

ANDREW HOOK

Andrew Dunnett Hook

21 December 1932 – 26 November 2024

elected Fellow of the British Academy 2002

by

CAIRNS CRAIG

Fellow of the Academy

Summary. When the Andrew Hook Centre for American Studies was launched at Glasgow University in 1997, it underlined Hook's pioneering role in American Studies in Britain and the significance of his writings on the modern American novelist, including two books on F. Scott Fitzgerald. Hook's first major publication, however, was *Scotland and America* (1975), tracing Scottish influences on early American culture, and he was equally prominent in the field of Scottish Literature, producing modern editions of two Walter Scott novels, editing Volume 2, 1660–1800, of the four-volume AUP *History of Scottish Literature* (1987), and being appointed President of the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Studies Society (1990–92).

Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the British Academy, 23, 95–121

<https://doi.org/10.5871/mem/023.095>

Posted 20 February 2026. © British Academy 2026.



A. D. Hood

Andrew Hook was proud of having come from Wick, the closest town to John o' Groats at the most northerly point of the Scottish mainland. He titled a collection of his essays on Scottish American topics *From Mount Hooly to Princeton*, Mount Hooly being the family home in Wick, as though its remoteness, both geographic and linguistic (could 'Hooly' be a local version of 'Holy'?), was a measure of how far he had to travel to fulfil his academic ambitions. It was a journey that took him first to Edinburgh, where he completed his secondary school education at Daniel Stewart's College, before going on to study English Literature at Edinburgh University. He then opted to continue his studies at Manchester University where Marcus Cunliffe and Geoffrey Moore had recently established one of the first departments of American Studies in the United Kingdom, and where Hook could pursue what had become his main literary interest, American novelists of the period after the First World War. There he was told that if he was serious about an academic career in American literature, he should undertake study in the United States. Having already spent two years doing his National Service (as an intelligence officer in Langeleben on the border between East and West Germany), Hook wasted no time in making applications for funding that would allow him to take a degree at an American college, and was successful in winning The Jane Eliza Procter Fellowship which he would hold at Princeton in 1958 and where he would stay to complete a PhD in 1960.

As he recounts in 'A Scot at Princeton',¹ his success was reflective of changing times in British academia, for the Fellowship had never before been awarded to any but an Oxford or Cambridge graduate. When he arrived at Princeton, however, it transpired that his PhD supervisor, Professor Willard Thorp, had been waiting for a student with a Scottish background – even if Hook himself had never studied Scottish literature – to investigate 'Princeton and America's eighteenth-century links with Scotland',² using the resources of the University's Firestone Library, which included the papers and books of John Witherspoon, the 18th-century Scot who had been President of Princeton (then the College of New Jersey) from 1768 to 1794. The College had many connections with Scotland: its first president was an episcopalian Scot, James Blair; collections were raised at church doors in every parish in Scotland to help build the American university's iconic centrepiece, Nassau Hall; and Witherspoon oversaw a traditional Scottish curriculum designed to prepare young men for presbyterian ministry. By the 1950s, such Scottish influence had been forgotten and Hook was voyaging on uncharted waters: he had to educate himself not only in 18th- and 19th-century Scottish thought – Blair, Kames, Ferguson, Reid and Dugald Stewart, as well as David Hume and Adam Smith – and in the country's literary traditions, from Allan Ramsay in the 1710s and 1720s to

¹ Andrew Hook, *From Mount Hooly to Princeton: A Scottish-American Medley* (Edinburgh: Kennedy and Boyd, 2020), p. 31.

² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Walter Scott a century later, as well as in American writing of the same period. This was an area of intellectual history that was invisible from both American and British perspectives; as Hook put it in his ‘Author’s Preface’ to the 2008 edition of his book *Scotland and America*, and looking back on the long delay between his PhD submission in 1960 and the book’s eventual publication in 1975, ‘Who would possibly be interested in a book about something as improbable as the cultural relationships between Scotland and America in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries?’³

What had transformed that ‘improbability’ was the discovery and identification (or the invention and creation) of what came to be known as the ‘Scottish Enlightenment’. *Scotland and America* declares that Scotland’s influence on America can be traced to the ‘emergence of what may be broadly described as the Scottish Enlightenment’,⁴ a phenomenon, indeed, that is credited with being ‘the sole justification for the writing of this book’.⁵ It was a justification, however, unmentioned in the dissertation of 1960, which refers regularly to Scotland’s 18th-century ‘renaissance’ or ‘revival’,⁶ but never adopts the notion of ‘Enlightenment’. Such terminology only came into general use after the second ‘International Congress on the Enlightenment’, held at St Andrews in 1967, in which Hugh Trevor-Roper argued the case for a *Scottish* Enlightenment in the context of a European Enlightenment emerging from similar, apparently marginal, societies with strong educational traditions. The intellectual prominence given to Scotland by the elaboration of its specific national contribution to the international phenomenon of the ‘Enlightenment’ changed its impact on America from a series of individual interventions by influential Scots – of the kind presented in Douglas Sloan’s *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal* in 1961 – to a general infusion of Scottish thought into the evolving culture of the United States. From university curricula foregrounding natural philosophy and *belles lettres*, to medical schools based on the model of Edinburgh University, to the acceptance of the ‘Common Sense’ philosophy of Thomas Reid and his followers, Scottish thought came to permeate the America intellectual environment, its prominence underpinned by the immense success of Edinburgh’s publishing ventures, not only the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* of 1768–71, but journals such as the *Edinburgh Review* (founded in 1802) and *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* (1817), both of which achieved a wide readership in North America.

³ Andrew Hook, *Scotland and America: A Study of Cultural Relations 1750–1835*, 2nd edn (Glasgow: Humming Earth, 2008), p. xx.

⁴ Hook, *Scotland and America*, p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶ Hook’s PhD dissertation, *Literary and cultural relations between Scotland and America, 1763–1830*, is available on microfilm, published by University Microfilms International (Ann Arbor MI, 1960); my thanks to John Logan of Special Collections at Princeton for this information. References to a Scottish ‘renaissance’ can be found, for instance, on pp. 26, 28, 32; to an ‘intellectual renaissance’ on p. 169; and to a Scottish ‘revival’ on p. 44.

Hook's analysis of the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment on the United States focuses on two overlapping periods: first, a 'North British phase' in which Scotland is identified as the 'land of learning' because of its prominence in many of the new disciplines of the period, particularly those dealing with communication skills (Hugh Blair's lectures on *belles lettres*) and the evolution and organisation of modern societies (Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*). In this phase, Scottish intellectuals looked to England and Europe for their audience and sought to avoid anything – such as David Hume's fear of allowing 'Scotticisms' to creep into his prose – which emphasised their Scottish origins. Hook cites the preface to the first version of the *Edinburgh Review* (1755) as indicative of the Scots' consciousness of the immaturity of their culture: 'If countries have their ages with respect to improvement, North-Britain may be considered as in a state of early youth, guided and supported by the more mature strength of her kindred country'.⁷ Lurking within this apparently callow 'North British' culture there was, however, a much more ancient one, represented by the late medieval poetry gathered in anthologies such as James Watson's *A Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems both Ancient and Modern* (1706, 1709, 1711) and Alan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany* and *The Ever-Green* (both 1724). The latter contained poetry preserved in the Bannatyne manuscript, dating back to 1568. This 'ancient' culture was distinctively Scottish rather than North British, and was to be given vaster amplification by James Macpherson's 'translations' of Ossianic poetry, published in the 1760s but claiming to be based on Gaelic originals dating from the 3rd century AD. The huge international success of Macpherson's poetry – both Thomas Jefferson and Napoleon Bonaparte were admirers – provided Scotland with a literary genealogy which, in Scots, went as far back as any literature in English, and in Gaelic seemed to be akin to the classics of ancient Greece. By the creative recovery of such native resources in the works of Robert Burns and Walter Scott, the 'land of learning' was transformed into the second of Hook's periods of Scottish influence, that of 'the land of romance'. In this phase there was no sense of inferiority – if anything, Scots tended to condescend to English cultural achievement – and no sense, in particular, that the Scots vernacular as used by a poet like Robert Burns was in any way a limitation as compared with literary English. Hook quotes from an essay in the *Edinburgh Review* of 1809 which he believes indicates the transformation of Scottish self-identity between the 18th and 19th centuries:

We beg leave too . . . to observe that this Scotch is not to be considered as a provincial dialect, – the vehicle only of rustic vulgarity and rude local humour. It is the language of a whole country, – long an independent kingdom, and still separate in laws, character and manners. It is by no means peculiar to the vulgar . . . it is the language of a great body of poetry, with which almost all Scotchmen are familiar; and, in

⁷Hook, *Scotland and America*, p. 3.

particular, of a great multitude of songs, written with more tenderness, nature, and feeling, than any other lyric compositions that are extant . . .⁸

These two phases of Scotland's cultural development are not a matter of one displacing the other, but of each deepening and consolidating the implications of the other:

Scotland's cultural development from the early eighteenth century through to the first decades of the nineteenth is then characterised by impulses both national and international, local and cosmopolitan; in the generation prior to the American Revolution the division may be identified as one between poets and literary editors on the one hand, and broadly speaking of the philosophical Enlightenment on the other. But in the subsequent generation, while neither impulse declines, no such clear division can be made.⁹

What underpins the widening influence of both these versions of Scottishness is the dynamism of the Scottish economy in the period between the 1740s and the 1840s when it was in the very forefront of Britain's 'industrial revolution', but it was a dynamism driven in large measure by Scotland's relationship with North America and with the importing and processing of products such as tobacco, cotton and sugar. Glasgow's geographical advantage over London or even Bristol in terms of sailing time to America's east coast and the West Indies made it the prime location for receiving goods from the Americas; in addition, the shortness of Glasgow's distance from Scotland's east coast ports, especially after the opening of the Forth and Clyde Canal in 1790, meant that goods could rapidly be transshipped to European destinations. The flourishing of industrial Glasgow meant not only regular contact with America by Scots merchants, sailors, ministers and educators, but an increasing flow in the other direction of Americans seeking education at Scotland's universities. The numbers of Scottish migrants in the United States remained small – as compared, say, with the Scotch-Irish from Ulster – and resentment at the politics of Scots who remained loyal to the crown during the Revolution was long-lasting. But Scots played key roles in the founding of American institutions on Scottish lines, from the College of William and Mary in 1693, to the earliest medical schools that adopted the curriculum of the Edinburgh University degree, such as that in Philadelphia, inspired by Benjamin Rush, a signatory to the *Declaration of Independence* who had studied in Edinburgh. The extensive Scottish influence on America's cultural institutions was manifest, for Hook, in the careers of John Witherspoon and James McCosh, the Scots under whose presidencies Princeton emerged as a leading 'ivy league' university. Witherspoon promoted the Scottish philosophy of the 'Common Sense' school of Reid and Stewart, and, as in the Scottish universities, adopted instruction in 'belles lettres' as a means of making students proficient in English. A century later,

⁸Hook, *Scotland and America*, pp. 6–7.

⁹Ibid., p. 8.

McCosh was no less certain of the value to American public life of Reid's philosophy as a buttress against scientific doubts about the truth of the Christian religion. As a Scot studying at Princeton, Hook discovered himself to be part of an institution which, for a hundred years, had operated as though it was an outpost of a Scottish intellectual empire.

The upsurge in academic interest in the Scottish Enlightenment in the 1970s and 1980s coincided with the 200th anniversary of the American Revolution, which set American scholars in search of the specifically American roots of post-Revolutionary culture, a search which was, in many cases, guided by the discovery of Scottish influence. In his 'Author's Preface' to the 2008 edition of his book, Hook suggests that his arguments had gathered a retrospective prominence from such works by American scholars as Garry Wills's *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (1978), which argued the case for Jefferson's knowledge of Hutcheson and Hume as the philosophical basis of the *Declaration*, and Arthur Herman's *The Scottish Enlightenment: the Scots' Invention of the Modern World* (2003), which made the much more ambitious claim that the modern world as we have come to know it was the creation of the Scottish Enlightenment.¹⁰ Hook's specialist study of an apparently insignificant corner of the history of ideas had suddenly become the cornerstone a major area of contemporary intellectual investigation. Such potential in Hook's study had been recognised by the early reviewers of the mid-1970s: *Scotland and America* was praised for its assiduous documenting of previously unconsidered materials, and for opening up what was generally felt to be a valuable – if minor – intellectual inheritance for both countries, but it was also greeted with the sense that it had not gone far enough. C. Duncan Rice's response is typical:

Mr Hook has produced a thoughtful, well written, and desperately needed book. It does not therefore follow that the same study will never have to be done again. But the highest compliment to *Scotland and America* is that when it is eventually replaced, ten or twenty years from now, it will be replaced because of research done along lines to which Mr Hook has pointed.¹¹

The sense of much still to be done is perhaps indicative of the long gap between Hook's original PhD submission and the publication of the book, a period in which the disciplines of history and literary criticism underwent radical changes in both countries.¹²

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. xix–xx.

¹¹ C. Duncan Rice, *The Scottish Historical Review*, 55:160 Pt 2 (October 1976), 203–205 at 205.

¹² David Craig's account of *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People, 1680–1830* appeared in 1961, and T.C. Smout's economic and social history of *The Scottish People, 1560–1830* in 1969. In the United States the Civil Rights movement focused attention on the consequences of slavery, a topic almost entirely absent from Hook's account of Scottish-American relations, as it was from almost all Scottish historical writing at the time; see, for instance, T.M. Devine's *The Tobacco Lords: A Study of the Tobacco Merchants of Glasgow and their Trading Activities, c.1740–90*, also published in 1961.

Hook's analyses also laid the groundwork for at least two important methodological innovations. The first was what came to be known as the 'history of the book', with its focus on the circulation of texts rather than the creativity of authors. Hook's study gets much of its detail from the places and dates of the re-publication in America of books by Scottish authors: 'However important in the long run contributions made by individuals may have been – American students in Scotland or Scottish teachers in America – it is difficult to see how Scottish influence could have been quickly transmitted and widely disseminated unless Scottish books were readily available in America.'¹³ The centrality of rhetoric to Scottish influence on American education is given substance by the publication history of Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, which was

published at Philadelphia, a year after its first appearance in Scotland. In 1788, there appeared at Albany the first of many abridged editions of the work. But in the period 1805–23 alone, adding together complete and abridged versions produced the extraordinary total of fifty-six editions of the work. Editions of course appeared in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York, but many others were the work of printing presses in small towns which rarely produced literary works of any kind.¹⁴

Book history was unknown in 1960 and would not become recognised in the Anglophone world till the 1990s.¹⁵ Hook's study, however, charted the circulation of Scottish books among American readers as evidenced by their citation in American journals and their use in school and college curricula. The 'great expansion in the republication of Scottish books in post-Revolutionary America', Hook concludes, 'reflects developments of a more substantial kind than simply the creation of the new, no copyright situation.'¹⁶ Ironically, the ideas and literary styles of a country which had lost its independence in 1707, and many of whose migrants in North America were hostile to the freedoms sought by American rebels, were to permeate the early culture of the country created by the *Declaration of Independence*.

Hook's focus on the shipment of goods, books, ideas and people between Scotland and America was also an early contribution to what later became known as 'Transatlantic Studies',¹⁷ a discipline that set itself to resist national historiography in order to explore the interrelations of regions that border on the Atlantic. *Scotland and America*, for instance, has a substantial chapter on the responses of American visitors to Scotland. The travellers might be American, but the minds that crossed the Atlantic were already full of memories of the Scotland they expected to encounter – and by which they were not disappointed:

¹³ Hook, *Scotland and America*, p. 39.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁵ See David Finkelstein & Alistair McCleery (eds), *The Book History Reader*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2006), 'Introduction', p. 2.

¹⁶ Hook, *Scotland and America*, p. 78.

¹⁷ The Transatlantic Studies Association was formed in 2002.

Again and again American travellers and critics point to the richness of association which her history and her writers had brought to Scotland. It is as if their recognition of the barrenness of so much of the American scene in this respect had sharpened their awareness of its presence in every corner of Scotland.¹⁸

The irony here is compounded by the fact that the appreciation of ‘association’ as a key element in aesthetic experience was itself, from David Hume to Francis Jeffrey, a largely Scottish invention: unsurprisingly, Scotland proved remarkably amenable to aesthetic experience as defined by Scottish thinkers, its landscape continually augmented in its associative potential by the success of the country’s literary works.

The influence of Hook’s anticipations of book history and transatlantic studies can be traced in the work of Richard B. Sher, Hook’s co-editor of a collection of essays on *The Glasgow Enlightenment* (1995). Sher was the founder of the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Studies Society, of which Hook was President (only the third and the first from Scotland) from 1990 to 1992. Sher’s specialism was the intellectual history of 18th-century Scotland, but he was to apply Hook’s methodology on a grand scale in his magisterial *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors and their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland and America* (2007), which traced the circulation of Scottish books in Britain, and their re-publication in Ireland and North America. Sher’s acknowledgement of Hook’s achievement, published as a preface to the 2008 edition of *Scotland and America*, gives prominence to Hook’s early investigations into ‘book history’:

He pays careful attention to the geography and timing of American reprinting of Scottish books, something that most cultural historians of his generation have scarcely noticed. He sees how certain American works, such as Samuel Miller’s *Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* (1800), facilitated the institutionalization of Scottish learning in America. He observes the different ways in which Scotland served as a model for Americans who were searching for a basis for a national culture grounded in native responses and traditions, without slavishly imitating English models.¹⁹

The ‘book history’ dimension of *Scotland and America* was crucial to the innovative thrust of Hook’s work but it was in service a much broader agenda, in which Scotland and Scottish literary achievement paved the way for the emergence of a truly American literature: ‘it was recognised in America’, Hook comments, ‘that the distinctively national path to literary glory, which American writers should follow, had been pointed out to them by the Scots’,²⁰ and he quotes Rufus Choate’s address at Salem in 1833 as

¹⁸ Hook, *Scotland and America*, p. 177.

¹⁹ Richard B. Sher, ‘Foreword’, *Scotland and America*, pp. xii–xiii.

²⁰ Hook, *Scotland and America*, p. 162.

indicative, its title being ‘The importance of Illustrating New England History by a Series of Romances like the Waverley Novels’.²¹

It was a theme that Hook pursued in the essays collected in *From Goosecreek to Gandercleugh* (1999), which explored the particular ways in which Scottish culture helped shape the emergence of a distinctive American literature. Walter Scott was crucial, both in completing the transformation of perceptions of the Scottish landscape begun by Macpherson’s Ossianic poems, and in turning the story of Scotland’s fractious history into material deserving of aesthetic appreciation. By the same means it would be possible for American writers to reinvent their own landscape and history:

For a period in the 1820s and 1830s there was what one scholar described as a ‘romance ferment’ in America. What Scott had done for Scotland through the Waverley Novels, American authors by writing about American manners, American scenes, American history, should do for America. Scott was repeatedly offered as both example and model.²²

Scott’s impact, however, was only the culmination of the long gestation of Scottish influences on America, influences that were not merely literary, as Hook suggests in his essays on ‘Hogg, Melville and the Scottish Enlightenment’ and ‘Carlyle and America’. In the first of these, Hook argues that parallels between Melville’s ‘Benito Cereno’ and Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* cannot be attributed to Melville’s knowledge of Hogg’s novel:

To set Melville beside Hogg is to suggest how a particular literary form may be explained not in terms of any alleged debt or influence, but rather as the way in which two different authors, working in distinct but not wholly unrelated contexts, articulate their sense of the complex relationship between themselves and their society.²³

What links Hogg and Melville is that they stand between a tradition of Calvinist Christianity and its dismissal by the proponents of Enlightenment, and seek to undermine the apparent certainties of both positions:

. . . in *The Justified Sinner* it is not only Calvinist extremism but also the complacency of the Scottish Enlightenment that are the objects of Hogg’s satire. Melville’s anguished obsession with the Calvinist deity is generally recognised; much less well understood is the fact that it was under the defensive walls of the Scottish Enlightenment that his most powerful satiric charges were laid. The official philosophy of that confident and complacent ante-bellum American society which it was Melville’s primary aim to undermine and subvert was neither more nor less than a ‘naturalised’

²¹ Ibid.

²² Andrew Hook, *From Goosecreek to Gandercleugh: Studies in Scottish-American Literary and Cultural Relations* (Phantassie, East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), p. 111.

²³ Ibid., p. 129.

form of the common sense philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment. It was in the ideas of Thomas Reid, Dugald Stewart, and James Beattie, as these were disseminated throughout the whole of America by way of the writings, teaching and preaching of countless American professors, college-presidents, and clergymen, that the society found its best protection from other, more dangerously radical, ideas and philosophies.²⁴

If the ‘learning’ of the Scottish Enlightenment subverted the theological certainties of Calvinism, those roles could be reversed to produce narratives that undermined both positions with equal intensity, even if readers and many literary critics remained blind to the implications of such narratives.

The sense that Scottish and American writers shared a similar cultural inheritance is particularly pronounced in Hook’s analysis of the American reception of Thomas Carlyle. Carlyle’s style, Hook suggests, is a consciously symbolic one in which ‘everyday reality is then a symbol of a greater reality; the visible is but the garment of the invisible.’²⁵ Carlyle, Hook argues, was returning to the traditions of a Calvinist reading of the world that the Enlightenment believed it had overthrown, and in so doing Carlyle inspired a generation of American readers who were, like him, in revolt against the ‘modified empiricism of the Scottish common sense school of philosophy – and, perhaps, more importantly, the moderation in religion that went with it.’²⁶ What Carlyle and American Transcendentalism shared was ‘the revitalisation of the old Calvinist way of seeing the hand of God in the most mundane aspects of everyday reality’,²⁷ a ‘supernaturalism’ by which, in the words of Carlyle’s American admirer, Ralph Waldo Emerson, ‘Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact’.²⁸ The intellectual consanguinity brought about by a shared Calvinist inheritance was the appeal of Carlyle to American readers, so that, for instance, *Sartor Resartus* appeared in book form first in Boston in 1836, two years before its publication in London. That intellectual consanguinity was also responsible, Hook suggests, for the Scottish ‘invention’ of American literature by John Nichol – author in 1875 of an article on American literature in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and subsequently of *American Literature, An Historical Sketch, 1620–1880* (1882) – and by Nichol’s former student James Bryce, author of *The American Commonwealth* (1888). These products of Glasgow University were, Hook insists, ‘the original Scottish cultivators of the field that was to become American Studies’,²⁹ thus providing a Scottish origin for his own enthusiasm for American literature.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

In the long period between the submission of his Princeton PhD and its book publication, Hook was appointed in 1961 to an assistant lectureship in English Literature at Edinburgh University. He was as sociable as the *lumières* of the Scottish Enlightenment whom he had studied in Princeton, and rapidly made the acquaintance of Jim Haynes, the American owner of what claimed to be the first paperback bookshop in Britain. Haynes had decided to revitalise Edinburgh by making its quotidian reality more like the three weeks of the already internationally famous Edinburgh Festival, and in 1961 he was, along with John Calder – publisher of, among others, Samuel Beckett – one of the organisers of a Festival event focused on contemporary writing, and billed as *The Novel Today*, an ‘International Writers’ Conference’. It ran 20–24 August 1962, and featured a wealth of contemporary American, English and Scottish writers. Hook was invited to become the editor of the conference publication, which contained both a daily programme and a series of discussion papers addressing the themes chosen for each day – ‘Contrasts of Approach’, ‘Scottish Writing Today’, ‘Commitment’, ‘Censorship’, and ‘The Novel and the Future’. The publication was a substantial one, at 128 pages, with a forceful typography, but the event itself was to be remembered as one which pitted ‘tradition’ against ‘experiment’, the ‘national’ against the ‘cosmopolitan’, and, most famously, for the bust-up between the grand old man of Scottish literature, Christopher Murray Grieve, better known as the poet ‘Hugh MacDiarmid’, and Alexander Trocchi, a Scottish writer who had been involved in publishing in Paris, who identified himself with the ‘Beats’ in America, and who was about to launch his *Sygma* project that sought to provoke what he declared would be ‘the invisible insurrection of a million minds’.³⁰ Trocchi complained about the unexciting nature of MacDiarmid’s nationalism, and MacDiarmid responded that Trocchi was ‘cosmopolitan scum’.³¹ The event, as Hook later recalled, was viewed as a symptomatic turning point, one that took place ‘on the brink of the sixties cultural explosion that would define the entire postwar artistic world.’³² It was sufficiently part of popular cultural memory that Hook was encouraged to have *The Novel Today* reprinted on the 50th anniversary of the conference in a limited edition signed by the editor.

If the ‘International Writers’ Conference’ represented a significant cultural moment, it also represented a significant personal opening in Hook’s career, for his own contribution to the publication, an essay entitled ‘Commitment and Reality’, in which he contrasted the views of John Dos Passos and Scott Fitzgerald on the importance of political engagement, was later republished in the United States in James B. Hall and Barry

³⁰ See *A Revolutionary Proposal: Invisible Insurrection of a Million Minds*, available at *Situationist International Online*, <https://www.sionline.researche-editions.cddc.vt.edu/si/invisible.html>

³¹ See Andrew Murray Scott, *Alexander Trocchi: The Making of a Monster* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1991), p. 108.

³² Hook, *From Mount Hooly to Princeton*, p. 24.

Ulanov's *Modern Culture and the Arts* (1967), establishing Hook's reputation as the specialist in the modern American novel he had gone to Princeton to become. As a consequence, he later edited a collection of critical essays on John Dos Passos for Prentice Hall (1974) that included work by many distinguished North American scholars, including Marshall McLuhan, Edmund Wilson and Lionel Trilling, as well as European contributions by F.R. Leavis and Jean-Paul Sartre. In his 'Introduction', Hook generalised the opposition between Dos Passos and Fitzgerald of his earlier essay, quoting again the letter from Dos Passos to Fitzgerald which he took to be indicative of Dos Passos's attitude to 'commitment'. The occasion of the letter was the publication in *Esquire* of the essays that later formed Fitzgerald's posthumous book *The Crack-Up* (1945), which 'tried to account for an overwhelming sense of personal frustration and failure' by which Fitzgerald was engulfed in 1936 and to which Dos Passos responded complainingly:

I've been wanting to see you, naturally, to argue about your *Esquire* articles – Christ man, how do you find time in the middle of the general conflagration to worry about all that stuff? . . . After all not many people write as well as you do. Here you've gone and spent forty years in perfecting an elegant and complicated piece of machinery (tool I was going to say) and the next forty years is the time to use it – or as long as the murderous forces of history will let you.³³

Hook glosses Dos Passos's response as indicative of a belief that 'as an artist he should be preoccupied not with the cracking up of his own life, but with what Dos Passos recognises as the imminent dissolution and disintegration of the society of which he is part'.³⁴ The disagreement is between 'private and public visions of the individual and society',³⁵ disagreements which, Hook argues, had developed in intensity during the Victorian era as writers struggled with the emergence of an industrialised, mass society. The opposition between Fitzgerald and Dos Passos in Hook's 1962 'Introduction' looks like a debate between a writer concerned with personal, subjective experience and one determined to present as impersonally as possible the world of external reality, but by 1974 Hook came to present this as an opposition within Dos Passos himself: 'An artist wholly committed at least to the imaginative recreation of a collectively perceived reality . . . he nevertheless retained a romantic sense of the value of the individual aesthetic sensibility and an equally romantic view of the essential hostility of a collective social reality to that sensibility.'³⁶ Dos Passos, in other words, was less an exemplar of the 'committed' writer than of the general condition of the creative artist in the modern

³³ Andrew Hook, 'Commitment and reality', *The Novel Today: International Writers' Conference* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh International Festival, 1962), p. 45.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

³⁶ 'Introduction', Andrew Hook (ed.), *Dos Passos: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall, 1974), p. 10.

world, caught between the retreat of art into ‘the logic of art for art’s sake’ and a countervailing acceptance of ‘engagement with the external, social reality as the only kind of engagement that matters’.³⁷ Whatever the ‘committed’ nature of Dos Passos’s writings of the 1920s and 1930s, they nonetheless bear witness to a crisis faced by all inheritors of romantic aesthetics in which art was in retreat from an unacceptable external reality while still believing that it should be capable of transforming that reality.

It was a dilemma Hook developed in the ‘Introduction’ he penned for the edition of Walter Scott’s *Waverley* he prepared for Penguin in 1971, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Scott’s birth. Scott may have been ‘the Wizard of the North’ but he was, Hook argued, by no means committed to the Scotland of Romance that his works did so much to project. Indeed, the decline in Scott’s literary reputation between the 1880s and 1920s coincides with a general rejection of romantic conceptions of the imagination. Scott, Hook argued, had been born into the Scotland of the ‘land of learning’ and its values continued to inform his representations of ‘the land of romance’:

Scott’s novels clearly reveal a strong revulsion from major elements in the romantic ideology. Romanticism is a passionate, enthusiastic, revolutionary, individualistic creed: Scott is intellectually distrustful of emotional fervour of any kind, is suspicious of extreme forms of individualism, and is positively hostile to social revolution. Where romanticism is liberal, forward-looking, politically progressive, Scott is by nature and conviction deeply conservative. Romanticism’s interest in the bizarre and exotic, even the sensational aspects of human nature and behaviour, is not shared by Scott. Indeed he was much concerned that his novels should not be seen as catering to the public’s taste for the lurid and sensational; and equally that he himself should not be regarded as exploiting such emotions.³⁸

Scott’s novels, in effect, invited their readers to enter sympathetically into the consciousness of characters given to a romantic response to the world, but do so only to reveal how illusory such a response must prove. The novels were thus as radically divided against themselves as Hogg’s *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, since the ‘Waverley’ novels are an exploration of the falsifying consciousness of the protagonist after whom they were named:

For most of the novel, then, the romantic Waverley finds himself in a romantic country surrounded by romantic people. His response, as we would expect, is uninhibited. But Scott’s enthusiasm for the world of romance is much more muted. The romantic vision of experience and experience itself cannot be permanently united.³⁹

³⁷ Hook, ‘Commitment and reality’, *The Novel Today*, p. 47.

³⁸ Andrew Hook (ed.), *Waverley* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 13–14.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

The *Waverley* novels are, in fact, self-cancelling: they evoke a romantic response to the world only to reveal the inability of romantic consciousness to grasp the real nature of that world. The ‘land of romance’ succumbs before the ‘land of learning’. As in the case of Hogg’s *Confessions*, Scott’s novels invoke competing narrative structures which create a dilemma for its readers:

Waverley speaks ultimately for peace and stability, for social and political cohesion and harmony. Was it a recognition of this, conscious or unconscious, which accounts for *Waverley*’s immense popularity? Or was it after all the other Scott, the Scott who speaks in the lofty tones of the heroic Evan Dhu rebuking the prudential Saxons, the romantically and revolutionary Scott, who in the end called forth an irresistible response?⁴⁰

Hook refuses to adjudicate between these alternative readings: ‘The modern reader may judge for himself’.⁴¹ The *Waverley* novels are redeemed from the critical condescension of the modern era not by being good pre-Victorian novels but by being prescient instances of what would later be identified as ‘postmodern’ indeterminacy.⁴² The apparently pre-eminent promoter of ‘romance’ becomes the exponent of an imagination in conflict with itself, an imagination roused from the obscurities of the historical past only to be again restrained by the chains of modern learning.

Hook’s pioneering editorial work on *Waverley* was undertaken at a time when there had been no new editions of Scott’s novels since those edited by Andrew Lang in the early 1900s, and though Lang had supplied introductions and additional notes, his versions reprinted the texts of Scott’s own revisions of his novels as they appeared in the so-called *Magnum Opus* published between 1829 and 1833, initiated by Scott’s recovery of the copyright in his earlier works that had been lost by his insolvency of 1825–26. Hook, however, acknowledges in his ‘Note on the Text’ that his version of *Waverley* has recovered ‘certain manuscript readings apparently passed over by Scott’, a recovery made possible by the work of Dr Isabel Brown, who had ‘collated the surviving sections of the manuscript of *Waverley*, with the first edition (1814), the collected edition of 1829, and the Centenary edition’.⁴³ Hook provides four pages of detailed emendations that he has made to the text based on Brown’s collations,⁴⁴ but suggests that Scott’s novel still awaits ‘a critical edition’.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² See Jerome McGann, ‘Walter Scott’s Romantic Postmodernity’, in Leith Davis, Ian Duncan & Janet Sorensen (eds), *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 113–29.

⁴³ Hook (ed.), *Waverley*, p. 29.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 601–4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Such an edition was to come two decades later from the English department at the University of Aberdeen that Hook had joined in 1971 as a Senior Lecturer, a year before the publication of his edition of *Waverley*. The Aberdeen department at that time included a distinguished group of Scottish specialists, among whom were Matthew McDiarmid, editor of many early Scottish texts, and Thomas Crawford, author of books on Scott and Burns, as well as an energetic younger group of scholars that included David Hewitt and J.H. (Ian) Alexander. The Association for Scottish Literary Studies (*ASLS*) had been founded in Aberdeen in 1970, and began to undertake an ambitious programme of newly edited versions of largely forgotten Scottish texts, published initially by Scottish Academic Press in Edinburgh, but later by the Association itself. Although Hook's edition of *Waverley* was not undertaken as part of the activities of *ASLS*, Hook's presence in Aberdeen added to a growing concentration of Scott specialists in that department, which eventually, after Hook's departure to the Bradley Chair of English Literature at the University of Glasgow, became home to the new edition of the *Waverley* novels (1993–2012) that had been proposed by Edinburgh University Press, then under the directorship of Archie Turnbull. Hook was to become a member of the Advisory Board which oversaw the completion of the *Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels (EEWN)*, and was the editor (along with Donald Mackenzie) of the volume *The Fair Maid of Perth*, one of Scott's last novels, originally published in 1828. The *EEWN* had decided not to use the *Magnum Opus* edition as its copy text, but went back to the first editions and to Scott's own manuscripts to reveal the extent to which even those editions had been corrupted by the publishers' and printers' misreadings of Scott's script, together with Scott's own lack of attention to what he had originally written as opposed to what had already appeared in print as being by 'the Author of *Waverley*'. Scott's need for anonymity had added several layers to the usual interactions between the author and the book's producers, each of them generating potential misreadings of Scott's cryptic handwriting. In the case of *The Fair Maid of Perth* – or *Saint Valentine's Day* as Scott originally called it – the potential for error was increased by the fact that Scott was ill at the time the *Magnum Opus* edition was being produced, and much of the proof-checking was done by his son-in-law – and, later, biographer – John Gibson Lockhart. Hook and Mackenzie's list of emendations amounts to more than one thousand eight hundred, and to their significant correction of the text Hook and Mackenzie added a challenging reappraisal of the novel, in which we should discern, they suggested,

a luminous creative intelligence working at high pressure to produce a tightly organised and deeply moving novel. Far too many critics, from his son-in-law J.G. Lockhart to the present day, have written off late Scott, and seen his last works as evidence of failing powers. The readers of this edition of *Saint Valentine's Day* will see that these critics are wrong.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Hook & Mackenzie (eds), *The Fair Maid of Perth* (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 418.

Scott's novels had been restored and their literary significance reclaimed: that there are currently at least five different versions of *Waverley* available in paperback is testimony to Hook's part in making Scott again accessible and interesting to modern readers, both through his own editorial work and his longstanding involvement in the Edinburgh Edition.

As a signal of his continuing commitment to English as well as American and Scottish literatures, Hook also edited for Penguin (along with his wife Judith) an edition of Charlotte Brontë's second novel *Shirley* (1849), often disparagingly compared with its much more famous predecessor, *Jane Eyre* (1847). In their 'Introduction', however, the Hooks argued that *Shirley* had been much misunderstood because Brontë was attempting something very different from her other novels – in fact, she was attempting a historical novel of the kind popularised by Walter Scott:

Its social focus also explains why *Shirley* is an historical novel. Charlotte Brontë writes about the years 1811–12 from her vantage point in 1848–9, because the historical perspective makes the identification of the forces at work in society that much simpler. Her grasp of this point probably grew out of her reading of Scott's historical novels, and it may well have been from Scott too that she learned how to use individual characters and incidents to focus wider social forces and issues.⁴⁷

It is Brontë's attempt to define a whole society rather than an individual consciousness which has led to common misunderstandings of the novel, because it is so much at odds with the strengths of her other works, focused on the response to the world of their first-person narrators; but,

Charlotte Brontë does not turn her back on the central dialectic between imaginative feeling and a hostile reality that is worked out in individual terms in her other novels. What she tried to do in *Shirley* is to extend that central theme out from the area of individual experience, where it creates the internal struggle of Jane Eyre and Lucy Snow, into the broader area of the life of society as a whole.⁴⁸

The novel is an attempted dramatisation of the conflict that Hook had identified as crucial to the aftermath of Romanticism both in Scott and in Dos Passos. In the mid-19th century it is a contradiction that a writer shaped by Romanticism's elevation of feeling over reason cannot escape: 'The one essential characteristic of the society which *Shirley* analyses is its denial of the world to which Charlotte Brontë herself is ultimately committed: the world of imaginative feeling.'⁴⁹ As such, *Shirley* is to be understood not as a failed attempt at the kind of passionate novel that Charlotte had produced in *Jane Eyre*, but as a 'condition of England' novel of the sort that was typical of the 1840s, when

⁴⁷ Andrew and Judith Hook (eds), Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley* (London: Penguin, 1974), p. 19.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

novelists struggled to come to terms with the consequences of industrial society in works such as Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil* (1845) or Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848).

Between these major editorial tasks, Hook edited Volume 2 of *The History of Scottish Literature, 1660–1800*, published by Aberdeen University Press in 1987. The 18th century was a period which had always proved extremely difficult in accounts of the history of Scottish Literature, because of the anglicising tendencies of the 'land of learning' and the fact that many influential Scottish writers, such as Tobias Smollett, James Boswell and James Thomson, had made their careers in London. John Hepburn Millar, for instance, in his *Literary History of Scotland* (1903), noted that, 'Down to the date of the Union of the Parliaments, the author's task was a perfectly plain-sailing one', but thereafter it was often unclear 'whether a particular writer of undoubted Scottish nationality should or should not be included in what professes to be a record of Scottish literature'. Millar's decision was 'to abstain from attempting anything like adequate criticism of men like James Thomson, James Boswell, and Thomas Carlyle',⁵⁰ because those Scots were contributors to 'English' rather than 'Scottish' literature, and this despite the fact that the literary history Millar was recording was not that of the various literary languages that had been employed in Scotland, including Gaelic and Latin, but 'the literature of the English-speaking Scots'.⁵¹ For Millar only Scots who wrote in English – or its local version, Scots – in Scotland could count as contributors to the literary history of Scotland, thereby reflecting in reverse what was to become a standard procedure in literary histories of England, which would adopt the Thomsons, Boswells and Carlyles, despite their country of origin, as honorary Englishmen. Hook took the opposite course, treating Scots in England as continuing participants in a distinctive tradition of Scottish writing. As Mary Jane Scott put it in her contribution on 'James Thomson and the Anglo-Scots', 'Scottishness is a stubborn thing':

It is not simply a matter of language or locale. It takes more than a Scottish birth-certificate, or a vocabulary sprinkled with Scotticisms, to make a Scottish poet. It is all those intangible influences – religious, historical, educational, aesthetic, geographical, linguistic, literary and broadly cultural – which work together to determine national and individual character.⁵²

It was an approach that matched with Hook's own sense of himself as a Scot whose father was an Englishman serving as a radio operator in Scotland, and who had married a Scotswoman in Wick. The Hook family travelled to Gloucestershire most summers to visit Andrew's paternal grandmother and though conscious of the very different ethos of

⁵⁰ J.H. Millar, *A Literary History of Scotland* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903), p. vii.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁵² Andrew Hook (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature, Volume 2: 1660–1800* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), p. 81.

his father's English home, Hook insists that 'in none of these early years was I particularly conscious of who or what – in national identity terms – I was. Scottish? British? Anglo-Scottish? The question just did not arise.'⁵³ It was only when, during his National Service days, he was addressed as 'Jock' that he became aware that to some, at least, he was inescapably a Scot. In line with his own experience of Scottishness, the volume he edited for *The History of Scottish Literature* was generously structured to give attention to Scotland's post-1707 British diversity – from Gaelic poetry to London biography, from Lowland Scots song to Anglophone historiography, from the philosophical aesthetics of modern Scotland to picaresque and sentimental novels set in London and the Empire – as well as to the European and American significance of the country's role in the rise of Romanticism. Hook's own contribution to the volume on 'Scotland and Romanticism: The International Scene', built on the distinctions he had advanced in *Scotland and America*:

In the end *Ossian* represented a challenge to the new, material and commercial civilization of Lowland Scotland and to the intellectual and cultural hegemony it had so brilliantly established; *Ossian* was a kind of Highland counter-attack, an attempt to impose upon Scotland, as her truer and more traditional self, a romantic Celtic image created out of the wild grandeur of her Highland scenery, and the heroic simplicity of a poetic Highland past. And it was to this mythopoetic vision that romantic Europe was responding at the end of the eighteenth century . . .⁵⁴

The romantic Scotland by which Europe and America was captivated was one of those illusions of the imagination from which subsequent artists struggled to free themselves. In *Scotland and America*, Hook had presented the 'romanticism' of Walter Scott and his contemporaries as an unsustainable vogue which, by the 1830s, was already 'on the point of disintegration and dissolution',⁵⁵ and it became a commonplace that by the 1830s 'the great days were all but over'.⁵⁶ Hook saw in the achievements of early 19th-century Scottish Romanticism the seeds of Scotland's late 19th-century decline into a sentimental provincialism that would end its European and North American influence, but also the origin of the crisis of the imagination by which subsequent authors across Europe and America were to be tormented.

This pessimistic view of the achievements of Scottish culture after the death of Scott in 1832 was matched by an equally pessimistic view of developments in the study of literature in the 1970s and 1980s. Like many of the literary historians of his generation, Hook was disturbed by the rise to prominence of 'theory', and what he described as the 'endless theorising which is the bane of so much academic writing today'.⁵⁷ It was

⁵³ Hook, *From Mount Hooly to Princeton*, p. 15.

⁵⁴ Hook, *The History of Scottish Literature, Volume 2: 1660–1800*, p. 316.

⁵⁵ Hook, *Scotland and America*, p. 231.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

⁵⁷ Hook, *From Mount Hooly to Princeton*, p. 71.

perhaps appropriate, then, that he contributed in 1983 to a series entitled *American Literature in Context*, providing a study of the period 1865–1900, a series whose methodology was essentially that of I.A. Richards’s ‘practical criticism’, the foundation of British literary practice in the 1950s. Each of the books in this series selects for analysis an individual passage from the work of a particular author, a passage which is shown to allow a ‘consideration of the whole text from which the extract is taken, and thence to an understanding of the author’s *oeuvre* and of the cultural moment in which he or she lived and wrote’.⁵⁸ In his ‘Introduction’, Hook brushes aside the theoretical innovations of his own era with a sturdy emphasis on the virtues of the ‘realism’ which came to dominate American writing in the late 19th century:

In the structuralist and post-structuralist criticism of today, realism is conventionally seen as the expressive mode most closely linked to the ideology of industrial capitalism. The story that this volume tells hardly supports that view. In the literary culture of nineteenth-century America, realism, whatever its origins, became the chosen mode of those writers least willing to accept the social and economic order of the capitalist America of their time. And by 1900 just such a repudiation of the economic arrangements of the society that sustained them was the almost unanimous response of America’s major writers.⁵⁹

‘Theory’ has no means of grasping the historical reality in which ‘the literature and culture of a society cannot be understood in isolation from the wider, social, economic, political, religious, and other forces, be they conservative or revolutionary, at work within that society’.⁶⁰ ‘Realism’ is the basis both of the literary method of the period and the focus of the critical approach best able to respond to it. Hook, however, was well aware that the most significant novelist of the era that he was charting was one who had rejected both contemporary America as a subject and realism as a style – Henry James, who had decided that a novelist needed an old and mature society in which to set his fictions. Hook quotes from a letter of James’s to William Dean Howells, a writer ‘dedicated to the realistic portrayal of the American scene’:⁶¹

I sympathize even less with your protest against the idea that it takes an old civilization to set a novelist in motion – a proposition that seems to me so true as to be a truism. It is on manners, customs, usages, habits, forms, upon all things matured and established, that a novelist lives – they are the very stuff his work is made of . . .⁶²

⁵⁸ Arnold Goldman, ‘General Editor’s Preface’, p. viii, in Andrew Hook, *American Literature in Context, III, 1865–1900* (London: Methuen, 1983).

⁵⁹ Hook, *American Literature in Context*, pp. 8–9.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁶² *Ibid.*

Nonetheless, the plots of James's novels are built around the clash between American 'innocence' and European 'experience', in which the encounter with European reality is destructive of American ambitions in both art and life. The romantic imagination in America is in awe of Europe's ancient beauties, but incapable of resisting its corruption and decay, any more than it is capable of transforming the barren utilitarianism of contemporary American materialism.

What links James with his American contemporaries is their continued belief in American 'idealism': while 'James seems to remain aloof from the social and economic issues increasingly preoccupying his contemporaries in America, it is worth emphasizing that in James there is no final rejection of American idealism'.⁶³ Idealism is the essential experience of being American; it is what sets Americans out on their individual quests, whether social, economic or artistic:

America after all was the land of opportunity; the American was the self-reliant, self-made man; America offered every man the opportunity to succeed, to improve his lot by his own hard work. Such ideas were part and parcel of the American Dream. So entrenched were they that in the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, America's business and industrial leaders hardly needed to make any kind of defence of their activities.⁶⁴

The 'American Dream' is the romantic imagining of an ideal future for which America is destined, but by which its contemporary reality must be judged a failure. Thus Hook's *American Literature in Context* can suggest of short-story writer Hamlin Garland that, 'What Garland registers with considerable power in *Main-Travelled Roads* is the failure, near the end of the nineteenth century, of yet another aspect of the American Dream'.⁶⁵ Following on from this the opening chapter of Hook's first book on Scott Fitzgerald is titled 'Fitzgerald and the American Dream', and seems set to continue in the same vein, since Hook argues that the recovery in Fitzgerald's literary reputation – which had declined almost to invisibility in the years before he died in 1940 – is closely tied to the rise of the 'American Dream' as a defining myth of the age:

But the Fitzgerald phenomenon, as it were, seems to require a more wide-ranging social and cultural explanation, and what this is, in my view, involves centrally the notion of the American Dream. Fitzgerald's reputation as a major American author has been developed and sustained by an ever-increasing popularity of the concept of the American Dream. Only when the American Dream began to pass into the general consciousness of what people everywhere knew – or thought they knew – about

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

America could the former chronicler of the Jazz Age be canonised as the poet of America and its lost hopes. Fitzgerald's reputation has been borne up and swept along by the notion of the American Dream.⁶⁶

Of course, for Hook and Fitzgerald, Princeton was itself emblematic of the American Dream: for Hook a place both American and Scottish and the route to academic success; for Fitzgerald, the gateway through which an Irish-American Roman Catholic could gain access to the upper-class world of White Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. Such a confident alignment of Fitzgerald with the *zeitgeist* of the American Dream is subject, however, to a much more sceptical understanding of the status of that Dream:

the term the American Dream seems not to have any general currency in the 1920s – and even less in any earlier period. The first identifiable use of the phrase in the form that has become so familiar occurs in James Truslow Adams's book, *The Epic of America*, published in 1931. In the Preface to his book, Adams speaks of 'that American dream of a better, richer and happier life for all our citizens of every rank which is the greatest contribution we have yet made to the thought and welfare of the world.'⁶⁷

Fitzgerald, it seems, was not intentionally the 'poet' of the American Dream: that identification was a retrospective reading of why America's actual existence underlined the lost potential of its origins, as yet another symptom of the conflict in which imagination founders on the reality of the world.

It was a conflict Hook saw embedded in Fitzgerald's life as well as his art:

The problem was that all too often the roles of man and writer seemed to pull in opposite directions. As a professional writer, Fitzgerald felt the need to be detached and objective, the disciplined observer of life and experience; as a man, however, particularly after his marriage to Zelda in April 1920, he felt himself totally committed to the fullness of living, without restraint or recrimination, both using and being used by life in all its aspects. The result was an extraordinary tension between the demands of art and the demands of life that Fitzgerald was never able fully to resolve.⁶⁸

Of course, from the perspective of Hook's analysis of the consequences, for the artist, of Romanticism's retreat from the modern world, no resolution was possible at the level of individual decision or action, because the problem was the problem of art itself in the modern world – an aesthetic rendering of the world would always violate art's ambition to transform society. Fitzgerald becomes the tragic victim of the art to which a writer like Dos Passos had looked for salvation, and Fitzgerald's writing out of personal experience only emphasised the impossibility of the artist imposing the values of art on a resistant

⁶⁶ Andrew Hook, *F. Scott Fitzgerald* (London: Edward Arnold, 1992), p. 2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

reality. This contradiction expressed itself in Fitzgerald's need to earn enough to maintain the lifestyle that early success and fame had made possible, and Hook's second book on Fitzgerald – *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Literary Life* (2002) – charts in detail Fitzgerald's relationship with Maxwell Perkins, the editor at Scribner's who first accepted *This Side of Paradise* for publication in 1919, and with Harold Ober of the Paul Revere Reynolds literary agency, who became Fitzgerald's literary agent shortly after. Together they helped Fitzgerald establish himself as a short story writer for magazines that would pay well for fiction that offered 'uplift' to their readers,⁶⁹ while encouraging him to follow up his initial success as novelist. As Scott and Zelda's extravagant lifestyle of the early 1920s subsided into an excess of alcohol on Fitzgerald's part and into Zelda's mental illness, requiring long-term psychiatric treatment, Fitzgerald found that the requirement to produce remunerative short stories undermined the concentrated work required by his novels. The flush of early success, Hook suggests, encouraged Fitzgerald into false expectations of his financial potential: in 1920 he earned a total of \$18,850, which was more than ten times what even a skilled industrial worker earned.⁷⁰ Fitzgerald was to keep up this pace of earning throughout the 1920s – his income in 1930 was over \$33,000⁷¹ – but the costs of his wife's psychiatric treatments and of his daughter's education meant that each of these years was more of a struggle than the last, a level of apparent financial success that, after the publication of *The Great Gatsby* in 1926, only increased Fitzgerald's sense of failure:

Fitzgerald always believed his writing would make him financially secure and independent: the next project was always going to bring in even more than the last. He was invariably wrong on both counts: he never achieved financial security and independence – even in his first year he spent more than he earned and established the pattern of obtaining advances both from Maxwell Perkins and Harold Ober – and none of his books ever matched his expectations in terms of financial returns.⁷²

Hook's explanation for what he presents as the tragedy of Fitzgerald's career is the conflict between the person engaged in life and the artist trying to make something impersonal out of it. Hook quotes from Fitzgerald's essay of 1933, 'One Hundred False Starts', about his creative inspiration: 'Whether it's something that happened twenty years ago or only yesterday, I must start out with an emotion – one that's close to me and that I can understand'.⁷³ And he concludes that Fitzgerald's art 'arose out of involvement with life, not detachment from it',⁷⁴ and was never, therefore, able to sustain Fitzgerald's

⁶⁹ Andrew Hook, *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 28.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

own aesthetic ideal of authorial objectivity. It was a crisis which Fitzgerald could only resolve briefly when he was able to project it on to the protagonists of his major novels: Gatsby who had turned his life into an aesthetic ideal in the impossible hope of recovering the life he had lost when he was separated from Daisy; Dick Diver in *Tender is the Night* who discovers that ‘the objectivity and detachment of the medical scientist are incompatible with the involvement and commitment of the husband and lover’.⁷⁵ In doing so, Fitzgerald gave voice to the hopeless trajectory of the American Dream: ‘So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.’⁷⁶

It was perhaps appropriate that Hook’s second book on Fitzgerald was written during his own return to Princeton as a Visiting Fellow in 1999–2000, by which time the hopes of the 1950s had long since been dissolved by the reality of modern America. Indeed, Hook’s own commitment to the development of American studies can be read itself as a form of ‘American idealism’, an idealism maintained in defiance of what America was becoming in the aftermath of the Second World War: ‘for those of us of the CND generation – as we demonstrated at Dunoon or elsewhere – anti-Americanism was almost an automatic reflex’,⁷⁷ he wrote in ‘Scotland and America Revisited’. But an ideal America continued its hold on Hook’s imagination in the form of his experience at Princeton, where ‘excellent students’ were matched by ‘outstanding faculty’:

In my time the Princeton English Department boasted major critics and scholars such as D.W. Robertson, G.E. Bentley, Willard Thorp, Carlos Baker, Lawrance Thompson and R.P. Blackmur. The whole experience amounted to academic life at least approximating what ideally it is supposed to be. Certainly nothing in the rest of my academic career in Britain and the US would get closer to that ideal.⁷⁸

It was an idealism that only existed in a lost past of the kind that, in a late essay, Hook attributes to John Dos Passos: ‘Increasingly hostile to contemporary politics and political ideologies of both left and right, in Europe and America, Dos Passos appears to have become convinced that the best times had actually occurred in the period when the new USA was in the process of being created.’⁷⁹ This, of course, was precisely the period that Hook had researched at Princeton for *Scotland and America*, and he is both surprised – and delighted – to discover how much of his own analysis of Scotland’s influence on the early history of the United States had already been suggested by Dos Passos. ‘For the new generation in Scotland’, Dos Passos writes, ‘the professor was taking the place of the clergymen’, and it was through Jefferson’s relationship with William Small, originally

⁷⁵ Ibid., 117.

⁷⁶ F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1950), p. 188.

⁷⁷ Hook, ‘Scotland and America Revisited’, *From Mount Hooly to Princeton*, p. 81.

⁷⁸ Hook, ‘A Scot at Princeton’, *From Mount Hooly to Princeton*, p. 34.

⁷⁹ Hook, ‘John Dos Passos, Thomas Jefferson, and the Scottish Enlightenment’, *From Mount Hooly to Princeton*, p. 91.

from Aberdeen, a Professor at the College of William and Mary, that Jefferson's intellectual interest and values were shaped: 'In his walks and talks with Small he established a connection with the main currents of the adventurous intellect of Europe which was not to be interrupted throughout his whole long life.'⁸⁰ In the 1950s, Hook insists, 'Dos Passos was providing an account of Jefferson's early exposure to the Scottish Enlightenment which suggests he would have been much less surprised by Garry Wills' arguments in *Inventing America*, a generation later, than the great majority of American academics appear to have been.'⁸¹ What is significant here, perhaps, is that the 'Scottish Enlightenment' has become an indisputable occurrence, even if it had been one of which Hook himself, in the 1950s, had been as unaware as Dos Passos. What Dos Passos had actually written was that Small, like 'the inquiring thinkers of that day were members of a sect' whose 'common religion was enlightenment';⁸² there is all the difference in the world between a 'sect' in Scotland of believers in 'enlightenment' and a 'Scottish Enlightenment', even if Hook's work had helped establish the intellectual credentials of the latter.

Dos Passos's 'best times', back in the early days of the Republic, seem to prefigure Hook's own 'best times' in the 1950s at Princeton. It was a time, Hook later recalled, when 'America seemed stable, unified, fixed in the certainties of the Cold War',⁸³ but within a decade 'the atmosphere was very different' because of the assassinations of John F. and Robert Kennedy and of Martin Luther King, which 'reinforced the sense that an older America had gone forever'.⁸⁴ The ideals of that older America were still the values of the enlightenment that were bound into the American constitution by 'a total separation of church and state',⁸⁵ a separation that by 2005 had come under serious threat: 'What is going on is a successful erosion of America's constitutional division between church and state',⁸⁶ led by 'the newly emboldened and empowered religious right'⁸⁷ and by those interpreting the Second Amendment as 'intended to guarantee every citizen an unfettered right to any kind of weapon he or she desires'.⁸⁸ A 'well-organized and well-funded campaign supported by both enthusiastic gun-owners and gun-manufacturers'⁸⁹ had created an America far removed from the ideal academic world that had welcomed Hook to Princeton in 1958.

⁸⁰ Quoted from John Dos Passos, *The Head and the Heart of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Doubleday, 1954), p. 100; Hook, *From Mount Hooly to Princeton*, p. 93.

⁸¹ Hook, *From Mount Hooly to Princeton*, p. 93.

⁸² Dos Passos, *The Head and Heart of Thomas Jefferson*, p. 101.

⁸³ Hook, 'Zealous Nation', *From Mount Hooly to Princeton*, p. 294.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 'Gun Controls Again', p. 331.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

By the late decades of the century, increasing recognition of Hook's research achievements went along with an increase in various management roles: his skills as an academic leader resulted in nearly ten years as Head of the English Literature Department in Glasgow University – consisting of some notoriously combative individuals⁹⁰ – but also to active roles in the development of Higher Education. He was an assessor, for instance, of American Studies courses for the Council for National Academic Awards, completing his tenure as Chair of the Council's Committee for the Humanities. In Scotland he worked for the Scottish Examination Board reviewing proposed school curricula for English and American Studies and their fit with university provision in the same subjects. He was also engaged on three occasions on similar evaluation exercises for colleges and universities in Hong Kong. Hook's concern for the advancement of American studies made him a generous sponsor of younger colleagues, whose work he supported by co-editing with them both collections of critical essays – for example, *The Glasgow Enlightenment*, with Rick Sher – and new editions of historical texts, such as *Francis Jeffrey's American Journal: New York to Washington 1813* (2011) which he edited along with Clare Elliott, and Eliza Oddy's *A Mississippi Diary: From St Paul Minnesota to Alton, Illinois, October 1894 to May 1895*, edited by Hook along with contributions by Heather Eggins (2013).

By the opening of the 21st century, Hook had seen his long-term ambitions for American studies fulfilled by the establishment of the Andrew Hook Centre for American Studies at the University of Glasgow, where it is still based, as well as by an editorial and critical career that spanned Scottish, American and English literatures, but his personal life was threaded with tragedy: his wife Judith, who had established herself as a historian of Renaissance Italy, died while the family were staying in Siena in 1984, leaving Hook responsible for Judith's daughter Sarah (adopted by Andrew as a baby) and their sons, Caspar and Nathaniel. Sarah, however, died in London in 1995 at the age of just thirty, and Caspar, born in 1968, died in his father's home in 2006. Publicly resilient, Hook continued with his participation in the events of the Andrew Hook Centre, and attended conferences in Europe and North America as well as the Section meetings of the British Academy in London. He also continued to write lively commentaries on his contemporary environment in Scotland, both cultural and political, and about developments in the United States, mainly for *The Scottish Review*. The enthusiasm characterised by his academic career and his academic friendships is perhaps summed up in the introduction to 'Further Dispatches from the *Scottish Review*' in which he states that 'The pieces I include here simply represent a selection of those that I enjoyed writing'.⁹¹ His teaching aimed at inspiring students with his joy in writing, whether Scottish, English or

⁹⁰ See, for instance, Hook, 'Postscript', *From Mount Hooly to Princeton*, p. 515.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 453.

American, his criticism at elucidating the significance of such joy, and his journalism at communicating his continuing excitement in charting the imagination's efforts to grasp hold of an elusive reality.

Note on the author: Cairns Craig is Emeritus Glucksman Professor of Irish and Scottish Studies at the University of Aberdeen. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2005.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the British Academy (ISSN 2753–6777) are published by The British Academy, 10–11 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AH
www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk

