

Editorial: Translation and Scottish Literature

John Corbett

Translation often touches a raw nerve, particularly when advocates of a literary tradition define that tradition on the grounds of cultural nationalism. In 'Tam O'Shanter' Robert Burns extols his native hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys and reels over the 'cotillion brent-new frae France', and elsewhere celebrates the home-grown haggis in preference to foreign fare:

Is there that owre his French ragout,
Or olio that wad staw a sow,
Or fricassee wad mak her spew
Wi perfect sconner,
Looks down wi sneering, scornfu view
On sic a dinner?

On their part, the linguistically gifted have always had at their disposal a powerful resource that puts monolinguals on the defensive. In Malcolm Harper's anthology *The Bards of Galloway* (1889), for example, we find a telling anecdote that praises, at Burns' expense, the virtuosity of one of the featured poets, the Reverend James Muirhead, author of 'Bess of the Gawkie':

Being a proprietor and a freeholder in the Stewartry, he [Muirhead] was lampooned in an election ballad by Burns, and retorted with one of Martial's Latin epigrams, giving a free translation touching on Burns's private affairs, which the poet, it is said, felt keenly.^[1]

Burns's chagrin, we may imagine, was occasioned not only by Muirhead's reference to his 'private affairs' but by the fact that the response to his ballad demonstrated his opponent's mastery of a prestigious literary form that also bespoke a superior, Classical education. The translation of 'one of Martial's Latin epigrams' served as a keenly felt put-down because it implied the common balladeer's vulgarity and lower social standing. Translation in Scottish culture,

whether resisted or enthusiastically adopted, has always involved contested ideologies, whether they be of racial origin, political affiliation, social class, linguistic validity or aesthetic value.

In the introduction to his *Poems* of 1721, Burns' predecessor, Allan Ramsay, also shows ambivalence in his negotiation of the domestic and the foreign in relation to his few Horatian adaptations, pleading that

My cheerful Friends will pardon (a very essential Qualification of a Poet) my Vanity, when in self Defence I inform the Ignorant, that many of the finest Spirits, and of the highest Quality and Distinction, eminent for Literature, and Knowledge of Mankind, from an Affability which ever accompanies great Minds, tell me, "They are pleased with what I have done; and add, That any small Knowledge of the dead or foreign Languages is nothing to my Disadvantage. King David, Homer and Virgil, say they, were more ignorant of the Scots and English Tongue, than you are of Hebrew, Greek and Latin: Pursue your own natural Manner, and be an original."^[2]

The tension between the competing demands of originality and fidelity to a source text echoes James VI's admonition to his court poets to nurture their own muse before embarking on translation in his *Essays of a Prentice in the Divine Art of Poesy* (1584). Likewise, Ramsay's admission that he relied for his own adaptations on bridging texts of Latin poetry 'dress'd in British'^[3] further complicates the transmission of texts between languages and national cultures.

The issues raised by these examples prefigure the recurrent concerns of the relatively young academic discipline of Translation Studies.^[4] As an emergent discipline, Translation Studies has moved beyond a narrow, if worthwhile, concern with finding equivalences between languages: what, for example, would be the appropriate expression in French, German or Polish for *scunner* or *jalouse*; does *hameseik* capture the force of the Portuguese expression *saudades*? The field has broadened to look at the political and ethical implications of the complex cultural contacts that are mediated by translators and translations. What gave rise to the conditions that allowed Muirhead to use a domesticated Latin epigram as a riposte to a satirical native ballad; what historical forces give rise to Burns, ironically, asserting native traditions in forms that his predecessor, Ramsay, had adapted, in part, from Horatian odes that he, in turn, had found versified in English? How, in brief, have Scottish writers engaged with other literary 'others' and how has that engagement shaped the national literary tradition?

The mirror image of this question, of course, is how Scottish literary works have influenced other national traditions. How does translation mediate the impact that Scottish writers make – or

sometimes fail to make – abroad? What particular challenges do Scottish texts pose for translators and how do they rise (or fail to rise) to them?

The articles in this special issue of *IJSL* address a variety of key issues in Translation Studies. They explore, with one exception, the reception of Scottish literature overseas, and the linguistic and cultural difficulties that Scottish novels and short stories pose to even the most gifted translators. One recurring theme is the difficulty translators have in finding an adequate equivalent not for individual Scottish terms, but for the endless shifting between languages and language varieties that is characteristic of Scottish texts, whether intended for a popular or 'literary' market. English, Gaelic and the different varieties of Scots (and Scottish accents) are key to characterisation and attitude in many works of fiction – their very presence in texts evokes meanings that conscientious translators must respond to and convey with skill and imagination. That several of the articles here deal with the failure of translators so to respond raises unsettling issues about the general reception of Scottish literature abroad. Olivier Demissy-Cazeilles suggests that Iain Banks' reputation as a skilled popular writer in France has suffered in part because his translators have down-played both the exaggerated, black gothic humour of his 'mainstream' novels and the dextrous code-switching that is crucial to the reader's apprehension of key and minor characters. Even when a translator responds to linguistic play, as in the translation of the 'barbarian' episodes in Banks' *The Bridge*, Demissy-Cazeilles suggests that the non-standard but ill-defined French equivalent of Banks' working-class, urban argot deracinates it, and so weakens the force of the novel.

Similarly, Beatrix Hesse laments the fact that many of the German translations of Robert Louis Stevenson's 'unco tales', particularly 'The Tale of Tod Lapraik' and 'Thrawn Janet', fail to honour the original texts' embedding of a Scots tale into an English frame. This loss, as Hesse observes, amounts to much more than the diluting of a native 'flavour' or rhythm, but also, as most critics would agree, to the omission of a crucial tension between fragile Enlightenment rationality, represented by the English frame-narrative, and the return of repressed folk beliefs, as represented by the Scots tales. Without the framing narrative and the shift in codes, Stevenson is reduced to an author of gothic terror, although, as Hesse concludes, there may remain a hint to German readers of depths in the original that are unplunged in the translation.

Jean Berton's article on Sir Walter Scott's fashioning of English, Scots and Gaelic into what Berton terms a 'linguistic clover-leaf' demonstrates that Scott's novels have suffered the same flattening of style that has afflicted Stevenson and Banks – and offers a possible solution, that would apply both to canonical writers such as Scott and their contemporary counterparts, such as Andrew Greig. After demonstrating the necessary depth of linguistic familiarity adept translators would need to acquire with the Scottish linguistic situation, Berton makes a radical proposition: he

suggests that translators of Scottish texts restrict their phonological palette when representing Scots and Gaelic to those sounds in French that might be associated with the original language or language variety. His case studies offer tantalising glimpses of possible outcomes and while it is difficult to imagine that many translators share with Berton the depth of knowledge and expertise required to accomplish such a project, his article vividly demonstrates the daunting demands that older and modern Scottish texts make on translators, and the kind of ingenuity that they might draw upon to satisfy these demands.

By way of contrast, Aniela Korzeniowska's article focuses less on language and more on the broader cultural concerns that translation can raise, a necessary step since her article depends on 'negative evidence' in its consideration of why the renowned writer, James Kelman, is *not*, so far, translated into Polish. Korzeniowska's reasoning parallels Sherlock Holmes, in his consideration of the curious incident of the dog in the night time, and she raises pertinent questions about cultural contact and the ways in which both the presence and absence of translated texts in a given society's literary 'repertoire' expose its anxieties and its intellectual and commercial constraints. She argues that Kelman meets many of the criteria that should make him a prime target for publishers of fiction in translation: he is not only a prize-winner but a controversial prize-winner; his novels address issues of oppression and alienation that are pertinent to historical and contemporary Polish society; his style is demanding but no less rewarding than that of Beckett or Kafka, with whom he is sometimes compared; and he is well-served by translations elsewhere. And yet there appears to be little appetite for Kelman in Poland. Korzeniowska draws upon her experience as a translator and scholar to speculate on the reasons why this might be so; they include a commercial timidity in recent Polish publishing, that stresses escapism and entertainment at the expense of critically-acclaimed literary fiction and – more worryingly perhaps – a tendency in the Polish readership to 'block' the uncompromising treatment of painful experiences in their past and present lives. A recurrent theme in these articles shows the authors – many of whom are published translators themselves – to have high expectations of their fellow practitioners and the publics they serve. Reading Korzeniowska's article, one is reminded of the awkward fact that James Kelman's Booker Prize in 1994 has not brought him the material rewards that a fêted novelist might be expected to enjoy. Kelman's difficulties in Poland might indeed be read as a more exaggerated version of the obstacles faced by the writer of literary fiction in Scotland who is forced to trade artistic integrity for financial security.

An apparent exception to the at times pessimistic mood of the articles collected here is J. Derrick McClure's characteristically vigorous celebration of Goldoni in Scots. McClure's critical and scholarly work on Scots language and literature ranges widely, but running through it all is the consistent sense that scholar and author are jointly engaged in a shared project to expand the expressive potential of Scots and in so doing enhance its cultural value. This does not make

McClure's work uncritical; on the contrary, he is quick to point out failures as well as successes in this national enterprise. However, his article, like Korzeniowska's expects the reader to share his assumption that a prime purpose of translation, done well, is to extend the repertoire and status of the native literary canon by allying it to the prestigious representatives of the canon of world literature. Unlike Korzeniowska, McClure is in the fortunate position of having a considerable corpus of translations to consider, and the different renderings of Italian comedy available to him provide ample scope for his consideration of the translation strategies employed by Victor Carin, Antonia Sansica Scott and Marjorie Greig, and Bill Findlay and Christopher Whyte. Even so, the vagaries of publishing and the commercial theatre implicitly impact on McClure's article too: stage drama is necessarily ephemeral, and the cultural impact of a play is dependent on the audience's memory, and the financial viability of revivals. The latter are made more likely if a published version of the play exists, but the market for drama texts is a small one, and so many plays fade into obscurity. To write his article, McClure had easy access to only one of the three Goldoni translations he wished to discuss; the other two are unpublished, and one of those is still unperformed. McClure and Korzeniowska, then, are linked by their acknowledgement that the role of the scholar is in part to make an intervention, to indicate gaps in the cultural repertoire and demonstrate how translated texts can begin to fill them.

The articles in this issue of *IJSL* were originally delivered as papers in a panel on Translation and Scottish Literature, co-organised by Adele D'Arcangelo and myself, at the ESSE conference in Aarhus, Denmark in 2008. Adele and I did not submit our papers for publication in this journal; had she done so, Adele's paper on James Kelman in Italian translation would have resonated with several of the other articles in the present issue. In contrast to Poland, Italy has been open to translation of Kelman's work, albeit by a smaller 'literary' press that expected modest sales. In her discussion of *How late it was, how late*, Adele also paid particular attention to the way in which the Italian translators 'synthesised' an Italian urban variety, as an experimental means of expressing Kelman's character's Scottish speech.^[5] The submissions received were peer-reviewed, and the versions here have been substantially reworked by the authors before publication. I am grateful to Adele, for her considerable organisational skills, and to the reviewers and contributors for dealing promptly with my requests. I am particularly grateful to the contributors for their patience with an often dilatory editor.

NOTES

[1] Malcolm Harper (ed.), *The Bards of Galloway* (Dalbeattie: Thomas Fraser, 1889), p. 257. [Available online at www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/cmsw]

[2] Allan Ramsay, *Poems* (Edinburgh: Thomas Ruddiman, 1721), p. vi.

[3] Ibid.

[4] For a concise survey of Translation Studies, see Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, 2nd edn. (Clevedon, Somerset: Multilingual Matters, 2001)

[5] Adele D'Arcangelo, 'Giving voice to the "inhabitant of a less significant world": James Kelman's *How Late it Was How Late* translated into Italian.' Paper delivered at the European Society for the Study of English conference, Aarhus, Denmark (23 August 2008).

The Unco Tales of Robert Louis Stevenson in German Translation

Beatrix Hesse

Iain Galbraith begins an article on translating Scottish poetry into German by invoking Janus, who acts as the presiding deity of his paper.^[1] A section of the article, entitled 'Paradox,' ponders the question of what could be 'Scottish' about a Scottish poem translated into the German language, noticing 'the strange duality [...] of the translation text itself', which is 'at one and the same time Scottish and German' and hence 'constitutionally two-faced'.^[2] Galbraith then proceeds to relate the duality of the translation text to the – equally constitutional – duality of metaphor and poetic language in general. A section on 'Transaction' presents examples of how various German-language translators have managed to transfer individual Scottish poems into the cultural contexts of their own culture (e.g. by transforming the Scottish stag into the Austrian imperial eagle). In passing, Galbraith refers to Roderick Watson's model of the 'haunting' of all forms of Scots by English.^[3] We may conclude, then, that a poetic text written in Scots and translated into German is two-faced in three different respects: as a poetic text (which employs metaphor and thus persistently merges two diverse meanings), as a text in Scots ('haunted' by English) and as a translated text which is both Scottish and German.

Poetry, however, is not the only literary genre characterised by constitutional duality. Galbraith's description of the translation process with his insistence on duality, on transformation and the liminal zone is even more strongly reminiscent of 'uncanny' literature in the sense of Freud's seminal article. Galbraith's use of language reinforces this impression: 'haunt(ing)' occurs four times in his paper, 'ghost(ly)' three times, 'occult' twice, 'uncannily', 'magic' and 'wonder and horror' once each.

In his article 'Das Unheimliche', usually translated into English as 'The Uncanny', Sigmund Freud famously defined the uncanny as something at the same time strange and familiar, noting how the meanings of the two opposites 'heimlich' and 'unheimlich' gradually become ambivalent until they finally merge.^[4] The experience of something at the same time strange and familiar also

accompanies the reading process of a translated text. But what happens if the text to be translated is itself an 'uncanny' text? If the translator adheres too strictly to the source culture, the translation will be insufficiently familiar to the reader; if the transfer into the target culture succeeds too perfectly, the reader will miss the sense of the strange that is so essential to the uncanny. In the following, I will address these issues by examining two uncanny tales that Robert Louis Stevenson wrote in Scots. If Watson's observation is correct, and Scots is indeed a 'haunted' language, it would seem to be an extraordinarily appropriate medium for uncanny tales. (Recall MacDarmid's view that the untranslatable Scots of 'The Watergaw' lends his poem 'a distinctively Scottish *sinisterness*'.) Stevenson's main operative term, however, is not 'uncanny' but 'unco', as in the passage in *Catriona* leading up to 'Black Andie's Tale of Tod Lapraik'.

I can find no word for it in the English, but Andie had an expression for it in the Scots which he never varied. 'Ay,' he would say, 'it's an unco place, the Bass.' It is so I always think of it. It was an unco place by night, unco by day; and these were unco sounds, of the calling of the solans, and the plash of the sea and the rock echoes, that hung continually in our ears.^[5]

As this passage insists, there is a special local variety of the uncanny that can only be adequately referred to by a term in Scots.^[6]

Before 'Black Andie's Tale of Tod Lapraik' (Chapter 15 of *Catriona*), Stevenson had written another story of the uncanny in Scots, 'Thrawn Janet', first published in the *Cornhill Magazine* in October 1881. Stevenson himself thought very highly of these two stories and remarked in a letter to Sidney Colvin: 'Tod Lapraik (ch. xv) is a piece of living Scots. If I had never writ anything but that and Thrawn Janet, still I'd have been a writer.'^[7] Obviously he prides himself mainly on his proficiency in the Scottish idiom, which makes the problem of translation a particularly difficult one, since the 'living Scots' will probably be the first thing that gets lost in translation. In spite of the special difficulties involved in the translation process, 'Thrawn Janet' and *Catriona* have been consistently popular in Germany: *Catriona* was translated for instance by Marguerite Thesing (in *Gesammelte Werke*, München, 1924-27), Ruth Gerull-Kardas (Berlin, 1957) and Richard Mummendey (München, 1978) and published together with *Kidnapped* under the title of 'Die Abenteuer des David Balfour' in an abridged version translated by Eva Schumann (Potsdam, 1939).

Translations of 'Thrawn Janet' appeared in *Gesammelte Werke* (translated once again by Marguerite Thesing) and in other collections of Stevenson's short fiction, for instance in volumes entitled *Das rätselvolle Leben: Erzählungen* (Leipzig, 1953, translated by Ilse Hecht) and *Die Vorsehung und die Gitarre: Erzählungen* (München, 1982, translated by Richard Mummendey)

and in anthologies of horror stories, for example *15 Satan-Stories* (i.e. the collection *The Satanists*, compiled by Peter Haining, München, 1975, translator not identified.)^[8] It will be noted that none of these collections presents 'Thrawn Janet' in a specifically Scottish context; the editors select the stories according to author or theme. It makes sense to discuss 'Thrawn Janet' (hereafter TJ) and 'Black Andie's Tale of Tod Lapraik' (TL) together in one article, because they share a number of characteristics, quite apart from the fact that they were both written in Scots. They are both set in the mid-eighteenth century but point back to an earlier period in Scottish history: the rebellion of the Covenanters in the second half of the seventeenth century.^[9] Both TJ and TL revolve around a case of Satanic possession, and both stories set the possessed title character against an equally terrifying priest. As in his most famous tale *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Stevenson presents the force necessary to suppress evil as equally violent as that evil itself. This device is particularly conspicuous in TL, which is not *one* story in the traditional sense but consists of four separate anecdotes, two of which revolve around the character of the prophet Alexander Peden, an historical 'outed' minister of the Covenant, while the remaining two concern the character of the warlock Tod Lapraik.

The most interesting feature that both stories share, however, is the fact that they are both framed: TL of course is framed by *Catriona*, and TJ has a preamble of about a page and a half in length, introducing the central character of the Reverend Murdoch Soulis. In both cases, the frame is written in standard English and set in the mid-18th century, representing the values of an Enlightenment scepticism, while the embedded narrative is told in Scots and reaffirms traditional folkloric superstitions. The following table illustrates these oppositions.

Frame	Embedded Narrative
English	Scots
Literacy	Orality
Mid-18th Century	Late-17th / Early-18th Century
Enlightenment	Folklore, Superstition

The final opposition between Enlightenment and folklore superstition is particularly relevant for effects of the uncanny in Freud's sense, because Freud argued that the return of primitive beliefs we thought we had overcome long ago serve as one of the main sources of the uncanny.

The English frame to the Scots-narrated story represents an important distancing device vis-avis the supernatural events described in the embedded narrative. Taking his cue from an idea in

Freud's 'Das Unheimliche', Tzvetan Todorov persuasively argued that the 'pure fantastic' requires that the reader be kept in permanent suspension between a supernatural explanation of the events depicted (the narrator is reliable; the ghosts are real) and a rational one (there are no ghosts; the narrator is mad).^[10] To put it differently: a story of the 'pure fantastic' requires unreliable narration. In TJ and TL, the use of dialect in the embedded narrative persistently reminds the reader of the narrator's subjectivity and hence of his doubtful reliability. In the case of TL, Stevenson adds yet another marker of narrative unreliability: after Black Andie has finished his tale (purportedly featuring his father, Tam Dale, as a young man), a rival narrator steps up and contests the authenticity of the story: "She would ken that story afore," he said. "She was the story of Uistean More M'Gillie Phadrig and the Gavar Vore." "It is no sic a thing," cried Andie. "It is the story of my faither (now wi' God) and Tod Lapraik."^[11]

In a retrospective comment on TJ, in his note for *The Merry Men* of 1887, Stevenson kept his judgment equally suspended, refusing to take sides either with the sceptical narrator of the frame or the narrator of the embedded story:

Thrawn Janet has two defects; it is true only historically, true for a hill parish in Scotland in old days, not true for mankind and the world. Poor Mr. Soulis's faults we may equally recognise as virtues; and feel that by his conversion^[12] he was merely coarsened; and this, although the story carries me away every time I read it, leaves a painful feeling on the mind.^[13]

Stevenson's remark stresses that TJ is not what we call 'Weltliteratur' in German, but a tale that cannot be divorced from its setting (and a translation into another tongue would therefore be a doubtful undertaking). Returning to the structural importance of the frame, particularly in stories of the supernatural (or, to return to the dominant term employed in this paper, stories of the *uncanny*), it is with regret that we note how frequently editors and translators remove the device, and spoil the effect. In spite of his awareness of the importance of the contrast between Scots and English in Stevenson's fiction, Kenneth Gelder reprints TL in his collection as an independent story, separated from its context.^[14] Two of the German versions of *Catriona*, on the other hand – Berlin, 1957 and Potsdam, 1939 – omit the story of Tod Lapraik as unnecessary for the progress of the action. TJ suffers a similar fate in German translations: translators refrain from the use of dialect in the German version and hence even-out the contrast between the frame/preamble and the embedded narrative. In the German translations of TJ, a reader may easily miss the fact that there are two separate narrators – an extradiegetic and an intradiegetic one – and ascribe the whole of the story to a single narrative source. This is partly due to the use (or rather, absence) of typographical markers. While English editions put a double paragraph between induction and embedded narrative, three of the four German translations I have consulted place only a single

paragraph between the two main parts of the story. The fourth translation (by Marguerite Thesing) also employs the single paragraph but adds a quotation mark at the beginning of the embedded narrative as an additional typographical marker. Since the frame is not 'closed' – we do not return from the embedded narrative to the frame – Thesing does not place quotation marks at the end of the story.

The decision of all four translators of TJ to refrain from using any kind of German dialect in order to render the Scots of the original is far from uncommon in the translation of Scottish literature. In his survey of twentieth-century Scottish verse in translation, Paul Barnaby has found that anthologists tend to 'adopt an identical translation strategy. Verse in Scots, English, or Gaelic, multilingual, polyvocal, or synthetic, is rendered without distinction in the standard language of the target culture.'^[15] In translations of Scots prose, 'the choice of an undifferentiated standard language as a translation strategy is even more prevalent than with verse.'^[16] Barnaby observes in particular that the diversity of the languages and dialects occurring in the Scottish texts tend to get lost in translation, for in the 'rare contemporary examples of the translation of literary Scots into a dialect or minority language, the target idiom is, as far as possible, unmixed with a standard or majority language.'^[17] As a result, the translations tend to be 'purer', more uniform, than the Scottish source texts, a quality that is obviously undesirable in tales of the uncanny that stylistically rely on 'impurity' and internal tension.

Although none of the six translations I have consulted uses a German dialect with any degree of consistency, this does not mean that the translators and editors are unaware of the loss this entails. In her commentary on Mummendey's translation of TJ, Vera Pagin praises the 'oddly harsh, yet picturesque dialect of the Scottish highlands', which distinguishes TJ among Stevenson's stories. Karl-Heinz Wirzberger comments in his afterword for *Das rätselvolle Leben*, which contains Ilse Hecht's translation of TJ:

Thus 'Thrawn Janet', which Stevenson wrote during a stay in the highlands, is strongly tuned in to the native atmosphere and impossible to imagine without the Scottish landscape and the people shaped by it with their Old Testament fear of God and their equally strong superstitions. This impression is enhanced in the original by the use of the – *albeit untranslatable* – Scots dialect. (456, my translation, my italics)

The translators' awareness of the inappropriateness of rendering a text in Scots in standard German is also evident in their occasional use of dialect terms. The translator of TJ in *15 Satan-Stories* (hereafter 15 S-S), for instance, renders 'sabbing' (TJ 417)^[18] as 'sabelle', a German dialect term meaning both 'salivating' and 'meaningless chatter' (and hence closer to the source text in terms of phonology than semantics) and employs 'Deibel', a dialect term for the devil in

various German dialects. Hecht uses the dialect term 'bubberte' to translate 'whammed' (TJ 416) and Thesing, somewhat unfortunately, renders 'lassie' (in TL, *passim*) as 'Dirne', which – although it still exists as a term for 'girl' in various versions and dialects ('Deern' in some North German dialects; 'Dirndel' in Bavarian) – is acutely misleading, since it is also a somewhat archaic term for a prostitute, and Black Andie – while veiledly alluding to the girl's low repute – takes great pains to avoid any such direct accusation.

If the translators are uneasy about rendering Scots as standard German, why do they not use a German dialect in their translations? One reason may be an insufficient proficiency in any German dialect, since, particularly in North Germany, the local dialect has become almost obsolete. Galbraith points to yet another key problem of rendering Scots by any German dialect by presenting an overview of German language history and concluding that no German idiom will have exactly the same relation to standard German that Scots has to English. Besides, the use of a German dialect will also bring along its own cultural baggage; the use for instance of Swiss German will not serve to make the story appear any more Scottish – it will merely make it Swiss. However, in spite of Galbraith's warning that '[t]ranslation even of non-synthetic literary Scots into any single German dialect would [...] circumscribe the translated text in a new way', the choice of some German dialect for a satisfactory translation of TL and TJ seems unavoidable.^[19] One reason for this is the strong sense of place evoked by the two stories – one main function of the Scots is to localize the stories firmly in a specific place and time.

The second reason is that a translation into standard German renders the target text far too accessible to a German reader. At present, an English reader will probably have far greater difficulties in understanding TJ and TL than a German one and will consequently experience the story as more 'strange'. The importance of this aspect of strangeness for the creation of uncanny effects has already been highlighted in this paper.

While the translators refrain from using dialect they are (to varying degrees) at pains to render the fictitious orality of the original stories faithfully. Markers of orality in the original – such as interjections or direct auditor address – are reproduced exactly. Besides, the translators occasionally use additional markers of orality, for instance non-standard grammar, colloquialisms and elision. It is hence by markers of orality rather than by the use of dialect that the translations ensure that the reader is constantly reminded of the subjectivity of the embedded narrative. TL permits the comparison between the two rather different strategies of translation employed by Thesing and Mummendey. Both in TL and TJ, Thesing is always extremely eager to retain the impression of oral communication created by the original, and she mainly does so by means of elision. Her translation of TL contains twelve instances of elision, far more than Mummendey's. Mummendey generally writes a more literary German, but he introduces some colloquial terms

and non-standard grammatical structures at the climax of the story, thereby suggesting that the narrator is getting carried away by his exciting story and allowing his self-control to lapse. This stylistic device, while interesting in itself, has no parallel in the source text.

Among the translators of TJ, Thesing once again has by far the greatest number of instances of elision and is most inventive in her use of archaic terms as markers of historical period. What is most interesting about her translation of TJ, however, is her use of non-standard grammatical structures as they may be found in dialect and/or colloquial language. Twice she uses the construction of 'tun' (to do) + infinitive for emphasis, twice she employs reduplication for emphasis (in one instance as an exact rendering of Stevenson's own 'lang, lang he lay ravin', TJ 418), and once she uses double negation for emphasis. Her most common device, however, is the insertion of the German 'so' for the vague '(some) kind of', which occurs no fewer than five times. As a result, Thesing's translations make more lively (albeit sometimes surprising) reading than Mummendey's. Thesing's translation does well to retain the flavour of the original, because Stevenson himself frequently employs deviations from a standard sentence structure, as for instance in TJ: 'But nae Janet could Mr. Soulis see' (TJ 416). By putting 'Janet' at the beginning of the sentence, three of the four translators, however, end up producing a perfectly grammatical sentence in standard German, approximately corresponding to 'But Janet was nowhere to be seen'. Only Mummendey uses a construction of negation + proper name, producing the approximate German equivalent of 'But Mr. Soulis saw no Janet'. Similarly, the expression of bafflement 'but the de'il a black man was there to see' (TJ 414) is transformed into standard German, with three of the four translators (at least) noticing and retaining the pun that alludes to the identity of the black man with the devil – 'aber zum Teufel noch mal, da war kein schwarzer Mann' (Hecht), 'aber zum Teufel, ein schwarzer Mann war nicht zu sehen' (Mummendey) and 'aber, Deibel, da war kein schwarzer Mann zu sehen' (15 S-S). Thesing alone misses the allusion and translates the phrase into the bland 'aber nirgends war da ein schwarzer Mann zu sehen' ('but a black man was nowhere to be seen').

In the source texts, we find that Stevenson occasionally uses parallel sentence structure and repetition of phrases in order to create a rising tension. One instance of this device occurs in TL, when Tam Dale is attacked by Tod Lapraik, who has assumed the shape of a solan goose:

And it seemed the solan understood about signals. For nae sooner was the signal made than he let be the rope, spried his wings, squawked out loud, took a turn flying, and dashed straucht at Tam Dale's een. Tam had a knife, he gart the cauld steel glitter. And it seemed the solan understood about knives, for nae suner did the steel glint in the sun than he gied the ae squawk, but laigher, like a body disappointit, and flegged aff about the roundness of the craig, and Tam saw him nae mair. (TL 122, italics mine)

Both Thesing and Mummendey ignore the use of repetition as a stylistic device in their German translations of this passage; possibly, because according to German standards, the repetition of words or phrases is in itself considered bad style. This suggests that for the translator, the stylistic norms of the target culture are more relevant than those of the source culture, since the quality of the translation will be judged according to the standards of the translator's own linguistic community.

It must also be noted that translators seem to have no ear for Stevenson's rhythmically structured prose. With phrases like 'low an' het an' heartless' (TJ 413), 'hap-step-an'lawp' (TJ 414) and 'skelloch upon skelloch' (TJ 417), translators invariably prefer semantic precision to the imitation of speech rhythms. Hence, none of the four translators of TJ comes up with an adequate rendition of 'she yam-yammered' (TJ 414), by which the citizens of Balweary cruelly mock the inhibited speech of the palsied woman. Translators evidently hesitate to adopt the derogatory language of the source text. The only exception to the translators' general reluctance to imitate Stevenson's speech rhythms occurs in the very obvious case of 'the dunt-dunt-duntin' o' his ain heart' (TJ 416), which translators render appropriately as 'das Poch-poch-poch seines eigenen Herzens' (Hecht, Thesing, 15 S-S) and 'das Tock-tock-tock seines eigenen Herzens' (Mummendey). In the case of 'fond of a lass and fond of a glass, and fond of a ran-dan' (TL 119), Thesing hits on a felicitous rendition of the rhyme 'lass-glass' as alliteration 'liebte den Wein und die Weiber und lustige Unterhaltung', which is particularly fortunate since 'Wein, Weib, Gesang' (wine, woman and song) is a proverbial combination in German. While German translators make little attempt to render the sound of the original with respect to rhythm, they are sometimes tempted to imitate the sound of individual words – thus, 'rummled' (TJ 413) is rendered as 'rumorte' by Thesing and Mummendey, and 'yowlin' (TJ 415) as 'jaulte' by Hecht and 15 S-S. Sometimes the excitement of having found a German term sounding very much like the original Scots word may tempt the translator to ignore semantic precision, as for instance in the example quoted above, in which 15 S-S renders 'sabbing' as 'sabbelte'.

So far my analysis has largely concentrated on questions of idiom and style. In the following, I focus on the transfer of geographical, historical and cultural knowledge that can be taken for granted in the source culture. Again, a translator has to maintain a delicate balance between making the text accessible and at the same time retaining its strangeness. The translation of place names and the treatment of historical references in a text may serve as an indicator of whether the translator's main objective is the faithful representation of the original or easy accessibility of the text in the target culture.

The 'Hanging Shaw' (TJ 409), for instance, remains the same in two of the translations (Thesing and Mummendey) and is translated as 'Hängendes Gebüsch' (Hecht) or 'Hängegebüsch' (15 S-

S) in the other two. Hence, Hecht and 15 S-S apparently do not expect their readers to tolerate even a small number of foreign terms in the German version. More interestingly, none of the four translators can resist rendering 'Deil's Hag' (TJ 411) as 'Teufelsmoor', a literal translation as well as a familiar place name in German. This translation, however, is problematic since it would seem to localize the action of TJ in a particular German region – the German Teufelsmoor is located in the North German county of Niedersachsen, in the vicinity of the village Worpswede. Since the historical references in the story locate it firmly in Scotland, a North German place name might simply confuse readers unnecessarily.

The religious controversy that provides the background to the events of TJ generally is insufficiently communicated to German readers. The reference to outed Presbyterian ministers ('their forbears of the persecution' TJ 411) remains uncommented on in Thesing, Hecht and 15 S-S, while Mummendey simply removes the entire phrase as too obscure. Hecht's editor Karl-Heinz Wirzberger at least provides an explanation for the term 'the moderates' (TJ 410), explaining that it refers to a Scottish religious party in the early-eighteenth century that is less rigidly dogmatic, and stresses the ethical message of the Bible.

Without any such glosses, the references to the historical and theological background will be lost to German readers. An insufficient knowledge of the religious background of TJ is revealed by translating 'to come forrit' (TJ 411, helpfully glossed by Stevenson himself as 'to offer oneself as a communicant') as 'zur Beichte gegangen' (Hecht, 15 S-S), replacing 'communion' by 'confession'. In a Roman Catholic target culture (as for instance in some German counties), confession would be considered a necessary prerequisite for taking communion, while Protestant cultures tend to dispense with individual auricular confession, since they emphasise salvation by faith alone. Hence, auricular confession was among the 'Papist' practices expressly condemned by the oath of the Covenanters.^[20] Janet's failure to attend communion points to a lapsed religious practice, whereas a failure to attend confession might be interpreted as pointing to a hidden sin or crime.

The different attitudes of translators towards glossing historical references are also evident in translations of TL. While Thesing does not remark on passages such as 'the kirk has aye had an ill name since the days o' James the Saxt and the deevil's cantrips played therein when the Queen was on the seas' (TL 121), Mummendey considers an explanation necessary.^[21] The sentence glossed by Mummendey is indeed significant, because it reveals a belief in witchcraft as a living reality. In stories of the uncanny such as TJ and TL, their background in folklore and superstition is clearly important and may also require translation. In this context, it is for instance fortunate for translators of TJ that the concept of the devil as a black man is also known in Germany, as evidenced by the children's game of 'Wer fürchtet sich vorm schwarzen Mann?' ('Who's afraid of the black man?') – and it is rather unfortunate for translators of TL that 'Tod

Lapraik' acquires an additional significance in German, since 'Tod' is also the German term for 'Death'.

In order to address the aspect of folk belief systematically, it may be helpful to consider whether there are any elements that are characteristic of a particularly Scottish uncanny. In his survey of Scottish fantasy literature, Colin Manlove has pointed to the rich folk and fairy-tale tradition of Scotland, particularly in the highlands, as evident in the four volumes of the orally collected *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, compiled by J. F. Campbell. In the literary works growing out of this rich repository of folk fantasy, Manlove isolates the following characteristics:

- a background scenery of a landscape recognizably Scottish;
- an 'imagery of absolute contrasts, particularly of light and dark';
- a scepticism towards progress and development;
- a psychological bias, a turn towards introspection.[\[22\]](#)

Manlove remarks that the preference for absolute contrasts may perhaps be accounted for by the influence of Calvinism; and in relation to the psychological bias he points out that the hero is often solitary, though frequently mirrored by a *doppelgänger*, which raises the question of the boundaries of identity.

The scepticism towards progress manifests itself in various ways. Scottish tales tend to be static rather than dynamic; the motif of the house is more common than the motif of the journey. The action is often violent, sometimes even 'gleefully savage', which may demonstrate that evolution, as well as civilization, is a fiction.[\[23\]](#) The process dominating the stories is regression: 'there is always the sense of a pull backwards, or even downwards, to one's roots.'[\[24\]](#) Consequently, at the end there is a sense of reduction and loss rather than gain. If we accept Manlove's analysis, TJ and TL are indeed uncommonly, perhaps even uncannily, Scottish. This may point to one possible answer to Galbraith's initial question of what can be 'Scottish' about a text in German: the plot motifs and 'moves' of the tales may of course be rendered in a foreign tongue, though they may not acquire their special resonance unless based on local folk beliefs.

The central operating folk belief in TJ is that a dead body may be possessed and animated by the devil: 'folk said, that Janet was deid lang syne, an' this was a bogle in her clay-cauld flesh' (TJ 415). This concept recurs in the final scene when Janet is eventually struck by lightning: 'An' at that moment the Lord's ain hand out o' the heevens struck the Horror whaur it stood; the auld, deid desecrated corp of the witchwife, sae lang keepit frae the grave and hirsled round by de'ails, lowed up like a brunstane spunk an' fell in ashes to the grund' (417). In German translations, both 'clay-cauld flesh' in the first and 'corp' in the second quotation are translated as 'Leichnam'

(corpse), but also occasionally as 'Leib' (body). The first of these two options is preferable, since it more expressly renders the gruesome image of a dead body still forced to walk the earth, animated like a marionette, but no longer inhabited by a living soul.^[25] In this context, it may be of interest that Freud mentions as one instance of the uncanny doubts as to whether an apparently living being is animated, or, vice versa, whether an apparently lifeless thing is alive after all.

The folk belief of the dead body animated by the devil is also reflected by the fact that, after her stroke, Janet is no longer treated as a human being by the inhabitants of Balweary, but as an object: 'they never gied that Thing the name o' Janet M' Clour; for the auld Janet, by their way o't, was in muckle hell that day' (412fn). Twice again, Janet is referred to as a 'thing': 'she was an eldritch thing to see' (413) and 'the fearsome thing' (417). As in the case of 'yam-yammered', noted above, German translators by and large hesitate to imitate the linguistic cruelty of the citizens of Balweary – they merely use the neutral German 'Ding' in the first example (and even here, Mummendey favours 'Wesen' – being), omit the noun altogether in the second case, and all use 'Wesen' in the third instance.

Stevenson's use of the term 'thing' for the uncanny figure or object is not limited to TJ, but may be encountered in his other stories of the uncanny.^[26] In TL, he uses 'thing' even more pervasively to refer to a being both mysterious and sinister. In this case, the use of the identical term also serves to reinforce the link between the character of Tod Lapraik and the solan goose into which he has temporarily transformed himself. In his translation of TL, Mummendey recognizes 'thing' as a key operative term and renders it by an identical German word, 'Ding', wherever possible, throughout the narrative. Thesing, by contrast, uses 'Ding' less frequently than Mummendey – employing 'Wesen' or 'Etwas' (literally: 'something') or omitting the noun altogether – but interestingly she introduces the term where Stevenson himself does not even use 'thing', rendering 'What's yon on the Bass?' (123) as 'Was ist das für ein *Ding* da auf dem Felsen?'. This may indicate that Thesing, just like Mummendey, notices the stylistic function of the repeated use of the term 'thing'. Tables 1 and 2 show the various translations of the term 'thing' in TL and TJ.

Table 1.

'Thrawn Janet'	Thesing	Mummendey	Hecht	15 Satan-Stories
that Thing	dem Ding da	diesem Wesen	das Ding da	das Ding
an eldritch thing to see	schauerlich anzusehen	gespenstisch anzusehen	schauerlich anzusehen	gruselig anzusehen
the fearsome thing	das gräßliche Wesen	das furchtbare Wesen	das gräßliche Wesen	das scheußliche Wesen

Table 2.

'Tod Lapraik'	Thesing	Mummendey
a thing dementit	wie nicht recht gescheit	wie nicht gescheit
this thing is nae bird	das Ding da ist kein Vogel	das Ding ist kein Vogel
as sune as that thing was gane	und so wie das Ding fort war	sobald das Ding weg war
Whatten kind of a thing?	Was für ein Ding?	Was für ein Ding?
Thon Thing	das Ding dort	das Ding dort
the wanchancy thing	das unselige Ding	das unselige Ding
this thing was its lee-lane	das hier war ganz allein	dieses Ding hier war mutterseelenallein
this thing had nae music but the skirling of the solans	dieses Wesen als Musik nur die Schreie der Lummen hatte	und dieses Ding hatte keine Musik außer dem Geschrei der Tölpel
the thing had clean disappeared	war das Ding vom Erdboden verschwunden	war das Ding reinweg verschwunden
thon awesome thing	das schreckliche Etwas	das schreckliche Wesen
What's yon on the Bass?	Was ist das für ein Ding da auf dem Felsen?	

The use of 'thing' with reference to Tod Lapraik corresponds to the fact that, as in the case of Janet M'Clour, doubts are raised as to whether his body is animated or not. What renders Tod Lapraik uncanny to the inhabitants of his community is that he is subject to 'dwams', fainting fits.^[27] Tam Dale obscurely remarks about these fainting fits: 'folk hae brunt far dwams like yon' (TL 121), leaving it ambiguous whether he is referring to a witchcraft trial or the eternal punishment of burning in Hell.^[28] Both Mummendey and Thesing render this remark similarly: 'Wegen dergleichen (solcher) Ohnmachten sind Leute schon (schon Leute) verbrannt worden'. These translations unambiguously refer to witchcraft trials, stating that 'people have *been* burned' rather than 'have burned', for which there is a perfectly acceptable equivalent in German.

A more substantial reduction of ambiguity and manipulation of meaning occurs in the translation of TJ in 15 S-S. Here, the entire final paragraph of the story is removed, a paragraph which reads: 'But it was a sair dispensation for the minister; lang, lang he lay ravin' in his bed; an' frae that hour to this he was the man ye ken the day' (418). While the original story ends with a focus on the character development of the priest, the version of 15 S-S finishes with Balweary's visitation by the Devil. The stress on the case of Satanic possession rather than on the character development of the minister accords well with the general gist of the anthology, which seems intended to present the reality and existence of the Devil – Peter Haining's introduction is entitled: 'Modern Satanism – the Facts'. A short story like Stevenson's TJ, which keeps the reader

permanently suspended between a supernatural and a rational solution can only find its place in this kind of anthology if the essential ambiguity of the story is removed as far as possible.

After all this elaborate analysis it remains for us to gauge just how 'uncanny' Stevenson's stories in Scots are when read in a German translation. They indubitably lose some of their power unless read in the original idiom, but even in German translation their effect is still undeniably uncanny. Possibly, however, it is just the feeling that behind the German text there is something lurking that defies translation, that we (as German readers) will always fail to find out, that contributes to this effect.

NOTES

[1] Ian Galbraith, 'Scottish Poetry in German: Paradox, Transaction, Context, Superstition', *Scottish Studies Review*, 9.1 (2008), 79-100.

[2] Ibid. p. 80.

[3] Cf. Roderick Watson, 'The Double Tongue', *Translation and Literature*, 9.2 (2000), 175-78 (p. 178).

[4] In *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 12 (London: Imago, 1947), pp. 229-68.

[5] Robert Louis Stevenson, *Catriona* (1593; Edinburgh: Canongate, 1989), p. 117f. All subsequent references are to this edition.

[6] 'Thrawn Janet', the other short story discussed here, also favours 'unco' to 'uncanny'. 'Unco' occurs four times in the story and 'uncanny' only twice. One of the two instances of 'uncanny' appears in the frame narrative introducing the story.

[7] Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Critical Heritage*, ed. Paul Maixner (London: Routledge, 1981), p. 424.

[8] The publisher credits five translators with the translation of the stories in this volume – Hans Maeter, Wulf Bergner, Richard Paul, Birgit Reß-Bohusch and Leni Sobez – but fails to point out which translator(s) translated which individual story.

[9] In his introduction to his collection of Stevenson's Scottish stories and essays, Kenneth Gelder discusses the influence of Covenanted history on Stevenson's writing in greater detail. See Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Scottish Stories and Essays*, ed. Kenneth Gelder (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989).

[10] Cf. Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), translated by Richard Howard as *The Fantastic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975).

[11] *Catriona*, p. 126.

[12] At the outset of the embedded narrative, Reverend Soulis is an enthusiastic, enlightened young minister who in the course of events learns to acknowledge the existence of personified Evil.

[13] *Critical Heritage*, p. 251.

[14] Cf. Gelder: 'in some of the Scottish stories he did write, Stevenson drew attention to the difference between Scots and English, linguistically and culturally' (p. 1).

[15] Paul Barnaby, 'Three into One: Twentieth Century Scottish Verse in Translation Anthologies', *Translation and Literature*, 9.2 (2000), 188-99 (p. 191).

[16] *Ibid.* p.196.

[17] *Ibid.* p.195.

[18] All references to TJ are to this edition: Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Complete Short Stories*, Vol. 1, ed. Ian Bell (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), pp. 409-19.

[19] Galbraith, p. 95.

[20] Cf. *The National Covenant; or, The Confession of Faith* of 1580: 'But, in special, we detest and refuse the usurped authority of that Roman Antichrist upon the scriptures of God, upon the kirk, the civil magistrate, and consciences of men; all his tyrannous laws [...] his manifold orders, auricular confession...'

[21] Mummendey's gloss reads: 'Im Jahre 1590 waren ein gewisser John Fian mit Agnes Sampson und anderen wegen Hexerei verurteilt worden, weil sie mit dem Teufel in der Kirche von North Berwick ein Abkommen getroffen hatten, um König Jakob und Königin Anna zu ermorden.' [In the year 1590 a certain John Fian with Agnes Sampson and others were convicted of witchcraft because they had entered a contract with the devil in North Berwick Church to murder King James and Queen Anne.]

[22] Colin Manlove, *Scottish Fantasy Literature* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1994), p. 7.

[23] *Ibid.* p. 6.

[24] *Ibid.* p. 4.

[25] In this context, the etymology of 'Leib' and 'Leichnam' may be of interest. 'Leib' specifically refers to the living body, since it is etymologically related to 'Leben' (life). 'Leichnam', on the other hand, is etymologically related to 'Leib', referring to the 'shell of the body' which clothes the immortal soul.

[26] Cf. for instance 'The Body Snatcher' and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

[27] As with the palsy in TJ, the source of the uncanny in TL is a disease; in this context, it is interesting to note that Freud also mentions some diseases, for instance mental illness or epilepsy, as causes of uncanny effects.

[28] Cf. 'Nae doubt they burn for it in muckle hell', TL 125.

Goldoni in Scots

J. Derrick McClure

As the Scottish literary renaissance of the early twentieth century gathered momentum, the long-established national traditions of poetry and prose fiction were spectacularly enriched with a spate of new works, individually fully capable of being measured against the benchmark texts of the existing repertoire and collectively representing an exuberant expansion of its range and scope. A defect in the Scottish literary tradition, highlighted by the abundance and quality of its poetry and prose fiction, had always been the almost total failure to develop a substantial corpus of drama; and this too was addressed with vigour. What happened in this field, in fact, provides an interesting case of the planned expansion of 'culture repertoire'^[1]: one of the features of a mature literary culture in the European tradition is a corpus of drama, strongly associated with the nation and including plays with the unchallenged status of national icons; Scotland lacked this, and therefore would have to acquire it in order to claim possession of a mature literary culture. In particular, since all three of the national languages were participating in the literary renaissance, the Scots tongue was urgently in need of being developed for serious plays: nothing could diminish its claim to possess, in Sir David Lyndsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, one of the monuments of mediaeval drama, and in the anonymous *Philotus* of 1603 a comedy to rank with many better-known specimens from the era; but in later periods, even the few noteworthy attempts at drama that had been made in Scotland had been in English.^[2]

The scale and excellence of the European dramatic tradition, in its many and diverse national developments, ensured that Scottish writers had a wealth of models to emulate. General features of European drama could be, and were, naturalised in Scotland: a notable instance is the genre of the history play, iconic figures from Scotland's past becoming the subjects of drama as — the most obvious analogy, though not one to be pressed — English kings had been for Shakespeare.^[3] More specifically, individual plays from European repertoires could furnish material for translations: as poets were expanding the scope of Scots in their genre with

renderings from poetry of many languages and periods, so dramatists exercised their linguistic and literary skill in naturalising the works of their European *confrères* in the Scottish repertoire.^[4]

This source was exploited with enterprise and initiative: indeed, the importance of translations to the Scottish theatre since the Second World War would be impossible to overstate. Robert Kemp's *Let Wives Tak Tent*, a rendering of Molière's *L'École des Femmes*, first performed at the Gateway Theatre, Edinburgh, in 1948, was the curtain-raiser to a still-ongoing sequence of translations and adaptations of plays by dramatists ranging geographically and chronologically from Aeschylus to Michel Tremblay, and including some of the benchmark works of European literature: Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Racine's *Phèdre*, Ibsen's *Ghosts* and Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, to mention only a sampling.^[5] This remarkable spate of translation activity has had numerous beneficial results: it has vastly extended the scope of drama in Scotland; it has both proclaimed and enhanced the cosmopolitan outlook which has characterised Scottish literature in its greatest periods; it has provided fascinating test-cases for issues relating to the theory and practice of literary translation; and it has contributed substantially to the literary development of the Scots tongue. To the task of finding within the many available dialects, sociolects, styles and registers of Scots appropriate media for recreating the milieu of ancient Athens, seventeenth-century Paris, nineteenth-century Silesia or twentieth-century Montreal, the translators have made imaginative responses; and to the related issue of cultural relocation and naturalisation they have found a wide variety of individual answers.

A notable feature of the corpus of Scots drama translations over the last sixty years is the predominance of comedy. It is tempting to speculate that since Scotland's failure to develop a native drama tradition in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries was to a great extent, though not entirely, due to the stern opposition to stage performances of the Presbyterian Kirk, the eventual breaking of that bondage was marked by an enthusiastic embracing of the most high-spirited sections of the European dramatic tradition. A more certain reason, however, is that a vigorous, distinctive and strongly national tradition of music-hall and pantomime comedy had flourished in Scotland throughout the twentieth century, in which a number of highly skilled performers, comic actors rather than simply comedians, had attained to wide renown: a stellar example is Duncan Macrae, whom Kemp had in mind from the outset for the part of Oliphant (Arnolphe) in his *Let Wives Tak Tent*. Molière, ever since, has remained by far the most popular source for Scots dramatic translations; and among other dramatists, Aristophanes' *The Frogs* and *The Birds*, Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Seville*, von Kleist's *Der zerbrochene Krug* and Holberg's *Den Stundensløse* are a few examples of classic European comedies which have been performed in Scots versions.^[6]

In this context, the attraction of Carlo Goldoni to Scottish dramatists and audiences is readily appreciable. His smart, fast-moving plots involve universally recognisable stereotypical figures who are cleverly individualised, and humorously contrived situations that are developed against a background with elements of social realism. This combination presents enticing challenges in the domain of cultural naturalisation; and Goldoni's distinctive use of the Venetian dialect, often contrasted with standard literary Italian, gives added appeal to translators working in a medium like Scots, with its range of dialects and registers and ambivalent social and literary relationship with English. Furthermore, Goldoni was an innovator in the theatre of his time, being a landmark figure in the development of Italian comedy from the *commedia dell'arte* tradition to a more realistic and more socially observant mode. Just as in the field of poetry, mighty figures from the mediaeval and Renaissance periods like Dante, Petrarch or Villon appealed to Scots translators not only for their intrinsic merits but by virtue of recalling Scotland's great period as an independent kingdom with a splendid national literature and a part to play in the affairs of Europe, so in drama, this boldly experimental and enterprising playwright had a natural attraction for translators, over and above the quality of his work, in the burgeoning springtime of Scotland's post-war dramatic scene. (Even outwith the context of Scots translations, Goldoni has been notably popular in the Scottish theatre. The Glasgow Citizens', the Edinburgh Royal Lyceum and the Pitlochry Festival Theatre are among the venues where his plays have been produced in recent years in English versions: Robert David MacDonald, the Citizens' resident translator, rendered no fewer than seven of his plays for performance at that theatre between 1976 and 1990.)

Three Scots renderings of Goldoni plays are discussed here: *The Servant o Twa Maisters* (*Il Servitore di Due Padroni*) by Victor Carin, *Weemen Strategem* (*I Rusteghi*) by Antonia Sansica Scott and Marjorie Greig, and *The Chioggian Rammies* (*Le Baruffe Chiozzotte*) by Bill Findlay and Christopher Whyte.^[7] The methods of translation differed somewhat in the three cases. Carin, an accomplished and popular actor and director on the Scottish stage who had previously translated Molière's *Le Malade Imaginaire* into Scots as *The Hypochondriack*, was fluent in Italian (and in fact half Italian by parentage): he first translated Goldoni's original literally into English, and then worked this version into a performing text in Scots. The other two were collaborative ventures. Antonia Sansica Scott, Italian by birth and education but resident in Scotland, was experienced in translating from Italian into English and had collaborated with Robert Garioch in his remarkable Scots translations of Giuseppe Belli's sonnets in Roman dialect; her co-worker in the Goldoni translation, Marjory Greig, was by profession a teacher of English but also a dramatist and producer. Bill Findlay, an active and committed scholar of and commentator on the Scottish theatrical scene as well as a practised translator, worked from a close literal English translation, with extensive notes and annotations, supplied by Christopher Whyte, a polyglot poet,

scholar and translator of high reputation with a thorough knowledge not only of Italian but even of the Chioggian dialect of the original.

As a translation, it may be noted, Carin's is much the least faithful, in a literal sense, of the three: whereas the other translations render the original more or less line by line, Carin's includes numerous passages where Goldoni's text is elaborated, augmented or re-written in other ways; the scene-by-scene development of the plot remaining unchanged but not always the individual speeches. The Scott-Greig play remains far closer to the original; but in view of this closeness the choice of title is striking: *Weemen Stratagem* does not translate *I Rusteghi*, which refers to the four elderly men. Goldoni in his introduction explains that *rustego* in Venetian dialect carries very different overtones from *rustico* in Tuscan: it implies *un uomo aspro, zotico, nemico della civiltà, della cultura e del conversare*; and since it would certainly be possible to convey this in Scots — the title could have been rendered as *The Reebalds, The Poushons, The Lurdans, The Glumphs, The Ruddochs, The Girnygabs, The Wheebers, The Catterwurrs* or *The Cabbrachs* (the last word is used in the play), to mention only some of the possibilities — the change is clearly intentional, implying a shift in the play's main focus from the menfolk and their unattractive ways to the efforts of their ladies to overcome them. The Findlay-White translation is very close literally and, as will be discussed, differs from the other two in retaining the original setting. All the translation projects had this in common, however: it was of the essence that they were aimed at producing performable acting texts which would appeal to the Scottish playgoing public. The work of the translators was anything but an academic exercise: it was a practical means of expanding the Scottish dramatic repertoire, employed by writers with extensive theatrical experience and conducted in the context of a rapidly expanding dramatic tradition and, concomitantly, a developing sophistication among audiences. Of necessity, therefore, the issue of cultural naturalisation presented itself forcefully from the outset. When adapting a comedy set in eighteenth-century Italy to the taste of audiences in twentieth-century Scotland, the most obvious choice would be to aim for a complete translocation: to avoid any suggestion of the original setting and transplant the plays culturally to a Scotland, or at least a conventional dramatic representation of Scotland, recognisable to their new audiences. A comparable setting could be found in the Edinburgh of the Enlightenment period, where counterparts could be readily imagined and convincingly presented for Goldoni's socially-pretentious patriarchs, obedient young ladies with ardent suitors, manipulative women and smart though downtrodden servants: indeed, the social world of Goldoni's theatre is not hopelessly remote from that portrayed in the novels of Susan Ferrier or Sir Walter Scott. On the other hand, this was by no means the only possible procedure: a translator could equally well retain the original setting and the cultural references which made it recognisable, thus presenting on the Scottish stage a story of Italian characters in their own community, only the language in which they now spoke serving to relate them to their new audience. From one point of view this would be the more straightforward

procedure, as it would restrict the translator's task to the purely linguistic level; however, it would run a greater risk, as the cultural foreignness might have an alienating effect on audiences.

The Carin and Scott-Greig translations take the former approach; the Findlay-Whyte, the latter. The difference is visible from the outset in the *dramatis personae*: in *The Servant o Twa Maisters* and *Weemen Stratagem*, the characters are given Scottish names. Pantalone becomes Mr Pittendree (an authentic name, but the last syllable is homophonous with a Scots word meaning 'suffer' or 'endure': not inappropriate for the stock put-upon old man of comedy!). The Doctor's new name of Alec MacKenzie has no such significance, but is unmistakably Scottish at least. Pittendree's daughter and her maid, Clarice and Smeraldina in the original, are Mary and Susie, names which might be said to suggest the class distinction (the latter part was created by Una McLean, an actress with an outstanding talent for comedy). MacKenzie's son is naturalised from Silvio to the archetypically Scottish Sandy: a tiny detail here, with no equivalent in the original but adding a touch of artistic verisimilitude, is that father and son evidently have the same Christian name, Alec and Sandy both being nicknames for Alexander. Sarah Burnett and David Kennedy as names for the other young romantic characters are merely serviceable and Scottish; Archie for the servant, the comic central figure in the play, seems at first to be a lost opportunity to the extent that it has nothing of the overtones of the original Truffaldino (*truffare*, to cheat or swindle); but a suggestion of 'he thinks he's Archie', an expression meaning 'he has an inappropriately high opinion of himself', is probably intended. A character who is altered in more than name is the innkeeper Brighella, a male character who in the Scots version becomes Jemima Gow! (This is not the only instance of a change of sex in Carin's translations: in *The Hypochondriack*, his version of *Le Malade Imaginaire*, Argan's brother becomes his sister.) Similarly in *Weemen Stratagem*, Lunardo, Canciano, Maurizio and Felipetto become Lennox Cruikshanks, Duncan Telfer, Mungo Scroggie and his son Finlay; Margarita, Marina, Felice and Lucietta become Mairget, Mairhi, Flora and Lizy; Simon's name is orthographically unaltered though he acquires the surname Mackerlie; and Il Conte Riccardo, interestingly, remains unchanged as an Italian aristocrat. One of the surnames is an in-joke: inspiration came to Charles Dickens when, on a dark evening in Edinburgh, he mis-read an inscription on a gravestone 'Ebenezer Scroggie, meal man' as 'Ebenezer Scrooge, mean man'!

By contrast, Padron Toni, Madonna Pasqua, Lucietta, Titta Nane and the other members of the cast of *Le Baruffe Chiozzotte* remain as they were in *The Chioggian Rammies*: the only naturalisation is that padron is rendered as 'skipper'. The nicknames which feature prominently in the play, however, are decidedly Scottish; most appropriately as *tee-names* (nicknames) are an integral feature of life in Scottish fishing communities to this day. Checca's nickname *Puinetta* (buttermilk curd) becomes 'Cheesie-chowks', Toffolo *Marmottina* (little marmot) is 'Titmoose', Lucietta *Panchiana* (fib, silly story) is 'Blethermooth', Orsetta *Meggiotto* (millet bread) is 'Dough-

heid', Pasqua *Fersora* (frying-pan) is 'Plooky-neb', Libera *Gallozzo* (cockerel) is 'Hairy-Ligs', Toni *Canestro* (fish-creel) is 'Mauck'rel', Fortunato *Baicolo* (a brand of Venetian biscuit) is 'Haddick', and Vincenzo *Lasagna* (no translation needed) is 'Wan-Airm'. The naturalisations have been assigned apparently on a nonce basis: Cheesie-Chowks, Blethermooth and Dough-heid have elements of meaning in common with the originals, though the common Scots insult 'Dough-heid' has a virulence which the Chioggian lacks; in 'Titmoose' a small bird has replaced the small animal but conveys at least equally well the overtone of contempt, and has the added virtue of alliteration (elsewhere Toffolo is addressed as 'Mister Toffee-nose' — i.e. snob: the original here is *Sior mamara*, 'idiot, simpleton' — the sound of his name again giving the translators a well-taken opportunity); 'Mauck'rel' and 'Haddick' have an obvious appropriateness for fishermen but bear no relation to the originals (though the change of *Baicolo* to 'Haddick' might have been influenced by the Spanish or Portuguese term *bacalao/bacalhau*, 'salted cod'); the others are randomly-chosen insults.

Besides the names of the characters, the setting is overtly naturalised in the first two plays. Carin invents a fictitious place-name Annamuck (with an unsubtly significant final syllable) for the family seat of the Burnetts (Turin in the original), states the conjectural place of Andra's death as Dumfries or 'doon about the Borders' (the original has no corresponding references), makes the former *Truffaldino Batocchio dalle vallade di Bergamo* present himself as 'Archie Broon frae Dundee' — is the choice of town conceivably because of Dundee's association with another famous set of Broons? — and comment disrespectfully on 'ye Embro fowk' where again the original has no specific reference. Scott and Greig are even more precise in their geographical translocation: Lennox Cruikshanks' house is placed by a stage direction in 'Brodie's Close, Lawnmarket, Edinburgh' and Simon Mackerlie's likewise in 'Chessel's Court, Canongate'; *gnanca una strazza de comedia no avemo visto* (13) is rendered as 'We hae been naewhere; no e'en doun the Canongate tae the Playhouse'; *quela petazza de la lasagnera* not only deals in a new foodstuff but does so in a precise location, being now 'that capernoitie besom at sells wilks at the heid o Wardrop's Court'; two actual Edinburgh taverns are cited in the change from *Dove voressi che andessimo? a l'osteria?* to 'An whare wad ye hae us gang? Lucky Middlemass's maybes, or the Cross Keys?' A reference to 'Allan Ramsay's playhous' (simply *teatro* in the original) locates the play historically as well as geographically: the theatre which Allan Ramsay founded in 1736 was forced to close only three years later.

Other details besides place names are employed to establish the cultural naturalisation. *Weemen Stratagem* abounds in references to calendrical landmarks such as Hogmanay (the specified time of the play's action, where the original refers only to *carneval*), Michaelmas, the Daft Days and Hallow Fair: though observance of these festive occasions was by no means restricted to Edinburgh, the fact that the last two are titles of poems by Robert Fergusson, the archetypal poet

of that city, serves to underwrite the setting of the play by association. References to food figure prominently in both plays: in *Weemen Stratagem* the verb *disnar* is rendered as ‘sup broth’ or ‘brak brose’, *dei boni caponi, de le bone polastre e dei boni straculi de vedèlo* is not only Scotticised but elaborated to ‘some skate an ingans, reistit tae perfection, a tasty mutton ham an a fine howtowdie, their gowden skins crackling in the fire, an the flesh white an sappy’ and shortly afterwards Lunardo’s invitation to his friend to partake of *latesini* (sweetbreads) is expanded to nothing less than ‘I hae some unco guid sheepheid broth on the bile, a reemin pot o stovies an a creamy Scots flummery for pudden’: no wonder Mungo’s response is not merely *I magneremo* but ‘I am droolan at the mou alreadyes!’ In *The Servant o Twa Maisters*, the list of appetising dishes offered by Brighella — *la zuppa, la frittura, el lessò e un fracando*, and so on for another couple of speeches — becomes ‘a green curly kale an’ barley broth, saut cod an’ butter-milk, a jeelied chucken-bree wi’ leeks, herrin’ soused wi’ ingans; or scrambled eggs wi’ chives’. A feature lost from the translation is Truffaldino’s incomprehension of the French- and English-derived names for some of the dishes; though in the play’s new Scottish context such a theme *could* have been introduced: some Scottish writers of the eighteenth century, including Robert Fergusson and (less seriously) Robert Burns, satirised the fashionable introduction of fancy exotic dishes and their preferred status in elegant society over traditional Scottish fare.^[8]

By contrast, the Findlay-Whyte rendering of *Le Baruffe Chiozzotte* leaves the Italian scene unaltered. This play is markedly different in tone as well as in setting from the other two: whereas they are urban comedies, extravagant and often farcical in their action, this is a gentler and much more naturalistic play with a village setting, in which the humorous misunderstandings and conflicts among the characters are realistically and sympathetically portrayed. This realism is reflected in the language of the translation: a register in which the more colourful words from the Scots vocabulary (which the Scott-Greig translation uses in abundance: *clashmaclavers, houghmagandie, curfuffle, contermacious, collieshangie, whigmaleeries*) are deliberately scarce. Since the fishing communities which Goldoni here depicts have obvious counterparts in Scottish life, the need for a deliberate cultural re-location may have seemed less pressing: Findlay’s intention, however, is more positive and specific than this. In the thesis of which the play text is a part, he argues that the frequent practice among Scots translators of re-locating the plays in a Scottish setting represents ‘a kind of defeatism’. In view of the energy, imagination and linguistic skill in which such translations have abounded this is at first sight a surprising judgement; but the case he makes is entirely clear: this practice implies an assumption that the Scots language cannot sustain an association with a non-Scottish subject; whereas a fully mature literary language can be used for writing on any subject whatever: in the specific case of drama, for plays set anywhere in space or time.^[9] Scottish audiences, Findlay argues, should be able to hear a play in Scots without automatically assuming that it must be set in Scotland — any more, he might have added, than a play in English, native or translated, must be set in England — and the

practice of altering not only the language but the setting of foreign plays in Scots versions is a hindrance to the development of this ability. Accordingly, the characters in *The Chioggian Rammies* are still Italian fisherfolk and their social superiors, engaging in the activities characteristic of the community (the opening stage direction has the ladies 'sitting on straw chairs, working lace on their cushions, which are placed on stools'). *Polenta* is still polenta and *barucche* are still 'roastit yellie pumpkin', the local currency is still *soldi* and ducats, town and village names either remain unchanged or are given in standard Italian instead of the local dialect (*Sinigaglia* for *Senegaggia*), more local place-names are given literal translations (*cale de la Corona* is 'Crown Vennel', *rio de Palazzo* 'Palace Key'). A specific set of words, names of garments, are left untranslated: it is interesting to note that the dialogue –

Lucietta: Awa?! Ye're gettin a 'donzelon'?

Checce: Ah dinna ken whit a 'donzelon' is.

Orsetta: Whut a haddie! Div ye no ken 'at when a young lassie comes tae a certain age she's gien a silk skirt, a 'donzelon'? When she gets a 'donzelon', it's a sign her family waants tae mairry her aff, 'at she's in the marriage mercat. Ye no ken that?

– is not an interpolation but is in the original, a *donzelon* and its significance being evidently as unfamiliar in eighteenth-century Venice as in contemporary Edinburgh. A reference to a *ninzoletto* is explained in a parenthesis, seemingly for the benefit of readers, but not in the dialogue (it is a 'sort of white cloth headscarf covering head and shoulders which women of Chioggia carry'); and the line 'Ah've brung ye the claith fur tae mak a "giubbonchino"', defined again in a parenthesis as 'sort of waistcoat but for a woman', corresponds to one in which the local name is in fact not used. Clearly this play, when it eventually receives its first public performance, has the potential to serve as a breakthrough in the developing status of Scots as a literary language, in countering the still-prevalent association that anything described or discussed in Scots must be Scottish.

Part of Goldoni's stock-in-trade is the use of the Venetian dialect (in *Le Baruffe Chiozzotte*, the local speech of Chioggia, which could be seen as a sub-dialect of this) and the contrasting implications of it and standard literary Italian: regularly, he makes dialect-speaking and standard-speaking characters interact in a manner which instantly recalls the interplay between Scots- and English-speaking characters in Scottish fiction and drama from Sir Walter Scott onwards. It goes without saying that the sociolinguistic histories of Scotland and Italy, and the attitudes to standard and dialectal speech forms that prevail in the two countries to this day, are very different; and that there is no simple correspondence between the social or literary relationship of Scots to standard

literary English and that of Venetian dialect to standard literary Italian: nonetheless, an obvious procedure in translating Goldoni might be to render the dialect passages into Scots and the Italian into English. One of the most interesting features of the three translations is that in no case has this course been followed exactly.

In *Il Servitore di Due Padroni*, the speeches of Pantalone, Truffaldino and Brighella are written in Venetian; those of the two romantic couples, the Doctor and Smeraldina in Italian (the Doctor also has a habit of quoting Latin aphorisms, a feature which is dropped entirely in the translation). Carin, however, chooses to write the entire play in Scots: the characters are distinguished in some cases by idiosyncrasies of speech (e.g. Jemima Gow's habit, not found in Goldoni's Brighella, of repeating phrases: 'A verra sad tale, A said, a sad, sad tale' — 'Waitye, waitye, A said waitye!'), but not by difference in language. Since he would certainly have been fully capable of incorporating, even elaborating upon, this device if he had wished — one could easily imagine a Scottish version of the play in which the old merchant spoke traditional Scots, his learned friend a pedantic Latinate English, the younger generation Scottish-accented English, the maidservant an exaggerated 'Kelvinsaide' English with hypercorrections, and the comedy actor a broad couthy Scots — his decision not to do so must have been for a reason: the most probable is that in a fast-paced comedy of action and situation it would simply have added nothing to the humorous effect and might even have proved a distraction by raising irrelevant issues. A marked speech difference of Scots as contrasted with English between the old and the young characters is a notable feature of Robert MacLellan's *The Flouers o' Edinburgh* and *Young Auchinleck*; but in those plays the focus is specifically on the social changes, reflected in speech as in other aspects of life, which affected Edinburgh and (to some extent) other parts of Scotland in the eighteenth century, and the adoption of an Anglicised language by the young is a source of conflict, or lack of sympathy at least, between them and their parents: this particular theme is not conspicuous in the Goldoni play, and might have been inappropriately suggested by a translator who tried conscientiously to find counterparts for his linguistic variations.

In *I Rusteghi*, the only character who speaks standard Italian is Conte Riccardo; and his lines are, predictably, translated into English, contrasting with the Scots of the other characters. An ingenious and very effective decision of the translators, however, has been to retain his original nationality (perfectly possible, of course, in the play's new context): in production, he would speak English with an Italian accent. Small though the part is, this device cleverly enhances the comedy of his scenes. In the original he is the stereotypically elegant, foppish, unscrupulous and to ladies dangerously attractive aristocrat, but though introduced as *un cavalier forestier* he is clearly an Italian: in the translation these qualities are intensified by his exotic foreignness. This is deliberately emphasised by interpolating into his dialogue, in English, some Italian phrases which are not in the original: 'Deliziosa signora!' — 'I have fallen in love with your beautiful city. (*Aside*,

with a sigh) Non solo della città, mi sono innamorato!'. A stage direction specifies 'when the ladies talk to Riccardo they make an attempt to speak English, but retain their broad Scots accents': this is not suggested in the original either by a stage direction or in the writing of the dialogue; and Duncan's overt attempt to make a language switch 'Dinna fash yoursel ... Don't — trouble — yoursel ... it — does — not — matter' has no equivalent in Canciano's *Eh, nol s'incomoda, che no me n'importa*. Riccardo's comment *È un bel satiro costui* becomes 'Che rustico! (*Fishes out his pocket dictionary, searches for the right word, then*) Bumpkin!'

Finally, in *Le Baruffe Chiozzotte* the speeches of most of the characters are in the local dialect throughout, but Isidoro, *Coadiutore del Cancelliere Criminale* in the original and 'Depute Magistrate of the criminal Chancellery' in the translation, speaks in Venetian with some Tuscan influence.^[10] At least in print, the differences are not obvious^[11]; but the translators emphasise Isidoro's official standing by making him speak English, with an occasional Scotticism ('Leave by ...'. 'I'll skelp your ear') or switch into full Scots ('Bide a wee...'). Inconsistencies are even more noticeable in the dialogue of the Clerk: this character's lines give the impression of a dialect speaker making a determined but not wholly successful effort to emphasise the dignity of his position by speaking 'proper': 'I summon you by order of the Depute-Magistrate to proceed forthwith to the Magistrate's office *for* to be examined' — 'Is that Skipper Fortunato's residence [simply *casa* in the original]? [...] Then that's the wan Ah seek. The door's lyin open, Ah'll away in.' These highly realistic touches illustrate Findlay's mastery of the subtleties of Scottish register-shifting, and his ability to exploit this in presenting his characters.

Cultural transfer must of necessity be accomplished by means of naturalisation, i.e. making the foreign cultural feature 'at home' in its new setting. In the case of literary translation, the language shift is a part of this process, to the extent that the literary artefact is now embodied in a familiar language instead of an unfamiliar one; but translation may not be sufficient for full naturalisation if elements of the foreign culture remain. In the specific context of Scotland's progress towards developing a native dramatic repertoire comparable to those of other countries, this factor is by the nature of the case already accommodated to a large extent: since the Renaissance, plays in contemporary vernacular languages but with settings remote in space and/or time have been so familiar that the spectacle of people feigning to be, say, Antony and Cleopatra yet conversing in English is taken as absolutely normal.^[12] The naturalisations of the Goldoni plays here examined are more comprehensive than a simple language shift, however: *The Servant o Twa Maisters*, *Weemen Stratagem* and *The Chioggian Rammies* are Scottish plays, and the means by which the translators have effected their Scotticisation have been examined. A final observation, however, is that the one of the three which at first sight appears the least naturalised is from another point of view the *most* so; in that whereas the 'Scotland' of the Carin and Sansica-Scott translations is rather a comical parody than a realistic socio-historical reconstruction, that of the

Findlay-Whyte is a not inaccurate representation of a social setting closely comparable to one which formerly existed in parts of the real Scotland and of which remnants can still be seen. If *The Servant o Twa Maisters* and *Weemen Stratagem* belong to the same company as, say, Robert McLellan's *The Flooers o Edinburgh*, *Torwatletie* and *The Hypocrite*, plays in which authentic and pointed social observations are presented within the recognised conventions of comedy, *The Chioggian Rammies* belongs to that of Donald Campbell's *The Widows of Clyth* and Gráinne Smith's *Chanceshot*, plays of much greater verisimilitude, set in fishing communities as they actually were (much more recently in the second case than the first): neither of those is a comedy as the Findlay-Whyte play is, but in all three cases the dramatists have chosen to depict humanly credible situations and characters rather than ones whose 'credibility' is in terms of dramatic conventions with a much greater degree of stylisation. To state the difference in an exaggeratedly simplistic and polarised form, the naturalisation of the plays is accomplished by making them conform, in the case of the first two, to existing Scottish dramatic conventions; in that of the third, to existing Scottish social history. Goldoni's stimulus to the Scottish dramatic scene has been, and will no doubt continue to be, both productive and interestingly diverse in its effects.

NOTES

[1] On this see Itamar Even-Zohar, 'The Making of Culture Repertoire and the Role of Transfer', in *Target*, 9:2 (1997), 355-363.

[2] For example, John Hume's *Douglas*, which at its first performance (in 1755) reputedly drew from an enthusiastic audience member the much-quoted comment 'Whaur's your Wullie Shakespeare nou?'

[3] Examples include *The Wallace* by Sydney Goodsir Smith, *The Bruce* by J.R. Silver, *John Knox* by James Bridie and *Jamie the Saxt* by Robert McLellan.

[4] For a ground-breaking account and evaluation of the development of drama in recent Scottish literature see John T. Low, 'Mid Twentieth Century Drama in Lowland Scots', in *Scotland and the Lowland Tongue*, ed. J. D. McClure (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1983), pp. 170-194.

[5] Translated by, respectively, Robin Lorimer and (less satisfactorily) David Purves, Edwin Morgan, Donald Campbell and John Byrne. See the list in *Serving Twa Maisters: Five Classic Plays in Scots Translation*, ed. John Corbett and Bill Findlay (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2005), pp. 331-8. This book, with its excellent critical apparatus and extensive bibliography, is the natural starting-point for any study of Scots drama translation.

[6] By, respectively, Douglas Young, Edwin Morgan, Hector MacMillan, Victor Carin and again Victor Carin: see Corbett and Findlay, *ibid.*

[7] The first of these received its première at the Royal Lyceum in 1965, the second at Perth Theatre in 1987; the third has not yet been staged. Only the first has been published, in Corbett and Findlay (eds), *Serving Twa Maisters*, pp. 143-215. I am grateful to Perth Theatre for allowing me to use their archive copy of *Weemen Stratagem*; the text of *The Chioggian Rammies* forms part of Findlay's unpublished Ph.D. thesis *Motivation and Method in Scots Translations: Versions and Adaptations of Plays from the Historic Repertoire of Continental European Drama*, Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh, 2000.

[8] In, respectively, *To the Principal and Professors of the University of St Andrews, on their Superb Treat to Dr Samuel Johnson* and *Address to a Haggis*.

[9] In fact the present writer argued on similar lines years ago: see 'Scots: its range of uses,' in A.J. Aitken and T. McArthur (eds.), *Languages of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1979), pp. 26-48; reprinted as 'Scots and its Use in Recent Poetry' in *Scots and its Literature: Varieties of English Around the World*, General Series 14, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995), pp. 171-189.

[10] This information is in Findlay's thesis. For my part, I am sufficiently familiar with standard Italian to have little difficulty in reading the dialect, but the differences between Isidoro's idiolect and those of the others elude me: even in the long conversation between him and Toffolo in Act 2 scene 1 I cannot detect any consistent differences in their speech. I take it on trust that they would be visible to native speakers or practised scholars; and no doubt in performance the play would be cast with actors who had, or could assume, clearly differentiated Chioggian and Venetian accents.

[11] In Act 2 scene 15, where Isidoro is puzzled and irritated by Fortunato's defective speech, the following exchange occurs:

Fortunato: Ah shpeaks Chioggian, ya hona'. Whit toon you frae, hona'?

Isidoro: I'm from Venice, but I can't understand a single word you say.

The *but* surely implies that a man from Venice would not expect the Chioggian dialect to present him with any difficulties of comprehension.

[12] Whereas experiments like Mel Gibson's films *The Passion of the Christ* and *Apocalypto*, with dialogue in, in the first case, Aramaic and Latin and, in the second, native Mexican languages and Spanish, seem audacious if not preposterous.

Iain Banks in French: Translating 'The Foreigner Within'

Olivier Demissy-Cazeilles

Over the years literary translation has constantly come up against the difficulty of relating cultural elements which are inherent to the original language, whether they are dialects or sociolects, examples of humour or references to the history, geography or customs of the country. These elements are often crucial in establishing that a character in fiction is a 'stranger' to the mainstream values of his or her own culture; effectively that he or she is a 'foreigner within'. In this article I argue that although some losses are inevitable when transferring novels from one language to another, translators and publishers must assume the responsibility of minimising the ethnocentrism of the translation process to make room for the 'foreigner within', this nuanced version of 'the Other', which gives the fiction its flavour.

First, I focus on an excerpt which illustrates the various strategies adopted by translators faced with the challenges posed by translating the humour, violence and 'Scottishness' present in four of Iain Banks's novels which have been rendered into French. The practical considerations are necessarily informed by an overall vision of translation studies, and cultural studies in the area of literary translation. I then address the issues raised by 're-centring' the way in which Banks and indeed Scottish novels in general are translated.

Iain Banks is a popular and critically acclaimed Scottish writer who remains relatively unknown in France, even though four of his major novels have been translated into French. Have the difficulties faced by his French translators diminished his reputation amongst francophone readers? There was an increased interest in the translation of Scottish fiction in France at the beginning of the 1980s. Banks was initially presented as an author of science-fiction (writing as Iain M. Banks) and of suspense novels. His first work of fiction, *The Wasp Factory* (1984), was even classed in the horror/fantasy category. From that point on, it was difficult for translators to submit any other kinds of work written by Banks to publishers. Banks's fiction, however, is far from homogeneous: it is colourful, dense, varied and impossible to classify. At the time of writing,

one of his most successful novels, *The Crow Road*, has not been translated, possibly because its specifically Scottish concerns do not conform to publishers' expectations. The cross-generic nature of Banks's output, then, is a first challenge to his French translators and publishers.

The present article deals only with Banks's work as a 'mainstream' fiction writer; it leaves aside those of his science-fiction works that have also been translated into French. My concern here is the interaction between stylistics and sociolinguistics as they apply to the field of translation. Even though black comedy, violence (both verbal and physical) and 'Scottishness' are present in all the four novels considered here, I examine only one of these dimensions in each novel discussed.

***The Wasp Factory*: Flattening the Style**

The Wasp Factory was translated as *Le seigneur de guêpes* by Pierre Arnaud in 2003. Despite the undeniable horror of the murders committed by the novel's main protagonist, Frank, they are also striking because of their absurdity, in the Beckettian sense. The whole novel is impregnated with an atmosphere of madness. For example, Banks manages to involve us deeply in a fight between Frank and a rabbit, which is described with such excitement and suspense that we almost forget how ridiculous the situation is.

The novel's grotesque black comedy is illustrated by the following excerpt, in which the author characteristically combines irony with touches of the macabre. The events that take place on this island off the North-West coast of Scotland are indeed terrible, yet the details used to describe them exaggerate reality, making them ridiculous. In the following passage, the description of the physical setting is characterised by the reiteration of lexical elements relating to its location, identified by (1) in the source text. The action involves burning sheep running down a hill – an image both terrible and comically grotesque (2). The repetitive use of the conjunction 'and' and the participial '-ing' form of the verb stylistically amplify the vision of the cascade of burning sheep. Both elements are absent from the translation, which as a result seems flat and platitudinous. Whereas Banks offers us a hyper-real, horror-film description of the burning sheep, the translator adopts an earnest and serious tone, downplaying the marks of exaggeration that are crucial to the black comedy.

The light was in a halo **over the big dune behind the house** (1), where the Skull Grounds were; it was flickering yellow with smoke-trails in it. The noise was like that the burning dog had made, but magnified, **repeated <and> repeated, <and> with another edge to it** (2). The light grew stronger, and something came running **over the top of the big dune** (1), **something burning and screaming and running down** (2) over the sea-face of Skull Grounds dune (1). It was a sheep, <and> it was followed by more. First

another two, then half a dozen animals came charging **over the grass and the sand** (1). In seconds the hillside was covered with **burning** sheep, their wool in flames, **bleating** wildly <and> **running** down the hill, **lighting** up the sandy grass <and> weeds <and> **leaving** them **burning** in their fiery wake.^[1]

Elles formaient maintenant un grand halo brillant, à peu près à la hauteur du Pré des Squelettes. Les hurlements me rappelaient, amplifiés mille fois, ceux qu'avait poussés le chien en brûlant. La lumière se fit plus forte et, soudain, des animaux apparurent en haut de la dune ; ils couraient en tous sens, le dos en feu. Il y en eut d'abord deux, puis dix, et en quelques secondes la colline fut couverte de moutons qui brûlaient, bêlant désespérément en galopant vers la maison, laissant des traînées de flammes dans leur sillage.^[2]

The loss of these details and stylistic elements has unfortunate consequences, for it changes both the tone of the translation, and leaves the reader with only the gothic aspect of the novel to experience. Yet the tone and effect of the original, as we have just seen, were quite different. This extract illustrates the problems that arise when translating a certain kind of humour, signalled through style. When humour is based on taboos or when it relies on puns, it is often translated through adaptation and/or compensation. When it is based on style and socio-cultural knowledge, the translator needs to follow the original model. Only by so doing, will the translation do justice to the original text and its author, for it is very likely that these characteristic elements will also appear in his other novels.

This misrepresentation of the writer's intentions is also evident in the way the translation deals with Banks's attacks on religion, also to be found in many of his other novels. Here we focus on a single example, the French translation of the title of the novel, which is echoed in the heading given to chapter VIII, "The Wasp Factory" (in French, respectively *Le seigneur des guêpes* and chapter VIII, "Le sanctuaire aux guêpes"). Not only does the French translation change the title of the novel (affording a gratuitous and distracting allusion to William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*) and the chapter, it also gives a religious connotation to both which would no doubt irritate Banks, a self-proclaimed atheist. Whereas the source text speaks of sacrifices and totems, the translation misleadingly returns us to a different form of religion.

A similar flattening of style can be observed in *Complicity* (1993), translated as *Un homme de Glace* by Hélène Colon in 1996. Cameron Colley, the novel's main character, is addicted to drugs, alcohol and sadomasochism. He becomes involved in a series of sordid murders committed by a childhood friend. In the following excerpt, for the first time in the novel, the violence of the language, expressed in the rhythmic repetition of obscenities, reflects the violence

of the acts described. The effect is therefore not one of shock or vulgarity for its own sake, but a desire to convey the full force of the verbal assault. This choice of wording reveals just how angry the murderer, Andy, is and amplifies his sadistic and violent personality, his desire to punish a corrupt and materialistic society.

Fucking squaddie culture, yeah; adoration of the fucking Maggie and pit bulls and getting some scoff down your neck and let's get pissed on lager and all moon together from the bus and camouflage jackets in the high street and yeah-well-I'm-inarestid-in-martial-arts-in't-I I'm not a fucking Nazi I just collect militaria I'm not a fucking racist I just hate blacks and gun magazines instead of magazines for guns wanking over the glossy photos of chromed Luger; Half of them think Elvis is still alive, buncha fucking stupid little cunts! [...] "Why are people so fucking useless?" he sobbed. "Fucking let you down, fucking can't do their fucking job ! Fucking Halziel; Captain fucking Michael fucking Lingary DSO – cunts!"^[3]

La culture de caserne... l'horreur. Idolâtrer Maggie et les pitbulls ; bâfrer ; se saouler la gueule à la bière ; montrer son cul tous ensemble par les vitres du car ; porter sa tenue de camouflage dans la rue ; se prétendre intéresser par les arts martiaux ; dire qu'on n'est pas un nazi mais collectionner les insignes militaires ; prétendre qu'on est pas raciste, mais qu'on peut pas blairer les Noirs ; acheter des magazines spéciaux au lieu de revues normales, sans doute pour se branler devant des Luger chromés sur papier glacé... La moitié d'entre eux croient fermement qu'Elvis est toujours en vie, les cons ! [...] « Comment les gens peuvent-ils être aussi nuls ? a-t-il sangloté. Vous laisser tomber comme ça, être incapable de faire correctement leur boulot ? Salopard de Haziél ! Salopard de capitaine Michael Lingary, avec sa médaille militaire de merde ! Tas de connards ! » ^[4]

The extreme violence of the murders in this novel may be read as a metaphor for the violence that the Conservative government has inflicted on the country. Here all the intensity of the hatred that Andy feels is articulated by the harshness of his words. But what do we observe in the translation? Here the flattening of style takes the form of an act of censorship, or self-censorship, which is typical of a French tendency to standardise 'deviant' features of a source text. Not only is it mandatory to edit out any repetitions, it is also essential to polish up the style. "Fucking" is both violent and socially nuanced; its omission sabotages the translation's potential to position the characters socially and to express the extreme nature of their emotions.

Translating 'The Foreigner Within'

The challenges posed to translators by 'deviant' styles of language are particularly salient when addressing the meanings of variation within a text. To illustrate this point, I refer first to *The Bridge* (1986), translated as *Entrefer* by Bernard Sigaud in 1988. In this novel, the protagonist, Alex, has a car accident and ends up in a coma. The narrative is his experience in this state, somewhere between life and death. *The Bridge* is entirely written in standard English, except for those chapters in which a barbarian, who represents Alex's unconscious and further functions as a cipher of the Scottish working class, expresses himself in a phonetic representation of a broad Scottish accent. The barbarian's language is not characterised by a rich Scots lexis or grammar, though some lexical items appear here and there. These two varieties express the twin subjectivities of Alex, who, in a deep coma, travels along the winding paths of his imagination. Thom Nairn highlights these linguistic and social divisions, while resisting the hasty 'national' reading of Banks they might suggest:

Quirky, complex, pointed humour, a diverse parade of atrocities and much else in Bank's work likewise recalls the Caledonian antiszygy, the dichotomy so beloved by MacDiarmid. Potential schisms in the individual (schisms are piled on schisms of all kinds) are constantly present in Banks's fiction, making it comparable to R.L. Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and James Hogg's *Confessions* or *The House with the Green Shutters*, or Alasdair Gray's *Lanark*. Yet Banks has expressed doubts about the place he may or may not occupy in a specifically Scottish literary tradition, as well as some dubiety about Scottish literature itself. The antiszygy, after all, is far from exclusively Caledonian: the same holds true of the most distinctive feature of *Walking on Glass* and *The Bridge*, which is their fusion of diverse styles of hard realism and quasi-science fiction, hardening the realist base while delving into some fairly strange subjective zones.^[5]

For the translator, these linguistic and stylistic contrasts are nonetheless best understood as dramatising a diglossic Scottish condition. There is a clear distinction between the code of emotions, generally expressed in Scots, and the code of rational thinking, sometimes associated with school and school bullying, which is expressed in standard English. The use of Scots in the following 'barbarian' section of *The Bridge* articulates the Freudian dimensions of the main character; the shift in codes expresses a schizoid tendency that is arguably characteristic of protagonists in Scottish novels.

It wiz this majishin that geez this thing, cald it a familyar soay did an it sits on ma showdder and gose jibber fukin jibber oll bluy day it gose. I cany stand the dam thing but am stuk with it I suppose an it wi me to, cumty think ov it. The majishin sed it woold help me; sed it woold tel me things, which it duz alright, but I thaught he ment sum usefyull

things no a lode a shite oll day. He wiz trying tay bribe me becose he thaugh I wiz goantae kill him, whitch I wiz, an he sed if I didnae hed give us this reely intirestin an usefyull familyar tay keep watch at nyht an giv us oll that advyce an that. So I sed fairnuf pal, lets see whit it can dae then, so he gose tay this shelp an gets this wee box an puts sum stuf intae it an ses sum o thae wurdz an that (I wiz watchin him, ken, in case he tryd enythin, had ma sord at his throate in case he tryd tae turn me intae sumthin wee an nastie, but he didnae).[\[6\]](#)

Sétté smajissyin kimavé doné struk, un familyé killaplé alor moi ossi et ysspérshh sur mon népoll et ski baraggwynn bordél toutt lanssintt journé illarétpa! Chpeupa bléré ste saloppry mais chpeupa man debaracé et jssupozz kssé paréye pour lui kanton nipanss. Le majissyin ydizé ki médré, komquoi ymdiré des truk pourssur sésskifé ahoui alor mais chkroyé kivoulédír des truk util padéta de konnry touttla journé. Il éssyéé dmashté passki kroyé kjalléltué illavé pator et ydizé keussi jletuépa y donnré à mezig se familyé vréman intréssan et util pour montélagardd la nuy et mdoné plintkonsséye ékssétra. Alor jyaidi sakollmonpott voyondonkvoir skisséfér, alor y vachérsché sétt petitt boitt sur unn nétajjér, illimé du truk dedan et ydidémo komssikomssa (jlavéaleuye, ouais, okaou ytantré kékshozz de toutpti touvilin, mais illa ryinfé).[\[7\]](#)

Even though the process of representing a socially and geographically specific accent on the page may run the risk of making the text impossible to read for some, it conveys a Scottish cultural identity. The French translation uses a similar phonetic process with the language yet it is hard to identify any social markers and therefore to grasp the reasons for this code. The resulting text may be contrasted to that of Raymond Queneau's *Zazie dans le metro* (1972), in which the language of the main character, Zazie, is represented phonetically, to express her personality as a young girl, and indeed another of Banks' novels, *Feersum Endjinn*, in which the language of one of the characters, Bascule, is represented in a kind of region-less, phonetic 'text-speak' to convey his youth.[\[8\]](#) If an English-speaker were to read the original passage from *The Bridge* aloud, he or she would at least approximate a Scottish accent, whereas a French-speaker reading the translation would find no clue as to the socio-cultural origin of the speaker.

The language of translation has at least two dimensions: language as expressive of content and language as a social process. The variety of English adopted by speakers often reflects their education and is therefore suggestive of social class or aspiration, and in Scottish contexts may convey the image of an oppressor or invader. When the barbarian expresses himself, he is reverting to his 'mither tongue', and at the same time returning to his working class roots. Unfortunately the translation is merely a synthetic morphosyntactic production that neglects the fact that Scots is more than a literary dialect, it is also a grounded social representation. The

translation of a regional and social accent or dialect in a novel, when it is directly opposed to the standard form of the language, remains closely linked to the function of both. While the literary representation of social dialects invites play, and although it is true that, to paraphrase Derrida, a good translation must know how to abuse, it must do so while remaining true to the writer's intent.^[9]

A further example of the challenges posed by language variety can be found in *The Business* (1999), translated as *Le Business* by Christiane and David Ellis in 2001. Kate Telman, the heroine of this novel, works for a semi-occult firm that wants to take over a state in order to obtain a seat at the UN. In the following extract she meets a young Scottish girl and begins a conversation with her. As Jean Berton discusses elsewhere in this issue of *IJSL*, it is extremely difficult to reproduce the effect of these characteristically Scottish oral markers. Whereas in the previous extract a form of phonetic spelling was used to characterise a 'barbaric' voice, here similar strategies are used to differentiate middle-class English and working-class Scottish voices:

'Come here, small girl.'

'Whit?'

'I said, come here.'

'Whit fir?'

'What? What did you say?'

'Eh?'

'Are you actually talking English, child?'

'Ahm no Inglish, ahm Scoatish.'

'Ah. Well, at least I understood that. I wasn't questioning your nationality, young lady. I was merely wondering aloud whether we shared the same language.'

'Whit?'

'Never mind. Look, would you kindly step closer to the car; I hate having to raise my voice...I'm not going to bite you, child.'

'Who'he?'

'That is Gerald, my chauffeur. Say hello, Gerald.'

'Aye-aye. Y'all right hen?'

'Aye... Zat him fixin the tyre, aye, missis?'

'Yes. We had a puncture. He's changing the wheel.'

'Aw aye.' 'How are we doing there, Gerald?'

'Getting there, ma'am. Getting there.'

'Now, what is your name?'

'Ahm no supposed to talk tae strangers. Ma maw telt me.'^[10]

- Viens ici, petite fille.
- Quoi ?
- J'ai dit : Viens ici.
- Pourquoi qu'faire ?
- Pardon ? Qu'est-ce que tu as dit ?
- Hein ?
- Est-ce que tu parles anglais, mon enfant ?
- Arrh, chu pas anglaise, chu écossaise.
- Ah ça, je l'avais compris. Ce n'est pas ta nationalité que je mettais en doute, jeune demoiselle. Je te demandais seulement si nous utilisons le même langage.
- Da quoi ?
- Bon laisse tomber. Tu veux être gentille et t'approcher un peu de la voiture ? J'ai horreur d'élever la voix...Allons, je ne vais pas te manger, mon enfant.
- Qui c'est-y, lui ?
- C'est Gerald, mon chauffeur. Dites bonjour, Gerald !
- Aye, aye ! Ca va ?
- Aye !...C'est lui qui répare le peuneu, aye, m'dame ?
- Oui. Nous avons crevé. Il change la roue.
- Aw aye.
- Nous progressons, Gerald ?
- Ca vient, Ma'me. Ca vient.
- Dis-moi, comment t'appelles-tu ?
- C'est pas permis de parler aux étrangers. Ma'aman, è'm'défend d'parler aux étrangers.[\[11\]](#)

The translator's strategy is similar to that used by Sylvère Monod in his translation of Scott's *Heart of Mid-Lothian* (also discussed by Jean Berton in the current issue of *IJSL*):

I therefore tried to introduce certain elements into the French used by these characters, on the one hand a small number of simple Scottish words which the general public may already know or which are discreetly explained when they first appear as is the case with *laird*, *kirk*, *cairn*, *manse*, their objective being to add a little local flavour without, one hopes, causing too much damage; on the other hand certain slightly stilted or deliberately awkward turns of phrase to express a feeling of strangeness – this is the sensation one should have, as is the case in Scott's novel, when speaking to a Scotsman and even more so when faced with a young Scottish girl dressed in her national costume in the Southern part of Great Britain.[\[12\]](#)

We might well take issue with the expression 'slightly stilted or deliberately awkward turns of phrase.' Indeed all readers in the target language will be faced with characters who do not speak properly ("Da quoi" is an example of a solecism in French), whereas in the original text the girl and the chauffeur speak 'good Scots', characterised by a local accent and a traditional lexicon (for example, the term of endearment, 'hen') and grammar (such as the weak verb 'telt', *told*). The effect that this has on a Scottish reader is difficult to predict with certainty: while some might regard the contributions of the girl and the chauffeur as poor English, others would welcome it as the familiar language of the local community. For other English-speaking readers, the discourse might simply be marked as Scottish. In the translated excerpt from *The Business* (it is important to note that the scene takes place in the outskirts of Glasgow), it is difficult to know if the reader will infer that the young girl is speaking as she does because she is young, or because of her lack of education, or because in her part of Scotland everyone speaks in the same way.

The translator, consequently, is faced with a set of choices amongst a politically sensitive array of potential 'equivalences'. Christiane and David Ellis negotiate these choices inconsistently. The contraction of the syntagm "je suis" into "chu" gives the reader the choice between five possibilities: the character is either relatively young, or uneducated, or from the North of France, or from a rural background, or all four. However the elliptic wording of "è'm'défend d'parler" is more a reference to oral language and can to some extent be destabilising to the French-speaking reader. Finally it is very rare for a translator to retain words or expressions from the source language which are unknown in the target language and rather than translate them try to incorporate them so that the readers can discover the Other. However, only "aye" and "aw aye" are kept, and "wee" (which appears a little further on in the original), a stereotypically Scottish term, disappears in the translation. This lack of consistency has its drawbacks. For example, isolating one word or one expression can give the target reader the impression that it is not a regional language but more a cry of pain, similar to the French interjection "aïe." In short, the complex potential significations of language variety in the original text lead to a number of incompatible strategies in the translation, which render it ultimately confusing to read.

Conclusion

The translation strategies adopted in the French versions of *The Wasp Factory* and *Complicity* diverge from the more experimental approach used in *The Bridge* and *The Business*. As we have seen, whether or not experimental techniques are adopted in the translation, it is still difficult for the readers of the French versions to appreciate the stylistic subtlety and range that is evident in the original texts, and this may have damaged Banks' reputation in francophone culture. The translators should not necessarily be blamed for the inconsistencies and shortcomings to be found in the versions of what are highly demanding texts to adapt. The publishers also have their

share of responsibility. A positive initiative in this respect can be seen in the policy of the Métaillé publishing house: it has a Scottish library and assigns one translator to each of its authors. This policy leads to consistency between translations, and indeed intertextuality among novels, and there is a greater chance of honouring the style of the original writer.

In terms of translation techniques, the first two excerpts considered here are cases of gradual adaptation^[13] and are characteristic of a certain conception of literary translation that still prevails in commercial publishing. Translation deadlines are often too short and so, even when the translations are the work of specialists who are asked by their publishers to respect the source text, they sadly remain unfaithful. The challenges posed by the latter two examples are more complex, and demonstrate the *aporias*, or inevitable impasses that translation induces / produces. Some attempts to address these issues are suggestive – for example, the use of French vernacular like *chtimi* in Freddy Michalski's translation of William McIlvanney's *Docherty* (Paris: Rivages, 1999) – yet it is important to note that each case is different and it is difficult to establish a generally applicable set of rules for translators to follow.

One is therefore forced to admit that a likely reason why a writer such as Banks has not been as successful in France as we might expect is that his novels pose substantial challenges for translators and publishers: they destabilise generic boundaries, and they are deeply rooted in a nuanced Scottish world-view that stands apart from mainstream Anglophone culture, a stance that is marked by either a characteristic form of humour or a penchant for code-switching. All of these elements create difficulties for the translator who is working under pressure for a publishing house, particularly when novels are allocated for translation individually. Flattening the style and deleting vernacular expressions are all too common translation techniques that invite a more imaginative response from increasingly visible translators.

Further Reading:

Berman, Antoine, *L'Épreuve de l'étranger* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995)

Berman, Antoine, *La Traduction et la lettre ou l'Auberge du lointain* (Paris: Seuil, 1999)

Cordonnier, Jean-Louis, *Traduction et Culture* (Paris: Hatier / ed. Didier, 1995)

Venuti, Lawrence, *The Translator's Invisibility* (London: Routledge, 1995)

Venuti, Lawrence, *The Scandals of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1998)

NOTES

- [1] Iain Banks, *The Wasp Factory* (1984; London: Abacus, 1990), p. 175.
- [2] Translation by Pierre Arnaud, *Le seigneur des guêpes* (Paris: Fleuve noir, 2003), p. 212.
- [3] Iain Banks, *Complicity* (1993; London: Abacus, 1994), pp. 212-13.
- [4] Translation by Hélène Colon, *Un homme de glace* (Paris: Denoel, 1997), pp. 227-8.
- [5] Thom Nairn, 'Iain Banks and the Fiction Factory' in Randall Stevenson and Gavin Wallace (eds), *The Scottish Novel since the Seventies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p. 127.
- [6] Iain Banks, *The Bridge* (1986; London: Abacus, 1990), p. 77.
- [7] Translation by Bernard Sigaud, *Entrefer* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), p. 90.
- [8] John Corbett, 'Past and Future Language: Matthew Fitt and Iain M. Banks' in Caroline McCracken-Flesher (ed.), *Scotland as Science Fiction* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, forthcoming).
- [9] Jacques Derrida, *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Vol. I* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 67.
- [10] Iain Banks, *The Business* (1999; London: Abacus, 2000), pp. 22-3.
- [11] Translation by Christiane and David Ellis, *Le business* (Paris: Belfond, 2001), pp. 32-3.
- [12] Walter Scott, *Le Coeur du Midlothian*, trans. Sylvère Monod (Paris: Gallimard, 1998)
- [13] See Lance Hewson, 'L'adaptation larvée : trois cas de figure', *Palimpsestes*, 16 (2004), 105-116.

Translating Scottish Literary Texts: A Linguistic Clover-Leaf

Jean Berton

The English language belongs to no community in particular; or at any rate to a community so vast and heterogeneous as to have no common features except common humanity and the English tongue. Scots, by contrast, is a language intensely territorial: one unique to a small and well-defined geographical area [...][\[1\]](#)

J. Derrick McClure's statement – which equally applies to Scottish Gaelic – offers the prospect of a fruitful debate for translators interested in the literature of Scotland. The 'linguistic clover leaf' in the title of this article refers to Scotland's three native languages. We are now beyond the need to prove that Scots, Gaelic and English are together part of the cultural identity of Scotland.[\[2\]](#) Occurrences of Latin, though not totally absent, are now becoming as rare as a four-leaf clover in a field. The complexity of the linguistic case of Scotland can no longer be overlooked even though what is self-evident must be repeatedly asserted, as John Corbett does:

To survey the history of translation into Scots is to explore in microcosm the history of Scottish literature and language, and their relationship to Scottish politics, history and social identity.[\[3\]](#)

The building of Europe – to summarise an involved process – has brought about a clear consciousness of linguistic variety in Europe, and various decisions since the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages was signed in Strasbourg on November 5, 1992, have boosted the revival of Celtic languages and other so-called minority languages. Again, the value of those minority languages need no longer be demonstrated. Following the Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights, signed in Barcelona on June 9, 1996, the notion of multilingualism has been superseded by the rise of plurilingualism. As it is expressed in the European Charter of Plurilingualism, currently in development, plurilingualism is a rather common international

phenomenon, and Scotland is well positioned to embrace it as an asset within a European context.^[4]

However, the topic of this article is not plurilingualism in Scotland but how to avoid erasing it when translating Scottish literary texts into French. Even though French linguists have made some progress in Scottish studies, they still face an age-old challenge as far as the languages of Scotland are concerned: 'English' is easily translated into 'anglais', but there is still much hesitation about both 'Gaelic' and 'Scots'. Even so, I will go on translating, as I have for some twenty years, 'Gaelic' into 'gaélique' (if necessary adding 'écossais' to avoid confusing it with Irish Gaelic), and 'Scots' into 'écossais'. I will also continue using 'anglophone(s)' for English speakers, 'gaélophone(s)' for Gaelic speakers and 'scottophone(s)' for Scots speakers.^[5] Such a clarification needs to be made to avoid doubt and confusion.

Hesitations about place-names are frequent, and it is the translator's duty to use names consistently and train their readers to be confident in recognising their significance. Most place-names need not be translated; however, after reading information on the internet about, say, the 'Region Highland', should the translator prefer a Gaelic name or an English name for a specific place? Should he or she choose *Inverness* or *Inbhir Nis* (in the latter case, must the pronunciation of 'inbhir' be explained)? The case of *Fort William*, alias *An Gearasdan*, can be more puzzling. And what can we say about *Edinburgh*, *Embro*, *Dun Eideann*? The name 'Edinburgh' is apparently difficult enough for French students to pronounce and the English spelling generally alternates with the French, 'Édimbourg'. Moreover, in French we have a corresponding adjective – 'édimbourgeois'. But for Glasgow, the corresponding adjective 'glaswégien' is not firmly established. For Inverness, we have to create 'invernessien' and enforce the use of the term. As for Aberdeen, football commentators can be of great help to familiarise the French with 'aberdonien.' The list can be greatly extended, but I shall restrict myself to one further illustration of the major issue of onomastics: my favourite place-name from Scott's *Waverley*, 'Ballybrough'. It is an invented name with a strong symbolical significance – in the narrative, the village is on the cusp between the Gaelic-speaking world and the Scots-speaking world and there seems to be no possibility of translating it literally into the French language other than by 'Villagevillage'.

These few examples serve to raise a key question: with a view to acknowledging the languages of Scotland as a major element of her identity, how are we to translate into French words, phrases, and sentences in either Scots or Gaelic when they are embedded in a narrative in English? The translator may, of course, choose not to translate them and allow the narrator to make the meaning clear (a highly debatable position) or opt to add a glossary with notes, after Walter Scott's manner in the *Waverley* novels, or Peter Urpeth's in *Far Inland*.^[6] Or the translator can decide to translate them and add a footnote stating that the words are in Gaelic or Scots in

the original version, in which case (s)he must have some knowledge of both Gaelic and Scots. There may be a third option which would be to translate using specific markers to indicate to the reader that the language used in the original version is either Scots or Gaelic. So far, no prescription has been made about translating plurilingual texts into French, especially in relation to Scottish literature, as the president of SEPTET (an academic association dealing with translation from English into French) assured me in a personal communication. This article, then, may in fact serve as a first step towards theorising a practice that covers the literatures of all the nations in the British Isles.

Defaucompret: A Landmark in Translation

I begin with some observations on the French version of Walter Scott's *Rob Roy*, by Auguste Jean-Baptiste Defaucompret (1767-1843), the much-praised translator of Scott's novels in the 1820s. A few examples will illustrate my thesis:

'Now,' he said, 'all is over—let the piper play *Ha til mi tulidh*, (we return no more)' and he is said to have expired before the dirge was finished.^[7]

« Maintenant tout est fini ; que le joueur de cornemuse fasse entendre l'air *ha til mi tulidh* (nous ne reviendrons plus). » Et il expira, dit-on, avant que le chant funèbre fût terminé.

Even though Scott's Gaelic quotes are not in the appropriate spelling, their meanings are quite easily accessed by modern readers. However, the mistake in his English translation of 'Ha til mi tulidh' into 'we return...' instead of 'I shall return...' is neither corrected nor noted in the French version ('nous...'). Such a detail suggests that Defaucompret had no knowledge of Scottish Gaelic.

'Warst of a', Robin,' retorted the Glaswegian,—'I mean, ye disloyal traitor—Warst of a!' [...] (p. 271)

– Encore pire, Robin! reprit le bailli de Glasgow, il y a de la trahison. Un traître déloyal! C'est le pire de tout...

Here the translator has no proper word in French to translate 'the Glaswegian'; and the phrase 'le bailli de Glasgow' is not adequate since Scott meant to draw his reader's attention on the Glaswegian's accent expressed in the repeated word 'warst'. The French word 'pire' does correspond to 'worst' but it fails to render the Glaswegian accent in 'warst'.

In the following extract, it is obvious that Defaucompret cannot translate Jarvie's colourful replies and he does not appreciate the several implied meanings in Scots and Gaelic. Furthermore he has no means at his disposal of showing the extent of the linguistic abilities of Rob Roy, who can speak both Scots and English fluently.

'I tell you, Robin,' said the magistrate, 'in my puir mind, if ye live the life ye do, ye shuld hae ane o' your gillies door-keeper in every jail in Scotland, in case o' the warst.'
'Ane o' my kinsmen a bailie in ilka burgh will just do as weel, cousin Nicol—so, gude-night or gude-morning to ye; and forget not the Clachan of Aberfoil.' (p. 276)

– Je vous dirai, d'après mon pauvre avis, Rob, dit M. Jarvie, que, si vous continuez à mener la même vie, vous feriez bien, en cas d'accident, de placer un de vos affidés dans chaque prison d'Écosse.

– Si un de mes parents était bailli dans chaque ville, cousin, cela me serait assez utile. Mais bonsoir ou bonjour, et n'oubliez pas le chemin d'Aberfoil.

In the phrase 'Clachan of Aberfoil', the translator mistranslates 'clachan' into 'chemin' (road) instead of 'Village'. Such a detail betrays the translator's lack of understanding of the Gaelic term, which was also borrowed into Scots. Therefore, we cannot expect him to render the language (and accent) correctly.

The following piece by the narrator shows that an analysis of the 'response of *'Ha niel Sassenach'*' with no subject clearly expressed can suggest several interpretations: 1) *I can't speak English*; 2) *I am not English*; 3) *there isn't any Englishman*. It may also express a polemical accusation through the possibly deliberate confusion between an Englishman speaking English and a Scotsman (Jarvie) speaking Scots.

[...] and to our various enquiries, the hopeless response of *'Ha niel Sassenach,'* was the only answer we could extract. The Bailie, however, found (in his experience) a way to make them speak English. (p. 320)

... et, à chaque question que nous fîmes, on nous répondit constamment: – *Ha niel sassenach*. M. Jarvie, qui avait de l'expérience, trouva pourtant bientôt le moyen de leur faire parler anglais.

The direct and indirect handling of languages is of prime importance. Defaucompret here adds a footnote translating Scott's footnote: 'C'est-à-dire: Je ne sais pas l'anglais. – Éd.' He has dropped 'hopeless' along the way, and turned 'The Bailie' into 'Mr Jarvie', which significantly alters the

politics of Scott's discourse. And the following extract reveals Defaucompret's lack of serious analysis before turning the reply into French:

'If shentlemans were seeking ta Red Gregarach,' he said, 'to be sure they couldna expect to find her without some wee danger.' (p. 347)

– Si les gentilshommes cherchaient les Gregarach, dit-il, à coup sûr ils ne devaient pas s'attendre à les trouver sans courir quelques petits dangers.

The character of Dougal, a Gaelic speaker, cannot master the English language – 'Shentlemans' instead of 'Shentlemen' – but the absence of the article may be meaningful and 'If shentlemans...' should not be translated into 'Si /es gentilshommes...'. Moreover, 'gentleman' is supposed to mean 'English gentleman', since at the beginning of the eighteenth century no Highlander was considered a gentleman. The word, both mispronounced and misused, is connoting social and political meanings which a French reader of the 1820s may not have been able to appreciate.

Furthermore, the phrase 'ta Red Gregarach' obviously meaning 'the Red (-haired Helen) MacGregor' is turned into 'les Gregarach', which is a serious mistranslation. Was Defaucompret misled by the unlenited 'the': 'ta'? (see on page 360 'tat' corresponding to 'that', and 'ta' to 'the'). Elsewhere, 'the MacGregor', meaning Rob Roy himself, is confused with 'les MacGregor', meaning the whole clan. Still, we may find some excuse in the fact that M. Defaucompret was as hard-pressed as contemporary professional translators to visit Scotland and study her vernacular languages.

Modern-Day Translators and Contemporary Novels

Around ten years ago Professor Sylvère Monod published a modern translation of Scott's *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*. In Defaucompret's earlier translation, the title had been rendered *La Prison d'Edimbourg*; but Professor Monod's choice of translation was more direct: *Le Cœur du Mid-Lothian*.^[8] In his preface he criticises Defaucompret's translation, mentioning the numerous omissions that cause major distortions in Scott's original narrative.^[9]

A major improvement is to be found in the clear consciousness of the existence of Scots expressed by Scottish characters. However, Professor Monod fails to acknowledge that Scots is a language expressed through many various dialects^[10] – to him those Scottish characters speak some sort of English.^[11] Further, Professor Monod does not distinguish between Scots and Scottish Gaelic – to him Gaelic speakers use 'a harsher language, more "distant" from ordinary English'.^[12] Nevertheless, he tries to tackle the linguistic differences in two ways, besides the addition of footnotes: one is the use of a few 'simple Scottish words' that can be recognised by

the reader (*laird, kirk, cairn, manse*) and which serve to enhance the local colour of the narrative,^[13] the other is coining some phrases or sentences in awkward French so as to produce a feeling of the bizarre.^[14] The final blow comes in the comparison between language and traditional dress – Monod's reader should experience the feelings of an Englishman watching a young Scottish lass in her traditional costume walking somewhere in 'Southern Britain'.^[15] However improved we may judge the latest translation of Scott's novel to be, we can observe that much remains to be done to make it clear to French translators that Scotland has been the host of three languages for centuries and that Walter Scott knew how to handle them with a purpose.

If every educated Frenchman and woman is likely to have read stories by R. L. Stevenson, there must be only a handful of us aware of the kailyard milieu. One of the main reasons is that a text like Ian Maclaren's *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush*, for example, poses a challenge to any translator. The narrator uses standard English to describe scenes and introduce various characters: some of them are Lowlanders speaking Doric, and others are Highlanders speaking Scots in their own ways. The following excerpt illustrates the difficulties at issue:

'Ye're no surely frae the Glen, lads?' as the men leaped the dyke and crossed to the back door, the snow falling from their plaids as they walked.

'We're that an' nae mistak, but a' thocht we wud be lickit ae the place, eh, Chairlie? A'm no sae weel acquant wi' the hill on this side, an' there wes some kittle (hazardous) drifts.'

'It wes grand o' ye tae mak the attempt,' said Drumsheugh, 'an' a'm gled ye're safe.'

'He cam through as bad himself tae help ma wife,' was Charlie's reply.

'They're three mair Urtach shepherds 'ill come in by sune; they're frae Upper Urtach, an' we saw them fording the river; ma certes, it took them a' their time, for it wes up tae their waists and rinnin' like a mill lade, but they jined hands and cam ower fine.' And the Urtach men went in to the fire.^[16]

There is an additional difficulty here in that Maclaren himself glosses the word 'kittle' as 'hazardous.' The English term can be translated as 'dangereux', but what do we do with 'kittle'? The solution must cohere with the translation of the whole narrative, where the narrator's standard English contrasts with both Drumsheugh's Lowland accent and wording and both of the Highlanders' idiosyncrasies when speaking Scots, the language of 'the hill on this side'. The complexities of translating this kind of text demand that an integrated approach be developed by the translator.

In his study *The Violence of Language*, cited by Lawrence Venuti, Jean-Jacques Lecercle writes:

A literary text [...] can never simply express the author's intended meaning in a personal style. It rather puts to work collective forms in which the author may indeed have a psychological investment, but which by their very nature depersonalize and destabilize meaning [...].[\[17\]](#)

In the case of Scottish literature, the phrase 'collective forms' includes the living languages of Scotland. Walter Scott's *Waverley* novels set a pattern for Scottish literature in that they brought together at least two of the three living languages of Scotland. Andrew Greig, in *The Return of John Macnab* (1996), emulates Walter Scott indirectly, through the medium of John Buchan's *John Macnab* (1925). Buchan's narrative is set in the west Highlands, and Greig's in the eastern Highlands, and in both cases some knowledge of both Gaelic and Scots does help the reader. To begin with, the name 'Macnab' (the identity assumed by a group of amateur poachers in each novel) is meaningful since, in modern times, priests and members of the clergy of the Roman Catholic church are not supposed to have offspring; therefore, Macnab, literally translating as 'son of the abbot', implies 'non being' or nobody, which enhances the elusiveness of the character in the narratives.[\[18\]](#) Here and there in his narrative, Greig uses Gaelic words which can be easily understood by a Scottish reader, for example:

'Special occasion, *a graidh*'?

'Aren't they all, *m'eudail*'?, she replied poorly mimicking the Lewis lilt [...].[\[19\]](#)

Discussing the correct spelling for a vocative ('a ghraidh' rather than 'a graidh') is of little interest or no interest with regard to this term of endearment. What is revealed in Greig's few references to Gaelic is that language is certainly an issue in Scotland, and part of the characterisation of the protagonist is his membership of a linguistic minority in his own land. Later, the narrator drops a hint:

The chair went spinning. He stood before the large-scale map, and using language only his Maker and some forty thousand other native Gaelic speakers would understand, he searched wildly for the lochan. [...] (p. 288)

The translator should not overlook the issue; all the more so as this particular character, together with the collective 'hero', appear again in a later narrative, *Romanno Bridge*, with their respective characterisations intact.[\[20\]](#)

In her detective novel, *Deadly Code*, Lin Anderson sets part of her story in a Gaelic-speaking environment:

Raasay House, Taigh Mor an t-eilean, 'The Big House on the island', stood in the southwest corner [...] [\[21\]](#)

She clearly means to make use of the linguistic context in the last few lines of the English narrative:

'I love her,' Spike had said. 'Tha gaol agam oirre.'

[...]

Rhona closed her eyes and let the Hebridean wind wash her soul.

'Tha mi 'dol dhachaigh,' she told the wind. 'I'm going home.' (p. 213)

Anderson sees to it that her reader understands the Gaelic words by producing an immediate translation. However the very last line of the novel expressing both Gaelic and English draws the reader's – and the translator's – attention to the actual presence of native languages other than English. To some extent, Lin Anderson's novel voices some linguistic militancy.

As a final example, Peter Urpeth's *Far Inland* also includes expressions in Gaelic. 'Donald knew that it was to be Angus's *marbh-phaisg*' (p. 20). The word is explained in a note at the end of the novel, 'death shroud' (p. 163). Later, "Sorley MacRath – *Fear na Slèibhtan*' it would say on his tombstone' (p. 69); the phrase is translated in a note as 'man of the mountains'. But the translator's work is challenged in the following:

The father spoke as they worked on:

'*Mòine dhubh*, black peat from the *fàd a caoran*. *Mòine bhan*, white peat rich in fibre that would keep a fire in all night.

'*Mòine chruaidh ghlas*, a mix of black and fibre peat that won't crumble like the *mòine dubh* [sic]. (p. 112)

An accompanying note reads: '*fad a' chaorain*, the bottom layer of peat in the bank, that produce *mòine dhubh*' (p. 162). The interested reader will see the different spellings of '*fad a c(h)aora(i)n*' and might expect an explanation. How might the translator respond to this demand? In this dialogue, the novel is verging on the documentary, and that fiction can take on several roles, such as telling a tale and defending a language, makes the translator's task more complex.

These few examples illustrate what might be termed a 'Scottian' mixture of translating strategies – immediate translations into English, notes at the bottom of the page or at the end of the narrative, and a glossary. A Scottish writer may consider it pointless to translate phrases or sentences in Scots, but a translator has to handle the native languages of Scotland with care, since Scots or Gaelic-speaking characters should not unwittingly be represented as fools, as is so

often the case with speakers of non-standard or non-dominant languages. The narrative voice being in the English language, whatever is written in English easily translates into French. But characters' voices, whether in Scots or Gaelic, must find an adequate expression. Furthermore, the text must not be altered for the worse.

Rather than theorise translation from bi/trilingual Scottish literary texts into one single language (French), bearing in mind the work carried out in our laboratory, CIEREC, and published in *Création théâtrale*, I would like to offer here something of a hypothesis that needs to be fully tested.^[22] To start with, standard English text can be unproblematically translated into standard French. Latin can remain as Latin in a French version – French is a Roman language, after all. For example, the Latin quotation that precedes the main narrative in John Herdman's *Ghost Writing* offers readers a significant clue to the meaning of the novel, and can remain unchanged. In the remainder of this paper I shall propose a way of handling shifts into Scots and Gaelic through the control of the phonemic and orthographic realisations of the translation. I focus on only some aspects of each individual language, because there is no space for a thorough phonemic analysis of either Gaelic or Scots. The present proposal should be considered merely a pilot study, to be improved through more extensive practice. Concerning this undertaking, I am quite conscious of the fact that, as Lawrence Venuti observes, 'translation, like any cultural practice, entails the creative reproduction of values'.^[23]

Translating Scots

I start with some general observations on Scots: Scottish vowels are set against standard (or RP) English vowels. English triphthongs are mostly absent in Scots – our/oor; about/about; English diphthongs are usually equal to monophthongs in Scots – my/ma; away/awa. Overall, Scots has fewer phonemes than RP English – 'cannot' in English is 'canna' in Scots. In the vocalic system, monophthongs in Scots are in a more upper-central position in the speaker's oral cavity – poor/puir; one/yin; from/frac; what/whit. Vowels in stressed syllables in English may correspond to long vowels in Scots – head/heid; well/weel. Following those observations, we can suggest that a French translation of Scots vocalic sounds may aim for a preponderance of central vowels. Since, in standard French, diphthongs are not frequent (except when using a Provençal accent!), we are left only with the option of altering the colour of selected vowels. The central vowel 'e', possibly with an accent 'é', can be used more often, even replacing some other vowels.

As far as consonants are concerned, we can observe that Scots predominantly uses k-sounds ('church' in English and 'kirk' in Scots). Therefore, we can mimetically represent North-English (Teutonic/Scandinavian) sounds in Scots through translated speech that also foregrounds k-sounds – in French, 'c' (as in 'cœur') and 'q' (as in 'qui, que') since the letter 'k' is rarely used. The

translator must avoid falling into some mock-Alsatian or German accent (for which k-sounds are turned into g-sounds and vice versa, owing to processes of voicing and unvoicing), which would result in a total failure. This procedure needs to be tested; some steps in this direction are taken below.

We can use, as a case study [24], James Robertson's *The Fanatic*, translated by Yves Bouveret as *Le Fanatique*. [25] Generally speaking, the narrator's English voice frames and displays the Scots voices of the characters. In Robertson's *The Fanatic*, modern Scots, at the end of the twentieth century, runs parallel with seventeenth-century Scots; the author's intention is evidently to demonstrate that modern Scots has the same value as seventeenth-century Scots and that the period from the Union of 1707 to 1997 – when the English language had to be considered prevalent – can now be dismissed. The chapter titles only indicate dates so as to help the reader fully grasp the structure of the narrative.

Example 1.

Not many folk were about, but those that did hurry past had to step around him, giving him dark looks. *Whit's the daft laddie daeing goaving up at the jail there? Dis he ken some puir body locked up inside?* (*The Fanatic*, p. 45)

En passant près de lui, les rares piétons devaient le contourner et lui jetaient des regards mauvais. *Qu'est-ce qu'il a ce jeune idiot à reluquer la prison? Peut-être qu'il connaît un pauvre type qui y est enfermé?* (*Le Fanatique*, p. 59)

Following the phonemic constraints described above, I would change Bouveret's 'idiot' for 'crétin', because it has both the 'é' vocalic sound and the 'k' consonant. I would also modify 'la prison' for 'c'te prison' because the vowel in 'c'te' (= a reduced form of 'cette') is more central than in 'la'. Because the character speaking here belongs to the lower classes, I would alter '... un pauvre type qui y est enfermé' into '... un pauv' mec qu'on aurait mis au trou', for the vowel of 'mec' is more central than that of 'type' and the digraph 'tr(ou)' is a harder sound than 'enfermé'. In the slang phrase 'mettre au trou' (send to jail), the vowel '(tr)ou' is fairly central but can be transformed into '(tr)eu' for a more central sound, still leaving the word intelligible. Overall, then, Bouveret's rendering would be altered to give:

Qu'est-ce qu'il a ce p'tit (for 'jeune') crétin à reluquer c'te prison? P'têtre qu'il connaît un pauv' mec qu'on aurait mis au treu?

Example 2.

Now he was wondering about a trip to view the prison: 'Would my lord Lauderdale object tae my gaein ower, dae ye think? I wouldna want tae gie offence by speirin if it was only tae be refusit.'

'Whit for are ye wanting tae gang tae the Bass, John?' said Sir Andrew.

(*The Fanatic*, p. 61)

Maintenant il envisageait de faire le voyage pour voir la prison:

– Est-ce que Lord Lauderdale s'opposerait à ce que je m'y rende, à votre avis ? Je ne voudrais pas déplaire en demandant une permission qui me serait refusée.

– Et pourquoi diable veux-tu visiter le Bass, John? dit Sir Andrew.

(*Le Fanatique*, pp. 76-7)

Here characters belong to the upper classes but still speak Scots. By replacing the soft 'y' by 'jusque là-bas' I can add a 'k' sound. For the same reason, I would replace 'à votre avis' by 'qu'est-ce que vous en pensez'. The section 'une permission qui me serait refusée' could be turned into 'une permission qui serait rejetée' so that the front 'u' ('refusée') sound is replaced by the central 'e' ('rejetée').

Sir Andrew's reply can do without the 'diable' which can be misleading, and 'visiter' does not translate 'gang' properly. I suggest the casual: '– Et qu'est-ce qui fait que tu veux te rendre au Bass, John?'

Example 3.

'Jean, Jean,' said Mitchel. 'Ye may gang hame noo. Hurry noo, afore ye freeze.'

'I'll no freeze,' she said. 'I'm weill happit. It's no me that'll freeze.'

He was about to pass her when she reached up a hand and touched his cheek.

(*The Fanatic*, p. 106)

– Jane, Jane, dit Mitchel. Vous pouvez rentrer maintenant. Dépêchez-vous avant de geler.

– Je ne gèlerai pas, dit-elle. Je suis très bien. Ce n'est pas moi qui gèlerai.

Il s'apprêtait à la dépasser quand elle leva la main et lui toucha la joue.

(*Le Fanatique*, p. 126)

Mitchel is an educated man, whereas Jean is not. The first name 'Jean' has to be translated because it is a female name in English and Scots, and a male name in French: 'Jeanne' would be definitely French, whereas 'Jane' remains English or Scottish and causes no confusion. Mitchel's words are in standard French and are to remain neutral. The translator could find some idiosyncrasies in Mitchel's speeches (corresponding to his 'noo') such as 'e' sounds replacing 'ou' vowels: 'Vous pouvez...' becoming 'Veu pouvez...', 'dépéchez-veu'. Of course, his way of speaking must be coherent from one end of the novel to the other. Jean's speech is harsher: she is reputed to be a witch. I would turn her sentences into something less correct: 'J' gèlerai pas. Chuis ben contente comme ça. C'est pas moi que j' vais geler.' Later in the narrative, when she is interviewed in prison, her speech can be made to sound truly pathetic without altering her register.

Example 4.

Tammas's bulk filled the doorway of the cell, blocking out what light might have got in. 'Ye hae a visitor,' he whispered. 'I'm shutting yese in till jist afore the boat leaves. They think she's ower wi a servant o Maister Fraser's.' (*The Fanatic*, p. 150)

La masse imposante de Tammas obstrua l'entrée de la cellule, empêchant le peu de lumière qu'elle laissait passer de pénétrer à l'intérieur.

– Vous avez de la visite, chuchota-t-il. Je vous enfermerai jusqu'au moment où le bateau sera sur le point de repartir. Ils croient qu'elle est venue avec un domestique de Mr Fraser. (*Le Fanatique*, p. 177)

Here, Tammas is a brutal man who will rape Lizzie before the boat leaves. We can expect him to use the 'tu' form with his prisoner, Mitchel. 'Vous avez de la visite...' can be turned into the less soft 'T'as d' la visite...'. 'Je vous enfermerai' ('yese' should be translated somehow) can be modified into 'J' la consignerai avec toi'. The expression 'jusqu'au moment où le bateau sera sur le point de partir' sounds too proficiently French for this character, and can be safely reduced to 'jusqu'au départ du bateau'; and the second vowel in 'bateau' can be made more central: 'bateu'. In Tammas's last sentence, we can improve on the translation of 'They think...', not in using 'ils pensent...' but, while saving the k-sound of 'ils croient...', inserting a relatively common grammatical error in the verb: 'Ils croient...' becoming 'Ils croivent...'

Example 5.

'Hih,' said the mirror. 'Where d'ye think you're aff tae? I want a word wi you.' (*The Fanatic*, p. 220)

– Salut, dit le miroir. Où vas-tu comme ça? J'ai à te parler. (*Le Fanatique*, p. 257)

The mirror is an important secondary character in the novel, infusing a degree of comedy into the narrative. What seems to suit its 'speech' best is the extreme reduction of vowels. In the phrases a number of 'que' ('k'-sounds) can be easily fitted: '– Hé dis donc!, dit le miroir. Où qu' te crois qu' te vas comme ça? I' faut qu' ch' t' cause.'

These few suggestions illustrate a strategy that would need to be applied to the whole novel before assessing the effect produced on the reader, who through them should be made aware of the changes in registers, accents and rhythms that accompany shifts between English and Scots. The translator's strategies may be visible only to the professional scholar; however, they will prove effective if the reader of the French text enjoys the linguistic subtleties as much as the reader of the original.

Translating Gaelic

Observing speech in Gaelic, generally speaking, we can note predominant sh-sounds (palatalisation), r-sounds close to the French uvular 'r', and also what can be likened to g-sounds (mainly fricative velarisation). In order to avoid creating an ersatz 'Chti' accent or an Auvergne-like accent, typified by sh-sounds, we can restrict the use of additional 'ch' to produce the appropriate sound to those s-sounds preceding what in Gaelic are called 'narrow' vowels, that is to say 'e' and 'i': 'sérénité' – 'chérénité'; 'civil' – 'chivil'; whereas s-sounds in 'sur, sous, sot, sa, sans, sain, son' will remain unchanged.

The phenomenon of lenition is bound to confuse the average French reader, and is best silently abandoned. We can make use of palatalisation, or slenderising, creating j-sounds and centralising vowels except where it might cause misunderstanding. Also, some vowels can be lengthened and be visually doubled, such as 'fataal', 'rapiide', 'aprèès'.

Voiced consonants can be unvoiced: 'v' > 'f'; 'b' > 'p'; 'd' > 't'; yet, to avoid producing something that appears to be a German accent, usually revealed by a double inversion between voiced and unvoiced consonants, the translator may decide not to voice unvoiced consonants – f-sounds thus remaining unchanged. Thus, 'varié' can become 'fariéé', but 'facile' can only be modified as 'faciile'. Expressions containing two voiced consonants may be half-modified: 'observer' can be turned into 'opserver', where only the unvoicing of 'ob-' operates, whereas 'inadvertance' can be turned into 'inatvertance', where the '-ad' is unvoiced, but not '-ver-'.

Here again, the translator will assess the effect that can be produced on the 'target' reader and make the appropriate decisions so as not to alter the quality of the character. Since this paper is

meant to be an introduction to the art of translating plurilingual texts, there is no room for longer extracts to be shown, so as to assess the transposition of the Hebridian lilt into French.

However, we can study some samples from the case of Fionn Mac Colla's *The Albannach*, a novel that, surprisingly, seems never to have been translated into French.

Example 6.

[...] Oh, Annie! I seem to have forgotten the beastly Gaelic word for the female breast! I wonder if you could supply the necessary information. Cìoch? Oh, yes. Many thanks. I had forgotten until you reminded me!

[...]

'Tha oidhche bhriagha ann, there's a beautiful night in it,' said he as he went stumping past.

'It's a devilish cold, wet, stormy night that's in it,' said Murdo loudly as he swung down the hill.

[...]

'It's a fine eeffening, Murdo,' says he in his high-pitched voice [...] [\[26\]](#)

The first word 'Cìoch' is explained in the reply and need not be translated. The phrase '*Tha oidhche bhriagha ann*' is immediately translated into English, but the translation is literal and cannot be turned into French directly. The idiomatic expression '(that's) in it' may lead us to use the structure 'c'est ... que ...': 'a stormy night that's in it' can be turned into 'c'est une nuit de tempête que voilà'. The phrase 'fine eeffening' (*belle soirée*) can be turned into 'pelle soirée'...

Example 7.

'It's a pair of scissors you'll be wanting there, worthy man,' shouted Murdo one afternoon as he was passing Domhnull Bàn's croft, and the man himself at the cutting.

'Yes, indeed,' says he, turning round. 'It's the slow business this.'

(*The Albannach*, p. 60)

The Gaelic phrasing of sentences in English forces the translator to make use of some awkward French, without going as far as using *anacoluthons*, or abrupt changes in syntax within any one sentence:

'and the man himself at the cutting' (the man is cutting barley) > 'et notre homme qui maniait sa faux.'

'Yes, indeed [...]' > 'Ouii, c'est ben vrai, dit-il en se retournant. C'est un long travail, que tout ça.'

If the last sentence is reversed ('Pour faire tout ça, il faut savoir prendre son temps') we lose the sense of the Gaelic phrasing.

Example 8.

Damn your patronising impudence, thought Murdo, and took the hand the tall fellow held out with exaggerated spontaneity, like a part rehearsed, as if he had never heard of Anderson, not even at the other side of the street a minute ago.

'How do!' said Murdo to him and then added, for MacAskill's benefit, "Bheil Gàidhlig agaibh?"

'Tha,' said MacPherson. 'Sgiathanach a th'annam.'

After they had exchanged a few trivialities MacAskill said in what was meant to be an off-hand manner, 'Mr MacPherson iss tchust in town for a couple of nights and we were haffing a little celepraytion. Would you care to tchoin us?' (*The Albannach*, p. 178)

The obvious differences between the narrator's description of Murdo's thoughts and the dialogue must be made clear in the French version:

[...]

– 'chanté !, lui dit Murdo. Il ajouta à l'intention de MacAskill, ' Parlez gaélique ?

– Oui. Et MacPherson de préciser, 'Sgiathanach a th'annam. (C'est de Skye que je suis).

Après un échange de banalités, MacAskill dit d'une manière qui se voulait spontanée:

– M. MacPherson fient d'arrifer en file. Il est là pour teux chours et nous faissons une petite fête. Ça fous tirait te fenir ?

In McAskill's final turn, the phrase 'in town' would usually be translated as 'en ville'; unvoicing the initial consonant in this instance would change the phrase to 'en fille' (*in girl*). The result being absurd and bound to distract the reader, I choose to depalatalise 'fille' and write it 'file'. Since, elsewhere, 'fient' obviously stands for 'vient' and 'arrifer' for 'arriver', the reader should find no difficulty in understanding 'ville' on reading 'file'. In this case, the translator must at the same time rely on the reader's ability to identify the patterns and interpret accordingly.

In some stretches of text, Gaelic place-names and family names abound. They call for some explanation, for a French reader who will be unfamiliar with the meaning of structures such as

Calum Bàn Mac Ruairidh 'Ic Ailein Mhòir. Onomastic information is often symbolic or part of the narrative:

'Say Achadh nan siantan [to a Gaelic man] and he will be seeing a little plain between great mountains and the rain driving down on it. But will a man of you tell me what Achbay or Achnasheen will mean in the Beurla [...]?' (*The Albannach*, pp. 70-1)

For such instances, the translator can decide on the most appropriate choice between footnotes and a glossary. We may ultimately concur with Walter Scott in deciding on both short footnotes and a longer glossary with notes at the end. The translator's aim is never to put the reader off a piece of fiction with an abundance of encyclopaedic notes that diminish the pleasure of reading a story.

To conclude this brief pilot study, we may recall Venuti's statement:

Translation can be considered a form of authorship, but an authorship now redefined as derivative, not self-originating. Authorship is not *sui generis*; writing depends on pre-existing cultural materials, selected by the author, arranged in an order of priority, and rewritten (or elaborated) according to specific values.^[27]

Venuti's point is illustrated by Iain Crichton Smith's translation into Gaelic in 1969 of Rimbaud's poem, 'L'adieu', from *A Season in Hell* (1873).^[28] Crichton Smith must have been aware of Norman Cameron's translation of the poem into English (1949) to carry out his own translation.

L'ADIEU – L'automne déjà! Mais pourquoi regretter un éternel soleil, si nous sommes engagés à la découverte de la clarté divine – loin des gens qui meurent sur les saisons.

FAREWELL – Autumn already. But why long for an everlasting sunshine, if we are engaged in the discovery of a divine light – far from the people who die according to the season?

SORAIDH – Am foghar mar tha! – Ach dé 's aobhar do d'chianalas airson grian bith-bhuan ma tha dòchas againn ri solus diadhaidh a lorg fada bho na daoine a tha bàsachadh a réir nan aimsirean.

The last element in Crichton Smith's translation, 'a lorg fada bho na daoine...', does not precisely correspond to the French element 'loin des gens...'. The translator's choice can be considered a 'rewriting' of the original sentence. What matters, in this instance, is how close a Scottish reader's

perception of the Gaelic version can be to a French reader's perception of the original, given the gap of about a century between Rimbaud to Crichton Smith.

However, in the case of *The Albannach* by Fionn Mac Colla, or of *Homers* by Iain Finlay MacLeod, it seems all but impossible for the translator (and editor) to avoid writing out a prefatory note explaining the different ways of rendering English, Scots & Gaelic phrases and sentences. Today, there's no denying that only a handful of 'professional' readers from a French-speaking area can grasp the differences in the languages of Scotland expressed in a piece of fiction. Nevertheless, since a fair number of French readers can detect phonemic variations in a text written in French, it is worth trying to create a comparative set of variations when translating such a text into French. Such an experiment, with the necessary comments, explanatory footnotes, phonetic transcriptions, and detailed introduction, may prove useful in establishing a 'template' for successive translators to improve upon.

NOTES

[1] J. D. McClure, 'Is translation naturalisation? Some test cases from Scots', in J.J Simon & A. Sinner (eds), *English Studies 3: Proceedings of the Third Conference on the Literature of Region & Nation*, Part I (Luxembourg: Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg, 1991), 193-213.

[2] I have written elsewhere on the relationship of literature and national identity: a paper on 'Les anthologies et histoires littéraires de la Renaissance écossaise, un enjeu d'identité', was presented at a conference in Nantes in October 2007 and published in B. Sellin, A. Thiec and P. Carboni (eds) *Écosse: l'identité nationale en question - Scotland: Questioning National Identity* (Nantes: CRINI, 2009).

[3] John Corbett, *Written in the Language of the Scottish Nation: A History of Literary Translation into Scots* (Clevedon, Somerset: Multilingual Matters, 1999), p. 1.

[4] For information on European language policy, see <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/>

[5] 'Scottophone' with a double 't' because this neologism is created on 'Scots' which is the reduced form of 'Scottis'. Another neologism sharing the same root is 'scotophile' (loving Scots, the Scots, and/or Scotland), which is often spelled 'scotiphile'. In other contexts, of course, 'scotophil' refers to *scotophilus*, a species of bat.

[6] Peter Urpeth, *Far Inland* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2006).

[7] Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, ed. by Ian Duncan (1817; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 39. Further page references are to this edition.

[8] Walter Scott, *Le Cœur du Mid-Lothian*, trans. S. Monod (Paris: Gallimard, 1998)

[9] [Elle] souffre surtout de trop nombreuses omissions et simplifications; [...] elles interdisent à son travail de rendre pleine justice à l'œuvre de Scott, (Monod, p. 27).

[10] Scott met en scène des personnages écossais qui parlent un anglais fortement marqué de

caractéristiques écossaises: vocabulaire, syntaxe et prononciation constituent presque un dialecte, sinon un patois, celui du sud de l'Écosse, c'est-à-dire de la région des Lowlands ou Basses Terres. (Ibid. p. 27).

[11] Car l'écossais des personnages de Scott est tout de même proche de l'anglais d'Angleterre, et compréhensible sans grand effort pour la plupart des lecteurs anglophones dans le monde (Ibid. p. 28).

[12] [...] à la frontière des Highlands, où la langue est plus rugueuse, plus éloignée de l'anglais ordinaire (Ibid. p. 28).

[13] J'ai donc essayé d'introduire dans le français utilisé par ces personnages, d'une part un petit nombre de mots écossais simples, [...] parfois discrètement expliqués lors de leur première apparition, comme laird, kirk, cairn, manse; ils sont destinés à assurer sans trop de dommage, espère-t-on, la présence d'un minimum de couleur locale; (Ibid. p. 28).

[14] [...] quelques tournures de phrases un peu plus raides ou d'une gaucherie délibérée, pour donner le sentiment de l'étrangeté; (Ibid. p. 28).

[15] [...] c'était bien l'impression [...] que devaient produire un Écossais, et surtout une jeune fille écossaise vêtue de son costume national, lorsqu'ils se promenaient dans le sud de la Grande-Bretagne (Ibid. p. 28).

[16] Ian Maclaren, *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* (1894; Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2007), p. 183.

[17] Lawrence Venuti, *Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 10.

[18] I discussed this point a paper given in Avignon in 2007, 'John Macnab et l'envers du décor, dans *John Macnab* (1925) de John Buchan et *The Return of John Macnab* (1996) de Andrew Greig', subsequently published in *Etudes Ecossaises*, 12 (2009), 201-214.

[19] Andrew Greig, *The Return of John Macnab* (London: Faber & Faber, 1996), pp. 24-5.

[20] Andrew Greig, *Romanno Bridge* (London: Quercus, 2008).

[21] Lin Anderson, *Deadly Code* (Edinburgh: Luath, 2005), pp. 97-8.

[22] Danièle Berton & Jean-Pierre Simard, *Création théâtrale: Adaptation, schèmes, traduction* (Saint-Etienne: PUSE, 2007)

[23] Venuti, p. 1.

[24] I gave a paper on this novel in Nantes in 2006, 'L'étrange et le miroir dans *The Fanatic* de James Robertson', subsequently published in *Etudes Ecossaises*, 11 (2008), 275-289.

[25] See James Robertson, *The Fanatic* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000) and Yves Bouveret (trans.), *Le Fanatique* (Paris: Métailié, 2003).

[26] Fionn Mac Colla, *The Albannach* (1932; London: Souvenir Press, 1971), pp. 56-7.

[27] Venuti, p. 43.

[28] Arthur Rimbaud, *Une Saison en Enfer/A Season in Hell*, trans. by Norman Cameron (London: John Lehmann, 1949) – translated into Gaelic as 'Soraidh' by Iain Crichton Smith, in *Gairm*, 18 (1969-70), 311-312.

James Kelman: A Resistance to Transfer

Aniela Korzeniowska

The furore over James Kelman winning the 1994 Booker Prize for *How late it was, how late* is well-known.^[1] Despite the critical response to the award at the time, it is usually prize-winning authors – often the more controversial the better – who are primarily translated. Publishing-houses are only too eager to exploit the ready-made publicity in their own promotion of a translated novel. However, in Poland, neither the prestigious award nor the attendant controversy benefited Kelman in 1994, nor has it since. Despite his unquestionable position in contemporary Scottish literature and the fact that over thirty translations of his work have appeared world-wide, Kelman continues to be neglected by the Polish publishing market. The aim of this article is to address the issue of ‘the making of culture repertoire’, to use Itamar Even-Zohar’s term, in reference to the dearth of Kelman’s writing in Polish translation.^[2] Taking into consideration the commercial imperatives of the contemporary publishing market, I ask why Kelman has been overlooked in Poland, in contrast to Irvine Welsh, for example, who, supported by the success of the film adaptation of *Trainspotting*, has found his own Polish cultural niche.

My answer to this question derives from reflection and discussions with a fellow-translator of contemporary British literature into Polish who, in turn, recently approached one of the publishers he co-operates with on a regular basis. Our intention was to propose a Polish translation of one of Kelman’s novels. The publishing-house in question is one of the larger ones in Poland, based in Cracow. It has a well-established and reputable series of literary titles, and over the last few years it has also been promoting a new series of translations that have been very well received. Because Kelman was not an unknown name to them, reaction to our proposal was initially positive, interest was expressed, and a request was issued as to a suggested work. Taking various factors into consideration, but primarily given the Booker award and the surrounding publicity, our final decision fell on *How late it was, how late*. At the same time, we were fully aware of the fact that a number of years had passed since that award was granted. With the

present international trend of publishing translations of award-winning authors within a few months of receiving the award – or even publishing translations of the works of well-known writers at the same time their new novel appears in their home country^[3] – it was a risky business promoting a work, no matter how good it was, so many years after it first appeared on its home ground. We were also aware that Kelman's oeuvre includes anthologies of short stories, which are out of fashion with publishers at the moment, and also reputedly 'difficult' linguistic experiments that reflect his political stance towards dictatorships and the superpowers.^[4] Proposing Kelman as a subject for translation in Poland seemed risky from the outset.

Unfortunately, our fears turned out to be fully substantiated. Before taking any publication decisions, a Cracow literary critic was approached for a review of *How late it was, how late*. The outcome was a highly appreciative critique, but also an honest recommendation not to undertake publication owing to a presumed lack of interest in such writing amongst the contemporary Polish reading public. Besides rightly noting that what caused the controversy around Kelman's novel when he was awarded the Booker Prize in 1994 was actually *passé* today, especially when one takes into consideration the fact that Irvine Welsh's novels are being translated and successfully promoted in Poland, emphasis was placed on the fact that critical regard cannot necessarily be equated with general acclaim.^[5] While the reviewer fully acknowledged the literary merits of the work, especially emphasising the manner in which Kelman depicted the main character, Sammy, and the bureaucratic world he found himself up against, the author's chosen narrative style presented her with an insurmountable obstacle. Although generally very positively inclined towards Kelman, the critic admitted that she herself had found it difficult to get to the end of the book.

The publishing-house followed the reviewer's advice, explaining in a polite letter to us that they could not take any financial risks at present. They felt they simply could not afford the costs involved, given the strong likelihood that they would ultimately face a financial loss. And here it has to be admitted that *How late it was, how late* did not become a bestseller in the UK either, even in 1994. Despite the continuing critical success of Kelman's more recent novels, such as *Translated Accounts: A Novel* (2001), *You Have to be Careful in the Land of the Free* (2004), or even the Saltire Society's Scottish Book of the Year, *Kieron Smith, boy* (2008), we can presume the answer would not have been any different had we proposed one of these titles for translation.

What is of particular interest here is that the publisher's decision not to promote Kelman in Poland was based solely on the views expressed by one critic. We could not help but form the impression that any excuse was good enough for the publishers to withdraw politely from what they believed from the very outset to be an unattractive venture. This impression was only

reinforced by the fact that we received no further requests about any other works by this Glasgow writer that we might recommend for the Polish market.

In his influential article on transfer and the making of a cultural repertoire, Even-Zohar draws our attention to 'the relations between the processes and procedures involved with the making of repertoire on the one hand, and import and transfer on the other'.^[6] Arguing that 'repertoire' is a major concept in the theory of culture, Even-Zohar goes on to explain that he sees the notion of culture repertoire as 'the aggregate of options utilized by a group of people, and by the individual members of the group, for the organization of life,'^[7] at the same time elucidating his understanding of the making of cultural repertoire in the following manner:

The culture repertoire, although sensed by the members of the group as given, and taken by them for granted, is neither generated nor inherited by our genes, but need[s to] be made, learned and adopted by people, that is the members of the group. This making is continuous, although with shifting intensity and volume. On the one hand, it may be made *inadvertently* (1) by anonymous contributors, whose names and fortune may never be known, but also *deliberately*, (2) by known members who are openly and dedicatedly engaged in this activity.^[8]

Relating the above to the 'inadvertent' making of the Polish cultural repertoire, we as 'anonymous contributors' were not given a chance to push our claim beyond some brief correspondence encouraging the translation of one of Kelman's novels. The 'known members' (the established Cracow publishers and literary critic), on the other hand, 'deliberately' refused to become engaged in this 'making'. These 'individual members', as Even-Zohar calls them, were neither prepared nor sufficiently convinced to make a contribution to the literary enrichment of Polish life. To fully understand the reasons lying behind these decisions, it is necessary to look back in time.

The changes in the Polish political system in 1989 empowered the country to open up to the world and had an immense impact on literary interests, particularly in the demand for the import of everything that was part of Western – mainly American – culture. The natural tendency to reach out for what had previously been denied has led over the years to the publishing market being commercially driven by literary products that will satisfy popular taste and demands. Indeed, publishing statistics show that, regularly in recent years, over fifty percent of new titles in literary fiction are translations.^[9] These numbers, however, have neither fully encompassed the requirements of the more demanding or inquiring reader in general, nor have they, as we know, specifically included Kelman and his literary output. The resistance here first to import and then subsequently to transfer – if we are to refer once again to Even-Zohar's terminology – in order to become part of the Polish cultural repertoire is unquestionably influenced (1) by the power of

market forces, and (2) Poland's past, which, sometimes quite subconsciously, has an influence on what is considered to be 'popular' reading material today. This combination, as Even-Zohar observes, 'depends on an intricate network of relations, which may be labeled for brevity "the system of culture", which includes such factors as market, power holders, and the prospective users serving as a dynamic interface between them'.^[10]

These factors, with the emphasis placed on what will sell and not the conscious shaping of a 'cultural repertoire' according to certain philosophical lines, have an impact on what is actually published. This emphasis on market forces, in turn, also influences the choice of foreign literary texts that are to be translated. Now that the publishing industry is largely commercially driven by entertainment value, there is little space in Polish culture for challenging writing that educates and stimulates thought. In the current context in Poland, what chance has a writer like James Kelman?

With even recent political events being for many Polish readers not only *passé*, but indeed belonging to what they genuinely feel is the far distant past and no longer relevant to their lives, it does seem hardly possible to interest more than a handful in such works by Kelman as his 1994 Booker Prize Winner or even his more recent novels, such as *Translated Accounts* or *You Have to be Careful in the Land of the Free*. Whether we like the idea or not, unfortunately we have to admit our sympathy with the doubts of the Cracow publisher mentioned above. And this does not have anything to do with Kelman's linguistic experiments as evident in *Translated Accounts*, or the important aspect of language varieties and accents – and their translation – as reflected in *You Have to be Careful in the Land of the Free*. Ironically, both of these highly political novels are relevant to Poland's recent past. Perhaps, indeed, it is precisely because they may be read as referring, if indirectly, to this country's experiences, with the latter work mirroring the current Polish *émigré* situation, that touches a nerve. The publishers and reviewers may judge that the majority of target readers do not necessarily want to read about matters that were until recently very much part of their lives, or even have reference made to what many are experiencing today. Kelman's work is anything but light entertainment in a market that demands escapism.

Having experienced Martial Law and the very difficult times of the early 1980s in Poland, as well as the period preceding it, Polish readers will find a great deal of *Translated Accounts* unusually and uncomfortably familiar. As an example, consider the following excerpt from Account Number 7 "lives were around me":

I saw the brains in this man's head, thumping on the shell, let me out let me out, I cannot stay in this job, it is not a job, how can a man live like this, I am leaving, I am going to Germany, to Copenhagen, I am told Oslo is good, in Amsterdam people have respect.

Yes, yes, go there. I go there. Why not Paris. Paris. Or London, Amereeca, New York, a fellow from our family's village was leaving to New York, our grandfather's friend, many years ago, our grandfather gave him a present in farewell, his shirt, very fine shirt, our grandmother was impatient with him, she said, You have no shirts for other people, he has a ticket to travel to America and you have nothing.^[11]

This passage will clearly resonate with Polish readers as, for the last couple of centuries, Poles have been a nation of *émigrés*, leaving their homeland in smaller or larger numbers, for political or economic reasons (and sometimes both). This was very much the case in the nineteenth century and is no less true today. The destination simply changes, depending on which countries are prepared to take in the next wave of arrivals.

The same account continues to develop situations that echo Polish experiences:

Yes, and soon all attention was gone of individuals, frantically, oh what upheaval now waiters and customers, the disturbance proper had come from the designated building and onto the street, beyond proper eyeview, people crowding to the windows overlooking the harbour, all action, screams and more shooting, rapid fire, now pistol shots. We remained in our seats. Outside was further activity. I continued talking to her, she staring away from me to those who stood by the window watching the scene beyond, customers also, and securitys, I saw them arriving down from our side and further along men were carrying a body and many securitys now rushing here, there, to there, to here, again. We also were moving, up from the table, bag over my shoulder, leaving money for the drinks, the waiters by the door shifting slightly, one staring to us, them allowiing us to squeeze our way past, as if not seeing us, not seeing us. (p. 59)

Kelman's imaginative insight into the nature of a totalitarian regime is both accurate and acute. As Suzanne Hagemann has observed, Kelman's experiments with language, presenting the lives of his unnamed characters through fragmented 'translations,' only enhance the horror and tragedy of the situation described.^[12] Looking at this work from the point of view of rendering these 'translations' into Polish, albeit an equally experimental Polish that would remain faithful to Kelman's intentions as expressed in the original text, it must be said that such a task is quite feasible.^[13] The same linguistic manoeuvres are possible. The unsettling questions the source reader is faced with can also be presented in full to the target reader. But how many target readers would we have, even granting the familiarity to the Polish audience of the subject and the continuing validity of the problems raised? It is precisely because of this familiarity that there might be resistance to import, especially in Kelman's vivid but intellectually demanding form of presentation, as many readers – even the readers of literary fiction – would no doubt prefer to

forget the memories and issues that Kelman forces us to confront. This resistance to transfer accords with Even-Zohar's view that it is not only the goods or products, but also the 'images projected into society by the *people* engaged in making the repertoire, who are in the particular case of transfer agents of transfer,'^[14] which undergo resistance.

If *Translated Accounts* deals with topics that are too close to be comfortable, then we might expect a warmer reception for that part of Kelman's fiction that has more universal themes. In many of Kelman's short stories, as well as in *How late it was, how late*, we see Kelman's broader empathy with individuals who are coping with a range of obstacles in the contemporary world. A recurring theme in Kelman's fiction is people's helplessness when confronted with uncaring, bureaucratic authority; we do not have to be subject to a totalitarian regime to find ourselves in such a position. Kelman's protagonists often perceive themselves as 'aliens' in so-called 'free' societies, as in the following passage from *You Have to be Careful in the Land of the Free*:

Some might argue that a Celtic male with pink skin, fair hair (receding) and blue eyes (watery) should have been empowered to travel the world where ere he chose and didnay need no colour-coded federal authorization never mind the okay from stray-born persons he met in bars. How can Aryans be Aliens, is what they would argue. It is a contradiction. This feller's physicality and language are passport and visa. And then add to the tally that I was an ex Security operative, how Uhmerkin can ye get! Okay, failed security operative. No really a failure, I just didnay make a career out it. But add to that failed husband and failed parent, failed father, general no fucking hoper. And now I was gaun hame! I was a failed fucking immigrant!^[15]

Jeremiah Brown's 437-page interior monologue covers a single evening spent drinking the hours away in an American bar before his flight 'home' to 'bonné Skallin' for a month's holiday after being away for twelve years. His frustration with himself and his adopted country is all too evident, matters which many Polish emigrants trying to make a better life for themselves also face when away from home. Through Jeremiah, Kelman makes clear his sympathy with the individual and his antipathy to the mechanisms of the state:

So okay, if I got my Green Card, so okay. But I wasnay gauny fucking creep and crawl about it. How could you creep and crawl to a right-wing load of keech like the US State? If it wasnay for the individual population naybody would stey in the dump ... (p. 132)

You Have to be Careful in the Land of the Free is, then, a further example of a literary work whose content, one would presume, should be of interest to the contemporary Polish reader. Its concerns, centred on being an alien in America, with Kelman's ironic tone directed against US

imperialist tendencies, are matters close to many a Polish heart. At the same time, however, the average Pole may be much more pro-American than many other contemporary European nations, the UK included, mainly because so many over the years have managed to achieve a better life for themselves in the US. Neither does Kelman's protagonist – whose name is not 'Jeremiah' for nothing – escape the author's all-encompassing irony. In short, a novel that treats an immigrant and the immigrant experience with such ironic ambivalence is unlikely to win popular appeal in a country where the immigrant experience is so widespread and where it is seen as a potential means of improving one's life.

The readiness of future Polish readers to identify with the themes addressed so well by Kelman's fiction does not, however, mean that publishers and booksellers are confident that those same people would be prepared to buy Kelman's stories and novels in sufficient numbers to justify their translation. The experimental forms are demanding, the topics unsettling and the economic times are weighted against taking risks with 'difficult' fiction. Critical appreciation of Kelman and knowledge about his work and the position he holds in the contemporary literary world are, to date, simply not enough for his writing to be added to the Polish cultural repertoire.

To the thematic concerns may be added certain linguistic issues. Kelman's narrative experiments bend more or less easily to translation. The narrative strategies used in *Translated Accounts* and even in *How late it was, how late* could find counterparts in Polish translation, but this is less true of *You Have to be Careful in the Land of the Free*. The variety of accents represented in this last novel, often in Kelman's own 'phonetic' spelling, is an important stylistic feature of the work, and (as noted elsewhere in this issue of *IJSL*) the challenge of finding an equivalent of this kind of feature is highly demanding. No Polish commercial publisher has yet attempted to address the challenge posed by Scottish accents and language varieties.

Kelman is a considerable literary figure, often compared to other 'demanding' writers like Joyce, Beckett and Kafka. If his reputation is sustained, we can but hope that, in due course, the necessary transfer will finally happen and that Kelman will find a Polish voice that is successful in both critical and commercial terms. In the meantime, those of us who contribute to the literary 'system' do well to recall Ian Bell's observation in his review of *Kieron Smith, boy*: 'Most literature denies a voice to most people because most of the people who decide most of what you can read ... are not most people'.^[16] We need to continue to press 'the people who decide most of what [we] can read' to realise that it may be worth taking that risk to bring out a work that, with the help of those other 'agents of transfer' – the translators – will make a valuable contribution to the enrichment of the Polish cultural repertoire.

NOTES

[1] See, for example, Scott Hames, 'Eyeless in Glasgow: James Kelman's Existential Milton', *Contemporary Literature*, 50.3 (2009), 496-527 and Nicola Pitchford, 'How Late It Was for England: James Kelman's Scottish Booker Prize', *Contemporary Literature*, 41.4 (2000), 693-725.

[2] Itamar Even-Zohar, 'The Making of Culture Repertoire and the Role of Transfer', *Target*, 9.2 (1997), 355-363. This was first presented as a paper at the International Conference "Translations: (Re)shaping of Literature and Culture", organized by Bogaziçi University, Istanbul, 24-25 October 1996.

[3] A good example here is David Lodge's novel *Deaf Sentence* (2008) which appeared in England at the same time its Polish version *Skazani na cisze* (2008) hit the market in Poland.

[4] *Translated Accounts: A Novel* (2001) and *You Have to be Careful in the Land of the Free* (2004).

[5] To date four of Irvine Welsh's novels have been translated into Polish. In 2006, for example, the appearance of the Polish version of *Porno* was accompanied by a tour jointly organised and hosted by the book's Polish publishing-house and the British Council in Warsaw. Welsh had the opportunity to speak about his writing in all the major cities of Poland.

[6] Even-Zohar, p. 355.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid. p. 357.

[9] From data gathered in 2004, for example, it appears that the number of published copies of translated literature even reached 85%, with 46.7% being American. See Krystina Bankowska-Bober et al., *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach L: 2004* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2004), pp. 54-55.

[10] Even-Zohar, p. 357.

[11] James Kelman, *Translated Accounts: A Novel* (2001; London: Vintage, 2002), p. 54.

[12] Suzanne Hagemann, 'Postcolonial Translation Studies and James Kelman's *Translated Accounts*', *Scottish Studies Review*, 6.1 (2005), 74-83.

[13] For more on the actual translation possibilities of this novel see, for example, my article "Tłumaczac przetłumaczone ... O zawilosciach przekładu *Translated Accounts. A Novel* Jamesa Kelmana" ["Translating the Translated ... On the Complexities of James Kelman's *Translated Accounts. A Novel*"] in Olga Kubinska and Wojciech Kubinski (eds), *Przekładając nieprzekładalne III* (Gdansk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdanskiego, 2007), pp. 153-166.

[14] Even-Zohar, p. 361.

[15] James Kelman, *You Have to be Careful in the Land of the Free* (2004; London: Penguin, 2005), p. 20.

[16] Ian Bell, 'Mad About the Boy', *Scottish Review of Books*, 4.2 (11 May 2008), p. 5.

Occasional Paper: Language, Ideology and the 'Scottish Voice'^[1]

James Costa

In this Occasional Paper, I would like to emphasise one way in which language ideological issues permeate literary discourse in Scotland. Focusing on issues related to Scots, I will analyse two (in my view complementary) introductions to anthologies of texts in Scots published over the past twenty years, and show how they participate in a wider ideological debate on language and society in Scotland.

A Tongue in Yer Heid is a collection of short stories in Scots, published in 1994.^[2] The second anthology, *New Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, is a collection of contemporary poetry in Scots, published in 2009.^[3] Both editors – James Robertson in the first case, Robert Crawford in the second – are highly respected on Scotland's contemporary literary and academic scene; both use their introductions to outline their conception of Scots. This paper considers how these introductions relate to narratives of language revitalisation. Both works will be shown to participate in an ongoing ideological debate on the status of Scots and on the modalities of its graphic representation. In so doing both editors not only contribute to this debate (advancing specific arguments defining a 'legitimate' Scots voice), but attempt to shape and influence reality through the creation and the promotion of a particular 'stance' for speakers and writers of Scots nationally, which will ultimately influence the way a 'Scottish voice' is articulated and perceived internationally.

The Revitalisation of Scots

The texts I propose to examine are enmeshed in a wider debate, the background to which could be called the Scots language revitalisation movement. While language revitalisation is usually defined as a backward-looking movement aimed at reinstating a language in its former usages, the way I will use this term is rather different.^[4] Revitalisation movements should, on the contrary, be seen as forward-looking movements in which the dynamics between minority and majority

groups are redefined. Such movements rely particularly heavily on discourse, and more specifically on the 'invention' of what I call a 'narrative of revitalisation' to further their cause. A narrative of revitalisation will seek to discursively give the impression of continuity where the dominant impression might be that of a number of discontinuous events. For example, in the case of Scots, it is important for the revitalisation movement to convince its audience that there is continuity between selected important events, such as between the writing of prestigious literature in the Middle Ages and contemporary Scottish speech.^[5] Such a narrative constitutes in fact a (charter) myth, the objective of which will be to explain why the present is the way it is, and how former glorious times can become real again. In examining those myths, one is able to look into the (very contemporary) ideological motivations of the various types of social actors involved. Myth is then, as Lincoln puts it, 'ideology in narrative form'.^[6]

In the case of Scots, imposing such a narrative is particularly problematic given the pre-existing circulation of competing narratives, those of English and Gaelic. In a way, Scots is the half-blood Prince, the shameful cousin of English whose legitimacy constantly needs to be proven or reasserted. Hence the tension within the revitalisation movements between those promoting a view of Scots as a language on the same level as English or Gaelic, and those in favour of alternative solutions. While the first group of activists basically adopt the traditional ideological view of language prevalent in modern European nation-States – viewing language as an independent, bounded entity in need of standardisation and normally functioning within a monolingual framework – others seek alternative solutions that see language in terms of complementary repertoires that can co-exist both within individuals and throughout a given territory. Interestingly, in Scotland both parties function with the same historical 'myth of revitalisation', but it is the question of norms (particularly the issue of orthographic standardisation) that reveals ideological positioning. To take a very simplified example in literature, one may refer to Robert Burns as an 'Ancestor figure' if one believes that Scots should be written freely, and with generous latitude regarding issues of code-mixing (English and Scots) and orthography. Conversely, others might follow MacDiarmid's stance regarding the necessity of a more uniform, standardised and normalised language.

An Alternative to Language Standardisation

Let us consider the texts themselves. I will look first at *A Tongue in Yer Heid* (1994), and then *New Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (2009).

In *A Tongue in Yer Heid*, James Robertson develops a full sociolinguistic manifesto for Scots, dealing both with what it stands for as 'a language' and with how it should be graphically represented. In claiming to represent the full reality of Scottish speech, he is promoting a

particular view on language in society, one which values diversity and representativeness of several geographic and/or social sectors of society.

With regard to language, Robertson writes: 'If on turning through these pages some readers are surprised, affronted or confused to find language which, in their view, is not "true" or "proper" Scots, or perhaps not even Scots at all, I make no apology for that' (p. vii). The debate is framed in terms of legitimacy and Robertson claims enough authority to impose a vision of 'language' at variance with the anticipated views of his readership, a vision validating a particular segmentation of Scottish speech possibly unusual in literary circles.

With regard to spelling, Robertson states:

There is a wide variety of approaches in these stories to problems of Scots orthography, and I have not sought to eliminate these. One argument against a standardisation of Scots spelling is that one of the language's very strengths lies in its flexibility and its less-than-respectable status: writers turn to it because it offers a refuge for linguistic individualism, anarchism, nomadism and hedonism. What has often been perceived as a fatal weakness may in fact be the secret of its resilience and survival against four hundred years of creeping Anglicisation. If there are inconsistencies – to adapt Walt Whitman – very well then, there are inconsistencies: the language contains multitudes.

(p. xiv)

This point of view contrasts sharply with dominant ideologies of language in modern European nation-states, which tend to emphasise monolingual and monocultural dynamics, and usually strongly promote the adoption of one written standard by all, in the name of efficiency. What Robertson's attitude does reveal is a very different approach to the social dynamics of Scottish society. We know how language standards have tended to reinforce the power of small cultural and economic elites. Such a position towards the 'multitudes' is socially innovative – it denies any one group full control over the language and focuses on the social dynamics of Scots as a living vernacular. It challenges the claim of any group to establish itself as a centre of power.

It is also worth noting that the editor justifies his position through arguments potentially connected to national characteristics. Individualism, anarchism, nomadism, and even hedonism are all traits associated with the Scots in popular mythology. In other words, Robertson creates a discourse of language and identity in which the obvious link is not just between 'language' and 'nation' as abstract categories, but between speech and deeper national characteristics, however stereotypical they may be. A lot more could (and should) be said about this text, but most important to this article is the idea that language need not be standardised, and that it can be

connected with the nation in deeper ways than usually put forward. Robertson's attempt in a way creates new indexical links between speech and (national) identity.

In his Preface to the *New Poems...*, Robert Crawford explains the basis of his own project:

Each poet was invited to submit about five pages of poetry that might suit an early twenty-first-century book called *New Poems in the Scottish Dialect*. Poets have travelled with Burns's title in different directions, and their poems have been published as they were submitted, without any attempt to regularise their attitudes to the Scots tongue.

(p. 11)

The weight of Burns within the circle of Scots language writers is still paramount. Interestingly, the idea of language revitalisation needing the collective creation of a myth here meets the cult of an Ancestor figure. In this collection the editor implicitly asks the authors what Burns means to them today, and this includes the choice of language and orthography.

The freedom of the author of each contribution is the principle underpinning this collection. There is a strong intertextual link with the wider debate on language in Scotland, or else the question of individual freedom and collective regularisation would not have been raised. Ideological issues that involve attitudes to the written medium are clearly at stake here. Whereas Robertson invoked diversity and the real sociolinguistic state of Scots today as the legitimising principle for his enterprise (and his coolness toward standardisation), Crawford refers to what Burns did to language to justify his own stance. This highlights an important difference in both approaches, and is an indication that the debate on language in Scotland is more complex than a simple duality of points of view focused on issues of spelling.

The possible alternative stances Crawford sets out for himself as an editor are either 'the regulator' or 'the liberal'. He clearly adopts the latter, which is a way to acknowledge other possible options while not discussing them. The editor presents the poems as disengaged from the constraints of orthography or standardisation, and uses vocabulary evoking images of freedom and unconstrained motion ('travelled', 'directions'). In doing so, he avoids questioning the authors' (or his own) ideological or political motivations, which are reduced to 'attitudes' rather than 'choices'. Yet, what 'Burns did to language', he did in a very different ideological context, one in which mixing English and Scots did not mean what it means today, and one in which having a single orthographic code was probably not viewed as terribly important. At play in both texts are questions of how to voice modernity, pre-modernity and post-modernity, and both ('liberal') editors choose to let all contributors play in their own way. They do however choose very different

public representations of language and of Scotland: in Robertson's case, 'the people', everyday speakers of what is now Scots; for Crawford, a mythical and ambiguous figure.

Scottish Voice(s)

At the heart of the debate lies a tremendously important question. If, as Robertson puts it, 'the language contains multitudes', then not only should speakers be free to do whatever they wish with language, the editor also redefines what a speaker of Scots is. The main issue in contemporary Scotland as far as language is concerned is to determine who has the right to impose their own linguistic taxonomy.

As a consequence, this debate has considerable implications in terms of defining what counts as the legitimate 'Scottish voice', understood both as political representation and as epistemological stance on what constitutes 'identity, experience and point of view'.^[7]

Robertson does put the issue of a 'Scottish voice' at the centre of his argument: 'These stories offer no simple answer to the question, how does one transcribe the Scottish voice? In my view there is no such thing as *the* Scottish voice' (p. viii). The question of voice is in fact recurrent in Robertson's introduction, and linked with Scottish identity. In one instance, the notion 'Scottish voices' equates with 'Scottish accent, syntax and vocabulary' (p. xii). In another, it is framed in terms of an opposition between a cultural elite's 'individual cultural neuroses' and 'a genuine voice of Scotland', the former running the risk of being mistaken for the latter.

However, Robertson's definition of voice remains on a narrow level limited to the representational dimension of self, particularly through the written medium. I would argue that what is at stake in the two texts analysed here is not the question of *transcribing* the Scottish voice, i.e. of writing down various expressions of Scottishness, but of *negotiating* and *establishing* whose voice is legitimate as the expression of Scottishness — and thus what Scottishness *is*. Ultimately what is at stake is the way in which language and speech contribute to the construction of individuals as 'Scottish', and on the collective level, the construction of Scotland as a nation.

Conclusion

In this brief paper, taking as my starting point two introductions to collections of poems and short stories in Scots, I have outlined certain sociolinguistic questions which currently occupy the floor in terms of ideological debate: 'what is legitimate Scots?'; 'how should it be written down?' The texts I chose suggest solutions that are not in line with traditional measures of language policy in Western Europe, where standardisation is considered the most efficient way to 'save a language'. Scots activists opposed to standardisation are now powerful enough to make their arguments

visible, giving the ideological debate a very unusual turn. This might possibly be caused by the disconnection of language and identity in traditional Scottish nationalist discourse, and the ambivalent effect of defining Scots as a declining language or, conversely, as one brimming with vitality (whether or not its own speakers share this perception).

The two texts I draw upon present similar options regarding standardisation, yet they rely on very different arguments and cannot be said to represent a unified point of view. The debate and the issues addressed in this Occasional Paper also raise a number of questions that go beyond those of language, and show how the latter becomes invested with social meaning within a language revitalisation movement. Language and speech are used in this context to discuss issues of legitimacy and authority: who is entitled to voice Scottishness, and Scotland? Who does language represent? And how does a voice (or a combination of several voices) come to index what is and is not Scottish in the twenty-first century?

The question is as yet unresolved, and the answer to the question 'Who speaks Scots?' might well be a question of ideological choices only. But the unique way in which the debate is framed makes Scotland a tremendously important place to study for scholars of language ideology, in a globalised context where issues of standardisation and legitimate 'voice' emerge in minority settings throughout the world.

NOTES

[1] I wish to thank Dr Karyn Wilson and Dr Scott Hames for their useful advice on this paper. Any remaining omissions, misinterpretations or mistakes are solely my own responsibility.

[2] James Robertson, *A Tongue in Yer Heid* (Edinburgh: B&W Publishing, 1994).

[3] Robert Crawford (ed.), *New Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009).

[4] See for instance Leena Huss, *Reversing Language Shift in the Far North: Linguistic Revitalization in Northern Scandinavia and Finland* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1999).

[5] See also James Costa, 'Language History as Charter Myth? Scots and the (Re)Invention of Scotland', *Scottish Language*, 28 (2009), 1-25.

[6] Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

[7] Webb Keane, 'Voice', *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 9 (1999), 271-73 (p. 271).