



Call For Papers:

Special Issue on Theory and Scottish Literature

Nationalism, national affirmation, as an essentially modern phenomenon, is always a philosopheme. ... It claims 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.¹ (Derrida)

It is a cliché of contemporary literary studies to observe that this 'we', this universality, these memories, these responsibilities – all demand sceptical reconsideration in the wake of 'theory'.

It is almost as trite to say that Scottish Literature has largely avoided, and perhaps even shirked, this process of radical critique – while pursuing an ambitious deconstructive project of its own, based on historical re-assessment of the very 'framing' or incorporating discourse, English Literature, which would enforce the obligatory engagement with 'theory'. What, from this perspective, of the apparent universality of 'theory' itself, presented as an effectively 'untranslatable idiom' whose terms nationalist literary history must adopt wholesale, on pain of irrelevance in the cosmopolitan intellectual market? Is a provincialisation of critical theory necessary, especially in a country attempting to reconstruct its 'native' intellectual bearings?²

What can we make of theory's evident impact on recent critical practice? Michael Gardiner's *From Trocchi to Trainspotting: Scottish Critical Theory Since 1960*³ stages a genealogy of 'Scottish literary thought' in high-theoretical terms, while the fluency and discursive coherence of the *Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature*⁴, edited by Berthold Schoene, suggests critical theory is already something more than an 'available method' or optional technique in Scottish literary studies.

Should the seeming 'acceptance' of theory be mistrusted? – from within Scottish Literature as a paradigm which 'impl[ies] that it is only through the ideas of Russian and American intellectuals that one can grasp the real nature of the Scottish condition'⁵; and from within Eng. Lit. as yet another 'strategic effort to raise the profile of Scottish literary studies within the context of its institutional marginalization'⁶?

For the third issue of *IJSL* papers are invited on any aspect of the relationship between Scottish literary studies and 'theory', both terms conceived as widely as contributors might wish. Proposals should reach the journal editors not later than **1st June 2007**, with complete papers required by 1 November.

<http://www.ijsl.stir.ac.uk/>

eleanor.bell@strath.ac.uk

scott.hames@stir.ac.uk

¹ Jacques Derrida, *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe*, trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael B. Naas (Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 47-48, pp. 72-73.

² See Cairns Craig, 'Scotland and Hybridity', in *Beyond Scotland: New Contexts for Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature*, ed. by Carruthers, Goldie and Renfrew (Amsterdam and NY: Rodopi, 2004), pp. 229-53.

³ Edinburgh University Press, 2006.

⁴ Edinburgh University Press, 2007.

⁵ Craig, 'Scotland and Hybridity', p. 241.

⁶ Liam Connell, 'Modes of Marginality: Scottish Literature and the Uses of Postcolonial Theory', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 23.1&2 (2003). Accessed online March 2007: http://www.csaame.com/issues/volume_2312_2003.html