

‘Unspeakable Scots: dialogues and dialectics in Scottish / British literary culture before the First World War’

David Goldie
University of Strathclyde

In a key work of recent Scottish Studies, *Acts of Union*, Leith Davis examines a series of dialogues between English and Scottish literary culture for the 150 years or so from the creation of the Union to the time of Thomas Carlyle and Matthew Arnold. Her argument describes a number of dialogues between national positions in which mutual recognitions of difference form the starting point for a negotiation through which the contradictions of Britishness are exposed. As Davis puts it, in selecting ‘historical moments when cultural difference was foregrounded’ she intends to initiate a reading in which ‘we can begin to understand the contradictions at the heart of Britain.’¹

This dialogical model seems apt for the early stages of a union, in which each partner is feeling the other out – each coming from a relatively distinct and well-defined place and encountering the established views of a largely alien culture. But it is a model that has limitations when we come to a more developed union, the union of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that has been refined by two centuries of complex interaction. By the beginning of the twentieth century a combination of political and economic integration, labour migration and a developed communications technology, along with the spread of cross-border academic, publishing, entertainment and media networks, makes a simple dialogical idea of cultural encounter problematic.

Such changes make it difficult, too, to see the work of union as the operation of distinct and unaltering cultural identities. Davis talks of the ‘intrinsically unstable’ notion of British identity that demands ‘constant renegotiation’, but pays less attention to the instabilities that might exist in the negotiators themselves.² The Scots and the English (not to mention the Irish

¹ Leith Davis, *Acts of Union: Scotland and the Literary Negotiation of the British Nation, 1707-1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) p.17.

² *Acts of Union*, p. 168.

and Welsh) are not as they were in 1707 (or 1542, or 1801), and one of the factors that alters each is the engagement with the other. The relationships between them are no longer those of mutual definition by difference but of the blurring caused by repeated association, in which the edges of identity no longer butt hard up against each other but rather blend and merge. The incentives, not least those commercial ones created by industry and empire, are such that any contradictions that might generate friction are smoothed and made productive. There may still be differences of tradition, character, and opinion, but within the larger operation of union such differences figure less as troubling contradictions than as paradoxes: inconsistencies that are not so much impediments to a common purpose as the means through which a more complex and multifaceted relationship might evolve.

The use of a dialogical model - a model that insists, at bottom, on the exchanges between self-consistent entities - to read the cultural relationships within union has proved an attractive and productive one to many Scottish critics, among them those attempting a Bakhtinian interpretation of Scottish literary culture.³ But it perhaps needs to be augmented with a model that recognises that the bases of difference are themselves subject to change, a model that places emphasis less on dialogue and more on dialectic.

Such a dialectic should not be thought of as the somewhat crude, Fichtean one of thesis – antithesis – synthesis, which might lend itself to a rather simplifying model according to which English and Scottish literatures become synthesized into something like a homogenous British literature. There are many very persuasive accounts of the ways in which a self-conscious British political and cultural identity came into being, not least those made by Linda Colley and Howard Weinbrot.⁴ But while these make ample scope for a unifying Britishness that remains heterogenous in construction, their emphases are arguably uni-directional: investigating, so to speak, what

³ See , for example, Alastair Renfrew, 'Brief Encounters, Long Farewells: Bakhtin and Scottish Literature', *International Journal of Scottish Literature*, 1 (Autumn 2006).

⁴ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), Howard Weinbrot, *Brittania's Issue: The Rise of British Literature from Dryden to Ossian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

the Scots did for Union rather than what Union did for Scottishness. An approach more along the lines of Hegelian dialectic, and particularly its notion of sublation, might give more room for a recognition of the persistence, and indeed the preservation in altered form, of the elements that comprise the synthesis of union. In so far as its possible to translate Hegel's idealism into a pragmatic way of interpreting cultural formation, sublation offers a way of reading a synthetic culture as something that both supersedes the original terms of its formation and incorporates them. As Hegel puts it in his *Science of Logic*:

The German "aufheben" ("to sublata" in English) has a twofold meaning in the language: it equally means "to keep," "to 'preserve'," and "to cause to cease," "to put an end to." Even "to preserve" already includes a negative note, namely that something, in order to be retained, is removed from its immediacy and hence from an existence which is open to external influences. – That which is sublated is thus something at the same time preserved, something that has lost its immediacy but has not come to nothing for that.⁵

It might just be that this is a long-winded, philosopher's way of explaining how it's possible to have one's cake and eat it (something many Scots proved adept at throughout the course of the union). But it also allows for a means of conceptualising the ways in which it was, and continues to be possible, to be both synthetically British and antithetically Scottish. It offers, too, a way of thinking about literary culture as a dynamic system: not a dialogue between two relatively well-defined subject positions, giving and taking from each other while retaining a sense of their distinctness and integrity, but a dialectic in which the subject positions themselves are dissolved, reformed, made discontinuous by their encountering of each other and their products; a model that insists that all subject positions and notions of identity are contingent and contextual rather than fixed and essential.

It is to suggest, too, that Scottish culture, or indeed any other culture, forms itself into a tradition not through a model of steady accretion or linear development, but dialectically as a set of practices that are continually being challenged, cancelled, and remade in their encounters with others, but which

⁵ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, transl. and ed. by George Di Giovanni (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 81-2.

even in their remaking preserve and maintain in sublated form the markers of a recognisable identity. A culture is by this definition made up at any moment of iterations each of which is a product not only of the linear history of that culture but also the lateral relations that that culture has had and continues to have with others; its coordinates are never simply temporal within that culture but are always also spatial in relation to others.

Unspeakable Scots

What prompts this latter emphasis on sublated identity at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries - the sense of a Scottishness that is both wholly integrated in British culture and yet strangely unfamiliar and dissonant - is a reading of T. W. H. Crosland's 1902 book, *The Unspeakable Scot*. Crosland's book is a polemic against the infiltration of London literary culture and media by the Scots. At times humorously hyperbolic, at others humourlessly shrill, it offers a somewhat hard-nosed and confrontational version of the insinuations that were appearing in contemporary magazines, such as *Punch*, against the apparently unstoppable force of the proverbial Scotsman on the make in the metropolis.

Your proper child of Caledonia believes in his bones that he is the salt of the earth. Prompted by a glozing pride, not to say by a black and consuming avarice, he has proclaimed his saltiness from the housetops in and out of season, unblushingly, assiduously, and with results which have no doubt been most satisfactory from his own point of view. There is nothing creditable to the race of men, from filial piety to a pretty taste in claret, which he has not sedulously advertised as a virtue peculiar to himself. This arrogation has served him passing well. It has brought him into unrivalled esteem. He is the one species of human animal that is taken by all the world to be fifty per cent cleverer and pluckier and honester than the facts warrant. He is the daw with a peacock's tail of his own painting. He is the ass who has been at pains to cultivate the convincing roar of a lion. He is the fine gentleman whose father toils with a muck-fork. And, to have done with parable, he is the clumsy lout from Tullietudlescleugh, who, after a childhood of intimacy with the crudest sort of poverty, and twelve months at "the college" on moneys wrung from the diet of his family drops his threadbare kilt and comes South in a slop suit to instruct the English in the arts of civilisation and in the English language.⁶

⁶ T. W. H. Crosland, *The Unspeakable Scot* (London: Grant Richards, 1902), pp. 4-5.

What seems to particularly irk Crosland, apart from the apparent ubiquity of successful Scotsmen across English literary and newspaper culture, is their seeming assumption of unity but reluctance to integrate – the sense they have of forming English culture while being themselves resistant to it and refusing to subsume themselves in it. They want to assert their right to full membership of the common cultural projects enabled by union, but to maintain a distinctive sense of themselves outside of it. To Crosland's frustration they appear to enjoy an elective, rather than an interpellated, relationship with the dominant culture. The project of a common British literary culture is compromised, Crosland implies, by the number of Scotsman who carry about within them a set of reference points inaccessible and to some extent incomprehensible to their English peers, from Bannockburn to Burns, to which they refer on an annoyingly regular basis to assert not only their difference but, as he suspects, their assumptions of superiority.

Alex M. Thompson, who had co-founded the *Clarion* with Robert Blatchford in 1891, betrayed a similar anxiety in his *The Haunts of Old Cockaigne*, even if his tone was more mischievously amicable than Crosland's. An episode in book features a fantastic encounter between a fictionalised Thompson and a somewhat self-satisfied Roderick, the six-inch high, self-proclaimed 'Speerit o' Scottish Literature'. This tiny, pompous imp perhaps epitomises the tiresome braggadocio of the Scottish literary man-on-the-make, as he buttonholes Thompson with his opinion that 'ye canna' alter the fact that a' great men are Scots' and informs him solemnly, in a sophisticated argument that is blissfully ignorant of the known facts, that Shakespeare was in fact a Scotsman, and not just any Scotsman, but William Drummond of Hawthornden.⁷

The idea that Scots were maintaining a disproportionate, and perhaps self-serving, influence on British literature and culture dated back to at least the late eighteenth-century, from the time in which the work of the Scottish Enlightenment writers began to exert a dominant influence on popular reading

⁷ Alex M. Thompson, 'Was Shakespeare a Scotsman?', *The Haunts of Old Cockaigne* (London: Clarion, 1898), pp. 87-115 (98-9).

and on the formation of a literary culture of politeness and self-improvement.⁸ This had both positive and negative effects, leading to a widespread respect for Scottish writers in England but also a resentment when that influence seemed to become overweening. David Hume and Lord Kames had been esteemed regulators of taste but their commercial successors, Francis Jeffrey, Henry Brougham, John Wilson, and John Gibson Lockhart among them, provoked not only similar kinds of admiration but also the ire of some, and particularly those who felt slighted by their assumptions of superiority. Lord Byron – half-Scottish himself - famously led the charge in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), where he not only noted resentfully that 'Scottish taste decides on English wit', but that Scottish literary critics were in practice little more than 'Northern Wolves': a 'coward brood, which mangle as they prey,/ By brutal instinct, all that cross their way'.⁹

The particular Scotch reviewer who raised the hackles of Crosland a century later was - in his view at least - a particularly odious type of northern wolf in sheep's clothing, William Robertson Nicoll, the founding editor of the *British Weekly* and *Bookman*. Robertson Nicoll was a pious Presbyterian entrepreneur of impressive energy and enormous ambition: a man with an unerring instinct for connecting Scottish writers with the British popular mainstream. To some he seemed a monster of sanctimonious sentimentality, but to others he was 'an inexhaustible fount of sound commercial ideas' and 'the cleverest, shrewdest Scot of his generation'.¹⁰ At first a literary adviser to Hodder and Stoughton, he created in *The British Weekly* (launched in 1886) a paper that thrived by marrying evangelical nonconformism with literary criticism – paving the way for the massive British and International success of Kailyard fiction which he effectively founded in his fostering of J. M. Barrie. S.

⁸ David Allan, *Making British Culture : English Readers and the Scottish Enlightenment, 1740-1830*, (New York & London: Routledge, 2008), p. 237.

⁹ *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. by Jerome McGann, vol 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1980), ll. 503 & 429-31, pp. 244 & 242.

¹⁰ George Blake, *Barrie and the Kailyard School*, (London: Arthur Barker, 1951), p. 25. Donald Carswell, *Brother Scots*, (London: Constable & Co., 1927), p. 237.

R. Crockett, and Ian Maclaren.¹¹ His work as editor and critic made him probably the most influential figure in popular, and what would later come to be called middlebrow British literature in the last years of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth.

He was equally influential in his editorship of the *Bookman* where he showed (as at *British Weekly*) an unerring instinct for the commercial potential of books. According to his contemporary Dixon Scott, he

addresses an audience far more numerous, far more responsive, far more eagerly in earnest, than that controlled by any other literary critic. He praises a book—and instantly it is popular. He dismisses one, gently—and it dies. He controls the contents of the bookshelves of a thousand homes—they change beneath his fingers like bright keyboards—and every alteration means the modification of a mind. What Claudius Clear [Nicoll] reads on Wednesday, half Scotland and much of England will be reading before the end of the week.¹²

Robertson Nicoll was only the most prominent of many Scots who had relocated to England and established themselves as the controllers and arbiters of popular literary taste. One was James Milne, who founded *Book Monthly* in 1903 and was from 1904-18 the influential literary editor of the *Daily Chronicle*. Another was J. M. Robertson, the Liberal politician, polymath, Shakespeare scholar, and author in 1908 of a series of articles in *T. P.'s Weekly* on 'The Best Hundred Books of Today'.¹³ Together, these Scots were largely responsible not only for regulating literary taste as Hume and Kames had done over a century before, but also commercialising it through the introduction of modern phenomena such as the creation of best-seller lists.¹⁴

¹¹ See T. H. Darlow, *William Robertson Nicoll: Life and Letters*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1925); Andrew Nash, *Kailyard and Scottish Literature*, (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2007).

¹² Dixon Scott, *Men of Letters* [1916] (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923), p. 205.

¹³ Philip Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain 1870-1918*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 104-6.

¹⁴ Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel 1875-1914*, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989), p. 439.

Scots could also be found not only dispensing advice but offering 'models of the self' in the causeries and correspondence columns that transformed the British sixpenny magazine market in the 1890s - the two stars of this new form were the Scots Andrew Lang in *Longman's Magazine* and Annie S. Swan in another Robertson Nicoll venture, *Woman at Home*.¹⁵ Lang was already an established maker and breaker of reputations - his professed preference for 'more claymores and less psychology' pleased many general readers, but exasperated writers like Henry James, who blasted Lang's 'beautiful thin facility to write everything down to the lowest level of Philistine twaddle'.¹⁶ Swan, who had emerged as a writer by winning a Christmas short-story competition in the Dundee *People's Friend*, had, by the First World War, become a public figure and a confidante not only of Robertson Nicoll and the wartime director of British propaganda, John Buchan, but also powerful magnates like Sir George Riddell, majority shareholder of the *News of the World* and the Pearson and Newnes publishing groups.¹⁷

In some respects, Robertson Nicoll offered a successful example of Scottish integration into a synthetic Britishness, an idea reinforced by the titling of his magazine as *The British Weekly* and his successful collaboration with its English nonconformist publishers, Hodder & Stoughton. Nonconformism, indeed, offered many from Scotland and England a fertile ground for a common British identity in which their various cultural and commercial projects could flourish.¹⁸

In this, Robertson Nicoll was only the latest in a long of Scots who had found themselves influencing the composite cultures of Britishness, both highbrow and popular, in the nineteenth century. And not only influencing, but

¹⁵ Margaret Beetham, 'The Agony Aunt, the Romancing Uncle and the Family of Empire: Defining the Sixpenny Reading Public in the 1890s', in *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities*, ed. by Laurel Brake, Bill Bell, and David Finkelstein (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 253-70 (p. 255).

¹⁶ Roger Lancelyn Green, *Andrew Lang: A Critical Biography*, (Leicester: Edmund Ward, 1946), p. 167 & 57.

¹⁷ Mildred Robertson Nicoll, 'The Letters of Annie S. Swan', (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1945), (p. 5). Annie S. Swan, *My Life: An Autobiography* (London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 1934).

¹⁸ For an illustration, see Keith A Ives, *Voice of Nonconformity: William Robertson Nicoll and the British Weekly*, (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2011).

infiltrating: relocating south of the border, like Swan, Lang, Barrie, and McLaren all did to be nearer the metropolitan centres of culture. The extent of such influence and of such increasing proximity is well-known by now, moving from the Scottish academics who, following Adam Smith and Hugh Blair, effectively invented the academic discipline of English Literature; through popular writers like J. M Barrie and Kenneth Grahame, who in *Peter Pan* and *The Wind in the Willows* did so much to define British Edwardian children's literature; to the peddlers of popular culture who helped shape what British people consumed on the page and on the stage (and later, via the influence of John Reith, heard on the airwaves and saw on the screen).¹⁹

Such figures ranged from academics like David Masson, author of *British Novelists and their Styles: Being a Critical Sketch of the History of British Prose Fiction* (1859), and George Lillie Craik, whose *A Manual of English Literature* (1862) was still in print in the Everyman's Library fifty years after its publication. It included the great Scottish publishers, John Murray, Macmillan, Smith Elder & Co, who had become established early in London early in the century, as well as those who set up offices in London later, like A & C Black, William Blackwood & Sons, Nelson & Sons, W. & R. Chambers, Blackie & Sons, Collins & Co. of Glasgow, who were, by the turn of the century, running London offices while also maintaining a strong presence across the empire. Many of these publishers were also responsible for the journals that dominated literary culture in the nineteenth century and which survived well into the twentieth: Archibald Constable had been responsible for the *Edinburgh Review* (1802-1929); John Murray for the *Quarterly Review* (1809-1967); David Masson had, like many literary academics of the mid-century, offered a bridge between the academy and commercial publishing as the founding editor of *Macmillan's Magazine* (1859-1907), which joined other influential journals named for their Scottish publishers, among them *Blackwood's Magazine* (1817-1980) and *Chambers's Journal* (1832-1956).

¹⁹ See Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 16-44; Robert Crawford, ed., *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

When a commentator in *Book Monthly* in 1917 asked, 'Has the English bookman ever reflected on the debt of service he owes to publishers of Scottish family and name', the question was plainly rhetorical. For as he quickly went on to say, 'the Murrays, the Macmillans, the Blackwoods, the Blacks, the Nelsons, and other names famous on the imprints of books' have all ensured the presence of a distinctive 'Scottish note in publishing'.²⁰

A 'Scottish note' was also audible in the newspaper press through the presence of people such as Robert Donald, editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, and James Nicol Dunn, editor of the *Morning Post*, as well as all the hordes of hacks and self-important sub-editors who, according to Crosland at least, ensured that "'Hoo are ye the noo?" is the conventional greeting in most newspaper offices.'²¹ It was present, too, in the commercial arm of literature that saw the rise of the phenomenon of the literary agent. Easily the most significant of these new figures on the literary scene was the Glaswegian A P Watt who not only represented most significant authors - from Marie Corelli and Arthur Conan Doyle, to Arnold Bennett, Rudyard Kipling, and W. B. Yeats - but who also acted as a crucial middleman for the publication of the great majority of the serialised and syndicated fiction in the British magazine market.²²

Theatre, both high and low, was also strongly inflected with the Scottish accent. William Archer was probably the most influential theatre critic of the day, in his ground-breaking *English Dramatists of Today* (1882) and his championing of realism and his promotion of Ibsen. And it was Archer who was responsible, in collaboration with the Englishman Harley Granville Barker, for making the first serious attempt to establish the idea of a British National Theatre, as expressed in their *Scheme & Estimates for a National Theatre* (1904). The two great theatre-owning companies of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, which not only offered space for performance but also effectively controlled much of the touring repertoire of theatre and variety

²⁰ 'Personal and Particular: Small Talk of Letters at a Time of Great Affairs', in *Book Monthly*, (1917), pp. 301-16 (p. 316).

²¹ T. W. H. Crosland, *The Unspeakable Scot*, (London: Grant Richards, 1902), pp. 58-9.

²² Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), pp. 27-39.

throughout Britain, were also substantially Scottish. Howard and Wyndham, a dominant theatre owning, production, and management company, famed for their lavish pantomimes, was established in Glasgow in 1895, by the Irishman John Howard and the Scotsman Frederick Wyndham, and ran the major theatres in Edinburgh and Glasgow, but also in London, Newcastle, Liverpool, and Nottingham. Moss Empires, the company that transformed British variety and made it a respectable activity for the middle-classes, eventually controlling thirty-nine theatres, had grown out of the experiences of its founder Edward Moss in his father's music hall in Greenock and his first lease at the Gaiety Music Hall in Edinburgh in 1877.²³

'England' for the English, and 'Britain' for the Scots?

For probably as long as the union itself, and certainly in the decades since the advent of the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights in the 1850s, there was an anxiety among Scots that the national distinctiveness of their contributions was not being adequately recognised. While the huge majority of Scots were, for the most part, content with union, some occasionally voiced a frustration that England was taking credit too readily for them. This manifested itself most notably in, what J. H. Grainger has called 'The English Presumption': the use of the adjective 'English' to describe things that are, more accurately, British, and the associated prejudice that files all Scots' successes under 'British' but their failures in the category, 'Scottish'.²⁴

In this context it is perhaps interesting to note some examples from the early twentieth-century that suggest analogous counter-resentments among the English. A contribution to the *Publishers' Circular* of 1916 was one such. Tellingly titled 'If it's Scotch it's Scotch; if it's English—it's British', its

²³ Paul Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall, 1850-1914* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 64-9

²⁴ J. H. Grainger, *Patriotisms: Britain 1900-1939* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 48-64. See also, for example, Brian Viner, 'Why Murray is a Brit when he wins and a Scot when he loses', *Independent* (1 July 2010), <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/columnists/brian-viner/brian-viner-why-murray-is-a-brit-when-he-wins-and-a-scot-when-he-loses-2016381.html> (accessed 12 August 2016).

arguments followed Crosland in suggesting that if there was bias in the British Press it was in fact systematically exercised in favour of the Scots; a consequence perhaps of the fact that 'English journalism is crowded with Scotsmen who plaster their papers with Scotch matter.'²⁵ The Anglo-Scottish writer Ian Hay picked up on this, albeit in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek way, in his book *The Oppressed English* (1917), in which he professed sympathy with the English for lacking the kinds of aggressive nationalism found in other parts of the United Kingdom and thus gaining none of the plaudits for British successes but many of the brickbats for the nation's failures: 'why should the credit for the good deeds of the British Empire be ascribed to those respectively responsible—except the English—while the odium for the so-called bad deeds is lumped on to England alone?'.²⁶

Whatever the truth of these claims, what they disclose is an unresolved tension arising from the presence of so many self-identifying Scots at or near the centre of British culture. This might be a low-level anxiety, raised mainly in a bantering, humorous context, but it suggests a continuing resistance among Scots to the idea of a wholly assimilative, synthetic Britishness. David Masson had signalled such a resistance in his *British Novelists and their Styles* in 1859, even as he celebrated British integration and the opportunities it offered Scottish cultural workers:

Scotticism is not one invariable thing, fixed and intransmutable. It does not consist merely in vaunting and proclaiming itself, in working in Scottish facts, Scottish traditions, Scottish reminiscences—all of which has perhaps been done enough; it may be driven inwards; it may exist internally as a mode of thought; and there may be efficient Scotticism where not one word is said of the Thistle, and where the language and the activity are catholic and cosmopolitan. And, seeing that it is so, need we suppose that we have yet seen the last of the Scotchmen, the last of the men of Edinburgh? No! The drain may still be southwards; Scotland now subserves, politically at least, the higher unity of Great

²⁵ Henry R. Brabrook, 'If it's Scotch it's Scotch; if it's English it's—British', *Publishers' Circular*, (29 July 1916), p. 89.

²⁶ Ian Hay, *The Oppressed English*, (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1917), p. 6.

Britain, just as that unity in its turn subserves a larger unity still, not so obviously carved out in the body of the surrounding world.

Welcoming the opportunities for Scots to assimilate, Masson nonetheless insists on a Scottish exceptionalism that allows them, even as they adopt the practises and language of the English, to maintain a distinctive 'internal Scotticism':

at the time when Scotland was united to her great neighbour, she was made partaker of an intellectual accumulation and an inheritance of institutions, far richer, measured by the mode of extension, than she had to offer to that neighbour in return; and since that period, while much of the effort of Scotland has been in continuation of her own separate development, much has necessarily and justly been ruled by the law of her fortunate partnership. And so for the future, it may be the internal Scotticism working on British, or on still more general objects, and not the Scotticism that works only on Scottish objects of thought, that may be in demand in literature as well as in other walks. But while Scotland is true to herself, and while nature in her and her social conditions co-operate to impart to her sons such an education as heretofore, there needs be no end to her race of characteristic men, nor even to her home-grown and home-supported literature.²⁷

This was, presumably, a compelling argument for many Scots. Not least because it aligns quite closely with the arguments of the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights, which supported union strongly while recognising the desirability of maintaining distinct national identities. The NAVSR's *Address to the People of Scotland* of 1853 stated clearly such support for Union alongside a belief that 'Scotland will never be improved by being transformed into an inferior imitation of England, but by being made a

²⁷ David Masson, *British Novelists and their Styles: Being a Critical Sketch of the History of British Prose Fiction* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1859), pp. 205-7.

better and a truer Scotland'.²⁸ Masson and the vindicationists acknowledge the desirability of a hybrid British culture, but what both refuse to do is to entertain the idea that what Masson describes as an innate 'Scotticism' might itself be a hybridized form subject to alteration through its encounter with a persisting 'Anglicism'. As such, the 'better and truer Scotland' conjured by Vindicationists is implicitly an essential quality, a spirit not blended in combination with Englishness but distilled in isolation from it. For all its subtleties and careful equivocations, Masson's idea of cultural, as distinct from political, union is essentially of a unidirectional flow in which an axiomatically homogenous 'Scotticism' contributes to a hybrid Britishness without itself suffering alteration.

Unspoken Englishmen

The story so far is a recognisable one, the familiar legend of the many Scots who made their distinctive and disproportionate contributions to the British imperial project and its culture. But there is another story to be told about the other side of this relationship: of the significant part played by England in Scottish culture, whether that was through the active presence of the English in Scotland or their influence on the country at a distance.

This is not simply a discourse of hegemony or cultural imperialism – the rise of a dominant Englishness suppressing Scottish domestic politics and education, and excising Scots dialect along the way; or of having to live under the English sentimental gaze, the indulgence of which leads to Balmorality, the Kailyard, and the tartan shortbread tin. Rather it's the progress of Englishmen doing in Scotland the same kind of cultural work that many Scots were doing more visibly in England: teaching English, editing newspapers, running theatres, writing for an eager readership – bringing elements of their particular culture with them and engaging them in a Scottish context.

The Scots – Masson among them - may lay a claim to having invented English literature, but many Englishmen returned the compliment and came

²⁸ National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights, *Address to the People of Scotland, and Statement of Grievances* (Edinburgh: Johnstone & Hunter, 1853), p. 3.

north of the border to help educate Scots in their own invention. Masson was succeeded in the Regius Chair at Edinburgh by probably its most celebrated incumbent, the Englishman George Saintsbury, while the chair in English at Glasgow University was held successively by two distinguished English scholars, A. C. Bradley and Walter Raleigh. Another Englishman who ventured north of the border was W E Henley, who, from 1889-92, ran the *Scots Observer* (from late 1890 the *National Observer*) from Edinburgh, and who did much to bring to the work of Robert Louis Stevenson, W. B. Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Thomas Hardy, J. M. Barrie, Rudyard Kipling, Kenneth Grahame, Alice Meynell, and H. G. Wells to British reading public.

The Scottish theatre, that most apparently localised phenomenon, was similarly hybridised. A number of pioneers of Scottish music-hall management in the nineteenth century had been English, including James and Christina Baylis who ran Glasgow's Scotia Music Hall and dominated the city's entertainment scene for many years. A. E. Pickard, the enterprising owner of Glasgow's Panopticon music hall and American museum and waxworks was an Englishman²⁹ And while the theatre-owner Edward Moss might be regarded as a Scot, he was born in Ashton under Lyne and was educated in Manchester; his partner Oswald Stoll was raised in Liverpool.

Scottish newspaper culture, too, was strongly influenced not just by professional and technical influences from south of the border but also by the presence of English journalists and proprietors. An example is offered by Scotland's most widely-read weekly newspaper at the turn of the century, *The People's Journal*. The paper, and its stable-mates including the *People's Friend* and the *Dundee Advertiser*, was owned and run by John Leng & Co. which would amalgamate with its Dundee rival W. & D. C. Thomson & Co. in 1905.

In 1891 Leng was advertising the *People's Journal* as the 'mouthpiece' of 'Scottish Radicalism' and was claiming for it a weekly readership of one

²⁹ Paul Maloney, *The Britannia Panopticon Music Hall and Cosmopolitan Entertainment Culture, Palgrave Studies in Theatre and Performance History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 163-210

million.³⁰ The *Journal* offers an important piece of evidence for William Donaldson, who argues the case that this 'organ of the Scottish democracy' played a vital part in maintaining a vibrant vernacular culture in North-Eastern Scotland in the later Victorian period – effectively an autochthonous culture that had grown directly from indigenous folk traditions.³¹ The paper's significance in maintaining the vernacular culture, particularly before the 1880s is manifest, and has been reinforced by Kirstie Blair's recent research into the poetry published in the paper.³² But it is also the case that as the *People's Journal* grew beyond its regional base, the more deracinated and the less vernacular it became. It had begun in 1858 as a paper strongly committed to a local vernacular, and it had become by the turn of the century Scotland's most popular paper: but it was not both of these things at the same time. The *Journal* of the 1890s and 1900s was, in fact, an outstanding success of the New Journalism of the 1880s and 90s, having broadened its reading community beyond Scotland, to Ulster and Northern England through its industry-leading experiments in editionising – creating bespoke versions of the paper to cover regional preferences in politics, sport, and local interest.

If the *People's Journal* was, as Leng advertised, a mouthpiece of 'Scottish Radicalism' or an organ of what Masson called an 'internal Scotticism', it seemed by the turn of the century more than happy to speak to its diverse audiences in a variety of voices: its coverage of news, comment and sport in standard English journalese, with odd Kailyard corners of Scots in its humour pieces and the occasional poem. In case it should be thought that this represented a falling away from an autochthonous purity, as Donaldson suggests, it is worth noting that the paper from its earliest days had been ready, indeed designed, to operate in a wider British, as well as narrowly

³⁰ *How a Newspaper Is Printed: Being a Complete Description of the Offices and Equipments of the Dundee Advertiser, People's Journal, Evening Telegraph, and People's Friend*, (Dundee: John Leng & Co, n.d. [1891]), pp. 18-19.

³¹ William Donaldson, *Popular Literature in Victorian Scotland: Language, Fiction and the Press* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986), pp. 1-34.

³² Kirstie Blair, ed., *The Poets of the People's Journal: Newspaper Poetry in Victorian Scotland* (Glasgow: The Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2016).

Scottish marketplace. Leng had exploited from early on the commercial possibilities of syndication, in which A. P. Watt would later corner the market. From its very beginning, the stories that appeared in the *People's Journal* were being syndicated for publication in other Scottish and Northern English papers. This had been the case, for example, with David Pae's *Lucy the Factory Girl; or, The Secrets of the Tontine Close* (1860).³³ An anticipation of the requirements of national British syndication might explain why this Glasgow novel keeps Scots dialect to a minimum: the only vernacular speaker is the salt-of-the-earth Hugh the knife-grinder, who finds himself assailed and assaulted by various apparently cockney-speaking criminals and embedded in a relentlessly polite and sentimental standard-English romance narrative.³⁴

A similar process of adapting Scottish localism for the British market can be seen at work in the *People's Friend* - the paper started in 1869 as a sister paper to the *Journal* with the express intention of publishing serial stories and competitions written by and for local audiences (again, in an early anticipation of some of the techniques and participative emphases of New Journalism). The *Friend* had been founded with the aim that it 'should be the exponent and conservator of Scottish literature, and should contain Scotch stories, poetry, and other articles written by Scotchmen.'³⁵ But it had quickly spread its net more widely (partly under David Pae's guidance as editor), printing fiction by, among others, Anthony Trollope, Dora Russell, and Mrs Braddon, and even discovering and bringing to the fore English popular writers, like Adeline Sergeant, through its competitions.

The Leng papers were not only open to the influences of the wider British market, they were in fact directly a product of it - not least due to the fact that their founder and proprietor, Sir John Leng, was, in fact an

³³ Bob Harris, 'The Press, Newspaper Fiction and Literary Journalism, 1707-1918', in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature: Volume 2, Enlightenment, Britain and Empire (1707-1918)*, ed. by Susan Manning (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 308-16 (p. 314).

³⁴ See, for example, David Pae, *Lucy, the Factory Girl: or the secrets of the Tontine Close* (Edinburgh, Thomas Grant, 1860), pp. 120-24 for a flavour of this linguistic hybridity.

³⁵ *How a Newspaper Is Printed: Being a Complete Description of the Offices and Equipments of the Dundee Advertiser, People's Journal, Evening Telegraph, and People's Friend*, p. 53..

Englishman. Leng had, in the early 1850s done exactly what Crosland would complain of Scots men-on-the-make doing some fifty years later: having crossed the border in search of commercial opportunities in the media. This was much more than carpet-bagging: there can be little doubt of Leng's commitment to Dundee's politics and culture, and of his seriousness in taking on the role of 'conservator of Scottish literature' – he became one of the city's Eminent Men and represented the city as a Liberal MP. But it is likely that Leng's commitment to Dundee arose from a paradox: that his and his company's advocacy of 'Scottish Radicalism' and 'Scotch stories' arose less from a rooted sense of national identity than from the deep beliefs in subsidiarity and civil society inculcated by the British Liberalism in which he grew up (as well as from a canny understanding of how to create and captivate a self-identifying public for his product – a businessman's realisation that local identity might be manipulated as a form of brand identity).³⁶ His status as one of the defenders of Scottish popular culture - of a sublated 'Scottishness' - was, in other words, the product of the synthetic British Liberalism from which he had emerged.

And Leng was not the only Englishman at the helm of a Scottish newspaper institution. A contemporary of his from Hull Grammar school (and indeed co-editor with him of the school newspaper and then fellow reporter on the *Hull Advertiser*) was Charles Cooper, who would go on to become one of the *Scotsman's* legendary editors. Cooper edited the *Scotsman* from 1876-1905 during which time it moved from being a staunchly Liberal, pro-devolutionary, paper to a solidly Unionist one - although Cooper had initially been an ally of Lord Rosebery and Gladstone throughout the Midlothian campaigns and had used the paper to campaign for Scottish Home Rule and the creation of a Scottish Secretary in Westminster in 1885, as well as doing his own bit for Scottish literature by being the first president of the Sir Walter Scott Club.³⁷

³⁶ And he was, of course, only one of many eminent English Liberals who represented Scottish parliamentary constituencies, from Gladstone and Asquith to Arthur Ponsonby and Winston Churchill.

³⁷ *The Glorious Privilege: The History of 'The Scotsman'* (London: Nelson, 1967), pp. 69-78.

Leng and Cooper were, in fact, fairly typical products of a British-wide provincial newspaper network that allowed for frequent cross-border traffic between newsrooms. The great editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, C. P. Scott, for example, had trained on the *Scotsman*, and from 1909-17 the *Glasgow Herald* was edited by a *Times*-trained Englishman, F. Harcourt Kitchin, who by all accounts had rather limited sympathies with Scotland.³⁸ Sir Linton Andrews (another former pupil of Hull Grammar School) was news editor of the *People's Journal* and *Dundee Advertiser* and would go on after the First World War to edit the *Leeds Mercury* and *Yorkshire Post*.³⁹

English newspaper groups, too, had a strong purchase on Scotland from the 1890s. The daily paper with the largest circulation in Scotland before the First World War, the *Daily Record and Mail*, was owned by the Anglo-Irish Harmsworth brothers, Lords Northcliffe and Rothermere. Likewise, Sabbatarian Scotland lacked indigenous Sunday papers before the war, which meant the English-owned *News of the World* had a wide circulation – a situation which led to the formation in the war of Scottish Sunday papers including the *Sunday Post*.⁴⁰

By the outbreak of the First World War there was little, apart from the details of their coverage of local topics, to distinguish the Scottish-owned regional and national newspapers from southern equivalents such as the *Birmingham Daily Post*, *Western Mail*, or *Yorkshire Post*. A reader of the *Aberdeen Free Press* in 1914 could find out the latest goings on in the city council while also keeping up to speed with the English county cricket scores through the scorecards printed in full in its back pages: a person browsing the *Glasgow Herald* might see, side-by-side reviews of the latest book by Ian Hay and a play currently causing a splash in London's West End; the *Daily Record*

³⁸ See A. McL. Ewing, *A History of the Glasgow Herald 1783-1948* (Glasgow: Printed for Private Circulation, [c. 1948]), p. 64; Alastair Phillips, *Glasgow's Herald: 1783-1983* (Glasgow: Richard Drew, 1983), p. 110;

³⁹ Linton Andrews, *The Autobiography of a Journalist*, (London: Ernest Benn, 1964).

⁴⁰ See Cyril Bainbridge and Roy Stockdill, *The News of the World Story: 150 Years of the World's Bestselling Newspaper*, (London: HarperCollins, 1993), pp. 60-61.

and Mail might feature a story from the Glasgow courts on one page and a feature on the latest London fashions on the next.

Scottish culture, as it was constructed in the pages of these papers, and as it was expressed in the literature and theatre that was consumed by the majority of Scots in the years before the war, was evidently not so much a single entity as a complex and dynamic system. The Scottish cultural identity to which these newspapers spoke was more than simply the nested grouping of 'concentric identities' described by Christopher Smout, but comprised rather of a myriad of intersecting and overlapping identifications with the local, the national, and the international.⁴¹ The sum of such referents might, at times, usefully amount to a quality that might be described as Scottishness, but it might equally be the formula for one of a range of other intranational or supranational subject positions.

Sublated Scots

What this complex cross-border cultural activity shows is how problematic it is to constitute the cultural and political relations between England and Scotland in the early twentieth century as a dialogue between two distinct traditions. The presence of influential Scottish people in England, and powerful English people in Scotland created not only a hybrid or synthetic Britishness, but also an alteration in the nature of both England and Scotland themselves. John Leng helped establish Dundee as a powerhouse of Scottish and British journalism and Charles Cooper would play a part in reshaping Scottish and British politics, just as Macmillan, Smith Elder, and Blackwoods created, and William Robertson Nicoll and A. P. Watt refined, the British and English markets in publishing.

Cultural exchange, though, and especially literary exchange, needs little actual proximity. Given a common language and the functioning of an efficient means of book, magazine, and newspaper distribution culture can operate at a distance. Benedict Anderson recognised this when he noted the

⁴¹ T. C. Smout, 'Perspectives on the Scottish Identity', *Scottish Affairs*, 6 (Winter 1994), pp. 101-113.

importance of print culture in the formation of the imagined communities of emergent nations.⁴² But what Anderson says is equally true of nations that are born through union as nations that come into being through separation. The imagination that John Leng wanted to inculcate in his readers was distinctly local and Scottish, relying as it did on the reporting of local news stories, municipal politics, and local sports teams. But it was also recognisably national and British, with detailed coverage of Westminster politics, metropolitan and international news, and national literary culture and sport. One of his early innovations, much vaunted in his papers, was to establish in 1870 a Fleet Street office with a direct telegraphic link back to Dundee.⁴³ D. C. Thomson, similarly, established an office in Manchester in 1913. The implication was that an important part of being Scottish was being British: that localism was not to be confused with parochialism and that its interests were best served by entering into a working relationship with the wider world. As such, the local became a locus – its newspaper not a kind of parish pump around which a culture might talk to itself but a place in which the diverse issues of a larger world might be focused and find expression within that culture.

Crosland was concerned that the Metropolitan and Imperial public spheres were, at the beginning of the new century, being distorted by hordes of semi-alien, unspeakable Scots – and he was not alone in both his amusement and bemusement at that fact. But the dichotomy he raised was a false one, for the Scots that he pilloried were not aliens at all but the products of that public sphere. The very distinctiveness they claimed, for all their references to Bannockburn and ‘that heaven-sent date, A. D. 1314’, was itself a direct product of, and manifestation of their reaction to their union with the English.⁴⁴ The Scottishness they bruted forth was not so much a token of

⁴² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edn (London: Verso, 2002), pp. 37-46.

⁴³ This distinctive building remained a Scottish outpost in the capital into the twenty-first century. As a *Sunday Post* office latterly, it housed the last working journalists in Fleet Street, closing only in August 2016. See Michael Holden, 'Stop press: Last two journalists leave London's Fleet Street' <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-fleetstreet-idUSKCN10G1LZ> (accessed 11 August 2016).

⁴⁴ Crosland, *The Unspeakable Scot*, p. 24.

independence as interdependence, a quality that had not been given once and for all at some originating moment in history, but a varying and relational means of self-identification that, like any complex identity, was constantly being remade in its continuing encounter with a familiar, antithetical Englishness.