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Editorial

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Editorial

The first issue of *The Journal of Scottish Thought* is focused on two major Scottish thinkers whose work had an enormous impact on American and British intellectual life – and on public perceptions of intellectuals – in the middle years of the twentieth century. Robert Morrison MacIver, born April 17, 1882, in Stornoway, not only became President of the American Sociological Association in 1940 as a result of the influence of works such as *Community: A Sociological Study* (1917) and *Society: Its Structure and Changes* (1931), but was a major public figure because of his defence of academic freedom during the McCarthy years in the United States, and for his promotion of the notion of the United States as a multicultural society. He also vigorously challenged the international political system that he saw emerging from the Second World War because ‘the menace of war is endemic in a world of States not organized within an international system’.¹ John Macmurray, born February 16, 1891, at Maxwelltown in Kirkcudbrightshire, became an influential ‘public intellectual’ in the UK after a series of broadcasts he made for the BBC in 1930. His talks on ‘A Philosophy of Freedom’ in the summer of that year were to set the template for the BBC’s agenda on educational broadcasting for several years: as Charles Siepmann, head of the BBC’s Talks Department, recalled, ‘Few would have expected that at the height of a beguiling summer and at the unlikely hour of eight of the evening twelve broadcast talks on Philosophy would have produced a miniature renaissance among thousands of English listeners’.² Macmurray’s subsequent influence on British public life – both Tony Blair and Margaret Thatcher claimed key ideas derived from his work – confirmed his ability to relate challenging philosophical positions to general social and political debate.

Both are thinkers whose work has been occasionally revived since their deaths (MacIver in 1970, Macmurray in 1976) but who have been largely ignored because they do not fall into the ‘mainstream’ of contemporary Anglo-American philosophical and sociological thought – and because, in Scotland,

¹ David Spitz (ed.), *Robert M. MacIver: Politics & Society* (New York: Atherton Press, 1969), 475.

² John E. Costello, *John Macmurray: A Biography* (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 2002), 180.

there has been so little effort to understand, engage with and promote the particular traditions of Scottish intellectual life. MacIver and Macmurray are, as the essays gathered in this volume indicate, both thinkers steeped in Scottish traditions; thinkers whose work ought not only to be the context for our understanding of past Scottish culture but whose writings ought to inform our current philosophical, social and political thought. That they do not do so is symptomatic of the failure of the Scottish educational system to maintain the record of the country's past achievements and to ensure that its past continues to shape—and to critique—its present. It is to counteract such amnesia that the *Journal of Scottish Thought* has been founded—to recall, re-present and re-engage with Scottish thought across a wide range of disciplines, Scottish thought which can help explain our past and may, in turn, help shape our future. This may seem an unnecessary focus when scholars around the world are researching the achievements of the Scottish Enlightenment, when books on Hume, Smith, Ferguson, on eighteenth century Scottish science and on the eighteenth-century Scottish book trade, are pouring from the presses. However, it is the phenomenon of the Scottish Enlightenment that we need to set in historical perspective in order to see the need for a broader and more extensive engagement with Scottish thought.

I

In their *Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, published in 1982, R. H. Campbell and Andrew Skinner note in their introduction that ‘interest in the Scottish Enlightenment is comparatively recent’³ and they date the inauguration of that interest to W. C. Lehmann’s *Adam Ferguson and Modern Sociology*, published in 1930, and to Gladys Bryson’s *Man and Society: The Scottish Enquiry of the Eighteenth Century*, which appeared in 1945. The interest of both these writers was in establishing that ‘social scientists of the twentieth century may properly regard them [the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers] as forerunners in the effort in which we are engaged’.⁴ More recently, John Robertson has assigned the commencement of the concept of the Scottish Enlightenment to the work of Duncan Forbes and Hugh Trevor-Roper in the 1960s, and particularly to the course on ‘Hume, Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment’ run by

³ R. H. Campbell and Andrew S. Skinner, *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982).

⁴ Gladys Bryson, *Man and Society: The Scottish Enquiry of the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1945), 11.

Forbes at Cambridge, and which was attended by many of the influential participants in Enlightenment studies in the following thirty or forty years—most notably, perhaps, by Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner.⁵

From such tentative beginnings the Scottish Enlightenment has become an institutional fixture in European cultural history, studied throughout the world as the foundational period in which ‘modernity’ was first brought into focus and in which the intellectual foundations of the modern world—confirmed by the collapse of communism and the contemporary dominance of the free-market economics of Adam Smith—were established. The centrality of the Scottish Enlightenment both to the history of the modern world and to the (re)construction of Scottish history is underlined by its promotion in works such as Arthur Herman’s *The Scottish Enlightenment* (2000)—originally subtitled in the US as ‘the true story of how Western Europe’s poorest nation created our world & everything in it’. Scotland, once regarded as marginal to the history of the world, has become the very birth-canal of modernity. T.M. Devine’s *The Scottish Nation* (1999), for instance, presents the Enlightenment as allowing Scotland to fulfil those transformations of agriculture and industry that English history used to claim was unique to English experience: while in England the ‘currently favoured view of English modernization, as a process characterized by cumulative, protracted and evolutionary development’, the case was very different in Scotland: ‘North of the border there truly was an Industrial and Agricultural Revolution’.⁶ The characteristics that had once justified England’s unique place among European nations and explained its nineteenth-century pre-eminence in economic development have been transferred to Scotland—Europe’s truly revolutionary society whatever its political quiescence throughout the modern era.

This vision of Scottish historical primacy has taken on significant political overtones in the aftermath of the establishment of the Scottish parliament in 1999. In the following years newspaper articles regularly asked whether there could be a ‘second Scottish Enlightenment’ or whether, indeed, in the light of major contemporary Scottish scientific achievements—such as the cloning of Dolly the sheep—we were already living through a second Scottish Enlightenment. And the Enlightenment—which for many years had been regarded as a movement that had betrayed Scottish identity by its anglicising tendencies—was rapidly adopted as the true foundation of Scottish identity. In

⁵ John Robertson, ‘The Scottish Contribution to the Enlightenment’, on-line at www.history.ac.uk/eseminars/sem12.html.

⁶ T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation* (London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1999), 107.

2006, the then first minister, Jack McConnell, chose to make the Enlightenment the theme of his Tartan Day address at Princeton University, deliberately attempting to relocate Scotland's national identity from 'romantic tartan' to 'enlightened science': Scots who migrated to the United States were 'the shock troops of modernisation—ordinary people who helped make America what it is today'—because at their back stood the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers who 'taught the world how to think scientifically; set out the laws of modern market economics; and helped create the modern, civilised values that the United States and the rest of the democratic world now upholds'. Despite the establishment of 'Tartan Day' as the iconic celebration of Scots in America, Scotland's future identity, like its past, was to be focused on 'enlightenment' rather than 'tartan' because 'there are some who think Scotland could become home to a second enlightenment'.⁷

The rapidity of this rise to prominence of the Scottish Enlightenment—and of the consequent rise of Scotland's intellectual history to a new international significance—can be measured by the fact that a book entitled *The Story of Scottish Philosophy*, published in New York in 1961, and edited by Daniel Somner Robinson, tells the story of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scottish thought without making any mention of Enlightenment, and presents the climax of the story of Scottish thought as the work of James McCosh, President of Princeton College and author of *The Scottish Philosophy* (1875)—as well as being eulogised by McConnell in his Princeton address. For Robinson, the importance of the story of Scottish philosophy derives from its being the source of contemporary American pragmatism, a source which Americans both need to know and to acknowledge if they are to understand the presuppositions of their own tradition. The Enlightenment makes no appearance in his story because it makes no appearance in McCosh's account of Scottish philosophy: for McCosh, Scottish philosophy is defined as a national continuity of which individual philosophers represent 'family members', so that though 'by the close of the [eighteenth] century, the fathers and elder sons of the family have passed away from the scene',⁸ the family business will inevitably be continued by the younger sons and their heirs. What is significant about this philosophical family, however, is that it does not include the figure who, by the twentieth-century, was to be central to the notion of the Enlightenment in Scotland. For Peter Gay, in his groundbreaking

⁷ Quotations from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/News-Extras/princeton>

⁸ James McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy: Biographical, Expository, Critical, from Hutcheson to Hamilton* (London: Macmillan, 1875), 248.

account of the Enlightenment in the 1960s as ‘the rise of modern paganism’, David Hume stood as the embodiment of ‘The Perfect Pagan’:⁹ for McCosh, on the other hand, what was Scottish about Scottish philosophy was defined precisely by its *resistance* to Hume. Hume might be part of the story but he was not part of the tradition of Scottish philosophy, for that tradition was defined by its ability to provide answers to Hume’s scepticism: ‘It has been the aim of the Scottish school, as modified and developed by Reid, to throw back the scepticism of Hume’ (146). While accepting that all later philosophy has been required to address the challenge of Hume’s philosophy, McCosh’s belief is that Scottish philosophy’s importance lies in the fact that it has found an adequate basis on which this ‘foe’, this outsider, ‘might be repelled’ (147). Clearly, as long as Hume—the Scottish thinker most central to the European conception of Enlightenment—remains outside of the Scottish tradition of philosophy, there can be no *Scottish* Enlightenment: Scottish philosophy is, in effect, defined as the refusal of Enlightenment values.

On the other hand, an influential book of the same period as Gay’s—Nicholas Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison’s *Scotland in the Age of Improvement: Essays in Scottish History in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1970)—reveals an equal hesitation about the appropriate terminology for describing the transformation of eighteenth-century Scotland. In the ‘Introduction’, the editors identify the second half of the century as ‘the time of the Scottish enlightenment, that remarkable outburst of intellectual life in which, almost overnight, Scotland was snatched from the relative cultural isolation in which she had passed the seventeenth century and placed in the centre of the thinking world’.¹⁰ What the passive grammar of this sentence emphasizes is how little was innately Scottish about this Enlightenment: Enlightenment *snatched* Scotland from its isolation rather than Scotland *producing* an Enlightenment. The causal uncertainty is compounded when, in a key chapter of the book, John Clive continues to use an older terminology: ‘The question of the origin of the “Scottish Renaissance”—that remarkable efflorescence of the mid-eighteenth century, with its roll call of the great names . . . —is one of those historical problems which have hitherto stubbornly resisted a definite solution’.¹¹ The difference in terminology can be ascribed to the fact that, as Clive acknowledges in a

⁹ Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: an Interpretation: Volume 1 The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: Knopf, 1977; 1966).

¹⁰ Nicholas Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (eds), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement: Essays in Scottish History in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 227, 225.

footnote, ‘This essay was first written some years ago, as a part, eventually not published—of the author’s *Scotch Reviewers: The Edinburgh Review, 1802–1815* (London 1957)’—in other words, it was produced before the notion of a Scottish Enlightenment had taken hold. The shift in terminology is, however, significant: the use of a ‘Scottish Renaissance’ in a context where the phrase cannot help but require comparison with the Scottish Renaissance movement of the 1920s, implies the revival of something implicitly Scottish, whereas a ‘Scottish Enlightenment’, in a mirror-image of McCosh’s tactics, insists that Enlightenment might have occurred *in* Scotland but was not rooted in Scotland, and was not fundamentally part of a Scottish tradition.

These denials, explicit or implicit, of the possibility of a *Scottish* Enlightenment—that is, of an Enlightenment arising from and being the expression of Scottish culture—have been matched in more recent accounts by the explanations of how Enlightenment in Scotland ended and what it left behind to later Scottish culture. For most, the Enlightenment in Scotland bequeathed nothing to its Scottish successors, and produced no Scottish succession. This is the burden of popular accounts such as Arthur Herman’s *The Scottish Enlightenment*: ‘As the nineteenth century waned, the intellectual capital of the Scottish Enlightenment waned with it’, he suggests, as though the capital had failed to be invested in an ongoing business: ‘Scotland’s days as the generator of Europe’s most innovative ideas were over’.¹² More philosophically adept academic analyses concur: Gordon Graham’s version of nineteenth-century Scottish philosophy in Alexander Broadie’s *Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, insists that ‘the nineteenth century . . . saw the unravelling of the great philosophical project that had animated the eighteenth’.¹³ It is a view supported by the most influential account of nineteenth-century Scottish philosophy, George Davie’s *The Democratic Intellect* (1961), which charts how ‘the democratic intellectualism which had distinguished Scottish civilisation was being allowed to disappear’ because Scots were no longer concerned to maintain ‘national pretensions to intellectual independence’.¹⁴ For Davie, what produced this failure was the submission of Scottish philosophy, in the second half of the nineteenth century, to Kantianism and Hegelianism, a submission so total that the Scottish tradition effectively ends at the point at which

¹² Arthur Herman, *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Scots’ Invention of the Modern World* (London: Fourth Estate, 2011), 347

¹³ Alexander Broadie (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 338.

¹⁴ George Elder Davie, *The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and her universities in the nineteenth century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1961), 336–7.

McCosh writes its history in 1875. There is no effective inheritance from the Scottish eighteenth century to the twentieth: in the 'Introduction' to *The Scotch Metaphysics* (published only in 2001 but written in the 1950s), Davie identifies 'the English tradition in philosophy' as 'practical utilitarianism, Bentham, John Stuart Mill and his father, Russell, Ryle and Popper'.¹⁵ If the tradition of Hume, as represented by the Mills, is to be treated as not part of the tradition of *Scottish* thought then not only is Scottish philosophy itself radically truncated but the Scottish tradition is wilfully circumscribed to only one side of the debate which Hume's work initiated. A striking version of this displacement of Scottish culture can be found in the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, for whom Hume, the greatest of Scottish thinkers, is the one who brings the tradition of Scottish thought to an end.¹⁶ MacIntyre takes the linguistic argument traditionally levelled at Hume—his concern to avoid Scotticisms in his writing—and turns it into an argument about the social nature of Hume's thought, a social nature which reflects not Scottish *mores* but English ones, with the consequence that the Scottish tradition abolishes itself from within.

The original accounts of the Scottish Enlightenment, in other words, propose that there is Enlightenment in Scotland but that it is not fundamentally Scottish; alternatively, for those who see in the 'Common Sense' school the only true Scottish philosophy, there is a surviving Scottish tradition but it is not the tradition of Enlightenment; or, recurrently in more recent accounts, there may be an Enlightenment which is Scottish in a more than geographical sense but it leaves nothing behind it in the texture of subsequent Scottish life. Nineteenth-century Scotland becomes the antithesis of Enlightenment, a country plunged again into the darkness from which it had (only too briefly) emerged. The history of nineteenth-century Scottish philosophy thus becomes the account of its gradual 'germanising', beginning with Sir William Hamilton's attempt to combine the positions of Reid and Kant, developing through J.F. Ferrier's attempted rejection of the presuppositions of Common Sense in favour of a Hegelian mode of philosophy, and culminating in the neo-Kantianism and Hegelianism of the Scottish Idealists, led by Edward Caird. Because of Caird's enormous influence in both Scotland and England,

¹⁵ Davie, *The Scotch Metaphysics*, 7.

¹⁶ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality* (London: Duckworth, 1988), 294ff: 'What is manifest in the judgments of the *History* is latent in those of the *Treatise*. The standpoint which underlies and informs both Hume's own particular judgments in the *Treatise* and the type of evaluative judgment which he describes as expressive of the passions is the standpoint presupposed by the shared evaluative vocabulary of the dominant English social order' (297).

the Idealism which he propounded has been treated as a crucial betrayal of the Scottish tradition. Symptomatically, George Davie sees J. F. Ferrier's efforts to find a way of constructing a compromise between the new German philosophy and the Scottish tradition as leading to 'the collapse of the Scottish Enlightenment after 1854' and its ultimate 'blackout':¹⁷

The Scottish Enlightenment—which in Ferrier's original form of 'German philosophy refracted through a Scottish medium' seems to be moving towards a new lease of life—suddenly collapses into a blackout expressed in a series of contradictions which are never overcome.¹⁸

For Davie, 'the kind of Hegelianism produced in such quantities by Caird and his group of disciples was heavy, imitative, and indeed bibliolatrous, the work of minds which made no secret of their belief that Hegel had more or less said the last word about everything'.¹⁹ Commitment to a Germanic style in philosophy is, for Davie, necessarily a refusal to acknowledge the relevance of the Common Sense tradition, which is 'treated by Caird as lying absolutely outside "the main stream of intellectual culture"' since 'no Scottish name later than David Hume passed his lips'.²⁰ Gordon Graham, too, accepts that Caird's 'indifference to the national tradition' was 'to signal the end of a philosophical project which had lasted the larger part of 200 years'.²¹ Whether it is the empiricism of Mill or the idealism of Caird, Scottish philosophy cannot be truly in the line of Scottish development if it follows the faithless and Anglicising implications of Hume or the Germanising of Carlyle and Caird.

Paradoxically, however, it was precisely in the period which commentators have identified as the end of the Scottish philosophical tradition, the period after 1870, that the Scottish Enlightenment was first identified and named by W. R. Scott in his study of Francis Hutcheson, published in 1900. That the concept should become possible at this specific point in time suggests that

¹⁷ George Davie, *The Scotch Metaphysics: A Century of Enlightenment in Scotland* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 4. Despite its date of publication, this book was written in the 1950s.

¹⁸ George Davie, *Ferrier and the Blackout of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Review, 2003), 70.

¹⁹ George Davie, *The Scottish Enlightenment and other essays* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1991), 109.

²⁰ Davie, *Democratic Intellect*, 330.

²¹ Graham, 'Scottish Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/scottish-19th>.

something significant was happening in Scottish intellectual life in the latter part of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries to make possible such a clarification of the historical landscape. It is, in fact, a period in which Davie's account of the Germanising of Scottish thought was given a very different interpretation. In the introduction to a selection of Carlyle's essays published in 1909, Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison declared that: 'Whatever else might be doubtful, Carlyle's intense conviction of the moral foundations of the universe, vibrating in every page he wrote, communicated itself to his readers as a tonic force of the most powerful and beneficent kind'.²² Carlyle's philosophical as well as literary importance is underscored by the fact that, for Seth, 'Carlyle's great histories are therefore as much philosophies of history as history pure and simple'.²³ The most prominent of the Scottish idealists, Edward Caird, was no less certain of Carlyle's importance: no writer 'in this century has done more to elevate and purify our ideals of life' than Carlyle, nor done more 'to make us conscious that the things of the spirit are real, and that, in the last resort, there is no other reality'.²⁴ For Caird, no less than Pringle-Pattison, Carlyle's Germanism was not a betrayal of Scottish traditions but, rather, the recovery through philosophy and history of the fundamental principles of the reformed tradition:

Yet this new ideal, when we came to look at it closely, was, after all, nothing new or strange. It was in new words, words suited to the new time, the expression of those religious and moral principles which all in this country—and especially we Scotsmen—had received into ourselves almost with our mother's milk. It was Puritanism idealised, made cosmopolitan, freed from the narrowness which clung to its first expression, or with which time had encrusted it. . . . Carlyle seemed to change the old banner of the Covenant into a standard for the forward march of mankind towards a better ideal of human life.²⁵

Far from representing the Germanising of Scottish philosophy, works such as Edward Caird's *A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant* (1877) saw themselves as marching under the Covenanting banner of Carlyle's 'better ideal

²² Thomas Carlyle, *Selected Essays of Thomas Carlyle*, with an introduction by Prof. A. Seth Pringle-Pattison (London: Andrew Melrose, 1909), ix.

²³ *Ibid.*, xii.

²⁴ Edward Caird, *Essays on Literature and Philosophy* (James Maclehose and Sons: Glasgow 1892), 267.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 235–6.

of human life' and did so because Idealist German philosophy was itself as response to and an attempt to transcend the dilemmas posed by Hume. In adopting the discourse of German philosophy in order to escape the implications of Humean scepticism, such thinkers saw themselves not as negating their Scottishness but as recovering an older Scottish sense of religious conviction and religious commitment in a modern philosophical discourse.

Hume, however, was not to be so easily suppressed. In 1885, James Hutchison Stirling published in the journal *Mind*—itself a major Scottish contribution to British intellectual life in the latter part of the nineteenth century—a series of articles in which he argued that 'Kant has not answered Hume'.²⁶

Instead of, like Reid, abandoning 'the ideal system' [Kant] elaborately reconstructed it, endeavouring to give it a more rational and tenable form. Kant is, indeed, the very prince of Representationists, and the Representation of the present day has its roots almost entirely in the Kantian theory.²⁷

Kant, according to Stirling, sought to defeat Hume's metaphysics by elaborating on them, but in the end the fundamental issue which inspired Kant's response—the search for the necessity which we feel to exist between a cause and its effect—proves the undoing of his whole philosophical edifice: 'Kant's whole work (and what alone led to all the others, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) rose out of one consideration only. What was—whence was—that very strange and peculiar species of necessity to which Hume has drawn attention in the phenomena of cause and effect'.²⁸ As a consequence, the whole edifice of the '*Kritik of Pure Reason*, nay, German philosophy as a whole, has absolute foundation in the *whence or why of necessary connexion*',²⁹ and on this crux of the issue Stirling finds Kant not only to have failed to answer Hume but to have realised, belatedly, the significance of his own failure.

Hutchison Stirling's argument was to have a profound influence on the course of late nineteenth-century Scottish thought. It is acknowledged, for instance, by Andrew Seth (later Pringle-Pattison) in 1890 as the starting point

²⁶ *Mind*, Vol. 9, Issue 36 (Oct., 1884), 531–47, and Vol. 10, Issue 37 (Jan., 1885), 45–72.

²⁷ Seth, *Scottish Philosophy*, 149.

²⁸ *Mind*, Vol. 10, Issue 37, 48.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

of his book on *Scottish Philosophy*, subtitled *A Comparison of the Scottish and German Answers to Hume*. In the light of the recognition of the inadequacies of the Kantian response—and the inadequacies of the Hegelian completion of the Kantian project, outlined in Seth's own *Hegelianism and Personality* (1887)—it had become possible to return both to the dilemmas posed by Hume and to the Reidian response to them as parts of a continuing—and a continually relevant—Scottish dialectic. Significantly, then, in 1898, there appeared in a series entitled 'Famous Scots' parallel studies of *David Hume* (by Henry Calderwood) and *Thomas Reid* (by Campbell Fraser). What the two books between them reveal is a transformation in the relation between the two philosophers.

For Campbell Fraser, the interest of Reid lies precisely in the fact that his philosophy provides a possible alternative, however limited, to a world in which scepticism and doubt has become pervasive:

It should attract those who, in an age of sceptical criticism, seek to assure themselves of the final trustworthiness of the experience into which, at birth, they were admitted as strangers, ignorant of what the whole means, like the agnostic in Pascal. Who has sent me into this life I know not; nor what I am myself. I find myself chained to one little planet, but without understanding why I am here rather than there; and why this period of time was given me to live in rather than any other in the unbeginning and endless duration. Life with its memories and forecasts looks like a blind venture. The sum of my knowledge seems to be that I must die; but what I am most ignorant of is the meaning of death. One is drawn to Reid by an interest in final questions like these, which the agnostic spirit is now forcing upon us.³⁰

Against the weight of such agnosticism, in an era 'when the fundamental questions of religious thought are at the roots of our doubts and perplexities' (143), Reid's philosophy offers 'Common Sense [as] the final perception of a being who can know the universe of reality only in part, and is therefore needed by man in that indeterminate position in which an absolute beginning or end of things must be to him incomprehensible' (135). The pragmatic basis of this limited acceptance of knowledge Campbell Fraser accepts: 'the unjust as well as the just, so far as they live at all, he sees, live by faith in what cannot be either proved or disproved by direct demonstration' (137).

³⁰ Campbell Fraser, *Thomas Reid* (London: Famous Scots Series, 1898), 16–17.

For Calderwood, on the other hand, contemporary interest in Hume arises precisely from his struggle with doubt, a struggle whose conclusion is not atheism or scepticism but possible faith. Calderwood dwells on Hume's *Dialogues on Natural Religion* as a key text for contemporary readers, because of its debate about scepticism and belief, and while modern readings of Hume's work tend to see in the sceptic, Philo, the character who most closely represents Hume's views, Calderwood emphasises the role of Cleanthes, the seeker after 'a vision of truth in harmony with our fundamental faith in the Divine existence' as 'the hero of the Dialogue'³¹ and Hume's true representative. He gives space, therefore, to a footnote added to the second volume of the *History of England* in which Hume regrets his emphasis on 'the mischief which arise from the abuses of religion' as compared with the 'salutary consequences which result from true and genuine piety' because of religion's ability 'to reform men's lives, to purify their hearts, to enforce moral duties and to secure obedience to the laws and civil magistrate' (103). As a result, Hume can be seen as rendering a service to belief rather than to scepticism:

Now that the prejudices against him have in a considerable measure passed away, we can admit that his perplexities may be helpful to us who follow. Faith succeeds doubt, while preparing the way for better thought. A true service is rendered in the history of intellectual and religious development when the common difficulties of our position in the universe are stated with clearness and force. Pioneers, after enduring untold hardships, may have the gratitude of the people. (107)

As a consequence, Calderwood hopes that 'readers may be willing to consider afresh the scepticism and the religious faith', with the result that 'they may even be able to find, in Hume, a witness for Christianity whose testimony is in some respects the more valuable since beset by so many and such grave doubts'. Or, at the least, that an understanding of Hume 'may lead us to a fairer interpretation of the attitude of those, in our own day, whose avowed doubts have induced earnest men to classify them amongst the irreligious' (6). A Hume who can save the irreligious from condemnation and who can lead the doubtful back to faith is a Hume who is no longer the ultimate 'foe' of the Scottish Tradition, but an integral part of it.

This reconciliation of Hume and Reid, this return to them as providing still,

³¹ Henry Calderwood, *David Hume* (London: Famous Scots Series, 1898), 108.

the fundamental starting points of modern philosophy in the aftermath of the collapse of the German metaphysic, is what makes possible W.R. Scott's study of Francis Hutcheson as 'a philosopher of the Enlightenment in Scotland'.³² For Scott, Hume does not stand outside of the tradition of Scottish philosophy but completes one phase of it:

If then Scepticism be accepted as the close of an epoch of thought, and if Scepticism is generally preceded by an Enlightenment, this order holds good in Britain in the first half of the last century. The Realism and Empirical Idealism of the eighteenth century alike, had reached their final development. Hutcheson, with many others, constitute the "Enlightenment," and the period rounds itself off in the Scepticism of Hume, who turns the arguments of either tendency against the other to disprove the presuppositions of both. (266)

Hutcheson is the subject of Scott's work, but it is Hutcheson as the inspiration of an Enlightenment of which Hume will be the most significant product: 'Is it not strange', Scott asks, 'that in Germany, Hume's claim to have drawn a dividing line across the development of modern Philosophy is admitted, while, in his own country, it is practically ignored?' (265). This rooting of Hume in the intellectual ground of Scotland as enriched by Hutcheson made it possible to identify what was 'national' to the Enlightenment that Hutcheson initiated in Scotland: 'however thorough he imagined his revolt [against Puritanism] to be, it was still Puritanism modified from within, not revolutionised from without, and this fact probably explains the leverage that gave him his influence in Scotland' (259).

This continuity of Hutcheson and Hume as Enlightenment thinkers was not finally to be completed until 1941, with the publication of Norman Kemp Smith's *The Philosophy of David Hume*, which gave historical contextualization to the radical rereading of Hume that Kemp Smith had originally proposed in *Mind* in 1905–06. There, he had insisted that the important issue in Hume's philosophy was not his scepticism but his naturalism, involving 'a purely naturalistic conception of human nature by the thorough subordination of reason to feeling and instinct'.³³ In the book, however, he showed how such an interpretation of Hume could be historically grounded in the influence of

³² W.R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson: his life, teaching and position in the history of philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900), 257.

³³ Norman Smith, 'The Naturalism of Hume', *Mind*, NS 54 (April, 1905), 150.

Hutcheson, because from Hutcheson ‘he was led to recognise that judgments of moral approval and disapproval, and indeed judgments of *value* of whatever type, are based not on insight or on evidence, but solely on feeling’.³⁴ As a result, such fundamental—not to say ‘common sense’—beliefs as ‘the belief in the existence of the body is, Hume declares, a “natural” belief due to the ultimate instincts or propensities which constitute our human nature. It cannot be justified by reason’.³⁵ Hume becomes part of a tradition which is founded on Hutcheson and is no longer fundamentally at odds with Reid, so that all of them can now be participants in that Scottish Enlightenment which W. R. Scott had as presciently described in the future as in the past.

The work of W. R. Scott and Kemp Smith made possible a Scottish tradition which could include both Hume and Reid and therefore made possible the notion of a Scottish ‘Enlightenment’: ironically, however, the adoption of the idea of the Scottish Enlightenment was to cast into eclipse the very period from which it was born. Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Scottish intellectual culture was treated as, at best, an afterthought to Enlightenment or, at worst, as a betrayal of it. And yet this was the culture of the two greatest physicists of the nineteenth century, Kelvin and Clerk Maxwell, who challenged Newtonian physics and made possible the work of Einstein; it was the culture of the some of the most important and influential anthropologists of the nineteenth century, in the work of Robertson Smith and J. G. Frazer; it was the culture of the most influential empirical psychologist of the nineteenth century, Alexander Bain, of the University of Aberdeen; it was the culture of Patrick Geddes, whose theories on the environment and on urban planning were to shape the development of twentieth-century thinking about the city and its future. The Scottish Enlightenment, in other words, was the conceptual product of a period of Scottish intellectual life as vibrant and creative as the period which it named, and it was into this powerful Scottish intellectual environment that Robert Morrison MacIver and John Macmurray entered as students in the first decade of the twentieth century.

II

In the decade before the First World War, Scottish culture was at the apogee of its international influence. The great nineteenth-century journals, *The*

³⁴ Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume* (London: Macmillan, 1966; 1941), 15.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

Edinburgh Review and, especially, *Blackwood's*, continued to have a worldwide audience even if they were no longer the arbiters of public taste, and new specialist journals such as *Mind*³⁶ had established themselves as the leading titles in their field. The Scottish universities were leading the way in the development of disciplines such as English Literature—David Masson, Regius Professor at Edinburgh is regularly cited as the first modern academic literary critic³⁷—and in the teaching of new disciplines such as sociology, which MacIver introduced at Aberdeen in 1907. Scottish intellectuals would take the high road to Oxford or to Germany for their postgraduate education but at colleges like Balliol they would find a Scottish tradition as deeply embedded as they would find a Protestant tradition in Germany. The attractions of the Scottish universities as centres of intellectual activity are clear from the biographies of philosophers such as James Seth, who held posts at Dalhousie, Brown and Cornell universities in North America before returning to a Professorship in Edinburgh, or John Laird, who returned from Dalhousie by way of Queen's Belfast to the Professorship in philosophy at Aberdeen, or Norman Kemp Smith, who returned to Edinburgh from Princeton in 1919. Robert Morrison MacIver's biography makes it appear that his progression from Aberdeen to Toronto and then to Columbia was a smooth transition into a fulfilling transatlantic career, but letters in the archives at Toronto reveal that in 1921–2 he was engaged in discussions with the Principals of both Aberdeen and Glasgow universities about taking up a chair back in Scotland, an outcome which was averted more by accident than design.³⁸ When John Macmurray returned to Edinburgh in 1944, it was because Edinburgh University, in his view, 'offers an almost ideal set of conditions' for his philosophical project.³⁹

As is clear from their continual efforts to engage their philosophical and sociological thinking with the practical requirements of their societies, MacIver and Macmurray were both 'generalists' in the sense suggested by G. E. Davie's account of the Scottish philosophical tradition as that of the 'democratic intellect'⁴⁰—thinkers for whom philosophy was the foundation for a general account

³⁶ Founded by Alexander Bain of the University of Aberdeen and actually printed in Aberdeen.

³⁷ See Chris Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism, 1848–1932* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

³⁸ Correspondence with James Mavor, in the 'Papers of James Mavor' held by the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto, boxes 35 and 53a.

³⁹ Costello, *John Macmurray*, 303; letter of May 15 to Provost of University College London.

⁴⁰ See also Davie's *The Crisis of the Democratic Intellect* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1986).

of all aspects of human experience and for a response to the particular historical circumstances in which they found themselves. The title of MacIver's book of 1955, *The Pursuit of Happiness: A Philosophy for Modern Living*,⁴¹ might stand as the epigraph of both their lives' work, and thus their constant need to find ways of communicating their philosophies to a general public in an accessible and non-specialist style. They both wanted to address an audience each individual of which would be able, as MacIver put it in that book, to 'think of yourself, the you between the heels and the hair, as a person',⁴² and not simply as part of a mass or as part of an elite. By the 1950s, however, this style of intellectual engagement was being replaced by an increasing specialisation—a specialisation within academic disciplines and in terms of a vocabulary which could not be immediately accessible to a 'general' audience. Meeting George Davie for the first time in 1946, when both had recently returned to Edinburgh from posts in London and Belfast, Macmurray declared that 'the humanities are fighting for their life at Edinburgh, and they're losing the battle'.⁴³ The same battle was being lost in Sociology departments in North America⁴⁴ as scientific explanations based on what MacIver described as 'crudely mechanistic assumptions' sought, 'in precise quantitative terms' to identify 'the role of various components of a causal complex'.⁴⁵ The challenge to philosophy and sociology as humanistic disciplines concerned with the decisions and actions of *persons*, and not merely with the formal structure of arguments or the quantitative analysis of data, was one which would marginalize both MacIver and Macmurray as their disciplines were reduced from *general* accounts of the nature of human communities to specialist analyses of the workings of language or of the collection of statistical data.

Through the 1930s, 40s and 50s, the chairs in philosophy at the Scottish universities were still regularly held by philosophers who had been educated in those universities—even if they had done their postgraduate work in Oxford or in Germany, and even if they had spent time in North American institutions: Kemp Smith and then Macmurray in Edinburgh, A. A. Bowman in Glasgow, Laird in Aberdeen, for instance. But with the rapid expansion of higher education in the 1960s, the small scale of philosophy departments

⁴¹ R. M. MacIver, *The Pursuit of Happiness: A Philosophy for Modern Living* (New York: Simon and Schuster), 1955.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴³ Costello, *John Macmurray*, 307.

⁴⁴ See Elizabetta Halas, 'How Robert M. MacIver was forgotten', *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 37, Issue 1, 27–43.

⁴⁵ R. M. MacIver, *Social Causation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964; 1942), 94.

which made such continuity possible was overwhelmed by the growth of much larger departments, many members of which had no connection with the traditions of Scottish philosophy. As John E. Costello puts it in his biography of Macmurray, ‘analytic philosophy, well dug in at Oxford and Cambridge, was now sweeping across England’.⁴⁶ As a result, it became increasingly the case that to study Scottish philosophy was judged as a failure to engage in philosophy as such—unless, of course, one was engaged in the study of the Scottish Enlightenment. As a consequence, the influence of Scottish philosophers such as Macmurray was much more pronounced in other disciplines than in philosophy itself—in psychology, in theology, in the practice of social work his ideas continued to have a relevance that they did not have within the ambit of ‘analytic’ philosophy. Similarly, as sociology in the United States became more ‘scientific’ and less ‘philosophical’, MacIver’s influence was to exert itself in areas of social concern such as academic freedom or teenage delinquency, rather than in the development of sociology itself.

Ironically, therefore, the generalism which made the Scottish Enlightenment such a productive area for international scholarship after the 1960s—Hume and Smith could attract the interest of metaphysicians, historians, sociologists, economists, (anti-)theologians, aesthetic theorists, moralists and political scientists—was precisely the reason why their Scottish successors were treated as marginal to the concerns of the modern disciplines of philosophy and sociology—they were not sufficiently *specialised* to be appropriate interlocutors in contemporary philosophical or sociological debate. The very lack of specialism which was applauded in their Enlightenment predecessors was the basis of their contemporary denigration—an irony which tells us a great deal about the divide between intellectual *history* and intellectual *engagement* in our contemporary academic environment, and a great deal about the *falsity* of the promotion of the Scottish Enlightenment as an epoch which has nothing to do with the development of Scottish thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is in part for these reasons that this journal is entitled the *Journal of Scottish Thought*—it seeks to understand the history of Scottish thought through a *generalist* commitment to understanding the relations *between* specialist disciplines, and to maintain Scottish thought’s refusal of those disciplinary boundaries which would isolate the social sciences from metaphysics, aesthetics from social history, or science from ethics. The traditions of Scottish thought to which MacIver and Macmurray belong have insisted on the need

⁴⁶ Ibid., 307.

for an engagement between the sciences, the social sciences and the humanities, because all of these have their impact on the needs and development of contemporary society—a society defined not by the requirements of particular intellectual disciplines but by the total activity of all the human beings who participate within it – what MacIver describes as ‘all the changing systems of human values, all the institutions, and all the creative works of man’.⁴⁷ It is this broad conception of ‘thought’ to which the *Journal of Scottish Thought* is committed. As it is committed to a no less broadly conceived conception of what is ‘Scottish’. Scotland, throughout its history, has been a country of immigrants and emigrants; as a nation, it has been a site of transit and transition. Such a nation does not exist within the fixed boundaries by which modern states are supposed to be defined: it is a nation at once located in a specific geographical and social-historical space and a nation whose filiations reach across the globe. It is a nation of communicative connections which refuse to acknowledge the territorial boundaries which the state assigns to it: it is a nation-in-community, a nation-in-communication, defying the territorial compactness of its political geography. It is this nation to which MacIver and Macmurray belonged: a nation which allowed one man to return to Scotland to find the community in which he could best fulfil the needs of his philosophical enterprise and the other to adopt citizenship in another country as the most practical application of the conception of community he had brought with him from Scotland.

Macmurray conceived of the human individual as a ‘person in relation’; MacIver conceived of ‘community’ as an ‘ever-evolving system spreading beyond and only partially controlled within the definite framework of any state’;⁴⁸ this journal is devoted to examining, analysing and understanding Scottish thought along both these axes—the relations of Scottish thinkers in whatever disciplines they happen to work and the interaction of thinkers who are engaged with Scottish thought wherever they happen to work. Through such ‘relations’ we hope not only to uncover unexpected interactions between Scottish thinkers—like the relations between MacIver and Macmurray explored in the essays in this issue—but to continue to promote the underlying agenda of this Scottish tradition—resistance to forms of specialism which on the one hand prevent us looking at human experience as a whole, and on the other prevent acknowledgment of the power of national traditions, whose particularity is a lens through which the nature of our modern experience can be understood. Such national particularities are as important to the eco-system

⁴⁷ MacIver, *Politics and Society*, ‘The Social Sciences’, 16.

⁴⁸ R. M. MacIver, *Community: A Sociological Study* (London: Macmillan, 1920; 1917), 35.

of thought as particular environments are to the eco-systems of the planet: we need them and we need to be committed to them, because any of them might, at some point, provide us with appropriate answers to the problems with which the modern world confronts us. There is no *global* theory which is not located in some *locale*, no *locale* which does not have the potential of providing a new and better global theory. Only by exploring, maintaining and developing the *local* can we hope to grasp the global—indeed, ‘glocalisation’ is what the theories of ‘community’ presented by MacIver and Macmurray might be said to confirm, the development and application on the widest level of generality of ideas that are grounded in particular social and historical experiences.

MacIver and Macmurray are appropriate figures for this first issue of the *Journal of Scottish Thought* because they are indicative both of the continuities within Scottish thought and the ways in which it has been disseminated across disciplinary and national boundaries. Scottish thought of their kind is as *inter-disciplinary* as it is *international*, and for the same reason: in a small country it is impossible to build barriers between intellectual endeavours which may, in larger cultures, seem to be entirely self-sustaining; just as, in a small country it is impossible to believe that one’s culture is entirely self-contained and self-generating. Not only persons-in-relation, but disciplines-in-relation and nations-in-relation is the burden of Scottish thought as it is evidenced in the lives and work of Robert Morrison MacIver and John Macmurray.

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