The Use of Obsolete Scots Vocabulary in Modern Scottish Plays

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The revival of old vocabulary in order to enrich the Scots language has a long tradition. Internal borrowing from sources like the literary canon, dictionaries and even dialectological treatises is a well-known strategy of the Scottish Literary Renaissance of the 20th century, but by no means their invention. The present paper examines a corpus of modern Scottish theatre plays to study how, if at all, this tradition is continued in more recent examples. The use of archaic Scots lexis varies from play to play and it is the aim of this paper both to show up these quantitative differences and to attempt an interpretation of the literary effects achieved.

The terms *archaic* and *obsolete* need to be used with caution: 'usage' of a linguistic item is not the same as passive 'knowledge' of it, the latter often applying to a much wider range of items. Macafee[1] shows that even in Glasgow - where dialect erosion is held to have advanced much further than in other dialect regions of Lowland Scotland - a fairly large number of old dialect words are still known, though hardly used.[2] Others may still be used in speech but not in writing and thereby escape registration in dictionaries. The difficulties in determining degrees of obsolescence and setting up a typology that does justice to the gradational scale between full currency of a word and total obsolescence is described in Görlach.[3] The present study, for lack of other sources, has to rely on the dating provided by the *Concise Scottish Dictionary* (*CSD*, supported by the *Scottish National Dictionary* (*SND*) and the *OED*).

While the use of obsolete vocabulary goes back a long way in the literary history of the British Isles, the tradition of reviving specifically Scots words in order to help revive or at least enrich the literary language draws on the works of the 15th and 16th century Scottish Makars. In the Vernacular Revival of the 18th century these Renaissance poets were edited or re-edited and thereby received a new enthusiastic readership. They also inspired writers like Allan Ramsay and later Robert Fergusson and Robert Burns, who borrowed freely from their vocabulary. It is, however, hard to pinpoint individual revivals of obsolete Scots words in their works, because a gap in written documentation does not necessarily mean that certain words had gone out of use.

In the 19th-century Romantic movement, writers such as Southey, Coleridge and Sir Walter Scott in particular implemented this strategy again to a great extent making use of the historical connotations of obsolete vocabulary. Nevertheless, even Scott's lexical revivals do not necessarily derive from Scots: "Although Scott contributed to Modern English many words current in the Scots of his own time - [Tulloch lists for instance: *awesome, cateran, gruesome, raid, slogan*] - he seems to have drawn but little from the older Scottish tongue which he could not have also found in earlier English".[4] The few identifiably Scots archaisms are partly one-offs, e.g. *jackman* 'a soldier' in *The Monastery* or *vasquine* 'a kind of gown' in *The Abbot*. Some others were adopted by later Scottish writers such as R. L. Stevenson and Neil Munro, e.g. *unfriend*, which had been obsolescent since 1700 and was revived by Scott in *Waverley*.[5]

Towards the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th, prior to what now is termed the Scottish Literary Renaissance, authors like Cameron, and Waddell before him, employed a great number of such old Scots words in their Biblical translations in order to emulate the archaic style of their originals.[6] They also started using not only literary sources, but also dictionaries - Jamieson's *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language* (1808 and various later, expanded editions) in particular - more extensively than earlier writers.

Then, Hugh MacDiarmid and later other Scottish Literary Renaissance writers discovered and fully exploited the lexical treasures of early (and 'revivalist') Scots literature, Jamieson's dictionary and dialectological treatises such as Wilson's (1915).[7] The use of revived words in MacDiarmid's early poetry is described for instance by Murison.[8]

The Scottish Literary Renaissance's usage of obsolete word material was criticised more severely and on different grounds from that of earlier 'revivalists'. By the late 1920s Scottish speech was much further anglicised and Scots in writing was usually used to create the illusion of linguistic realism. Therefore, these archaic words in contemporary poetry are easier to recognise as such than in earlier works: they stick out as extraordinary. Scottish Literary Renaissance authors also mixed their use with other techniques of extending their Scots vocabulary (neologisms, loan translations, borrowing from various local dialects) and thereby created a 'synthetic' language, which was not generally accepted.[9] The advantage of this procedure was of course the achievement of singular poetic effects and of maximal distance from English (desired for political reasons). The obvious disadvantages - apart from the artificiality condemned by so many critics - lies in the fact that intelligibility is seriously impaired.

Immediate intelligibility is not essential with respect to poetry, the genre predominantly served by the Scottish Literary Renaissance writers: poems may be re-read; they may have glossaries or readers may use a dictionary; and they are usually short enough not to strain the reader's patience. These considerations do not apply in plays and novels. Consequently, there are hardly any plays or novels in this 'synthetic' type of Scots, often named Lallans.[10] With narrative prose, it is mainly the question of readers' patience and attitude that prevents the large-scale usage of obsolete words. Even here, as with poetry, techniques such as paraphrasing or footnotes may be found to overcome problems of comprehension. With drama that is actually intended for the stage, however, immediate intelligibility is more crucial. Although not every single word has to be understood at first hearing to get the gist of the stage-dialogue, a clustering of obsolete items is counter-productive. Still, a number of contemporary Scottish playwrights are prepared to use this method of expanding their stage-language.

The present study is to show how often obsolete words are used in a corpus of twelve Scots play texts written between 1947 and 1993 and will try to answer the question why they are used at all. The corpus was compiled for a purpose different from this study.[11] It was selected to cover a wide variety of genres and settings and thereby a variety of forms of Scots, and the choice was not concerned with the use of obsolete Scots words in the texts. It is therefore not surprising to find that some of the plays in question do not contain archaic material at all. They may, however, serve as a comparative backdrop to the interpretation of the effects of obsolete words in the other plays and give a broader scope to the quantitative

results of this study, though representativeness may of course not be achieved with such a small number of texts.

The corpus cannot be representative of Scottish drama in the second half of the 20th century, anyway, because of its bias towards plays that make use of Scots. A great number of Scottish plays are also written in (Scottish) Standard English. The twelve texts chosen from the canon of published, multi-character plays using Scots are: *Men Should Weep* (1947) by Ena Lamont Stewart, *The Flouers o Edinburgh* (1948) by Robert McLellan, *The Stick-Up* (1961) by Sydney Goodsir Smith, *The Rising* (1970) by Hector MacMillan, *The Jesuit* (1976) and *The Widows of Clyth* (1979) by Donald Campbell, *The Hard Man* (1977) by Tom McGrath, *The Puddok an the Princess* (1985) by David Purves, *Mary Queen of Scots Got her Head Chopped Off* (1987) by Liz Lochhead, *The Steamie* (1987) by Tony Roper, *Bondagers* (1991) by Sue Glover and *Julie Allardyce* (1993) by Duncan McLean (dates of first production in brackets).

The corpus was prepared in order to allow computerised searches and counts of various kinds of 'Scotticisms' in the texts. The present study[12] assumes a synchronic understanding of the ill-defined notion of 'Scots' and uses the term 'Scotticism' as describing any linguistic feature ever used in the spoken or written language of Lowland Scotland that the contemporary recipient will notice as not belonging to Standard English (StE) and associate with specifically Scottish usage.

A distinction between lexical and orthographical Scotticisms is notoriously difficult. The approach taken in the present study acknowledges the following as the clearest cases of Scots lexis: words not related to English; words related to early English, but whose English cognates are now obsolete; words whose relationship with English is so distant that it is hardly noticeable, either because the forms are so different or the meanings have drifted apart; names of Scottish 'institutions' or words which also occur in English, but in Scots refer to a particularly Scottish concept; complex words that resemble an English word-formation in form and meaning, but which were derived from different bases (e.g. 'wrangeously', 'needcessity'). Another large group of words is classed as lexical Scotticisms only with reservations: words that also appear in northern English dialects (e.g. 'lass'), those that are known and used in England but with stereotypical reference to things Scottish (e.g. 'wee', 'bonnie'), those whose relation to English cognates is recognisable (in form or in content), but too distant to simply speak of polysemy or variation in spelling/pronunciation, and derivations that differ systematically in the choice of affixes between Scots and English (e.g. 'afore' vs. 'before', 'atween' vs. 'between'). A further group incorporates Scots idioms, i.e. set phrases which have a specific lexicalised meaning in Scots. Their identification is particularly difficult, because few of these are recorded in dictionaries. A few interjections and other particles are classed as lexical Scotticisms if they are recorded in the Scots dictionaries and - in case they have English cognates - if their spelling clearly indicates a Scots pronunciation (e.g. 'och' with /x/).

These words are, then, regarded as making up the Scots vocabulary of a text. The density of Scots lexis was calculated as the proportion of Scots words (types) and Scots wordforms (tokens) with regard to the respective total numbers in the lines of the Scots speaking characters of the plays.[13] Then, out of this total list of lexical Scotticisms, those marked as

obsolete by the *Concise Scots Dictionary* - either the item as a whole, or only the meaning that appears in the plays - were drawn for the present study. Only fairly clear cases of obsolescence qualified for analysis. Some items are excluded, because their meanings as used in the texts and labelled as obsolete by the CSD are very close to other meanings given as current. Sometimes the context does not fully disambiguate the meaning of a word and it is therefore difficult to decide whether it is used in a meaning registered as obsolete or not.[14] Also, individual words may still be used in set phrases or compounds but have died out in separate use.[15]

Of a total of 1126 lexical Scotticisms found in these plays, 79 are thus taken to be obsolete, amounting to 7% of all Scots lexemes.[16] However, these words usually appear in very low frequencies, so that the percentage of the obsolete lexical tokens is much less impressive. Of the 9596 times that Scots words are actually used in the dialogue of the plays, only 176 instances are tokens of obsolete ones, i.e. only 1.8%. Considering the fact that the density of exclusively Scots lexis in the plays, though very variable from text to text, averages at about 12.5% for all lexemes (Scots and English, not counting Scots spelling variants that indicate a Scots pronunciation of a word shared with English) and 6.7% of all word forms, the share of obsolete Scotticisms in the whole of the word material may seem negligible. Their significance only becomes apparent in an analysis of individual texts.

The CSD gives dates both for forms and meanings of its entries. Most of the archaic words used in the plays went out of use in the 20th century. They are labelled as current up to the first half of the 20th century (-e20) or as "recently obsolete or known to be obsolescent" (-20).[17] Only a smaller number died out long ago. Some words have lost only some of their earlier meanings; others have completely disappeared from current usage. These differences in the degree of obsolescence (according to dictionary evidence) may influence the effects these words can have when used on the stage. Again, a closer look at individual plays points to differences in usage.

Both the density and the 'degree of obsolescence' of archaic Scotticisms depends on the type of Scots used in a text, its functions and the genre and setting of the play. The following table gives an overview of the quantitative results of the study, showing which plays use obsolete word material and to what extent:

	obs. Sc. types	total Sc. types	%	obs. Sc. tokens	total Sc. tokens	%	Sc. lexical density (type/token)
M	0	148	0	0	1051	0	9.1%/6.1%
F	14	268	5.2%	21	1297	1.6%	17.1%/7.8%
S	13	217	6%	18	855	2.1%	23.1%/14.8%
R	0	99	0	0	370	0	6.7%/4.7%
J	3	188	1.6%	3	981	0.3%	12.7%/7.7%

H	0	87	0	0	367	0	4.9%/2.3%
W	0	89	0	0	537	0	8.6%/4.7%
P	22	442	5%	39	1838	2.1%	32.6%/13%
Q	6	183	3.3%	10	541	1.8%	10.6%/6.3%
T	0	107	0	0	708	0	7%/4.5%
B	18	182	9.9%	84	670	12.5%	12.8%/5.7%
A	0	78	0	0	383	0	4.3%/2.5%

Table 1: Survey of quantitative results. M = *Men Should Weep*, F = *The Flouers o Edinburgh*, S = T*he Stick-Up*, R = *The Rising*, J = *The Jesuit*, W = *The Widows of Clyth*, H = *The Hard Man*, P = *The Puddok an the Princess*, Q = *Mary Queen of Scots Got her Head Chopped Off*, T = *The Steamie*, B = *Bondagers*, A = *Julie Allardyce*. The data are arranged chronologically according to the dates of the first perfomances of the plays.

Six of the twelve plays do not employ obsolete Scots words or meanings at all. Not surprisingly, they are the ones with the lowest density of Scots lexis in general. Three of them, *Men Should Weep*,[18] *The Hard Man*, and *The Steamie* are set in 20th-century Glasgow; another one, *Julie Allardyce*, in 20th-century Aberdeen. Their use of Scots words, then, seems to reflect (not least as far as archaisms are concerned) their attempt at creating a stage-language that seems authentic. The style of none of these plays, apart from *Men Should Weep*, may be called realist, but the dialogue in all of them is certainly intended to resemble closely the patterns of natural speech. This is also true of the other two plays, *The Rising* and *Widows of Clyth* - although they are set in the 19th century and in rural areas (reputed to preserve dialect lexis much longer than the urban centres), which would make the use of now obsolete items much more likely.[19] Still, accessibility and intelligibility of the language must have had priority over authenticity in the writing of these texts - a conclusion supported by the comparatively low density of lexical Scotticisms and the fact that both plays use only very few local dialect words.[20]

The other plays in the corpus do employ obsolete Scotticisms. If general intelligibility is restricted by current Scots lexis, words that even active speakers of Scots no longer use certainly add to this difficulty. Their functions for the texts must, then, be of great significance, considering the fact that they impair the immediate accessibility of the dramatic medium.

Dramatic functions of the use of Scots - and of obsolete Scots words in particular - include the evocation of a certain atmosphere, the characterisation of the dramatic figures and the creation of a (historical) setting. Archaic vocabulary may also be employed to achieve certain poetic effects in the stage language. Then, although this is less common, their use may have no predominantly literary function, but may be rather an aim in itself, an attempt to use the full scope of the writer's native dialect, to preserve archaic material, or even to extend the vocabulary and add to the prestige of the Scots language. All these functions may of course combine and are brought to bear to different degrees in each individual play.

In *The Flouers o Edinburgh*, McLellan uses a comparatively large number of obsolescent words,[21] but many of them are marked as still in use in the first half of the 20th century, so that it is likely that McLellan may have heard them used actively in speech. Some of the others specify items of Edinburgh life and culture at the time of the play, the early 1760s (e.g. *caddie, gardyloo, laird, tirling pin*). They help to set the scene, but - along with the other linguistic components - they do not suggest that linguistic authenticity is aimed at. McLellan's Scots is not supposed to reflect 18th century speech, but to represent a modern literary language which is at the same time clearly different from Scottish English and easily intelligible.

This is suggested not only by his choice of non-localised General Scots speech- forms, but also by the high degree of standardisation of the non-standard variety Scots achieved in his text. McLellan uses the same kind of language for the stage, his poetry and his imaginative prose:[22] it is firmly based on his spoken native dialect, but carefully stripped of local forms and enriched with some historical and literary material, avoiding artificiality, always retaining respectability and achieving variety. The author uses it as a standard language on the same standing as Standard English, which shows that he employs archaic material in order to explore the full scope of the native dialect. The major dramatic function of the juxtaposition of the two languages is certainly to highlight the qualitative contrasts and correspondences within the dramatis personae.[23] The speakers are characterised implicitly through their choice of language. On top of criteria such as 'class', 'generation' and 'gender', the linguistic divide offers an additional dimension to the dynamic constellation of the characters. The archaisms themselves contribute to this only in so far as they help to exploit the linguistic potential and enrich Scots as a fully fledged language.

More specific dramatic functions seem to trigger the use of the few obsolete Scotticisms in *The Jesuit*. The play is a 'historical' piece in the sense that it is set in the early 17th century and presents the story of real persons. Campbell, however, is not giving an historical pageant and is certainly not trying to re-create the language of the time. His use of language is actually the main dramatic means of transposing the message of the play into the present. It shows the timelessness of its theme, the sources and consequences of extremism.

There are three groups of characters in the play that are contrasted through their use of language: the 'extremist' Catholic priest, Ogilvie, speaks present-day Standard English; the Archbishop of Glasgow, Spottiswoode, and his wife speak a type of 'ideal' literary Scots;[24] and the Archbishop's soldiers speak a present-day variety of Edinburgh dialect. In a personal letter to the author, Campbell explains this linguistic differentiation as follows:

> I used a variety of registers for purely theatrical purposes. Ogilvie's English was intended to convey the extent to which he was a stranger - a foreigner even - in his own country. Spottiswoode's Scots is not so easy to explain. On the one hand, I did not want him to appear to be as coarse as the soldiers: on the other, if his authority over the soldiers was to be implicit, this required to be expressed linguistically. As for the soldiers themselves, I simply used the demotic Scots dialect I myself used as a boy in working-class Edinburgh.

The few obsolete Scots words Campbell employs cannot be taken as an attempt to create linguistic authenticity. They mainly support the characterisation and differentiation between

the two groups of Scots-speaking characters. The use of Scots lexis is denser in the speech of the soldiers (13.9% of all types and 8.5% of all tokens) than in that of Spottiswoode (9%/4.9%)[25] and the vocabulary of the two groups is carefully differentiated stylistically: the Scots words used by the soldiers tend to be highly informal, associated with urban and lower social class usages and are often 'anachronistic' insofar as they have come into use a long time after the period in which the play is set.[26] Spottiswoode's selection of Scots words is more traditional and stylistically elevated, i.e. more 'respectable', which includes his more frequent use of obsolete Scots words.[27] The archaisms, therefore, help in establishing this 'ideal' literary variety and in distinguishing the groups of speakers. The use of present-day Edinburgh working-class dialect by the soldiers is a very effective means of referring the audience to our time and of encouraging the recognition of the contemporary validity of the issues dealt with in the play. The three-way linguistic distinction between the characters relates the Archbishop to his soldiers (the 'people'), because both speak Scots, while at the same time distancing him from them socially because of his standardised literary style (partly evoked by his use of archaisms), which bridges the gap between him and Ogilvie, the speaker of another standardised literary language, *viz*. English.

In Liz Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots Got her Head Chopped Off* the use of Scots archaisms also fulfils dramatic functions.[28] As in *The Jesuit*, they help distinguish groups of characters linguistically. This is here important in a more practical sense, because several roles are taken over by every actor and these role-switches are usually indicated mainly by linguistic code-switches. The setting of the play alternates between 16th-century London and Edinburgh, and the last scene is set in 20th-century Glasgow. The use of Scots, then, serves to distinguish an English from a Scottish character and vice versa. The obsolete words in the speech of the 16th-century Edinburgh court characters differentiate them from the contemporary Glaswegian children, whose speech is thoroughly modern and informal.[29]

Apart from this pragmatic function, the archaisms give a historical and literary imprint to the atmosphere of the play (apart from the last scene), without ever attempting to imitate period language.[30] This is supported by the use of Scots words that are marked as literary, though not obsolete, such as *eldritch* and *vaunty*, or very rare, 'exotic', Scots words and word formations, such as *rumple-fyke*, *penny-jo*, *sourrock-flattery*, *ungimp*, *just-keistit*, *keist-and-rummle*. For the same effect, also English archaisms are employed, such as *afttimes*, *agrowin*, *fain*, *nuncle*, *rapine*, and *priesthooses*. The poetic potential of such word-material is particularly, though not at all exclusively, drawn on in the lyrical passages that pervade the play.

This poetic function of obsolete Scots vocabulary is also explored in Sue Glover's *Bondagers*, which has the highest proportion of archaisms within the corpus (9.9% of all Scots types and even 12.5% of all Scots tokens).[31] Most of these words were explained in a glossary accompanying a production of the play for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 1995. This shows that they are known to impair comprehension, but this is accepted due to their literary functions. They blend in with other dramatic devices such as the use of choric voices, songs, repetitions, dance and a reduced stage design to create an expressionist style and to create a heavily symbolic atmosphere. The sounds of these words and their connotations are just as important to the play as a whole as their actual meaning, or even more so.

In addition, the use of terms that very specifically refer to an historical part of Scottish culture and a way of life that have disappeared localises the setting of the play quite clearly with respect to time and place.[32] All of them were current at the time the play is set in. The language acquires a historical flavour and conjures up the cultural heritage. The use of Scots in general in this play helps portray the characters as members of a very specific social group with a well defined regional and historical background. The language is nevertheless not intended to be naturalistic: the (obsolete) Scots items are used more for their symbolic value than for authenticity. Glover does not attempt to give a realistic representation of a historical local dialect. She describes the form and function of her stage language as follows:

> Plays are not historical/sociological documentaries. The dialogue here is not authentic 1860-speak. How could it be? No reliable record of the speech of the fields (or the streets, or even of the drawing-rooms) survives. (Letters and diaries can only give clues; people do not talk as they write.) The function of the language in *Bondagers* is dramatic: to help the audience believe in the time, the place, and above all, the characters. It is honest: I do not use any Scots that the bondagers might not have used. It is not very broad Scots because I am not writing solely for a Scottish (far less a Border) audience.[33]

Sydney Goodsir Smith, the author of *The Stick-Up*, as an outstanding representative of the Scottish Literary Renaissance movement, exploits the poetic qualities of Lallans to the full. Compared with his poetry and narrative prose, he does make concessions to his audiences' comprehension in this (verse!) play. He reduces the density of Scots for the dramatic genre, but with 23.1% of all lexemes and 14.8% of all word-forms it is still denser than in most other plays of the corpus. And these 'curtailments' certainly do not lead him to use a less 'synthetic' or more naturalistic kind of Scots. He mixes archaisms (many of them long out of use),[34] obsolete word- forms (*ulyied* 'oiled' 19-e20; *kame* 'comb' la14-e20), other literary words (such as *dule* 'distress' la14- now verse; *ligg* 'lie' 15- now only literary; *tassie* 'cup' la18- latterly literary) and previously revived vocabulary (*fousome* 'filthy, dirty, loathsome' la14-16, 19-; *bedizened* 'rotten' 18, 20-) with modern colloquial 'urbanisms' (e.g. *b'roo* 'Unemployment Benefit Office' 20-; *fish supper* 'fish-and-chips' 20-; *a wee hauf* 'a small whisky' la20-) and local dialect vocabulary from various other regions (*bottach* 'contempt.: old man' now Caith. or Banff; *fusionless* 'weak, numb, without feeling' NE; *oury* 'uncanny, strange, disquieting' now Shetl.).

Despite the Scottish background of his mother's family, Smith was not a native speaker of Scots, but learned it as a second language through studying its older and contemporary literature and through contact with the Scots-speaking regulars of his favourite Edinburgh pubs.[35] He acquired a historically, stylistically, socially, as well as regionally mixed, vocabulary, which he was able to develop for his writing without being restrained by the linguistic norms of the speech community. He justifies his 'synthetic' approach by means of two arguments. The first one reveals the political stance of the Scottish Literary Renaissance:

> The soul of Scotland can only be revived by a return to our true tradition - [to] the idea that Scots is a language and not merely a hotch-potch of dialects (or even one dialect, as the foolish say); that it's a language capable of coping with any subject in heaven or earth or hell; the idea implicit in this belief that Scotland has a part to play in Europe as it had before, and the realisation that Scots is a more expressive and potent medium for

a Scottish writer than is English or American or Esperanto.[36]

His other justification, however, seems to be even more important: he argues that literary language never restricted itself to the confines of one single dialect of real speech, but always drew on the entire range of linguistic material available.[37] As suggested above, this argument is of limited validity with respect to drama and his synthetic use of language may be one reason why his plays (and his novel) are largely neglected - apart from his strikingly nationalist historical pageant *The Wallace*.[38] There are, however, also other issues with regard to Smith's dramaturgy for the contemporary stage which need review elsewhere.

For his verse-play, *The Stick-Up*, the literary vocabulary - and the Scots archaisms in particular - fulfils the function of raising the level of the diction, and its apparent clash with other types of lexis achieves numerous effects. Their use contradicts the patterns of real speech: the stage directions give the setting of the play as the "Industrial riverside during Slump [...] Streets of blind tenements" (Glasgow and the 1930s are implied) and the main character is an unemployed (apparently unskilled) worker. Authenticity is definitely not intended. The archaisms and literary words achieve their poetic functions through an aesthetically charged deviation from the norms of 'every-day language'. They may also be taken to act as 'epic' elements or 'anti-illusionist' markers (along with other features such as the use of foghorn, whistle and horn to structure the action and the reduction of minor characters to nameless stock-figures), which counter identification or empathy with the figures and situations.[39]

Purves, Scots-language activist and author of *The Puddok an the Princess*, is obviously more interested in the political side of Smith's argument. It is rather emotional than poetic effects he is trying to achieve through his use of Scots, by appealing to the emotions of national solidarity and identity. He criticises the state of the Scots language today and wants to set an example by means of his literary use of it. This is evident from his non-fictional writings.[40]

Like McLellan before him, though more distinctly so, he tries to create a standardised Scots that may be used for several purposes. He is, however, not only aiming at a literary language, but a fully functional national language. This is reminiscent of the Scottish Literary Renaissance of the 1920s. Like Smith (and Douglas Young for instance), Purves uses his kind of Scots for fictional and expository writing and, by employing archaisms, he actively expands the vocabulary and adds to the prestige of the language. As boldly synthetic as the earlier writers, he refrains, however, unlike them, from using urban lexical innovations. The prestige of 'old' dialect words is often higher than that of current ones,[41] making them particularly suitable for his aims. At the same time, he intends to achieve maximal linguistic distance from English, which is reflected in the extremely high density of Scots lexis (32.6% of all lexemes 13% of the tokens) and of Scots archaisms as well (5.2%/2.3%).[42] This may be seen more as an act of language planning - an attempt at extending the functional range of the language - rather than the use of a certain linguistic variety purely for its literary merit.

The present study shows that some plays do not use archaic Scots words at all, whereas others contain a great number of them. The degree of obsolescence varies from word to word and from play to play, and the presence of obsolete vocabulary depends on the type of Scots employed, its functions in the individual text and on the genre and setting of the

play. Accordingly, the literary functions of archaic word-material are varied. Linguistic 'authenticity' is not a priority in any of the plays in the corpus which make use of obsolescent words. They may be employed for purposes of language planning, in order to extend the vocabulary and the functional range of the language. Some authors may only want to preserve archaic material and use the full scope of their native dialect. Apart from poetic effects, the use of obsolete words may create a particular atmosphere, characterise dramatic figures, or define historical settings. They represent a welcome additional source of 'exotic' and (ironically) 'fresh' word material from the respectable end of the stylistic scale, which is apparently accepted by modern audiences - if used sparingly - in spite of its potential lack of intelligibility. Whether the modern usage of such words will lead to their revival in Scots speech (as happened to some revived by Scott) is, however, debatable.

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Footnotes

[1] Caroline Macafee, *Traditional Dialect in the Modern World: A Glasgow Case Study* (Frankfort am Main: Peter Lang, 1994). [Return to Text]

[2] Smaller-scale studies, set for instance in Caithness (Wickens 1980), in the new town, Livingston, (Pollner 1985) or in the Central Belt small town, Larbert (Alexandra Agutter and Leslie N. Cowan, 'Changes in the Vocabulary of Lowland Scots Dialects', *Scottish Literary Journal*, Supplement 14 (1981), pp. 49-62.), showed similar results. [Return to Text]

[3] Manfred Görlach, 'Lexical Loss and Lexical Survival: the Case of Scots and English', *Scottish Language*, 6 (1987), pp. 1-20. [Return to Text]

[4] Graham Tulloch, *The Language of Walter Scott: A Study of his Scottish and Period Language* (London: André Deutsch, 1980), p. 29f. [Return to Text]

[5] Graham Tulloch, 'Lexis' in Charles Jones (ed.) *The Edinburgh History of the Scots Language* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), p.414. For more detail also on revivals by other writers of that age. [Return to Text]

[6] Graham Tulloch, 'Lexis' in Charles Jones (ed.) *The Edinburgh History of the Scots Language* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), p.414f. [Return to Text]

[7] Colin Milton, 'Shybboleths o the Scots: Hugh MacDiarmid and Jamieson's Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language', *Scottish Language*, 14/15 (1995-6), pp. 1-14. Also, J.D. McClure, 'The Synthesisers of Scots' in *Scots and Its Literature* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1995), pp.190-9. [Return to Text]

[8] David Murison, 'The Language Problem in Hugh MacDiarmid's Work' in Paul H. Scott and A.C. Davis (eds.) *The Age of MacDiarmid: Essays on Hugh MacDiarmid and His Influence on Contemporary Scotland* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1980), pp.83-99. For a larger survey of Scottish Literary Renaissance volcabulary 'revivals' see Graham Tulloch, 'Lexis' in Charles

Jones (ed.) *The Edinburgh History of the Scots Language* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), p.415f. [Return to Text]

[9] For a survey of strategies with examples see J.D. McClure, 'The Synthesisers of Scots' in *Scots and Its Literature* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1995), pp.190-9. [Return to Text]

[10] There are a few exceptions, such as Sydney Goodsir Smiths novel *Carotid Cornucopius* (written in 1947, first published in 1964), his - largely unpublished - plays (see below) and those by Robert Garioch, for instance the - still unperformed? - *Masque of Edinburgh* (1954) and *The Laird o Dreepdaily: a Musical Ploy in One Act* (1983). There are also a number of translations of classical plays into this kind of Scots (e.g. Douglas Young's *The Burdies* (1959) and *The Puddocks* (1957)) or other 'synthetic' linguistic mixtures using both literary/archaic and modern/urban forms of Scots (e.g. Edwin Morgan's *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1992)). However, the translation process demands so many considerations different from the creation of an original play that their use of archaisms would have to be investigated in a separate study. [Return to Text]

[11] Katja Lenz, *Die schottische Sprache im modernen Drama* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1999). [Return to Text]

[12] In accordance with Lindsey A. Hewitt, 'A Sociolinguistic Approach to the Study of Literary Dialect in the Work of John Galt and Christian Johnston' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 1992), p.130. [Return to Text]

[13] In plays like McLellan's *Flouers o Edinburgh*, MacMillan's *The Rising* or Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots*, a linguistic contrast is created between Scots-speaking and English-speaking characters. The latter group has therefore to be excluded from a calculation of the density of Scots in a play. [Return to Text]

[14] Compare for instance *dozent* with the current meaning 'stupefied, dazed, physically weakened (through age, drink etc.), stupid' and the obsolete one 'stiff, numb' (la18-19). In McLellan's *Flouers o Edinburgh*, it occurs in young Miss Kate's disparaging description of the type of dance partner her aunt would choose for her, where it could mean either: "A wheen dozent auld meenisters or college professors, or lords o the Coort o Session" (1981, p. 167). The item is therefore not accepted in the word-count. [Return to Text]

[15] The idiom *set a stout hert til a stey brae* 'to face difficulties wth resolution' (18-) may serve as an example. The phrase is current, but the word stey 'of a hill, road etc.: (very) steep, difficult to climb' (la14-20) is labelled as obsolete/obsolescent. In the corpus it only appears in the set phrase and is therefore not counted as an obsolete item. [Return to Text]

[16] This count includes the few cases of both obsolete and current lexical Scotticisms used only in the stage-directions, etc., for instance *awmrie* 'a cupboard' (la15-e20) and *tirling pin* 'a kind of door-knocker' (la19-e20) in McLellan's *The Flouers o Edinburgh*. It excludes, however, some items that are labelled as 'obsolete' by the dictionaries, but have been attested variously as still current by native speakers of Scots, who commented on draft versions of the present paper, such as the meaning 'a struggle, a hard time' (la17) for

trauchle (found in *The Stick-Up* and *The Jesuit*) or the meanings 'involving hardship, difficulty, danger etc' (la15-20) and 'serious (frequ as intensifier)' (la18-20) found in The *Flouers o Edinburgh*, *The Jesuit*, *The Puddok an the Princess* and *Mary Queen of Scots Got her Head Chopped Off*. Other words and meanings taken as archaic because they are marked as such by the dictionaries may also represent such debateable cases. [Return to Text]

[17] The *CSD* excludes certain authors such as H.P. Cameron and P.H. Waddell from their calculation of a date range, "as they are known to have been deliberate users of archaic language [...]. Prominent authors such as Sir Walter Scott and Hugh MacDiarmid have however been included, even if they are obviously using deliberate archaisms. Such instances are normally marked *arch* (for Scott) or *literary* (for MacDiarmid)." In Mairi Robinson, *The Concise Scots Dictionary* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985), p.xxx. [Return to Text]

[18] An early version of the play, in a typescript of c.1946, when it was still called *Poor Man's Riches*, has the now obsolete word *argyfy* 'to argue' (la18-e20). It may still have been marginally current at the time of writing, but was edited out in later versions (it does not appear in the typescript of 1974). This word represents, however, another debatable case according to my informants, as mentioned in footnote 15. [Return to Text]

[19] There is one obsolete Scots word in the stage-directions of *Widows of Clyth: much* 'a close-fitting cap worn by married women' (la18-e20). The word went out of use with the object itself, but is still appropriate and useful for the description of 19th-century fisherwives' costumes. [Return to Text]

[20] The only lexical items in *Widows of Clyth* closely associated with Caithness (or at least northern Scots) are: *to cown* 'to weep, lament (now Cai)', *lockie* 'a (small) quantity (now Cai Gall Uls)', *to tak long* to 'to grow weary for (Cai)', *owse-room* 'the space in the wale of a boat from which the bilge-water is baled out (not in CSD, but in Geddes [1978], Sutherland [1992] and *SND*: Sh Ork Cai)', a few usages of *til* 'prep. (now esp. Sh Ork N); prep governing an infinitive (now Cai; conj: local Sh-WC)', *shore* 'a landing-place, harbour (now N Fif, only Sc)', *skerry* 'an isolated rock or islet in the sea' (chf Sh Ork)', *shortago* 'a short time ago (Sh-Per)', *swack* 'of persons: active, lithe, supple (now local Sh-Fif)' and the diminutive suffix *-ag* in *boyag* (Cai Abd). The remainng 90% of the Scots vocabulary are current all over Lowland Scotland. *The Rising*, which is set in Strathaven, South Lanarkshire, uses even fewer words that are locally restricted (6 out of 99), the rest belonging to a general Scots. Incidentally, of all the plays in the corpus, *Widows of Clyth* has the lowest proportion of spellings indicating Scots pronunciations of words shared with English. Campbell makes no attempt to represent the local accent in his spellings. Macmillan, on the other hand, uses a large number of Scots spellings, but only very few of them represent local West Central Scots pronunciations. [Return to Text]

[21] The following words or meanings found in the dialogue of the play are labelled as archaic by the Scottish dictionaries: *caddie* 'a messenger or errand-boy; cfl. in pl. and organized corps of such in Edinburgh and other large towns' (18), *dottery* 'unsteady' (SND attests 18-e20), *doxie* 'a sweetheart' (19 verse), *gardyloo* 'interject: a warning call that waste, dirty

water etc. was about to be poured into the street from an upper storey' (la17-e19 chfl. Edinb.), *gleck* 'a glance of the eye' (SND attests 1825 Ayr), *guid wife* 'the landlady of an inn' (la18-e20), *kyte* 'the stomach, belly' (16-20), *laird* 'the landlord of landed property or an estate; of lesser landowners: a landowner holding directly of the Crown, and so entitled to come to parliament' (-e18), *pockmantie* 'a travelling-bag, a portmanteau' (la16-19), *rasp* 'to make a grating or rattling noise with a door risp (SND attests 19-e20), *runrig* 'a system of joint landholding ...; such a portion of land' (15-20), *tochert* 'endowed with a tocher, dowered' (la16-19), *wabster* 'a weaver' (la14-20), *ware* 'to spend, waste' (la15-e20). Two additional obsolete words are only used in the stage-directions: *awmrie* 'a cupboard' (la15-e20), *tirling pin* 'a kind of door-knocker' (a19-e20). [Return to Text]

[22] Often referred to as 'ideal' Scots in A.J. Aitken, 'Scots and English in Scotland' in Peter Trudgill (ed.) *Language in the British Isles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.517-32. [Return to Text]

[23] Manfred Pfister, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.166-70. [Return to Text]

[24] For the term 'ideal' Scots cf. for instance Aitken 1984. [Return to Text]

[25] As Paterson rightly points out, he "modulates the degree of Scottishness to suit the occasion. Thus when he is talking to Ogilvie, he uses a less broad Scots than he does with the soldiers". In Lindsay Paterson, 'Language and identity on the stage' in Randall Stevenson and Gavin Wallace (eds.) *Scottish Theatre Since the Seventies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p.81. However, his dialogue with the soldiers is very restricted; his discussions with Ogilvie account for more than ten times more of his word-material. For reasons irrelevant to the present argumentation, his wife speaks denser Scots, though Scots of the same kind. [Return to Text]

[26] Compare for instance *bampot, shoot the craw, nae danger, haurdcase, screw the nut, rammy, gie s.o. the boke, awfy, panloaf, high-heid-ane.* [Return to Text]

[27] Spottiswoode uses *alowe* 'on fire, ablaze' (19-e20) and *siccarly* 'with full certainty, undoubtedly' (-e19). The soldiers only use once the obsolete conjunction *acause* 'because' (la19-e20). [Return to Text]

[28] The words here taken as obsolete are: *bere* 'barley' (-e20), *daw* 'a slattern' (la17-e20), *hause-bane* 'the collarbone' (15-20), *put to the horn* 'to proclaim as an outlaw or bankrupt' (la14-19), *ryal* 'one of several Scottish silver coins' (la16) and *kittock* here meaning 'a kitten' (this sense is not found in the dictionaries; *SND* and *CSD* have *kittok* = † 'term for a girl of low rank or character' (la15-16), which may also apply, but a formation of shortened 'kitten' and the obsolete *-ock* suffix (*SND*: 'forming nouns as a diminutive, freq. alternating with other dim. endings, (e.g. *-ie*), either freely or with differentiation of meaning; the use of *-ock* as a simple dim. is obsol., exc. perhaps in Cai. and Rs., being replaced by *-ie*') is more likely). [Return to Text]

29 As shown in table 1, the percentage of archaisms in the total Scots vocabulary is 3.8% of the types and 2% of the tokens. These figures include the last scene, in which there are no obsolete items. [Return to Text]

30 The style shifts for theatrical purposes within the speech of individual characters in the 'historical' part of the play from archaic and highly formal to modern and informal are striking and prove that linguistic authenticity is not an aim here. [Return to Text]

31 These are *arle* 'earnest money' (la15-e20), *bondage* 'service due from a tenant to his superior or from a farmworker to a farmer' (17-e20), *bondager* 'a person who performs bondage service, chf a female field-worker supplied by a farm-tenant in accordance with the conditions of his tenancy' (19-e20), *buckled* 'join or be joined in marriage' (18-20), *burdie* 'term of endearment, esp to children' (19-e20), *dang/ding* 'euphemismistic: damn' (19-e20), *day and way* 'support oneself for the day, so as to clear one's way, without any overplus' (SND: 1894 Edb), *dirtery* 'worthless people or things' (19-e20), *fettle* 'attend to the needs of, feed' (la19-e20), *flaunty* 'capricious, flighty' (la18-e20), *fulzie* 'filth, dirt garbage, dung, excrement' (la14-e20), *handfast* 'become engaged to marry, esp. agree to a probationary period of cohabitation with someone before marriage' (la15-e20), *kirn* 'a celebration marking the end of the harvest, a harvest-home' (17-20), *limmer* 'freq of Border or Highland robbers: a rascal, villain, scoundrel' (15-20), *smoor* 'bury, cover over thickly, envelop in a dense covering of smoke etc.' (19-e20), *the Speaking* 'the time of year at which employers, esp. farmers, renew or terminate workers' contracts' (la19-20), *trig* 'active, nimble, brisk, alert' (la15-e20) - perhaps debatable, cf footnote 15 - *whang* 'move with sudden force, push, pull etc. with a jerk' (la19-e20). [Return to Text]

32 This is particularly true for the terms *arle, bondage, bondager, handfast, kirn* and *the Speaking*. [Return to Text]

33 Sue Glover, *Bondagers* in Ian Brown and Mark Fisher (eds.) *Made in Scotland: An Anthology of New Scottish Plays* (London: Methuen, 1995), p.179. [Return to Text]

34 The words here counted as obsolete Scots lexemes are: *anerly* 'only' (la14-e16, e19 arch), *brulyie* 'a turmoil, quarrel' (16-e20), *dree* 'pass, spend (time) miserably' (18-19), *graithin* 'a harness' (la18-e20), *grugous* 'grim, ugly' (la18-e20), *mapamound* 'the globe, the world' (la15-16), *skaithless* 'unharmed, free of financial loss' (la14-e19), *sunkots* 'something' (18-19), *swith* 'quick, speedy' (19-e20), *tint* 'got rid of, freed oneself from' (la18-e20), *tod* 'the fox' (15-20), *wanhope* 'despair' (*SND*: attested up to -20). [Return to Text]

35 Sydney Goodsir Smith, 'In Defence of "Lallans"', *The Scots Review*, 9/2 (1948), p. 23. [Return to Text]

36 Sydney Goodsir Smith, *A Short Introduction to Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Serif Books, 1951), p.30. [Return to Text]

37 Sydney Goodsir Smith, 'In Defence of "Lallans"', *The Scots Review*, 9/2 (1948). Also see by the same author *A Short Introduction to Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Serif Books, 1951) and 'Synthetic Analysis', *The Scots Review*, 7/9, 1946, p. 9. [Return to Text]

[38] *The Rut of Spring* [1949-50] remains unpublished apart from a few passages (Smith 1955, 1958), just as *The Jolly Beggars* [1960], *Culloden* [1962], *The Bull of Crete* [1964], *King Stobo* [c1960], The *Laughter of the Gods* [no date available], some of which have not received a performance. In Randall Stevenson, 'Scottish Theatre 1950-1980' in Cairns Craig (ed.) *The History of Scottish Literature*, Vol. IV: Twentieth Century, 2nd edition (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), pp.349-67. [Return to Text]

[39] Manfred Pfister, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.71. [Return to Text]

[40] David Purves, 'A Scots orthography'. *Scottish Literary Journal*, Suppl. 9 (1979), pp. 62-76. Also see by the same author 'The present state of Scots', *Chapman*, 41 (1985), p. 32f; *A Scots Grammar: Scots Grammar and Usage* (Edinburgh: Saltire Society, 1997) and 'The way forward for the Scots language', Forward Series 4 (Peterhead: Scottish Centre for Economic and Social Research, 1997). [Return to Text]

[41] Karl Inge Sandred, *Good or Bad Scots?* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1983). Also see A.J. Aitken, 'Bad Scots: Some Superstitions About Scots Speech', *Scottish Language*, 1 (1982), pp. 30-44; and 'Scots and English in Scotland' in Peter Trudgill (ed.) *Language in the British Isles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). [Return to Text]

[42] He uses the following archaisms in *The Puddok an the Princess*: *ahaud* 'on fire' (e20 S), *badlyke* 'unwell, ill, ailing' (la18-e20), *beild* 'to shelter' (la15-19), *binna* 'unless' (19-e20), *div* 'emphatic and interrogative for *dae*' (19-e20), *fasherie* 'trouble, annoyance' (la16-e20), *forsay* '(forsee) to overlook, neglect' (SND attests e19 Ags), *gruntils* '(contemptuous, of a person) the nose and mouth' (16-e20), *kemp* 'to strive, contend' (16-20), *kinrik* 'a kingdom' (la14-e20 latterly only literary), *kyte* 'the stomach, belly' (16-20), *lourd* 'heavy' (15-17), *mediciner* 'a physician' (la14-17), *ootlin* 'foreign, strange, distant' (la15-e20), *paction* 'an agreement, bargain, understanding' (16-e20), *pant-wal* '(the mouth of) a public well, fountain' (18-20 Bwk S), *sachless* 'without sense, silly, lacking drive or energy' (19-20 S), *sonsie* 'shrewd' (la17-e18), *stank* 'a moat' (e16), *weird* 'to ordain by fate, destine' (la16-e20), *whuff* 'to drive or carry by blowing' (19-e20), *whummil* 'to knock down, push over' (19-e20). [Return to Text]

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