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## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

# Faith and Religion

*Meg Bateman and James McGonigal*

This chapter deals with traces and erasures in a most perplexing area of human life: the awkward seriousness of faith, past and present, and its otherness. It describes poets writing within the context of a post-Reformation Scotland that was in many ways distrustful of the life of the senses upon which religious liturgy, music and also poetry depend. It records other poets speaking out of a more ancient and oral pre-Christian Gaelic culture deeply at odds with the church powers that had mainly supplanted it – and also the paradox that most Gaelic communities came to embrace the new Protestantism, and to be defined, indeed, by a strictly Calvinistic cast of mind. Finally we consider contemporary Scottish poetry composed in a ‘postmodern’ and ‘post-religious’ age, where religion nevertheless seems oddly resilient, with global and ethnic conflicts often defined along religious lines.

Scotland has its own long record of spiritual warfare, iconoclasm and bloodshed. The Scots word ‘thrawn’ (‘uncompromising’) is often used almost admiringly of people likely to follow their own path of commitment. Perhaps this stubborn streak is what has kept religious differences at the centre of Scottish cultural life for centuries, and has left across the landscape evidence of the cost of many divergences of faith. There are the mysteriously carved Pictish stones, the many ruined abbeys and ancient empty churches and Celtic crosses with weather-worn carvings. And there are the many extant churches (albeit with declining congregations in the main) whose denominations record frequent schisms and quarrels from the sixteenth-century Reformation onwards – Protestant or Calvinistic values of individual interpretation of Scripture and justification by faith seemed almost to foster divergence.

Unexpected resonances from a spiritual, sometimes pre-Christian, past are also part of Scottish literature’s depiction of forces that belong in the domain of religion: the human response to the super-human; to

the sublime or numinous power of a presence beyond this world yet sensed within the world. This may be perceived as an evil presence. In the Gaelic tradition, the pre-Christian gods and earth goddesses have become euhemerised as heroes or fairies, and demonised as ogresses or monsters. Colin Manlove describes how often in Scottish writings the supernatural suddenly bursts through into mundane reality, an individual apparition of disruptive force, forcing itself into normality and changing it remorselessly.<sup>1</sup> The figure of Gil-Martin in James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) is perhaps the best known of such figures in prose. In poetry, we might cite the supernatural beings that haunt the earlier Border ballads, or their recognisable descendants in the early twentieth-century poems of Marion Angus (1866–1946); but poetry's most vivid example is surely the sudden apparition of light and devilish music from within the abandoned kirk in Robert Burns's 'Tam o' Shanter' (1791). Even ruined churches of the old religion in beautiful remote places, some abandoned maybe centuries before the Reformation, can shock the dozy consciousness awake. Such a sense of an immanent spiritual presence within the landscape persists in contemporary Scottish poetry, although poets of the present generation might hesitate to call their commitment to modern ecological values a 'faith'.

Tracing such poetic motifs across time is certainly possible through poetry, even where the paths of faith have so often been distressingly at odds. Poems counter the convenient political denial of previous faith, since their imagistic compression, symbolism and patterns of sound are deliberate devices of memory and commemoration. In them we can follow the continuities and bifurcations of Scotland's troubled relationship with religion – its people's 'courage beyond the point and obdurate pride' (to use Edwin Muir's description in 'Scotland 1941') that has left a landscape, both physical and cultural, of attempted erasures for poets of succeeding generations to address. Poetry can be a sounding board, then, for ancestors who built those ruins that can yet be made to speak.

It is possible to do little more here than to chart a trajectory of Scotland's poetry of faith. This begins in religious literature with the monastic and missionary church of Columba and his Irish monks in the sixth century, which countered in poetry the heroic oral traditions of the pre-Christian faith it aimed to supplant. Within a Christian Scotland, the layered signification of the medieval makars, Henryson (c. 1424–c. 1506) and Dunbar (c. 1456–c. 1513), was created out of a European and Catholic (there was no other) philosophical perspective. This in turn was overthrown by the thorough-going Calvinistic reshaping of society at the Reformation,

releasing vernacular and individualistic energies from Bible reading, preaching and communal singing of translated psalms. Such revolutionary impetus gradually became formalised across society, and eventually as oppressive for many as the regime it replaced – and thus, in its turn, open to challenge not only through Enlightenment ideas but through poetic satire and simple human song and wit. Meanwhile, in the Gaelic world, the military and legal crushing of a culture following two failed Jacobite risings was no light matter: here an evangelical creed of rebirth and redemption offered an alternative to the heroic ideal, and a strong identification with reformed religion.

The Victorian age brought new challenges, not only to religious faith but also to poets. For how was poetry to encompass the vastness of technological development, the attendant shifts of population from the land to new conurbations, and the ambiguities of imperial conquest, emigration and administration in which many Scots took part? Hamish Whyte's Glasgow anthology *Mungo's Tongues* (1993) records the perceptions of Janet Hamilton (1795–1873), Alexander Smith (1829–1867) and James Macfarlan (1832–1862) of human life within that fiery industrial world. Gaelic poets such as Neil Macleod (1843–1913) engaged with the temperance movement and music hall to write cautionary and edifying songs for the Lowland Gaelic diaspora. Later, and making his uncertain way as a literary journalist in London, James Thomson (1834–1882) would explore the depths of alienation in urban mass society in *The City of Dreadful Night* (1874), as Faith, Hope and Love die one by one, and God too is dead. His nightmarish dark creation made an immediate impression, and looks forward both to the surrealists and to T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Eliot was also affected by another expatriate London Scot, John Davidson (1857–1909), a journalist and early modernist with a sharp sense of the beauty and squalor of the city. Alert to intellectual currents of contemporary scientific thinking, Davidson's poetry would be an acknowledged influence on a later visionary poetry of ideas from Hugh MacDiarmid (1892–1978), who memorably describes this father-figure's suicide in 'Of John Davidson' as 'A bullet hole in a great scene's beauty, / God through the wrong end of a telescope'.

Such uprooting of artistic talent from Scotland to England and overseas was part of a wider dispersal and mixing of cultures, as famine and clearances in the Highlands and Ireland drove people off the land and into industry or emigration, complicating religious and ethnic identities not only in the Lowlands of Scotland but also in the Americas, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. At home, economic migration made Scottish and Irish

Gaelic and Catholic voices and values present again to Protestant Central Scotland, often disturbingly so, and very gradually cultural hegemonies were altered, particularly through state education. At the same time, disruption in the Church of Scotland saw the secession of a radical Free Church which considered that the established Church had lost its integrity through collusion with landowners and the politically powerful. (In the twentieth century, a Scottish radicalism would become a feature of the most significant poetry – more political than spiritual, to be sure, yet typical of a cultural tendency to carry ideas to their logical conclusions.) During this nineteenth-century cultural disruption, ancient Gaelic spiritual perspectives were gathered, if occasionally sweetened, in the folkloric expeditions of Alexander Carmichael (1832–1912) whose *Carmina Gadelica*, published in six volumes between 1900 and 1971, preserved prayers, charms and blessings that would continue to influence ‘Celtic spirituality’ into the present age. The political land-reform songs of Mary MacPherson (Mary Nic a’ Phearsain) (1821–1898) add poignancy to her more personal ‘Soraidh leis an Nollaig ùir’ (*Farewell to the New Christmas*), recalling traditional practices from her experience of deracinated city life.

However, the interpenetration of modes of language and thought from different faith communities would enrich Scottish poetry in remarkable ways, often working against the grain of false sentiment and bigotry. The twentieth century saw a burgeoning of poetry in all three main Scottish languages, a second renaissance where the first had been stalled by the conflicts of sixteenth-century Reformation. Modern poets were drawn to confront revolutionary changes in politics, technology, warfare, social attitudes, philosophy, linguistics, the urban environment, and scientific investigation of the minutest particles of life and deepest reaches of the universe. Religion could not be treated simply, yet perhaps the nuance of poetry in a range of tones and forms became one vehicle through which the mystery, origins and ultimate purposes of life could be explored. Thus in the anthologies, meditational or even devout poetry by Edwin Muir (1887–1959) or George Mackay Brown (1921–1996) can be found side by side with poems by Hugh MacDiarmid, Sorley MacLean (Somhairle MacGill-Eain) (1911–1996) and Iain Crichton Smith (Iain Mac a’ Ghobhainn) (1928–1998) confronting church belief, or with avant-garde ‘re-writings’ of Christianity by Edwin Morgan (1920–2010) and Tom Leonard (b. 1944), or with the agnostic yet palpably religious perception of John Burnside (b. 1955) or Carol Ann Duffy (b. 1955):

'Some days, though we cannot pray, a prayer/ utters itself' ('Prayer', *Meantime*, 1993).

Considering such a vexatious chronology, it may be helpful to look at a few abiding themes in particular works over time, and to draw contrasts or continuities between poets and languages not normally partnered. The first of these may be termed 'cosmic piety'.

A distinguishing feature of some Gaelic poetry is the use of nature as a gateway to religious feeling. Monasticism, following the Egyptian model, had come to Scotland with St Columba. While the monks of late antiquity had sought seclusion in the desert, Gaelic monks looked for deserted islands off the Atlantic shore. Poetry expounding the ascetic ideal, such as 'Columba's Island Paradise',<sup>2</sup> speaks of the spiritual benefit of looking at nature as the work of the Creator. While this practice of *peregrinatio pro Christo* came from Egypt, the admiration of the cosmos and attention to nature probably came from the pre-Christian faith of the Gaels, that, so far as one can tell, looked on nature as the principal Other with which human society had to reach accord if it was to prosper. In the Neo-Platonic theology of the ninth-century Irishman John Scotus Eriugena, Creation is part of the emanation of God, in which He is profoundly present. The idea of the immanence of God in creation can be seen in the prayers preserved in *Carmina Gadelica*: Christ is on hand to help Columba with his horse in 'An Stringlein' ('*The Strangles*'); the saints and the Godhead stand by to heal us of sin in 'Cuirim Fianais' ('*I Send Witness*') and to bring us peace and protection in our daily lives in 'Achan Chadail' ('*Sleep Invocation*'). We are in loving communion with them and should undertake every task in their name, and because God is present in the Creation his sign can shield us, as in 'Mugron's Cross'. Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh's twentieth-century poem, 'Laoidh nach eil do Lenin' ('*A Hymn which is not to Lenin*'), resonates with this same cosmic piety: 'cailèideascop-Dhia / bèò-dhathan dian-loisgeach [...]' ('*kaleidoscope-God / conflagration of living colours [...]*').

'Altus Prosator', often attributed to St Columba and translated as 'The Maker on High' (1997) by Edwin Morgan, has appeared as the earliest Scottish poem in two significant post-millennial anthologies, *The New Penguin Book of Scottish Verse* (2000) and *Scottish Religious Poetry: An Anthology* (2000). The relentless drive of its internally rhymed Latin and its sublime perspective on Creation, Paradise and the Fall seem designed to drown out the heroic verse of unrecorded times. This blending of ideology and piety within a cosmic perspective may remind us of

MacDiarmid's later fusion of universal and local, for instance in 'The Eemis Stane', where the earth is a lichened and mysteriously lettered stone, or in 'The Innumerable Christ', with the crucified figure hung between the cosmic and human worlds, on a distant planet.

Evangelisation is no simple process. Whether new preaching aims at the conversion of pagan kingdoms, or at reformation of religious hierarchies grown distant from the concerns of ordinary people, the changes that follow will be disruptive. Contrary poetic voices have long been heard across a Scottish cultural landscape frequently in flux. William Dunbar is the sublime yet earthy poet of diverse attitudes and forms: from 'Surrexit Dominus de Sepulchro', his great poem of Christ's resurrection, to the dark morality of 'The Dance of the Seven Deidly Synnis' or 'Lament for the Makaris', we are drawn into the medieval awareness of death, and the centrality of ancestral remembrance through words and sacred imagery, where prayer runs parallel to the elegiac mode. This mode persisted in Gaelic poetry with the natural world being seen, rather than as a fount of beauty, as the vale of tears through which we journey in exile; or worse, this world's distractions, in league with the Devil, seek to waylay us from reaching our true home, as for example in Athairne MacEoghain's 'Is Mairg Do-ní Uaille as óige' ('*Woe to the One who takes Pride in Youth*') (c. 1600).

The 'roads to Reformation' (in Michael Lynch's phrase) were many and intersecting, and involved economic and political forces as well as theological dissent, too complex for brief summary.<sup>3</sup> Reform offered ideological gains but also losses, as a traditionally immanent or incarnational God, often intimately linked with local pieties, became in the new creed an unknowable transcendent force of obscure and unchangeable motivation. The attractiveness of earlier morality, as in Henryson's fable 'The Preiching of the Swallow' (c. 1480) where folk wisdom is allied to religious reflection, now tended to darken in the intensity of Reformation, with its Calvinistic theology of an elect minority destined for heaven, the rest being damned and therefore not to be prayed for. Moreover, the Reformed Church condemned as 'vanity' all literature other than Scripture. In his preface to his Gaelic translation of John Knox's *Book of Common Order*, Bishop Carswell rails against poets who would disseminate stories of Fenian heroes rather than use their skills to spread the Gospel.<sup>4</sup>

Protestant poetry was still drawn to cosmological witness to God's majesty, as in the reformer George Buchanan's Latin 'Elegy on John Calvin' (1590): 'you are beyond the stars, you nudge / God'.<sup>5</sup> Yet the popular

demotic ballad rhythms of the Scots hymns of *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis* (1567) evoke a positive Reformation culture of grounded worship. Biblical translation extended the poetic range, as in 'For the Baptiste' and 'For the Magdalene' by William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585–1649). The impact of Bible rhetoric is seen also in 'Job. Chapter III Paraphrased' by Robert Fergusson (1750–1774); and the strength of family religion and Bible-reading is sincerely expressed by Robert Burns in 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' (1785). It has also been suggested that translation of the Protestant Bible into Scottish Gaelic (in 1767 and 1801) as propaganda for the reformed faith had the unforeseen effect of enhancing the Gaels' linguistic identity through their exposure to scriptural rhetoric.

In the twentieth century, MacDiarmid's vision ranged widely through philosophical, political or geological destiny, as in 'On a Raised Beach'. Edwin Muir's perspectives on time, myth and history deepen the significance of 'One Foot in Eden', or 'The Horses', gathering past into present; but Edwin Morgan preferred a more radical focus on the future, with sublime exploration of space and time in 'From the Domain of Arnheim' or 'Sonnets from Scotland'. Sorley MacLean's view of time and nature in such poems as 'Coilltean Ratharsair' (*The Woods of Raasay*), 'Hallaig' and 'Uamh an Òir' (*The Cave of Gold*) evokes, for some readers, a pre-Christian Gaelic vision. In these poems time is essentially circular, and nature an alternately succouring and destructive force.

Mariology, pantheism and the place of women are other features that can seem thematically interlinked in Scottish poetry. In the Reformed religion, male authority, with Biblical justification, simplified or relegated women's role in spirituality, in contrast with the honoured place of Mary or Brigid in Gaelic poetry, and in earlier ornate Scots verse such as Dunbar's 'Ane Ballat of Our Lady'. In the thirteenth century, Muireadhach Albannach depicted the Virgin as an all-powerful figure in 'Éistidh riomsa, a Mhuire Mhór' (*O Great Mary, Listen to Me*). She is queen of heaven, presiding over a drinking hall filled by her kinsmen, whose admission she has engineered as co-redemptrix. Perhaps this view of women owes something to, besides contemporary and European views of Mary, the various goddesses who had represented nature to the pre-Christian Gaels.<sup>6</sup>

Plain-spoken Protestant tendencies created difficulties for poets. Alexander Montgomerie (c. 1555–97), a gifted Catholic in the Protestant court of James VI, seems caught between ideologies. His late allegory 'The Cherry and the Slae' explores his own emotional development, and perhaps also religious ideologies in competition, with the accessible but sour new sloe bush set against the attractive yet distant cherry tree.

Working in uncertain times, Montgomerie wrote psalm translations acceptable to the reformers before being finally outlawed. Swept away with the ancient liturgies were most sacramental signs of spiritual linkage between divine and human life. However, ongoing emotional engagement remained possible, whether through hymn writing or later, as with Marion Angus (1866–1946) and Violet Jacob (1863–1946), in a female spirituality touched by landscape, memory, the supernatural and Scots language. A sense of immanence is present in Muir’s ‘The Annunciation’, and more widely in George Mackay Brown’s reverential response to Orkney’s history; and even, occasionally, in the lucid poetry that Norman MacCaig created from his annual holidays in Highland Assynt (‘Zen Calvinism’ was his own ironic self-description of a faith), or in the sophisticated perceptions of Muriel Spark’s early poetry (see *Collected Poems*, 1967). Among current poets, John Burnside’s contemplative ‘Annunciations’ (*Common Knowledge*, 1991) and Carol Ann Duffy’s ‘The Virgin Punishing the Infant’ (*Selling Manhattan*, 1987), while not in the least pious, reflect the rich iconography of Catholic childhood.

A contrary strand invites distrust for the world and a turning from it. There is a link between medieval poems of contempt for the world and the evangelical poetry that rose during the ‘awakenings’ of the eighteenth century. Attempting to wean the Gaels from the ‘tribalism’ that had determined their allegiance in the Jacobite wars, poets such as Dùghall Bochanan (1716–1768) redefined the hero as a Christian, who, instead of conquering others, conquered his own desires. In his ‘Là a’ Bhreitheanais’ (*Day of Judgement*), the anticipated destruction of the world, ‘wrinkled up by that red flame / like birch-tree bark in living fire’, is a greater incentive towards religion than its beauty had formerly been. The ‘natural state’ was by definition bad, yet while the world and the body are corrupt, there is great joy to be had in contemplating the justified soul in eternal life with Christ – expressed by Iain Gobha (John Morison) (1780–1852), the Harris blacksmith, as the rebirth of a new man from the old corrupt one. The joy of an intensely personal, rather than sacramental, relationship with Christ is conveyed in ecstatic, even erotic, terms in the ‘Luinneag’ (*Song*) of Anne NicEalair (*fl.* c. 1800), as it is still celebrated by Catriona NicDhòmhnaill (b. 1925) in ‘Mo Chalman (My Dove)’, Christ’s love song to man.

Such an evangelical emphasis in social and personal life, and the public shaming of those accused of (mainly sexual) misdemeanours, produced a counter-movement of anti-clericalism and, in poetry, anti-clerical satire. Of course, such writing is also found in pre-Reformation times, in the

*Book of the Dean of Lismore* (c. 1500), poking fun equally at lecherous priests and at the gloom of the holy. But regular preaching of a perfectionist morality, and encouragement to keep close observation on the moral failings of others (as well as oneself), fostered a satirical view of any hypocrisy in the moralisers, as in Burns's 'Holy Willie's Prayer', and in his 'The Holy Fair' which mocks religion's appropriation of local festivals, each preacher's performance being rated merely as entertainment by an earthy audience. In genteel Victorian society, the mockery can be relatively gentle, as in 'Let Us All Be Unhappy on Sunday' by Charles, Lord Neaves (1800–1876), or John Davidson's cleric 'The Rev Habakkuk McGruther of Cape Wrath, in 1879', who accepts some changes to strict doctrine but pleads: '[...] leave us / For Scotland's use, in Heaven's name, Hell'. Later, Robert Garioch's Scots translations of Giuseppe Belli's sonnets from nineteenth-century Roman dialect (first published in *Selected Poems*, 1966) give a new twist to anti-Catholic satire, written now from the inside. In twentieth-century Gaelic poetry, a history of cultural suffering adds a keener edge to Sorley MacLean's 'Ban-Ghàidheal' ('*A Highland Woman*') and 'Tìodhlacadh sa Chlachan' ('*Funeral in the Clachan*'), or Iain Crichton Smith's 'A' Chailleach' ('*Old Woman*') and his Puritan poems, or Ruairidh MacThòmais's (Derick Thomson, 1921–2012) 'Àirc a' Choimhcheangail' ('*The Ark of the Covenant*') and 'Srath Nabhair' ('*Strathnaver*'), for in these that suffering is partially condoned by the Church as the wages of sin.

Intellectual and artistic revolt against a narrow preaching culture meant that poets also created a ready strand of 'cosmic impiety', subverting traditional religious imagery. George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824) creates a cynical 'Vision of Judgement' involving a poetic rival. MacDiarmid in 'Prayer for a Second Flood' and 'An Apprentice Angel', or Morgan in 'Message Clear' and 'The Fifth Gospel' both create free-ranging and radical re-writings of the Protestantism in which they were raised: 'Give nothing to Caesar, for nothing is Caesar's'. Am Puilean (Aonghas Caimbeul or Angus Campbell, 1903–1982) wickedly drinks a toast to the Devil, in 'Ám Fear Nach Ainmich Mí' ('*The One I shall not Name*'), for his disproportionate concern with the sinning of the Gaels. Poems such as 'Leòdhas as t-Samhradh' ('*Lewis in Summer*'), by Ruairidh MacThòmais (1921–2012), and 'Soisgeul 1955' ('*Gospel 1955*') and 'Fèin-Fhireantachd' ('*Selfrighteousness*'), by Dòmhnall MacAmhlaigh (b. 1930), display a more subtle form of anticlericalism which simultaneously recognises the deleterious effect of a world-denying religion on a people's happiness and the integral part played by the church in Lewis culture.

The concept of the elect, and indeed of predestination, was inimical to modern humanism and left-wing politics. Deòrsa Mac Iain Deòrsa (George Campbell Hay) (1915–1984) expresses the alternative view in ‘Priosan da Fhèin an Duine?’ (*Locked in the Human Cage?*), that mankind and the world are fine if allowed to flourish. Social justice has become a key feature of both Scottish politics and poetry, as radical socialist politics replaced pietistic acceptance for many modern poets. As early as the eighteenth century, the Gaelic poet Rob Donn (1714–1778) had urged on his neighbours not so much the individual rebirth of the Evangelicals, as the rational society of the Moderates, as in ‘Marbhrann do Chloinn Fhir Taigh Ruspainn’ (*The Rispond Misers*). Sorley MacLean in ‘Calbharaigh’ or ‘*My Een are Nae on Calvary*’ (as translated into Scots by Douglas Young) finds that the limited life-chances of the poor in ‘shitten back-lands in Glesca toun’ forbid easy Christian consolation and demand a political response.

A number of poets from the next generation were ‘sons of the manse’, and Alastair Reid (1926–2014), Robin Fulton (b. 1937) and Stewart Conn (b. 1936) have all written movingly about their fathers’ qualities, and their own search for alternative meaning. Among younger poets from a non-conformist or ‘brethren’ upbringing, the emotional residue of early strictness has marked the poetry of Iain Bamforth (b. 1959), Don Patterson (b. 1963) and Helen Lamb (b. 1956). Medicine, teaching and mentoring have offered another sort of social commitment. Alan Spence (b. 1947) and Gerry Loose (b. 1948), and the Gaelic poets Kevin MacNeil (b. 1972) and Rody Gorman (b. 1960), have been drawn towards Buddhist meditation and Japanese forms that refresh our appreciation of nature and the present. Traditional Christianity is seen variously as an instrument and as an enemy of social justice. Rob A. MacKenzie (b. 1964), a Church of Scotland minister, satirises the ethical hollowness of financiers in *Fleck and the Bank* (2012), while Christopher Whyte (b. 1952) has consistently rejected church dogma as a source of ongoing gay prejudice.

Our stewardship of the planet, whose exploitation formerly found biblical legitimisation in Adam’s God-given dominion over the earth, has become another issue of justice. ‘Celtic Christianity’ is sometimes thought to carry a different emphasis, in the ecological tone of some early texts that value the world and its creatures more as God’s creation than as man’s resource. Pelagius, a Roman thinker born in Britain or Ireland and active around 400, has been brought into this late twentieth-century nexus of aspiration and commitment, notably in his thesis that human beings have it in their own power to avoid sin and achieve righteousness.

Theologically, such magnification of the will seemed heretically to downplay the power of God's grace. That appears part of the attraction for Edwin Morgan in 'Pelagius', revealing a strong identification with Pelagian attitudes as the poem boldly returns him to Glasgow to speak out for life's 'amazing, but only human, grace' (*Cathures*, 2002). John Scotus Eriugena, mentioned above, is another ancient philosopher cited in ecological debate. A Christian Neoplatonist, he developed a cosmology with Nature as the first principle, the totality of all things – including both God and creation. His teaching too was later condemned. Such ancient 'Celtic' theologies, owing something to pagan Greek and possibly pre-Christian Celtic attitudes, are being mined again in current discussions and are part of the context of contemporary Scottish poetry. Exploring human relationship with nature, Kenneth White (b. 1936) has made use of 'geo-poetic' wanderings, as have Alec Finlay (b. 1966) and Ken Cockburn (b. 1960) nearer home, while Kathleen Jamie (b. 1962), visiting North Atlantic islands, is one of several ecologically-aware poets expressing closeness to and responsibility for natural environments under pressure, as in her *The Overhaul* and essay collection *Sightlines* (both 2012). John Burnside has been the most prolific, drawn increasingly to Nordic and Arctic landscapes: see, for example, *The Light Trap* (2002). His early poetry used traditional Catholic imagery in ways that some readers found religious, whereas he saw himself as trying to remake that iconography, and as being more interested in politics and Gnosticism than established religion.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, his poetry has retrieved a liminal sense of ancestral presences, and of spiritual engagement with this world through which we live, that echoes anciently Scottish matters and genres of faith.

- 34 Donald Meek (ed.) *Caran an t-Saoghail: The Wives of the World* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2003), pp. 254–55.
- 35 Sorley MacLean, *Caoir Gheal Leumraich / A White Leaping Flame*, ed. Christopher Whyte and Emma Dymock (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2011), pp. 152–53.
- 36 MacLean, *Caoir Gheal Leumraich*, pp. 124–25, 132–33, 134–35.
- 37 Sydney Goodsir Smith, *Collected Poems* (London: John Calder, 1975), p. 185.
- 38 Christopher Whyte, “‘Now you see it, now you don’t’: Revelation and Concealment in the Love Poetry of Edwin Morgan,” *Glasgow Review* 2 (1993), pp. 82–93.
- 39 Edwin Morgan, *Nothing Not Giving Messages: Reflections on Work and Life* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990), pp. 178, 162.
- 40 Edwin Morgan, *Collected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1990), p. 169.
- 41 Cf. Christopher Whyte, ‘Queer Readings, Gay Texts: From *Redgauntlet* to *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*’, Bell and Miller, *Scotland in Theory* (2003), p. 152.
- 42 Liz Lochhead, *Dreaming Frankenstein* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1984), p. 16.
- 43 Carol Ann Duffy, *Selected Poems* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 22, originally *Standing Female Nude* (London: Anvil, 1985). See Deryn Rees-Jones, *Carol Ann Duffy* (Devon: Northcote House, 2001), pp. 30–44.
- 44 Jackie Kay, *Other Lovers* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1993), p. 40.

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- 1 Colin N. Manlove, *Scottish Fantasy Literature: A Critical Survey* (Edinburgh: Canongate Academic, 1994).
- 2 Thomas O. Clancy (ed.), *The Triumph Tree* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1998), pp. 188–89. Most other Gaelic poems referred to can be found, with translation, in Meg Bateman, Robert Crawford and James McGonigal (eds), *Scottish Religious Poetry: An Anthology* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 2000).
- 3 Key factors are mapped in Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (Pimlico: London, 1992), pp. 171–202.
- 4 R. L. Thomson (ed.), *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh: John Carswell’s Gaelic Translation of the Book of Common Order* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd for the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1970), pp. 10–11.

- 5 Edwin Morgan, 'Ioannis Calvini Epidium / Elegy for John Calvin', in Bateman, Crawford and McGonigal, *Scottish Religious Poetry*, p. 62.
- 6 See Marie-Louise Sjoestedt, *Gods and Heroes of the Celts*, trans. Myles Dillon (Mineola: Dover, 2000), especially chapter 3, 'The Mother-Goddesses of Ireland'.
- 7 See Attila Dósa, 'Poets and Other Animals: An Interview with John Burnside', *Scottish Studies Review* 4:1 (2003), pp. 9–23, reprinted in his *Beyond Identity: New Horizons in Scottish Poetry* (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2009).

### 18: Scottish Poetry as World Poetry

- 1 Translated extracts from *The Kingis Quair* appeared in the *Revue poétique* (Paris, 1835), and from Dunbar and Douglas in the Croatian-Slovenian poet Stanko Vraz's posthumously published *Děla* (1868). These appear to be the only translations from the makars before the twentieth century, which saw complete translations of *The Kingis Quair* (France, 1969; Japan, 1976), Dunbar's *Tretis of the Twa Mariit Wemen and the Wedo* (Japan, 1980–1981, Italy 1989), Henryson's *Morall Fabillis of Esope the Phrygian* (Japan, 1986), *The Testament of Cresseid* (Japan, 1988; Italy 1998), and *Orpheus and Eurydice* (Japan, 1992), and Barbour's *The Bruce* (Spain, 1998). Selections also appeared in anthologies of world or Anglophone writing in Belgium, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, and Russia. For full bibliographical details of these and subsequently mentioned translations, see *The Bibliography of Scottish Literature in Translation (BOSLIT)* [www.nls.uk/catalogues/boslit](http://www.nls.uk/catalogues/boslit). I am also indebted to Dr Yuko Matsui (Aoyama Gakuin University) for information on Japanese translations.
- 2 Du Bartas was returning a favour after James partially translated his *L'Uranie* and *La seconde Sepmaine* in 1584. See Sarah M. Dunnigan, 'The Return of the Repressed', in Gerard Carruthers, David Goldie, and Alastair Renfrew (eds), *Beyond Scotland: New Contexts for Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), pp. 111–32 (p. 124).
- 3 Apart from James VI (translated primarily as a prose-writer), no translation of the Castalian Band has been traced before the twentieth century, when Sir Robert Ayton appeared in the Polish anthology *Poeci języka angielskiego* (1969), and Alexander Montgomerie in the Georgian anthology *Šotlandiéri poezia* (1979).