Scotland - The Event; or, Theory after Muir

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> There is a paradox of the homeland… Just as great rivers have, as their
> being, the impetuous breaking apart of any obstacle to their flight towards
> the plain … so the homeland is first what one leaves, not because one
> separates oneself from it, but, on the contrary, through that superior fidelity
> which lies in understanding that the very being of the homeland is that of
> escaping.
>
> Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*

In July of 2004, *Scotland on Sunday* ran an article under the headline 'McConnell "destroyed Scotland the Brand"'. 'One of Scotland's leading businessmen has condemned Jack McConnell's "crass" and "arrogant" handling of the nation's image abroad, suggesting the First Minister has damaged trading opportunities rather than enhancing them'.[1] McConnell did so, argued Maitland Mackie, chairman of Mackie's Ice Cream, by undercutting the fledgling corporation's efforts to market Scotland internationally. 'The idea of Scotland the Brand was to place a distinctive "made in Scotland" logo on Scottish products', whereas McConnell funded a £300,000 campaign sponsoring the Saltire as Scotland's international image. Images divided against themselves are simulacra which shall not stand, and having expended its resources on aborted packaging Scotland the Brand liquidated its assets and went out of business.[2]

As David McCrone, Angela Morris, and Richard Kiely observe, Scotland the Brand was born of the rage for heritage sweeping through Scotland and much of the West in the last quarter of the twentieth century. This modern-day 'cult of the past' actually has its roots, they argue, 'in

nineteenth-century Scotland and the revolution in the writing of history brought about by Sir Walter Scott'.[3] Heritage itself is a Scottish brand. Of course, intellectual historians like Tom Nairn might wryly observe that the *failure* of Scotland the Brand is a truer emblem of nineteenth-century Scottish heritage. The failure here is two-fold, however: it follows from a dysfunction of Scotland's national identity—in Nairn's famous thesis, the tartan-and-kailyard effigy of a genuine *Volksgeist*—but also from theories like Nairn's seeking to explain that dysfunction. Nairn may have rightly acknowledged in 1997 that he had underestimated the resilience of Scottish nationalism two decades earlier in his landmark book *The Break-Up of Britain*, but the collapse of Scotland the Brand equally challenges Nairn's later thesis that global capitalism (i.e., 'Internationalism') and its appurtenances (e.g., market-driven images) have historically fueled national identity.[4] The truth is, Nairn's two arguments really are not so different, but not only because they probe the relationship between nationalism and modernisation. Each in its way recapitulates Edwin Muir's (in)famously despairing vision of Scotland's cultural bankruptcy: whether imagined for the substance which is not there (e.g., the tartanry which Nairn bewailed in 1977) or for the vacuous images which are (e.g., Scotland the Brand), Scotland amounts to a 'blank', a 'Nothing'.[5]

Muir's remarks drastically undersell Scottish culture, of course, but perhaps for that very reason they have been too defensively dismissed in Scottish criticism. After all, nothingness is often more than it appears to be, especially in twentieth-century thought. For example, it is a key component of ontology, the study of being which accords meaning to notions like heritage and national identity—of what it means to 'be' Scottish. Jean-Paul Sartre made nothingness the existential precondition for being, by which he meant the emergence of a fully conscious and self-realised human subject in a world defined by 'nothing' but that subject's choices.[6] Martin Heidegger defined nothingness as the anxious backdrop—the unsettling quotidian sameness—against which the hidden truth of being suddenly appears.[7] Muir's reflections might be compared with these others in a facile way (e.g., the Scottish writer must assume [Sartrean] responsibility for his work given the absence of a meaningful tradition; the bland colours of Scotland's literary past [a Heideggerian might say] makes the astonishing literary production of the Scottish Renaissance that much more vivid). But Muir's vision delimits more than this: for him, nothingness—'a blank, an Edinburgh'—is not a general ontological category, but rather a *historically Scottish* one. This is the McCrone-Morris-Kiely argument inverted: emptiness finds a special home in Scotland; the nation 'is' the icon of a desolate crofter's village or an abandoned Glasgow tenement. Such images have long served as a corrective to the happy Highlandism of tartanry and bagpipes, but they are images nevertheless, and distortional ones at that.[8] And yet, their accession to the status of reality principle in work by Nairn and T. C. Smout in the 1970s (that is, during the era of the onset of the 'cult' of heritage), to say nothing of the grunge chic in literary representations of Scotland (e.g., in work by James Kelman, Irvine Welsh, and others[9])

enables us to pose these questions: In what ways has emptiness become part of the heritage of modern thought? And what does it mean to trace the origins of this emptiness, as Muir does (and as McCrone, Morris, and Kiely do), to the time, place, and memory of Scott?

These are questions for literary criticism, but also for theory, and fittingly so: Muir imagines his survey as theoretical. '[T]he object of this book is not criticism. I wish merely to define the position of the Scottish writer, and then to inquire by what means he can come to completeness, what help Scotland can give him in doing so, and what obstacles she puts in his way' (14). These are provocative but contradictory questions when put to Muir's own treatise, for the 'obstacles' of which he speaks clearly serve as the impetus behind his argument. But such conflict is endemic to theory, which implies a vision (from the Greek *theorein*, meaning 'to see'; related to *theatron*, or theatre: 'seeing place') derived from a particular vantage point but aspiring to universality. For instance, psychoanalysis is a theory about the mind (*all* minds) growing out of nineteenth-century neurology; structuralism is a theory about language (*all* languages) rooted in the ambivalent mimicry of the hard sciences in linguistics; Muir's treatise is a theory about the aesthetic vagrancy of Scottish writers (*all* Scottish writers) anchored in Muir's own mythic sense of existential displacement.[10] As theorist, then, Muir sees more than his circumstances presumably should allow but less, perhaps, than he claims; as Paul de Man would say, blindness perpetually shadows Muir's insights.[11] Or, in this case, blindness *spawns* Muir's insight: the dissociation of sensibility purportedly stultifying Scottish culture and foreclosing any unity of thought and feeling actually inspires Muir's own impassioned reflections on that subject.

And yet … perhaps because of the provocative tensions by which it is riddled, I wish to pursue the tacit implication of Muir's treatise: Scotland's paradoxically productive emptiness makes it a consummate place of theory. It is central to such an argument, of course, to define what this (non-)emptiness is. The example of *Scott and Scotland*, of something born from the putative 'nothing' of its heritage, certainly bespeaks the particularity of Muir's own historical moment, both in the obsession with alienation characteristic of modernism and also in the influence of Eliot's criticism.[12] But it also more generally evokes notions of 'the event' in twentieth-century theory. The category of the event possesses a long philosophical history which attains unusual urgency after the 1960s (making Muir a provocative forerunner). There, as in Sartre's and Heidegger's ontologies, reflection often turns to the paradox of productive nullity and to the contradictorily vital emptiness of theory itself. But as recent work by Ian Duncan, Cairns Craig, and others makes clear, 'events' are not merely the offspring of continental existentialism; they also emerge, in a different way, from Scotland's intellectual history. With Muir's observation serving as a touchstone, my aim in this essay is to adumbrate these dynamics. More specifically, and with Muir's argument in mind, I will do so in light of the lingering effects of the Age of Scott, which not only leave their imprint on failed nationalist icons like Scotland the Brand, but also on Derridean

deconstruction and on other, similar efforts to reconceive the 'heritage' of western thought. Muir may be right: Scotland may be empty, and historically so. But this may be precisely what explains the unusual, if all too often unremarked and underexplored, significance of Scottish literary studies in the international arena of modern theory.

I

Theory too is often accused of emptiness. Its critics have bashed it insistently over the past twenty years, calling it jargon-laden, programmatic, tin-eared, patriarchal, elitist, ideologically complicit, and passé. These complaints eventually grew so loud that *Critical Inquiry*, the leading American theory journal, convened a special conference in 2003 to discuss the future of the field. In his letter of invitation, W. J. T. Mitchell, the journal's editor, asked the participants to consider accusations of theory's irrelevance, its perceived turn from revolutionary engagement to soft humanism, the fate of literary studies generally in a climate of new technological media, and other items. The *New York Times* covered the event—hardly a typical occurrence in the American academy—and summarised it with the headline 'Latest Theory Is That Theory Doesn't Matter'. Mitchell angrily dispatched a letter to the editor—which the *Times* chose not to print—disputing that conclusion: 'Theory may not matter right away, in the short run, but over time it matters a great deal… Theories of literature, language, culture, and the arts, like theories in any other field, take time to percolate down to practical application… The very theorists who your reporter quoted as saying theory doesn't matter have themselves produced theories that have made considerable difference in the way people read, write, think, and behave'.[13] In other words, Mitchell argued, theory may begin as relatively nothing, but it bears substantial fruit. This is as much a function of position as timing, as Mitchell implied in his own contribution to the summit, which he described as 'medium theory', and which consisted of 'a picture of theory … locate[d] somewhere between the general and the particular' (332) as an intervening force between ideas, disciplines, media of communication, and material practices. Theory possesses no language of its own, but rather mediates between other languages—other discourses and disciplines—and changes how we view them. In Sartrean fashion, Mitchell dialectically converts what Muir would call 'nothing', theory's lack of an authentic theoretical language, into an existential condition of theory's infiltrative power.

This move is unlikely to persuade scholars of Scottish literature that Muir is actually paying the Scottish literary tradition a backhanded compliment in labeling it empty. Likewise, one might easily argue that the notion of theory-as-languageless-agent-cum-mediator makes a virtue of necessity, exchanging theory's diminishing academic capital as counterfeit justification for its enduring existence. And yet, even if we were to concede the disputable point that theory's best

days are behind it, we might pause here first to consider the place that theory would even wish to claim in a modern world its practitioners have denounced for a variety of totalitarianisms. These include fascism (Adorno), biopolitical oppression (Agamben), ideology (Althusser), environmental terrorism (Bate), barbarism (Benjamin), class hegemony (Bourdieu), misogyny (de Beauvoir), error (de Man), metaphysics (Derrida), power (Foucault), repression (Freud), violence (Girard), irrationality (Habermas), amnesia (Heidegger), monolithic capitalism (Jameson), phallocentrism (Kristeva), compulsive injustice (Lyotard), corrosive skepticism (Ricoeur), Eurocentrism (Said), dehumanising technocracy (Virilio), class warfare (Williams), and a host of other ills. The diversity of these theorists and philosophers, representative of a much vaster conglomerate, makes virtually any consensus among them startling. But the chorus here that the world is too much with us puts a different spin on Mitchell's argument. The role which Mitchell ascribes to theory, a role evocative of Muir's paradoxically perspicuous—non-dissociated—treatise, has actually become a tacit ideal in modern thought. Theory moves with the speed, stealth, and (it wishes) force of a guerilla brigade precisely because of its discursive, disciplinary homelessness.

An analogy suggests itself here between theory and Scottish literary history—one which is likely to be more appealing 'in theory' than it is in the practice of Scottish literary criticism: Scot Lit is to Eng Lit what theory is to discursive 'knowledge'; each plays empty impetus (in Robert Crawford's terms, 'inventor') to its other.[14] Each, that is, informs the system which appears to exclude it. Such is the place of the 'empty' body of work, theoretical and/or Scottish, which nevertheless makes its presence felt. This principle finds perhaps its most rigorous exposition in Georg Cantor's late nineteenth-century set theory in mathematics, wherein every set contains some void element which transcends it; more recently, Alain Badiou (to whom I refer in my epigraph) has converted this idea into a theory of subjectivity and being.[15]

But mathematical abstraction is one thing, nationalist sentiment something else: what nation embraces an identity of emptiness? Putting it that way, it is easy to see why theory in its post-1960s incarnations has seemed to garnish Scottish criticism more often than it has been fully absorbed into it, exceptions duly noted.[16] The same is probably true of most national literatures, including American literature despite the suffusion of theory throughout the American university system. However, the situation seems more poignant in Scottish studies inasmuch as theory represents the double subordination of Scottish texts to non-Scottish contexts and of literary studies generally to a globalised (and primarily a French, German, and American) intellectual public sphere. This is hardly appealing to proponents of Scottish literature who desire recognition for the legitimacy of the field institutionally in schools and universities across the UK and beyond, including in Scottish universities, and even in something as modest as the status of a separate 'division' within the Modern Language Association. The (necessarily and rightly) self-promotional

quality of Scottish studies seems more redolent of Scotland the Brand than of Mitchell's vision of theory as unmoved mover, or, from a different perspective, as sleeper cell.

Hence, there is something disturbingly uncanny for Scottish literary studies about a claim like Mitchell's regarding the reasons why and the way in which theory matters—a claim that portrays theory as the unacknowledged legislator of the world. The almost perverse pleasure which theory takes in its embedded anonymity seems better suited for subversion than political recognition. No wonder it remains a fond intellectual centrepiece of a besieged American liberalism.

Perhaps for this very reason, theory places Scottish literary studies in an uncomfortable bind, especially for scholars in the field who are inclined favorably toward nationalism but not necessarily toward theory. The excerpt from Derrida's *The Other Heading* which served as a prompt for this special issue of *IJSL* is an illustrative case in point.

> Nationalism, national affirmation, as an essentially modern phenomenon, is always a philosopheme… It aims to justify itself in the name of a privilege in responsibility and in the memory of the universal and, thus, of the transnational. The logical schema of this argument, the backbone of this national self-affirmation, the nuclear statement of the national 'ego' or 'subject', is, to put it quite drily: 'I am (we are) all the more national for being European, all the more European for being trans-European and international; no one is more cosmopolitan and authentically universal than the one, than this "we", who is speaking to you'. Nationalism and cosmopolitanism have always gotten along well together, as paradoxical as this may seem… No cultural identity presents itself as the opaque body of an untranslatable idiom, but always, on the contrary, as the irreplaceable *inscription* of the universal in the singular.[17]

On their surface, Derrida's remarks provocatively situate nations within international communities; with respect to Scotland, for example, his logic undoes the false binary between independence and union with which Westminster paints Scottish self-determination as 'provincial'. This fact alone lends the excerpt a manifesto-like quality for a journal with the mission statement of *IJSL*. That said, readers familiar with deconstruction detect something overly familiar, even clichéd, about Derrida's formulation. It isn't that Derrida is wrong, or that his words do not apply provocatively to Scottish literary studies, but rather that he is redundant: nationalism serves as the pretext for yet another elaboration of deconstructive methodology, taking its place in a long list of similarly-configured *topoi* from fields like linguistics, philosophy, psychoanalysis, law, literature, aesthetics, the physical and human sciences, and religion, and pertaining to subjects

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like death, monetary currency, translation, femininity, technology, secrecy, spectrality, memory, friendship, and many others (or, as it were, non-'others'). This follows from the tenets of deconstruction, in which the key semantic component of a term like 'nationalism' is never its root, 'nation', but rather its suffix, '-ism'. National-'*ism*' is a concept (a 'philosopheme'), and concepts for Derrida all reproduce the generalising, 'logocentric' features of metaphysical constructs. As Derrida began arguing vehemently in the 1960s, such constructs suppress the play of differences and the effects of contingency; they are literally meta-physical, above or outwith the world. National-ism thus nullifies differences of language, custom, and history between individual nations, rendering these nations simultaneously sovereign and subordinate—chartering them to act in their own names, but subjecting these nominative acts to the monolithic grammar of legitimacy which accords them separate-but-equal status. Here, as always, deconstruction divulges the philosophical workings of The Man. But a similar 'Manly' quality adheres to Derrida's own work, which detects and unbinds metaphysical structures with compulsive, even mechanical inexorability.[18] The case of nationalism is therefore merely the different-in-same of the recurrent logic of deconstruction. This is both the strength and weakness—the rigor and blandness—of Derrida's insight.

Hence, deconstruction does not *promote* Scottish (qua 'Scottish') studies as much as *disseminate* them into a linguistic stew of united nationalisms. And yet, we might gaze a little more closely at the form of this dissemination. In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida lays out what he calls 'the *heritage* to which' all metaphysical constructs belong. Implicitly reiterating David Hume's observation that all governments originate in usurpation[19], Derrida ventures a similarly Humean-conservative thesis that metaphysical constructs are nevertheless necessary to philosophy as well as to the practice of everyday life. However, in doing so he enunciates the programme of a deconstructive apparatus of writing, 'grammatology', which he claims structures all representation. Given the dependence of metaphysics on representation (for its internal logic as well as its exposition), grammatology establishes an 'intimate relationship to the machine whose deconstruction [it] permit[s]; and, in the same process, designate[s] the crevice through which the yet unnameable glimmer beyond the closure' of writing by metaphysics 'may be glimpsed'.[20] Deconstruction exposes the differences, the cracks and fissures, in the metaphysical façade of conceptual wholeness (for instance, in the '-ism' which converts nations into essences). It thus assumes the place, in Muir's terms, of the 'blank', the 'nothing', through which we perceive the 'glimmer' of a post-metaphysical landscape.

The recovery here of Muir's logic prompts us to hold our gaze a moment longer. According to the tenets of deconstruction, were we to name the post-metaphysical vista which grammatology opens (thereby converting that previously undisclosed region into a proper noun and implicitly subordinating it to a grammatical structure), we would reanimate metaphysics all over again. It

may be true that 'writing' destabilises every metaphysical construct, but such constructs are also the outcome of writing. This is, to use Derrida's word, the 'heritage' of Mitchell's canny placement of theory at the empty centre of discourses of power. But (deconstructive) theory thus becomes a system of interminable analysis compulsively reinvigorating a relationship of core and periphery—one which is all too familiar to students of Scottish cultural history. The dynamic goes something like this: though counted as 'nothing', grammatology structures the Empire (the 'machine') of metaphysics at the same time as it imbues the subordinate elements of this Empire—the differential linguistic components—with the capability of subversion through play. But inasmuch as these deconstructive particles of representation escape the centre of conceptual authority, establish the latter's periphery as the axis of an imagined alternative, and then eventually reconstruct metaphysics out of sheer pragmatic necessity (since for Derrida such constructs are inevitable), then deconstruction undermines the Empire only to re-establish it on defamiliarised grounds. In essence—and here is the punchline, as it were—grammatology compulsively repeats Scott's narrative of *Waverley*, and more generally of eighteenth-century Scottish—'British'—Unionism. And Scottish nationalists know only too well how that story ends.[21]

This is a 'heritage' of Scott's which McCrone, Morris, and Kiely seem not to have imagined. Perhaps it explains why critics of Scottish literature often resort to milder forms of play like Bakhtin's relative to language and Homi Bhabha's to national identity[22]: such theories offer the young Edward Waverleys of romantic difference a greater likelihood of escaping the gravitational pull of England (Scott) and metaphysics (Derrida); with these alternative theories, presumably, one might more fully imagine an independent but still international 'Scotland'. Eleanor Bell and Gavin Miller even edited a collection entitled *Scotland and Theory* which charts multiple roads to that complex destination.[23] But as Bell observes elsewhere, there is something self-defeating about this preoccupation with home, something essentialising and reductive in presuming to know in advance just what 'home' is.[24] Attention to 'native' Scottish traditions inadvertently helps Derrida make his case: to claim a text, idea, or social dynamic as uniquely Scottish is to convert place and people into 'philosophemes', that is, into mere exhibits of what is eternally self-same, 'essentially' *Heimlich*, and hence universal. This is why, as Derrida has it, provincial nationalism of any sort is 'always already' international/metaphysical despite even its most fervid separatist intentions. Derrida's '*Waverley* narrative', its grammato-logic, encompasses *all* Scottish studies from the instant they define themselves as 'Scottish' studies.

So, where does this leave us? In an all-too-familiar place, or so it would seem. 'Scottish' studies may be partly responsible for western thought (e.g., for heritage and, more obliquely, for its metaphysical reinscription), but this makes them no less empty in their nationalism and their internationalism, in their engagement of and their resistance to theory. Derrida's observations

render Muir's thesis impregnable by converting refutations of it into the redundant emblems of an unremarkable metaphysics.

This, at least, is the logic linking Derrida and Muir. To be sure, the sweeping generality of this logic defies common sense and alternative readings of the Scottish literary tradition, to say nothing of the energy surrounding Scottish studies over the past quarter century (that is, during the reputed era of 'heritage'). But if we hold momentarily to this 'empty' argument, if indeed we *try* to say 'nothing' of Scottish literary history—if we permit Muir the last word, as it were—then we may usefully find ourselves returning to the contradiction between the substance of Muir's polemic and the force of its enunciation, an antinomy reducible to the poles of 'nothing' and 'something'. We might recall here the question Heidegger poses relative to being—'Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?'[25]—and put a series of similar questions to Muir: If *Scott and Scotland* succeeds in making its point, if it is 'something', then why is it immune to the 'nothingness' of the tradition out of which it works? Isn't the forceful, lucid articulation of 'dissociation' disqualified by the very idea of dissociation? What is the language, the tradition, the heritage of such evocative emptiness? Quoting again from Heidegger, 'How is it with [Muir's] nothing?'[26]

II

To answer this question, we might briefly turn our attention from theory to literature. When compared with the exotic land- and seascapes of *The Sea Road* and *Voyageurs*, Margaret Elphinstone's 2006 novel *Light* seems to be about next to nothing. Unlike those other texts, this one is not set over many years and against the backdrop of eleventh-century Rome, Iceland, and Vinland or amidst the vast frontier of early nineteenth-century North America. *Light* tells the story of the impending displacement of a non-traditional family from a small island a few miles off the Isle of Man. One member of this family, Lucy, keeps the lighthouse on the island, and has done so since her brother Jim was drowned during a storm. That lighthouse, however, is due for replacement by a newer model constructed by the 'Lighthouse Stevensons',[27] and with that model will come a new lighthouse keeper, forcing Lucy, Diya (Jim's Indian widow), and Diya's three children off the island. The action, most of it understated, is set over the course of only a few days, at the conclusion of which the family leaves its home. The End.

But *Light* is most provocative not in its *histoire*, or story, but in its *récit*, or manner of unfolding. For *Light* presents a series of dramatic encounters with the inconceivable; in the parlance of theory, *Light* is a meditation on the event, on the 'something' emerging from 'nothing'. And yet, unlike Muir, for whom Eng Lit is something and Scot Lit nothing, the novel does not present these

terms as a dialectical pair. Uneven in its voice(s) and episodes, *Light* is less *Waverley* than *Rob Roy*, less Derrida than Deleuze and Guattari (which is to say, it is less evocative of grammatology—of battle waged against metaphysical Empires—than of deterritorialisation, of un-homely-ness).[28] Or, better still, it recalls Jean-François Lyotard's notion of the sublime as a set of unforeseeable disruptions to a normative state of privation. Such disruptions are 'what dismantles consciousness, what deposes consciousness, [they are] what consciousness cannot formulate, and even what consciousness forgets in order to constitute itself' as normative in the first place.[29] To the extent that Lyotard defines these disruptions as 'events' which outflank the institutional and metaphysical dimensions of 'thought', he echoes theorists from Blanchot to Badiou.[30] But he provides a unique perspective onto this dynamic by situating it within the tropology of the sublime, and hence in the debatable land between the historical moments of 'enlightenment' and 'romanticism'. So does Elphinstone in her way, setting *Light* in 1831 and embroiling it in tropes and themes which are not only enlightened and romantic, but also—by the 1830s, to say nothing of the early 2000s—marked by an enlightened and romantic heritage. The ambiguous nature of these motifs in the novel makes them events relative to each other as well as to the cultural, literary, and epistemological narratives in which they figure. As we will see, this ambiguity—not to be confused with antisyzygy[31]—is a 'Scottish' quality of rich significance, one of which Muir makes no note.

Any discussion of events necessarily involves the category of time; events denote occurrence. Fittingly, *Light* is at its core a novel about time—about the multiple temporal registers in which things transpire and more particularly about their cataclysmic effects on each other. Diya's daughter Breesha registers this impact one night as she suddenly awakens from a dream. In it, Saint Bride, the matron saint of her island, had appeared to her urging her to do whatever she could to eliminate the surveyors and restore the rhythm of her family's lives. 'Something *was* happening. Something real', Breesha reflects.[32] Elphinstone's italics emphasise the fact that the event here was no mere hallucination; Lyotard, by contrast, underscores the bare experience of occurrence in itself, whether illusory or actual. Indeed, he argues, so startling is our experience of events that we cannot initially conceptualise their meaning: events are not 'a matter of sense or reality bearing upon *what* happens or *what* this might mean… That it happens "precedes", so to speak, the question pertaining to what happens… The event happens as a question mark "before" happening as a question' (Lyotard, 197, original italics).[33] Perhaps this is why Breesha first processes the impact of the surveyors' arrival in a dream, at the limits of consciousness: 'she smelt danger… Because perhaps this was the end of her life here, this unknown thing that she could feel coming towards her… Perhaps the island would not always be lonely, or at peace. Perhaps one day the whole world would change, and no saint would be safe on a lonely island any more' (*Light* 259).

Two aspects of Breesha's limit-experience resonate in the larger scheme of the novel as well as with the theory of the event. First, the conditionality of the future—'*perhaps* this was the end of her life here … *Perhaps* the island would not always be lonely … *Perhaps* one day the whole world would change'—underscores how little the family actually knows about what awaits them. The surveyors' presence happens, in Lyotard's terms, as a question mark before taking the form of a fully-conceptualised question. Second, Breesha's identification with her muse—'no saint would be safe on a lonely island any more'—reveals an important convergence in the novel between natural and supernatural vectors of time. These conventionally dueling registers unite in Archie Buchanan, the young and painfully ambitious head surveyor of the Stevenson team. At a superficial level, Archie embraces a geological paradigm. As he tells Diya regarding her tenuous home, 'what's really *unimaginable* is the time scale' of the island's creation:

> Not just thousands of years: *millions*. Two hundred years ago men were trying to explain the sequence of events—right through from the debris of early volcanic activity to the evidence of previous life we find in fossils—and fit it into the four thousand years calculated by theologians. That meant they *had* to think it was a miracle… But once you admit that the whole thing took [millions] of years, you give yourself permission to believe that the laws of history, or of nature, as we know them have *never* been violated… In other words, when you accept the true time scale, and measure the history of the natural world accordingly, the verra idea of a miracle becomes simply *unnecessary*. [185, original emphases]

What Archie rehearses here in miniature is the narrative of enlightenment: once, men's minds were darkened by superstition; then, science liberated them from ignorance and made progress possible. This narrative figures powerfully in Archie's personal history, having converted him from a poor son in a religious family into an upwardly-mobile explorer of brave new worlds. Indeed, Archie exemplifies Murray Pittock's definition of the Scottish Enlightenment as 'the application of reason to knowledge in the context of material improvement'.[34] Hence, Diya's reply takes Archie by surprise: 'It's a fascinating theory, Mr Buchanan. What gods do you worship?' (185) The question hits Archie with all the force of an event. 'What gods? In his country', Scotland, 'a question like that would have been a hanging matter not so many years since… What *gods*? *What* gods? [Diya] showed neither shock nor incomprehension. She merely looked at him with civil interest, and all the certain ground of Natural Philosophy on which he stood seemed suddenly to shift under his feet' (186). Her rationale is that geology makes individual human life so insignificant that one necessarily turns elsewhere for meaning. And in fact, Archie's narrative of enlightened self-empowerment is one such catechism. Diya's question awakens in Archie the memory of a painful domestic episode in which his father had called him an atheist. Geology has

thus unshackled Archie from home, but at the cost of alchemically converting his science into a virtual religion.

This conversation not only conjures the superstitious residues of secular enlightenment (thus underscoring the religious, doctrinaire quality of science, a point explored at length by anthropologists like Emile Durkheim and James George Frazer[35]), but it also highlights the overlapping modalities of time. And Archie's abstract appreciation of the material forces shaping the island is countered in the novel by a mythical and phenomenological reckoning of the same. Lucy in particular contemplates the physical features of the island as well as its flora and fauna and reflects that '[a]ll these things had been there since long before the lighthouse … perhaps from the very beginning of time itself. When you thought about it that way, the lighthouse … had sprung into existence just in the very last second of the island's history' (152). Sensing her own transience in this place, she feels herself able 'to imagine the island … lying here uninhabited ever since the world was made. Everything the island was, and ever had been, existed inside her head, like the idea of a bird in the yolk of an egg. But nothing was more easily broken than one little egg' (152-53). The island is at once complete in itself and also oddly dependent; self-sufficient in its 'nature', it is contingent in its 'being'. 'Soon [the island] would be gone', Lucy remarks to herself. 'Or rather, they would be gone… Lucy would carry [the island] away with her, inside her head, and no one could take one detail of it from her. But even that … one day Lucy herself would grow old and she might start to forget' (420). What Lucy reflects on here is the difference between geological and ecological objects on the one hand and narratives and signification (including the implicit narratives, the [Durkheimian] religiosity, built into scientific discourse) on the other. The island's existence is rooted in all of them.

This is what Diya perceives in Archie's geological bravado. No 'island' of abstraction, it harbors narrative and conflict; hence, his scientific discourse perpetually borders on becoming something else, especially in his own imagination. 'What could be more humane, more advantageous, more audacious, and more conducive to the greater good of all, than illuminating the coasts of Scotland for all the shipping that had to pass, now and in the future?' (87) Archie sees himself as Prometheus, a mythic torchbearer of enlightenment. 'Mr Stevenson's new lighthouse was not only functionally perfect, but also an outpost of civilisation, a little piece of Edinburgh illuminating the chaos and the wilderness. It seemed like the embodiment of an ideal' (88). And yet, this ideal is rooted less in the brain than in the gut or some other nether region: 'It was always like this: as soon as he got away from Edinburgh Archie began to wake up. It wasn't that he didn't like the world he lived in; it was just that he preferred to be on the very edges of it, and yet somehow bring with him everything that was good about the civilised world. In his experience that was how new ideas were most likely to happen' (88). What Archie craves is a life on the edge, his light venturing into obscurity. If we recall the associations of obscurity in eighteenth- and early

nineteenth-century aesthetic discourse, then we might observe that, more than science, *sublimity* is native to Archie.

According to Lyotard, sublimity is the traditional rubric of the event. The experience of something happening, he remarks, is perpetually attended by 'the feeling that nothing might happen' (Lyotard 198). This is 'the misery' of the artist, who always awaits the next note, line, colour, or word, dwelling like Archie at the edge of obscurity. 'Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe this contradictory feeling' of expectation and emptiness, or, in Muir's language, of 'something' and 'nothing', 'was christened … by the name of the *sublime*. It is around this name that the destiny of classical poetics was hazarded and lost; it is in this name that aesthetics asserted its rights over art, and that romanticism, in other words, modernity, triumphed' (198-99). Such sublimity, overwhelming any preconceived poetics or 'school' of thought, 'is the rigour of the avant-garde'; it is 'the only mode of artistic sensibility to characterize the modern' (199, 200). Modernity is thus by definition a mixed mode, cataclysmic in wreaking havoc on our conventional sense of history. This is how Lyotard is able to appropriate Nicolas Boileau, the seventeenth-century translator of Longinus, and Edmund Burke, the eighteenth-century theorist of the sublime, for a generalised romanticism commensurate with the avant-garde.[36] Elsewhere, Lyotard encrypts these historical inversions into his theory of postmodernism: 'A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant'.[37] In this 'state', art and criticism toil, like Archie, at the edges of the known world, 'working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done… [Postmodernism] would have to be understood according to the paradox of a future (*post*) anterior (*modo*)'.[38]

Sublimity is Lyotard's word for an intensified, a-systemic, and non-linear spirit which enters Western consciousness in the eighteenth century. More than a mere aesthetic category, sublimity—like postmodernism—is metonymic of the mother of all events, the grand disruption (via science, commerce, industrialisation, democratisation, global exploration, print dissemination, etc.) which shook the classical world to ruin and elaborated modernity through a series of aftershocks. 'Sublimity' thus denotes the confusion subsisting in the terms 'enlightenment' and 'romanticism' as hallmarks of this shift. Given the way these forces play out in *Light*, a novel bound up in the symbolic significance of Edinburgh, it prompts the query of whether there was a specifically Scottish sublime. Or, even better, it begs the question of whether 'sublimity' as Lyotard imagines it is even a necessary concept in Scottish history. Indeed, and more incisively still, it compels us to ask whether Lyotard is not straining to synthesise a general concept from a truism of Scottish history, where the terms 'enlightenment' and 'romanticism' dissolve under close scrutiny. In other words, 'Scotland' is functionally synonymous with Lyotard's theoretical notion of the 'sublime.' Granted, Lyotard does not explicitly address Scottish culture, and it seems ungainly

to transmogrify any nation's history into a concept. Still, as Lyotard's influential meditation indicates, 'Scotland' taken as a concept—as Lyotard would have it, 'Scotland, the event'—would bring with it a powerful train of associations. For instance, it would vividly reanimate several facets of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century modernisation (e.g., 'improvement' in the Highlands, rapid urbanisation in Glasgow and Edinburgh, etc.).[39] It would also name a lifeworld rather than a mere aesthetic category, thus painting a broader spectrum of modernity.

Perhaps most importantly, 'Scotland, the event' would fuse the categories of 'enlightenment' and 'romanticism' through which we historicise the postclassical world as well as the subsequent history of its critique. In her landmark *Life of Robert Burns* (1930), Catherine Carswell observed that it makes little sense to distinguish between 'enlightenment' and 'romanticism' in Scotland, arguing that by 1786, when Burns came to Edinburgh, 'the romantic movement had been in full swing' there for a quarter century.[40] More recently, Ian Duncan has expounded on this point, evoking Scottish cultural phenomena ranging from historiography and periodical journalism to vernacular poetry and theatrical experimentation. Contemplating the 'romantic' precursor Ossian alongside the 'enlightened' descendant Scott, Duncan remarks that '[a]gainst th[e] English model' to which it is often subordinated, 'Scotland could only loom as an intermittent, shadowy anachronism, a temporal as well as spatial border of Romanticism. In Scotland, "Classical" and "Romantic" cultural forms occupy the same historical moment and institutional base, rather than defining successive stages or periods'.[41]

Duncan's critique implicitly raises the question of whether broad headings like enlightenment and romanticism, forged in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as lenses through which to read the past, are not anachronistic in describing *any* aspect (or nation) of the 'long' eighteenth century (roughly 1660-1830). He effectively exposes the 'English' histories in which Scottish literature often figures as what Lyotard calls grand narratives—sweeping etiological tales or 'just so stories' which fail to account for their own linguistic legerdemain. In Lyotard's estimation, such narratives are insufficiently postmodern, or sublime. But Cairns Craig asks us to think further about whether 'Scotland' and 'sublimity' are conceivable as interchangeable categories, and by extension whether sublimity is truly an apt term in describing a theory of the event. He makes the compelling case that the emancipatory postmodernism which Lyotard derives from the sublime finds its axis in Kantian philosophy, and specifically in Kant's notion that the sublime enables us to transcend the categories through which we typically think. In the terms we have been discussing, the Kantian experience of the sublime is an 'event' which anchors the 'system' of our thought by surpassing it—that is, by validating that system on transcendental grounds.

But for this reason, Kantian sublimity would not really be an 'event' at all, no more than Derrida's grammatology transcends metaphysics; and this realisation has powerful implications for our

understanding of the 'histories' to which Duncan refers. As Craig sees it, the Kantian sublime 'haunts the postmodern as the last possibility of real freedom in a world where freedom … is an illusion'. If postmodernism is, as Lyotard argues, an aesthetic which works outside existing rules of artistic production, this 'outside' is already firmly planted 'within' sublime tropology. 'Postmodernism, in other words, is a late twentieth-century replay of some of the key elements of Kantianism…'[42] Against this transcendentalist tradition, Craig juxtaposes an associationist model proceeding from Hume. This latter paradigm disables the Kantian sublime by skirting the causal relationships on which Kant bases his categories of cognition. As Craig contends, '[i]f Kant has not answered Hume' with respect to the problem of causality, 'then the transcendental argument which locks us into the world as produced by the categories of our own consciousness—the structures of our own language, the narrative forms of history writing and so on—is deprived of its authority. The whole [Kantian] edifice is an illusion…'[43] By this logic, the tradition of association becomes a true 'event' in Western intellectual history precisely because it does *not* posture as a 'sublime' occurrence which, via Kant, reinscribes the presiding 'system' of thought. In the Humean model, there is only displacement without a corresponding transcendence. Indeed, in the place of transcendence, Hume proposes sociability—a proposition which, in Hume's own case, redounds on the club society of eighteenth-century Edinburgh.[44] The *Waverley* paradigm implicitly informing Derrida's grammatology thus gives way to something else—including, doubtlessly, alternative readings of Scott's inaugural novel.

The implications here of 'Scottish' difference (that is, of Hume, Edinburgh club society, and, in Craig's account, of nineteenth-century Scottish philosophers like Andrew Seth) are significant. They not only situate Lyotard's 'sublimity' within history, but they also transform the former's central paradigm. By contrast, 'sublimity' as Lyotard evokes it blurs the distinction between enlightenment and romanticism, modernity and its critique, in a way which nevertheless reiterates the conventions of Kantian transcendence. As Derrida would recognise, this is metaphysics—the sublimation of a mundane state of affairs by something greater—all over again. Anything but a genuine 'event', the cultural poetics of sublimity in the generic, uninflected sense repeat the cycle of sameness, of 'nothingness', which makes occurrence so tantalising.

Not coincidentally, generic sublimity is essentially Muir's poetics: Scotland is the 'empty' literary place in which 'nothing' can possibly happen, at least not within the 'system' of Scottish culture. If anything were to emerge in the Scottish literary tradition, it would be an 'event' indeed. Muir's Scott held this same view: for him, for instance, '[t]he Union between Scotland and England was an accomplished fact, a solid part of the established order. He accepted it as such, and although Jacobite sentiment still excited his imagination, it had no effect on his practical judgment' (*Scott and Scotland* 137). Jacobitism is less a political dogma for Muir's Scott than the grand symbol of national occurrence; and, because Jacobitism points to what can never actually happen, '[o]ne

has the impression … that Scott can find a real image of Scotland only in the past, and [that he] knows that the nation which should have formed both his theme and his living environment as a writer is irremediably melting away around him' (140). Transcendence here would provide the only real option, as it purportedly does for Muir. Politically, this would mean superseding both Union *and* sovereignty: 'I do not believe in the programme of the Scottish Nationalists, for it goes against my reading of history, and it seems to me a trivial response to a serious problem. I can only conceive a free and independent Scotland coming to birth as the result of a general economic change in society…' (181-82). This is a vision of sublimation—of capitalism by egalitarianism, and of Scotland by something other than nationhood.

Duncan and Craig enable a different view of Scott, one defined less by transcendence than by association, and hence less by Muir's monolithic and vacuous 'tradition' than by a network of relations which Deleuze calls 'habit'.[45] For Deleuze, Hume provides us with a human and social model wherein '[w]e start with atomic parts, but these atomic parts have transitions, passages, "tendencies," which circulate from one to another. These tendencies give rise to *habits*… We are habits, nothing but habits'.[46] Elsewhere, Deleuze describes this network in terms of extension, infinite series (as in calculus), and, significantly, *events*: 'Extension exists when one element is stretched over the following ones… Such a connection of whole-parts forms an infinite series that contains neither a final term nor a limit… The event is a vibration with an infinity of … submultiples', of potential associations.[47] Deleuze's reference to infinite series vaguely recalls Kant's notion of the mathematical sublime, but in the Deleuzian 'event' there is no corresponding gesture of sublimation, unlike in Kant's philosophy, which defines (the mathematical) sublime as 'what even to be able to think proves that the mind has a power surpassing any standard of sense'.[48] Instead, 'events' in Deleuze's work proceed outward toward unknown destinations.

And so too do Scottish literary studies. At least, they do if we imagine the nation *not* as one of Derrida's 'philosophemes' (which is to say, as an essentialised given) nor as one of Lyotard's sites of sublimity (that is, as the locus of a body of work which 'transcends' theory altogether). Instead, taking Deleuze's cue—which he took from Hume by way of Nietzsche—we might conceive of Scottish literary studies as the sum of myriad 'transitions, passages, "tendencies" … [and] habits' which are less the expression of raw nature than the result of pathways cleared through dense forests of experience. That 'Scottish' here names a history as well as a concept may be what Scottish studies has most to offer to contemporary theory. As theory fights for its institutional as well as intellectual relevance, its practitioners will necessarily continue to probe the past to uncover resources for reimagining western traditions in terms which do not simply recapitulate Kantian categories or, for us, Derridean models like grammatology. This is already happening, for instance, in areas like environmental studies and genetics, fields in which Scottish scientists (by accident of birth *and* cultural force of 'habit') are among those at the forefront. The

associationist philosophy which filters to us through Hume and his social milieu is thus one (but only one) such revisionist resource, effectively dissolving the difference between enlightenment and romanticism in a way which undercuts sublime tropology and, with it, the implicit reinscription of the philosophy of transcendence. Scottish history is in this respect a tradition without transcendence; it is not a 'something' predicated on 'nothing'.

Hence, Muir is right: Scottish literature does make 'for a very curious emptiness' indeed (*Scott and Scotland* 11). But he is right for reasons he seems not to have imagined. For this reason, scholars working in Scottish literary studies do not need to learn how to 'apply' theory; they need only realise that the material they profess already is theoretical. This is the accident and the opportunity, the 'event' and the 'habit', of Scottish literature's relation to the cornerstones of modernity.

NOTES

[1] 'McConnell "destroyed Scotland the Brand"', *Scotland on Sunday,* 11 July 2004. http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/politics/McConnell-destroyed-Scotland-the-Brand.2544888.jp

[2] I allude here to Matthew 12:25—'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand'—and to Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

[3] McCrone, Morris, and Kiely, *Scotland – the Brand: The Making of Scottish Heritage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 1, 4. See esp. ch. 1.

[4] Nairn's dour assessment of nineteenth-century Scottish nationalism may be found in *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (London: NLB, 1977), esp. Ch. 2. He revisits this issue, this time taking critical aim at Ernest Gellner's thesis that industrialisation is at the root of modern nationalist identity, in *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited* (London: Verso, 1997).

[5] Muir, *Scott and Scotland: The Predicament of the Scottish Writer* (New York: Robert Speller, 1938), 12. Subsequent references will be cited in the text.

[6] See Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), esp. Part One: 'The Problem of Nothingness'.

[7] See especially Heidegger, "What Is Metaphysics?" trans. unnamed, in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1977), pp. 92-112.

[8] This point is made most forcefully by Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull in *Scotland after Enlightenment: Image and Tradition in Scottish Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1997). See esp. Chs. 1-3.

[9] I wholly concur with a remark by this essay's referee that Kelman's work in particular is about far more than simply 'grunge chic'. Critics convincingly argue that Kelman's fiction highlights issues of gender as well as class, language as well as social realism (and, I would add, ecology as well as economics). My point in this narrow context is simply that Kelman's frequent recourse to working-class Glaswegian narrators as media for these subtle issues does not overtly contradict—and even, at some level, corresponds with—the images of Scotland purveyed by Nairn, Smout, and others.

[10] For the richest and most mythic sense of this displacement, see Muir, *An Autobiography* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1993), esp. pp. 1-121, as Muir moves leaves his Orkney childhood for adult life in Glasgow.

[11] See especially de Man, 'The Rhetoric of Blindness: Jacques Derrida's Reading of Rousseau' in de Man, *Blindness and Insight* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), pp. 102-41.

[12] Eliot introduces the concept of the 'dissociation of sensibility' in his 1921 essay 'The Metaphysical Poets'. See Eliot, *Selected Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950), 241-50.

[13] Mitchell, "The Future of Criticism—A *Critical Inquiry* Symposium," *Critical Inquiry* 30: 2 (2004), 328. Subsequent references will be cited in the text.

[14] I am referring here to Crawford's well-known edited volume *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). See especially Crawford's "Introduction" (pp. 1-21). 'Emptiness' here is exaggerated inasmuch as Eng Lit begins as the Scottish instruction of English texts.

[15] See Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum, 2005).

[16] To be sure, theory abounds *in* Scottish studies, but as with most fields in which theory figures it tends to be *applied to* Scottish studies instead of *following from* them. That is, the theories exist independently of anything recognisably 'Scottish'. There are, however, more complex cases. For instance, Michael Gardiner appeals at once to theorists like Gilles Deleuze and Paul Virilio as a lens through which to read Scottish culture even as he casts Scottish history as a basis if not for those later theories then for the cultural milieu of postmodernism in which they emerge. (See *From Trocchi to Trainspotting: Scottish Critical Theory Since 1960* [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006].) Cairns Craig is more enterprising still, eliciting Scottish Calvinism and Enlightenment associationism as the rudiments of a larger critique of modernity in which the category of literature and literary forms like the novel are firmly mired. (See *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999] and *Associationism and the Literary Imagination: From the Phantasmal Chaos* [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007].)

[17] Derrida, *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe*, trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael B. Naas (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 47-48, 72-73, Derrida's emphasis.

[18] I say 'Manly', but we might punningly quip 'de Manly'. Wlad Godzich comments on the compulsive quality of de Man's rigorously rhetorical readings in his introductory essay to de Man's *Blindness and Insight*, 'Caution! Reader at Work!' (pp. xv-xxx)

[19] 'Almost all the governments which exist at present, or of which there remains any record in story, have been founded originally, either on usurpation or conquest, or both, without any pretence of a fair consent or voluntary subjection of the people'. 'Of the Original Contract', *Selected Essays*, ed. Stephen Copley and Andrew Edgar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 274-92), 279.

[20] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 14, my emphasis.

[21] Apparently, so did the French *soixante-huitardes*, who perceived in deconstruction a highly abstract and rigorously intellectual apology for neo-conservatism. In a printed interview, Derrida's interlocutors extracted from him this exasperated reply: 'I do not believe that there is any "fact" which permits us to say: in *the* Marxist text, contradiction *itself*, dialectics *itself* escapes from *the* dominance of metaphysics…' (*Positions*, trans. Alan Bass [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981], 74. Such a reply, however, is precisely what irritated Derrida's critics, refusing a discussion of matters like class because of a philosophical difference regarding the *language* of class. This is what led Jürgen Habermas, among others, to refer to Derrida as a 'disciple' of Heidegger's despite Derrida's denunciations of Heidegger. See Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), esp. Lecture VII.

[22] On the attractions of Bakhtin to Scottish literary criticism, see Alastair Renfrew, 'Brief Encounters, Long Farewells', *International Journal of Scottish Literature* 1 (2006); for a discussion of Bhabha relative to Scottish literary studies, see Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel*, esp. the Conclusion.

[23] Bell and Miller, *Scotland in Theory: Reflections on Culture and Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004). One of the collection's essays, Thomas Docherty's 'The Existence of Scotland' (pp. 231-48), gives an alternative reading of Scott's *Waverley* as the archetypal text of Scotland considered as a 'theoretical possibility'.

[24] See Bell, *Questioning Scotland: Literature, Nationalism, Postmodernism* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), esp. ch. 2.

[25] Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale Nota Bene, 2000), 2.

[26] 'What Is Metaphysics?' 98.

[27] For a history of lighthouses in Scotland and the Stevensons' role in that history, see Bella Bathurst, *The Lighthouse Stevensons* (London: Harper Perennial, 1999).

[28] On seminal differences between *Waverley* and *Rob Roy*, see Ian Duncan, "Introduction" to Scott, *Rob Roy*, ed. Duncan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) and also my book *The Ruins of Experience: Scotland's "Romantick" Highlands and the Birth of the Modern Witness* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), ch. 2. Deleuze and Guattari address the phenomenon of deterritorialisation in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

[29] Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant-Garde', trans. Lisa Liebmann, *The Lyotard Reader*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989: 196-211), 197. Subsequent references are cited in the text.

[30] Events belong to a philosophical category which dates back as far as Aristotle, and today philosophers associate them with semantics as often as causality. For a compendium of essays on this topic, see *Events*, ed. Roberto Casati and Achille Varzi (Aldershot, NH: Dartmouth, 1996). However, the category of the event has played an especially strong role in French theory over the past quarter century. For exemplary discussions of events relative to writing, mathematics, psychoanalysis, and of course philosophy, see Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986) and Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, *opp. cit.*

[31] G. Gregory Smith famously outlines his theory of the Caledonian Anti-Syzygy in *Scottish Literature, Character and Influence* (London: Macmillan, 1919). On the uses, abuses, and wide influence of this concept in subsequent Scottish criticism, see Gerard Carruthers, *A Critical Guide to Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming 2009), ch. 1.

[32] Elphinstone, *Light* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006), 260. Subsequent references will be cited in the text.

[33] As Lucy watches the surveyors go about their business, it strikes her that 'it marked the beginning of an ending that neither Breesha nor Lucy' nor any other member of the family 'could quite fathom' (153).

[34] Pittock, *A New History of Scotland* (Phoenix Mill, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2003), 225.

[35] Durkheim likens science to religion, whereas Frazer likens to science to magic but opposes each to religion. See Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: The Free Press, 1995), esp. pp. 418-48, and Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 3rd ed., Part One: *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1935), 1: 220-43.

[36] Lyotard generally speaks more favourably of Burke than Kant, toward whom he expresses deeper ambivalence. See especially Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

[37] 'Answering the Question: What Is Postmodernism?' trans. Régis Durand, *The Postmodern Condition*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979, pp. 71-82), 79.

[38] Lyotard, 'Answering the Question: What Is Postmodernism?' 81.

[39] T. M. Devine evokes Scotland in precisely this conceptual way in his landmark book *The Scottish Nation: A History, 1700-2000* (London: Penguin, 2001).

[40] Carswell, *The Life of Robert Burns* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1990), 185.

[41] Duncan, with Leith Davis and Janet Sorensen, 'Scotland in Romanticism', *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, ed. Davis, Duncan, and Sorensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 1-19), 3. Duncan pursues this point with remarkable rigour in his recent book *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[42] Craig, 'Beyond Reason – Hume, Seth, Macmurray and Scotland's Postmodernity', in *Scotland in Theory*, pp. 249-83 (263).

[43] Craig, 'Beyond Reason', 265. Duncan proposes a similar argument in *Scott's Shadow*, reading Scott's impact on nineteenth-century realist fiction and British national identity through Hume's associationist model of the imagination. In contemporary theory, the non-Kantian, non-transcendental aspects of Hume's thought appealed strongly to Deleuze. See *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), esp. Ch. 6.

[44] George Elder Davie situates Hume firmly within Edinburgh club society in *The Scotch Metaphysics: A Century of Enlightenment in Scotland* (London: Routledge, 2001), ch. 1.

[45] See Duncan, *Scott's Shadow*, 251 and Craig, *Associationism and the Literary Imagination*, 116-17. For that matter, Elphinstone imagines her fiction as a productive, associative confusion of fact and fancy, which is how she envisioned Scott working. See 'What Force Made Men Act So?: A Question of Historical Fiction', *Scottish Studies Review* 4:2 (2003: 121-30), esp. pp. 126-27.

[46] Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, x.

[47] Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 77.

[48] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 106.