 'To take without anxiety the love / you think fate might have left you is / hard, when the brassy years without it / have left an acid on the ease of purpose.' (*CP*, 303) The key word here is 'hard'. If the poem as a whole is 'hard', is difficult, it is partly because the narrator's experience of love has been hard. After this admission, poem 26 immediately takes off on the road of misdirection, cueing the appearance of yet another Antonioni-like heterosexual couple. Progressively the manner becomes less oblique. There is not space here to examine it in detail but poem 38 then offers a half-way house of sorts between the coded antics of the opening numbers and the documentary style vignettes of poems 86 and 87 where the soldier and friend, Cosgrove, makes his appearance.

What I am suggesting, therefore, is that – as in the poetry of John Ashbery – homosexuality 'hypostasizes' in many of the poems in this sequence 'via his style, whose most striking operations are concealment and misdirection'.[38] But again – and this is the crucial nuance – as in Ashbery's

work this hypostasization of homosexuality is 'simultaneous with its presence'. John Emil Vincent has drawn attention to a number of Ashbery poems where references to homosexuality are relatively clear, but pointed to the fact that these poems 'still behave differently'.[39]

What we are dealing with in 'The New Divan', therefore, is nothing less than a depiction over the course of some 100 poems of a process of difficult 'coming out', of coming to terms in all senses of that expression, a veritable rite of passage. This aesthetic, like Ashbery's, is essentially mimetic in character. Like Ashbery, Morgan 'writes homosexual lives as difficult on a quotidian lived level, a difficulty that invites an analogy to his own poetic *difficulty*'.[40]

Vincent states that while Ashbery's poetry is 'not *only* addressed to homosexuals, it does suggest that he has particular designs for serving an audience of homosexuals'.[41] This returns us again to the terms of the interview quoted by Nicholson to back up his description of Morgan's outgoing aesthetic: 'But a great many things', Morgan states, 'seem to me to have a general appeal, even though they have a special appeal as well'.[42] It is frankly *not simply* a question of emphasis. Nicholson uses the passage to stress the way homosexuality in Morgan's work acts as a kind of 'irrigation canal', – to adopt Vincent's expression – opening up areas of obscurity, leading to more generally shared (read 'heterosexual') subject matter. And it is true that Morgan himself often thinks of the non-gender specific nature of some of the love poetry as a way of making it available to many different kinds of people. Nevertheless, in this passage, Morgan keeps the needs of a gay readership in mind as well. One of the reasons this is important is because – as Vincent explains – 'figurations of generality as heterosexual must always be interrogated, because not only do they elbow homosexuality out of the frame, they also deny (by ignoring) any complicated way of inhabiting a *heterosexual* subjecthood'.[43] Passing acknowledgements of the sexually coded nature of Morgan's writing enables a criticism that foregrounds, often in accurate and sophisticated terms, its profoundly postmodern character. My point is that this is not *sufficient* and actually obscures the human pain at the heart of this poetry, a pain which keeps it alive and active.

Again, somewhat paradoxically, it is the specific character of the gay affairs detailed in 'The New Divan' that sheds light on what some have recognised as the shifting, imprecise, enigmatic qualities of many of the individual poems. Few of these poems, for example, are poems that evoke in-

tensely an individual, specific place. The exceptions are those closing poems where the homosexual affairs are treated explicitly, where the romantic crush on his friend Cosgrove is evoked (poem 86). Otherwise, the Orient we are presented with by Morgan is deeply unstable, a space – historical, intellectual, emotional – rather than a place. In passing, one might note here links to a Deleuzian valorisation of nomadic space over 'socioideological' place.[44] Equally useful parallels are those to be made with John Ashbery's poetry. Vincent notes how Ashbery offers 'a poetics whereby a cruising reader does not look to "get to know" the poet or speaker, but rather seeks an encounter with a poet or speaker who will afterward walk away still anonymous'. Vincent quotes Michael Warner who notes that Ashbery's poetry is not one that features the pleasures of stable relationships: 'Contrary to myth, what one relishes in loving strangers is not mere anonymity, nor meaningless release. It is the pleasure of belonging to a sexual world, in which one's sexuality finds an answering resonance not just in one other, but in a world of others'.[45] Here, the many 'others', heterosexual as well as homosexual, who coalesce momentarily in 'The New Divan' come into view. And it is worth recognising that the very last gay encounter (poem 98) described here and placed immediately before the poem's most visually intense evocation of violent death (poem 99), is one that celebrates 'the body, not the heart'. (*CP*, 329). Here romantic Cosgrove is replaced by an anonymous Squaddie. What's more it focuses on an incidental of the act itself that clearly figures its absolutely disposable character:

> We'd our black comedy too
> the night you got up, on Mount Carmel,
> with a dog's turd flattened on your shirt-front:
> not funny, you said.
> Well, it was all a really unwashable laundry
> that finally had to be thrown away.

What is cast away here is as much a poetry of epiphanic, lyric closure as an old shirt. The moment of climax is one of deflation; it is discarded as quickly as all the other evocations of sexual liaisons that pepper the 'Divan' before the protagonists cruise on to some other destination, some other time.

Inevitably, because of its position in the sequence it casts an awkward light on poem 99 which is remarkable for its vividness. To suggest that this

juxtaposition implies the disposability of human bodies in war as in sex would be monstrous although it is a cliché of so much comment on the experience of war that it does concentrate the appetite. To interpret these poems in this way would be to ignore the specific tone of each: the rueful regret of 98 at a farewell made in silence, the implicit tenderness and pity that leaks from the image of the dead soldier 'light as a child / rolling from side to side of the canvas' in poem 99. But the most important function of the juxtaposition lies elsewhere. Both these poems foreground the frail, bestained human body as the only reality worth fighting for. I have stated that this is a war poem in which the war is present by virtue of its absence. This is true right up until its appearance in the very late poems of the sequence. But now it confronts us viscerally in the penultimate poem, stripped back to its essence: a body from which life has departed. It is a mark of humanity's shame. It follows poems about human sexuality some of which – to deploy Vincent's description of Ashbery again – 'gesture back to the missing origin of the central evasion and omission, homosexual content'.[46] It follows a poem where, finally, the unmistakable mark of the act itself is presented, a mark not of shame but, in this instance, of sheepish complicity that dissolves in humour. The war that is present in 'The New Divan' is, in other words, a gay man's war, one that cannot be articulated in the same manner as his heterosexual compatriots. As Vincent writes, '[h]omosexual and heterosexual desire and bonds, given their different cultural valuation, have entirely different available narratives, legality, forms of expression, as well as different available relations to abstraction, specification, self-definition, community, ritual, temporality, and spatiality'.[47] As with sex, so with the War: missing, hypostasized, fleetingly present, fundamental.

Notes

1 Edwin Morgan, 'The New Divan', *The New Divan* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1977). Further references to this long poem and to other poems in the collection will be to the versions published in the *Collected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1990) and incorporated into the text after quotations in the form *CP* followed by the relevant page number.

2 See for example James McGonigal, *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan* (Dingwall: Sandstone Press, 2010), p.44.

3 Iain Crichton Smith, 'The Public and Private Morgan', *About Edwin Morgan* edited by Robert Crawford and Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p.46.
4 Patrick Crotty, 'That Caledonian Antisyzygy', *Poetry Ireland*, 63 (1999), 89-96 (p.90).
5 See Rory Watson, '"Death's Proletariat": Scottish Poets of the Second World War', *The Oxford Handbook of British and Irish War Poetry*, ed. by Tim Kendall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.315-39.
6 Morgan's manuscripts are deposited in the Special Collections of Glasgow University Library at 'MS Morgan: 1-920'. See also McGonigal, p.87.
7 Marshall Walker, 'Let's Go,', *Nothing Not Giving Messages*, ed. by Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990), pp.54-85 (p.56).
8 Robert Crawford, 'Nothing is not giving messages', in *Nothing Not Giving Messages*, pp.118-43 (p.136).
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10 D. Smith, and J. Protevi, 'Gilles Deleuze', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 edn), ed. by Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/deleuze/>.
11 Jon Clay, *Sensation, Contemporary Poetry and Deleuze* (London: Continuum, 2010), p.19.
12 Nicholson, p.124, quoting M. F. Burnyeat, 'Art and Mimesis in Plato's "Republic"', *London Review of Books*, 21 May 1998, pp.8-9.
13 Nicholson, p.125.
14 Gilles Deleuze, 'The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy', an appendix to *The Logic of Sense*, trans. by Mark Lester, with Charles Stivale, and ed. by Constantin V. Boundas (London: Continuum, 2003).
15 See Crawford, p.128, for Morgan's early love of film. Mark Smith also confirmed, in conversation with me, Morgan's particular admiration for Antonioni.
16 A. P. Colombat, 'Deleuze and Signs', *Deleuze and Literature*, ed. by Ian Buchanan and John Marks (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp.14-33, p.23.
17 Colombat, p.18.
18 M. Antonioni, 'The Event and the Image', *Sight and Sound* (Winter, 1963-4), p.14, quoted by John Marks, 'Underworld: The People are Missing', in *Deleuze and Literature*, pp.80-99, p.83.
19 Marks, pp.83-4.
20 Colombat, p.18.
21 Marks, pp.82-3. McGonigal, pp.203-4, makes clear how memories of the War came flooding back to Morgan in the early 70s via a series of dreams and television reporting of the Yom Kippur war.
22 Edgecombe, 64.
23 Ibid.
24 Crawford, 'Nothing not giving messages', pp.135-6.
25 Robert Crawford, 'The Whole Morgan', in *About Edwin Morgan*, ed. by Robert Crawford and Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp.10-24, p.22.
26 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis, 1989), p.5, quoted by Marks, p.83.

27 Rosmarie Waldrop, *Against Language?* (Mouton: The Hague, 1971).
28 Waldrop, p.25.
29 Morgan, 'Language, poetry, and language poetry', *The Kenneth Allott Lectures* (Liverpool Classical Monthly, Department of Classics & Archaeology, 1990), p.10.
30 *Ibid.*, p.12.
31 *Ibid.*, p.12.
32 Nicholson, p.104. Morgan, *From Glasgow to Saturn* (Cheadle: Carcanet Press, 1973); *Rites of Passage* (Manchester, 1976).
33 Nicholson, p.105.
34 Nicholson, p.104.
35 John Vincent, *Queer Lyrics: Difficulty and Closure in American Poetry* (New York, 2002), p.31.
36 Edgecombe, p.50. McGonigal states that Scott was 'small and wiry' (p.132) so Edgecombe's interpretation seems dubious here.
37 See Christopher Whyte, *Modern Scottish Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004) for a discussion of the coded nature of Morgan's love poetry.
38 Vincent, p.34.
39 Vincent, p.38.
40 Vincent, p.32.
41 Vincent, p.38.
42 Nicholson, p.105 quoting Morgan's interview with C. Whyte, 'Power from things not declared', *Nothing Not Giving Messages*, pp.144-87, pp.185-6.
43 Vincent, p.31.
44 For an interesting discussion of Deleuze's impact on poetic depictions of space and place in contemporary innovative poetry see Clay, pp.133-51. The term 'socio-ideological' is attributed to Mikhail Bakhtin by Dennis Walker in a passage cited by Clay, p.133.
45 Vincent, pp.9-10 quoting Michael Warner, *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics and the Ethics of Queer Life*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p.179.
46 Vincent, p.34.
47 Vincent, p.30.

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Experimenting with the Verbivocovisual: Edwin Morgan's Early Concrete Poetry

In *The Order of Things: An Anthology of Scottish Sound, Pattern and Concrete Poems*, Ken Cockburn and Alec Finlay suggest that with the advent of concrete poetry, 'Scotland connected to an international avant-garde movement in a manner barely conceivable today'. The 'classic phase' of concrete poetry in Scotland, they note, begins around 1962, and, referencing Stephen Scobie, they point out that it should probably be regarded as an experiment in late modernism in its concerns with 'self-reflexiveness, juxtaposition and simultanism'.[1] Some of the chief concerns of concrete poetry were therefore to expand upon the conceptual possibilities of poetry itself, instilling it with a new energy which could then radiate off the page, or the alternative medium on which it was presented. Both Edwin Morgan and Ian Hamilton Finlay were instantly drawn to these contrasts between the word, its verbal utterance and its overall visual impact (or, as termed in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, its 'verbivocovisual presentements', which the Brazilian *Noigandres* later picked up on). Although going on to become the form's main proponents within Scotland, Morgan and Finlay recognised from early on that its Scottish reception most likely be frosty (with Hugh MacDiarmid famously asserting that 'these spatial arrangements of isolated letters and geometrically placed phrases, etc. have nothing whatever to do with poetry – any more than mud pies can be called architecture').[2] Both poets nonetheless entered into correspondence with key pioneering practitioners across the globe, and were united in their defence of the potential and legitimacy of the form. As will be shown, the participation of Morgan and Finlay in this 'concrete moment' in early 1960s Scotland also helps to illuminate crucial tensions between tradition and modernity (or late modernism) evident within the literary and cultural zeitgeist of the time. While Morgan and Finlay were drawn to the form for different reasons, the debates around concrete reveal an insightful and detailed cultural snapshot of the period. Although concrete poetry is often readily dismissed as play, not 'serious'

poetry, as will be shown, for Morgan the move towards concrete was clearly justified and also a liberating in several important respects.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Morgan's poetic career has been his self-confessed anti-traditionalist approach, and, connected to this, his openness to contemporaneity and significant cultural and technological shifts. For Morgan, the spatial transformations offered by the sixties (for example, in design culture, to name just one), offered the potential for a radical revisioning of society. One of the appeals of concrete was therefore the experimentation it offered between linearity and spatiality. This, in Morgan's view, extended to clear parallels within 'life itself', that is, with the world that was radically changing 'outside' the text:

> The battle between linearity and spatiality which concrete reflects is something that is in life itself and is going to have far-reaching consequences . . . When you enter a very modern newly-designed shop or a large open-plan house you may have feelings of unease, you don't see the familiar signposts and you don't quite know where to go or what to do – this is because the concept of space has taken over and it needs some adjustment on your part . . . The problem of concrete, then, is not hard to relate if you start to think about it, to changes that are going on in our society. And if it is important that the arts should be sensitive to these movements of thought and movements of perception which affect or are going to affect people's lives, and I certainly think this is part of their function, then concrete poetry has its place.[3]

This statement appears in notes prepared for a talk on concrete in the early sixties. In these papers from his personal archive, Morgan explains that he has not simply 'gone over' to concrete. Rather, he explains, 'to me it is a sideline which I find useful and rewarding for producing certain effects'. One of the most important effects of concrete on its readership or audience, he explains, is its ability to challenge the 'well-known insularity' not only within Scottish literary culture, but in the UK more widely: 'The English Channel is a pretty narrow strip of water . . . but it's remarkable what an effective barrier it can be for the passage of ideas'. The experimentation with form offered by concrete therefore discourages 'laziness and torpor', especially since, 'the majority of English poets since the war have been busy stacking their neat little bundles of firewood, but they have stopped planting trees'.[4]

For Morgan, concrete poetry therefore offered an appropriate medium for the much-needed transformation of the poetic, at a crucial time:

> The young painter or sculptor, for example, is working today in an atmosphere of marked creative excitement. This doesn't mean that the assemblages of Rauschenberg or the luminous pictures of John Healey represent the directions art has to take: it is simply that the artist feels himself to be in the midst of a varied and vigorous range of aesthetic activity. The English poet, on the other hand, has been containing himself with a narrowed spectrum in which the traditional looms large and the exploratory has been almost forgotten.[5]

Morgan felt that this reluctance towards the exploratory, this antipathy towards experimentation, was too engrained in British, and, by extension, Scottish culture, and this was, of course, one of the key reasons why he was drawn to the experimentation of the Beats in the USA and to developments in concrete poetry as they were emerging in Brazil, Switzerland and Sweden. As I have commented elsewhere, in the early 1960s Morgan was acutely aware of the problematic nature of tradition weighing down on the shoulders of young Scottish poets.[6] This is perhaps most famously explored in his article 'The Beatnik in the Kailyaird' (1962), where he expresses his view that Scottish culture had become too conservative in outlook, too married to the 'ghost of their country's history'.[7] On the one hand, Morgan observes, 'intellectuals and reformers, of course, must guard against lashing themselves into a fury over the Kailyaird' unnecessarily, yet, on the other, he maps out the need for Scottish literary criticism to become more attuned to international literary developments, to seek new forms of inspiration with which to energise from within.[8] For Morgan, this moment in the early sixties represents a much-needed turning point, a moment of reflection in Scottish poetry, in which to stake stock and to challenge the dominance of the Scottish Literary Renaissance and its focus on synthetic Scots as the primary medium for artistic expression. Instead, as he points out, 'it would seem sensible to preserve an unanguished flexibility in this matter of language, suiting your diction to your subject, or to the occasion and the audience.'[9] Morgan suggests that there is 'an important place for sentiment and pathos in any literature,' yet the main issue, he finds, is that the Scottish Renaissance has become too removed from the world 'out there':

> It has allowed life, in Scotland and elsewhere, to move on rapidly and ceaselessly in directions it chooses not to penetrate, and the result in 1960 is a gap between the literary and the public experience which is surprising and indeed shocking in a country as small as Scotland . . . Almost no interest has been taken by established writers in Scotland in the postwar literary developments in America and on the continent. Ignorance is not apologized for.[10]

While Morgan's criticism is most often carefully and thoughtfully balanced, some of his early sixties outbursts appear uncharacteristically angry by comparison. In this way, Morgan inadvertently became an important spokesperson for many of the younger generation of writers and critics who had been feeling increasingly disinvested and excluded from the literary culture at the time. While certainly not a lone voice, he is perhaps one of the most eloquent on these matters. Despite his frustration with the literary scene, Morgan nonetheless managed to critique it from within rather than rejecting it outright, as many of his peers were drawn to do, and, looking back on his interventions it seems that, whether consciously or otherwise, his role was that of intermediary between the overtly angry young writers (including Ian Hamilton Finlay, Alan Jackson, Alex Neish and Alexander Trocchi) and the more established and mainstream writers who they were evidently kicking against (Hugh MacDiarmid, of course, being the principal figure here).[11]

Many of these tensions were famously brought to a head in 1962 at the International Writers' Conference in Edinburgh.[12] This was an event that was to have significant historical resonance around the world due to both the sheer volume and international profile of its attendees. The 'Scottish Writing Today' debates, held on the second day of the Conference, were particularly scandalous and controversial.[13] Morgan was invited to speak on a panel which included Hugh MacDiarmid and Alexander Trocchi, and subsequently found himself in the cross-fire that ensued between Trocchi's denouncement of the contemporary Scottish literary scene and, by contrast, MacDiarmid's antipathy towards what he dismissed as mere beatnik, naïve exuberance.[14] In these debates Morgan was firmly on the side of the anti-traditionalists, and took this opportunity to challenge the reluctance towards experimentation that he found embedded in the Scottish literary scene:

> I think provincial and philistine are two of the words one would certainly have to apply to what one sees around one at present. I think that one has also to see Scotland not just at the edge of Europe . . . but also, in a sense, as the edge of something else, at the edge of America. I think this also has to be taken into account . . . We have had far too much tradition in the last fifty years and we want to wake ourselves up and realize that things are happening at the present time and are in the consciousness of everybody, [and these] are the things that a writer ought to be feeling and writing about. Things that are perhaps expressing ones reactions to world events, to international events, this is something that ought to be being thought about . . . I think that is what makes Scotland purely provincial, that the things that are really happening in the world, and affecting the whole world are not being sufficiently being taken into account.[15]

In his accompanying article in the conference programme, entitled 'The Young Writer in Scotland', the strength of Morgan's convictions on this issue are again reinforced: 'History will sigh with relief when it has finally dragged or cajoled our reluctant, suspicious, complaining country into the second half of the twentieth century!'[16]

For Morgan, concrete poetry therefore presented an ideal means through which to get beyond the narrowly national and to explore new horizons. Reflecting back on experimentation taking place during the sixties in Scotland during a talk at the Edinburgh Festival in 2002, Morgan pointed out the seemingly paradoxical notion that concrete poetry was both an international movement and yet strangely peripheral at the same time. Concrete poetry, he writes, 'was an international movement that turned out to be strong in Scotland but not in England. When Ian Hamilton Finlay and I began to publish our concrete poetry, eyebrows were raised; could this be poetry? Could this be Scottish? I was ready to answer Yes to both charges. It was a new time'.[17] While this statement might appear rather odd given that there were only two main proponents of the form within Scotland at the time and yet several in England (including Dom Sylvester Houédard, Bob Cobbing and John Furnival), for Morgan the effects of this formal experimentation, its ability to deflect the ripples of literary nationalism and generally shake up the literary culture, was nonetheless more strongly evidenced in the Scottish context. With Morgan's translations of some of the

Brazilian *Noigandres* poets and Ian Hamilton Finlay's *Poor.Old.Tired.Horse*, the profile of concrete poetry in Scotland was certainly strong, even if Morgan's point about its representation in England remains debatable.[18] As James McGonigal points out in *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan*, the English concrete poet, and Benedictine monk, Dom Sylvester Houédard (or dsh, as he was known), for example, actually had a vital role in shaping aspects of the small press scene within Scotland at the time, therefore highlighting the interconnectedness of Scottish and English forms of the genre at an intrinsic level:

> Dom Sylvester was staying at Pluscarden Abbey near Elgin in November 1964, working on biblical translation, but was also in contact with a postgraduate student in Edinburgh, Robert Tait, who wanted him to give a talk there. Dom Sylvester visited [Edwin Morgan] for tea in his new flat in Whittinghame Court at that time, and made a striking impression in his black Benedictine cloak on Great Western Road. He gave him a handful of his typestracts. They also met the following evening in Robert Tait's flat. A year later, after a visit by Gael Turnbull and Michael Shayer of Migrant Press to Prinknash Abbey, we find Dom Sylvester suggesting the need for a critical magazine in Scotland, and also that Robert Tait . . . would be the person to be involved in it. This would come to pass, when [Edwin Morgan] and the Edinburgh poet Robert Garioch co-edited *Scottish International* with Tait from 1968 until 1970, continuing thereafter as editorial advisers until 1974.'[19]

While the English context of concrete poetry was undeniably strong, for Morgan, nonetheless, the effects of the form generated more impact within the relatively smaller literary culture of Scotland.

For Marjorie Perloff, one of the key critics of experimental writing, concrete poetry is also deeply associated with the peripheries. In her book *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century*, Perloff notes that while concrete was an important international movement, it was strikingly unusual in that it first began to appear largely outside of the major metropolitan centres:

> When the revival came after World War II, it occurred not in Paris, where the postwar ethos was one of existentialist introspection as to

> how France had taken such a terribly wrong turn in the pre-Hitler years, and certainly not in the war capitals, Berlin, Rome, Moscow – but on the periphery: in Sweden (Fahlström), Switzerland (Eugen Gomringer), Austria (Ernst Jandl), Scotland (Ian Hamilton Finlay), and especially Sâo Paulo, Brazil.'[20]

The impulse for, and the drive behind concrete poetry, she feels, is therefore largely entwined with postwar recovery and, reflected in this light, it becomes rather obvious why these experimental hubs were often in a sense, decentred. It was not just its Scottish exponents who felt that concrete could provide a way of pulling away from the potential insularity of the local culture. As Perloff notes, this was also the case for other key exponents, for example, the Swiss Eugen Gomringer:

> The motivation of these 'constellations', as Gomringer called them, was closely related to the situation in Switzerland in the immediate postwar era. In the 1930s and '40s there had been much talk of German Switzerland's becoming a separate nation and adopting a written German variant of its own. Although the plan was abandoned, the war further isolated Switzerland, turning it into a neutral island surrounded by warring power blocs. After the war, a unified but still multilingual Switzerland once again opened its borders to the larger European world, but that world (including Germany itself) was now newly divided by the Iron Curtain. Concrete poetry, Gomringer insisted, could break down the resultant linguistic and national borders by transcending the local dialects associated with *Heimatstil*, the endemic Swiss nativism. In using basic vocabulary . . . poetry could avoid the local.[21]

Here, once again, concrete poetry emerges on the peripheries, yet as a means of overturning any dependency on the local, resisting the parochial in its search for a more universal means of communication.

Throughout her writings on experimental poetry, Perloff has consistently returned to the importance of concrete poetry and its late modernist trajectory. For Perloff, as with Cockburn and Finlay mentioned earlier, the concrete moment certainly did not present a radical break with modernity (in the manner often attributed to postmodernism, for example). Rather, Perloff describes the concrete moment as *arrière garde*, that is, as wedded to modern-

ism, a late manifestation of it fundamentally indebted to earlier specific experimental modernists.[22] In this way, concrete poetry, as she terms it, might be thought of as 'bringing up the rear' of modernism:

> The concept of the avant-garde is inconceivable without its opposite. In military terms, the rear guard of the army is the part that protects and consolidates the troop movement in question; often the army's best generals are placed there. When an avant-garde movement is no longer a novelty, it is the role of the *arrière-garde* to complete its mission, to ensure its success.[23]

For Perloff, however, this is not to suggest that concrete was without its own radical energy, merely echoing previous forms without a sense of its own autonomy. On the contrary, it has a paradoxical identity that can be viewed as both *arrière garde* and formally innovative – that is, as deeply informed by earlier modernists yet also containing its own rupture and energy within its own historical moment, generating its own radical potential.[24] Following the work of Willam Marx, Perloff agrees that concrete poetry does not present a nostalgic form of modernism – rather, in its *arrière garde* status, it represents the 'hidden face of modernity', a deeply-rooted connection with it.[25]

While Morgan was much engaged with the deeper theories of concrete as they were emerging, drawn to its modernist origins and roots (for example, in the ideograms of Pound and Fenollosa), for him it was also crucial that concrete connected with its present moment:

> I'm interested in concrete poetry as an extension of technique. It's a new instrument which you have to learn to play. You have to find out what it can do and what it can't do. As a language it can be very dense and compressed or very light and delicate, and yet both of these different characteristics are held within a common ideogrammatic quality which seems peculiarly right at the present time. I mean that it's a system of signs, of striking and uncluttered flashes of language which find their place in a world of multiplex and speeded-up communications.[26]

Concrete poetry, he writes, '. . . is definitely post-existentialist, it's reacting against the world of Kafka and Eliot and Camus and Sartre. It's more

interested in Yuri Gagarin and Marshall McLuhan. It looks forward with a certain confidence. It sees a probable coming together of art and science in ways that might benefit both.'[27] It was therefore this forward and, simultaneously, backward looking nature of concrete poetry which offered Morgan and its other proponents a new aesthetic with which to challenge 'well-known insularity' on the one hand and to explore new forms of spatiality on the other. While many of his concrete poems are now often taught in Scottish schools, packaged as a light-hearted and 'accessible' way into literature for young children ('The Loch Ness Monster's Song' being perhaps the most obvious example, although many others could be substituted here instead), for Morgan concrete was nonetheless a serious artistic form, a serious form of play, not a gimmick, and its verbivocovisual composition facilitated the ability to probe new spaces of the poetic imagination, to tap into experimentations with form taking place elsewhere, for example, in art and music.[28]

Morgan's detailed archives reveal that he was in correspondence with many of the main practitioners of concrete throughout the sixties, and his various critical writings and notes on concrete reinforces his strong belief in the legitimacy of the form.[29] Morgan corresponded with brothers Augusto and Haroldo de Campos, who, along with Decio Pignatari were responsible for producing the 'Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry' in Brazil in 1958. In this manifesto, the Brazilian poets, or as they were known (stemming from the influence of Ezra Pound, the *Noigandres*), assert that the: 'concrete poem is an object in and by itself, not an interpreter of exterior objects and/ or more or less subjective feelings. its material: word.' (*sic*).[30] Concrete poetry, they continue, 'begins by being aware of graphic space as structural agent.' Morgan's annotations on personal copies of the 'Pilot Plan' reveal that he was critically pondering such formulations, considering their applicability to his own experimentations. An apposite example of 'graphic space as structural agent', for example, can be found in Morgan's poem 'Pomander', written in the 1960s, yet collected in *From Glasgow to Saturn* (1973):

pomander
open pomander
open poem and her
open poem and him
o p en poem and hymn
hymn and hymen leander
high man pen meander
o pen poem me and h e r
pen me poem me and him
om mane padme hum
pad me home panda hand
o p en up o holy panhandler
ample panda pen or bamboo pond
ponder a bonny poem pomander opener
open banned peon penman hum and banter
open hymn and pompom band and panda hamper
o i am a pen open man or happener
i am open manner happener
happy are we open
poem a nd a p o m
poem a nd a pan d a
poem and aplomb

The poem, as we can see above, makes use of graphic space to visually represent the object itself, with the blank spaces between the words on the page representing the air holes of the pomander, which are also, of course, the spaces which separate out all of its possible meanings, that, is, the words on the page itself. Yet these words within the pomander self-consciously generate their own complexities: the pomander is opened out in the second and subsequent lines, revealing a variety of engaging word-plays and juxtapositions (him and hymn, hymn and hymen, and so), and there is sense of the object being fully opened out in a rather comical fashion ('open up o holy panhandler') and perhaps slowly closed again, or at least some form of resolution being reached ('poem and a panda/ poem and aplomb'). The pomander is also given a Scottish inflection ('ponder a bonny poem pomander opener'), as well as an obviously spiritual one, in the form of a Buddhist mantra, ('om mane padme hum'). At the root of all of this is a

strong sense of play, of a connection with its sixties moment ('oh I am a pen open man or happener').

Commenting on the potential of meaning in 'Pomander', Morgan has noted:

> The lines are arranged in the imitative form of a pomander. I take the idea of a pomander as a round object which in some way is opened up (either by having holes in it, or by being actually openable) to release its fragrance – I had one in mind particularly which opened like the segments of a cut orange. I use this to bring out the theme of opening up the poem, opening it up spatially, and in a broader sense the theme of opening out life, life itself (or the round world) as a pomander, its secrets and treasures and rare things not to be hoarded but opened up and made visible. To keep this wide range viable within a concrete form, the poem uses associative imagery within a deliberately narrowed range of sound-effects.[31]

For Morgan, concrete poems are therefore not merely intended to experiment with space and form – they also contain the possibility, as suggested here, of opening out 'life itself'. While some of the key critics of concrete have linked the form to its purely formal values, Morgan's experimentations with concrete often contain elements of wit and personality, a presence of some kind within the text.[32] This is one area where we can see Morgan breaking away from some of the strict criteria as laid down in the 'Pilot Plan': 'Concrete Poetry: total responsibility before language. Thorough realism. Against a poetry of expression, subjective and hedonistic'. In Morgan's concrete poems, which encompass a vast and eclectic range of topics, there is often a sense of lived experience – human or otherwise.[33] Such an approach perhaps differs quite markedly from the view of concrete taken by other critics. David Kilburn, writing in 1966, for example, was of the opinion that concrete should evade any concerns with consciousness or the ontological:

> Traditional poetry may be regarded as the creation of a personal poetic consciousness with memories, thoughts, experience of the world, ideas and feelings, in short a world to which the poet gives verbal expression not as an attempt to communicate this world (which would be best to foster a cheap illusion) but as part of a process by which the poet reaches an orientation to essentially hidden

> areas of his own experience and perceptions and enables the reader to engage in a similar process: essentially an ontological pursuit. Concrete poetry differs in that it does not refer to any consciousness and is not concerned with worlds or experience, real or imaginary and is thus not ontological.[34]

By comparison, the connection with mindscapes, human or otherwise (including animal, insect, computer and alien!), have been a consistent component of Morgan's poetic output, concrete or otherwise, and giving voice to animate and at times inanimate objects has been part of his playful trajectory. Even in the very pared down form of concrete poetry, Morgan often managed to let humour and human experience radiate through:

> I'm interested in concrete poetry as something that I relate to concrete human experience. I'm not concerned with its potentialities for nonsemantic or abstract pattern (except of course that on occasion one may *use* the ostensibly nonsemantic or abstract for an overall semantic purpose). I see it as an instrument of immediate communication: a flash; a blush; a burst; a curse; a kiss; a hiss; a hit; a jot; a joke; a poke; a peek; a plea; an ABC. An instrument of communication, but also an instrument of pleasure.[35]

In this insistence on the semantic function of his own concrete poems, Morgan can be seen to challenge some of the expected conventions of the form; yet he does so in order to expand the power of its immediate effect.

One of the key figures in shaping changing conceptions of culture and space during the 1960s was, as mentioned earlier, Marshall McLuhan. In *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962) and *Understanding Media* (1964), for example, McLuhan was concerned with mapping out the effects of new technologies on consciousness – with taking the technological pulse of the period. In 1967, the Something Else Press (founded by Dick Higgins and well-respected for its concrete poetry and Fluxus publications) produced McLuhan's *Verbi-voco-visual Explorations*, the title of which in itself revealing some of the similarities between McLuhan's work and that of the concrete poets.[36] For McLuhan, as for Morgan, verbivocovisual experimentations were fundamentally linked to changes in the world 'outside' of the text, to the new media, the media of communication, and the reshaping of consciousness these implied. Morgan's archives from this time reveal a debt to McLuhan's

thinking on these matters, demonstrating that concrete poetry was very much a natural extension of such interconnections:

> Marshall McLuhan describes . . . the movement away from the printed book, away from the linear, towards a more 'open', instantaneous, spatial experience which technology has presented us with in newspaper and radio, film, TV, advertising, and in computers which offer us a kind of extension of human consciousness . . . He says, 'All the new media, including the press, are *art forms* that have the power of imposing, *like poetry*, their own assumptions. The new media are not ways of relating us to the old 'real' world; they *are* the real world, and they reshape what remains of the old world at will.' (*Explorations in Communication* (1960)). – This, I think is relevant to concrete poetry. The concrete poem isn't meant to be something you would come across as you turned the pages of a book. It would rather be an object that you passed every day on your way to work, to school or factory, it would be in life, in space, concretely *there*.[37]

Concrete poetry was deeply entwined with this imagining of new aesthetic configurations of spatiality and temporality. The form itself, the medium in McLuhan's terminology, was therefore inseparable from the mood of the time, that is, with breaking away from outmoded forms and looking towards new forms of expression. Concrete may have been operating within a broadly modernist trajectory, or in Perloff's terms, 'bringing up the rear' of modernism in its arrière garde concerns – yet it was also inevitably switched on to its present moment at the same time. With the benefit of hindsight it is therefore possible to see why this move towards concrete was so attractive for Morgan. In its deep affiliations with new media, and with the changes in consciousness these offered, concrete poetry presented an opportunity for the reader or viewer to become an active participant in the changing world around them, to become more engaged within, and self-conscious of, the world 'out there.' In Morgan's own words, 'what [concrete poetry] gives us is something quite small, but it may be a small key that opens a large door.'[38]

Notes

1 Ken Cockburn and Alex Finlay (eds), *The Order of Things. Scottish Sound, Pattern and Concrete Poetry* (Edinburgh: Pocketbooks, 2001), pp.13, 18.
2 '[. . .] Morgan's prominence in connection with 'Concrete Poetry' and with Ian Hamilton Finlay rules him out completely as far as I am concerned. I will not agree to work of mine appearing in any anthology or periodical that uses rubbish of that sort, which I regard as an utter debasement of standards but also a very serious matter involving the very identity of poetry. These spatial arrangements of isolated letters and geometrically placed phrases, etc. have nothing whatever to do with poetry – any more than mud pies can be called architecture . . .' Alan Bold (ed.), *The Letters of Hugh MacDiarmid* (London: Hamilton, 1984), 703.
3 Draft of article 'Concrete Poetry' in Glasgow University Special Collections Acc 4848/ Box 69 Concrete/ Sound Poetry.
4 Glasgow University Special Collections Acc 4848/Box 69.
5 Glasgow University Special Collections Acc 4848/Box 69.
6 Eleanor Bell '"The ugly burds without wings?": Reactions to Tradition since the 1960s' in Fran Brearton, Edna Longley and Peter Mackay (eds), *Modern Irish and Scottish Poetry* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp.238-50.
7 Edwin Morgan, *Essays* (Cheadle: Carcanet, 1974), p.167.
8 *Ibid.* p.168.
9 'There is no reason now to suppose that a Scottish poet cannot write good poetry in English, as Edwin Muir, Norman MacCaig, W. S. Graham, and Hugh MacDiarmid himself have done. There is equally no point in questioning the achievement in Scots of *Under the Eildon Tree* or *Sangshaw* or Soutar's bairnsangs and whigmaleeries.' (p.173).
10 *Ibid.*, pp.168, 174.
11 For example, venting his frustration against the Scottish Renaissance poets, Ian Hamilton Finlay, in a letter to Lorine Niedecker, exclaimed 'I who was once rather gentle and tolerant, am now going to make them RUE THE DAY THEY showed their contempt for beauty . . . I'm going to fight them to the death – the whole horrible lot.' In a printed sheet inserted inside the third number of *POTH*, Finlay railed: 'We began with a feeling of warmth and open-ness. We are now going to return hate for hate.' See Alec Finlay (ed), *Ian Hamilton Finlay: Selections* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), p.23. In his long essay on culture and nationalism, 'The Knitted Claymore', Alan Jackson states with exasperation, 'The nationalist writer seems to conceive of tradition as something specific and destined, like a slab of shortbread handed to a babe which he chews till finished, then dies.' *Lines Review*, 37, June 1971, p.25. Other writers, including Alexander Trocchi and Alex Neish simply left the country rather than trying to negotiate their own place within it. In an e-mail to the author on 13th August 2010, for example, Alex Neish stated that: 'In the late '50s and early '60s new Scottish literature was in the doldrums. The late printer and publisher Callum MacDonald did more than anyone to keep it alive. At his own expense he paid for poetry editions. He printed an Edinburgh University magazine I was editing and invited me to take over as Editor of his *Jabberwock* which sought to find something good in contemporary literature of the period. With the exception of Norman MacCaig, the

early Sydney Goodsir Smith, and Tom Scott, this was a dire battle. I soon tired of the struggle and its endless parochial obsessions and decided to move into a more international field. This gave birth to the American issue of *Jabberwock* which is now a collector's item. It featured writers like Alan Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Gregory Corso, Kerouac and William Burroughs. In the Scottish literary establishment it was received with shock and hostility and in the process *Jabberwock* folded. As a phoenix *Sidewalk* was born to focus on new writing from the States and the French nouvelle vague. It was very much a one-man show and when I moved in 1962 to Argentina it died as there was no one to carry the flag forward.'

12 See Angela Bartie and Eleanor Bell (eds), *The International Writers' Conference Revisited: Edinburgh, 1962* (Glasgow: Cargo Publishing, 2012).

13 This debate was chaired by David Daiches and speakers included: Douglas Young, Hugh MacDiarmid, Naomi Mitchison, Robin Jenkins, Alexander Reid, Walter Kier, Edwin Morgan, Alexander Trocchi, Sydney Goodsir Smith and Stephen Spender. The questions that speakers were invited to comment on included: 'What is the strength of Scottish writing today and how is it related to the Scottish literary tradition? Should Scottish writers deal principally with Scottish themes, and if they do, what market do they have outside Scotland? Has there been a Scottish Renaissance in recent years, and how successful have been the attempts to use Lallans as a literary language?'

14 Many of the outbursts at the Scottish Day of the Conference are now infamous. It was on this day, for example, that Alexander Trocchi stated that 'I think frankly that of what is interesting in the last, say twenty years in Scottish writing, I have written it all', to which Hugh MacDiarmid responded with fury: '. . . Mr. Trocchi seems to imagine that the burning questions in the world today are lesbianism, homosexuality and matters of that kind. I don't think so at all. I am a Communist, and a Scottish Nationalist and I ask Mr. Trocchi and others, where in any of the literature they are referring to us . . . us to, are less provincial than our own, and so on, are the crucial burning questions of the day being dealt with, as they have been dealt with in Scottish literature, if you knew enough about it.' See Bartie and Bell (eds), pp.69-70.

15 Ibid, p.67.

16 Ibid, p.82.

17 Edwin Morgan, 'Scottish Fiction' in *Scottish Left Review*, issue 12 Sept/Oct 2002, pp.18-20, p.18.

18 As Mary Ellen Solt notes in her *Concrete Poetry: A World View* (1968): 'Although England cannot lay claim to having been in on the laying of the foundations of the concrete poetry movement, important exhibitions have been held there. We have noted the First International Exhibition of Concrete and Kinetic Poetry in Cambridge in 1964, organized by Mike Weaver. Another important comprehensive exhibition, 'Between Poetry and Painting', organized by Jasia Reichardt, was held at the Institute of Contemporary Art, London, in 1968. The London *Times Literary Supplement* put out two special numbers on international avant-garde poetry on August 6 and September 3, 1964.' The full text of Solt's book is available online at http://www.ubu.com/papers/solt/.

19 James McGonigal, *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan* (Dingwall: Sandstone Press, 2010), p.137.

20 *Unoriginal Genius*, p.61.

21 *Unoriginal Genius*, pp.64-64.

22 'The point here is that whereas the Surrealists were concerned with "new" artistic content – dreamwork, fantasy, the unconscious, political revolution – the concrete movement always emphasized the transformation of materiality itself. Hence the chosen pantheon included Futurist artworks and *Finnegans Wake*, Joaquim de Sousandrade's pre-Modernist collage masterpiece *The Inferno of Wall Street* (1877), and the musical compositions of Anton Webern, Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and John Cage.' *Unoriginal Genius*, pp.67-8.
23 *Unoriginal Genius*, p.53.
24 This paradoxical tension is neatly summarized in the title of Perloff's 2010 book, *Unoriginal Genius*, as mentioned above. Commenting on the distinctions between post-war recovery vs. the original sense of 'discovery' posited by modernism, Perloff writes: 'Here is the important distinction between *avant-* and *arrière-garde*. The original avant-garde was committed not to recovery but discovery, and it insisted that the aesthetic of its predecessors – say, of the poets and artists of the 1890s – was "finished". But by midcentury the situation was very different. Because the original and avant-gardes had never really been absorbed into the artistic and literary mainstream, the "postmodern" demand for total rupture was always illusory. Haroldo de Campos, following Augusto's lead, explains that the concrete movement began as rebellion – "We wanted to free poetry from subjectivism and the expressionistic vehicle" of the then poetic mode.' (*Unoriginal Genius*, p.67).
25 Perloff is referring to William Marx's *les arrière-gardes au xx*^{e} *siècle* (*Unoriginal Genius*, p.53).
26 Glasgow University Special Collections Acc 4848/Box 69 Concrete/ Sound Poetry.
27 Glasgow University Special Collections Acc 4848/Box 69 Concrete/ Sound Poetry.
28 'The 1960s, however, have seen a tentative widening of the English poet's field of operations. Concrete or spatial poetry (both terms are used) in its different forms has begun to make an impact, and it's interesting that this at once links up with the spatializing tendencies already seen in art and music. It's as if poets were suddenly becoming aware of a time-lag which had been withdrawing them farther and farther from the cultural experience of their fellow artists.' Glasgow University Special Collections Acc 4848/Box 69 Concrete/ Sound Poetry.
29 Morgan corresponded with many of the key concrete poets including Haroldo and Augusto de Campos, Eugen Gomringer, Ernst Jandl, Cavan McCarthy, Dom Sylvester Houédard, Bob Cobbing and, of course, Ian Hamilton Finlay.
30 On the origins of the title 'Noigandres poets', Perloff quotes Ezra Pound's *Cantos*: 'Noigandres, NOIgandres! You know for seex mons of my life/ Effery night when I go to bett, I say to myself:/ Noigandres, eh *noigandres*, Now what the DEFFIL can that mean!'. (*Unoriginal Genius*, p.66). The 'Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry' is available at online http://www.ubu.com/papers/noigandres01.html.
31 Glasgow University Special Collections Acc 4848/ box 38.
32 Mike Weaver, for example, has commented that: 'Concrete poetry is an aesthetic movement in poetry, only indirectly concerned with moral, social and psychological values. This is not to say that concrete art and poetry are not fully committed to the improvement of the environment, but only the Brazilians and Czechs have shown any inclination for social or political engagement. The main emphasis has fallen on formal values.' 'Concrete Poetry' *Lugano Review*, vol 1, summer 1966, pp.100-55. Morgan, by contrast, has written that: 'Each of my poems has a 'point' and it is not just an object of contemplation, though it is also that. I like to hear the semantic mainsheets whip

and crack, but not snap. I like to extend the possibilities of humour, wit, and satire through concrete techniques and although this involves 'play', whether of words, letters, or punctuation, it must be an imaginative and therefore fundamentally serious kind of play.' *Nothing not Giving Messages*, p.256.

33 See for example *Starryveldt* (1965), *Emergent Poems* (1967), *Gnomes* (1968) and *The Horseman's Word* (1970).

34 David Kilburn, "Type is Honey" *Mermaid*, Vol 35, no 3, January 1966, pp.9-11, p.10.

35 Glasgow University Special Collections Acc 4848/Box 69.

36 It is worth noting that Something Else Press also published Emmett Williams' important *Anthology of Concrete Poetry* in 1967.

37 Glasgow University Special Collections Acc 4848/Box 69.

38 Glasgow University Special Collections Acc 4848/Box 69.

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While Crowding Memories Came: Edwin Morgan, Old English and Nostalgia[1]

Morgan's career as a poet began with Old English;[2] the first books of poetry he completed were *Beowulf: A Verse Translation*, and the volume *Dies Irae*, a collection including translations of several other Old English poems, and which was also intended to appear the same year (1952), but whose publisher folded before it came out.[3] Although Old English allusions and influences can be found liberally throughout Morgan's subsequent writing career,[4] it was only towards the end of his life that his poetic engagement with Old English approached the same intensity it possessed at the beginning. Certain passages and motifs from Old English poetry were obviously lodged deep in Morgan's memory and resurfaced in his late poems. As key examples of these Old English intertexts are themselves to do with memory, loss and nostalgia, the return, or *nostos*, that Morgan performed in this manner over the long arc of his career seems deliberate and self-conscious. This article aims to trace that arc, and to identify some of the meanings invested in that late reprise of Old English, after first investigating in more detail than has previously been the case what Morgan's archives tell us about his early study and knowledge of Old English.

Old English served two important needs for Morgan in his early career. Firstly, it enabled him to come to terms with his traumatic experiences of the Second World War, serving as a member of the Royal Army Medical Corps in Egypt and the Middle East. Unlike several other soldier poets of the same campaign, Morgan found the war totally debilitating in terms of poetic productivity.[5] This state of affairs is corroborated by McGonigal, who notes that only one poem in Morgan's compilation of early typescripts held in Glasgow University Library Special Collections, is dated with wartime composition: 'A Warning of Waters and Evening', dated October-November 1943.[6] Morgan's translation of Old English, and of *Beowulf* in particular, a project begun in the immediate post-war period and continuing through the late 1940s,[7] was the poet's way of breaking this creative

deadlock, and of finding a way to approach his experience of combat in verse. When Carcanet republished Morgan's *Beowulf* in 2002, the older poet was more explicit about this relationship between translating *Beowulf* and the war than his youthful self had been. In its preface he wrote:

> The translation, which was begun shortly after I came out of the army at the end of the Second World War, was in a sense my unwritten war poem, and I would not want to alter the expression I gave to its themes of conflict and danger, voyaging and displacement, loyalty and loss.[8]

Old English, then, brought the poet back into voice, allowing him to strain to unbind himself, to sweat to speak, as the corresponding stanza of Morgan's autobiographical poem 'Epilogue: Seven Decades', has it.[9] This difficulty in unbinding speech, and the tension between making poetry and keeping silence, is itself an Old English *topos*, and one expressed with the same word, *bindan*, in *The Wanderer*, lines 12-14 of which Morgan would much later quote, untranslated, in one of his last poems, on the very subject of guarding enough isolation to be able to make poems for a public.[10]

'Epilogue' also reveals the other, more surprising need that Old English fulfilled for Morgan: 'At thirty I thought life had passed me by, / translated *Beowulf* for want of love.'[11] *Beowulf* was a palliative against the loneliness of having to live a secret life as a gay man in Glasgow in the late 1940s. This connection, improbable as it might sound on the face of it, was rendered more explicable by comments Morgan later made in interview with Jim McGonigal while discussing homosociality, ancient Greek, and Japanese Samurai poetry:

> The idea of a band of fairly close-knit persons – maybe that's why I like *Beowulf* so much – appealed to me, although I'm not myself a great joiner of anything. I'm not much part of a band – except in the army, when I had to be. So it's an ambiguous notion. But I liked that idea of either a band of soldiers or explorers.[12]

What Morgan describes here as an attraction of Old English poetry, is the group of retainers who form bonds of mutual loyalty around a lord or a king, and which was known as the *duguð* in Old English.[13] A little later in the same interview, when discussing Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Morgan

makes the same concatenation of male-male intimacy, the culture of the *duguð*, and the modern military:

> It's a sort of ladder from homosexual, homoerotic and homosocial (is it homosexual or is it not?) down to homosocial, which is just boys together or men together, in an army or in a band or whatever. I suppose the *Beowulf* society would be regarded by her [Kosofsky Sedgwick] as homosocial. There are overtones of something, perhaps, but you're not quite sure.[14]

That receptivity to 'overtones' of something bordering on homoeroticism in Old English poetry, and their subsequent amplification into explicitness, is something that resurfaces in Morgan's use of *The Wanderer* in his late poetry, as this essay will go on to argue. What the published conversation with McGonigal clearly emphasises, is what 'Epilogue' more obliquely insinuates: that from the start Morgan intimately associated *Beowulf* both with his experiences as a soldier and his experiences as a gay man. His translation was a way of dealing both with sexual inhibitions and with the inhibitions the war placed on him as a writer. This, then, is what Old English meant to Morgan as a young poet: an antidote to unhappiness in two important spheres of his early personal experience as an adult; and the strong affection and loyalty he felt towards his instructor in its language and literature, the dedicatee of his *Beowulf* translation, Ritchie Girvan.[15]

The footprint of Morgan's instruction in Old English is found primarily in two separate archives of Morgan's books and papers: The Mitchell Library in Glasgow holds most of his personal library, including many books annotated by Morgan, as well as an assortment of some private papers; the bulk of his notebooks, papers and correspondence are held in the Department of Special Collections in Glasgow University Library. To gain a full appreciation of Morgan's studies of Old English, one must shuttle between these two archives, piecing together (sometimes quite literally, as will be demonstrated in the case of Morgan's scrapbook cut-ups) the relationship between his textbooks, his study notes, and his verse drafts. What strikes one upon carrying out such research, is how astonishingly committed to the study of Old English language and literature Morgan was. When one bears in mind that Morgan's extensive notes were made not in the pursuit of postgraduate study, but by an undergraduate with no

intention of specialising in the field of Anglo-Saxon studies, the effect is not only shocking, but also humbling.

Morgan began his English degree at Glasgow in 1937, but was called up for wartime service in 1940, when he had completed just one term of his Junior Honours (third) year of his four-year course. He resumed his studies in 1946 and took his final exams at the end of Senior Honours in 1947. Morgan's Eclipse 'Reporters Note Book', containing notes from an 'ANGLOSAXON READER', was almost certainly in use before Morgan's studies were interrupted by the war.[16] Its title refers to Henry Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse*, a standard textbook at the time, and which Morgan studied in its ninth edition. His copy of Sweet's *Reader* in the Mitchell library is inscribed on the inside cover 'EDWIN G. MORGAN 1939',[17] indicating that he was probably using Sweet in his second year, or perhaps the first term of his Junior Honours year, before signing up for the RAMC. Sweet's *Reader* consists of two parts, an initial grammar, and then the reader proper: extracts from a variety of prose passages and poems. Morgan underlined many passages in the first, grammatical section, but this part of his Sweet is not as heavily annotated as another textbook in his library, Albert Cook's *First Book in Old English*, an introductory text more suitable text for beginners than Sweet. Morgan went through his copy of Cook, marking up the language section with underlining, numbering, and the occasional gloss for meaning or grammatical organisation (Morgan often adds Roman numerals in the margin for verb classes, for example).[18] The second half of Morgan's copy, the reader, is without annotation. Evidently then, Girvan taught Morgan the basics of Old English grammar using Cook, perhaps as early as 1937, but certainly no later than 1939, before graduating the class to Sweet to practice reading and translation. It was probably also around this period that Morgan acquired a copy of the third, revised edition of Clark Hall's dictionary of Old-Modern English.[19]

Whether Girvan required it or not, once Morgan got to Sweet's *Reader* he made a study of it that is anything but elementary. An introductory course to Old English might typically select a few prose passages from Sweet, in order to get the students' translation skills working – perhaps passages from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, or the Old English Bede – before cherry-picking several highlights from the orchard of Old English. Yet in Morgan's copy of Sweet every single one of the texts is extensively

annotated and has clearly been studied in great detail with the exception of just three, and these are all texts placed in the appendix to the *Reader* in order to give an idea of the variety of 'dialect texts' that survive: *Northumbrian Texts*, and *Kentish Charters* B and C (*Mercian Hymns*, also from the dialect appendix, however, is very heavily marked up by Morgan). The order in which Morgan studied these texts was not the order in which Sweet prints them, and can be deduced from the aforementioned Eclipse notebook.[20]

Most of the pencil annotations in Morgan's copy of Sweet are lexical glosses, elucidating the meaning of words or phrases, but some include suggestions for the interpretation of notorious textual cruces, or refer to the work of scholars. These annotations are supplemented by even more detailed notes from Sweet, which Morgan made in the Eclipse notebook. Many of these consist of items of vocabulary encountered in Sweet's texts, which Morgan capitalizes, underlines, and then glosses. In effect it is a customized word list. But the nature of the glosses makes it clear that Morgan, even near the beginning of his studies, was not content merely with learning the meaning of words. He also includes detailed notes on usage, phonology, dialect, and any relevant grammatical points related to the word under consideration. A few examples from the fourth folio of the notebook will indicate the attention to detail with which Morgan applied himself to learning Old English:

> MICEL, YFEL: Syncope in obliq[ue] cases regular in MICEL & frequent in YFEL in spite of short stem: MICLES, YFLES
>
> WINTER: Masc (like FELD) in sg, neut (usually) in pl – N. A. Pl WINTRU, WINTER
>
> TRYMMAN, PREMMAN [sic] generally in LWS transferred to sec wk class in -IAN, b[u]t occasionally we find them treated like long-stem vbs (orig): TRYMDE – GETRYMMED

The first entry tells us that Morgan did not just want to learn that *micel* means 'much, a lot', or that *yfel* means 'evil', but that when they are in the genitive singular, they do not normally exhibit the form **miceles* and **yfeles*, which are the 'regular' forms one might expect, but that they usually lose

their middle syllable in such circumstances. Likewise, Morgan is interested in the fact that the masculine nouns for 'winter' and for 'field' typically change gender when they are in the plural (adding a '-u' ending, instead of the strong masculine '-as' ending). The third entry shows Morgan determined to memorise a certain group of verbs that in Late West Saxon dialect (LWS) get treated as second class weak verbs, whose infinitives end in '-ian', instead of the '-an' that all other verb classes' infinitives end in, but that even then their past tenses will sometimes revert to '-de', instead of the '-ode' that is typically displayed by 'real' second class weak verbs. The point to re-emphasise here is that Morgan, although only an undergraduate beginner, involved himself not only in the basic grammatical rules that govern how most sentences work in Old English, but with every oddity, exception, and special case.

Morgan certainly progressed from Sweet's *Reader* (which contains but one extract from *Beowulf*) to studying the whole of *Beowulf*, although whether he began this task before or after the war is hard to ascertain. His library contains several editions and translations of that poem, including a copy of W. J. Sedgefield's 1935 edition, although this is largely unmarked, and therefore not his main study text, despite its recent date of publication.[21] For that Morgan used Frederick Klaeber's third edition of *Beowulf*, the standard scholarly edition for several decades.[22] Like his copy of Sweet, Morgan's Klaeber is heavily annotated throughout in pencil, and supplemented by numerous *Beowulf*-related newspaper cuttings slid under the front cover. His annotations occur throughout the text of the poem, but also in the edition's apparatus, the introduction and the endnotes. They include scholars' suggestions for interpreting textual cruces, scansion patterns for certain verses which Morgan finds metrically interesting, notes on dialectal variants in form, and comments on style and identification of rhetorical devices (e.g. 'litotes' is written in the margin next to line 109, describing the little joy that Cain received from his killing of Abel). Morgan notes analogous uses of words and phrases in other Old English poems (e.g. he refers the *Beowulf*-poet's use of *astah* at line 1118b to that of *The Dream of the Rood*-poet at line 103), and he jots down other literary parallels that occur to him in the margins of his text (e.g. by lines 86-9, which describe Grendel, Morgan makes comparison with the motive of Milton's Satan). His notes often express compressed nuggets of literary criticism: a schematic note at the top of the page, above line 98, diagrammatically maps the

poem's 'faint suggestion' that Hrothgar corresponds to God, Heorot to Paradise, *ða drihtguman* to Adam and Eve, Grendel to Satan and Beowulf to 'Xt as Redeemer'.[23] Throughout, Morgan's notes include publication details (usually title, date and volume of journal) of the research he summarizes. Morgan was fully immersed in the *Beowulf* scholarship of his day. Not only this; the *Beowulf*-related correspondence, cuttings, and papers that are stuffed under the swollen front cover of his student Klaeber tell the story of his ongoing relationship with the poem into the twenty-first century. Twenty newspaper reviews alone of *Beowulf* related publications dating from 1960 to 2000 were stored in this way by Morgan.[24]

Two 'notebooks on English Language' in the Glasgow University archives, and which can be dated to his post-war studies, show Morgan extending his detailed enquiries both into advanced language study and into contemporary literary criticism of *Beowulf*.[25] One contains notes on 'Anglo-saxon [sic] Phonology' (written on its inside cover) and is dated '1945-46 Jun Hons English / 1946-47 Sen Hons English'. A home-made table of contents (Morgan habitually added page numbers to most of his notebooks) records that pages 1-38 deal with 'Phonology'; and pages 39-53 with 'Dialects' (first Northumbrian and then Mercian). Under 'Phonology' Morgan has drawn up the very detailed rules that govern sound changes in Proto-Germanic, including palatisation, breaking, i-mutation, syncope and acope, illustrating each one with multiple examples. The 'Dialects' section consists of detailed notes on the linguistic features of a variety of texts thought not to be written in Late West Saxon.

In the second of these 'English language' notebooks Morgan recorded a summary of all his secondary reading in Old English and the jotter contains as much material on literary scholarship and criticism as it does on philology. Although undated, an entry early in the notebook to Dickins and Ross' 1944 edition of *The Dream of the Rood* (pp.7-9) confirms that these notes were likely to have begun after the war and are probably simultaneous with his phonology and dialect researches. The notebook demonstrates Morgan's extremely wide reading in and on Old English literature, from publications as early as Francis Gummere's 1892 work *Germanic Origins: A Study in Primitive Culture* (p.41) and as late as Dorothy Whitelock's *The Audience of Beowulf* (pp.57-8). We glimpse the young undergraduate reading prose texts (Wulfstan's famous *Sermo lupi ad anglos* in Dorothy Whitelock's 1939 edition, pp.3-4) as well as poetry, and he was particularly interested, as one

might expect, in Old English prosody, taking extensive notes on 'Old English Metric' from 'RG' (Ritchie Girvan's lectures, pp.16-23), and on John C. Pope's *The Rhythm of Beowulf* (and its subsequent review by Girvan in *Review of English Studies*, pp.34-9). These are illustrated with numerous examples of scansion patterns and musical notation symbols. Several works on heroic warrior culture of early medieval northern Europe might have informed Morgan about the homosocial culture of the *dugað* that he was later to express such an affinity and desire for in his interview with McGonigal: 'M. G. Clarke: Sidelights on Teutonic History During the Migration Period (1911)' (pp.39-40); 'Olrik: The Heroic Legends of Denmark 1919 (tr.)' (pp.40-1); 'H. M. Chadwick: The Origin of the English Nation (1907)' (pp.42-5); 'HM Chadwick: Heroic Age (1912)' (pp.45-8). The notebook is in use as late as the early 1950s, and was undoubtedly a repository for his researches into earlier translations of Beowulf during the time he was working on his own version. Notes to translations by C. S. Moncrieff in 1921 (p.45), C. W. Kennedy in 1940 (p.49), William Morris and Alfred Wyatt in 1895 (pp.51-2), Gavin Bone in 1945 (pp.53-5), Leonard Strong in 1925 (p.55) as well as from Chauncey Tinker's 1903 survey of Wackerbarth, Lumsden, Garnett and Earle in *The Translation of Beowulf* (pp.50-1) excerpt many quotations (occasionally underlined, or punctuated by disbelieving exclamation marks) and compile lists of archaic vocabulary. Much of this note-taking would later be quoted verbatim in the critical survey of translations that forms Morgan's first introductory essay to his own version, 'The Translator's Task in *Beowulf*'.[26]

More notes on Old English are recorded among the quotations copied into the first two 'commonplace books', which Morgan titled 'Gnotelbrik.[27] 'Gnotelbrik 1', for instance, contains detailed notes from 'Syntax & Style in Old English – by S. O. Andrews (Cambridge UP 1940)', illustrating common word orders in Old English with many examples, especially from *Beowulf* (pp.37-41). Later there are notes on the early Germanic runic alphabets known as the *futhark*, taken from 'Bruce Dickins: Runic and Heroic Poems 1915' (pp.62-5). These include the entirety of *The Anglo-Saxon Runic Poem* (which would later serve as a model for 'Nineteen Kinds of Barley' and 'A Trace of Wings'),[28] copied out in stanzas. In 'Gnotelbrik 2' are notes from 'J P Oakden Alliterative Poetry in Middle English (MUP 1930)', which include treatment of 'The Grave', the late Old English/Early

Middle English poem which Morgan translated as the concluding poem to conclude the sequence *Dies Irae*,[29] as well as extensive notes on the development of English metre from Old English into Middle (pp.91-4).

Several of the earlier translations dealt with in the second 'English Language Notebook' detailed above are also found among Morgan's personal library in the Mitchell collection. Wackerbarth's 'boisterous' translation, maligned in Morgan's prefatory essay as 'a double parody, first of *Beowulf* and then of the ballad', is marked in the margins at key points of interest to Morgan.[30] Similarly, in his copy of Mary Waterhouse's *Beowulf in Modern English*, Morgan has marked in the margins the two passages he will quote from and argue against in his introduction.[31] Morgan's copy of Gavin Bone's interlace-rhymed translation, which does not fare as badly as some others in the prefatory essay, is, on the other hand, unmarked.[32] It is striking how many of Morgan's bugbears are prefigured in Bone's own introductory essay. In particular several of the translators whom Morgan attacks are singled out by Bone for exactly the same failings: Strong and Leonard for their use of rattlingly long, garrulous couplets; Scott-Moncrieff for an impenetrably strange and barbarous imitation of alliterative metre; the general impropriety of blank verse as a medium for translating Old English.[33] There is a real and previously unacknowledged debt that Morgan's pugnacious essay 'The Task of the Translator' owes to Bone's own preface; many of the arguments are themselves translated and extended by Morgan. Bone is also represented in Morgan's library by his anthology of shorter poems in translation, the introduction to which emphasises the presentist meaning of much Old English poetry during the Second World War:

> Mr Desmond MacCarthy has said that he draws strengths of heart as he sits in a shelter with bombs falling round by reading of the utter heroism in Icelandic Sagas. These people will go on fighting when there is not the smallest possibility of victory. The corresponding Anglo-Saxon Saga is the famous annal in the Chronicle, of Cynewulf and Cyneheard. 'And they were fighting until they all lay dead except for one British hostage and he was very badly wounded.' Or the famous speech of Byrhtwold in the *Battle of Maldon*, where the old man exhorts his company to hold fast in the losing battle:
>
> The will shall be harder, the courage shall be keener
> Spirit shall grow great, as our strength falls away.'[34]

Bone's interest in Old English seems to have anticipated Morgan's, and served as a model for him. For, as we have previously seen, Morgan's appropriation of Old English poetry shares this presentist affinity, with the corpus acquiring a special layer of meaning in the light of his war experiences.

Other important aids to learning among Morgan's personal library include grammars by Sievers and Wright, both annotated by Morgan, and several scholarly editions of Old English poems other than those he translated. In fact his library is almost exhaustive in this respect. Even relatively little read poems, such as the *Christ* trilogy from *The Exeter Book*, are represented in Morgan's library in the appropriate scholarly editions of his day.[35] Morgan also owned the full set of Krapp and Dobbie's six volume edition of *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*. For much of the second half of the twentieth-century this remained the standard authoritative edition of most Old English poetry with the exception of *Beowulf*; it is far from being a student edition.[36] Indeed, it would be hard to imagine any undergraduate reading of Old English poetry as deep as Morgan's; his self-application to *Beowulf* would even put many PhD students to shame. It is also evident that no poet-translator of *Beowulf* has ever had such a profound and detailed knowledge of the poem, or such a secure linguistic grasp of its workings.[37]

Nevertheless, Morgan's use of this extraordinary breadth of scholarship is not at all pious or dry. Morgan performed Old English orally at beatnik-inspired readings,[38] as well as visually on the pages of his famous scrapbooks, now kept in Glasgow University Library Special Collections. In fact the dual nature of his performance of Old English in this respect is entirely in keeping with the catholicity of his avant-garde tastes and practices, being both a sound poet and a concrete poet. Morgan would literally cut-and-paste (as well as sometimes copy in ink) lines from a wide variety of Old English texts into his art-montage scrapbooks, assembling a bewildering array of images and verbal fragments from a large number of languages into a series of found poems of almost epic proportions.

To take but the first of these scrapbooks, MS Morgan 917/1 alone contains, by my reckoning, twenty-eight extracts from Old English texts (some of which are not set horizontally, but are rotated through degrees in either direction, so that they must be read either 'up' or 'down' the page). Sixteen of these are cut-outs from a printed edition, and in all cases can be traced back to the copy of Sweet held in the Mitchell library, the corresponding pages of which are often like lacework decorations after the work of

Morgan's scissors. I write 'often' because in some cases Morgan has astonishingly repaired his holed Sweet by cutting out missing lines, sections, or even pages from another (now lost) 'spare' text he must have had, and gluing them back into the copy he originally cannibalised for the scrapbooks.[39] Thus his own copy of Sweet became a kind of Franken-text of two books glued together. One wonders why he did not simply keep the second copy intact. My own hunch is that Morgan was loathe to give up use of the student text which he had so heavily annotated and glossed that it had either become indispensable to his work methods, or had perhaps become so imbued with affectionate memories of Girvan that he decided to repair it back into a usable shape rather than switch to a newly acquired, 'clean' copy. The Old English extracts that have been copied into the first scrapbook by hand (rather than cut and pasted) are almost always (with *The Dream of the Rood* being a notable exception) quotations from *Beowulf*, or other texts not represented in Sweet's *Reader*, such as *Andreas*.

Close attention to the composition of each scrapbook opening, and of the use of Old English in each one, would certainly repay analysis. Space prevents this here at any length, but consideration of one such instance will indicate the artistry of Morgan's scrapbook engagement with Old English. The 'Animals in Art' opening of pp.227-8, for instance, sees lines 53-9 of *The Phoenix*, rotated left through ninety degrees used in the top right hand corner of the recto.[40] The passage relates how in the paradisal land of the phoenix there is no suffering, pain, death or disease, poverty or harsh weather. The deployment of a poem about the phoenix clearly complements other depictions of mythical animals on the page, including several of dragons, and is a counterpoint to several of the other components of the pages, most notably the quotation from *Doctor Faustus*, in the exact same position of *The Phoenix* fragment, but on the opposite verso, and in which Mephistopheles laments the loss of such a place of everlasting bliss as *The Phoenix* fragment describes. Morgan may have worked hard at Old English, but as the scrapbooks show he also put his Old English to play for him.

Playfulness is one of the chief qualities of the Old English riddles, and it is no surprise therefore, that Morgan was drawn to translate several of them early in his career. Later he would pose his own 'New English Riddles',[41] and as his life was nearing its end he returned to their witty restlessness to translate at least two more.[42] Morgan cut Riddle 57 out of his copy of Sweet (where it was titled 'Riddle G'), to paste into his scrapbook.[43] Two

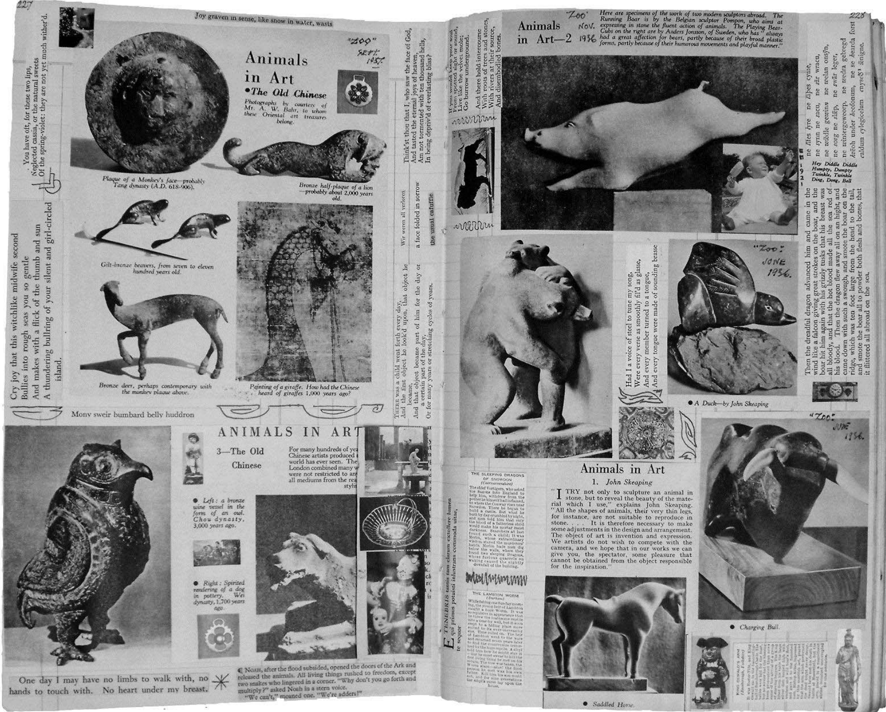

Fig. 1. Glasgow, University Library Special Collections, MS Morgan 917/1, pp.227-8.

other riddles Morgan translated for *Dies Irae* were also in his copy of Sweet (his 'Swan', Sweet's 'Riddle A', and his 'Bookworm', Sweet's 'Riddle F'). One (Morgan's 'Storm') was not. But even in the case of riddles that were available to him in Sweet's *Reader*, Morgan seems to have worked from other texts.

Like Auden, who used it when composing *The Orators*,[44] Morgan owned a copy of Gordon's anthology of translations, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*. Only Gordon's selection of *Exeter Book* riddles is much marked by Morgan, who pencilled in the numbering of the standard editorial scheme next to Gordon's titles. Although Gordon, unlike Sweet, includes all four riddles that Morgan translated for *Dies Irae* ('Storm', or Riddle 3; 'Swan', or Riddle 7; 'Bookworm', or Riddle 47; 'Swallows' or Riddle 57),[45] it seems likely that Morgan relied on Gordon only in his translation the 'Swan' riddle, for both share certain word choices, not all of which are the inevitable result of

the source text vocabulary (e.g. 'silent/silence', 'garment', 'trappings/armour-trappings', 'adornments', 'melody/melodiously', 'flood').

More heavily annotated, however, is Morgan's copy of Sedgefield's *An Anglo-Saxon Verse-Book*; several of the titles on the contents page are underlined, as if for study, and he had read the appendix on Anglo-Saxon versification closely enough to query in pencil a number of the examples given of Sievers' five metrical types, and to suggest alternative scansions, especially of types C and D.[46] Judging from the annotations he made both to the text and to its endnotes, Morgan used Sedgefield's edition of Riddle 3 (which merges modern editors' Riddle 2 and 3) to produce the translation which he called 'Storm'.[47] Morgan was interested in the rhetorical effect of the repetition of *hwilum* ('sometimes', 'at times') in the Old English poem, and underlined and numbered each instance of it in Sedgefield's text (lines 1, 32, 51, 83a, 83b, 84b and 85b; for modern line numbers of Riddle 3 deduct 15 from Sedgefield's). Although Sedgefield presents the poem as a continuous verse block, Morgan decided that the repetition of *hwilum* was an example of deliberate anaphora to indicate structural organisation in the Old English, and he uses the first three occurrences of *hwilum* to divide his translation into verse paragraphs beginning 'Sometimes'. A fourth paragraph was first identified by Morgan's underlining and numbering of *þonne*, 'then', at line 78b of Sedgefield, but by the time he finished his translation he had decided to start his last section at line 74 of the original (in a sentence also adverbially marked by *þonne*). Morgan translates the denser passage of *hwilum*-repetition in lines 83-5 with the word 'now', emphasizing a sense of urgency in keeping with the original. Elsewhere Morgan's pencil notes query manuscript readings Sedgefield has made, suggesting, for example, *wudu* ('wood', or figuratively 'ship') in place of Sedgefield's *wada* ('waters') in line 39 (modern line 24). To Sedgefield's note that 'the MS. reading *wudu* is clearly wrong', Morgan has pencilled in the margin an exasperated 'clearly right! Where is yr ear?' Morgan indeed translates this as 'ship' in his riddle. Morgan's reading is now, in fact, the preferred one. Morgan's many questionings and emendations of Sedgefield show him to be an engaged and thoughtful translator of Old English, getting directly involved with textual cruces (and imagining some where they do not exist), rather than working mainly from existing translations and cribs.

If Morgan's total undergraduate immersion in the complexities of Old English grammar is surprising, no less so is his dedication to keep up with

developments in *Beowulf* scholarship throughout his life; he collected a vast number of special books long after his formal studies of Old English were complete. Some of these were bought and used even into the 1990s, almost concurrent with the work he must have begun on the sequence *Love and a Life*, first published in 2003 as a Mariscat volume, and which deploys Old English in several poems.[48] Suffice it to say the collection of Old English materials held in the Mitchell Library is not that of a poetry reader who has a passing interest in medieval verse. It would be quite unremarkable if Morgan had been a professional scholar of Old English, teaching the subject year in and year out at Glasgow University. But Morgan was not. Like the notes taken in his undergraduate jotters, Morgan's library of Old English shows a commitment to the subject that, for a non-specialist reader, bordered on the obsessive.

Some of the loose leaf papers the elderly Morgan hoarded inside the cover of his student, third-edition of Klaeber, tell a story of disappointment, however. Among them is a postcard of Ian Hamilton Finlay's *Et in Arcadia Ego* from 'Bob' [Cummings], asking Morgan if he would like to review Seamus Heaney's translation of *Beowulf* for the journal *Translation and Literature*. A photocopy of Morgan's reply, dated 6 October 1999, in which he declines the invitation to review, states that he is 'feeling bad and sad and (in the American sense) mad about BEOWULF', on account of the University of California's decision to withdraw his own translation from their list, despite having sold 60,000 copies of it. Morgan surmises that the decision is based on the commercial competition of a rival translation by a Nobel prize-winner commissioned for the Norton Anthology of English Literature and 'set for virtually every introductory course in English on the North American continent' (quoting from Shippey's *TLS* review preserved in the same sheaf of papers). In a cod-Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse pair, Morgan ruefully notes that

> BEOWULF has become   big business.

He consoles himself with the knowledge that Carcanet will republish his translation, and that its publisher, Michael Schmidt, had apparently written to him that 'Your BEOWULF is so much better than the new Heaney one'. Nevertheless Morgan admits that he is not impartial enough to take on the job of reviewing Heaney's version in good faith.

Carcanet did republish Morgan's translation, exactly fifty years after it (his first book publication) had come out. In *Beowulf* fifty years (*hund missera*, line 1769, 'a hundred seasons', where a season is either winter or summer) is the length of time that Hrothgar says he has reigned over the Danes before Beowulf arrives. It is the period of time it takes for a king to go from the glorious exploits of his youth to the infirmity of old age, to a time when he can no longer defend his home without external help. Beowulf too, rules over his people, the Geats, for exactly this period of time (*fiftig wintra*, line 2209, 'fifty winters') until the dragon attacks and, in his vulnerable old age, he too, like Hrothgar before him, is unable to protect his people with absolute success. This, then, is the significance of the anniversary republication of the second edition of *Beowulf* for an aged Morgan who had become, like Hrothgar, no longer powerful enough to hold his court. Not long after the Carcanet republication, Morgan's *duguð* of James McGonigal and Hamish Whyte would help him move from his home with dignity.

During 2002 Morgan was also at work on the heavily Old English-allusive *Love and a Life*. One of these allusions, not previously noted, occurs in 'Freeze-Frame'. The preceding poem, 'Those and These' had opened the sequence with description of the many faces of his past lovers, friends and passing acquaintances, 'crowding round' him. In 'Freeze-Frame' they continue to press in on the poet's memory 'in clouds in streets in trees / Often and often, or in dreams'.[49] This in itself is not sufficiently direct to invoke *The Wanderer*, a poem in which former companions crowd in on the lonely speaker as he dreams (lines 34-44). But Morgan's poem goes on to quote a voice that punctuates their prodding and probing:

> "When my head was on your knees
> And your hand was on my head, did you think time would seize
> Head, hand, all, lock all away where there is not ring of keys?"

This confirms an intertextual reference to *The Wanderer*, in which the exiled speaker remembers laying his head on his lost lord's knees (*þinceð him on mode þæt his mondryhten / clyppe ond cysse, ond on cneo lecge / honda ond heafod*, 'it seems in his imagination that he embraces and kisses his lord and lays his hands and head on his knee', lines 41-3a). The image, in both the Old English poem and in Morgan's, is of loss, isolation, remembering and

nostalgia, with, to the modern reader, a hint of homoerotic possibility (as Auden exploited in his poem 'The Wanderer').[50] Remembering lost companions from his youth, Morgan remembers a poem studied in his youth – a poem about remembering the lost companions of youth.

Elsewhere in the sequence, we see the old Morgan deliberately align himself with the aged Hrothgar. When Beowulf returns from Heorot to Geatland, he relates to his own king, Hygelac, the adventures that took place while he was in Hrothgar's court. One of the details that Beowulf adds to his account for Hygelac is a portrait of Hrothgar as a poet, composing poetry from past reminiscences. In Morgan's translation:

> The old Scylding, time-schooled, told over the past
> Now the hero of battles awoke the harp's sweetness,
> Plucked the happy strings; now sang a poem
> Heartbreaking and true; and the great-spirited king
> Recited after tradition a narrative of marvels;
> And then again the warrior in chains of old age
> Would begin to bewail his youth and his war-strength –
> His breast was vexed within him, while the crowding
> Memories came to him from so many winters.[51]

It is from this passage that Morgan quotes the untranslated Old English in 'The Last Dragon', where he struggles to recall his own 'narrative of marvels' against the threatening dragon of oblivion:

> Is it the mists of autumn? My mind's dislodged, far back, far off, in
> turmoil, a memory trail
> To the grizzled warrior in Heorot hall whose heart *inne weoll*
> *Thonne he wintrum frod worn gemunde* and told his ancient tale.
> I too am old in winters and stories and may I never fail
> To guard my word-hoard before the dragon with his flailing tail
> Sweeps everything away
> Leaves nothing to say
> Either in turmoil or in peace, and neither poetry nor song nor all their
> longing can avail.[52]

As Old English was once the lifeline that allowed him to produce verse at

all, overcoming his war-induced writer's block, so, fifty years later, remembering Old English becomes the palliative to encroaching memory loss, and the lifeline that enables him to keep writing in spite of that. Moreover, although in *Beowulf* there is a constant anxiety expressed about worldly achievements slipping from memory, the preventative against this is poetry, and despite the poem's fears about human transience, its own survival is the strongest rebuttal of those fears. This too is the case with Morgan's 'The Last Dragon', which defeats the same anxiety even as (and because) it expresses it.

We see then, in the fifty-year return to Old English, both in his original poetry and his translations, Morgan cycling back to the beginning of his career, according to a time span which he would have well understood as a measure of his rise from youthful promise to waning age. *Beowulf* mirrors its eponymous hero with Hrothgar, using the fortunes of one king to reflect those of another, and Morgan deliberately mirrors both against himself.

But this is not where Morgan's affair with Old English ended. He later renewed contact with the Old English riddles, after a commission for Norton's *The Word Exchange*, an anthology of Old English poetry translated by over seventy poets. The riddles are poems that burst over with wonder and enthusiasm for the multiplicity of the natural and domestic worlds, as well as for the possibilities of language, and Morgan responded to them in kind. Riddle 38 is commonly accepted as referring to a bullock,[53] which suckles on the four springs (*feower wellan*, line 3) of its mother's udders in youth, breaks up downs (*duna briceð*, line 6) if he thrives (yoked in the plough) but binds the living (*bindeð cwice*, line 7) if he falls apart (into leather straps). Morgan, with great acuity, seized on a possibility for double entendre implicit in the opening line of the Old English (although there nothing more than a hint) and amplified it with relish. The word *wiht* in Old English normally means 'creature', 'thing' and this riddle's opening gambit *Ic þa wiht geseah* ('I saw a creature') is a common, formulaic way to begin a riddle in Old English. However, Morgan must have remembered that occasionally in *The Exeter Book* riddles this somewhat ambiguous 'thing' is seen in contexts that look decidedly phallic; in Riddle 25, for instance, the mysterious speaking object declares that it is a wonderful *wiht* that stands tall, rooted from its hairy bed and that its red head is often grasped hard by a common woman, wetting her eye. Riddle 25's *wiht* is, of course, an onion, but Morgan transferred its teasing ambiguity onto the *wiht* of riddle 38 (where it is also a thing *waepnedcynnes*, or 'of weapon-kin')

and transformed the bullock into the kind of figure he might have admired voyeuristically in the bars and cinemas of the Glasgow of his youth: 'I watched this big well-hung laddie'. The move is an innovation on this particular riddle, but entirely in character with the way the riddles operate as a group in *The Exeter Book*. Likewise Morgan's concluding couplet, 'For both use and joy / Meet in this boy', has no precedent in the original poem, but its exuberance catches the spirit of the riddles, even as it emphasises the queering of its subject. One is reminded by this act of translation that Morgan's early relationship with Old English was characterised partly by a want for male-male love.

The second riddle that Morgan was commissioned to translate for The *Word Exchange*, Riddle 66, also finds last place in his last book publication, *Dream and Other Nightmares*.[54] This is appropriate in a number of ways, for it not only refers to creation (so Morgan's end is translated into the beginning of everything), but, as Morgan no doubt knew, it was itself a translation of a Latin riddle (so the last poem of one of the twentieth-century's great translators is a translation of a translation). Moreover, Aldhelm, to whom the Latin 'original' is credited, strategically placed his *Creatura* riddle at the end of *Aenigmata Aldhelmi*. It is a poem then that, despite being about origins, has a history of use as a conclusion. The Old English riddle is of the *Ic eom* . . . genre (most Old English riddles divide into a third-person narrated 'I saw a thing . . .' category, such as the one we have previously considered, or into a first-person 'I am a . . .' category). Characteristically, Morgan ignored the opening first-person declaration of the poem's subject (*Ic eom mare þonne þes middangeard*, 'I am greater than this middle earth'),[55] instead turning it into an anticipatory adverbial phrase of direction, with a cosmological scope much broader than the original ('Up beyond the universe and back'), before then going on to introduce first-person pronouns in declarative verbal phrases thirteen times in his translation (three of which are 'I am's), whereas the original uses only five more first-person verbs, three of which suppress the pronoun. Morgan's poem becomes characteristically dynamic and urgent, a creation poem of verbs, of acting, and of proud self-declaration. It is a long way from the sweating and straining to unbind and speak with which 'Epilogue' describes his painful coming into voice. It is the fulfilment of his earliest experiments with Old English, and an apt summation of the vast scope of his creativity. It is a fitting conclusion:

Up beyond the universe and back
Down to the tiniest chigger in the finger
I outstrip the moon in brightness,
I outrun midsummer suns.
I embrace the seas and other waters,
I am fresh and green as the fields I form.
I walk under hell, I fly over the heavens.
I am the land, I am the ocean.
I claim this honour, I claim its worth.
I am what I claim. So, what is my name?

Notes

1 The title quotes Morgan's rendering of line 2114b of *Beowulf*, *worn gemunde* (literally 'he [the aged Hrothgar] remembered many things'), also quoted in the original in 'The Last Dragon'. R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (eds), *Klaeber's Beowulf*, 4th edn. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p.72. Edwin Morgan, trans., *Beowulf: A Verse Translation into Modern English* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), p.58. Edwin Morgan, *Love and a Life: 50 Poems* (Glasgow: Mariscat, 2003), p.32; reproduced in Edwin Morgan, *A Book of Lives* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2007), p.93. I would like to thank the Royal Society of Edinburgh, for the award of a small grant to allow me to study Morgan's archives in the Special Collections Department of Glasgow University Library and the Mitchell Library, Glasgow. An early version of this article was presented at the Scottish Poetry Library as the inaugural Edwin Morgan Lecture, 25 April 2012. I would also like to thank Robyn Marsack, Graham Caie, Sarah Hepworth, James McGonigal and Hamish Whyte for help and advice.

2 Chris Jones, *Strange Likeness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.127-8.

3 Robert Crawford and Hamish Whyte (eds), *About Edwin Morgan* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p.143; James, McGonigal, *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan* (Dingwall: Sandstone, 2010), p.117. *Dies Irae* was eventually published in Edwin Morgan, *Collected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1990), pp.21-40. It includes translations of the Old English poems *The Ruin*, *The Seafarer*, *The Wanderer*, and four riddles from *The Exeter Book*, which Morgan titles 'Swallows', 'Swan', 'Bookworm' and 'Storm'. (These are usually numbered 57, 7, 47 and 3, respectively: Bernard J. Muir (ed)., *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, rev. 2nd edn., 2 vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), pp.325, 291, 320, and 286-9.

4 For which, see Jones, *Strange Likeness*, pp.152-81 and '"Where now the harp?": Listening for the Sounds of Old English Verse from *Beowulf* to the Twentieth Century', *Oral Tradition*, 24 (2009): 485-502.

5 See 'Your Jack London bit', interview with William Barr, January 1982, in Edwin Morgan, *Nothing Not Giving Messages: Reflections on Work and Life*, ed., Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990), p.98.

6 Poembook 1936-61 in Glasgow, University Library Special Collections, MS Morgan, 4848/102, later published in Morgan, *Collected Poems*, pp.26-7. McGonigal, *Beyond the Last Dragon*, p.75.
7 McGonigal, *Beyond the Last Dragon*, p.85.
8 Edwin Morgan, trans., *Beowulf*, 2nd edn. (Manchester: Carcanet, 2002), p.ix.
9 Morgan, *Collected Poems*, p.594.
10 'Poetry', in Edwin Morgan, *Dreams and Other Nightmares: New and Uncollected Poems 1954-2009* (Edinburgh: Mariscat, 2010), p.28; Muir (ed)., *Exeter Anthology*, p.215.
11 Morgan, *Collected Poems*, p.594.
12 Edwin Morgan in Conversation with James McGonigal', in James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling (eds), *Ethically Speaking: Voice and Values in Modern Scottish Writing* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), p.147.
13 Morgan used the word 'duguth' in 'Lamps': Edwin Morgan, *Sweeping out the Dark* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1994), p.92.
14 McGonigal, *Ethically Speaking*, p.150.
15 For the influence of Girvan on Morgan's translation, see Chris Jones, 'Edwin Morgan in Conversation', *PNReview*, 31/2 (2004), p.47, and *Strange Likeness*, pp.124, 140 n. 43, 144, 162-3.
16 Glasgow, University Library Special Collections, MS Morgan, B/1/2.
17 Henry Sweet (ed.), *An Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse*, 9th edn., rev. by C. T. Onions (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933). Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/SWE.
18 Albert S. Cook, *A First Book in Old English: Grammar, Reader, Notes and Vocabulary*, 3rd edn. (London: Ginn, 1921), pp.5-99. Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/COO.
19 John R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 3rd rev. edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931). Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/HAL.
20 The first text Morgan studied was Sweet's fourth extract, concerning Ohthere and Wulfstan's journey from 'The Old English Orosius'. He worked non-chronologically through the extracts, although broadly moving from prose to verse texts.
21 W. J. Sedgefield, ed., *Beowulf*, 3rd rev. edn. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1935). Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/BEO.
22 Fr. Klaeber, ed., *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 3rd edn. (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1936). Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/BEO.
23 Klaeber, *Beowulf*, p.5. Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/BEO.
24 Klaeber, ed., *Beowulf*. Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/BEO. This continuing interest in the subject, long after his undergraduate studies were over, can also be traced in the various *Beowulf*-related correspondence with publishers, scholars, broadcasters and reviewers continuing into the 1980s and contained in Glasgow, University Library Special Collections, MS Morgan, E/3/2-7.
25 Glasgow, University Library Special Collections, MS Morgan, B/1/2.
26 Morgan, trans., *Beowulf*, pp.v-xxv.
27 Glasgow, University Library Special Collections, MS Morgan, Acc 4580/Box 42.
28 Morgan, *Collected Poems*, pp.518-19.
29 *Ibid.*, pp.39-40.
30 A. Diedrich Wackerbarth, trans., *Beowulf: An Anglo-Saxon Poem* (London: William Pickering, 1849). Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/BEO.
31 Mary E. Waterhouse, *Beowulf in Modern English: A Translation in Blank Verse* (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1949), pp.ix & xiv. Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/BEO; Morgan, trans., *Beowulf*, pp.x & xii.

32 Gavin Bone, trans., *Beowulf in Modern Verse with an Essay and Pictures* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1945). Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/BEO.
33 Bone, trans., *Beowulf*, pp.6-9. Compare Morgan, trans., *Beowulf*, pp.viii-xx.
34 Gavin Bone, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: An Essay with Specimen Translations in Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1943), pp.21-2. Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/BON.
35 Albert S. Cook (ed.), *The Christ of Cynewulf* (Boston: Ginn, 1900). Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/CYN.
36 George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie (eds),*The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, 6 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-54). Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/JUN, EM/VER, EM/EXE, EM/BEO, EM/PAR, EM/DOB.
37 In writing 'poet-translator' I exclude Michael Alexander from this generalisation, whose intimacy with the poem is comparable to Morgan's.
38 See Jones, 'Edwin Morgan in Conversation', 47-51. Morgan's marked up performance copy was the English, Hand and Flower Press edition of his translation. Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/BEO.
39 Sweet, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Reader*, 9th edn.. Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/SWE, pp.91-2, 94-5, 110, 149, 161-2 & 169-70.
40 Glasgow, University Library Special Collections, MS Morgan 917/1, p.228.
41 Morgan, *Collected Poems*, p.127.
42 Riddle 38 and Riddle 66 (Muir, ed., *Exeter Anthology*, pp.311 & 361-2 which were commissioned for Greg Delanty and Michael Matto (eds), *The Word Exchange: Anglo-Saxon Poems in Translation* (New York: Norton, 2011), pp.277 & 449. Riddle 66 was also published in Morgan, *Dreams and Other Nightmares*, p.61.
43 Glasgow, University Library Special Collections, MS Morgan 917/1, p.233.
44 Chris Jones, '"One can emend a mutilated text": Auden's *The Orators* and the Old English *Exeter Book*', *TEXT*, 19 (2002): 261-75.
45 R. K. Gordon, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: J. M. Dent, 1926), pp.290-305. Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/GOR.
46 W. J. Sedgefield (ed.), *An Anglo-Saxon Verse-Book* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1922), pp.vii-viii & 127-8. Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/SED.
47 *Ibid.*, pp.113-15 & 188-9. Morgan, *Collected Poems*, pp.38-9.
48 E.g. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.4-6, 18, 22, 55, 57, 76, 84-5, 95 & 187. Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/OKE and H. Momma, *The Composition of Old English Poetry*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 20 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.194. Glasgow, Mitchell Library, EM/MOM. Both of these are marked around passages concerned with prosody, performance and the textuality of Old English poetry.
49 Morgan, *Love and a Life*, p.7. Also reproduced in *A Book of Lives*, p.82. Other poems which allude to Old English in *A Book of Lives* are 'The Sputnik's Tale' (p.40), in which the man-made satellite refers to itself as 'Widsith', the name of a legendary Old English poet, meaning 'Far-traveller'; and 'The Welcome' (pp.67-8), which coins the kennings 'word-enroller' and 'rhythm-giver' for the poet, and bids its readers to 'unlock / Your word-hoards', alluding again to *Widsith* (line 1), Muir (ed.), *Exeter Anthology*, pp.238-43.
50 Jones, *Strange Likeness*, pp.89-97.
51 Lines 2106-14, Morgan, trans., *Beowulf*, pp.57-8.
52 Morgan, *Love and a Life*, p.32, reproduced in *Book of Lives*, p.93.

53 Muir, ed., *Exeter Anthology*, p.311.
54 Morgan, *Dreams and Other Nightmares*, p.61.
55 Muir (ed.), *Exeter Anthology*, pp.361-2.

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JOHN CORBETT

The Summer of *Cyrano*

Edwin Morgan's engagement with the Scots language is a curious one. The most obvious paradox is that his most extensive forays in the realm of the 'mother tongue' are in his translations and adaptations, rather than in his original poetry or drama.[1] The most substantial of his Scots language translations are the two late dramas, *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1992) and *Phaedra* (2000), which followed the much earlier reworking of Mayakovsky's verse, *Wi the Haill Voice*, published in 1972, but composed largely in the 1950s.[2] More modest excursions in Scots can be found in other adaptations, such as a rendering of a speech by Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth (Act I, scene 5), republished in the *Collected Translations* (1996), and a few lines of *Beowulf*. These lines were published as 'The Auld Man's Coronach' in the Glasgow Herald in 1953; a half-century later, they were disinterred and reprinted by Chris Jones in his monograph, *Strange Likeness*.[3] Translation of canonical poetry and drama into Scots was, of course, one of the major projects of those in the post-war Lallans movement who followed the example of Hugh MacDiarmid, and, at a cursory glance, Morgan's practice seems to fall in line with that of the Scots language makars of his own generation and the one that immediately preceded it. For example, his Mayakovsky translation can be set in the context of a lively 20th century tradition that begins with MacDiarmid's renderings of Aleksandr Blok's lyric poetry in *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1926) and includes Sydney Goodsir Smith's Scots translation of the same poet's more fragmentary reflections on the Bolshevik revolution, *The Twelve* (1957).[4] In drama, Morgan's translations follow the distinguished lineage of Robert Kemp's celebrated versions of Molière's farces and Douglas Young's adaptations of Greek comedies. The very title of Morgan's Mayakovsky translations, *Wi the Haill Voice*, seems to proclaim that only through Scots will Morgan express himself fully. Such a sentiment echoes MacDiarmid's stated desire to see:

> [. . .] a synthetic Scots gathering together and reintegrating all the *disjecta membra* of the Doric and endeavouring to realise its latent potentialities along lines in harmony at once with distinctive Scots psychology and contemporary cultural functions and requirements.[5]

And yet there are clearly problems with this reading of Morgan as a late Lallans makar, despite the fact that Robin Hamilton describes his Mayakovsky and Shakespeare adaptations as being in 'Lallans Scots.'[6] As already noted, Morgan's original verse – and indeed most of his translations – are in English, which makes Scots for him a marked choice, rather than one that 'reintegrates' the elements of a fragmented national psyche, and realises their 'latent possibilities'. Commenting on his own practice, Morgan distances himself – though not in principle – from the easy association between nationalist politics and the use of Scots that characterises much of the post-MacDiarmid 'renaissance':

> I tend to use Scots where it would be naturally used in a poem, in speech. I'm very much aware that this leaves the whole position in the air – whether one should use Scots as a deliberate political act – this is clearly a possibility.[7]

And though the Scots that bursts forth in *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Phaedra* is in fact far from that which would be 'naturally used in speech', it is also some way from the kind of Scots employed by those earlier 20th century translators and dramatists who – like Douglas Young – wore their nationalist credentials on their sleeves. As Bill Findlay observes, in a detailed discussion of the nature of Morgan's dramatic medium, whereas Lallans translators of drama, like Robert Kemp and Victor Carin, tended to draw upon conservative, rural language varieties as the basis of their stage Scots, Morgan turned to Glaswegian speech, synthesizing elements of this stigmatised medium in ways reminiscent of the strategies of the Lallans poets and dramatists, with results that root the literary dialect in the city rather than the country.[8] In his article on *Cyrano*, Findlay suggests that part of Morgan's motivation for writing in Scots was indeed a growing political awareness, though the quotation he musters to support this case still finds Morgan drawing back from a wholehearted endorsement of nationalism *per se*. In an essay first published in 1979, the year of the failed devolution refer-

endum, Morgan proposes that 'more and more' writers are acknowledging their identity as Scottish writers, and he suggests that

> The result will be, I hope, that dedication to the art of writing will not be unaccompanied by the other dedication – to a society, to a place, to a nation.[9]

The tentative circumlocution of 'will not be unaccompanied by' suggests a careful distinction between the vocation of writing and the desire to honour a 'place' which, in the context of this sentence, mediates between 'society' and 'nation'. When he came to translate *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Morgan's literary chauvinism was more civic than national, a fact perhaps reflected in his appointment in 1999 as poet laureate of Glasgow, five years before his elevation to Scots Makar.

From his introduction to the 1976 edition of the Mayakovsky translations, it is evident that what attracts Morgan to Scots as an occasional literary medium is, in part, the challenge of drawing on the resources of the Scots language available to him to re-inscribe the 'racy colloquialism' and 'verbal inventiveness' of his source material. The 'raciness' and 'inventiveness' that Morgan associated with Scots clearly appealed to him as he turned, later in his career, to the commission of translating *Cyrano de Bergerac* for Communicado theatre company. David Kinloch, commenting on the range of styles evident in this translation, suggests that a key to Morgan's use of Scots is his 'conception of writing as a means of controlling and expressing a fundamental human energy'.[10] In the conception of dramatic composition in Scots as channelling a fundamental energy, Morgan had a ready inspiration in his friend, Liz Lochhead's highly successful reworking of *Tartuffe* (1986). Lochhead had reinvigorated the successful tradition of staging 'MacMolières', and Morgan could not have helped but remark upon the energy of her fusion of 'Byron, Burns, Stanley Holloway, Ogden Nash and George Formby, as well as the sharp tongue of [her] granny'[11] – and its positive reception by audiences. Five years after the success of *Tartuffe*, Morgan was ready to embrace the offer to give his own take on Rostand's version of the life of a man whom Donald McManus memorably describes as 'the expert swordsman with the big nose and broken heart [who] was the prototypical heroic figure of the late Romantic era.'[12] Though written in a later century, Rostand's play was close enough in spirit to popular classics

by Molière and Goldoni, which also have at their core larger-than-life misanthropes, hypocrites, hypochondriacs, swindlers and misers, to tap into an established Scottish tradition of dramatic adaptation, while offering something different: a flamboyant, Scots-speaking principal character who is a tragicomic, romantic hero rather than a buffoon or rogue.

Kinloch likens the political moment of the first performances of *Cyrano*, in the disillusioned summer of 1992 when Scotland was collectively licking its wounds after the defeat of the Labour party in a key general election, to the subdued atmosphere in 1887 when the play was first performed in France, in the wake of its defeat in the Franco-Prussian war. Kinloch also discusses the character of Cyrano as an outsider, regionally (he is represented, unhistorically, as a Gascon in Paris) and sexually (the historical Cyrano was bisexual, and, in the play, to woo his beloved, he must effectively unite his expressive soul with the body of a fellow handsome but inarticulate male). In fact, although Rostand's hero is widely seen as rivalling only Hamlet in theatrical popularity, and though he might therefore be considered a staple figure in European culture, the long summer of Cyrano de Bergerac's intense engagement with Scottish audiences extends arguably from 1985, when a radically updated, but still-recognizable Hollywood version of the story, *Roxanne*, directed by Fred Schepisi and written by and starring Steve Martin, was first shown in Scottish cinemas and, later, on television. Then, in 1990, two years before Morgan's adaptation, a more faithful cinema adaptation of Rostand's play, directed by Jean-Paul Rappeneu and starring Gerald Depardieu, could be seen in art cinemas and then, again, on television screens across the country. For the non-francophone viewers in the Scottish aisles and on the Scottish sofas, the English subtitles were based on a translation by Anthony Burgess that had been theatrically performed in 1985. Burgess' stage adaptation was the version familiar to Gerry Mulgrew of Communicado, who commissioned the Morgan translation. Mulgrew later described reading Morgan's script after Burgess's as 'like having a lovely little minuet by Haydn suddenly interrupted by a Charlie Parker solo.'[13] The trope of interruption continues beyond Morgan's translation to A. L. Kennedy's novel *So I am Glad* (1995) in which a present-day Glaswegian radio announcer, Jennifer Wilson, finds her stable life complicated by the sudden appearance in her flat of Savinien Cyrano de Bergerac. His returned shade disrupts and enlarges the life of a woman whose life is gradually dwindling in scope to the status of a disembodied

voice, carried by the ether. For a decade, then, in different forms and media, Cyrano de Bergerac was a recurrent character in Scottish culture. Arguably, the Martin and Rappeneu films raised his public profile amongst a broad audience. Morgan and Kennedy could then draw upon this visibility, and perhaps upon the licence already taken by Martin's domesticating contemporary adaptation, to play their own variations on a familiar set of themes.

Morgan's version of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, then, draws on diverse sources beyond Rostand's text. It can be seen as part of a vigorous post-war tradition of translating classic drama texts into Scots, an extension of the 'McMolières' and the 'McGoldonis' into the 19th century arena of French romantic tragi-comedy. The employment of a 'synthetic Glaswegian' as the dramatic medium might be considered an act of linguistic experimentation and civic chauvinism that parallels but is distinct from the linguistic experiments and national chauvinism signified by the Lallans of earlier playwrights such as Douglas Young. Young's versions of Aristophenes' *The Burdies* (1956) and *The Puddocks* (1958) were performed in the decade when Morgan's views of poetry and poetic drama were forming. Another trait shared by both Morgan and Young, a professor of Classics at St Andrews University, was, of course, a scholarly approach to language and translation, characterised, in Morgan's case at least, by informed reflection on his own practice and that of others. Morgan prefaced his English translation of *Beowulf* (1952) with a sharp critical discussion of earlier translators, and Jones (this issue) records that Morgan kept abreast of developments in Old English scholarship. It is likely that, in the early 1990s, he would have been aware of earlier translations of Rostand's play into English, such as Burgess' adaptation and a much earlier version, in blank verse, by the American poet, Brian Hooker (1923). However, perhaps the most revealing comparison is between Morgan's translation and that of Christopher Fry, first performed in 1975 and published the following year.

By 1975, Fry had enjoyed several decades of success as a playwright and translator of verse drama. His earliest triumphs were again performed and published in Morgan's formative years as an artist; for example, Fry's best received original play, *The Lady's Not for Burning*, was performed in 1948, and his adaptation of Jean Anouilh's *L'Invitation au Châteauown* was performed as *Ring around the Moon* in 1950. Morgan's antipathy for Fry's work is forcefully expressed in an unpublished verse epistle, dated 19th June

1954, written to a younger, aspiring playwright, Ian Dallas.[14] In this letter, composed in blank verse, Morgan effectively sets out a manifesto for what he calls 'patterned writing' in poetry and dramatic verse, encouraging Dallas, the apprentice writer, to experiment with a range of genres and styles, contemporary and historical, before becoming overly concerned with the propositional content of his work. Against Dallas' perceived scepticism, Morgan emphasises the paradoxical need for formal constraint in order to attain freedom; and he urges the younger playwright to 'be flexible, not Fry.' Amongst the techniques Morgan recommends to give the pentameter line the desired flexibility and a colloquial flavour are inversion of the iambic foot, and variety in pausing and rhyme, all in the ultimate service of 'rhythmic involvement.' In place of Fry, Morgan in the final lines of the epistle recommends as a model 'Wayland the Smith', an Anglicisation of the Norse god Vulcan, who in the Old English poem had fashioned Beowulf's chain-mail shirt.

Morgan shared his distaste of Fry's style with other contemporary commentators, such as Denis Donoghue, who writes of Fry's early verse dramas:

> Its typical effect is not to concentrate feeling and thinking into the word, but to diffuse these activities over a broad verbal area. Indeed there are few writers and fewer dramatists who yield so readily to the lyric temptation. Where ideas are involved Mr. Fry uses them to make verbal show-cases, rather than, like Shaw, to start dialectical battles. Frequently, Mr. Fry's language seems perversely designed to smooth away any conflict inherent in the situation.[15]

Donoghue's valorisation of verbal and dramatic energy, of the resistance to easy lyricism, and of form harnessed to 'dialectical battles' all accord with Morgan's manifesto in his verse epistle to Dallas, in which he argues that 'speech is the very first problem to solve'. The relation of the verse in contemporary verse drama to the everyday speech of the audience was indeed a problem that vexed playwrights and critics of the 1940s and 1950s. In Donoghue's words:

> One of the problems involved in verse drama is the relation between the verse (in particular, its syntax, diction, and rhythm) and the characteristic speech of the audience to which it is addressed.[16]

The ways in which Fry, Morgan – and, before them, Hooker – addressed the issue of relating verse drama to everyday speech can be illustrated by comparing their treatment of a brief exchange in Act I of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, in which Cyrano responds to a Viscount, Valvert, who impugns his pedigree. In chronological order – Rostand, Hooker, Fry and Morgan – the scene is realised as follows.

LE VICOMTE (*suffoqué*)

Ces grands airs arrogants!
Un hobereau qui . . . qui . . . n'a même pas de gants!
Et qui sort sans rubans, sans bouffettes, sans ganses!

CYRANO

Moi, c'est moralement que j'ai mes élégances.
Je ne m'attife pas ainsi qu'un freluquet,
Mais je suis plus soigné si je suis moins coquet;
Je ne sortirais pas avec, par négligence,
Un affront pas très bien lavé, la conscience
Jaune encor de sommeil dans le coin de son il,
Un honneur chiffonné, des scrupules en deuil.
Mais je marche sans rien sur moi qui ne reluise,
Empanaché d'indépendance et de franchise;
Ce n'est pas une taille avantageuse, c'est
Mon âme que je cambre ainsi qu'en un corset,
Et tout couvert d'exploits qu'en rubans je m'attache,
Retroussant mon esprit ainsi qu'une moustache,
Je fais, en traversant les groupes et les ronds,
Sonner les vérités comme des éperons.[17]

VALVERT

Oh – These arrogant grand airs!
A clown who – look at him – not even gloves!
No ribbons – no lace – no buckles on his shoes –

CYRANO

I carry my adornments on my soul.
I do not dress up like a popinjay;
But inwardly, I keep my daintiness.
I do not bear with me, by any chance,
An insult not yet washed away – a conscience
Yellow with unpurged bile – an honor frayed
To rags, a set of scruples badly worn.
I go caparisoned in gems unseen,
Trailing white plumes of freedom, garlanded
With my good name – no figure of a man,
But a soul clothed in shining armor, hung
With deeds for decorations, twirling – thus –
A bristling wit, and swinging at my side
Courage, and on the stones of this old town
Making the sharp truth ring, like golden spurs![18]

VISCOUNT [*raging*]

Such arrogance! In a lout
Who . . . doesn't even wear gloves, and goes about
Without bows or ribbons!

CYRANO

My finery's in the heart.
I don't have to dress myself like a male tart
Or flaunt my cuffs to demonstrate my merit.
My plumage is an independent spirit,
A plume to brave all weathers, my panache!
I twirl my points of wit like a moustache,
And cross the city's sycophantic squares
Making Truth right as others clank their spurs.
It isn't the well-cut suit but the well-cut mind
And deeds, not frills, that suit me best, I find.[19]

VALVERT

Whit? A jumped-up squire?
Sich arrogance! You . . . you . . . ye'd huv tae hire
Gloves, ribbons, tassels, braid, stoakins, the loat!

CYRANO

Elegance is a morality, no a coat!
Ah leave thae fripperies tae a fribble like you.
Ah'm no fantoosh, but still Ah'm groomed right through.
Ah widnae go ootdoors wi the carelesssness
Of a hauf-scrubbed reproach, a yella conscience
Wi gummy eyes hauf-opened in the moarnin,
Ma honour crumpled up, ma scruples in mournin.
So ivrything aboot me's spick and span,
Topped wi frankness, an independent man.
Ah cannae cut a dash like Valentino,
It's soul, no flash, Ah press oot fur its *vino*.
Ah pin oan deeds, no ribbons, tae ma doublet,
Ah wax ma wit, no ma moustache, tae unstubble it.
Ah pass through punters, chatterers, orators,
And shinin truths come ringin oot like spurs.[20]

The comparison of this extract from the source text to the three verse translations of it highlights the versatility of Morgan's Scots and the way his peculiarly Glaswegian stance towards his material pays off in additionally layered meanings. While Hooker and Fry translate Valvert's *hobereau* 'county squire' as *clown* and *lout*, Morgan retains the original concept, but accentuates the class slur by adding *jumped up* as an epithet, and he has Valvert sneering that Cyrano would have to *hire* any finery that he might wear. The *squire/hire* rhyme is thus earned. Rostand, Hooker and Fry all have Cyrano responding to the viscount's insult with a claim about his own moral character (e.g. 'My finery's in the heart'); Morgan, however, initially depersonalises the claim by beginning with a universal aphorism ('Elegance is a morality, no a coat!'). The personalised descriptions that follow are directed at Valvert. While Rostand's *freluquet* (literally 'popinjay,' as in Hooker's version) expresses the general category of trivial person, in Fry the barb is

specified as 'male tart'. In Morgan's translation, the expression becomes 'a fribble like you'. The word *fribble* is recorded in Scots as a verb meaning 'to titivate a wig'; Morgan is either using it as a nonce-word, or creatively as a noun meaning something like 'wig-fiddler' – or, perhaps most likely, both. Indeed the attraction of Morgan's verse drama in Scots shares with much poetry in dense Lallans – as Caroline Macafee once shrewdly observed – a pleasure in its nonsense-like aural effects combined with the payoff that the words might actually have a deeper significance, although that significance might be beyond the readership or audience's immediate grasp.[21]

The perennial issue of the relationship between the language of verse drama and the everyday language of the audience is given a fresh twist by Morgan's translation. Hooker's 'I go caparisoned in gems unseen/Trailing white plumes of freedom' is elegant but pretentious; Fry cuts the self-aggrandisement, preferring the slightly plainer 'My plumage is an independent spirit.' Morgan renders the lines 'So ivrything aboot me's spick and span/Topped wi frankness, an independent man.' Again, rather than simply performing a self-audit of his own virtues, Morgan's Cyrano employs the exuberance of the rhythm and the ingenuity of the images and rhymes to effect a dramatic realisation of his character, as illustrated in the lines 'Ah cannae cut a dash like Valentino/It's soul, no flash, Ah press oot fur its *vino*.' Morgan's Scots, then, proves a flexible and powerful dramatic medium; however, it can hardly be said to be the everyday language of the audience. It draws on the resources of Scots – the phonetic spellings (e.g. *hauf, yella, moarnin*), the few grammatical markers (e.g. negatives, as in *widnae, no*), and a scattering of distinctive lexical items (*fribble, fantoosh*) – to fashion in 'patterned language' a larger-than-life character who embodies the stereotypical virtues of a romantic hero, scorned by his so-called social superiors. The linguistic markers would help to prime a Scottish audience to identify with and root for this home-grown version of the French hero; Morgan's intensification of recognisable social snobberies would no doubt also contribute to the domestic audience's adoption of his localised reconstruction of the 'expert swordsman with the big nose and the broken heart'. However, the notion that Morgan's stage Scots is somehow a transcription of the natural, everyday speech of Glasgow underestimates its complex nature and multiply-inflected roots.

The demands made by Morgan's translation are not confined to his use of a dramatic medium that both is and is not shared by his audience. His

translation does not shy away from the allusive nature of the source text; he does not cut occasional cultural references that, like the more obscure Scots terms, might seem opaque to a domestic audience. To take one example from several, in Act III of the play, Cyrano seeks to delay Roxane's suitor, the Comte de Guiche, by pretending to have fallen from the moon. The exchange between the sceptical de Guiche and the wildly fantastic Cyrano, who presents himself as an early astronaut and whose historical counterpart wrote early examples of science fiction, must have appealed to Morgan, whose poetry often draws upon the images and themes of this literary genre. In the exchange, Cyrano makes references to characters and events that a present-day audience might well know little or nothing about:

CYRANO

Ye wahnt tae hear, ye wahnt tae read me,
Whit's the muin made a, and is there a pundit tae
Say whae lives in that big gourd's rotundity?

DE GUICHE

No no! I want to . . .

CYRANO

. . . suss ma aeronautic?
Ah hud ma ain invention, quite a braw trick.

DE GUICHE

Mad!

CYRANO

Ah didnae reinvent automata
Regiomontanus's daft eagle, gone at a
Flap, Archytas's wee widden doo . . .

DE GUICHE

Mad, but learned.[22]

Cyrano's 'mad but learned' references are, first of all, to Regiomontanus, a pseudonym of Johannes Müller (1436-76), a German astronomer and mathematician who was internationally famous in his day, and who was reputed to have built an automaton, a wooden eagle, which flew to greet the Emperor at Koenigsberg. The reference to Archytus of Tarentum assumes the audience's easy familiarity with this philosopher, a contemporary of Plato, who flourished in the early 4th century BC; like Regiomantus, Archytus applied his interest in mathematics to the construction of a famous automaton, though his 'wooden dove' might actually have been a later translator's misinterpretation of a reference to an early form of catapult.[23] Of course, all the theatre audience really needs to infer from this exchange is that Regiomontanus and Archytus were precursors to Cyrano as inventors of flying automata; however, the allusive nature of the exchange hints at hidden depths of meaning, in a manner that parallels the use of obscurer Scots terms, whose sense is grasped more from their context than from familiarity of usage. Morgan's *Cyrano de Bergerac* is studded with such erudite allusions. Morgan, indeed, simultaneously domesticates, ironises and celebrates cultural name-dropping in a scene that alludes pointedly to Muriel Spark's satire of educational pretensions, while revelling in the references to a bevy of French academicans:

FIRST FOP

Crème de la crème!

SECOND FOP

Mesdames

De Guéméné . . .

CUIGY

De Bois-Dauphin . . .

FIRST FOP

Such lambs!

BRISSAILLE

De Chavigny . . .

SECOND FOP

Ah, she can do no wrong!

LIGNIÈRE

Even Corneille has made it, fae Rouen!

THE YOUNG MAN

Is the Academy here?

THE BOURGEOIS

Aye, big and braw:
There's Boudu, Boissat, Bourdon, and Arbaud,
Curean de la Chambre, Colomby, Bourzeys and Porchères . . .
Grand names tae live fur ever and evèr!

FIRST FOP

Look! Academicianettes too! What a gas!
Barthénoïde, Urimédonte, Cassandace,
Félixérie . . .

SECOND FOP

Oh, those names are divine!
Do you know them all, my dear?

FIRST FOP

I know them fine![24]

This joyous litany echoes Morgan's own poem 'Canedolia', which makes mouth music of Scottish toponymy, and yet the fact that, in Morgan's translation, it is 'fops' who salivate over the recitation of academicians' names accentuates a deeper irony (Rostand's text simply labels the characters as First and Second Marquis). The Académie française, which was founded around 1630, consisted of the forty most distinguished literary men of France, the so-called 'immortals'. It quickly became the guardian of conservative literary fashion, and codified French vocabulary, grammar and rhetoric; it upheld, in short, the very conventions of literary and cultural decorum that Rostand's original might celebrate but Morgan's scotticised version challenges. In an influential essay on 'The Arts of the Contact Zone' Mary Louise Pratt, a living member of a current elite academy, the Modern Language Association of America, reflects on ways of surmounting the challenge of teaching literacy in a multicultural, polyvocal world:

> These will include, we are sure, exercises in storytelling and in identifying with the ideas, interests, histories, and attitudes of others; experiments in transculturation and collaborative work and in the arts of critique, parody, and comparison (including unseemly comparisons between elite and vernacular cultural forms); the redemption of the oral; ways for people to engage with suppressed aspects of history (including their own histories), ways to move *into and out of* rhetorics of authenticity; ground rules for communication across lines of difference and hierarchy that go beyond politeness but maintain mutual respect; a systematic approach to the all-important concept of *cultural mediation*.[25]

Pratt's essay is about how indigenous Latin American people wrote back to European empires; however, her proposed approach to cultural mediation nicely encapsulates the strengths of Edwin Morgan's *Cyrano de Bergerac*. All translation is an experiment in transculturation; the public performances of this Scottish version of this French play, draw upon, celebrate, parody and critique the myths and 'suppressed histories' of France, and, more particularly, Scotland. The 'unseemly' engagement of elite and vernacular language and culture has the potential to redefine the ground rules for establishing hierarchy and difference. Morgan's strategy here echoes and amplifies that of his fellow Glasgow poet, Tom Leonard, whose 'Six o' Clock News' inverted and thus challenged entrenched assumptions of linguistic propriety.

Part of the triumph of Morgan's *Cyrano de Bergerac* is to recast the Glasgow swagger as the swashbuckling panache of a French romantic hero and the 'language of the gutter' as the eloquence of a French academician – and in doing so, to question the authenticity of the systems of power that realise cultural value. That questioning is the enduring legacy of the long summer of *Cyrano*.

APPENDIX

When Bill Findlay and I were editing the volume that became *Serving Twa Maisters: Five Classic Plays in Scots Translation* (2005), we hoped to include *Cyrano de Bergerac* as one of the plays. For various reasons, that aspiration was not fulfilled. However, as part of the preparation of that anthology, Edwin Morgan kindly allowed us to consult his personal copy of the 1992 Carcanet edition of his *Cyrano de Bergerac* (signed 'Edwin Morgan 23-10-1992'), in which he had marked up typographical errors for correction. These corrections are given below, in the hope they will aid future editors of the play. The page references are to the 1992 Carcanet edition, and what follows the symbol > is the corrected reading:

- p.10, LIGNIÈRE's 2nd speech: Magdaleine > Magdeleine
- p.16, THE CROWD's 1st speech: Monfleury > Montfleury
- p.17, THE CROWD's 2nd speech: Monfleury > Montfleury
- p.24, CYRANO's 3rd speech, line 17: awe > aw
- p.24, CYRANO's 3rd speech, line 23: Hippocamelelephantocamelou > Hippocampelephantocamelou
- p.27, VALVERT's 2nd speech: Move line to right
- p.29, A MUSKETEER, line 2: Judge > judge
- p.36, CYRANO's 6th speech: Move line to right
- p.39, 4th speech: OURTH ASTRYCOOK > FOURTH PASTRYCOOK
- p.45, FIRST POET's 4th speech, line 1: gingerbrieds > gingerbreids
- p.60, DE GUICHE's 5th speech: Your > You
- p.63, line 7: Insert comma after 'hassle'
- p.63, line 15: jourkerie > joukerie
- p.63, line 19: Insert comma after 'Dream'
- p.64, CYRANO's 2nd speech, line 12: an > in
- p.66, LE BRET/CARBON's 1st speech, line 2: teuchers > teuchters

- p.66, CYRANO's 1st speech, line 7: daurkist > darkest
- p.67, CYRANO's 3rd speech, line 2: can > oan
- p.81, DE GUICHE's 3rd speech: Pleas > Please!
- p.92, CYRANO's 2nd speech, line 1: as > aw
- p.108, LE BRET/CARBON's 1st speech, line 2: stervin > servin
- p.125, ROXANE's 4th speech: bet > bit
- p.146, 8th speech: MOTHER MAREURITE > MOTHER MARGUERITE
- p.146, MOTHER MARGUERITE's 5th speech, line 2: Magdaleine > Magdeleine
- p.154, CYRANO's 4th speech, line 4: a fall > fall (i.e. deleted 'a')
- p.157, ROXANE's last speech, line 1: as > aw
- p.161, line 2: love's > lover's

In addition, we identified a few other typographical errors in the 1992 edition. Our suggested corrections are as follows:

- p.62, CYRANO's 5th speech, line 4: gummmy > gummy
- p.104, CYRANO's 4th speech, line 2: catttle-marra > cattle-marra
- p.109, CYRANO's 3rd speech, line 2: seee > see
- p.113, CYRANO's 2nd speech, line 8: sleeepy > sleepy
- p.113, CYRANO's 2nd speech, line 23: greeen > green
- p.149, THE DUKE's 2nd speech, line 3: One > one
- p.151, LE BRET/CARBON's 4th speech, line 2: doacter > doactor ('doactor' is the form used elsewhere, including in LE BRET/ CARBON's immediately previous speech)
- p.159, ROXANE's 2nd speech, line 2: thay > they ('they' is the form used elsewhere)

Notes

1 Of course, arguing that literary Scots is the literal 'mother tongue' of any 20th century Scottish poet or dramatist is problematical since most writers absorbed Scots linguistic features from a diversity of social, geographical and written sources. Morgan, a bourgeois Glaswegian by upbringing, is unlikely to have used Scots as his first language, but he would have been aware of it as part of the linguistic cityscape. I therefore use the term 'mother tongue' here in the sense of a language variety that can symbolise 'home', whether that home is conceived of as a city, a region or a nation. Morgan, of course, used Scots almost exclusively in his literary negotiations with 'otherness'.

2 See Colin Nicholson, *Edwin Morgan: Inventions of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); especially Chapter 3, 'From Glasgow to Mayakovsky.'

3 Chris Jones, *Strange Likeness: The Use of Old English in 20th Century Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.169-70. See also Jones, this issue.

4 The poetic tradition is well represented in Peter France and Duncan Glen, (eds) *European Poetry in Scotland: An Anthology of Translations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989) and the rich dramatic tradition is partially illustrated by John Corbett and Bill Findlay (eds) *Serving Twa Maisters: Five Classic Plays in Scots Translation* (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2005). See also John Corbett, 'Translated Drama in Scotland' in Ian Brown (ed) *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp.95-106.

5 Hugh MacDiarmid, *Contemporary Scottish Studies* (Edinburgh: The Scottish Educational Journal, 1976), p.61. The column reprinted in this edition was first published on the 27th November 1925.

6 Robin Hamilton, 'The Poetry of Edwin Morgan: Translator of Reality,' *Akros*, 15:43 (1980), pp.23-39.

7 Edwin Morgan, *Nothing Not Giving Messages*, edited by Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990), p.46.

8 Bill Findlay, 'Linguistic motivation, dramatic language and Glasgow-inflected Scots in Edwin Morgan's version of *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1992).' *International Journal of Scottish Theatre and Screen*, 4:1, (2011). <http://journals.qmu.ac.uk/index.php/IJOSTS/article/view/110>

9 Reprinted in Morgan, *Nothing Not Giving Messages*, p.201 and cited in Findlay, 'Linguistic motivation', p.2.

10 David Kinloch, 'Edwin Morgan's *Cyrano de Bergerac*' in Bill Findlay (ed) *Frae Ither Tongues: Essays on Modern Translations into Scots* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2004), p.124.

11 Liz Lochhead, 'Introduction' *Tartuffe*, (London: Nick Hern, 1985), p.i.

12 Donald C. McManus, 'Cyrano's Intercultural Voyages in India', in Megan Alrutz, Julia Listengarten and M. Van Duyn Wood (eds) *Playing with Theory in Theatre Practice* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.190.

13 Gerry Mulgrew, 'Patter Merchants and Nutters,' Preface to the published script of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, trans. E. Morgan. *Theatre Scotland* 1:3, p.30; cited in Findlay, 'Linguistic Motivation', p.15.

14 I am most grateful to James McGonigal for pointing out this letter to me; it will appear in a forthcoming collection of Edwin Morgan's letters, edited by James McGonigal and John Coyle, to be published by Carcanet Press. Presently Morgan's general correspondence (1946-2000) can be consulted in the Special Collections section of Glasgow University Library; see <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/specialcollections/collectionsa-z/morganpapers/>.

15 Denis Donoghue, *The Third Voice: Modern British and American Verse Drama* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p.189.

16 Donoghue, p.14.

17 Edmond Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac* Project Gutenberg edn. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1256/1256-h/1256-h.htm> Accessed 13 October 2012.

18 Edmond Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, trans. Brian Hooker (New York: Bantam, 1981), p.32.

19 Edmond Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, trans. Christopher Fry; ed. Nicholas Cronk (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1996), pp.21-2.

20 Edmond Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, trans. Edwin Morgan (Manchester: Carcanet, 1992), pp.25-6.

21 See Macafee, Caroline, 'Dialect vocabulary as a source of stylistic effects in Scottish literature.' *Language and Style* 19:4 (1986), pp.325-37.

22 Morgan, trans., p.103.

23 See, for example, the entries for Regiomontanus in the online *New World Encyclopedia* (http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Regiomontanus), and for Archytus in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/archytas).

24 Morgan, trans., pp.5-6.

25 Mary Louise Pratt, 'Arts of the Contact Zone' *Profession* 91. New York: MLA (1991), p.40. Original emphasis.

University of Macau

REVEILLE

Wake up, new nation,
Stretch yourself. It's time
To fling the covers back, and sing,
Alarm-clock loud, a sharpened trill of song
Greeting the daylight now that dawn has broken,
You who have slept so long – too long –
With one eye open.

Robert Crawford

Reviews

***Tobias Smollett in the Enlightenment: Travels through France, Italy, and Scotland*. By Richard J. Jones. Lewisburg PA: Bucknell University Press, 2011. ISBN 9781611480481. 221pp. $80.**

This book is a little more modest than the title suggests, at the same time it is more modest than it should be, as the author raises a number of provocative ideas about Tobias Smollett as a thinker and as a writer. Smollett alone, among any top two-dozen writers of importance to be named in the eighteenth century, lacks a decent biography. Even the author's collected letters are incomplete, but worse, poorly edited. This has meant that every writer on Smollett has had to create a version of the author that they think they know as a starting point for their remarks. As Jones is well aware, this failure to bring Smollett alive on in the pages of a biography creates special problems for anyone interested in Smollett's travels, as much of the criticism, especially of *Travels through France and Italy* (1766), has centred on the extent to which the narrator represents Smollett or a fictional persona whom he created. How this is to be done when all sides of the equation vary, is rarely asked. Jones, working back and forth between the *Travels* and what he has discovered about Smollett's life and career sends the discussion in a new direction.

Jones accepts the fact that Smollett is a Scottish writer who happens to write in English (a fact surprisingly slow in being generally accepted). He is also careful to demonstrate that even though he left Glasgow in 1739 to try his fortune in London, he really never left the city behind him. Smollett was proud of his origins and particularly proud of Glasgow. Even a casual reading of his letters reveals how often he asks to be remembered to his friends in Glasgow. This relationship between the author and the city has frequently been dismissed because there seems to be no surviving evidence that he matriculated at the university there. But as Jones observes, this is to take a too narrow a view as Smollett is familiar with those connected with the university, not only later in life, but from his youth.

It has always been generally accepted that with Smollett's failure to establish himself as a surgeon he turned to writing to make a living for his family. His medical treatise, *The External Use of Water* (1752), along with the purchase of a M.D. degree from Marischal College, Aberdeen, were, in fact, last efforts at a medical career, and he then gave himself to historical writing. But Smollett had been apprenticed in Glasgow to the surgeons John

Gordon and William Sterling, and he was to continue his connection with the Glasgow medical community through William Smellie, William Hunter and John Moore. Those who think of Smollett primarily as a novelist will be surprised to find how rarely in the *Critical Review* he chose literary works for review, favouring instead medical texts and becoming involved in medical controversies. With the founding of the *Critical Review* in 1756 his medical career took a decidedly literary turn and his interest in medicine persisted throughout his life.

Those familiar with Smollett's writing career beyond the novels know that beginning in the early 1750s he began extensive compiling for the booksellers. This has suggested to Jones that *Travels through France and Italy* might be examined as an extension of this activity, leaving the domain of the 'travel book' and becoming instead, 'an encyclopedic work of a Scottish (and notably Glaswegian) Enlightenment'.

Fascinating as it is to contemplate Smollett among the Scottish literati, he is different in an essential way from all these figures. True, he was a gentleman, and from a distinguished family. Most recently, his grandfather Sir James Smollett had been a member of the Commission that worked out the Treaty of Union between England and Scotland, and had been knighted by William III. But he was the youngest son of a fourth son, and must have known from boyhood that he was going to have to make his own success in the world.

Smollett is candid about his weaknesses and strengths in his dedication to 'To Doctor ******' in his *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) and in his final novel, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771). Nevertheless, like it or not, he was forced to accept the fact that writing for the booksellers, and finding a ready audience for his writings, was essential, if he was going to thrive and feed his family. The story of Tobias Smollett, the professional author, remains to be fully told.

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***Francis Jeffrey's American Journal: New York to Washington 1813*. Edited by Clare Elliott and Andrew Hook. Glasgow: Humming Earth, 2011. ISBN 9781846220364. 126pp. pbk. £14.95.**

Late in 1813, during the period of the little known and less understood war between Britain and the young United States of America (1812-14), Francis Jeffrey secured permission from the then U.S. Secretary of State, James Munroe, and overcame 'a constitutional horror of the tossing of the sea' (p.3) to sail to America and marry Charlotte Wilkes. Clare Elliott and Andrew Hook's edition of *Francis Jeffrey's American Journal* covers a substantial part of Jeffrey's unpublished account of his sojourn in America (and all that has survived): his visit with his new bride and her father, Charles Wilkes, as well as two other unnamed companions, to the new capital of Washington, D.C. – a narrative with its own coherence and its own considerable interest. As the editors are quick to point out, however, next to none of that interest is personal. The presence of Charlotte and her father, let alone that of their anonymous companions, is barely registered, and Jeffrey's own comfort and discomfort is used almost exclusively as an index to American society and its built environment. Only once is Jeffrey willing to share a passing mood (and its cure is entirely characteristic):

> As I stood on a crazy timber bridge in the midst of this desolate and dreary scene, and saw nothing all round me but falling trunks, withered and rotting leaves, naked fields, and the bare tops of more distant woods crossing the faint gleam of the lonely sky to the West, I was struck with a sense of desolation which soon became so oppressive that I was glad to get rid of it by the crackling fire of our little parlour in Mr. Ross's inn – where we spent a very tolerable night. (p.42)

What we get instead of the personal is an extended physical description of the landscape over which the companions travel between major cities en route to Washington and back again, punctuated by discussion of their accommodation and transport (and of bridges), with occasional reflections on manners and modes of living in this brave new world. Throughout, Jeffrey betrays a sense of propriety and hierarchy that surprises the editors (the women are too forward and, like the Negro servants, too 'familiar' for this fastidious Scotsman), but the impression overall is a positive one.

Jeffrey takes genuine 'pleasure in entering the room in which the Declaration of Independence was adopted' (p.19), feels the 'honour' of being placed next to the President, James Madison, at dinner in the White House (p.40), and is 'pleased and impressed' by the Catholic Archbishop, John Carroll (p.44). And 'even after New York and Philadelphia', Jeffrey found Baltimore 'one of the gayest, busiest and most thriving places I had ever seen' (p.28).

This literate, though not by and large self-consciously literary journal, is the description and reflections of a man who, as a briefless advocate in the 1790s, developed the habit of writing down what came first to his notice and the impressions that it made upon him. The narrative culminates in ten pages of Jeffrey's conversations on the American war with Secretary of State Munroe and with President Madison, who took him aside after dinner at the White House especially to discuss the issue. It is hard to imagine anyone other than Jeffrey being given such privileged access to the corridors of an enemy power. The *Edinburgh Review*'s reputation for informed, oppositional polemics must have been presented as a gift to an administration determined to establish its international credibility and promote its cause in Europe, where in both Britain and on the Continent the *Edinburgh Review* was as renowned as it was in America itself. That Jeffrey should have proved no less oppositional to the Americans than he could be to the British – though often critical of Liverpool's government, he consistently defends Britain's intervention to Munroe and Madison as justified by the war with Napoleon – will come as no surprise to someone familiar with Jeffrey's habitual bloody-mindedness and national partiality. Having said that, it is to be doubted that his journal records all the concessions he must have been willing to make to Madison in person, nor the optimism he would have betrayed during their previous discussion of 'the productions and physical capabilities of the country' (p.37). (One afternoon, writes Jeffrey, while staying in the capital, '[i]t began to rain before we got home, and we heard it rattling our windows as we sat round our fire talking of the future glories of Washington' [p.40].) Either way, as the editors point out, in Jeffrey's journal 'we are able to watch the new world that is the United States beginning to unfold' (p.xvii).

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***The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism*. Edited by Murray Pittock. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011. ISBN 9780748638468. 264pp. pbk. £21.99.**

Among a number of reference books on Romanticism Murray Pittock's volume is unique as the first attempt to characterise Scottish Romanticism as a distinct literary *and* national movement. Based on impressive results of textual criticism, literary and cultural history, which dispel the prejudices against Scottish Romanticism as a product of 'sham bards of a sham nation' (p.1), the volume has a deeper meaning and wider importance than most reference books to established literary periods or movements. For the first time it tries to define Scottish Romanticism in a specific national framework, no longer determined by the existing nation-state, but by the past *and* present cultural, sociological and political features of Scotland. This traditional as well as present-day approach establishes links between the progressive aspects of romantic nationalism (e.g., viewing the nation as a distinct 'public sphere') and recent theories of nation by Joep Leersen.

Pittock's succinct and thought-provoking 'Introduction' asks a fundamental question 'What Is Scottish Romanticism?' (p.1). Summing up the debate about the Scottish Enlightenment, Pittock argues for the specificity of Scottish Romanticism, which, against the Enlightenment's stress on 'stadial development, technological progress, standardised language and shared British norms of civility' (p.7), sets the romantic emphases on individuality, locale and nationality (p.8). This, however, does not mean that Scottish Enlightenment and Romanticism are antitheses but that both movements are 'inextricably intertwined' (p.8), due to their important philosophical and aesthetic affinities (e.g., between the Enlightenment's associationism and Romantic notions of imagination) and the contemporary reception of Scottish culture by leading European intellectuals, such as Herder or Goethe.

Despite the complexity of Scottish Romanticism as a cultural and social phenomenon, Pittock employs the results of his former research (in *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, 2008) to establish five of its characteristic features: a 'separate public sphere in Scotland' consisting in the preservation of the majority of Scottish 'professions and institutions' (p.3), 'a distinctive agenda of selfhood' called by him 'altermentality', 'the use of hybrid language and variable register to both simultaneously reveal and conceal the self' (p.3)

seen in authors like John Galt and James Hogg but also in Walter Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian* (pp.190-201), 'the taxonomy of glory', connected with the search of a 'glorious past' (p.4) as a primordial value, and finally 'the performance of the self in a diaspora' (p.5).

Some of the above features are specific of Scottish Romanticism, but the fourth trait, 'the taxonomy of glory' has numerous analogues in nineteenth- or twentieth-century Europe and even in some recent outbursts of nationalism. The second and third features characterise diverse phases and developments of Romantic movements in Europe and America, especially the phenomenon known as romantic irony (found in authors as widely different as Novalis, Byron, Thoreau or Melville). And the fifth feature links Scottish Romanticism with some exile movements, such as that of the Polish intellectuals after the failed revolution of 1830, but separates it from others, namely the German, Russian or Czech movements, putting a great emphasis on the homogeneity and cohesion of the national community based on a set of central values (language, territory, 'spirit of the people', ethnicity, ancient history and myths).

Pittock's typology of Scottish Romanticism is both innovative, connecting eighteenth-century and post-colonial criteria (the emphasis on diaspora, hybridity), and transformative, 'territorialising' the fluid post-colonial notions in the field of a distinct national history. In this way, Pittock's taxonomy contests the existing divides between the research of nationalism and postcolonial studies and between the study of Romantic individualism and nationalist movements focusing on collective developments.

The five features of Scottish Romanticism discussed in the 'Introduction' inform the structure of the book. The first part, entitled 'The Scottish Public Sphere: Themes, Groups and Identities', specifies the initial, rather socio-historical definition and focuses on a number of *cultural* and *literary* features of the Scottish public sphere. Some of the chapters focus on distinct spaces (e.g., Ian Duncan argues for the importance of urban settings in Scottish Romanticism, Thomas Owen Clancy discusses the affinities and differences between Scottish Gaelic and Anglophone literatures and Alex Benchimol outlines the public space created by the Scottish literary periodicals), others on genres (ballads or songs discussed by Steve Newman and Kirsteen McCue) and founding texts (Fiona Stafford's 'Romantic Macpherson'). The second part, focusing on major canonical authors is dominated by Nigel Leask's revealing study of Robert Burns's reception on

the British Isles, reinstating the writer in the canon of major British Romantics as well as in the less known context of Anglophone Celtic literatures.

Despite a few disputable features (e.g., Fiona Stafford's reading of Ossianic fragments through the lens of post-structuralist theory), *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Literature* is not only an excellent reference book, but also an inspiring work, which challenges existing approaches to Romanticism and nationalism.

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Robert Burns and Transatlantic Culture. **Edited by Sharon Alker, Leith Davis and Holly Faith Nelson. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012. ISBN 9781409405764. 320pp. hbk. £65.**
Burns and Other Poets. **Edited by David Sergeant and Fiona Stafford. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012. ISBN 9780748643578. 240pp. hbk. £65.**

As Sharon Alker, Leith Davis and Holly Faith Nelson note in the introduction to their new collection *Robert Burns and Transatlantic Culture*, 'the malleability and continuity of Burns as a cultural phenomenon' persists in sustaining the poet's international appeal (p.2). Indeed, they claim that 'a transatlantic awareness permeates Burns's poetic and political understanding from its very beginning' (p.4). *Robert Burns and Transatlantic Culture* contributes to the growing body of research on the poet's attraction to audiences across the Atlantic. The first section of the collection addresses 'Burns's own awareness and discussion of transatlantic concerns in his work' (p.8). Murray Pittock's essay on 'slavery as a political metaphor' opens the collection; examining Burns's ambiguous stance on slavery (the subject of much recent critical debate), Pittock argues that 'Burns wavered in his use of the lexis of slavery between its history as a metaphor for voluntary inadequacy and its acknowledgement of an external and inescapably oppressive reality' (p.26). Offering a detailed examination of Burns's relationship to America, Andrew Noble claims that the country was for the poet 'the seminal site from where democracy [was] to be exported eastwards' (p.31).

The second section of the collection focuses on 'the material aspects of Burns's early publications in America and Canada' (8), beginning with Fiona Black's detailed examination of Burns's transatlantic 'availability' in print in Canada. Rhona Brown's essay on Burns and contemporary Scottish and American periodicals follows Noble's lead in assessing America's significance for the poet, finding that 'Burns is attentive to American history and politics, often presenting them as didactic models for Britain's and Scotland's instruction' (p.73). Her analysis of the contemporary American periodical response to Burns is compelling, revealing critical appreciation of the poet that 'demonstrates the poet's versatility and universality' (p.83).

The collection's third section explores 'the question of Burns's reception in the Americas' (p.8). Gerard Carruthers's essay traces critical reactions to the poet's political reputation in America, finding that 'it was only really

from the 1830s that a "revolutionary" Burns emerged for North America' (p.91). Robert Crawford's essay offers a different perspective by examining the notion of Burns as 'America's bard'. He states that 'Burns is America's bard first and foremost because he made himself so in his own poetry' (p.101). Crawford underscores connections between American Revolutionary political ideology and Burns's core beliefs, claiming that 'clearly the Declaration impressed [Burns] and helped shape his own declarations of independence' (p.102). Other transatlantic connections are explored in the essay by Carole Gerson and Susan Wilson on Burns's presence in Victorian and Edwardian Canada. Likewise, focusing on Latin America, Nigel Leask examines possible reasons for the historical lack of critical and popular interest in Burns there.

The fourth section of the collection concerns 'the non-literary ways in which Burns was represented in a transatlantic context', exploring his presence in material culture (p.9). Susan Manning offers a fascinating discussion of Burns's 'transatlantic afterlives,' invoking the theoretical concept of the 'rhizome' to explore the tangled nature of his influence. She argues that 'the transferable power of Burns's verse remained strong in the transatlantic imaginary towards the end of the nineteenth century' (p.157). Carol McGuirk discusses the relationship of Burns and aphorism, particularly how 'the stripped-of-context or proverbial Burns' became a significant element of his American reception (p.175). In her analysis of the 1859 Centenary of Burns, Leith Davis describes the process by which Burns became a figure of transatlantic proportions. She writes, 'The [1859] centenary served to globalize Burns, drawing on the new technologies of the time in order to represent him as a modern phenomenon linking individuals around the world' (p.187).

The last section of *Robert Burns in Transatlantic Culture* seeks to 'remediate' Burns in contemporary studies of the poet, beginning with Michael Vance's intriguing discussion of Burns monuments in Canada. Kirsteen McCue follows with an in-depth examination of the 'magnetic attraction' linking Burns and Serge Hovey, author of one of the twentieth century's most significant transatlantic projects in Burns studies, *The Robert Burns Song Book*. Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson conclude the volume with an intriguing discussion of the possibilities for Burns scholarship on the internet, arguing that 'the time is ripe for deploying new digital technology to deepen in imaginative ways the knowledge and understanding of the life

and works of Burns' (p.260). As a whole, *Robert Burns and Transatlantic Culture* offers a convincing and thorough exploration of Burns as a transatlantic figure, providing new directions for further research that should prove quite productive for Burns studies.

Burns and Other Poets, edited by David Sergeant and Fiona Stafford, also enters into original territory while building on recent work on Burns's literary influences upon his successors in Scotland, England, and Ireland. The collection stresses Burns's engagement with the mainstream literary discourse of his day, particularly his use and understanding of poetic forms and modes. Andrew McNeillie's poem 'The Devil's Elbow' opens the volume by asking of Burns, 'What shade was there but yours,/what story but your own enacted there?' (p.ix). David Sergeant's introduction presents a skilled reading of 'To a Mouse', arguing that we need to develop 'an appreciation of the poetic skill which underpins Burns's achievement' (p.3). Scottish poet and critic Douglas Dunn assesses the role of loyalty (to both class and nation) in Burns's work, noting that in addition to being a 'poet of the Scottish people', he was 'one of the great virtuosi of verse' (p.19). Rhona Brown and Gerard Carruthers examine Burns's relation to his Scots poetic predecessors and contemporaries, offering new perspectives on his contribution (in Brown's words) to 'a cultural and literary dialogue which was immensely influential' (p.36). Freya Johnston and Mina Gorji offer thorough discussions of 'To a Mouse' and 'To a Mountain Daisy', focusing on issues of power, equality, and sentiment. Claire Lamont examines representations of the house and home in Burns's poetry, looking at the influences upon Burns ranging from Robert Fergusson to Virgil and Lucretius. Murray Pittock appraises Wordsworth's formal indebtedness to Burns; arguing that we need to 'change the way we read Burns', he states that 'we have read Burns too much through glossaries, and not enough through dictionaries, thesauruses and histories' (p.104). The influence of Burns upon Irish writers is explored in considerable depth in the essays by Patrick Crotty (on Brian Merriman), Michael Griffin (on Thomas Dermody), and Bernard O'Donoghue (on Burns as 'Ireland's National Bard'). Stephen Gill further analyses the complex connections linking Wordsworth and Burns, while Brean Hammond makes a strong case for reading Burns and Byron 'ethically'. Robert Crawford's discussion of Hugh MacDiarmid's ambivalent response to Burns and Burns Clubs offers fresh insight into the knotty issue of the poet's legacy for twentieth-century Scots poets. Fiona Stafford's essay

on Seamus Heaney's responses to Burns in the 1990s concludes the collection, with excellent analysis of the ways in which Burns's influence is still felt by practising world poets. As with *Robert Burns and Transatlantic Culture*, *Burns and Other Poets* provides much valuable debate on key topics and concepts in the field, demonstrating the continuing international relevance of Burns in the present day. Both are salutary, much-needed collections, revealing timely new directions in Burns studies.

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***Robert Burns in Global Culture*. Edited by Murray Pittock. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2011. ISBN 9781611480306. 269pp. hbk. $75.**

Robert Burns's reputation and popularity have rarely wavered among the general public living in Scotland and abroad. But as Murray Pittock's highly original and remarkably informative edited collection of essays, *Robert Burns in Global Culture*, reminds us, Burns's reputation largely fell by the wayside in the academy after World War II. This collection does much to remedy this fact by situating Burns's habits of thought and aesthetic practices in their European and North American contexts and by tracing Burns's ongoing influence on intellectuals, creative writers, and cultural traditions throughout the world.

Four 'research questions' fleshed out by the Global Burns Network shape the collection. These address: the marginalisation of Burns in English and American universities after 1945; the reception of Burns in Anglophone communities across the globe and in non-English speaking nations on the Continent; the place of Burns in the world-wide depiction and reception of Scotland; and the role of Burns in cultural celebrations and artefacts in myriad nations. While the volume illuminates Burns's place in global culture, there is still room, as Pittock notes, for more volumes on the subject that could explore, for example, Burns in Asian and African contexts.

In the volume's introduction, Pittock attributes the preliminary stages of Burns's 'universal appeal' to his reception on the Continent as a 'traditional folk poet' (supportive of 'radical politics' and symbolic of 'universal progressive aspirations'), to his reception in America as a hopeful symbol of 'liberal-radical Britishness', to the efforts of Scots living abroad to maintain their culture of origin, and to the longing of Scots at home to have their own 'national bard' (pp.18-19). The creative merging of Burns with other cultural traditions ('fusion Burns' [p.19]) in recent years, Pittock adds, has further secured Burns's global influence.

In the volume's first essay, Pittock expertly traces Burns's marginalisation by Romantic scholars for more than half a century (*c.*1930s-*c.*1990s) due to their privileging of authors who produce 'imaginative', 'subjective' and 'visionary', rather than nationalist and historical, literary works (p.26). When theoretical shifts led to Burns's inclusion in the Romantic canon, it was generally as a minor working-class poet. Despite his declining repu-

tation among Romantic scholars, Pittock notes that Burns remained popular in non-academic circles. In the volume's second essay, Robert Crawford evocatively reads Burns's works as a reflection of a European rather than only a Scottish mindset. Crawford believes that Burns's role in the 'mind of Europe' is to balance a 'generalized sense of human rights' with 'a fidelity to localized culture' (p.50).

The collection's third and fourth essays, authored by Silvia Mergenthal and Frauke Reitemeier respectively, consider the 'German Burns'. Both helpfully introduce the reader to little-known German translations of Burns's poems. Mergenthal examines Klaus Groth's translation of 'Tam o' Shanter' ('Hans Schander') (1849) into Low German and his essay on 'Dialects and Dialect Poetry' (1873) as well as August Corrodi's translation of 'My Heart is in the Highlands' (1870) into Swiss German, recalling that both formerly standard languages, like Scots, were displaced by those viewed as more esteemed or serviceable. Like Burns, Groth and Corrodi were 'improperly bilingual' and their choice to write in a 'minor' language to express their sense of alienation should be understood as an aesthetic and political deed with creative and transgressive potential (p.65). However, Mergenthal concludes that in translating Burns, both fail to make use of the linguistic resources available to them and thus produce 'antimodernist' translations that figure Burns as the 'heaven-taught ploughman' and nostalgically yearn 'for a prelapsarian home' (p.69). Reitemeier focuses on the treatment of Burns in German literary histories published between 1854 and 1986. In these works, Burns is often admired for his songs, composed in a distinct national tradition; but he is typically presented *either* as a revolutionary poet *or* the familiar 'Heaven-taught ploughman' (p.85), depending on the background, life stage, occupation and political leanings of the literary historian or the historical circumstances or the location (East or West Germany) in which their accounts were produced.

The place of Burns in Italian letters is addressed in Alan Rawes's absorbing essay on Giuseppe Chiarini's 1886 'Roberto Burns', a piece republished in 1900. Rawes's essay asks: why would an anti-Romantic Italian classicist write a short biography, and produce selected translations of the poems of, a Scottish Romantic poet not long after the birth of Italy as a unified kingdom? Rawes explains that while Chiarini was not impressed by Burns's art, he saw Burns and William Cowper as great eighteenth-century poets because their works utter a *political* 'sincerity and sympathy' for the oppressed and

call for radical change, which Chiarini associates with the French Revolution (p.92). Rawes speculates that Chiarini chose to translate those poems by Burns that expose the poet's 'sympathy for, and profound connectedness to, his own downtrodden, rural, farming community', as these lyrics speak into Chiarini's anger at the suffering, most notably of the 'rural poor' (pp.93; 97), caused by the financial calamity, the 'agricultural crisis', and political conservatism that followed *Il Risorgimento* (p.98).

Three essays by Dominique Delmaire, Pauline Anne Mackay, and Andrew Monnickendam turn to the subject of the 'French Burns'. Delmaire argues that the nineteenth-century French literati – conservative classicists – misread Burns's songs and poems in order to excise their popular, demotic spirit, thereby fitting Burns into their refined and elitist procrustean bed. Their Burns was 'sedate, enervated, maudlin, melancholy, and, above all, depoliticized', and thus akin (in their minds) to James Macpherson and Sir Walter Scott (p.116). Mackay argues that the 'enlightened' views and works of Burns and his French contemporaries Jean François Marmontel and Charles Collé on religion and sex point to the influence of these French authors on Burns or at least suggest that all three operated in the same ideological sphere. Their religious criticism and bawdry are a reaction to what they viewed as the church's unnatural attitude toward and desire to control the body, according to Mackay. This is hardly a new claim in relation to Burns, though Mackay's association of the Kirk and Catholic Church with the 'dehumanising doctrines of totalitarianism' is overstated and oversimplified (p.125). However, Mackay makes a good case for the influence of the songs in Collé's *Chansons Joyeuses* on Burns's 'religious bawdry' and of the ideas in Marmontel's prose romance *Belisarius* on Burns's 'religious outlook' (pp.131; 130). In his richly suggestive essay, Monnickendam persuasively argues that the love poems composed by Burns – his contribution to 'the literature of desire' (p.142) – are, at least in part, informed by the courtly love tradition of the troubadours, as portrayed in Denis de Rougemont's *Love in the Western World*. It is for this reason, he argues, that we find in Burns's love poetry French literary themes and tropes, though Monnickendam grants that it is difficult to establish a precise genetic history of Burns's discourse of desire.

The subsequent two essays in the volume cast the net wider temporally and spatially. R. D. S. Jack's impassioned essay addresses the major contribution of the *BOSLIT* database to knowledge of the international reception of

Scottish literature, including Burns's works. Jack notes that only Robert Louis Stevenson has more entries in the database than Burns, who has 3,042. Given the strong presence of Burns in the database (and Burns's own engagement with the 'European literary scene'), Jack laments that an insular, nationalistic attitude toward Burns has long been entrenched in Scotland (p.162). However, he is encouraged that a growing 'outward-looking international approach' is beginning to take hold.

In an engrossing study, Nigel Leask follows Burns's writings and relations to the colonies, considering the close connection between colonial life and Scotland. He refers to wealthy Ayrshire families known to Burns whose fortune came about through the slave trade, revisits Burns's plans to find employment in Jamaica, discusses what is known about the poet's attitude towards abolition, reflects on Burns's sadness that his poverty prevented him from enjoying a 'colonial career' in India, and considers the colonial careers of two of Burns's sons and other relations. Though much of Leask's essay underlines how the poems and progeny of Burns 'shor[ed] up Scottish identity within the British Empire', the latter portion considers how Bengalis, a number of whom were educated by Scots in Calcutta, drew on Burns to give voice to 'dissident, proto-nationalist, and anti-colonial views in British Bengal' (p.185).

Memorialising Burns in suppers, monuments, and 'on page and stage' is the subject of the final three essays in the collection (p.229). Clark McGinn undertakes an epic task in an effort to overview the Burns Supper, beginning with the first supper held by nine men in Alloway (1801) who performed the rite devised by Hamilton Paul on which suppers have been modelled ever since. Associating the early suppers with the rituals of the Freemasons, McGinn follows the custom from Scotland to Oxford, London, India, the Americas, Australia, France, Denmark, Spain and beyond, linking such celebrations to the formation of Burns clubs. Though, as McGinn details, there has always been (sometimes justified) criticism of Burns clubs and suppers, they have grown exponentially, with women taking on important roles in the celebrations and diversity occurring in the 'style' and 'content' of – and 'level of cultural discussion' at – Burns suppers across the globe (p.199).

Christopher A. Whatley examines acts and artefacts of Burns's memorialisation in Victorian Scotland. Though he recognises that the majority of Burns's statues were 'erected between 1877 and 1898', 'a period of unprece-

dented public hero-worship' (p.205), Whatley is most interested in the effort to memorialise Burns earlier in the century, and adopts a nuanced approach in analysing the politics and socio-economics of memorialisation in Scotland in this period. In the process, he perceptively distinguishes the motives of the 'urban elites who commissioned . . . Burns's statues and memorials' from those of the ordinary men and women who attended and participated in Burns celebrations, including monument unveilings (p.222).

The collection concludes with an engaging essay by Leith Davis on Burns's life (as it took shape after his death) in print and dramatic performances up to the mid-twentieth century, taking into account the impact of interpreting Burns's works through (versions of) his life, a practice established by early critics and regularly adopted by later scholars and creative writers. Davis provides a fascinating account of British and American literary responses to Burns after the 1859 celebrations, which consistently read the poet through his life. These include plays by William G. Wills, J. F. Duncan, Edward Winslow Gilliam, John Drinkwater and Jerome Lawrence and Robert Lee, biographies by Catherine Carswell, Franklin Bliss Snyder and Hans Hecht, and novels by John A. Steuart and James Barke. Davis explains that with Burns's art so intertwined with his life, the modern academy (of T. S. Eliot and the like), which sought to evaluate the creation apart from its creator, distanced itself from Burns. Yet the everyday reader was drawn to this treatment and embraced the 'creative fictions' that arose from the biographical and textual fusion (p.242).

Robert Burns in Global Culture is an invaluable and indispensable book for anyone working on Burns or on the remarkable influence of Scottish literature on countries throughout the world between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries. Though there are some typographical infelicities here and there in the volume, these in no way detract from the vast knowledge on Burns's afterlives that this collection brings together. The thirteen essays cover such a wide range of material that we are granted extraordinary access to many of the cultural, social, economic, and political afterlives of one of the greatest Scottish writers in literary history.

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***Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*. By Katharine Glover. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2011. ISBN 9781843836810. 228pp. hbk. £55.**

By the early years of the eighteenth century, it was becoming a commonplace, both in England and Scotland, that women were essential to the establishment of polite, well-regulated sociability. The question of what that actually meant for women who were living in those societies is however a vexed and difficult one, as Katharine Glover points out in *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*. Taking as her starting point research carried out over the last few decades that has established the 'significant, if not uncomplicated place' of women 'in eighteenth-century Scottish thought' (p.11), she investigates the ways that women at that time understood their own experiences, turning back to the archives in order to explore the ways that their lives were shaped by the emerging ideal of polite sociability. Necessarily, her study focuses only on women of the upper classes, ranging from the well-to-do gentry to the family of the Dukes of Atholl: not only is the concept of polite society strictly class-bound in itself, but such women were also far more likely to have left records documenting their social worlds.

The stories that Glover uncovers are fascinating, and she demonstrates the benefits of reading women's accounts of their own lives with an eye 'on the possibilities presented to or left open for women by the prevailing norms' (p.166). Lord George Murray might have offhandedly dismissed his educational aims for his twelve-year-old daughter Amelie by saying that she'd been sent to Edinburgh to learn 'to Dance &c', but in her letters to her mother Amelie herself reveals a richer and more complex education in ways of navigating her social world. These lessons were both formal and informal, incorporating everything from learning how to manage social networks at school to producing the correct mixture of sensibility and moral backbone in writing exercises such as a letter of condolence to an acquaintance who had been robbed of her beauty by smallpox (pp.34; 24). Amelie even had a somewhat precocious – if, given her family, unsurprising – education in political discretion, as in 1744, at the age of eleven, she reported on the upset caused in Edinburgh by 'a manifesto put up on the principal Church door setting forth a certain persons right to a certain Island' (p.132).

The book is not a study of individuals, however. Glover is more interested in general social practice than in biography, and she draws upon

records from across the century (although her focus is on the half-century from around 1720 to 1770) to illuminate the experiences typical of a small but by no means homogenous class of women. Moving from the more intimate aspects of social relationships to the thoroughly cosmopolitan – from early childhood education to foreign travel – and incorporating along the way reading and intellectual life, public sociability and political engagement, Glover offers the fullest picture available of the lived experiences of elite Scottish women at this time. There is a slight drawback to this approach, in that none of the women she discusses ever comes entirely into focus. While Glover concludes with a compelling plea for the significance of her subjects, insisting that '[w]omen like Betty Fletcher and Amelie Murray deserve to take their place alongside their more well-known fathers as actors and commentators in the Scottish historical narrative' (p.166), the scope of the study means that only limited attention can be given to any individual life. Given the richness of the archival material that Glover includes on Murray, Fletcher and others, the book inevitably raises the question of how much more there probably is to be said about them.

That said, the very great benefit of Glover's methodology is that it provides a much clearer sense of the scope of women's lives at this time than would be possible with a more fine-grained study of a few individuals. This is particularly the case in the chapter on politics, which makes clear that for elite women, participation in the messy day-to-day practicalities of political life was the rule, rather than the exception, and that focusing on the political role of a single powerful woman (such as the Duchess of Devonshire) makes such politicking sound far more unusual than it in fact was. As Glover demonstrates, it was taken for granted that women in political families would play a role in the patronage networks that were so important in eighteenth-century society, and she makes very clear that even though such roles were informal, they were necessary to the smooth functioning of the system. Glover never downplays the very real disadvantages of and limitations on women at this time, but she also refuses to condescend to her subjects by downplaying the impact of their sociable activities. In bringing the voices of these women out of the archives, Glover has made a valuable and compelling contribution to the growing body of scholarship on women in eighteenth-century Scotland.

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Walter Scott and the Limits of Language. By Alison Lumsden. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010. ISBN 9780748641536. 256pp. hbk. £70.

Of course Walter Scott fell afoul of literary Modernists. Notoriously given to Britishness as a culmination for Scottishness; a long but not a Romantic poet; a romancer yet equally a historian (so the story went), Scott pretty much missed the point. Never mind that this was a point only to become evident in the twentieth century, with the hindsight of Saussurean semiotics, Freudian psychoanalysis, and Marxist politics.

Still, the last twenty five years have recuperated Scott as a proto-postmodernist. Alison Lumsden – with a supreme gift of clarity – begins her study here, rehearsing the last century's shifts in theoretical perspective, and the sophistication they have brought to our understanding of the author. But Lumsden takes a step further. If 'language invaded the universal problematic' (a phrase from Derrida that she repeats) and precipitated post-structuralism, it is now time to go beyond – or behind – recent re-considerations of Scott through gender, nation, or the postcolonial. It's time to get back to language. Indeed, it is time to explore the novel as an engine for linguistic problematics, and Scott's novels as obsessed with related anxieties as they erupt within a totalising form that is incapable of any totality. Viewed aright, Scott's problems may prove to be sites for innovation, opportunities where, once more, Sir Walter leads the way.

The novel theory propounded here is not in itself new: Lumsden stresses that criticism of the novel increasingly turns from the genre's mimesis and verisimilitude toward recognising its 'self-conscious awareness of its own modes of operation' (p.13). She references George Levine's claim that Scott tussles with 'how . . . to tell the truth in a form that is by its nature untrue' (p.12). However as an editor for the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley novels, thoroughly grounded in theory, Scott criticism, Scottish philosophy, and Scott's texts, Lumsden accomplishes an elegant extension of the problematics of language *through* Walter Scott.

Where Levine stops with the observation of Scott's difficulty, Lumsden sees the author embracing difficulty for its inherent opportunity. Pursuing 'Scott's anxiety concerning the linguistic medium in which his work has been operating', she develops an extensive case for Scott's ongoing interaction with the problematics of language, and for the implicit theorising

thereby produced (p.10). As she puts it: 'Scott's fiction . . . [has] at its heart an awareness of the limits (and problematics) of language as a tool for communication, and . . . it is this which generates creativity throughout his work' (p.15).

Lumsden demonstrates this in ways that are themselves important. Although her argument is crafted initially through a Bakhtinian understanding of the novel and its dialogic quality, she builds her first case through Scott's poetry. Focusing on the internal tensions generated by a 'last minstrel' who may also be author, and a generic multiplicity that arises between the many tales told in many forms that we find in *The Lay*, Lumsden points to a playfulness and yet a problem that resides in the expression of supposedly authentic tales.

Turning to *Waverley*, she moves beyond today's critical commonplace that the Preface teasingly denies generic stability to the story to come – which then settles down into a historical romance – and focuses instead on the novel's too easily ignored opening chapters. Sir Everard's love story and country house are convincingly revealed as semiotic meditations on genre at the interface between eighteenth-century philosophy and nineteenth-century practice; Waverley's arrival at Tully-Veolan raises the issue of art: this genre piece provides context for the equivocal final portrait.

Indeed it is a considerable strength of this book that repeatedly Lumsden highlights neglected texts (*Peveril of the Peak* or *Reliquiae Trotcosiensis*), moments (Waverley's arrival at Tully-Veolan), and terms (Meg Merrilees, according to the Edinburgh Edition, spoke 'fremit gibberish' – it was strange, not 'French' as the compositor had it). And these, either taken for granted, neglected, or (as in the case of 'fremit') never known, carry the trace of language, its problematic. They manifest Scott's struggle with a language that traps, fractures, resists – and that precipitates creativity through the struggle.

Thus Lumsden, thralled like most scholars to the run of an author's life, finds herself compelled by Scott's last quarrel with language. Having passed beyond the laws of language, its exhaustion, our resistance through silence (the most expressive character in *Count Robert of Paris* may be the voiceless orang-utan), Scott found his voice, his pen, his purpose out of joint. Suffering 'stammering' fingers and intrusive editors, for the aged author theory and practice erupted together. Scott 'side-steps', Lumsden says, 'into a new kind of narrative; one not driven by the minstrel's desire to communicate

'true knowledge' but one driven by the imperative of digression or evasion' (p.222).

And yet it is here that, with Scott established as proto-postmodernist, I find myself quarrelling with Lumsden – or wishing she could go further. Lumsden marches her argument alongside recent reconsiderations of Scottish philosophy. Human idealism today points to a less 'rational', more contingent context for a Walter Scott and his language. But Lumsden is judiciously restrained in drawing such lines of attachment. If, however, as Lumsden implies, Scott engages linguistic problematics through the practice of writing, then perhaps it is not so far fetched to think of him as working in a circumstance informed at least by other creative writers. We may not find the name of Hume or of Locke invading his pages and inflecting his tussles with language – but we do find Aunt Dinah. *Tristram Shandy* is everywhere in Sir Walter. Which is simply to say (with apologies to Derrida) that 'language [is always invading] the universal problematic'. It is the nature of language to problematise itself. It is in great practitioners, such as Scott, as Lumsden says, that we can register, explore, and experience that *difference*.

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***The Afterlives of Walter Scott: Memory on the Move*. By Ann Rigney. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. ISBN 9780199644018. 328pp. hbk. £55.**

Ann Rigney's recent work has been turning increasingly towards theories of memory and the formation of cultural frameworks for memory. As Principal Investigator of the major 2006-11 Dynamics of Cultural Remembrance project, she has written some key articles, which, building on scholars and theorists such as Halbwachs, Foucault and Assmann, have helped to redefine the importance of cultural memory as the source of what she (creatively following Billig) dubs 'banal canonicity' (p.45). In this book, this 'banality' becomes the realm in which the 'lived environment' (p.217) is peopled with a monumentalism, tourism, fiction and even cinema ultimately derived from Scott.

Scott's presence in cultural celebration and representation from the Eglinton tournament to the Deep South, from paddle steamers to tall tourist tales, from celebratory dinners to the instant clichés of invented traditions, makes him a most suitable subject for the theoretical tools Rigney has to bring to bear. What results is both an extraordinarily wide kind of reception study, and a deep and intricate awareness of what made Scott important in so many ways to so many groups of people in so many different places, a figure (like Burns) both transnational and Scottish.

This is an outstanding book which deftly shows the limitations of insistent disciplinary overreliance on text at the expense of considering its mediations. As we move into an ever more visual and image laden and image driven age, it is important that the study of literature remains excellent, but also relevant, and able to move far beyond the overdetermined textualism which resists the turn to memory, material culture and the cultural environment so characteristic of an open intellectualism. Ann Rigney does this outstandingly well, and this book is a fine – and, it is to be hoped – pivotal example of intellectual good practice which others will pursue in their own spheres.

Rigney's book is full of complex concepts, sharp phrases and original approaches. Her assessment of Scott as 'an immigration officer of the symbolic realm' (p.31), her focus on the creation of 'concentrated and localized' tourist experiences (p.137), the way in which she places Scott's reception in space, object and representation against a background shift from

genealogical to biological notions of generation (pp.204-5) all evidence a relentlessly lively and acute mind. For the present reviewer she perhaps over-stresses the imperialism of Scott's legacy, given his insistent emphasis on allowing subalterns speech. This was a virtue which Hungarian nationalists saw in the nineteenth century and postcolonial critics do today, but it is a minor reservation in the context of a work of criticism as original and strong as this.

The book closes with a look at the recuperation of Scott and the difficulty of making him available to contemporary student audiences. One of the problems here surely – when all is said that can be said about the use of Scots, the slow narratives, the pictorial descriptions which are unnecessarily evocative in an era so dominated by images as our own – is that the inherited readings of Scott are no longer utilisable either. One of the tragedies of Scott criticism is that it itself – as much as statues and railway engines – long became a process of memorialisation which simply repeated in celebratory anaphora the things the nineteenth century 'knew' about Scott, which in their turn became straw men for Forster, Leavis and others. Scott's 'optimism' (p.227) is at the heart of his stadialist paradigm – there will always be progress and things will always be better thereby. But the composition of his narratives undermines their theme. Final Hanoverian victory in *Redgauntlet* is realised through the isomorphism of law and power, for justice is indeed – *pace* Plato – the interest of the stronger. In the most central crusading fiction, *Ivanhoe*, the Jews can only find refuge in a Muslim land; in *Guy Mannering*, Meg Merrilies expends her life restoring natural order and dies neglected, while the 'Eastern' gypsies and colonised Indians are domestic and oriental versions of the same violent process of marginalisation. In *The Two Drovers*, there are no signs that the fundamental opposition in character between Scot and Englishman can ever be fully reconciled. Scott has been read for his complacent closure, but it is not why he should be read now. The challenge for new Scott criticism has always been the weight of what Rigney sets out here: the extraordinary weight of cultural memory, which means that how we remember Scott is framed by his social, not his critical reception. That is why he is still not so widely read as he deserves: the stereotype we think we know is not the author who is there.

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***Secondary Heroines in Nineteenth-Century British and American Novels*. By Jennifer Camden. Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010. ISBN 9780754666790. 190pp. hbk. £55.**

In his 1908 preface to *Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James comments on the relative importance of his heroine, Isabel Archer, and a secondary character, Henrietta Stackpole. Henrietta, James tells us, may be memorable, even to the point of distraction, but we should regard her only as the 'wheels to the coach' in which the favoured Isabel sits. Henrietta, as Jennifer Camden's recent study suggests, is one of a long line of unruly women characters who should not be so lightly dismissed. In *Secondary Heroines in Nineteenth-Century British and American Novels*, Camden highlights the cultural and figurative significance of the female characters who exist alongside more obvious heroines. Terming such figures 'secondary heroines', Camden thoughtfully explores the way these characters allow novels to make apparent and displace potentially problematic alternatives to conventional domestic and national identities. From Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* through works by Hannah Foster, Walter Scott, James Fenimore Cooper, and Catharine Sedgwick, Camden considers how novels regularly shape their courtships and marriage plots against the presence of a racially, economically or culturally heterogeneous would-be heroine. Camden concentrates on British and American novels from the first half of the nineteenth century, focusing especially on transatlantic juxtapositions of female characters' function in the formation of national ethos. However her observations on the ideological significance of secondary heroines feels strikingly relevant to a host of nineteenth-century texts. Indeed, Camden's concluding reading of the unresolved national interests of Thackeray's *Rebecca and Rowena* (1850), a comic reimagining of Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, foreshadows the potential value of secondary heroines for the cosmopolitan concerns of later nineteenth-century fiction.

While Camden primarily studies the genre of historical romance, a body of work whose often-overt political concerns make it a logical choice for readings of nationalism and character, her opening chapter on *Clarissa* (1748) provides an illuminating context for this focus. Situating the secondary heroine in a 'transatlantic history of the novel', Camden builds on the claims of Nancy Armstrong and Ian Watt to illustrate how, in the novel's pursuit of authority, secondary heroines regularly facilitate a primary

heroine's public reception (p.5). Shifting critical attention away from comparisons of filial and national obedience, Camden emphasises secondary female characters' editorial control over the legacy of 'fallen' heroines, demonstrating a form of feminine authority unallied to the possession of female 'virtue'. Camden astutely contextualises *Clarissa*'s well-known Anna Howe with readings of Hannah Foster's American novel *The Coquette* (1797) and Charlotte Smith's French Revolution romance *Desmond* (1792). In doing so, she shows that these epistolary novels collectively establish a transnational trend of imbuing secondary heroines with paradoxical narrative agency; their authorship creates a heroine's status as female exemplar, thus obscuring their own alternative feminine authority.

If Camden's first chapter at times labours to connect characters' narrative identity to nationalist belief, her nuanced juxtapositions of Scott's *Waverley* (1814) and *Ivanhoe* (1820) with Cooper's early volumes of *The Leatherstocking Tales* (1823, 1826) and Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827) make the nationalist function of secondary heroines compellingly evident. Here, characters such as Scott's Rebecca and Sedgwick's Magawisca 'embody romantic possibilities that the knowable facts of history render impossible' (p.92). Camden convincingly demonstrates that these novels' concluding marriages entrench prevailing domestic (and, by extension, national) ideologies only through the exclusion, exile or physical diminishment of racially and culturally 'other' heroines. Here, Camden's attentiveness to the roles of affect and sympathy is particularly illuminating. As her reading of *Ivanhoe* reveals, Rebecca may not be Ivanhoe's primary heroine in the sense of winning the hero's hand, but the Jewish woman's capacity to elicit readers' affection ensures that the novel's concluding emphasis on the consolidation of Anglo-Saxon linage will be implicitly undermined by this all-but-heroine's sympathetic legacy. Similarly, Camden's study of Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) suggests that the ideal American heroine's association with sensibility distracts readers from the economic underpinnings of a distinctly American aristocracy. While, as Camden illustrates, the mixed-race Cora is a dynamic, brave and thoroughly appealing character, it is only through her death that the novel can establish a marriage between two characters whose elevated social status is, ironically, a direct result of their families' respective slave holdings. Camden navigates the tricky territory of readers' responses with a light hand, and, in doing so, productively complicates our assumptions about just who and what constitutes a heroine.

At times, *Secondary Heroines in Nineteenth-Century British and American Novels* suffers from its somewhat cursory treatment of theoretical influences. In particular, Camden's handling of Benedict Anderson's construction of nationalism feels incomplete given the explanatory weight she places on his theory of 'imagined communities'. By exploring variations on nationalist theory alongside her perceptive close readings, Camden would only further illuminate the unevenness of transatlantic nationalism to which her study already gestures. Yet this is not to diminish the value of Camden's scholarship. In both its meticulous readings and its thought-provoking emphasis on marginalised forms of femininity in British and American novels, this study upends any easy assumptions about female character's 'minor' roles. Camden's work admirably engages the broad concerns of feminism, nationalism and the history of the novel, making it a useful resource for scholars of any and all of these fields.

Anna E. Clark
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Elizabeth Hamilton, *The Cottagers of Glenburnie: And Other Educational Writing*. Edited by Pam Perkins. Glasgow: The Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2010. ISBN 9780948877858 and 9780948877865. 376pp. hbk. £25.00 and pbk. £9.95.

Pam Perkins's *The Cottagers of Glenburnie: And Other Educational Writing* is a timely, valuable contribution to Hamilton scholarship. The most popular and influential of Hamilton's novels in its own day, *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* has long stood in need of a modern scholarly edition. Perkins's affordable, authoritative edition will further help to restore Hamilton to her rightful place alongside prominent Romantic-era women writers such as Hannah More and Maria Edgeworth. In addition, Perkins's volume also usefully provides a healthy selection of Hamilton's other, less well-known writings as well as a fulsome scholarly apparatus that will serve both the undergraduate reader encountering her for the first time and the professional scholar.

Alongside her own *Women Writers and the Edinburgh Enlightenment* (2010) and the work of critics such as Gary Kelly, April London, Susan Egenolf, Claire Grogan and Eleanor Ty, Perkins's introduction is a significant addition to the small but growing body of scholarship on Hamilton. Tracing her subject's relationships with contemporary figures such as Walter Scott, Francis Jeffrey, Anne Grant, Joanna Baillie and Edgeworth as well as her engagement with the ideas of John Locke, Thomas Reid, David Hartley, Dugald Stewart, Lord Kames, Edward Gibbon, Mary Hays, Mary Wollstonecraft, More, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Francis Hutcheson, Perkins is particularly adept at situating Hamilton in a broad contextual landscape that includes not just 'the literature of Romantic-era British women reformers' but also 'the early nineteenth-century Scottish canon' (p.1). While one might wish for more attention to the Revolutionary contexts that shaped Hamilton's earlier career and writing – an omission that is perhaps understandable in light of Broadview's recent editions of *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796) and *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* (1800) – Perkins's consideration of her subject against the backdrop of education is especially elucidating. Contending that '*The Cottagers of Glenburnie* is as thoroughly grounded in her life-long interest in educational theory as any of her more overtly ambitious books on the subject' (p.1), the introduction provides a historically sensitive reading that links her fictional and non-fictional writings

in fruitful, compelling ways. Hamilton emerges from the introduction as a committed social reformer who was immersed in the debates over education that raged throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The text of *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* follows the first edition of 1808, with the addition of the 'Extract of a Letter Addressed to the Author'. Printed in later editions of the novel and of uncertain authorship, the 'Letter' provides a brief history of the fate of the remaining members of the MacClarty family and will come as a pleasant surprise to readers familiar only with the first edition. Although there are a few minor errors and typos that detract from the reading experience, the text has on the whole been imputed with care. One wishes, however, that the faithful transcription of the text (which includes the reproduction of, for instance, variant spellings of character names) had been at times abandoned in the name of consistency and modernisation. Perkins's endnotes are judicious and clarify the various contexts of and allusions in Hamilton's novel, but the lack of a textual symbol to key the reader of the text to the notes themselves is a little curious. Perkins's Glossary, meanwhile, provides the very valuable service of defining Hamilton's unfamiliar 'Scots terms', which for readers past and present have been barriers to the novel's accessibility.

The second half of the volume makes available portions of Hamilton's less well-known works, including sizeable extracts from her *Letters on the Elementary Principles of Education* (1801), *Memoirs of the Life of Agrippina, Wife of Germanicus* (1804), and *Letters, Addressed to the Daughter of a Nobleman* (1806). Introduced by informative headnotes that succinctly clarify the contexts of the works from which the extracts are taken, the selections re-confirm Perkins's overarching thesis that '*The Cottagers of Glenburnie* depicts a range of educational practice and illustrates in a series of vignettes a number of arguments about education that Hamilton had made elsewhere' (p.26). They also invite the reader to consider the ways in which her fictional and non-fictional writings mutually inform one another.

Perkins's *The Cottagers of Glenburnie: And Other Educational Writing* makes Hamilton's most popular novel available in a modern scholarly edition for the first time, provides contextual materials that introduce readers to a variety of her lesser known and now out-of-print writings, and contributes a valuable piece of scholarship in the form of its introduction. Its lack of a comprehensive bibliography is unfortunate, its occasional typos can be distracting, and its emphasis on Hamilton's educational interests tends to

overshadow consideration of subjects such as, for instance, the relationship between *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* and Hamilton's earlier fictions or the historical significance of her remarkable decision to represent Scottish culture in the vernacular. Perkins's edition, however, is a fine, much-needed and much-welcomed addition to Hamilton scholarship.

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***Peter Pan's Shadows in the Literary Imagination*. By Kirsten Stirling. New York and London: Routledge, 2012. ISBN 9780415888646. 188pp. £80.**

This excellent book is an important contribution to the documentation and critical interpretation of a literary myth, text and character that has transcended its authorial and textual origins and, as the author states, 'taken on a life of its own' (p.1). Not that those authorial and textual origins are themselves clear and uncomplicated. The character Peter Pan first appears in the novel *The Little White Bird* (1902), out of which were extracted chapters that make up *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* (1906). In between came the play, *Peter Pan*, which premiered in 1904 but should not be confused with the first printed version of the play that was published in 1928. Before then, a prose version, *Peter and Wendy*, appeared in 1911 and the play itself went through many transformations in and out of the theatre. The situation is thus complicated even before we look beyond the texts that emanated from the pen of J. M. Barrie, and he himself claimed – slyly, but with more meaning than is first obvious – to have no recollection of having written the play himself.

One of the strengths of this book is its close attention to the 'difficulties of establishing both origins and closure' (p.3) that pervades the content as well as the writing and rewriting of *Peter Pan*. Whilst it 'does not claim [to] give a complete critical history of Barrie's *Peter Pan*', Kirsten Stirling's lucidly written book offers stimulating accounts of the main versions of Barrie's text and a revealing overview of some of the modern transformations that keep this singular artistic creation living in the literary imagination. As Stirling writes in her opening lines, 'a great many people today know Peter Pan only through the shadow he has cast over the popular imagination' (p.1). Her task is to bring that shadow into some sort of focus.

Chapter 1, 'Origins and Storytelling', concentrates on the textual history of the work, covering all the main versions by Barrie, demonstrating how each stages 'a metaliterary concern with the function and practice of narrative' (p.7). Neverland emerges as 'a textual space, constructed out of stories told by his own and other voices', as Barrie uses each new literary form and textual moment to shift meaning onto 'newly uncertain ground' (p.12). Chapter 2, 'Peter and Pantomime', provides a well-researched account of some of the generic conventions used, exploited and transformed by Barrie.

Building on Roger Lancelyn Green's still essential but now historical *Fifty Years of Peter Pan* (1954), it restores a much-needed sense of historical theatrical context to Barrie's play, demonstrating his deployment of the harlequinade and pantomime traditions and showing how many of the elements of the play 'that we now consider fixed and immutable were originally the results of theatrical contingency' (p.41). Not that this restricted the imaginative power of the author, as Stirling demonstrates with effective use of material from manuscript drafts and unpublished versions of the play.

Chapter 3, 'Wendy and Peter', examines the battle between the two central characters for authority over the 'story'. Here Stirling deals well with psychoanalytic interpretations of *Peter Pan*, which she finds problematic and reductive. By concentrating on what is *in* the text, her discovery of 'a deep-seated fear of female sexuality which underlies the irreconcilable trajectories of Wendy and Peter' is a more convincing analysis of the operation of the 'unconscious' than many previous investigations of this kind. In this analysis the central conflict is not that between Peter and Hook (which is a fantasy created and controlled by Peter), but between Peter and Wendy, who is a threat from outside, one who offers 'the possibility of reintegration into the real world' (p.51) and attempts to 'superimpose her domestic/romantic fantasy' (p.51) onto Peter's own. Wendy's role in the text is also seen as crucial to the complicated, unresolved nature of the various endings Barrie attempted to fashion for the play, discussed in chapter 6.

More than any other author's, perhaps, Barrie's biography has been irresistible to those interpreting his texts (just as his texts have been irresistible to those interpreting his biography). Stirling wisely suspends analysis of the biographical background to *Peter Pan* and to the creative reworkings of Barrie's life until Chapter 5. In 'Imagining Barrie' she pays particular attention to the biopic *Finding Neverland* (2004) which evades the darkness of the story of Barrie's relationship with the Llewllyn Davies family, and to Andrew Birkin's *The Lost Boys* (1978) which offers a more artistically complex dramatisation. In addition to other imaginings, Stirling also considers Rodrigo Fresán's *Jardines de Kensington*, demonstrating a richness that makes it deserving of a wider readership. Piers Dudgeon's *Captivated* (2008), which is not so deserving, is debunked; perhaps not as harshly as it deserves to be.

Surrounding these considerations of Barrie's texts and treatments of his biography are chapters devoted to prequels and sequels to the story by other authors. Stirling pays particular attention to a six-volume adult

comic-book series by the French *bande dessinée* author Régis Loisel, which is largely unknown to Anglophone readers. She sees this series – where Peter's origins are imagined as the harsh streets of working-class London, and his fantasy serial killing is aligned with Jack the Ripper – as 'one of the most intelligent and creative' adaptations of *Peter Pan*, 'partly, though not entirely, because Loisel does not seem intent on resolving Barrie's ambiguities' (p.68). The final chapter deals with various sequels, including Steven Spielberg's film *Hook* (1991) and Geraldine McCaughrean's official sequel *Peter Pan in Scarlet* (2006).

If there is a criticism to be made about this book it is perhaps the lack of extensive cross-reference to other texts by Barrie, but that regret only reflects the satisfaction gained from reading a study that pays Barrie and his enigmatic creation the sort of close and intelligent attention it deserves but is rarely afforded.

Andrew Nash
University of Reading

***Myths and the Mythmaker: A Literary Account of J. M. Barrie's Formative Years*. By R. D. S. Jack. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2010. ISBN 9789042032187. 341pp. pbk. €68.**

R. D. S. Jack has already made a significant contribution to our understanding of J. M. Barrie. This new monograph, through a combination of detailed archival research, close readings of the texts and challenges to existing criticism, further extends and reshapes the context in which Barrie is situated. Jack's re-evaluation draws heavily on material from the Beinecke Library which reveals much about Barrie's early days and aspirations and he explores in detail his Victorian activities in order to redefine the trajectory and significance of Barrie's literary career.

Jack suggests Barrie's reputation as an 'elusive' figure has come from the conflation of criticism and biography, which focuses on a limited number of texts. Early claims for his genius were, as Jack demonstrates, also of a generalised quality that made him particularly susceptible to subsequent attack and dismissal. To challenge these critiques Jack tackles the myths that surround Barrie before offering his own analysis of the early work and its significance in terms of the later prose and drama. Jack presents the case for Barrie not as a dilettante escapist but as a 'determinedly self-conscious apprentice, anxious to text himself across as wide a modal range as possible' (p.35). In so doing Jack engages with two dominant readings of Barrie – the Kailyard and the Oedipal – and demonstrates that both are based upon limited and limiting readings of his work.

As the title suggests, the mode of this monograph is fairly confrontational. It might be argued that those critics identified as most problematic in the myth-making process – George Blake in a critique of Barrie within the Kailyard context, seeing him as sentimental and a failed realist, and Harry M. Geduld in Freudian and biographical interpretations – no longer have the critical currency they held when Jack began this research. More recent approaches to Scottish literature rarely present the crude nationalist or socialist readings or that desire to find realism of Blake's study and, as Jack himself argues, Freudian structuring of an Oedipal myth has also undergone considerable revision. Nevertheless Jack's detailed analysis of little known material suggests that Barrie still needs to be 'rescued' from certain misconceptions. The Barrie that emerges from study of these early writings is different: an early supporter of the women's suffrage movement; an author

engaged with the gender dynamics of Darwinian thinking; a young man interested in critical theory; and someone who worked hard to plan and structure his oeuvre as a 'comic imaginative idealist' (p.36).

Jack states his final aim is to use this reassessment of Barrie's early years to anticipate his mature drama and argue its importance. There is, however, another product to emerge from this study: a recontextualisation of Barrie's own scholarship and significance as a literary critic, placing him within a specifically Scottish (indeed Edinburgh) intellectual tradition. Jack considers the books that most influenced Barrie from his early education as evidenced by his notebooks; early articles he wrote for the *Nottingham Journal*; and his own drafts for a critical work. Jack assesses Barrie's ideas for an academic monograph on the *Early Satirical Poetry of Great Britain*, reading these early notebooks in terms of the influence of David Masson (who held the Chair of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at Edinburgh, 1865-95) through lectures and in his many books. Masson, Jack argues, challenges divisions of idealism and realism, suggesting that Romance offers a means of tackling the actual and ideal, historical and metaphysical. Alongside Masson's literary influence, he identifies that of another Edinburgh Professor, Alexander Campbell Fraser, on Barrie's views of psychology and personality. Rather than pursuing a Freudian interpretation Jack reads Barrie in terms of a histrionic personality, which produces an engagement with artificiality and plurality.

Following this assessment of the very early writing to dismiss what he sees as damaging myths around Barrie, Jack goes on to examine in detail the work of the mythmaker himself. *The Little Minister*, the only major prose work which Barrie translated into a full-length play, provides the focus for Chapter Five; Chapter Six likewise offers highly detailed reading of *The Wedding Guest* in its different instantiations. The final sections of the monograph test again the extent to which the *Tommy* novels can be read as autobiographical and disappointingly episodic, or whether they become more interesting and more complicated when understood within the wider context of Barrie's work.

As Jack concedes he spends as much time (if not more) in attacking the Oedipal/Kailyard interpretations as offering a counter version. It is only in the final chapter that Jack fully demonstrates the direction of his argument and produces more than a critique of what he sees as those damaging and dominant myths that mean while Barrie asks to be assessed on the imaginative power of his plays he is condemned on the grounds that his novels

offer bad realism. In presenting this case the strengths of Jack's study also become its weakness. There is a wealth of detail here and highly specific arguments which (as evidenced by the high number of subheadings within chapters) offer new interpretations of under-researched material but also threaten to overwhelm the broader argument for a progressively complex mythic vision of the world emerging in Barrie's oeuvre.

This analysis of Barrie's Victorian years and literary apprenticeship which, Jack argues, is an advance on Peter Hollindale's 1995 study, presents a more strategic, ambitious and self-aware writer. It is, however, also a book laying the ground for further debate. One of Jack's consistent calls is for a literary biography adequate to Barrie. Jack's holistic approach suggests a more coherent view of Barrie's literary career but reinforces the need for that underpinning study.

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***Scottish Novels of the Second World War.* By Isobel Murray. Edinburgh: Word Power Books, 2011. ISBN 9780956628312. 172pp. pbk. £12.99.**

Isobel Murray is, of course, a well-known champion of Scottish writing, and the purpose of this book is precisely to apply that championship to a group of novels most of which have been neglected and largely forgotten both by critics and a wider readership. Indeed, this neglect of the writing of the Second World War is not just a gap in Scottish literary history, but something of a gap across the British Isles – it is still common for undergraduate literature courses to leap over the nineteen-forties as if there were no literary production at all in that period. In fact, and despite paper rationing and other difficulties, there was an enormous amount of war-time and post-war writing, with a central if not exclusive focus on the war itself and often on issues of national identity brought into focus by contemporary events. The focus of *Scottish Novels of the Second World War* is actually a little wider than just novels produced during the war itself, for Isobel Murray seeks to look at:

> how some Scottish novelists confronted the Second World War, the biggest or second biggest happening of their lifetimes . . . I want to see what kinds of novel they wrote, and then concentrate on those I think are best . . . or best deserve to survive. But I have read as widely as I could, among my chosen field, which includes authors who were adult during the war, and who wrote about it, in military or civilian life, however long after the event (p.3).

The book is mainly structured around the work of the eight Scots novelists who Murray concludes fulfil these criteria and also mainly around one novel by each which is most representative or significant. The following novelists and novels make the final selection: Eric Linklater's *Private Angelo* (1946), Naomi Mitchison's *The Bull Calves* (1947), Fred Urquhart's *Jezebel's Dust* (1951), Robin Jenkins's *Guests of War* (1956), Muriel Spark's *The Girls of Slender Means* (1963), Jessie Kesson's *Another Time, Another Place* (1983), Stuart Hood's *A Den of Foxes* (1991) and George Mackay Brown's *Beside the Ocean of Time* (1994). As the publication dates make clear, this selection actually covers nearly fifty years of writing about the war, though in each case by an author who lived through the war itself. It also covers a variety

of kinds of experience including 'novels by pacifists, conscientious objectors, civilians and armed services' (p.4). However, this list of contents under-represents how much material the book covers, for as well the eight main chapters there is also an introduction which discusses a further fifteen authors and explores the kinds and genres of fiction most used by writers about the war, and the eight main chapters also give brief overviews of other relevant works by the chosen authors, both in a list of principal works and life events and in discussion of the place of the chosen war novel in the author's literary career.

As you might expect from a work published by the independent publisher Word Power Books of Edinburgh, this is not an academic book in a narrow sense and, though it certainly offers some critical commentary as part of its contents, its main stress is instead on introducing a rich variety of Scottish writing about the war in an approachable way, so that the book should reach a general readership as well as readers in more academic contexts. In either case, this will be an enjoyable and reliable guide, introducing works which are well worth discovering. The novels' approaches to the task of representing and understanding the war cover a large range. For example, Mitchison's *The Bull Calves* (perhaps one of the better known novels discussed) is actually a historical novel set during the 1745 Jacobite Rising, but which suggests many parallels to the 1940-45 war, while Linklater's tragi-comic *Private Angelo* follows the (mis)fortunes of its Italian soldier protagonist, Angelo, through Italy's alliance with Germany, its armistice with the Allies and even on to the projected post-war reconstruction of Italy from its wartime ruins. The hero of *Private Angelo*, perhaps a Scottish equivalent to Jaroslav Haseks's *The Good Soldier Schweik* (1923), is a 'born coward' who says at the end of the novel that he has 'learnt the most useful of accomplishments, which is to survive' (quoted p.30). Or there is Robin Jenkins's also partly comic *Guests of War* about the conflict between evacuees from Glasgow and their unwilling hosts in the highly respectable town of 'Langrigg', as compared to Muriel Spark's more experimental *The Girls of Slender Means*, which makes much use of 'flashforward and flashback' and is set in London 'between VE day in May 1945 and the public celebrations of VJ day in August, after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, although they remain unmentioned' (p.101). Some of the novels discussed have been republished relatively recently (including a 2008 Canongate edition of *Private Angelo*, a 1997 Black and White Publishing edition of *Guests of War*

and a Kennedy and Boyd 2011 reprint of *Jezebel's Dust*), but others will have to be acquired second-hand. Personally, I'm going to start acquainting myself with these undiscovered Second World War novels by reading *Private Angelo* in the Penguin edition of 1958, which can still be acquired fairly easily acquired in second-hand bookshops or via online booksellers.

Chris Hopkins
Sheffield Hallam University

***An Cuilithionn 1939: The Cuillin 1939 & Unpublished Poems, Somhairle MacGill-Eain/Sorley MacLean*. Edited by Christopher Whyte. Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2011. ISBN 9781906841034. 325pp. pbk. £12.50.**
***Caoir Gheal Leumraich: White Leaping Flame: Sorley MacLean: Somhairle MacGill-Eain: Collected Poems in Gaelic with English Translations*. Edited by Christopher Whyte and Emma Dymock. Edinburgh: Polygon, 2011. ISBN 9781846971907. 524pp. hbk. £25.**

Readers of Gaelic literature are greatly indebted to Christopher Whyte for the work he has done in recent years to bring to light full versions of the poetry of Sorley MacLean, to elucidate that poetry, and then to tell us the story of how it emerged. A new generation of scholars has joined Whyte in editing and analysing MacLean, and this synergy has now rewarded us with two major new editions of the poetry. The first of these editions has been brought to us by Whyte himself, and the second is a collaboration by Whyte and Emma Dymock. These two editions have come from different publishers, but they are both handsomely designed and produced, and would make welcome additions to anyone's library.

An Cuilithionn 1939 opens with some beautiful contextualising pictures of the Cuillin and with a helpful line-drawn map that has places of interest marked on it. Even for those familiar with Skye and Raasay, these two resources are invaluable in appreciating much of the poetry, which is so often related to the physical environment. The version of the poem presented in this book is the one unearthed at Aberdeen University Library's Special Collection, running to over 1600 lines, as compared with the originally-published poem that ran to a little over 1200 lines. Whyte considers 'An Cuilithionn' to be breathtakingly original, perhaps more so than even *Dàin do Eimhir*, which he sees fitting into the by-then well-established Modernist tradition.

The introduction explains how MacLean uses symbolism to link the topography and toponymy with the great movements in philosophy and ideology that were sweeping across Europe in the half-century leading up to the poem's writing, as well as the seismic historical events that accompanied those movements. Whyte points towards many of the countless allusions MacLean makes to literary sources, both well-known and relatively obscure, and expertly outlines the subtle, ingenious structure of the poem. He suggests

that MacLean himself was perhaps not entirely conscious of some of the effects he was creating.

The introduction traces the history of the attempts to bring 'An Cuilithionn' to print, and notes that, by the time the shorter version (the only version previously available) appeared in 1989, the MacLean who oversaw its preparation and publication was effectively a very different MacLean from the one who wrote it in the first place. As Whyte suggests, he had had four decades in which to 'reinvent' himself. As a result, the 1989 version was presented from a chosen 'angle'. Whyte argues, convincingly, that the recent editions of MacLean's work that go back to original versions are not meant to undermine the finalised versions the poet himself published: these recent editions simply complement the other versions. This is a very attractive argument, encouraging the reader to appreciate the complementary versions in their own right.

There are detailed commentaries on each of the poems, with fascinating insights and discussions that include the provision of context, history, information on MacLean's family, his contacts and his influences. With these commentaries, the restored 'missing lines', and the forty-five other (largely unrelated) poems, Whyte has turned this volume into an invaluable resource.

This brings us to the second book under review, *Caoir Gheal Leumraich*, which is a new 'collected poems'. This is a beautifully-presented hardback book of well over five hundred pages, that includes not only a great bulk of MacLean's majestic oeuvre but also *two* introductions (one by each of the editors) and a wealth of additional material: notes on the poems, a glossary of place-names, and maps of parts of Skye and Raasay.

Whyte's introduction again discusses MacLean's 'reinvention' of himself. Here, he shows how some scholarly detective work revealed that MacLean engaged in a process of deliberately obscuring elements of his work. As both of MacLean's major sequences, the poems to 'Eimhir' and 'An Cuilithionn', exist in at least two versions, the editor's job has partly been one of restoration, undoing this obfuscation. Of course, as Whyte himself acknowledges more than once, the older MacLean was a valid editor of his own work, and so the versions of poems presented in this book are not meant to take precedence over the versions MacLean himself finally endorsed for publication. They merely serve to enlarge our appreciation of the fullness of his art, with a freedom he himself could never enjoy. (It is entirely appropriate that the editors have selected a cover photograph of the

young Sorley MacLean. We are so used to seeing the wise, wry gentleman in his seventies and eighties: the post-'reinvention' MacLean. Here we see the passionate young scholar, on fire with love, philosophy and learning. This is completely in keeping with the restoration of the earlier versions of many of his texts.)

The second introduction to the book, by Emma Dymock, focuses on MacLean's various contexts. Dymock points out the oddity that MacLean's reputation was established long before his major poems were even fully accessible, in their correct order and with academic apparatus appended. Dymock goes on to discuss the contexts of MacLean's cultural identity/ies and examine the various 'landscapes', real and figurative, that underlie his writing. Anyone interested in pursuing the study of MacLean's poetry might do well to treat this essay as a starting point.

Following the second introduction, there is a select bibliography, a useful biographical timeline, and then the poetry itself begins. The editors have ordered the poems loosely chronologically, allowing for overlaps where sequences appear over a number of years, and indeed there are poems included which were not previously published, with the result that these necessarily appear 'out of order'. On the whole, though, a reader can follow the narrative of MacLean's writing career in the pages of this book. The editors' decision to include only part of 'An Cuilithionn' (in two separate sections: 1939 and 1989) makes sense in light of the other book discussed in the present review.

Although apparently less extensive or discursive than in *An Cuilithionn 1939*, the notes here are excellent, filling in the details, contextualising individual poems, cross-referencing with other aspects of MacLean's work, pointing out allusions, and generally giving us the tools we need in order to engage with such a major poet.

These are two very fine books, edited and produced to a standard entirely worthy of (as Whyte reminds us in *An Cuilithionn 1939*) 'the greatest Gaelic poet of the twentieth century'.

Moray Watson
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Subaltern Ethics in Contemporary Scottish and Irish Literature: Tracing Counter-Histories. By Stefanie Lehner. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. ISBN 9780230241701. 248pp. hbk. £50.

Stefanie Lehner's project in *Subaltern Ethics in Contemporary Scottish and Irish Literature: Tracing Counter-Histories* is a purposely political one; in engaging with the contemporary historical context of Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland she has deliberately focused on three socio-political entities in great flux and transition. This is the context of the 'Atlantic archipelago', a perspective from which to examine affinities between these historically constituted margins of England in a move to side-step the 'obsessive and debilitating' relationship with that dominant centre. As a counter to some of the more idealistic and transcendent imaginings of the new opportunities transpiring for such national formations, Lehner intends to examine the 'enduring impact of class divisions, gender inequalities, patriarchy, sexism, ethnic discrimination and poverty' (p.5) as represented in a selection of fiction from these areas. This is a timely book; written at the crossroads of these intersecting histories, the Irish financial collapse makes a poignant backdrop to Lehner's erudite and studiously executed analysis.

In countering dominant discourses the concept of the 'subaltern' is key to this analysis. In a move familiar to some strands of Irish studies, Lehner appropriates this controversial figure from Gramsci and the Subaltern studies group of South Asian historians to designate subordinate social groups, 'as a relational term in a dialectic with dominant' (p.9). She does not underestimate its contentious significance and takes space to examine the detail of its recent signification and its relevance to her project. Aware of the debates around the use of postcolonial theory in both the Irish and Scottish contexts, Lehner emphasises that she relates to it as an ethical form of criticism and her project thus involves a re-engagement of the disciplinary area as part of her aim to critique 'both fields' [Scottish and Irish studies] adherence to national paradigms and conventional applications of Theory' (p.28). This sustains her intention to 'refuse the primacy of nationalism' (p.185) in interrogating the power relations presented in the fiction, a nationalism often guilty of eliding uncomfortable truths regarding those excluded from the dominant national narratives. Lehner has certainly isolated a general point of affinity in the texts as disempowered groups such as the working and under classes and women are foregrounded in their uneasy

narratives. These 'counter-histories' form her case for the ethical impulse of the criticism she intends to practice, her aesth*ethics*. In this she also enlists the more radically challenging discourses of contemporary philosophy including feminism, Marxism, psychoanalysis and poststructuralism to weave a delicately wrought web of interrogative reading. Stylistically, this makes for a demanding book as perspectives and ideas pile up in a palimpsest-like manner giving a slightly breathless rhetorical impression. The intellectual range and energy will impress many; some may be a little weighed down by this comprehensive approach and the turn to neologism (aesth*ethics* is foundational; *arkhe*-taintment and ImagiNation are also crucial). However, the aim of instigating a new method justifies such bold interventions.

Lehner states that her primary methodological framework takes the form of a 'subaltern counter-history'. The trajectory of the book presents us with the notion of the unspoken and buried histories of marginalised groups and engages these as they are intimated and sometimes realised in the fictional texts in relation to dominant political and cultural narratives, the poor and women. That narrative arc works its way from the *maelstrom* of masculine dominance towards the distinctly feminine trauma of novels by Janice Galloway, Jennifer Johnston and the incongruously convincing *The Woman Who Walked into Doors* by Roddy Doyle. Culminating in an investigation of the liberatory potential of the appropriation of the feminine in male-authored texts, specifically *1982 Janine* by Alasdair Gray and *Breakfast on Pluto* by Patrick McCabe, *Subaltern Ethics* pessimistically concludes that even this body of raucously transgressive fiction ultimately stops short of creatively thinking through an escape from the grave inequalities of capitalism as they are presently lived and imagined in these three socio-political contexts. Though illuminating, the book's overtly feminist route opens out on to bleak possibilities and, in its engagement with trauma studies, contemplates that highly melancholy viewpoint, that trauma is foundational to the process of subjectification.

The readings, however, are thought-provoking and intricate in their detail. And there are some bold juxtapositions of texts – placing James Kelman alongside Patrick McCabe's 'bog gothic' is one such revelatory strategy – all intriguingly facilitated by the Irish-Scottish studies archipelagic standpoint. Lehner refuses simple parallels and constructs her argument with intellectual detail and verve. Her disarming faith in literature as a space for

exploring social and political concerns of the most radical kind strongly underpins this book, urging us all to engage with the ethics of criticism, in our reading and practice.

Carole Jones
University of Edinburgh

***An Introduction to Gaelic Fiction*. By Moray Watson. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011. ISBN 9780748636631. 224pp. hbk. £60.**

It is perhaps indicative of the dearth of critical work on Gaelic fiction that Moray Watson's *An Introduction to Gaelic Fiction* has to begin, not only as a defence for the necessity of a book of this kind, long overdue in the field of Gaelic criticism, but also as a statement for carving a niche for Gaelic fiction in its own right. Gaelic poetry has been viewed as the stronger of the two genres to the extent that the poetry has become synonymous with Gaelic literature in general. The present reality appears to be that fiction and poetry in Gaelic must compete for the attention of literary critics, a situation that Watson at least partly attributes to the modest number of scholars employed in Celtic departments and the preference, in the past at least, for focusing on philological and linguistic issues at the expense of literary criticism.

An Introduction to Gaelic Fiction covers the major developments of Gaelic fiction over the last century, including its origins, the first and second wave of novels, collected stories and periodical fiction. If at times the book seems to move quickly over certain aspects of the genre, this is because Watson is attempting to achieve breadth as well as depth, offering an overview which will allow certain strands to be developed in more detail in the coming years; a hope that Watson himself expresses at various stages in the book. There can be no greater tribute to Watson's original purpose than the word on the street, or in this case, the word in the university library. When stopping to chat recently with two Honours students of Gaelic, I noticed that Watson's *Introduction* was top of their pile of books. Both students emphasised the value of this book in their studies to date.

Throughout the early chapters, Watson casts an eye on the foreign influence of the Brontë sisters and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* on the emerging nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Gaelic fiction, but it is the influence of the native folk tradition coupled with the impact of religious zeal and sermonising which rightly garner the most attention from him. Clearly these influences did not always provide the best foundation for Gaelic fiction; less than convincing dialogue and plot lines are evident during this period but there are also some unique examples of early fiction such as the fable, 'Pòsadh an Dealain-dé' ('The Butterfly's Wedding') by Hector MacFadyen, which effectively blurs the boundaries between dream and

reality. Watson cites groups like An Comunn Gaidhealach, who fostered a healthy environment for fiction in Gaelic but whose efforts were never wholly rewarded with a defining major piece of fiction during that time. It is commendable that Watson steers away from placing the blame completely on the universal factors such as the world wars and the subsequent loss of so many of the Gaelic-speaking population. He writes that the authors of the early novels (Iain MacCormaic, Aonghas MacDhonnachaidh and Seumas MacLeòid) 'seem to have been confused by conflicting political and ideological sympathies, rendering their novels thematically opaque.' It is telling that Gaelic modernist fiction did not emerge until the 1960s, a time when postmodernism was taking hold in English literature. This is not a criticism of Gaelic fiction; it is ineffectual to compare an emerging and developing fiction tradition with a more established one and it further indicates the need for a book of this sort, which studies Gaelic fiction in its own context and on its own terms.

It is evident that the greatest leap forward for Gaelic fiction was not the publication of a single work, but the appearance of the Gaelic journal, *Gairm*, under the editorship of Derick Thomson from 1952 to 2002. Watson writes that 'perhaps MacThòmais's status as a 'modernist' poet, or perhaps his intellectual rigour as Celtic professor at Glasgow University, also helped encourage contributors to experiment with plot and technique and to push the boundaries'. The most promising recent development in Gaelic fiction has been the Ùr-Sgeul project, which is continuing to support many new writers and give them the space to develop their own style. Watson comments that most Gaelic novels are not lengthy; a result perhaps, of the short story being the most comfortable and successful form of fiction for writers in Gaelic, especially during the *Gairm* years. Watson's *Introduction* suggests that, mainly due to initiatives like Ùr-Sgeul, the most exciting and fruitful part of Gaelic fiction's own story may only now be unfolding.

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***Uneasy Subjects: Postcolonialism and Scottish Gaelic Poetry.* By Silke Stroh. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011. ISBN 9789042033580. 378pp. pbk. €76.**

Silke Stroh's *Uneasy Subjects: Postcolonialism and Scottish Gaelic Poetry* is a benchmark book in several ways. First, the study approaches – *nomen est omen* – Scottish Gaelic poetry from the theoretical viewpoint of postcolonialism and thereby opens up exciting and frequently surprising perspectives on the literature and culture it examines. Second, Stroh's examination of Scottish Gaelic poetry from the classical period to the present features an exceptionally wide range of verse that is certain to amaze readers through its sheer extensiveness. It is rewarding to become acquainted with the works of Cathal MacMhuirich, Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn (Iain Crichton Smith) or Maoilios Caimbeul (Myles Campbell), to name but a few, while also being presented with fresh ideas on authors such as Hugh MacDiarmid (Christopher Murray Grieve), Neil M. Gunn or Anna (Anne) Frater. Last but not least, Stroh's policy to provide English translations – some of which are her own – for all Scottish Gaelic poems she investigates makes the subject of her book accessible even to those who may be unfamiliar with the language.

Uneasy Subjects opens with an introduction that defines its theoretical framework of postcolonialism with regard to Scottish Gaelic studies. Afterwards, the book proceeds chronologically. It starts with a chapter on the 'Colonial beginnings' of Scottish Gaelic culture in the classical era, and it ends with several chapters that take the reader up to the present state of Scottish Gaelic poetry. In each of these chapters, Stroh draws on a variety of postcolonial concepts. She illustrates that Scottish Gaelic poetry is, indeed, infused with postcolonial discourses, though not always unambiguous ones. Concepts such as the noble savage, cultural cringes, the binary opposition of centre vs. periphery or the rewriting of history are shown to be prominent characteristics of Scottish Gaelic poetry, but frequently highly contested ones.

Considering the lively debate surrounding the question whether or not Scotland can be viewed as a postcolonial culture, Stroh makes clear that 'the main interest of the present study lies not in colonialism and postcolonialism as historical, political or sociological concepts, but rather in postcolonialism as a methodology for analysing certain discursive and ideological patterns which occur in the context of inter- or transcultural

encounters and power imbalances' (p.14). Consequently, Stroh uses postcolonial theory as analytical tool for her reading of Scottish Gaelic poetry rather than as ideological dogma. This proves to be a rewarding modus operandi, especially since Stroh's understanding of postcolonial concepts is multifaceted and, in a positive manner, complicated. While she illustrates that numerous parallels exist between Scottish Gaelic poetry and other postcolonial literatures, she is equally aware of the differences between Scotland and those overseas colonies that are more typically considered the subjects of postcolonial studies. For instance, Stroh recurrently reminds the reader that many Scots participated in Great Britain's colonial enterprises after the Union of Parliaments in 1707, seemingly without identifying with the colonised cultures abroad. Similarly, Stroh is prepared to accept and demonstrate the ambiguity regarding postcolonial discourses in many of the Scottish Gaelic poems she analyses. Her reading of Maoilios Caimbeul's 'Bhuainn agus dhuinn' ('From us and for us') is an example of her complex understanding of postcolonial methodology in general, and of postcolonial readings of Scottish Gaelic poetry in particular. According to Stroh, the poem addresses a 'panorama of anti-Highland imperialism that takes in military, political, economic and culture oppression from the end of military clanship to the late twentieth century' (p.254). But while it successfully criticises these colonial forms of repression, Stroh points out that the poem 'fail[s] to establish a truly subversive anticolonial counter-discourse' because of its 'one-sided treatment of agency' (p.256). Highlanders are represented as passive victims of the coloniser rather than as acting subjects. Thus, Stroh argues, Caimbeul inadvertently repeats the very stereotypes of colonialism that postcolonial discourses otherwise seek to destabilise. By not ignoring or disavowing intrinsic incongruities like this one, Stroh's argument about the complexity of postcolonial discourses in Scottish Gaelic literature becomes even more potent. She entirely proves her point that 'Scotland's internal ethnic and cultural power imbalances, as well as its ambivalent position at the interface between margin and periphery within the UK and its empire, make it a particularly intriguing subject for postcolonial investigation' (p.13).

In the end, Stroh's book is more than an important contribution to the debate about the relationship between Scottish studies and postcolonialism. It is a convincingly argued testimony to the possibility of thinking beyond the alleged limits of theory, in this case postcolonialism, and to test its basic

ground by developing it into another field of study. For this, and for its combination of in-depth analysis with accessibility of subject matter, *Uneasy Subjects* is certain to excite a large audience, if not to become compulsory reading for anybody interested in Scottish and postcolonial studies.

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Notes on Contributors

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ROBERT CRAWFORD is Professor in the School of English at the University of St Andrews. His book 'On Glasgow and Edinburgh' was published by Harvard in February 2012. 'Simonides', his Scots-language collaboration with photographer Norman McBeath, is published by Easel Press and will be exhibited at the Poetry Foundation, Chicago, in the spring. An earlier version of this poem appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*.

SARAH HEPWORTH is Assistant Librarian in Special Collections, University of Glasgow Library. Her responsibilities include the online manuscripts catalogue and the management of the department's archive collections, which are particularly strong in art and literature. She is currently managing a project to catalogue Edwin Morgan's papers in more detail.

CHRIS JONES teaches English at the School of English, University of St Andrews. He work on the reception and influence of the Middle Ages and is an inveterate Edwin Morgan fan. His book Strange *Likeness: the Use of Old English in Twentieth-Century Poetry* came out with OUP in 2006.

DAVID KINLOCH teaches Creative Writing and Scottish literature at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow where he is Reader in Poetry. A winner of the Robert Louis Stevenson Memorial Award, he is the author of five collections of poetry including *Un Tour d'Ecosse* (2001), *In My Father's House* (2005) and *Finger of a Frenchman* (2011), all from Carcanet. In the 1980s he co-founded and co-edited the influential poetry magazine, *Verse*. More recently he helped establish the first ever Scottish Writers' Centre and is a founder and organiser of the Edwin Morgan International Poetry Competition.

ROBYN MARSACK is an editor, critic, and translator. She has been Director of the Scottish Poetry Library since 2000, and was previously Managing Editor of Carcanet Press. With Hamish Whyte, she co-edited two collections of tributes to Edwin Morgan: *Unknown is Best* (Mariscat/Scottish Poetry Library, 2000), and *Eddie@ 90* (Scottish Poetry Library/Mariscat Press, 2010), and also From *Glasgow to Saturn: 50 favourite poems by Edwin Morgan* (Carcanet/Scottish Poetry Library, 2008).

JAMES MCGONIGAL is Emeritus Professor of English in Education in the University of Glasgow. Recent publications include *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan* (Sandstone Press, 2010, 2012) which was the Saltire Scottish Research Book of the Year 2011, and *Cloud Pibroch* (Mariscat Press, 2010) which won the UK Michael Marks Poetry Pamphlet Award. He is a founding editor of the SCROLL series from Rodopi (*Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature*). Currently he is working on a Selected Letters project from the Edwin Morgan Papers in the Department of Special Collections.

RICHARD PRICE's books include the poetry collections Lucky Day, Rays, and Small World and the novel The Island. He was a founding member of the Informationist group of Scottish poets.

GREG THOMAS is completing a PhD on concrete poetry in England and Scotland at the University of Edinburgh in conjunction with the Scottish Poetry Library, focusing on the work of Ian Hamilton Finlay, Edwin Morgan, Bob Cobbing and Dom. Sylvester Houédard. He has contributed a chapter on the UK concrete poetry movement to the forthcoming Rodopi publication *Concrete Poetry: An International Perspective*, and an article on Bob Cobbing is forthcoming in the *Journal of British and Irish Innovative Poetries*.

HAMISH WHYTE is a publisher, editor and poet. He lived for many years in Glasgow before moving to Edinburgh in 2004. He has edited several collections of Scottish literature and runs Mariscat Press, publishing poetry. His own collections of poetry include *Window on the Garden* (Essence/ Botanic Press) and *A Bird in the Hand* (Shoestring Press) – a new collection, *The Unswung Axe*, is due from Shoestring in 2012. He is an Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Scottish Literature, University of Glasgow, and an Honorary Fellow of ASLS.