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**AN EXPLORATION OF PLACE AND ITS REPRESENTATIONS:
AN INTERTEXTUAL/DIALOGICAL READING OF THE
PHOTOGRAPHS OF A. B. OVENSTONE AND THE NOVEL
GILLESPIE BY JOHN MACDOUGALL HAY**

Lindsay Blair and Donald Blair*

The present article is an exploration of place and its representations based on the intertextual reading of a series of photographs of Tarbert, Loch Fyne, in Argyll, taken between 1880 and 1882 by Andrew Begbie Ovenstone (1851-1935), the Atlantic Freight Manager of Glasgow-based shipping company Anchor Line, and the dialogical reading of a novel, *Gillespie* (1914), by John MacDougall Hay (1881-1919). This exercise raises questions about the (unexamined) coded readings of place, especially in relation to the photograph, and the lack of an adequately theorized tradition for the novel. The literary text is well known—if not well understood—but the images here examined are from a rare, unpublished, private collection of photographs by Ovenstone from Scotland, India and the furthest reaches of Empire. Methodologically, a semiotic approach to the subject will reveal far more than has been discovered within the tradition of hermeneutics and patrimony and that much will be gained by a study of the contrast between written and visual signifiers. The conventional reading of photography and fiction in relation to place would be one of contrast between objective and subjective representations of

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reality. The photograph, with its indexical signification, would reflect more accurately the “what is” than could ever be achieved in fiction with its purely symbolic relation to the real. Our contention is that the acceptance of such an un-problematized reading is reductive of both our understanding of place and the codes underlying representation itself.

According to Neal Ascherson, the most common reading of Scottish history is as an assortment of bits and pieces: “the past remains a pile of dramatic, often gory tableaux.”¹ The same might be said about the common reading of the history of Tarbert: Magnus Barelegs dragging his longships to claim ownership of Kintyre in 1098; Robert Bruce’s occupation of the castle in 1306; the ill-fated insurrection led by Archibald Campbell, 9th Earl of Argyll, against the Stuarts in 1685; the civil unrest during the development of the ring net in the 1850s and 1860s; and the decimation of the population at Mealdarroch by cholera in the 1860s. Other readings include the socio-cultural analysis where the village is characterized according to the binaries of strict religious observance and excessive consumption of alcohol.² In terms of visual representation, we encounter Anne Macleod’s groundbreaking *From An Antique Land: Visual Representations of the Highlands 1700-1880*, whereby the Highlands represent an ancestral home, a more natural, organic society than the one which developed in most of Britain after the industrial revolution.³ Besides these readings of the village, we find readings for the specialist in ancient monuments, archaeological finds, linguistic curiosities or the history of specific industries or agricultural methods.

Both visual embodiment and fictional account are made readable by the use of semiotic codes; it is the primary task of the critic here to decipher the codes which enable a reading to take place. In order to open up the field to questions of cultural theory, we have to interrogate the acceptance of photographic document as truth. Photographer Owen Logan has questioned the central tenet of the documentary photographer: “the problem with the traditional documentary agenda...is the notion that reality can somehow speak for itself instead of being ‘spoken for’ by the photographer or ‘spoken over’ by the viewer.”⁴ Logan’s view is the exact antithesis

of that expressed in Sara Stevenson's essay "Discoveries and Explorations: The Scottishness of Scottish Photograph," where she assesses the relationship established by Hill, Adamson and their subjects: "the photographer, invisible to us, was physically there and the photographs necessarily involve both a reaction to that presence and co-operation between the photographer and subjects."⁵ It is the tacit agreement between photographer and subject/sitter that is the mistaken assumption with the conventional reading of the documentary photograph. In an analysis of Ovenstone's photographs, we aim to consider the photographer's role in constructing the scenes in Tarbert and to interrogate the position taken up by Logan that the subject has a right to "negotiate and re-interpret" the situation.

We might imagine that the novelist would tend to present a subjectivist, phenomenological version of reality.⁶ However, as against this assumption, we have to consider the number of voices, the play of genres, the kinds of knowledge or truth functions encompassed by MacDougall Hay's *Gillespie*. One of the most remarkable features of the novel is the way in which incidents or episodes are prefigured in the text and then narrated or voiced in a parable/fable or folk-tale style and the notion of "truth" or "reality" is always problematized by the discontinuities within the text. So

Figure 1: From the West end of the fish quay, Tarbert



we are never, whatever the reactions of the time might suggest, presented simply with an individual's version of Tarbert.⁷ The horizon of expectation of the reading community, however, will determine how far these disparate voices are heard.⁸ While both texts might be consumed without the use of codes, they can neither of them be "read" without engagement with the codes underlying their production.

The photographs of A. B. Ovenstone: the landscape aesthetic

Ovenstone's photographs reflect the compositional, tonal and perspectival attributes that the viewer would expect to find in an oil painting of the period. There are two carefully balanced compositions, *From the West end of the fish quay, Tarbert* and *From the East end of the fish quay, Tarbert* (Figures 1 and 2), which foreground the symmetry of the mise en scène using the raked masts of the skiffs with the distinctive angle to offset the dominant horizontals of sea front and horizon. Tarbert was the subject of paintings by William McTaggart, David Murray, Colin Hunter, R. M. G. Coventry, Hamilton Macallum and other Scottish

Figure 2: From the East end of the fish quay, Tarbert



Realist painters of the mid-late nineteenth century. The nineteenth-century photographs of Tarbert include examples from the commercial studios of George Washington Wilson and James Valentine. Ovenstone's archive was built over a decade, between 1880 and 1890; it included a collection of sixteen albums each containing approximately twenty-four albumen prints of Langbank, Greencastle, Carradale, Clyde, Tarbert, Cleghorn, Dunblane, Elie, Bute, Busby, Loch Fyne, Largo, Portencross and Ardbeg. He also had five albums of larger format prints, which included images from Switzerland. Ovenstone contributed significantly to the founding of the Glasgow and West Coast Photographic Association. He won several medals for his work: a silver medal awarded by *Amateur Photographer* (1885), and one silver and two bronze medals from the Photographic Association for his figure studies. He was a member of the Glasgow Art Club and of the Art Union committee; he also had a close connection with the exhibitions of the Royal Glasgow Fine Art Institute. Ovenstone had a significant personal collection of Scottish paintings from the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century landscape tradition.⁹ We need to acknowledge, however, the essential difference between the painting and the photograph at this stage. The relatively new medium of photography was prized above all for its promise of veracity: it was anticipated that the photograph would dispense with the need for illusionism within two-dimensional representations of the visible world. Where the landscape painter had been free to alter the features of the subject before him—to distort, exaggerate or omit structures at will—the photographer was bound to the subject, which was then framed and captured through the lens.¹⁰ We will see the significance of this distinction between photographed and painted landscape later where we interrogate individual photographs but this point of difference does not alter the significance of the art historical landscape aesthetic as one of the most important codes determining the selection of location, subject and composition.¹¹ The identification of place as art text through its intertextual relations with other visual references is essential to a reading of Ovenstone's images of Tarbert.

Gestalt theory provides us with insights into the mechanics of the perception process which questions what we have come to

regard as natural rather than learned in the way that we see things. This, in turn, has led to the emphasis upon the code that underlies perception. While there are a number of features that characterize the way that we read the visual world, the dominant one is the separation of figure and ground. In other words, confronted by a visual image we seem to want to distinguish a dominant shape (a figure with a definite contour) from the rest, which we relegate as background or “ground.” The fishing village setting offers numerous opportunities for the isolation of a small central image (such as the rowing boat at anchor in the middle of a tranquil harbour, a group of fishermen on a quay, rows of boats tied up) and, as such, perfectly conforms to the figure and ground requirement.

As well as conforming to the way we have come to perceive the world, photography reinforces an ideology in which the individual subject (the viewer or reader) becomes the focus or origin of meaning. In other words, it is the viewer’s capacity to recognize the preferred reading that makes him both originator of meaning and also subject to the text. Writers on Scottish photography concentrate on the sociological aspects of the images—the way images of rural subjects would act as consolation for a rapidly industrializing society—suggesting ideas of continuity and organic wholeness to counteract the trauma of change.¹² In her essay, “Discoveries and Explorations”, Sara Stevenson emphasizes the relationship between photographer and subject: “the capacity to see the reality of other people’s lives, to move into a social group and become a sympathetic part of it, and to rearrange it to make it natural to the camera, were and are crucial to the documentary art.”¹³ Ovenstone’s photographs belong to a different period when historical conditions had changed; yet there is something of the organic community set up there against which his photographs can be read in an intertextual way. Both Normand and Blaikie in different ways support Stevenson’s sociological readings. Normand sums up the appeal of fishing scenes for the photographers of the nineteenth century:

Fisherfolk were a common focus for photographers and painters alike throughout the nineteenth century.

This was occasioned by the fashion for genre subjects and by the related demand for comforting images that countered the mechanical march of modernity. Fishing and rural communities represented stability at a period of rapid social change, they spoke of a notion of 'organic' life during a time of the increased mechanization of society, and they signalled a sense of community in an epoch where the alienated life of the city was becoming a norm.¹⁴

This idea of the consolation of the image of the rural community with its connotations of tradition and an ancientness which yet endures is certainly an important preferred reading.

The attraction of fishing ports like Tarbert, Carradale, Campbeltown, Port Bannatyne, Dunure, Lochranza (Arran) on the west coast, and Largo, Anstruther, Pittenween and St. Monance on the east coast, to the major commercial photographers—Valentine of Dundee or Washington Wilson from Aberdeen—is ample proof that these images represented a desirable vision for the Victorian traveler. These commercial photographers were able to capitalize on the growing demands for the material cultural artefact: objects like the photograph were regarded as superior forms of material evidence for observed reality when compared with the traveler's written account.¹⁵ This was due in large part to the shift towards empiricism: the belief that our understanding of reality should be based on observable phenomena. It is against this background that we see Ovenstone's photographs.¹⁶ The viewer confirms his or her status as reader of the image by understanding the preferred reading: the organic community, the homogeneous society, the ancient world, the artistically picturesque, the vision of permanence.

The images of photographers tend to confirm the rightness of the way things are. The images produced, especially those produced by the large successful postcard manufacturers suggest above all the suspension of time passing, they impart to the viewer a sense that the world can be held onto, they suppress anything which might make the viewer uncomfortable, they suggest that the

world with all its quaintness and curiosity can be possessed in the form of the photograph. Sometimes the photographers would merely use a vocabulary of signifiers which the constructed viewer would readily understand, but that could quickly turn into cliché. Do Ovenstone's photographs conform to the clichés of conventionalized photography? Does he open up the subject of the village to a greater range of readings? Does he get closer to rendering a more composite image of "reality"?

The photograph of the rowing boat at anchor (*Tarbert Harbour*, Figure 3) is one that has been copied and reworked in photographs and in paintings. This is one of the stock images, stock components as the fishing/sea equivalent of the rural/pastoral idyll. The rowing boat in the tranquility of the harbour represents the moment of peace when the day's labours are done. The harbour is a meaningful place of shelter and refuge in a maritime community where open boats are used in the industry and the lives of the fishermen are still vulnerable to the elements. The two components—haven and open sea—provide an irresistible symbolic binary that functions, often unconsciously, as a code.

Ovenstone: photograph as tableau

Ovenstone came from a wealthy middle class background and as

Figure 3: Tarbert Harbour



such has concentrated on the images of *difference* that we might expect. The photographs of the back street in Tarbert (Figure 4) draw attention to the disheveled state of the clothing and dwelling conditions of the villagers. There is an uncomfortable element of voyeurism here. Other people's misery or squalor becomes a point of interest for the photographer, a supposed concern for the poor can easily elide the moral with the aesthetic—social concern can be turned to spectacle with shocking and powerful impact.



Figure 4: The Back Street, Tarbert

Roland Barthes writes in *Camera Lucida* of moments of “punctum” that penetrate the studied set-up of the photographer’s practice. These were moments in which something of the accidental, the unexpected or the dissonant can occur.¹⁷ In the photograph *Mending Nets at The Battery, Tarbert* (Figure 5) a moment of this nature occurs in the hostile sneer of the main figure on the left of the composition.¹⁸ The stare of the fisherman in Ovenstone’s photograph resonates with one of James Cox’s (1849-1901) photographs in Auchmithie of the same date where a young girl stares directly at the camera refusing to pose or be flattered by the lens.¹⁹ Many of Ovenstone’s photographs use a set-up scenario



Figure 5: Mending Nets at The Battery, Tarbert

with models—family members, as often as not—acting out the part of agricultural labourers, or other roles as required.²⁰ Similarly, the Glasgow Boys dressed up sons and daughters of wealthy patrons in working class costume, and represented them engaged in simple childhood pastimes to evoke feelings of nostalgia.

Figure 6: The Smack on the Shore, Tarbert



Ovenstone's photograph *Smack on the Shore, Tarbert* (Figure 6) includes a group of men in the middle distance, watching an artist at work. What at first glance appears as another innocuous tableau confronts us with a picture of representation itself - the painter is constructing a view of the harbour. We become aware of the photographer's gaze: the construction of the composition and of the people who are looking/ gazing/ constructing and the subjects of the gaze.

According to Normand, Blaikie and Padget, we find in Scottish photography a dialectic between a tendency to mythologize on the one hand and a need to remember on a more personal basis on the other. These two forces collide and interact and are held in tension within the photographic tradition. The historicizing, iconic tendency represents a collective consciousness and forges a series of icons or symbols or myths which binds people together giving a common sense of history and nationhood. The need for individual identity will be represented in family photographs, snapshots and so on. History, or mythology, has to allow for the individual instance and not construct a narrative in which only one representation of a particular place or industry or activity or time is regarded as authentic. Some of the revelations in Padget's study about the way that Strand constructed his famous photographs of the Western Isles epitomize the tendency to mythologize, to force the individual into a version of the authentic.²¹

Ovenstone: photograph as “long quotation from appearances”

Normand's, Blaikie's and Padget's sociological readings of photographs are distanced from the more philosophical/ epistemological readings of Susan Sontag or John Berger. Sontag writes that

whatever the moral claims made on behalf of photography, its main effect is to convert the world into a department store or museum-without-walls in which every subject is depreciated into an article of consumption, promoted into an item for aesthetic

appreciation. Through the camera people become customers or tourists of reality.²²

Later she clarifies the point in relation to value:

The force of a photograph is that it keeps open to scrutiny instants which the normal flow of time immediately replaces. This freezing of time—the insolent, poignant stasis of each photograph—has produced new and more inclusive canons of beauty. But the truths that can be rendered in a dissociated moment, however significant or decisive, have a very narrow relation to the needs of understanding. Contrary to what is suggested by the humanist claims made for photography, the camera’s ability to transform reality into something beautiful derives from its relative weakness as a means of conveying truth.²³

The words of Kafka in interview with Gustav Janouch echo Sontag’s deep reservations:

Photography concentrates one’s eye on the superficial. For that reason, it obscures the hidden life which glimmers through the outlines of things like a play of light and shade. One can’t catch that even with the sharpest lens. One has to grope for it by feeling.²⁴

Yet we do find in Ovenstone’s photographs a sense of “the long quotation from appearances” which Berger endorses.²⁵ He writes of “the expressive photograph” as one which functions as “a long quotation from appearances: the length here to be measured not by time but by a greater extension of meaning.”²⁶ While he always sees the photograph as discontinuity rather than narrative, Berger finds a positive aspect to this discontinuity in certain photographs:

the very same discontinuity, by preserving an instantaneous set of appearances, allows us to read across them and to find a synchronic coherence. A coherence which instead of narrating, instigates ideas. Appearances have this coherent capacity because they constitute something approaching a language.²⁷

Despite his own scepticism about the potential of the medium to convey meaning, Berger does see photography as a medium that can operate like a language. This “synchronic coherence” is found in a few of Owenstone’s photographs of Tarbert. The photograph *The Battery* (Figure 7) contains within it elements that provoke meaning. There is a reading that can be made beyond the instantaneous recognition of the various elements of the mise en scène. The photograph is made up of three heterogeneous elements: two girls at the water’s edge, the cannon in the foreground, and the fishermen at work on the boats in the background. It is interesting to note that MacDougall Hay’s novel *Gillespie* opens with a description of this exact spot:

Somewhat by East of the bay two of the Crimea cannon, each on a wooden platform, lifted to seaward dumb mouths which once had thundered at

Figure 7: The Battery, Tarbert



Sevastopol. A little west of the derelict guns, and almost at the end of the shore-road, stood a gaunt two storeyed house.²⁸

By 1880, when Ovenstone took his photograph, one of the cannon had been removed. Reading through the elements we find the apparent tranquillity of the holiday village scene confronting us uncomfortably with antinomies. The canon and its associations as part of the Empire's armoury during the Crimean conflict in the 1850s is juxtaposed with young girls bathing, and this combination of an instrument of war alongside the seaside idyll creates a sense of unease. But there are other uncomfortable antinomies: the men on the boats working in the same space as the girls bathing, the sense of femaleness and the male gaze, the sense of the leisured and the working classes. The photograph contains oppositions, makes us want to fill in the gaps, question the relationship between the elements—not the type of consolation that we might expect to find in the rural/seaside idyll.

Another photograph that reads as “extended quotation from appearances” is the one taken from the Pier Road: *Fishing boats opposite The White Shore* (Figure 8). Seven herring boats are manoeuvring in a confined space of water. Instead of emphasizing

Figure 8: Fishing boats opposite the White Shore, Tarbert



the foreshortening of perspective we have come to expect—the deep theatrical space of the low-horizon stage of the harbour—we are faced with a shallow space; it is as though the scenario had been tilted towards us to allow us to see the boats at the top of the composition. This allows us to visualize, in an anachronological way, the movement towards the radical reorientation of the picture plane that was to occur in early-twentieth-century art. Industrialization's emphasis on mechanical process injected a whole new dynamic into the way that pictures could be made and read. Where most of the photographs of the 1880s emphasize stillness, partly because of the limitations of the photographic process of the time, this particular photograph emphasizes movement. This prefigures the turn towards abstraction in the early twentieth century: the emphasis falls upon the use of diagonal lines to signal movement and the creation of patterns of lines which in themselves will convey meaning even when stripped of conventional signifiers. The boats are still the signifiers in Ovenstone's photograph but it is the movement, the dynamic of the divergent lines, which affects us.²⁹

Ovenstone: photograph as poetic extension of truth

Laundresses in the Back Street, Tarbert (Figure 9) leads us to another kind of representation. While the image is a common one amongst photographers of this era, Ovenstone does invest his subject with something of a poetic aura.³⁰ The twenty-first-century

Figure 9: Laundresses in the Back Street, Tarbert



photographer and critic, Jeff Wall, has defended the particular kind of truth value that photography of this nature can convey. Of his own poetic images, Wall says:

The experience of a photograph is associative and simultaneous, and in this respect it resembles our experience of poetry. In poetic writing, meaning is not achieved by means of a consistent structure of controlled movements along lines made up of sentences. Rather the poem is made of lines that may resemble sentences typographically but which abrogate the requirement to be read the way sentences are read. So there is a break with any necessary relation to the chronicle... The poetic quality of an image transgresses the indexical truthfulness of a representation.³¹

Wall's argument introduces a new element to the discussion.³² Truth value is disconnected from a one-to-one correspondence between the object and its depiction; Wall's contention is that there is more in the image than in the original source, that the image embodies a poetic truth, and that this poetic truth is of greater veracity than could be realized by any simple resemblance.

Gillespie: "mutations from below"

Cultural theorist Fredric Jameson uses the term "shepherds of Being" to describe the role of the nineteenth-century Realists, as MacDougall Hay has been often categorized, but he does not belong amongst their number.³³ In *Gillespie*, we hear the unmistakable murmurings of the voices from below.³⁴ While it might seem that a Church of Scotland minister would use the opportunity as novelist to thunder from the pages at his congregation, this is not the case here. Hay certainly intrudes into his narrative and moralizes at will both through and alongside his characters without chastising the community he is writing about. Hay rails against the controllers of being: the banker, hotel owner, school teacher, lawyer, fish buyer, privileged student, and of course shop owner/businessman, and Gillespie himself. The predominant

voices in the novel are the voices of the people and the refracted voice of the author; they are largely communicated to us in the coded form of the folk tale.

The novel consistently operates at more than one level. The limits of a Zola-esque Naturalism are often breached: we find ourselves in a kind of Scots Gothic, especially in the opening pages, but we might equally find ourselves in a world of nightmarish fantasy, a distorted, symbol-laden Expressionism, a Hardy-esque pastoral and at other times—as in the incident with Jock o’ the Patch or with Queebec, Andy Rogers and the eel—in a kind of Stevensonian balladic picaresque. Hay has no regard for generic continuities and consistently infringes upon these kinds of consideration. His narrative method has received some critical attention, but it is remarkable for the way that it foregrounds the self-conscious artistry of the novelist. Published in the same year as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, it shares with Joyce’s Modernist classic a reflexive, gestural physicality.

We find ourselves in a realm that has some relationship with the phenomenological existentialism that goes back to Dostoevsky but is strangely allied with the folk voice. There is a subjectivism that bears the features of the expressionist manner; yet the distinctive sounds of “heteroglossia” or the dialogical are found in the voices of fishermen, crofters and womenfolk of the village.³⁵ Hay’s ear for language is remarkable; the texture is so densely wrought at times that the text becomes unreadable.³⁶ We become too aware of language as thickening gauze to be comfortable with the gestalt of the sign. The ambiguity of the word as thing allied to word as transparency becomes impossible at times to hold in the same perceptual field and as readers we are left grasping after wraiths.

Gillespie: “hybridity” and “heteroglossia”

Oddly, it is in the hybridity of the form that the sense of reality is captured. The author’s voice with all its Dostoevskyan subjectivity allied with the disparate Scots and Gaelic voices of Brieston (the fictional name for Tarbert), the haunting of the folk tale and the collective unconscious that suggest to us something of the richness of the culture and, hence, the reality of the world. When one of the

Brieston women, Mary Bunch, is instructed by Gillespie to teach his servant, Topsail Janet, how to bake, we find a typical example of the hybridity in the narrative: “Mary Bunch retired, an emeritus-tutor, with a wallet of news for Mrs. Galbraith, the chief item of its contents being the fact that Morag had a penchant for ‘a glass’, and was starved of her ‘crave’ by Gillespie.”³⁷ In the inverted commas, “a glass” and “crave,” the voice of the community is inserted into the sentence of the omniscient narrator so that the two voices speak as one. The difference between that voice, the folk voice, and the voice of the author is made particularly clear when we have expressions like “emeritus tutor” and “penchant” within the same sentence. This alerts us to the fact that there are two disparate voices at play. The phrase “wallet of news” is also an expression that would have come from the voice of the community but is here embedded without syntactic signaling. Hay parodies the appetite for gossip within the community while apparently offering merely an objective account of events. This is an example of what Mikhail Bakhtin would refer to as “pseudo-objective underpinning.”³⁸

Another example, but this time from within the repertoire of the comic novelist, is where Hay is introducing the character, Jeck the Traiveller, and describing the effect that his stories had upon the more gullible of the young fishermen in Brieston (Tarbert):

These Ulysses tales gave an itch to the young fishermen to seek adventure, crisp bank-notes, and wooden legs in Mediterranean yachts. Ah! he knew about ladies, this Jeck. When wheeling his traveller’s kit through the Square to Gillespie’s shop his tarry eye had fallen athwart the buxom Topsail, and we behold him about to coquette with the lady at the close-mouth on ‘wee Setterday’.³⁹

Hay speaks in the collective community voice in the expression “wee Setterday,” meaning the last night of the year, and yet when he reports the reactions of the young fishermen, he is clearly parodying their reactions to Jeck’s “Ulysses tales.” When he refers to the way that Jeck’s “tarry eye” had fallen “athwart the buxom

Topsail,” he adopts a comic, burlesque idiom that is no longer remotely close to the kind of language he is supposedly reporting. According to Bakhtin, we recognize this as hybrid construction because “it appears by its syntactic structures to belong to one speaker but it actually contains mixed within it two (or more) utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two languages, two semantic and axiological belief systems.”⁴⁰

A third example is when the community is discussing the state of the herring fishing, in which Hay signals he is moving to the opinions of another section of the community:

In more important quarters the matter was discussed. Willie Allan, Campion the schoolmaster, Dr. Maclean, the Banker, and Lonend’s father, were seated in Brodie’s back parlour.⁴¹

The word “important” is the particular element of hybridity here. Grammatically, it seems like a part of the narrative account, but it is clearly in keeping essentially with the view of the people who consider themselves important: those seated in Brodie’s bar. This is another example of “pseudo-objectivity” as the adjective would seem to belong to the author but is, in fact, the barely concealed opinion of a subjective elect.

There are two main points to be made about the use of language within the novel. First, Bakhtin’s point about unitary consciousness: “the novel is the expression of a Galilean perception of language, one that denies the absolutism of a single and unitary language—that is, that refuses to acknowledge its own language as the sole verbal and semantic centre of the ideological world.”⁴² Bakhtin debars almost all literature of the twentieth century that derives from the notion that the only mind that the author can know is his or her own. It also conflicts with the perfected Realistic text, which is designed to mask the voice of the narrator in the interest of the seamless narrative. Hay’s text bulges with heterogeneous voices. Bakhtin’s second point relates specifically to the use of Scots: “the internal speech diversity of a literary dialect and of its extraliterary environment, that is, the entire dialectological makeup of a given national language, must have the sense that it is

surrounded by an ocean of heteroglossia.”⁴³ In Hay’s *Gillespie*, we are always aware of an unaligned and unfettered linguistic diversity, which is an astonishing exemplification of Bakhtin’s “dialogized heteroglossia.”⁴⁴ Hay’s voice is only one amongst so many others; this, we argue, is one of the genuine achievements of *Gillespie*. The lack of a unifying consciousness, rather than being a weakness, is seen now as a strength.

Gillespie: beyond the novel (1)—folk-tale and ballad

Hay prefigures in *Gillespie* a decisive inclusion of the folk idiom within the novel, something that is developed in Gibbon, Shepherd and Kesson and later in Jenkins, McIlvanney and Kelman. Whilst the great novels within the English tradition as in Hardy, Conrad or Lawrence concern themselves with their baleful heroes, Hay largely sidelines his central character in order to more densely realize his bit players. His narrative and his characters are blissfully not “of a piece.” As fiction, of course, it is essentially a parallel world as so clearly represented in Alasdair Gray’s *Lanark* or James Joyce’s *Ulysses*: it is a world of words that can only point us to what is possible. Hay’s novel, though, without its Blooms or its Thaws, belongs more to the folk, representing far more a collective voice than is to be found in Joyce or Gray. For this reason, we suggest that the novel is most fruitfully read as a series of folk-tales, ballads or stories.

As indicated above, the process of reading the novel is peculiarly disorientating. This disorientation comes partly from the “ocean of heteroglossia” that swells throughout the book, partly from the frequency of genre discontinuity within the text but partly also from the way that individual incidents constantly threaten the supposed central thread or plot of the novel. It is impossible to retain a sense of plot, theme or eponymous hero because the parts have a more “rhizomatic” relationship with each other than with any central spine or tree-like structure. The parts interrelate mainly to some notional idea of community than to the grand central theme of freedom and determinism. The episodes can stand alone as separate stories or narratives: the curse upon the “Ghost” inn, Gillespie’s education, Galbraith and the Laigh Park, Lonend and the wooing of Morag, the death of Calum Galbraith, Marget

Galbraith's departure from Muirhead Farm, Topsail Janet's life on the shore and her acquisition of the sweetie shop, the arrival at Muirhead of M. C. R. Champion, the new schoolmaster, the rescue of Jock o' the Patch, Red Duncan stealing from the shop, the penury of Briston, Quebec and the drowned man, the burning of the fleet, the coming of the plague ship, Eoghan's childhood, the Spey wife and the tragedy of the *Sudden Jerk*, Topsail Janet's day out in Dunoon, Morag's Strang's excursions or Eoghan's hallucinations. The next question is whether or not they may be more precisely categorized as certain kinds of stories.

What we find when we read *Gillespie* are the remains of pre-existing inherited traditional or sacred narrative paradigms like the verse, the tale, the ballad, the parable, the sermon or the play. They have not disappeared beneath the fully centred bourgeois subject or monadic ego. There is an aspect of that earlier story telling style in the omniscient narrator who sees into the minds of his characters:

Omniscience...may be said to be the after effect of the closure of classical *récit*, in which the events are over and done with before their narrative begins. This closure itself projects something like an ideological mirage in the form of notions of fortune, destiny, and providence or predestination which these *récits* seem to 'illustrate', their reception amounting, in Walter Benjamin's words, to 'warming our lives upon the death about which we read.' Such *récits*—closed adventures, *unerhorte Begebenheiten*, the very idea of strokes of fortune and destinies touched off by chance—are among the raw materials upon which the Balzacian narrative process works, and with whose inherited forms it sometimes uneasily coexists. At the same time the gestures and signals of the storyteller...symbolically attempt to restore the coordinates of a face-to-face storytelling institution which has been effectively disintegrated by the printed book and even more definitively by the commodification of literature and culture.⁴⁵

Jameson's words formalize what may be just an instinctual response to the novel: a sense that it is pulling itself apart into individual stories that reflect a collective consciousness not yet subsumed within the private psychological realm of *bovarism*.⁴⁶

Literary historians tend to see the twentieth-century short story as tracing its origins to Chekov: the story is concerned with one particular event, a limited number of characters and a finite time span. An analysis of the Scottish short story, however, has to take into account the influence of the folk-tale and the ballad.⁴⁷ The ballads, especially, could hardly be further removed from the distinctive format of the Chekovian short story: they will typically refer to a number of events, move rapidly from one incident to another and concern themselves with matters of life and death. While each may deal with one main event, the event in itself is a microcosm. Hay's stories with their philosophy and their didacticism, their ferment and melodrama have that world in a box quality—not a slice of life so much as a miniaturized parallel world—spiritual, expressionist and visionary.

The description of the death of Jock o' the Patch is symptomatic of Hay's method. Like the short stories by Liam O'Flaherty or George Mackay Brown, the tale itself condenses the life of the central character, Jock o' the Patch, into the one incident which leads to his death. But it also graphically conveys the life that he has led in solitary toil, the devotion of his ailing mother, his place within the village of Brieston and the roles of fishermen, policeman and doctor in the community. The story carries within it an oral as opposed to a written dynamic—much of the tale's action is conveyed in the direct speech of Neilsac, one of the fishermen:

it was blowin' good O! frae the suthard—fair glens
o' seas runnin' oot on the Loch. We'd four reefs in,
an', being close-hauled, I got into the fo'c'sle beside
the bobby for the jib. Just wi' that we opened
Rudh'a' Mhail an' she got the weight o' the sea,
bow under. Ye ken in the deid o' winter we werena
oot at the fushin'; an' beds an' nets were lyin' about;

an' the hale laggery fetched away tae leeward, an'
the bobby wi' them.⁴⁸

Hay reinforces the melodrama of the tale by the contrast between the actual telling of the tale and the way that the tale is contained within the narrative: "Inasmuch as the picked men of the port were tall, reticent fellows, it was left to the alert tongue of Neilsac to inform the 'Shipping Box' of how they got their beards bleached in the gale, when news came that Jock o' the Patch lay dying on the Barlaggan Hill, having by a mischance stumbled in the heather, and shot himself with the gun he carried."⁴⁹ By using a formal English indirect speech in the narrative, Hay creates a powerful dynamic that contrasts with Neilsac's use of the vernacular. The tale, also, has a distinct sense of structure. We are aware of it as a tale within a tale: the story told by Hay of the tale told by Neilsac of how the news from the Barlaggan shepherd reached the town, the heroic journey to rescue Jock from Barlaggan Hill, the sea voyage back to Briston and then Jock's final demise in the arms of his mother at MacCalman's Lane. Melodrama and pathos are equally present as is often the case within the Scots ballad tradition; dialogue is essential to the immediacy of the narrative and parts of it, such as the exchange between the dying Jock and his mother, read like a ballad's refrain:

'Where are ye hurt, Jock?
He muttered doggedly, 'I'm no' hurt.'
'Ay! ye're like your faither, dour as daith.'
The hands were rapidly moving over him.
'Dinna tell me ye're no' hurt.'
'It's only — a bit — scratch.'
'A geyan scratch: ye're no' the wan tae be cairrit
hame for a scratch, ye dour deevil.'
The dying man groaned.⁵⁰

Many of the ballad elements are here: for example, the emphasis upon the moment of death, the use of dialogue, the focus upon physical detail, the use of repetition as narrative tool and not just mnemonic effect, and the sense of the outside world echoing in a

terrible physical way as in a pre-Copernican universe the emotional maelstrom of the human drama. Thus the “*récits*” referred to earlier by Jameson are seen to survive within the text.

Gillespie: beyond the novel (2)—folk-tale, encounter and other “lines of flight”

The folk-tale element becomes particularly precipitous when linked to the idea of encounter. Within the largely social, agent-centred tradition of the Scottish philosophers, the moment of encounter is the moment of crucial moral import.⁵¹ In a philosophy of action, the decisive moment occurs when the individual is forced to interact with the world—in the struggle to make the world fit to theory or theory to fit with world then growth occurs. This growth resembles more “assemblage” or “rhizome” because of the unpredictable, improvisational nature of agency and the dynamics of “becoming” overwhelm any philosophy of being. It is this sense of the Deleuzian that is revelatory. Hay’s stories billow out from the text and trace a variety of “lines of flight” to create much more the sense of “assemblage” or “multiplicity”: they undermine the sense of the homogeneity of the form, the identification with the middle class hero of the *bildungsroman* and the hegemony of an authorial narrative voice. The novel epitomizes the attributes that Deleuze would outline in his seminal text on *Kafka and Minoritarian Literature* and the qualities he celebrates in his essay on English and American literature.

Hay’s adherence to a philosophy of encounter is exemplified in many parts of the novel: in the dealings of the literary Marget Galbraith with the ruthless, predatory Gillespie, in the way that Stevenson the undertaker deals with the victims of the cholera brought by the diseased ship to Brieston, in Eoghan Strang’s incapacity to square the demands of the university with the ignominies of his life in Brieston. The episode relating the death of Iain Strang on the *Sudden Jerk*, though, is an example of the way that Hay undermines the normally irresistible forward thrust of the narrative in a novel by sidelining the traditional institutional wisdom in favour of the tragic immediacy of the real. The episode begins, as we would expect in the folk tale, with a prophecy. Iain and Eoghan Strang meet the Spey wife who tells them, “while

there's water to dron, or fire to burn, or poison to mak' an' end, a Strang 'ill no' die easy in bed."⁵² Instead of proceeding determinedly to the action, Hay leads us to those other interpreters of life on earth—dream, literary exegesis, evangelical sermon and parable. The first is Eoghan's fevered dream, in which the drowned of the village are resurrected from the sea. There is no message of hope here, however, to free Eoghan from the destiny predicted by the Spey wife; nor is there hope to be found in the literary outpourings of his old schoolmaster, Mr. Colin Kennedy. Nor indeed is there illumination to be gained from the day's sermon, even with all its evangelical fervour and Eoghan's state of heightened susceptibility. There is no illumination either from his attempts to force his mother to listen to a reading of the Mary Magdelene verses from the bible. These descriptions of Eoghan's futile efforts to defy the hand of fate are dramatically contrasted with the graphic description of his brother's demise when the *Sudden Jerk* founders and is lost.

The drowning itself is delineated in a kind of heightened realism so that it does not become part of a rhetoric of fiction. He conveys the hectic, desperate melodrama of the situation in his description of Iain's heroic efforts to clear the decks of water:

“Gauging her plunge, he staggered forward. Crash! crash! came the hammer-head; the gangway door swung open; the torrent of salt water hissed out. Iain, caught in the suction, saved himself by dropping the hammer and clutching a stanchion. The *Sudden Jerk* heaved up, relieved from the weight of water, and righted herself. The gangway door swung to and caught Iain on the leg. It snapped like matchwood. He fell, pinned as in a vice.”⁵³

Hay's control of the pace of the action, his understanding of the dynamics of the course of events, his authoritative command of a specialized vocabulary bring the scene to three-dimensional life. Then as the scene reaches its climax, Hay uses a different kind of language:

‘She was right - the spey-wife,’—he muttered; ‘it’s comin’; it’s no the wee fellow after all—Thank God—one of you will find the other.’ His face became inexpressibly sad. His mouth was open, miserable, hanging loosely, dejected. For a moment he heard a triumphing scream in the rush of the wind, felt the drunken swaying of the ship as if she were being butted by an enormous ram; then a great vacancy stretched away before his eyes.⁵⁴

He uses a different register and a different set of rhythms in this passage as he moves from Eoghan’s meditations upon the prophecy of the Spey-wife to the external narrator’s perspective (“his face became inexpressibly sad”) before returning to Eoghan’s internal deliberations, which have now assumed an incantatory quality. He will not conclude the episode here, however, as he returns to the folk and the communal experience:

In a sea-town which harbours a fishing-fleet these are the footsteps of the men in the night which the women know—the trudge which tells of bleak shores and empty boats; the joyous ring of the steel-shod heels with which the younger men dent the pavements, crying aloud of herring; and another step—ominous, slow, shuffling as men creep silently home.⁵⁵

Hay uses an extended metaphor here to real poetic effect as he turns from the individual incident to the experience of the folk. The meaning of the individual instance takes its place within the communal or collective refrain.

Hay has striven consistently to represent the different voices within the community and has resisted the claims of an authoritative narrative voice. We hear the individual voices, the voice of the local people (as in Grassie Gibbon’s “speak” of the Mearns) and the voice of the narrator (free indirect discourse). The central issue here is whether Hay’s novel works towards the radical

position advocated by Deleuze and Guattari in their *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*. They make it clear that minor literature does not come from a minority language: the writer has to use the dominant language and introduce into it elements of his own minoritarian culture. They speak about the first characteristic of the minor literature being “a high coefficient of deterritorialization.” Writers like Samuel Beckett, Scott Fitzgerald, Virginia Woolf or Nathalie Sarraute, as well as Kafka himself, look for “lines of flight” that will free them from the cultural establishment that would otherwise bind them. So these writers effectively “deterritorialize” themselves from any official culture before “reterritorializing” themselves somewhere else. The presence of “heteroglossia” in Hay’s novel is partly what prevents it from conveying a sense of homogeneity, the use of so many different registers is another, the use of Scots, English and Gaelic is another but it is the sense that the novel is “deterritorialized” within the tradition of the English novel that surpasses all of these outward linguistic discontinuities.

Conclusion

Throughout the article, we have emphasized the need for the use of codes to decipher texts. When we “read” photographs we need to be aware of the intertextual relationship between the photograph and the landscape-painting tradition as well as the common practice of the created tableau—there is then overlaid upon the image the sense of a set of conventions, a system which operates much like a language. We are able to discover through the notion of the “long quotation from appearances” the potential for more complex “synchronic” readings and through the poetic truth a photograph can take us beyond a correspondence with appearances. Likewise, in the case of *Gillespie*, the novel operates within a genre that should determine a “reading.” When we are aware of a code we become aware of the way that Hay manoeuvres adroitly to thwart the reader’s best efforts to settle upon a preferred reading—especially one shaped by an authoritative narrator—which thereby allows for the genuine experience of “heteroglossia” to emerge. Hay bodies out a space that requires a complex set of codes to interpret it, including those that function within the folk-tale, the

ballad, the philosophical encounter, and a minoritarian literature. By engaging a range of codes, the self-consciousness of the novel's construction is revealed: we become aware of the multi-dimensional aspect of representation itself so that we, as readers, may move closer to the sense of a reality of "place."

NOTES

¹ N. Ascherson, *Stone Voices: The Search for Scotland* (London: Granta, 2002), viii.

² Examples of socio-cultural readings include William Anderson Smith's reminiscences and Dugald Mitchell's *History of Tarbert*, where they allude to the characteristic behaviour of the villagers. Hay, himself, in his correspondence has commented on the excessive drinking to be encountered in Tarbert on a regular basis.

³ A. Macleod, *From An Antique Land: Visual Representations of the Highlands and Islands 1700-1880* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2012).

⁴ T. Normand, *Scottish Photography: A History* (Edinburgh: Luath Press Limited, 2007), 125.

⁵ S. Stevenson, "Discoveries and Explorations: the Scottishness of Scottish Photography," *New Scottish Photography: A Critical Review of the Work of Seventeen Photographers*, (Edinburgh: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1990), 15.

⁶ The view of the novel as escape from reality or "the hell of history" is the central argument of Cairns Craig's thesis. He argues persuasively that J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1885) is key to an understanding of the contemporary Scottish novel: "it dissolved history into a series of imaginative conjectures and conjunctions which was no history at all. History, as verifiable narrative, either retreated back into myth or disappeared into the inner consciousness of the narrator." Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 162. However, Craig's thesis must be read against the dominant strain of literary criticism in Scotland, where fiction functions as a central supporting pillar for a canonical tradition whose "other" is very much the scaffolding of history.

⁷ There is one book written from a PhD thesis by Silke Böger entitled *Traditions In Conflict: John McDougall Hay's Gillespie* (Frankfurt and New York: Peter Lang, 1989), which aims to establish exact

correspondences between fictional Brieston and its characters and their equivalents in the real Tarbert of Hay's time. An isolated essay by I. Spring, "Determinism in John MacDougall Hay's *Gillespie*", *Scottish Literary Journal*, 6, no. 2 (1979): 55-68, is a thematic reading of the novel comparing it very favourably with *The House With The Green Shutters*. Spring notes at the end of his piece that, "Hay's novel is clearly more ambitious than Brown's, and its almost total neglect until recently is inexplicable." Other articles on the novel are: a review by I. Crichton Smith typically comparing the book unfavourably with *The House With The Green Shutters*, entitled "Thoughts On J. MacDougall Hay's *Gillespie*," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 31, no.1 (1999): 1-13, a more positive essay on the treatment of the minor characters in the novel by P. Ower entitled "The Minor Characters in Hay's *Gillespie*," *Studies in Scottish Literature* 16, no.1 (1981): 50-60, and an article entitled "Myth and Realism in *Gillespie*," *Studies in Scottish Literature* 20, no.1 (1985): 34-48 by C. Whyte. A statement by Whyte towards the end of his article is pertinent to our purpose here: "Our approach to a novel is conditioned by the way it has sedimented into our culture. Vital texts fertilize the tradition, and may be present more or less explicitly in much of the literature that follows. We approach *Gillespie* in different circumstances. So far it has had little opportunity to shape subsequent writing, and the tradition it might find a place in has yet to be clearly formulated."

⁸ P. T. Trexler notes the extremely positive reception of the book in the USA, which contrasts sharply with muted and often negative reception of the book in Scotland. P. T. Trexler, "J. MacDougall Hay's *Gillespie* (1914) and its American Critical Reception," in the *Scottish Literary Journal*, 18, no.1 (1991): 59-67. The most insightful piece on the book remains the article by F. R. Hart. He summarizes the problem of the book as lying somewhere between the novel itself and its reception: "we, as critical readers, are theoretically unequipped to treat of the book, in its greatness or in its confusion." F. R. Hart, "Reviewing Hay's *Gillespie*: Modern Scottish Fiction and the Critic's Plight," in *Studies in Scottish Literature* 2, no.1 (1964): 19.

⁹ Normand focuses on the career of the early amateur photographer John Forbes White (1831-1904), who combined his role as successful businessman and manager of the family flour mill with his role as cultural broker and collector in Aberdeen. He was, besides, an associate of professional photographer George Washington Wilson and painter George Reid. His photographs, as Normand suggests, reflect "all the attributes of

those Hague School landscapes he would later import into the galleries and private collections of Scottish connoisseurs" and, as such, reveal more about his particular lens than about the Aberdeen of his time. Normand, *Scottish Photography*, 129.

¹⁰ Leen De Bolle states: "As opposed to painting which is characterized by a certain opacity, photographs are transparent representations of reality. The two characteristics (immobility and transparency) assure photography's bond with representations of reality." L. De Bolle, "Jeff Wall and the Poetic Picture: With Bergson and Deleuze towards a Photo-theory beyond Representation," *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge*, Issue 23 (2012). Accessed July 6, 2015.

<http://www.rhizomes.net/issue23/debolle/index.html>.

¹¹ Macleod discusses the artist Paul Sandby (1731-1809) who worked on a survey of the Scottish mainland. On the north side of the River Tummel Sandby ignored the most prominent landscape feature visible: the mountain Schiehallion. MacLeod, *From An Antique Land*, 1.

¹² See Normand, *Scottish Photography*; Stevenson, *New Scottish Photography*; M. Padget, *Photographers of the Western Isles* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010); and A. Blaikie, *The Scots Imagination and Modern Memory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

¹³ Stevenson, "Discoveries and Exploration," 15.

¹⁴ Normand, *Scottish Photography*, 114.

¹⁵ Macleod, *From An Antique Land*, 14.

¹⁶ Ovenstone owned a morocco album of views by James Valentine, Francis Frith and George Washington Wilson, mainly of Scotland.

¹⁷ R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (London: Vintage, 2000), 42-60.

¹⁸ The Battery refers to the meeting place of the Volunteer movement, which originated in 1859. D. Mitchell, *Tarbert Past and Present: Gleanings in Local History* (Dumbarton: Bennett and Thomson, 1886), 98.

¹⁹ James Cox, like Ovenstone, was from the wealthy middle-classes, son of a jute manufacturer in Dundee. He, like Ovenstone, was the founder of a photographic society: the Dundee and East of Scotland Photographic Association. S. Stevenson, "James Cox 1849-1901," *Scottish Masters, National Galleries of Scotland*, 8 (1988): 4-32.

²⁰ The set-up is apparent in the composition, which seems static and forced, but then these were the constraints of the time. These constraints

were partially technical as the subject had to remain in fixed position for twenty seconds.

²¹ Padget, *Photographer's of the Western Isles*, 191-216. See also P. Strand, *Tir A'Mhurain: The Outer Hebrides of Scotland* (New York: Aperture, 2002).

²² S. Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 1979), 110.

²³ *Ibid.*, 111-12. While Sontag's criticism indicates a kind of absolutism inherent in her Modernist ideals, she suggests exactly the opposite kind of relationship between photography and reality than that suggested in Normand's history of Scottish photography with its brisk assertion that "it was the documentary form that spoke of the lived, the real or democratic, history of Scotland. Here the populace was recognized in all its vitality and enterprise." Normand, *Scottish Photography*, 165.

²⁴ Sontag, *On Photography*, 206.

²⁵ J. Berger, *Understanding a Photograph*, ed. Geoff Dyer (London: Penguin Classics, 2013), 97.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 97.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 97-8.

²⁸ J. MacDougall Hay, *Gillespie* (Edinburgh: Canongate Classics, 1993), 1.

²⁹ There have been refinements in recent times to the theories of Barthes, Berger and Sontag where the paradox of the photograph is regarded by W. J. T. Mitchell as an essential element of the medium that unfortunately Barthes's influential *Camera Lucida* is unable to overcome. Mitchell quotes Barthes: "the co-existence of two messages, the one without a code (the photographic analogue), the other with a code (the 'art' or the treatment, or the 'writing', or the rhetoric of the photograph)," from Barthes, "The Photographic Message," in *Image/Music/Text*, 19, quoted in W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 284. Mitchell explores Barthes' attempts to resolve the issue in his insistence on the denotative and connotative aspects of the image, but ultimately finds Barthes' attempt at a resolution of the paradox unconvincing because it is impossible to find a photograph which does not contain at each level elements of denotation and connotation. While Mitchell does not wish to return to the idea of the photograph as "innocent," he is unwilling to concede to the notion that photography operates in the same way as a language with all of the ideological implications of language and insists that photography "both is and is not language." Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 284.

³⁰ Washday scenes and washerwomen were popular subjects with photographers, often for use as postcards. See Valentine's image from the turn of the century in I. Donnachie and I. MacLeod, *Victorian and Edwardian Scottish Lowlands from Historic Photographs* (London: BT Batsford Ltd., 1979), fig. 28.

³¹ J. Wall, "Monochrome and Photojournalism," *Jeff Wall: Works and Collected Writings* (Ediciones Poligrafa: Barcelona, 2007), 337.

³² Wall's references to Freudian concepts of displacement and condensation in the *Interpretation of Dreams*, as well as references to déjà-vu, all propose that there is a deeper inner self which can bring us directly into contact with the real. De Bolle, "Jeff Wall and the Poetic Picture."

³³ "The great realistic novelists, "shepherds of Being" of a very special ideological type, are forced, by their own narrative and aesthetic vested interests, into a repudiation of revolutionary change and an ultimate stake in the status quo. Their evocation of the solidity of their object of representation – the social world grasped as an organic, natural, Burkean permanence – is necessarily threatened by any suggestion that the world is not natural, but historical, and subject to radical change." F. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 180-181. While several critics have commented on the way that the novel diverges at times from the conventions of the genre the fact remains that the novel is still generally regarded as belonging within the genre of Realism as Böger indicates: "Gillespie has been praised for its realism, for showing reality." Böger, *Traditions In Conflict*, 125.

³⁴ M. Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London and New York: Tavistock Publications), 290.

³⁵ While we admire the authenticity of the voice, and in that sense the "heteroglossia," of the *Odyssey* Radio Programmes produced by Billy Kay in the 1980s, they do not compare to the voice as adumbrated in MacDougall Hay's novel.

³⁶ If we attend to the thickness of the style at the opening of *Gillespie*, we notice the movement away from the transparency which is the hallmark of Realism. The description of the "Ghost" and the sign above the house as well as the curse upon it and the way that Gillespie is brought up so as to be kept ignorant of the curse upon his family makes us conscious of the opacity of the language. Just as the Expressionist painters Klimt, Schiele, Kokoschka and Soutine distort, disfigure, elongate, and exaggerate so also does Hay. Where the painters load their brushes with a thick impasto

laying bare the marks of knife or brush upon the canvas, so does Hay load his pages with repetition, hyperbole, metaphor and wild, unpredictable shifts in lexicon and register. The artist or writer is determined that emotional effect be not diluted through convention. The artist's emotion is visible in the gesture imprinted on the canvas. The writer's emotion is revealed in the way that the words seem to have been wrestled into his desired meaning. When we look at the different semiotic codes, the obvious one to describe this kind of effect is the indexical—the mark of the artist is deliberately left in evidence upon the finished piece.

³⁷ MacDougall Hay, *Gillespie*, 132.

³⁸ M. Bakhtin, "Heteroglossia in the Novel," *The Continental Aesthetic Reader*, ed. C. Cazeaux (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 284.

³⁹ MacDougall Hay, *Gillespie*, 136-7.

⁴⁰ M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. M. Holquist, translated by C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 2.

⁴¹ MacDougall Hay, *Gillespie*, 220.

⁴² Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 366.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 368. By applying the term "ocean of heteroglossia" to *Gillespie*, we would argue that there is indeed an ocean of voices but that these voices are often unspecified: they occur in the range of registers encountered within the free indirect discourse of the narrative.

⁴⁴ A revealing contrast with Hay's dialogical text is to be found in the publication, *Off The Chain*, by William Anderson Smith (1868). The book comprises a series of reminiscences of a trip to Tarbert and its environs by the author in the 1860s. His attitude towards the inhabitants of the village is from the perspective of an alien observer. Describing the fishermen he notes that their lives are: "by no means hard...caring for nothing but fishing—having time for nothing else during long periods, they know about nothing else, and talk of nothing else...the sharing is made every Saturday night, when a scene of great dissipation takes place; and I'm afraid very little cash reaches the hands of their better halves if such a term can be applied when many are as addicted to the bottle as their mates." While the account offers fascinating observations on the villagers from an outsider's perspective, it is lacking in understanding or nuance and rarely rises above the level of anecdote, caricature, or journalistic reportage. His attitude towards the language spoken by the native people in Tarbert and the surrounding area—so reminiscent here of the metropolitan's shorthand, "Poor Hodge," for the Dorsetshire labourer - is

characteristically patronizing: “John has a good education, writes a good hand, and, like most Highlanders who have learned their English at the schools, he talks comparatively well; indeed, when he likes, he talks very well. When a Scotch boy of the humbler classes goes to school he may acquire English, but never will lose his plebeian vocabulary and form of speech. Like as in the spare cultivation of the neighbourhood, the rude original substratum insists upon cropping out.”

⁴⁵ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 140.

⁴⁶ A. Huxley, *Stories, Essays and Poems* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1937), 370.

⁴⁷ C. MacDougall, “Introduction,” *The Devil and the Giro: The Scottish Short Story: Two Centuries of Scottish Stories* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1991), 2.

⁴⁸ MacDougall Hay, *Gillespie*, 65

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 65

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 67-8

⁵¹ Amongst the most important overviews of the distinctly Scottish philosophical tradition are G. Elder Davie’s *The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and Her Universities in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1961), J. McCosh’s *The Scottish Philosophy* (Carlisle, USA: Applewood Books, 2009), A. Broadie’s *The Tradition of Scottish Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990), and R. Turnbull and C. Beveridge’s *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989). Hay’s philosophical speculations are not based on subjective introspective analysis but on observation of his fellows as suggested in McCosh. This point connects to the absence that is the narrative viewpoint of Gillespie himself—we are not seeing through the consciousness of a character/narrator but rather seeing the actions and thoughts of an ensemble cast of characters from the point of view of the moral philosopher/novelist from Jock o’ the Patch, to Sandy Galbraith, to the Spey wife, to Topsail Janet, or to Stevenson the Undertaker. Hay pays particular attention to each of his characters affording them a space in which their lives are given specific shape; this is the mark of the philosopher from the Scottish School according to McCosh. There are so many aspects to the novel which emphasize the inductive method favoured by Scottish philosophers (Reid especially), the emphasis upon the empirical in respect of the observation of human behaviour rather than the insistence upon first principles or *a priori* truths (especially as in Hume), and finally in the link with action in terms of social engagement (as in Chalmers). McCosh

emphasizes those aspects of the tradition which interest him but it is a quality of engagement which he admires within the tradition—typified maybe in his descriptions of the social and moral improvement schemes and practice of Chalmers and James Mill. Some of the most thorough investigation of the links between Scottish philosophy and literature in recent times are to be found in Craig's *The Modern Scottish Novel* and in M. Gardiner's *From Trocchi to Trainspotting: Scottish Critical Theory since 1960* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

⁵² MacDougall Hay, *Gillespie*, 305.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 330.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 331.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 337- 8.