

story', since any history we find in the ballads is manipulated, one event being layered upon another (or more) and heroic deeds and persons celebrated rather than recorded. Disentangling elements of historicity can be, to put it mildly, frustrating and often pointless. The ballads are drama, after all, and the narrativity they display treats the catastrophe of Opposing forces even when a song is based on an actual event. While Child did include a section of 'historical ballads' he was careful to warn against tying these too closely to recorded history. The art and worldview of the ballad maker is what shapes the ballad story, and the ritualising of performance in different contexts tends to wrest ballad reality away from history and toward human interaction, to 'presence' the actors in a series of abrupt scenes, which may be comic as well as tragic (the emphasis in this volume is very much on the latter). Nevertheless in balladry, as Professor Cowan remarks, the history that the songs relate is generally counter to the 'official' histories of the establishment.

Herein, too, lie the attempts by Scott (and others) to interfere in an evolving process of print-influenced singing that he did not fully understand but which both he and Child recognised instinctively as important, even from a simple aesthetic standpoint of ballad language and action or, alternatively, of historical reference. Regarding this process, Valentina Bold lucidly dissects the relationship between Scott, Child and the Hogg family ballads (116-41). Charles Duffin's otherwise thoughtful disquisition on 'making history from ballad texts' (19-35) is oddly innocent of the vigorous contemporary ballad singing tradition in Scotland, whether 'source' or 'revival'. The dust jacket of this volume proclaims, after all, that among other topics the songs of 'the twentieth-century travelling fraternity' are surveyed, but there is in fact no mention of traveller ballad singers (e.g. Sheila Stewart, Duncan Williamson, Jane Turriff and others) who are still flourishing and have a story to tell about the history in the ballads they sing. This was already strikingly evident from *The Mackie Sang* disc issued by the School of Scottish Studies in the mid-1970s. Perhaps, in the end, it is the modern folklorist collectors who have the last word when they emphasise – even in relation to ballads based on an historical event – not only the ballad's dramatic core and changing social contexts but also its stirring immediacy, its subjection of the recorded past to a theatre of presence and interaction.

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***Anecdotes of Scott.* By James Hogg. Edited by Jill Rubenstein. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999. ISBN 1 7486 0933 4. £35.**

Reading a text by Hogg can be an unnerving experience. Readers can never rest easy that they know what they are reading – tragedy becomes farce, history becomes romance, the deadly serious becomes the comic at the blink of an eye

and yet in the end it all holds together. Hogg's anecdotes of Scott provides yet another example of this. What, finally, are we to make of a text which at one point praises Scott as a generous benefactor and at another point accuses him of gross snobbery? How, too, should we react to a work which claims to be about Scott but is at least equally concerned with its author, Hogg; a text in which, as Jill Rubenstein points out, the author exhibits 'simultaneous repression and indulges of selfhood'?

These may be difficulties but the effort of surmounting them is well worthwhile. If we judge Hogg by conventional standards and criticise him for a role which is overly invasive for a biographer we will miss the point and the value of the text. This is not an account of Scott but of Scott's relationship with Hogg or, perhaps more accurately, of Hogg's relationship with Scott. What makes it in the end fascinating and compelling reading is that Hogg does *not* present us with a balanced and distanced account of someone's else's life but rather opens up to us a particularly interesting relationship between two people, a relationship which attracts our attention because, like real-life relationships, it is not without its ups and downs, its tensions and disturbances. What further adds to the interest is that we can observe Hogg trying to present a certain perspective on this narrative and then at other times encouraging his readers to see it in a rather different light.

This edition presents two rather different versions of Hogg's anecdotes of Scott; firstly the text of the manuscript now in the Alexander Turnbull library which Hogg prepared for inclusion in a projected but never published life of Scott by John McCrone and then another text from a new revised manuscript prepared for its American publication and now in the Pierpont Morgan Library. These two texts are expertly edited and fully and helpfully annotated by Jill Rubenstein while Douglas Mack has provided an authoritative history of the genesis of the text with very full quotation from the relevant correspondence.

Jill Rubenstein's excellent introduction to these texts provides us, amongst other things, with a balanced and perceptive account of the two writers' complex relationship, avoiding the temptation to redress the errors of his own time by presenting Hogg merely as the victim of Scott's snobbery and recognising instead that Scott's attitude to Hogg was ambivalent: he 'regarded Hogg as something of a loose cannon, disapproving of his love affairs, intemperance, and financial improvidence' although he was 'undeniably fascinated by the authenticity of Hogg's genius and, most likely, flattered by his adulation' (xiv). Hogg's attitude to Scott was, as noted above, similarly ambivalent. As Douglas Mack notes, while 'Hogg must have found Scott's friendship a source of great comfort and support', at the same time Scott's 'occasional lapse into patronising condescension' would have been 'particularly painful and humiliating for Hogg precisely because of the value he placed on Scott's opinion' (xxxii-xxxiii).

One of the most interesting reflections within the texts of the tensions within the relationship lies in the various strategies which Hogg employs in placing

himself in relation to Scott. Much of it is covered in Jill Rubenstein's sensitive and perceptive introduction which discusses, amongst other things, how Hogg places Scott, but not himself, within a feminising domestic setting. Another of Hogg's strategies has to do with the deployment of Scots and English. By reporting Scott's comment about his wife that 'she does not speak the broad Scots as well as you and I do' Hogg records Scott's view that both Hogg and Scott were fluent speakers of Scots yet throughout the anecdotes he regularly presents himself accounts of their conversations in which he speaks Scots and Scott speaks English. Hogg achieves several things by this. Given the strong associations by this time of Scots with the oral and of English with the literary it helps reinforce an implicit claim of the anecdotes that Hogg possesses the authority of the voice of the people while Scott's authority lies in books. In this context there is perhaps a double edge to Hogg's praise of Scott's remarkable memory when he tells us that, when he sought Scott's help with correct details about 'noblemen and gentlemen' mentioned in his historical tales, Scott could always instantly find the information needed in a book (40). A picture of Scott as a man of books is powerfully established here (although it is only fair to say that Hogg goes on immediately afterwards to record an impressive instance of Scott's memory of oral texts). By contrast Hogg intended in originally writing his anecdotes that they should be introduced as a record of his own oral account. As Mack notes, this was highly significant for Hogg because for him 'the oral carries with it associations of unaffected honesty' (40). Not only by this overall device but also by presenting himself as a Scots-speaker and thus associating himself with the oral, Hogg implicitly claims this unaffected honesty for himself. Contrast with this criticism of the 'thousands of *lees* [Scott] told regarding the anonymous novels' (11). While the use of '*lees*' softens the criticism by avoiding the highly condemnatory '*lies*', the emphasis put on the word '*lees*' by Hogg's punctuation serves to highlight it as Hogg's own choice of word and thus to remind us of his own status of Scots-speaker and by implication an honest man.

Returning to Hogg's account of Scott's remarkable memory we should note too that it is specifically for references to 'noblemen and gentlemen' that Hogg turns to Scott. While it may be said that this is because they are the ones most likely to be referred to in books, the implication remains that Hogg is his own authority for the actions of working class people. It is, of course, those very working class people that are the speakers of Scots and the implication sits well with Hogg's implicit association of himself (but not Scott) with the working classes through his own use of Scots in conversation. At the same time it also merges with another recurrent theme of the texts, the suggestion that Scott was a snob in contrast to Hogg 'who alas to this day could never be brought to discern any distinction in ranks save what was constituted by talents or moral worth' (43). Scott's snobbery thus becomes a crucial issue for Hogg since it contrasts strongly with Hogg's own implicit claim to be one of the people and thus possess the authority of their voice.

There is thus a coherent underlay of implications which ally Hogg with Scots, the oral and honesty and Scott with English, the literary and dishonesty. Nevertheless it would be quite misleading to suggest that the overall effect of the texts is to present Hogg as the honest voice of the people and Scott as the dishonest and snobbish writer. As is typical with Hogg, the situation is much more complex. Hogg needs both to establish his role as the voice of oral tradition and to reinforce his status as a serious writer of literary works. He can have it both ways precisely because most of what I have examined so far has taken the form of implications rather than explicit statements and thus can be happily overturned at another point in the text. Indeed, while presenting himself as a Scots-speaker in relation to Scott, Hogg also presents himself as an English-speaker in the vast bulk of his narrative. He can thus also lay claim to that kind of authority as well. A good example of how Hogg claims both kinds of authority is his response to Scott's criticism of *The Brownie of Bodsheck* as being 'a false and unfair picture of the times altogether' (22). The gist of Hogg's response is that he was relying on oral tradition and, as Rubenstein notes, he reinforces this by opening with the unmistakably Scots words 'I dinna ken'. However we might also note how a few sentences later he is claiming that 'I was obliged sometimes to change the situations to make one part coalesce with the other but in no one instance have I recorded in *The Brownie* that which is not true' (22). By presenting this part of his reply in a very literary English, Hogg is simultaneously laying claim to that other authority that English and literature confer.

There is a lot more that could be said of these fascinating and complex texts. There are other aspects which will occur to other readers. Douglas Mack has previously edited both manuscripts in separate volumes but we have not before had the two manuscript versions brought together in one volume. We can now compare within the one volume the subtle but significant variations between the two original manuscripts of what Jill Rubenstein has rightly called, for all the complexities of Hogg's attitude to his subject, 'the tribute of one remarkable man to another, both flawed and both admirable, living in a remarkable time' (xxv).

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***La Nouvelle Alliance: Influences francophones sur la littérature écossaise moderne.* Edited by David Kinloch and Richard Price. Grenoble: ELLUG, 2000. ISBN 2 843 10 021 6. 140 French francs pbk.**

This French language text is the latest contribution to the series *L'Écosse en questions*, edited by Keith Dixon. The aim of the series is resolutely pluridisciplinary.