

Hugh MacDiarmid, Harry Lauder and Scottish Popular Culture

David Goldie

Hugh MacDiarmid was, to put it mildly, no great fan of twentieth-century Scottish popular culture. His work is peppered with slighting and outright derogatory references to popular writers and entertainers and to the recreational tastes of his compatriots: from the 'puerile and platitudinous doggerel' promoted by the degraded Burns cult; through the popular writing of those like Annie S. Swan and 'most other accepted Scottish litterateurs' who 'know nothing of literature and life' and 'have no ideas or ideals'; to the works of the popular Scottish Players movement, George Blake, John Brandane, Neil Grant, J. J. Bell, and Hugh Robertson, which are 'entirely destitute of literary distinction or significance'.¹ Among all this spleen sits one pre-eminent target for MacDiarmid's ire: an entertainer who was probably, at the time, the world's most famous living Scotsman, and who in MacDiarmid's resentful description 'rules the roost'—Sir Harry Lauder.² MacDiarmid's criticisms of Lauder take the form both of generalised attacks on the malign influences of popular culture in Scotland and more direct *ad hominem* assaults on Lauder's character. The gist of this commentary, as instanced in *To Circumjack Cencrastus*, is that Lauder is prime among a number of peddlers of 'hokum, hokum, hokum' - a part of a cultural racket that panders unashamedly to a debased popular taste and thus makes the work of serious art impossible.³

Part of MacDiarmid's queasiness about the cultural and recreational tastes of contemporary working-class Scotland might be put down simply to old-fashioned prejudice and snobbism. For a man of relatively humble origins and modest formal education, MacDiarmid could sound surprisingly aristocratic in his put-downs of the urban poor, and rather Arnold-like in his fears of extending to the contemporary proletariat the right of 'doing as one likes'. Nowhere is

this more evident than in his persistent derogation of the hub of proletarian Scotland, Glasgow: a city, according to MacDiarmid, that has 'never had / A single poet of the slightest consequence'; a place whose people are characterised by their 'vulgarity / And pettiness and darkness of spirit' and their need drag down with their 'idiot fury' any solitary genius who might attempt to rise from the city's unplumbed cultural depths:

Wherever the faintest promise, the slightest integrity,
Dares to show in any of the arts or thoughts or politics
At once the jealous senile jabber breaks out
Striking with sure instinct at everything with courage and integrity [. . .]
In the Tarnhelm of unconscionable ignorance
Where "everybody is entitled to his own opinion"⁴

MacDiarmid's assault here is not so much on the working class per se, but at what he sees as a lumpen proletariat corrupted by its masters — a vitiated, enervated people whose better instincts have been beaten down by capitalism. Indeed, he would at various times ostentatiously embrace this proletariat, as with his public espousal in 1936 of 'Scottish Workers' Republicanism' in the wake of his expulsion from the National Party of Scotland. Even here, though one of the preconditions for the needful 'self-education of the Scottish proletariat' was that it learn its 'revolutionary tasks *with the aid of their own intelligentsia*'.⁵ This sounds, perhaps, as much like Arnold as it does Marx in its insistence that the workers do not so much look to themselves and their own values in order to liberate themselves, as submit to the guidance of an enlightened elite. Arguments like this, hedged in the vehement manner with which MacDiarmid castigated the unenlightened proletariat throughout his writing career, rather gives the impression that he identified with the Scottish generality only in so far as he might command their support. Like many leftist intellectuals of the time, he took few, if any, of his values from this mass, but demanded rather that they adapt their tastes and judgements to those he had acquired through his professedly superior reading and culture.

But there is also a more principled and perhaps more interesting reason for MacDiarmid's revulsion from the popular, which derived from his conception of his self-appointed role as the saviour of Scotland's aesthetic culture: his ambition to 'be the creator of a new people, a real bard who "sang" things till they "became"'; to be 'as an individual, the incarnation of an immemorial culture'.⁶ The reader of MacDiarmid's poetry and prose cannot mistake his utter seriousness in this regard: his work is shot through, not only with pronouncements about the nature of the necessary cultural revival, but also with acknowledgments about the sheer amount of hard work that will be required.⁷ MacDiarmid worked himself hard – with what he described rather characteristically as 'that extreme pressure and blinding overwork / Only genius knows' – and clearly expected Scotland to work hard to keep up with him.⁸ Plainly, the simple pleasures of popular culture were an affront to that strenuous moral purpose – a frittering away of the national spirit in a few cheap laughs and a sentimental song. So when he talked of 'Glasgow's hordes', 'All bogged down in words that communicate no thought, / Only mumbo-jumbo, fraudulent clap-trap, ballyhoo', and complained that,

The idiom of which constructive thought avails itself
Is unintelligible save to a small minority
And all the rest wallow in exploded fallacies
And cherish for immortal souls their gross stupidity,⁹

it is apparent that a large part of the cause is the trivialising popular culture in which the people are mired.

It is against this, and often in direct contradistinction to it, that C. M. Grieve first constructed the persona of Hugh MacDiarmid in 1922: a persona dedicated, quite ruthlessly, to reclaiming Scottish cultural standards from 'the preferences of Auchenshuggle, or what smacks of the legacy of Sir Harry Lauder or William McGonagall', and rescuing its language from the 'smattering of hackneyed tags' propagated by the 'rhymesters of the Kail-yard-cum-Harry-Lauder-school'.¹⁰ There can, I think, be little doubt that this was a laudable aim, and that MacDiarmid's

was a timely intervention in the culture. But it is the extent to which he went to the opposite extreme, the way he flew too fast and too far from a trivialising mongrel popular culture to rest on an idea of Scottish culture that placed an inhibiting insistence on national purity and high-aesthetic seriousness, that is particularly troubling.

Troubling, too, is the manner in which this flight from the popular threatened to force the persona of Hugh MacDiarmid over the borderline of an admirable high-minded seriousness into a rather monstrous inhumanity. The emphasis on work, for example, might in one light make him appear an admirable Stakhanovite intellectual labourer, but in another it makes him seem rather like a joyless Victorian reformer for rational recreation – a kind of humourless, tutting public moralist disapproving the irresponsibilities of music hall and cheap literature.¹¹ A more generous commentator would perhaps not have been so grudging about the recreational needs of an already hard-worked people, and so dismissive of the ways in which they chose to spend their hard-won leisure time and disposable income. For someone who claimed to be interested in getting back ‘among the common people and down to the roots of our national psychology’, MacDiarmid was curiously dismissive of what such ‘common people’ actually thought and felt.¹² He seemed, rather, to be much keener on prescribing what, in the light of his tendentious interpretations of the national tradition, he felt they would be better to be thinking and feeling.

A more sensible, and more pragmatic, reformer might also have realised the extent to which humour and the demotic mode more generally can be a powerful weapon: that, from a purely rhetorical standpoint, it can be more effective to cajole than harangue; and that it might just be more prudent and winning to speak to people in the forms of a popular culture to which they willingly subscribe rather than those of a higher form of culture from which it is perceived they have fallen. This, however, would involve stooping to the popular will, and MacDiarmid (like Browning’s Duke of Ferrara) chose never to stoop.¹³ Instead, he risked turning himself into a kind of caricature of pompousness, of ranting humourlessness and red-faced pontification. When it came, for example, to defending what he admitted were his ‘furious attacks’ on Harry Lauder and other Scottish comedians he chose to do so on the rather dubious grounds that a sense of humour was an impediment to the serious artist. ‘It is indeed necessary’, he wrote, ‘to eschew

humour altogether if a man is to make it possible for himself to pursue his art with the almost inhuman tenacity and resolution which is necessary.'¹⁴

MacDiarmid chose increasingly to extend this 'inhuman tenacity' to the subject matter of his philosophical and political poetry, too. For a writer so concerned with the Re-Catholicization of Scotland, he could sound remarkably Puritanical in his insistence upon an informative, ratiocinative poetry purged of its more sensuous and sentimental qualities. It is interesting, for example, to note the tone of evangelical zeal in which he hedges his appeal for *The Kind of Poetry I Want*:

one must die to life in order to be
Utterly a creator – refusing to sanction
The irresponsible lyricism in which sense impressions
Are employed to substitute ecstasy for information,
Knowing that feeling, warm heart-felt feeling,
Is always banal and futile.¹⁵

The persona of Hugh MacDiarmid thus constructed: a persona which privileges relentless work over recreation; which believes a sense of humour to be an impediment to the necessary 'inhuman tenacity' of the artist; and which prefers information to 'irresponsible lyricism' on the ground that heart-felt feeling 'is always banal and futile', is hardly a very sympathetic one, and does not exactly seem like the recipe either for poetic success or the basis of a revived national character. Added to this is MacDiarmid's deeply unattractive Anglophobia, expressed in various ways, from the 'England is Our Enemy' section of *In Memoriam James Joyce*, through a relentless sniping campaign in his journalism, to the boast, in *Lucky Poet*, that indifference and hatred toward the English had 'developed into my life work'.¹⁶ Such a position has, to some extent, a recognisable rationale behind it: the argument advanced by Arnold and developed by the writers of the Irish Renaissance that identified Englishness and English popular culture with

industrialisation and found in Celtic culture a viable, indigenous cure to its various malaises, and which led to the de-Anglicization programmes of Irish Republicanism. So when MacDiarmid talks of 'that made-in-England speciality, the Proletariat' and argues that 'the vast majority of Scots today . . . regard as typically Scottish the very sentiments and attitudes which are the products of their progressive Anglicization,' he is not being extraordinarily contentious.¹⁷ What he is doing, however, is cutting off his lines of communication to that 'vast majority'. By placing himself above the culture, speaking as a True Scot to the sorry mass of inauthentic Scots perverted by the English and their popular culture, he closes down the possibility of a meaningful dialogue. In insisting on the distance between his enlightened position and their debased state he begins to employ a megaphone to get his arguments across.

Given all this, it is no surprise that MacDiarmid felt antipathetic to Lauder: an artist whose basic tools were humour and sentiment, who exhibited an effortlessly sure feel for his audience and appeared to have an indecent capacity to please his English clients with a capering caricature of Scottishness. If it can be said – bearing in mind the extent to which MacDiarmid had modelled a persona in direct contrast to the qualities embodied by Lauder – that they were the Polar Twins of Scottish Culture in the nineteen twenties and thirties, then it is perhaps hardly surprising that MacDiarmid's diatribes have a kind of fratricidal urgency and desperation. His most sustained attack appeared pseudonymously in August 1928 in *The Stewartry Observer*. Two long quotes show the intensity of MacDiarmid's feelings towards the Lauder phenomenon and are, arguably, as interesting for what they tell us about MacDiarmid as about Lauder:

The reason why the Harry Lauder type of thing is so popular in England is because it corresponds to the average Englishman's ignorant notion of what the Scot is – or because it gives him a feeling of superiority which he is glad to indulge on any grounds, justified or otherwise. 'Lauderism' has made thousands of Scotsmen so disgusted with their national characteristics that they have gone to the opposite extreme and become, or tried to become, as English as possible; 'Lauderism' is, of course, only the extreme form

of those qualities of canniness, pawkiness and religiosity, which have been foisted upon the Scottish people by insidious English propaganda, as a means of destroying Scottish national pride, and of robbing Scots of their true attributes which are the opposite of these mentioned. It is high time the Scots were becoming alive to the ulterior effect of this propaganda by ridicule.

Sir Harry Lauder earns £1,500 a week; and Sir Harry himself [. . .] rejoins that he never fails to receive full houses in Scotland as elsewhere. That may well be. There are plenty of non-Scottish people in Scotland to supply him with the necessary audiences. Besides, what proportion of the population of Scotland – or even of the cities in which he appears – do Sir Harry's audiences constitute? A very small and not necessarily in any way a representative one! The present writer has never met a single intelligent Scot who would be seen at a Lauder performance. The fact that this over-paid clown gets £1,500 a week is a shameful commentary on the low state of public taste. It represents a salary which, divided up into good reasonable sums, would provide for 150 intellectual workers yearly amounts of £500 each.¹⁸

Setting aside the more obviously untenable claims (that Lauder so disgusts Scots that they willingly take on English attributes, or that his Scottish audiences are predominantly made up of non-Scots) there are several assertions here that need further examination. The first concerns the extent to which Lauderism is English propaganda foisted on Scots and delivered to audiences that don't represent the majority taste. MacDiarmid here can be said to be glossing over a rather unpalatable truth, which is that Scottish audiences were far from unwilling participants in the kind of tartan comedy epitomised by Lauder. As Alasdair Cameron and Adrienne Scullion have argued, tartan comics such as Lauder and his precursor W. F. Frame, were far from being the creations of Anglocentric culture, but were rather 'approved and even celebrated as symbols of a nationality which, under normal circumstances, audiences were never allowed to express'.¹⁹ Paul Maloney has similarly shown that MacDiarmid's assumptions are rather wide of the mark, arguing

that 'the idea that the Scottish comics arose purely as a response to English variety audiences' need for a handle on Scottish identity seems simplistic, given their enormous popularity in Scotland'.²⁰

The second dubious contention made by MacDiarmid derives from what might be described as a zero-sum theory of Scottish culture, seen in the contention that the vast amounts earned by this 'over-paid clown' represent money that ought instead to be spent on salaries for more worthy 'intellectual workers'. Even discounting MacDiarmid's rather piqued envy (understandable, perhaps, given the extremely straitened, and probably unfair, financial circumstances under which he was working at the time) this argument is pernicious, assuming as it does that Lauder is unfairly monopolising a finite, limited resource of capital expenditure on culture. This not only misunderstands economics (a science of which MacDiarmid claimed a profound knowledge) but also hampers culture more widely by refusing it a genuinely productive capability. Instead of welcoming popular cultural forms as an expansion of the whole sum of forms available to the practising Scottish artist, MacDiarmid attacks these forms on the assumption that he is competing against them for a finite sum of cultural and economic capital. MacDiarmid assumes that Scotland isn't big enough for both himself and Lauder, and like a small-town sheriff in a Western insists that one of them will have to leave. This is not only hopelessly parochial, but also betrays a mind unable to see beyond the economics of command. Had MacDiarmid been less concerned about the disbursement of cultural funding and instead concentrated on expanding and diversifying that economy in response to an obvious demand for a wide range of cultural forms, he might have realised that both he and Lauder might have been able to prosper side-by-side in a larger, more broadly-based cultural economy. Why this is particularly pernicious is that this kind of zero-sum argument sets the tone for much of the criticism of popular culture that was to follow in the twentieth century. The arguments against Scottish popular culture, particularly tartanry and kailyard literature, made by commentators like Tom Nairn, Colin McArthur, and in the early work of Cairns Craig have often been grounded in this assumption or one very like it. Based partly in MacDiarmid's modernism, partly in Gramscian thinking about hegemony and false consciousness, and partly in Adorno and Horkheimer's

strictures against the culture industry, their arguments have often turned on the ways popular forms impoverish the culture more generally: characterising popular culture—or as Nairn memorably called it ‘sub-cultural Scotchery’—as a component of a cultural hegemony that makes serious or authentic expression more or less impossible.²¹ For Nairn and McArthur, these are ‘pathological’ and ‘regressive discourses’ that ‘provide a seriously limited set of representations about the country and its people’.²² For Craig, these discourses have turned ‘the language of lowland Scots into a medium necessarily defined with a couthy, domestic, sentimental world’ so that ‘it becomes impossible to give expression to a vernacular working-class environment in Scotland without provoking those connotations’.²³ These arguments are theoretically sophisticated and often very persuasive in their assertions about the political irresponsibility of Scottish popular culture, but they are based on a set of assumptions about the reach of popular culture and its power to repress more serious forms of art and argument that seem to fall down in their real-world applications. Can it really be said, for instance, that Sandy Powell and *Last of the Summer Wine* make Ted Hughes and Tony Harrison impossible? Or that it is credible to deny that *Father Ted* and Seamus Heaney might not spring from the same culture, or that Jackie Mason and Krusty the Clown somehow invalidate Saul Bellow and Philip Roth? Was Scottish culture so limited that Harry Lauder really made it impossible for MacDiarmid to ply his trade and earn an honest living?

MacDiarmid’s grossest error with regard to Lauder, however, was his inability to understand the subtlety of Lauder’s performance and the complexity of the cultural interchange transacted in it. One criticism that MacDiarmid characteristically makes of Lauder and other popular figures is their parochialism – their failure to rise to the status of international artists. This was the stick with which MacDiarmid beat Neil Munro – another very popular practitioner to whose cultural and historical subtleties MacDiarmid proved unresponsive.²⁴ Lauder, however, was not only an internationally recognised artist but also worked in a medium that was itself very far from being parochial. As Scottish theatre historians have shown, the roots of early twentieth-century Scottish music hall and comedy were very diverse: the Glasgow Fair, for instance, had, since the mid-nineteenth century hosted performances by the great English/Italian clown families

such as the Lupinos and the Boleros, helping foster the Scottish penchant for pantomime; and Scottish comedians routinely modelled themselves on continental performers (Bert Denver and Tommy Lorne, for example, drew heavily on the clowning and mime of Jean Gaspard Debureau and Joe Grimaldi)²⁵. Lauder, then, who it must be remembered was deeply dyed in this tradition—and who began as an Irish comedian—was in fact a sophisticated artist working quite consciously in one of the first truly international modern media. It is true that he chose, with a degree of understanding of his audience that amounted almost to cynicism, to make for himself a naïve persona whose primary appeal was to sentiment and to a regressive stereotype of highlandism. But it is also true that he had a much wider tonal range and formal sophistication than this. Paul Maloney has argued that ‘music hall in Scotland offered a more rounded and varied representation of Scottish culture than the predominance of the Scotch comic caricature has led us to expect’, and it is possible to argue that Lauder, who epitomised it, similarly offered a range and roundedness that has been ignored by his detractors.²⁶ His highland persona, for example, was only the most famous of many that he adopted – personae that moved from guilelessness and simplicity on the one hand to real depths of irony and genuine pathos on the other.

It is plainly impossible for a modern critic to evaluate an ephemeral performance from nearly a century before, but the next best thing is to find reliable witnesses to that performance.²⁷ The response of two such credible witnesses, both Englishmen, contradict MacDiarmid’s assertions about the way Lauder degrades the national stereotype and also suggest that his performances were more nuanced and more affecting than MacDiarmid allowed. MacDiarmid talked, for example of the ‘brainless buffoonery and “chortling wut”’ of ‘Sir Harry Lauder and the other Scotch “coamies”’ that are ‘to-day general and accepted as particularly Scottish’.²⁸ The great theatre critic of the *Sunday Times*, James Agate, however, saw it quite differently:

It must not be supposed that Lauder does not calculate his effects. He does. Each verse is more elaborate than the preceding one, so that the effect is both cumulative and culminative. This actor has an exceedingly fine feeling for character. Soldier, sailor, yokel, god’s innocent are all to their several manners born. They are true to nature, yet

transfigured. Even Doughie, the loutish baker, his face covered with flour, his brow bound with a ragged bonnet, wears about him something elfin, something of Pierrot. Once or twice the daft fellow will cock a malignant eye, and in such a moment the great actor is revealed. Lauder can make a face of horror like the mask of Irving's Dante confronted with the starving Ugolino. These qualities of pathos and tragedy are not what the generality look for. To them Lauder is a figure of pure fun, with a modicum of sentimental alloy. They love that description of bonnie Wee Jean with her velvet arms around her father's neck, but they adore still more that rueful 'But she's got ma nose and ear-r-r-s!' Here again the comic idea is given an ingenious twist. The gist of it is not the superimposing of absurdity upon plain sense, but the discovery of the rational in lunatic or sentimental disguise. When all is said and done the man remains an evangelist whose tidings are of pure joy.²⁹

This testifies to Lauder's tonal range and plainly suggests that there is far more to him than a simplistic comedian draped in tartan. The range of characters he embodies plainly begin in caricature but end in the kinds of insightful characterisation to be found in recognisably higher forms of drama.

The idea that the average Englishman gets a wholly misplaced understanding of Scotland through Lauder is similarly brought into question by H. V. Morton. There are few better claimants to the title of representative Englishman in the period than Morton, the much-celebrated *Daily Express* countryside writer and author of the best-selling 'In Search of' series of books that began with *In Search of England*.³⁰ Morton's search for Scotland found him confronted with its most famous performer:

Millions of people who have never seen, and never will see, Scotland have experienced affection for the country whose homelier characteristics are so deliciously exaggerated in this man. Lauder's genius is a thing apart. Observe that sudden extra tenseness which comes to an audience when he is announced; see him come on the stage, a grotesque

little 'Highlander' with a deformed yellow walking-stick; watch him advance right to the footlights and, in the apparent effortless certainty of his genius, grip his audience so tightly to him that his slightest inflexion becomes full of meaning, the hardly perceptible movement of a muscle significant. Rarely does he say anything witty. An audience, however, is willing to welcome anything he may care to say, no matter how commonplace, with a constant ripple of laughter. His personal magnetism is irresistible. [. . .] Watch how he will concentrate his effect on one good laugh, quickly followed with another, funny but with a serious side to it; and then, suddenly, startlingly, and with a simplicity and a sincerity impossible to question, he is telling some story of the war. There is not a sound in the theatre. The little Scotsman stands in the full flare of the floodlights speaking words which come straight from his heart. Every word rings true. In two minutes he has carried hundreds of men and women of different types and mentalities to the opposite pole of emotion. There is real feeling in the theatre now; an emotion which few great actors can command. Something essentially honest, good, pure, and simple in the little Scotsman is speaking to those same qualities in his fellow-men. Then he switches back to laughter! [. . .] The greatest compliment the world pays him is the fact that he is the only comedian who is permitted to be serious whenever he feels like it.³¹

Note that Morton doesn't mistake Lauder's dress for real Scottishness; he spots the caricature immediately (placing, for example, scare quotes around the designation 'Highlander') and recognises it for the 'delicious exaggeration' that it is. Morton is clearly seeing here what presumably most Scots would also have registered in Lauder's performance – a sophisticated presentation of a national type that is being celebrated and ironised at the same moment. Morton's measured, humane view of a complex, self-reflexive popular culture is plainly quite far from MacDiarmid's casual assertions about 'brainless buffoonery' and 'chortling wut'.

What Morton also attests to here, is Lauder's capacity to move and to articulate a deeply-felt response to the devastating social consequences of the First World War. Lauder, of course,

lost his son in the war and so was well placed to speak out in this way – something Morton, as an old soldier, presumably recognised. MacDiarmid, of course, also served in the war, and had made that experience the subject of some of the early writing published in *Annals of the Five Senses*. It is interesting to compare Lauder's seriousness and sensitivity on this issue with MacDiarmid's often more blundering and solipsistic response. Material written by MacDiarmid during his service in Salonika and Marseilles suggests a rather high degree of self-absorption and disregard for the larger catastrophe of war and for the many people suffering in the war's other theatres.³² His post-war poem 'At the Cenotaph' continues in this vein:

'At the Cenotaph'

Are the living so much use
That we need to mourn the dead?
Or would it yield better results
To reverse their roles instead?
The millions slain in the War –
Untimely, the best of our seed? –
Would the world be any the better
If they were still living indeed?
The achievements of such as are
To the notion lend no support;
The whole history of life and death
Yields no scrap of evidence for't. –
Keep going to your wars, you fools, as of yore;
*I'm the civilisation you're fighting for.*³³

This poem is noteworthy for its almost magnificent hauteur and its spleen. Read as a dramatic monologue it offers a powerful insight into a mind driven to the margins of derangement by

Coriolanus-like aspirations and assumptions. If we allow it as the product of what MacDiarmid described as his 'Berserker' poetic persona we can – even if we don't relish its sentiments – at least marvel at its combativeness and the ruthlessness with which it carries through its central argument. But if we believe for one moment that these words are intended to be taken seriously and coldly as a statement of cultural politics then they become something else entirely. At best they offer an example of the kind of aesthetic autism sometimes found in MacDiarmid's work – that fundamental inability to comprehend other opinions and sensibilities which could make his pronouncements seem unnecessarily tactless and gauche. At worst, they ring with a worryingly authoritarian tone. This, of course, is not too much of a concern in the case of a poet – poetry offers a space to attempt to think the unthinkable or say the otherwise unsayable, and a part of MacDiarmid's strength as a poet is his willingness to take risks in affronting aesthetic and political convention. But it is a worry in the case of someone who moves so freely between the aesthetic and political spheres as MacDiarmid, and whose project is so nakedly that of a *Kulturkampf*. It is, after all, one thing to read and enjoy Baudelaire, Nietzsche, and Pound, but quite another to identify with and aggrandize their politics. When MacDiarmid wrote of the need for a Scottish fascism, or when he supported the Soviet Union's repression of Hungary in 1956 it is just about possible to invoke his artistic license and excuse it as the tolerated folly of a poet.³⁴ But such opinions are much less forgivable when uttered from the political platform where the poetic license is necessarily revoked. It was, arguably, often MacDiarmid's problem that he failed to recognise the significance of this boundary and was too ready to exercise an elitism and hauteur acceptable to aesthetics in the spheres of nationalist politics and culture where it was much less acceptable and appropriate. In the case of this poem, MacDiarmid's want of empathy can be excused as kind of sublime curmudgeonliness and perhaps even celebrated in its way as art, but it surely can't be tolerated as politics: it is, arguably, in these terms quite contemptible in its casual disregard for the lives and wishes of millions of his fellow citizens. This perhaps, is what comes of placing oneself above one's audience in the belief that they have become unwittingly conditioned to a state of inferiority by modern culture.

What might leave the sceptical reader even less enamoured of the poem, bearing in mind MacDiarmid's derogation of Lauder, is the way it lumbers rather heavily towards its punch line in the manner of a poorly executed music-hall monologue. It is also not particularly to MacDiarmid's credit that the punch line itself ('I'm the civilisation you're fighting for') is an unattributed lift from a humorous comment made by Lytton Strachey to a bellicose lady patriot during the war. One normally expects the poet to have the mastery of complex emotion and tone, and the vulgar entertainer to disregard humane feeling in grabbing opportunistically for the cheap gag. But in these examples it is Lauder who makes a connection with the audience through his tonal and technical subtlety and MacDiarmid who strikes the hollow note.

All this is not intended to suggest that Lauder is somehow to be preferred to MacDiarmid. MacDiarmid's great poetry needs no defence and will happily stand on its own aesthetic merits; he undoubtedly brought a seriousness to Scottish poetry, and a new belief in the resources of the language that was long overdue. What is worth noting, however, is just how disabling MacDiarmid's contempt for a contemporary popular audience proved to be – both for himself and for those who sought subsequently to make him an exemplar of the national literary consciousness. Contemporaries like Lewis Grassie Gibbon and Edwin Muir could write with equal asperity about urban Scotland – Gibbon once referred to Glasgow as 'the vomit of a cataleptic commercialism' while for Muir the city famously evoked the sense of 'an immense, blind dejection' – but both could also write generously and sympathetically about the plight of its inhabitants.³⁵ For Gibbon, all questions of culture were necessarily secondary to the fact of poverty. 'There is', he suggested, 'nothing in culture or art that is worth the life and elementary happiness of one of those thousands who rot in the Glasgow slums.'³⁶ While in *Scottish Journey*, Muir exhibited a humane understanding of the need to sympathise with rather than condemn the lapses in conduct and taste of the urban working classes. For Muir, the industrial poor were 'ordinary men and women in a hopeless position, who have been placed there by the operation of a process over which they have no control.' This being the case, 'it would surely be inhuman to grudge them what enjoyment they can get, whether in drink, love, or fighting'.³⁷ Muir had not

always been so understanding - his *Autobiography* offers a psychologically astute account of his early attempts to escape the squalor of his Glasgow surroundings by assuming a superior, Nietzschean intellectualism:

To support myself I adopted the watchword of 'intellectual honesty', and in its name committed every conceivable sin against honesty of feeling and honesty in the mere perceptions of the world with which I daily came into contact. Actually, although I did not know it, my Nietzscheanism was what psychologists call a 'compensation.' I could not face my life as it was, and so I took refuge in the fantasy of the Superman.³⁸

For Muir this was an adolescent reaction, conditioned by his reading and the arrogance of youth, which he outgrew with practical experience. It is arguable that MacDiarmid started from a similar point, but made much less progress along this road than Muir, and that his attitudes of Nietzschean 'honesty' and his striving to be a kind of *Übermensch* of Albyn – refreshingly shocking at first – became both strained in themselves and damagingly constraining to his wider work the more they were uttered. Muir and Gibbon, like George Blake, had learned that where the working class and their culture was concerned it was better to try to understand a little more and condemn a little less.³⁹ MacDiarmid was less forgiving, and his intolerance and dogmatism on issues relating to the relationship between the lumpen proletariat and the national ideal threatened to destabilise the project of literary revival. One of the writers associated with that revival, James Barke, for example, noted a growing and increasingly damaging separation between the movement's nationalism and the aspirations and experiences of ordinary Scots and urged Scottish writers to remember that 'all that is best and worthy of preservation in the various national cultures is the heritage of the workers and peasants'. Although he did not mention MacDiarmid by name, he talked of a nationalism promulgated in prominent writers of the revival that 'has vitiated much of their work', and noted the consequence that 'much strength that ought to accrue to the Left in Scotland is actually diverted into reactionary channels.'⁴⁰ Such warnings weren't always heeded however, and MacDiarmid's centrality to the movement licensed others to

disparage the cultural tastes of ordinary Scots in the name of a high nationalist aesthetic—to laud the Scot in the abstract but find they were sadly disappointed by him in the particular. Nan Shepherd, for example, was content to follow MacDiarmid in asserting the aim of the movement to be ‘man “filled with lightness and exaltation”’, while noting that, in fact, under current conditions in Scotland ‘Men are obtuse, dull, complacent, vulgar. They love the third-rate, live on the cheapest terms with themselves . . . Their reading is “novels and newspapers”, their preoccupations “fitba” and “weemen”, their thinking “treadmills of rationalizing”’.⁴¹ In summarising MacDiarmid’s central contribution to the movement, Duncan Glen was prepared to recognise elements of ‘hatred and intellectual arrogance of fanatical intensity’ in MacDiarmid’s less temperate statements—such as his professed willingness to ‘sacrifice a million people any day for one immortal lyric’—yet was still prepared to argue that he was ‘not only the “authentic voice of Scotland” but also that of universal man’. Perhaps I am not the only reader to be reminded of the special pleading of the photojournalist played by Denis Hopper in *Apocalypse Now*, ascribing Kurtz’s monstrosities to his great genius (‘Hey, man, you don’t talk to the Colonel. You listen to him. The man’s enlarged my mind. He’s a poet-warrior in the classic sense’) as Glen explains that ‘not all MacDiarmid’s protests and yells of wild hatred can hide that this hatred grows out of a love of humanity—he is a humanist, call it scientific as opposed to emotional, but it is a great love of Man.’⁴²

Had MacDiarmid been less dismissive of Lauder and popular entertainment more generally he might have learned to master a more democratic discourse, and might have discovered that dialogue is a more attractive and effective form of political and cultural communication than the castigations of the soap box. Had he spoken *to* his audience rather than *at* them, had he addressed them in a human voice rather than place them at the other end of a megaphone, he might have been able to engage in a dialectic beneficial to his art: his claims to speak for Scotland might have gained just a shred more credibility. Paradoxically, if he had been prepared to extend more credit to Lauder and others like him MacDiarmid might have approached closer to

the status of one of his heroes of high literary seriousness, James Joyce. Joyce similarly adopted an aesthetic distance from the mob and used his art to disparage the urban conditions that degraded modern thought—famously describing *Dubliners* as an attempt ‘to betray the soul of that hemoplegia or paralysis which many consider a city’.⁴³ Joyce, however, also attended closely to and relished the language and popular culture of the Dublin crowd, and in *Ulysses* wove its songs, its cheap advertisements, its jokes, and all its petty vulgarities into a work of the highest literary accomplishment. The lesson he taught, largely ignored by MacDiarmid, was that a serious modern (and national) art might be constructed out of, not in spite of, an often trivial, ephemeral popular culture. Failing to make this stretch, MacDiarmid was left, in his quieter moments to lament his failure to connect with a national audience. For all his mastery of his poetic craft, in which he took a justifiable pride, he was terribly conscious throughout his career of his failure to hold and master a Scottish audience. This is discouraging to any writer, but it doesn’t need emphasising that it is especially disappointing for a writer who has cast himself in the role of national saviour. He could write plaintively of this dilemma in *To Circumjack Cencrastus*, and in *Second Hymn to Lenin*:

Are my poems spoken in the factory and fields,
In the streets o’ the toon?
Gin they’re no’, then I’m failin’ to dae
What I ocht to ha’ dune.⁴⁴

The simple point here is that had MacDiarmid moderated his high expectations, had he trusted the industrial working class and been prepared to acknowledge the vitality and validity of their hybridised culture in the way that Lauder did rather than derogate that populace and its culture at every turn, he might in his own lifetime have achieved the national standing that he believed was his due. Lauder might be guilty of flattering his audience into a lazy attitude of complaisance, but was it really better actively to insult them—to argue, as MacDiarmid did, that ‘the truth of the matter is that it doesn’t matter one way or another what the general public think, on any literary

matter. They are not in a position to have or express opinions’?⁴⁵ Had Joyce thought this way he would still have created Stephen Dedalus, but could surely never have come up with such a convincing, sympathetic rendering of Leopold and Molly Bloom. Joyce does not condone the cultural or literary tastes of the likes of Bloom or Gerty MacDowell, but neither does he dismiss them out of hand. Rather, their cultural tastes – shallow and silly as they often are – come to be recognised as the novel progresses as the necessary, humane complement to Stephen’s often tiresome aesthetic seriousness. Joyce shows, with a humour and magnanimity rarely seen in MacDiarmid, that the popular culture of modernity, vulgar and mongrel as it is, is a vital—perhaps even a central—component of the national life that the serious modern artist cannot afford to ignore.

In setting himself apart from this aspect of the national life MacDiarmid forced himself into a number of awkward, sometimes specious, arguments to justify his self-estimation as the national bard. There was, for example, the argument about cultural belatedness—that as Scotland was too degenerate in the present to deserve being thought about as a nation then its national poet would necessarily be out of step with the country’s inhabitants.⁴⁶ Such an idea could only foster contempt, leading him to inveigh against his fellow Scots for being a people whose “race memory” only goes back to the day before yesterday’;⁴⁷ and to talk ‘again and again and again about the current stranglehold of mediocrity in Scotland’ and ‘the moronic character of most of our people’, and to see his compatriots as ‘a people greedy, lying, and unconscionable / Beyond compare’.⁴⁸ In the looking-glass world of this nationalism contemporary unpopularity becomes an asset—the less attention MacDiarmid gets the more he feels he proves his point about racial and cultural degeneracy and the blindness of the undifferentiated contemporary mob. ‘I am’ he says ‘consumed with love for the people I detest’.⁴⁹ Luckily, he never paid heed to ‘the people’, who might well have been forgiven for telling him exactly what he could do with such love.

This general attitude is, of course, in many ways similar to the modernist emphases of Eliot and Lawrence, and Pound and Leavis.⁵⁰ These writers share with MacDiarmid a direct and

personal experience of cultural deracination, and a corresponding revulsion at forms of mass-participative culture. But while they accept a diminished role for their preferred version of culture—a position summed up in Leavis's 'Mass Civilization and Minority Culture' (1930) and Eliot's *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948)—MacDiarmid's vision of a national culture does not allow him to let go so easily.⁵¹ Much of modernism throws up its hands at popular culture, and like the Engsoc of Orwell's *1984*, just allows the proles to get on with whatever they're doing as long as they don't interfere with the interests of the opinion-forming elite. MacDiarmid's insistence on the national role of his art puts him in a trickier position: if he continues to insist that his elite culture is necessarily the cornerstone of national consciousness then the popular culture of contemporary Scotland cannot by definition be Scottish. The benign interpretation of his role as national poet is thus to make his poetry the bridge between an authentic Scotland of the past and the re-achieved Scotland of the future. Or as he himself put it in *To Circumjack Cencrastus*, to make his poetry 'sic' a Noah's Ark' in which, by implication, the genetic stock of Scottish culture is conserved for propagation when the obliterating flood relents.⁵²

This means, of course, repudiating the heterogeneous mix of contemporary Scottish cultural production epitomised by Lauder, and supplanting it with an ideal Scottish culture: a belief that properly realised Scottish art is the manifestation of an essentially unchanging national spirit—a little like what Hegel in *The Philosophy of History* called 'a *determinate* and particular Spirit' to which actual historical national cultures conform to a greater or lesser degree and through which nations come fully to consciousness of themselves.⁵³ This is raised explicitly by MacDiarmid in, for example, 'The Burns Cult', in which he talks of the need to reassert 'the fearless radical spirit of the true Scotland'; or in *To Circumjack Cencrastus* when he talks of the spirit at work that is 'The Shape o' Scotland's purpose'; or in his desire, quoted earlier, to become 'the incarnation of an immemorial culture'.⁵⁴

Instead of simply developing an inclusive model of the national culture as the sum of all current cultural activity—which would have been both permissive and progressive, and which even T.S. Eliot was broad-minded enough to acknowledge when he described culture as 'the whole way of life of a people'—MacDiarmid tried instead to impose a proscriptive model of high-

cultural nationalism that was both unworkable and exclusive to the point of redundancy: a model that had no truck with England or Britain, and which massively overstated the danger of relatively harmless UK-wide popular cultural phenomena like kailyard and Sir Harry Lauder. In this regard, MacDiarmid proved a pernicious influence, encouraging Scottish literary and cultural criticism to narrow its sights and become over-influenced by nationalist-led ideas of a singular Scottish cultural ideal—to privilege cultural homogeneity over heterogeneity and to reject out of hand the supposed embarrassments of a mongrel, commercially-dominated popular culture. The result was that Scottish culture tended to become defined negatively and conservatively. The idea of Scottish culture was not that of a bustling marketplace of ideas. It was, instead, figured as a repository of traditional value, ‘an immemorial culture’, that functioned to keep the vulgarities of the market at bay and put apparent aberrations such as tartanry, kailyard, and Lauderism firmly in their place. Fortunately, this influence has not lasted and recent Scottish criticism, in the work, for example, of Angus Calder, Douglas Gifford, Duncan Petrie, and Alan Riach, has developed a much more inclusive sense of what properly constitutes Scottish literary culture.⁵⁵ Cairns Craig has also revised his early opinions and written perhaps the most powerful indictment of this Scottish *Trahison des Clercs* with regard to Scottish popular culture. For Craig, MacDiarmid and the ‘Scotch Myths’ critics who followed in his wake constructed out of their embarrassment at a popular culture that was ‘resolutely national, and which had all the vulgarity, sentimentality, and vitality of popular culture everywhere’ a damaging myth of an ‘evacuated culture’ that belied what was actually a ‘long and vital tradition of working class literature in one of the most literate countries of the world’. In Craig’s damning analysis, this type of critique did not so much expose the shortcomings of Scottish culture as point to ‘the profound hatred of the intellectuals for the culture they inhabited, the profound embarrassment they suffered by being unable, any more, to identify themselves with some universalist truth that would redeem them from Scottishness’.⁵⁶

Harry Lauder is far from being a figure on whom one would want to found a national culture. But his work, like that of Billy Connolly or the ‘Chewin’ the Fat’ comedians after him, needs to be recognised not only for its technical excellence, but also for the way it speaks directly and in differing ways to a wider national culture than that normally reached by serious literature.

As such, it is a complement rather than a threat to literature. If such a view is allowed, the picture of the national culture that emerges is both more generous and humane than MacDiarmid admitted, and also more open to cross-fertilization and revitalizing change. To see *both* MacDiarmid and Lauder as important national figures is to imagine a culture open to possibility and not one bound by either a narrowing intellectualism or an inhibiting deference to tradition or precedent.

In his *Scotland in Film*, Forsyth Hardy recalls his taking the Hollywood producer Arthur Freed around Scotland. Freed was preparing the production of Vincente Minelli's *Brigadoon*, and was scouting locations in search of 'a village in the Highlands which would look unchanged with its inhabitants just awakened after the passage of a hundred years'. After having been taken on a tour that took in a number of places often considered the quintessence of Scottishness—Cullross, Dunkeld, Braemar, and Inverary—Freed went back to Hollywood disappointed. 'I went to Scotland but I could find nothing that looked like Scotland', he is reported to have commented. So, unable to find an apparently authentic Scottish location on this side of the Atlantic he constructed one in Hollywood.⁵⁷ This story is sometimes retold as an example of a vulgar Americanism that has little understanding of and empathy with other cultures. But couldn't it be argued that this is also and exactly MacDiarmid's approach to Scotland? When he says, for example (in his very first published piece as 'Hugh MacDiarmid'), that 'there's nothing more foreign in Glasgow today than a real Scotsman', or states outright that the vast majority 'of the Scottish people in Scotland today are not Scottish in any real sense of the term' is he not just being as blind as Freed?⁵⁸ *Brigadoon* was a low-cultural travesty of Scottishness. Could it not be said that MacDiarmid's view of Scotland was its high-cultural equivalent?

Works Cited

Agate, James, *Immortal Toys: A Survey of Light Entertainment on the London Stage, 1920-1943* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1945).

- Bell, Eleanor, *Questioning Scotland: Literature, Nationalism, Postmodernism* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
- Blake, George, *The Heart of Scotland* (revised edn.; London: B.T. Batsford, 1951).
- Bold, Alan, *MacDiarmid: Christopher Murray Grieve, A Critical Biography* (London: Paladin, 1990).
- Brown, Callum G., 'Popular Culture and the Continuing Struggle for Rational Recreation', in T. M. Devine and R. J. Finlay (eds.), *Scotland in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 210-29.
- Calder, Angus, 'A Descriptive Model of Scottish Culture', *Scotlands*, 2/1 (1995), 1-14.
- Cameron, Alasdair and Scullion, Adrienne, 'W. F. Frame and the Scottish Popular Theatre Tradition', in Alasdair Cameron and Adrienne Scullion (eds.), *Scottish Popular Theatre and Entertainment: Historical and Critical Approaches to Theatre and Film in Scotland* (Glasgow: Glasgow University Library, 1996), 39-61.
- Craig, Cairns, *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and English Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996).
- Ellmann, Richard, *James Joyce* (revised edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).
- Gardiner, Michael, *Modern Scottish Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005).
- Gibbon, Lewis Grassie and MacDiarmid, Hugh, *Scottish Scene: or The Intelligent Man's Guide to Albyn* (London: Jarrolds, 1936).
- Gifford, Douglas, 'Re-mapping Renaissance in Modern Scottish Literature', in Gerard Carruthers, David Goldie, and Alastair Renfrew (eds.), *Beyond Scotland: New Contexts for Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature* (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2004), 17-37.
- Glen, Duncan, *Hugh MacDiarmid and the Scottish Renaissance* (Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers, 1964).
- Hardy, Forsyth, *Scotland in Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990).
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956).
- LeMahieu, D. L., *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).
- MacDiarmid, Hugh, *Selected Prose*, ed. Alan Riach (Manchester: Carcanet, 1992).
- , *Complete Poems*, eds Michael Grieve and W. R. Aitken, 2 vols. (1; Manchester: Carcanet, 1993).
- , *Complete Poems*, eds Michael Grieve and W. R. Aitken, 2 vols. (2; Manchester: Carcanet, 1994).
- , *Lucky Poet: A Self-Study in Literature and Political Ideas. Being the Autobiography of Hugh MacDiarmid (Christopher Murray Grieve)* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1994).
- , *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, ed. Alan Riach (Manchester: Carcanet, 1995).

- , *Albyn: Shorter Books and Monographs*, ed. Alan Riach (Manchester: Carcanet, 1996).
- , *The Raucle Tongue: Hitherto Uncollected Prose*, eds Angus Calder, Glen Murray, and Alan Riach, 2 vols. (1; Manchester: Carcanet, 1996).
- , *The Raucle Tongue: Hitherto Uncollected Prose*, eds Angus Calder, Glen Murray, and Alan Riach, 2 vols. (2; Manchester: Carcanet, 1997).
- , *Annals of the Five Senses: and Other Stories, Sketches and Plays*, eds Roderick Watson and Alan Riach (Manchester: Carcanet, 1999).
- Mackie, Albert D., *The Scotch Comedians: From the Music Hall to Television* (Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press, 1973).
- Maloney, Paul, *Scotland and the Music Hall, 1850-1914* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2003).
- McArthur, Colin (ed.), *Scotch Reels: Scotland in Cinema and Television* (London: British Film Institute, 1982).
- McCulloch, Margery Palmer, *Modernism and Nationalism: Literature and Society in Scotland, 1918-1939: Source Documents for the Scottish Renaissance* (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2004).
- Morton, H. V., *In Search of Scotland* (London: Methuen & Co., 1929).
- Muir, Edwin, *An Autobiography* (London: Methuen, 1964).
- , *Scottish Journey* (London: Flamingo, 1985).
- Nairn, Tom, *The Break-Up of Britain* (Second, Expanded edn.; London: New Left Books, 1981).
- Neubauer, Jürgen, *Literature as Intervention: Struggles over Cultural Identity in Contemporary Scottish Fiction* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 1999).
- Petrie, Duncan J., *Contemporary Scottish Fictions: Film, Television and the Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).
- Riach, Alan, *Representing Scotland in Literature, Popular Culture and Iconography: The Masks of the Modern Nation* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

Notes

¹ 'A New Movement in Scottish Literature', in Hugh MacDiarmid, *Albyn: Shorter Books and Monographs*, ed. Alan Riach (Manchester: Carcanet, 1996), 4. 'After George Robey', in Hugh MacDiarmid, *The Raucle Tongue: Hitherto Uncollected Prose*, eds Angus Calder, Glen Murray, and Alan Riach, 2 vols. (1; Manchester: Carcanet, 1996), 65. 'On Scottish Drama', in Hugh MacDiarmid, *Selected Prose*, ed. Alan Riach (Manchester: Carcanet, 1992), 13.

² 'Ann Garborg, Mr Joyce, and Mr M'Diarmid', in MacDiarmid, *The Raucle Tongue: Hitherto Uncollected Prose*, 234.

³ Hugh MacDiarmid, *Complete Poems*, eds Michael Grieve and W. R. Aitken, 2 vols. (1; Manchester: Carcanet, 1993), 252-4. For other examples of Lauder bashing see, 'Scotland and the Banking System' and 'Whither Scotland' in Hugh MacDiarmid, *The Raucle Tongue: Hitherto Uncollected Prose*, eds Angus Calder, Glen Murray, and Alan Riach, 2 vols. (2; Manchester: Carcanet, 1997), 10-24 (11) & 271-3 (271).

- ⁴ 'Glasgow', Hugh MacDiarmid, *Complete Poems*, eds Michael Grieve and W. R. Aitken, 2 vols. (2; Manchester: Carcanet, 1994), 1049-51. See also Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (1869), in *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold* ed. by R. H. Super, vol. 5, *Culture and Anarchy with Friendship's Garland and Some Literary Essays* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965), 115-36.
- ⁵ See Hugh MacDiarmid, *Lucky Poet: A Self-Study in Literature and Political Ideas. Being the Autobiography of Hugh MacDiarmid (Christopher Murray Grieve)* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1994), 145.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 81.
- ⁷ Although he does rather overdo this at times, as when he claimed that he had, by the age of fourteen, read 'almost every one' of the 12,000 books in the Langholm Library. See, *Ibid.*, 8-9.
- ⁸ 'Glasgow', MacDiarmid, *Complete Poems*, 1335.
- ⁹ 'Third Hymn to Lenin', *Ibid.*, 900.
- ¹⁰ 'Introduction 1978', Hugh MacDiarmid, *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, ed. Alan Riach (Manchester: Carcanet, 1995), 449. 'A Lesson from Provence', in MacDiarmid, *The Raucle Tongue: Hitherto Uncollected Prose*, 97.
- ¹¹ As Callum G. Brown has shown, this spirit was still very much alive in Scotland well into the twentieth century. Callum G. Brown, 'Popular Culture and the Continuing Struggle for Rational Recreation', in T. M. Devine and R. J. Finlay (eds.), *Scotland in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 210-29.
- ¹² MacDiarmid, *Lucky Poet*, 16.
- ¹³ See Browning's 'My Last Duchess' ll. 42-3.
- ¹⁴ MacDiarmid, *Lucky Poet*, 80. This doesn't altogether stop MacDiarmid from attempting the kinds of humorous anecdote found, for example, in the early sections of *Lucky Poet* (5-7). Such anecdotes are, however, rather lumbering, and are perhaps best seen as an example of what Alan Riach has, in another context, described as MacDiarmid's 'unsophisticated comicality'. See Hugh MacDiarmid, *Annals of the Five Senses: and Other Stories, Sketches and Plays*, eds Roderick Watson and Alan Riach (Manchester: Carcanet, 1999), ix.
- ¹⁵ *The Kind of Poetry I Want*, MacDiarmid, *Complete Poems*, 1021.
- ¹⁶ MacDiarmid, *Lucky Poet*, 16.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 332. MacDiarmid, *Albyn*, 6.
- ¹⁸ 'Special Correspondent' [Hugh MacDiarmid], 'Scottish People and Scotch Comedians', *Stewartry Observer*, 23 August 1928, in *The Raucle Tongue*, vol. 2, 113-15 (114-15).
- ¹⁹ Alasdair Cameron and Adrienne Scullion, 'W. F. Frame and the Scottish Popular Theatre Tradition', in Alasdair Cameron and Adrienne Scullion (eds.), *Scottish Popular Theatre and Entertainment: Historical and Critical Approaches to Theatre and Film in Scotland* (Glasgow: Glasgow University Library, 1996), 39.
- ²⁰ Paul Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall, 1850-1914* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 170.
- ²¹ Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain* (Second, Expanded edn.; London: New Left Books, 1981), 158.
- ²² Colin McArthur, 'Introduction' and 'Scotland and Cinema: The Iniquity of the Fathers', in Colin McArthur (ed.), *Scotch Reels: Scotland in Cinema and Television* (London: British Film Institute, 1982), 2 & 58.
- ²³ Cairns Craig, 'Myths Against History: Tartanry and Kailyard in 19th-Century Scottish Literature', in *Ibid.*, 11.
- ²⁴ 'Neil Munro has literally no place in British, let alone European literature: he simply does not count – his popularity – is simply a commercial phenomenon, an element (of a comparatively very restricted nature) in contemporary entertainment, of no particular literary consequence at all'. 'Neil Munro' in MacDiarmid, *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, 18-19.
- ²⁵ Albert D. Mackie, *The Scotch Comedians: From the Music Hall to Television* (Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press, 1973), 12-13.
- ²⁶ Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall*, 163.
- ²⁷ Although it is possible to gain a sense of the power of Lauder's voice and persona from recordings such as those found at <http://www.sirharrylauder.com>.
- ²⁸ MacDiarmid, *Lucky Poet*, 152.
- ²⁹ James Agate, *Immortal Toys: A Survey of Light Entertainment on the London Stage, 1920-1943* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1945), 201-2.
- ³⁰ See Charles Perry, 'In Search of H. V. Morton: Travel Writing and Cultural Values in the First Age of British Democracy', *Twentieth Century British History* 10/4 (1999), 431-56.
- ³¹ H. V. Morton, *In Search of Scotland* (London: Methuen & Co., 1929), 155-6.
- ³² See particularly 'A Four Years' Harvest' in MacDiarmid, *Annals of the Five Senses*.
- ³³ MacDiarmid, *Complete Poems*, 538.
- ³⁴ 'Plea for a Scottish Fascism', MacDiarmid, *The Raucle Tongue: Hitherto Uncollected Prose*, 82-7; 'Programme for a Scottish Fascism', MacDiarmid, *Selected Prose*, 34-8. See also Alan Bold, *MacDiarmid: Christopher Murray Grieve, A Critical Biography* (London: Paladin, 1990), 409-11.

- ³⁵ 'Glasgow', in Lewis Grassic Gibbon and Hugh MacDiarmid, *Scottish Scene: or The Intelligent Man's Guide to Albyn* (London: Jarrolds, 1936), 136-47 (36). Edwin Muir, *An Autobiography* (London: Methuen, 1964), 92.
- ³⁶ Gibbon and MacDiarmid, *Scottish Scene*, 140-41.
- ³⁷ Edwin Muir, *Scottish Journey* (London: Flamingo, 1985), 118.
- ³⁸ Muir, *An Autobiography*, 127.
- ³⁹ See, for example, George Blake, *The Heart of Scotland* (revised edn.; London: B.T. Batsford, 1951), 44-6.
- ⁴⁰ James Barke, 'The Scottish National Question' (1936), in Margery Palmer McCulloch, *Modernism and Nationalism: Literature and Society in Scotland, 1918-1939: Source Documents for the Scottish Renaissance* (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2004), 369.
- ⁴¹ From the *Aberdeen University Review*, quoted in 'The Politics and Poetry of Hugh MacDiarmid' in MacDiarmid, *Selected Prose*, 218.
- ⁴² Duncan Glen, *Hugh MacDiarmid and the Scottish Renaissance* (Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers, 1964), 180-81.
- ⁴³ See Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (revised edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 163.
- ⁴⁴ MacDiarmid, *Complete Poems*, 323.
- ⁴⁵ 'The Doric and Literature', in MacDiarmid, *The Raucle Tongue: Hitherto Uncollected Prose*, 35.
- ⁴⁶ For his rationalisation of this, see, for example MacDiarmid, *Lucky Poet*, 41-3.
- ⁴⁷ Hugh MacDiarmid, 'The Caledonian Antisyzygy', *Scottish Eccentrics* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1936), 287.
- ⁴⁸ 'Author's Note 1972', MacDiarmid, *Lucky Poet*, xiii.
- ⁴⁹ 'Glasgow' and 'Third Hymn to Lenin', MacDiarmid, *Complete Poems*, 1337 & 895.
- ⁵⁰ For an excellent account of this Modernist (and leftist) suspicion of popular culture at this time, see D. L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 103-37 & 294-317.
- ⁵¹ Eliot, for example, writes that 'it is the essential condition of the preservation of the quality of the culture of the minority, that it should continue to be a minority culture. T. S. Eliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1948), 184.
- ⁵² MacDiarmid, *Complete Poems*, 255.
- ⁵³ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), 53
- ⁵⁴ 'The Burns Cult' in MacDiarmid, *Selected Prose*, 105.
- ⁵⁵ See, for example, Angus Calder, 'A Descriptive Model of Scottish Culture', *Scotlands*, 2/1 (1995), 1-14; Douglas Gifford, 'Re-mapping Renaissance in Modern Scottish Literature', in Gerard Carruthers, David Goldie, and Alastair Renfrew (eds.), *Beyond Scotland: New Contexts for Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature* (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2004), 17-37; Duncan J. Petrie, *Contemporary Scottish Fictions: Film, Television and the Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004); Alan Riach, *Representing Scotland in Literature, Popular Culture and Iconography: The Masks of the Modern Nation* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). See also Michael Gardiner, *Modern Scottish Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), and the discussions of 'postnational communities of difference' in Jürgen Neubauer, *Literature as Intervention: Struggles over Cultural Identity in Contemporary Scottish Fiction* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 1999), 163 and Eleanor Bell, *Questioning Scotland: Literature, Nationalism, Postmodernism* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
- ⁵⁶ Cairns Craig, *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and English Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), 107.
- ⁵⁷ Forsyth Hardy, *Scotland in Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 1.
- ⁵⁸ 'Nisbet, an Interlude in Post War Glasgow' (1922), MacDiarmid, *Annals of the Five Senses*, 110. 'Albyn: or Scotland and the Future' (1927), in MacDiarmid, *Albyn*, 6.