

CALL FOR PAPERS

Conference – ‘The Object of Poetry’ – Saturday 26th March 2011

Dalhousie Building, University of Dundee

This conference is the culmination of the AHRC Beyond Text project ‘Robert Burns: Inventing Tradition and Securing Memory 1796 – 1909’ the aims of which are to study the public and private memorialisation of Robert Burns, through a detailed study of the various statues, monuments and numerous artefacts produced in his memory. Thus, the project endeavours to explain the link between the memorialisation of Burns and the reception of his poetry, also considering its effect on the reception of Burns as a poet and icon, and how this impacted on popular memory.

Although the project deals with the case of Burns, the aims of this conference are to widen the field of investigation by examining hitherto unexplored interactions between literary and material culture throughout all the long nineteenth century, aiming to 1) address the interconnection between literary reception and popular memory, and 2) explore the ways in which different writers and their writing are transmitted into the broader cultural context. The conference seeks to examine the relationship between literary reputation and popular culture, attempting to explain how an author’s status and works are translated in material cultural terms through associational objects, whether this is publicly through fine art, sculpture and architecture or privately in the form of relics, souvenirs and domestic artefacts.

The conference will also consider how these different forms of material culture commemorate, resonate and reflect the writers themselves, and how they illustrate and impact upon the reputation of the poetry or prose of that writer; ultimately examining whether and/or in what ways material culture, public or private, can be used as an effective tool in studying the reception history of a text or an author. In relation to the link between literary reception and popular memory, this conference will study the way in which different writers through their own reputation and writing, many supported by material cultural evidence, have evolved as cultural icons creating defined and lasting traces in popular memory whilst acting as signposts of the relationship between literature and material culture.

Key-note speakers attending the conference include Professor Murray Pittock (University of Glasgow), Professor Murdo Macdonald (University of Dundee), and Professor Christopher A. Whatley (University of Dundee), who will be giving papers on different aspects of the core themes of the conference relating to different writers and iconic figures from the nineteenth century. The organisers of the conference welcome proposals for papers on any of the following themes as described above:

- Connection between material culture and literary reception.
- Use of material culture as a means of investigating/explaining reception history.
- Impact of iconic writers or historical figures on popular and/or collective memory.

Proposals should be up to 250-300 words in length and the deadline for receipt of proposals is Tuesday, 30th November 2010. Please send proposals by email to Katherine McBay, Research Assistant, University of Dundee at the following address: k.a.mcbay@dundee.ac.uk