

Expository Scots

Wi the recent needcessity for the Cross Pairtie Comatee on Scots ti translate an offeecial blad inti Scots, the leid finnds itsel at a turnin pynt. For a gey lang time, the'r been fowk threipin at Scots shoud be traetit as a langage in its ain richt. At the same time, the'r been fowk - whiles the same fowk - threipin at Scots is only uiss for leeterary ettles, an at English can be uised for aa the practical wark. But ye canna pit Scots forrit as a langage on the same foond as Gaelic an no can write offeecial blads in it, like ye can wi Gaelic. It's no possible for Scots ti get recogneection as a langage, an at the same time jouk the question o an expository register.

The expository register o a langage is the ane at's uised for the ilkaday wark at we hae tradeetionally left ti English - includin the narrative an expository pairts o prose writin. Sic a register is forordinar conservative - mair conservative nor the registers at ye wad uise for the likes o dialogue, an aften for poietry. Expository Scots needs ti be biggit up an practiced. Ye canna expect ti cobble thegither an offeecial blad ad hoc frae leeterary or colloquial styles whaniver the needcessity kythes, an than forget about expository writin til the niest time.

The'r raesons whit wey sic a register maun be conservative. The first haes ti dae wi pittin forrit a hale langage, an no juist sindrie dialects. The example o the word *guid* haes aften been uised.

Gin ye'r writin yer ain dialect, ye micht write *gid* or *gyid* or *geed* or *gweed* or *göd*. But gin ye uised ane o thae maks in an offeecial blad (or onie writin, for that maiter) supposed ti be in 'Scots', a lot o fowk micht staw at it, pleenin at it wis 'Glesca' or 'Doric' or whitiver, an no thair langage ava. The tradeetional spellin *guid* can beir aa thae differin pronunciations, an is aesy recognised as a Scots word. This is juist the maist kenspeckle example o a principle o briggin dialects at shoud be the main principle ahint Scots spellin.

Anither raeson an expository register maun be conservative is the perception o register itsel. In dialogue an poietry relate ti dialogue, it's naitural ti uise spellins at shaws pronunciations – sae eg: '*Fit are ee fusslin fur, min?*' or '*Gonnae go doon the shoap for a boa'le o Chardonnay.*' Apairt frae bein dialect-specific (the speakers o the first ane wad think on the Central '*shoap*' an '*boa'le*' as 'Glesca') siccan maks pits ower a colloquial register – ane at's obviously relate ti the wey at dialects o English is written in English leeteratur, no ti the wey at langages is written for expository ettles.

It's aften sayed at Scots is a langage, no juist slang. But hale langages haes colloquial an slang registers as weel as leeterary an expository anes, an for Scots ti be recognised as a hale langage, aa its differin forms maun be recognised as sindrie registers. "*Ah seen youse oan the telly*" micht be juist as guid colloquial Scots as '*I don't wanna work on Maggie's farm no more*' is guid colloquial American, but nane o thaim is the richt register for expository writin.

Register haes adae wi aa the aspects o langage, like spellin, grammar an vocabular. Houaniver, sin

the examples I've gien sae faur haes been adae wi spellin, I'll tak examples frae whit shoud be the foond o spellin - the soonds o Scots.

Thare needna be muckle bather wi consonant soonds in Scots, sin maist o thaim is the same as English. Scots haes some soonds at English disna, or hardly dis - like 'skl' at the beginnin o words like *sklent*, an the 'ch' soonds in *loch*, *trauchle*, *nicht*, etc. The glottal stop is whiles thocht ti be characteristic o Scots, but it's no raelly - a lot o English dialects uises it, an some Northern Scots anes disna (I dinna speak wi a glottal stop ava.) For the kynd o conservative writin at's needit for a expository register, this is nae bather - ye can juist write the *t* - for example, *watter*, *butter* - an say it wi a glottal if ye like. For a conservative register, it's necessar ti mak the 'ch' soond obvious, e'en tho words like *nicht* micht no be uised in less conservative dialects, an the 'ch' soond no uised ava bi youngers in some airts.

Vowel soonds is a bittie mair difficult, cause the'r a lot o confuision aboot whit is Scots soonds. Speakers o some Central dialects, for example, tends ti think on the 'oa' soond in words like 'shoap' an 'boa'le' as a characteristic Scots soond (an pronunciations like 'shop' an 'on' as 'pittin it oan') but gin ye raik throu the Linguistic Atlas of Scotland, volume 3, ye'll finnd at some o the mair conservative dialects maks a disteenction atween 'o' in words like *cot*, an 'oa' in words like *coat*, at ither dialects disna mak. It's no a North/Central divide aither - Gamrie in Buchan an Largoward in Fife baith maks a disteenction atween *cot* an *coat*, but Wast Kilbride an Rhynie i the hert o kintra Aiberdeenshire disna. An some dialects at disna

mak the same soond disteenction as English still maks *coat* langer nor *cot*. Sae conservative spellins like *shop* an *got* – in thir cases, mair like the English anes, but conform tae tradeetional Scots pronunciations tae – is better for a conservative, dialect-briggin register.

Coorse, whiles conservative Scots maks is no like English anes. Scots is a leid in its ain richt wi its ain tradeetional strynd, an whither the spellins at reflects thir strynd is like English or no shoudna be important. The maks *shop, on, guid, bluid, fluir, nicht, licht, eneuch, lang, deid, gless, faither*, is some like English an some no, an thay aa belang a conservative register o Scots. The maks *shoap, oan, gweed, flair, daid, father an glass* is some like English an some no, an thay'r aa characteristic o sindrie dialects o Scots. The maks *enough, dead, night, blood an long*, tho thay micht be uised in colloquial registers o Scots, is no Scots maks ava – thay shaw English soond strynd (like the tynin o the 'ch' soond; the 'oo' soond in words at haes the sindrie 'ui' soonds in Scots; an the 'e' pronunciation o the vowel in words like *dead* whaur Scots deid haes 'ee' or 'ai' soonds) at merks thaim oot as English len-words in dialects at haes tint the Scots maks.

Whit maks Scots, an parteeular a conservative Scots at wad dae for an expository register, is no whaur an whither it's different frae English, but whit its ain weel-documentit tradeetional strynd is.

John M. Tait

Stravaigin the Wab

Andy Eagle

This time aboot we're no juist stravaigin the wab but gaun faur ayont – oot ower the lift in til the heich hievens thairsels. Fowk haes aye leukit up at nicht an been cuirious aboot whit's oot amang the mairchless mirk abuin thair heids. Thanks tae modren technology fowk can nou tak a keek at thir hine awa places an the byous ferlies that thaim that cleckit the the first telescopes coudna dream o seein. The world's maist weel-kent organisation for reengin oot intae space is NASA (<http://www.nasa.gov>) wi airtins for bairns (<http://kids.msfc.nasa.gov>) along wi maiter for collegianers an teachers forby. For the wee anes there's a puckle gemmes, for example, ane aboot gaun tae Maurs wi wittins anent hou NASA is gaun aboot winnin thare. Anither interestin pairt o this steid is "In Search of Moon Trees". Whit's muin trees ye maun speir – weel – thir's trees that's been plauntit athort the world fae seeds that's been tae the muin. Dae ye ken whaur tae find a muin tree? – stairt rakin here.

Anither NASA steid (<http://liftoff.msfc.nasa.gov>) haes aw kin kynd o ken an wittins anent spacecraft, fowk in space an hou tae follae satellites. Alang wi this comes a fell feck o maiter anent the universe an the founds o science an engineerin. Dae ye ken that there's mair nor aicht thousand airtifecial objects birlin roond about the yird? Mair nor twa an a hauf-thousand o thir is satellites aither aye still wirkin or is juist auld anes that haesna sliddert intae the atmosphere an been brunt tae shiners. The lave is orbital spreath sic as pairts an bits o rock-

ets, peylades that's gane oot o ither or explodit, whiles e'en objects that's been tint bi fowk wirkin on spacecraft.

The wappin maist bit graith birlin abuin is the Internaitional Space Station (<http://liftoff.msfc.nasa.gov/temp/StationLoc.html>), an acause o its bouk it's nou ane o the brichtest objects in the sky. Misfortunately the station's ninety meenit orbit daesna tak it tae a lattitude heicher nor saxty degree north sae some fowk nicht no can see it. NASA haes a guid walin o picturs o the yird (<http://visibleearth.nasa.gov>) taen fae space. In amang this is no juist ordinar picturs shawin the continents an kintras but mony adae wi wir biosphere shawin hou fowk uises the laund for fermin, forestry an industry an the eftercome o thir human ongauns athort the planet.

Nearer oor cauf-grund we hae wir ain European Space Agency (<http://www.esa.int>) giein wittins anent space flicht an splorin space bi baith man an machine. Alang wi this comes whit siclike haes adae wi the betterin o the life o ilka day fowk lik wirsels an hou siclike is pairt an paircel o pertectin the warld about us. For fowk that's efter newsins anent space flicht, astronomy an technology (<http://www.space.com>) haes a virtual veage throu space alang wi an ainimatit encyclopedia that kythes mony saicrets o wir neebour warlds. "Views of the Solar System" (<http://www.solarviews.com>) brings ower a vieve multimedia adventur unfauldin the brawness o the sun, planets, muins, comets, asteroids an mair forby. Airt oot the latest scientific knowledge, or study the history o space exploration, rocketry, early astronauts, space meessions an spacecraft throu a muckle archive o photoes, scientific facts, text, picturs an videos. For mair anent astronomy, (<http://www.astronomy.net>) haes resoources that gies a haund tae thaim that's efter learnin mair about whit is aiblins

the grandest science o thaim aw acause it inrowes braidly unalike schuils o lair – ettlin tae unnerstaund nocht less nor the universe itsel. Ower an abuin thon this steid haes news an forums whaur ye can howk oot an speir ocht ye nicht wad like tae ken. The fowk ahint a weel-wrocht steid (<http://www.dustbunny.com/afk/>) airtit at bairns threaps that something sae radgy an bonny as the hievens shoudna be left tae grown-ups acause thay mak it dreich. Drap in an see the planets bi uisin the cairts o the hievens shawin whaur ye can find thaim. Hae a shottie at the puzzles an follae some o the weel-waled airtins tae ither astronomy steids.

Are we wir lee lane? Is something that's aye been speirt bi fowk glowerin at the skyre airch o glentin starns an galaxies that comes tae the fore in the cauld cranreuch o a winter nicht. There's twa steids whaur ye can howk oot mair anent a scientific experiment that uises internet-connectit computers for tae rake the hievens for tae find intelligence ayont the yird. Ye can be a pairt o this bi rinnin the SETI@home program (<http://www.seti.org> an <http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu>), a freebee that dounlades an analeezes radio telescope data. Its a speical kind o screensaver that, like ithers, stairts whan ye lea' yer computer its lane, an steeks itsel whan ye set yersel tae yer wark. Whit it daes inatween is byordinar. While ye're aff maskin the tea, or haein yer denner or sleepin, yer computer will be tyauvin awa giein a haund wi the search for extraterrestrial intelligence bi chowin throu data fendit bi the world's mucklemaist radio telescope.

Ae thing that facinates mony fowk aboot space exploration is whither or no there's life on Maurs. Answers tae this verra quaisten an mair anent splorin Maurs can be fund at <http://>

www.jpl.nasa.gov an <http://www.fas.org/mars/marslife.htm>. Organisations lik NASA an ESA is aye pittin this tae the fore sae that aw the siller bein pittin intae space exploration will be acceptit bi the feck o fowk. Ae pairt o the search for life on Maurs haes been adae wi findin watter on Maurs. For tae dae this the 'Mars Odyssey Satellite' (<http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov/odyssey>) that can detect neutrons haes been birlin roond about the reid planet. The ettle haes been tae detect neutrons comin fae Maurs. Neutrons comes about whan gamma rays (<http://imagers/gsfsc.nasa.gov/ems/gamma.html>) comes intae contact wi hydrogen atoms. Gamma rays comes fae the nuclear ongauns athin the sun or fae gamma ray bursts that's nou bein associate wi supernovae (<http://www.supernovae.net/isn.htm>). Gamma rays skelps intae atoms an the smatter gars neutrons flee aff.

Acause the neutrinos that's gien aff bi sindry chemicals haes different energies, it's nae meestery whit chemical ye're dealin wi. Fae thon scientists kens thae neutrons haes come about fae gamma rays skelpin intae hydrogen atoms. Hydrodgen on Maurs wadna lest its lane but wad in a compound lik watter sae the neutrons detectit shaws thare's watter on Maurs. This is aw weel an guid – staiblishin that watter, or mair richt that ice, can be fund ablo the grund o Maurs but the kinch wi gamma rays is that thay dae untelt skaith tae leevin cells, the verra thing that aw life lippens on. The selsame gamma rays wad hae lang syne kilt ony life on Maurs e'en gin it did hae a chance tae evolve.

The ootcome o a gamma ray burst in about oor neuk o the milky wey, athin a thoosand licht-year or sae, micht coud be the braid-spreid daith o mony species on the yird (<http://>

www.physlink.com/Education/AskExperts/ae254.cfm). Ony beasties no bieldit bi eneuch solit or liquid shields wad be birselt bi deidly cosmic radiation. It nicht weel hae been sauf on Maurs athin the first twa-three billion year o its bein, whan the planet haed a guid bit thicker atmosphere, but the day, an aiblins for the bygone billion year or sae, the planet haes been birselt wi hie-energy radiation. Efter the atmosphere growed mair shilpit, ony life on the grund wis exposed tae hie-energy radiation fae gey an strang solar flares an antrin stranger flauchts fae sindry astronomical soorces athort the Galaxy. A dout A hinna pit the branks on ony ettles tae find life on Maurs but its certies something tae think on.

In oor cauf-grund ye can veesit the Renfrewshire Astronomical Society at (<http://astrocot.bravepages.com/>) wi wittins anent whit winners an ferlies can be seen abuin wir heids on a clear mirk nicht. Ither associates adae wi astronomy athort Scotland can be fund at

http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/space/myspace/localspace/scotland_index.shtml

Andy Eagle
www.scots-online.org

REVIEWS

***Aeschylus's Agamemnon in Scots*, W.S. Milne, Agenda Editions, Poet's and Painter's Press, London, 2002, 88pp., £12.**

Gavin Douglas set a byuss exempil ti skreivars in Scots bi owersettin the 'Aeneid' in the 16t centurie, but the leid haes chynged a lot sen his day, an the'r nou a sair need for translations o classical warks, in whit Jek Aitken wad hae cawed 'neip Scots' (leiterarie Scots), or even in 'tumshie Scots' (demotic Scots). A whein owersettins o classical warks hae kythed in LALLANS frae tyme ti tyme, an skreids can be fund frae the Latin o P. Vergilius Maro, Seneca an Horace; an frae the auncient Greek fae Xenophon. Pairt o the 'Odyssey' owerset bi William Neill wes publisht bi the Saltire Society in 1991, an the translation o 'The Iliad' bi Dr. Kenneth Farrow is complete but haesna yit been publisht.

Agin this backgrund, W.S. Milne's owersettin o Aeschylus's 'Agamemnon' soud hae been a walcum eik til the corpus o translations frae classical texts, but A im vext ti say that this wark kyths ti be naither in leiterarie nor in demotic Scots. It is seeminlie intended ti be in a kynd o neip Scots, bit it haes turnt oot ti be naither tae thing nor tither: a wark in D.I.Y. Scots, whaur the author, whan he is no acquent wi a wycelyke Scots wurd, whyles maks yin up aff the tap o his heid, or uises an English wurd oot o context. For exempil, a hantil wurd (dizzens o thaim) ir no ti be fund in the 'Scottish National Dictionary'. Gin A mention a whein, we finnd, 'aingir', 'alwaysis', 'anuncted', 'bathfae', 'fortaikenin', 'inuncted', 'mi', 'ogart', 'stughrie', 'takenar', an 'ying'. Forby, the'r

solecisms lyke the uiss o 'aipen' (the wurd that never wes) for 'apen', 'ain' for 'ane'; an the author disna seem ti ken about the adjectival numeral, 'ae', as in 'ae fond kiss'. Sae we finnd 'one wey' for 'ae wey', an 'one wurd' for 'ae wurd'. The uiss o spellins lyke 'thouch' for 'tho', 'throuch' for 'throu', 'bouw' for 'bou', 'grouw' for 'growe', serrs nae guid purpose; it leads ti confuision anent pronounciation an gies the hail text an outlin appearance. The sicht o a phrase lik, 'their destined weys hae went,' is geyan ill ti thole in a classical throch.

For aw, the author haes wrocht steive at this wark, an this play micht hae read weill gin it haed been weill editit. The fact that it haes been publisht in this unco state, is, A daursay, a result o the lang neglect o the Scots leid in education, as an important pairt o the national cultural heritage, baith at skuil an in further education. Naebodie lairns ti skreive in Scots at the skuil, sae for sum wrytars, wrytin in Scots haes nou becum an arteificial exercise in a leid that is oniething thay want it ti be.

David Purves

***Resurrection Men*, Ian Rankin, Orion, London, 2002, 484pp., £6.99.**

The 'Resurrection Men' is a stouninly ironic eikname for the five orra polismen (DS Rebus includit) sent tae Tulliallan College fur retrainin in teamwark an hou tae 'mind their Ps and Qs': except that the camsteerie Rebus is there as a mowdiewort – or is he? Back in St. Leonard's, DI Clark is speirin intae the murder o an Embro airt dealer. Bogles frae previous investigations cam back tae haunt Rebus whan

the Resurrection men are telt tae delve intae a cauld case, ane that warms up gey quick, an mells wi the ongaein investigation in Embro. As the plot thickens an birls, DI Clark fins a doodled tornado oan her note-pad as mebbe ‘her way of giving some shape to the chaos...’ !

This is sae much mair nor a whadunit. The fanklet threids o monie crimes are woven thegither wi snell Scottish irony an patter as shairp as a flesher’s gully. Feminists tae maun get a rerr heist frae Rankin’s smeddum-stappit weemen: ‘You’ve got more balls than Tynecastle’, Big Ger tells DI Clark. Rebus himsel bides an enigma, aye forcin the reader intae moral re-assessments. He maks mistaks, taks shoart cuts, whiles lets machismo get the better o him, an aw too often gaes ‘a kennin wrang’, but we hae tae respeck an admire him, for his raw humanity an his sense o vocation are faur mair important tae him nor keepin his neb clean in a warld smooored by bureaucracy.

The Embro sweit-howffs, warehooses, suburbia, Leith docks aw hae a whiff o daurk glamourie, a Stevensonian ‘genius loci’: but even mair Stevensonian is the aw-pervasive ambivalence o evil.

Ann Matheson

***Never Somewhere Else*, Alex Gray, Canongate Crime, Edinburgh, 2002, 246pp., £9.99.**

‘Never Somewhere Else’ is Glesga-born Alex Gray’s furst novel. At £9.99, it’s a tait ower-priced, whan an Ian Rankin novel, wi twice the nummer o pages, can be had fur £6.99! Grippy girnin aside, it canna be easy tae fin a niche, whaur Rankin an

MacDermid et al are sic giants o the genre.

This is a weill pit-thegither story wi aw the mixer-maxter o a crime novel: the trauchlet polisman, the wife brouned-aff wi his lang oors, the new fanglet psychological limner, a dearth o clues except fur the esoteric 'kanekelon'. (Ye can fin oot fur yersel!) Stertin aff wi thrie murdert lassies in Glesca, it develops intae a tale o blackmail an bairn abuse, endin up wi a helicopter chase in Bellahouston Park.

The weakness in the novel is its want o characterisation. Chief Inspector Lorimer has piercin blae een an a penchant fur airt an English literature, an it's hard tae say muckle mair. Whiles, the descrivin is a tait Mills an Booney, lik 'he had a face which could never have been called handsome, but there was something that made you look twice', no tae mention his 'lean and desirable body' (Whaur's yer DI Rebus noo?), set aff by the 'square Rennie MacKintosh cufflinks'. Ye get the feelin they're aw nice fowk (naethin wrang wi that, of coorse), but the want o irony an gleg patter maks the novel seem un-Scottish, despite the weill-realised Glesca howffs an howes. 'Right lass, I'm off', fur exemple, is descrivit as 'an exaggerated Glasgow accent': an ony polisman, Detective Superintendent or no, that maks puir jokes lik 'A bit on the shady side, if you'll excuse the pun' anent an Asian caur dealer, needs tae be reid-cairdit fur his lousy sense o humour as muckle as his racism.

Despite thae reservations, this is a guid read.

Ann Matheson

***The Lightning Tree*, Valerie Gillies, Polygon, Edinburgh, 2002, 80pp., £7.99.**

There are fowk wha scribe poems; an there are poets. Valerie Gillies is a poet. Naethin is too ordinar or byordinar for her tae see it as pairt o the hail ferlie o the cosmos.

Her reenge itsel is a ferlie: frae ballant tae concrete an haiku, wi maist forms in atween, an frae lyrical Inglis tae Scots, Americanese an, in her descrivin o wee edders, an enamellit diction mindfu o the auld makars: 'Beaded bronze wires soldered in spirals'.

Words in their ain richt aften are the poetry, lik in 'Marbles', whaur 'clambroths like chowder, zulus or zebras, custards and daubs, glassies and glimmers' mak the scuilbairns' gemm intae a glisterin darg o airt that cud be shawn in a gallery. An at the hert o it, 'my blue marble again / no beginning or end' is a metaphysical lown.

Orra an awesome elements are her subjeck maitter: fire is everywhaur, the transmogrifyin lichtnin, the fuit-an-mooth holocaust, the driftin imagery o 'Singing the Storm', the stoun o 'om', 'cosmos of all tones' makin the guddle o fairm graith pairt o the integrity o creation.

Landscape is a metaphor for the human condeetion. In the heroic curn o poems that are a coardy-lick tae breist cancer, the 'fiery pap o Tintock Tap' is the focal peynt for the needle test, an science is explained bi magic, raither nor the ither wey aboot.

'The Charmstone' that gies 'the first beam of radiation therapy' is 'like us, made of star stuff'. 'A Sonnet for Sorley', anent Sorley Maclean, that caws tae mind MacCaig's tributes tae MacDiarmid, is an