

Editorial

Language choice and ideologies of identity

Ian Brown

This volume is the tenth of the *International Journal of Scottish Theatre and Screen*, including in that sequence its first three volumes as the *International Journal of Scottish Theatre*. After its launch under its original title in 2000 and three volumes published by Queen Margaret University, problems led to a hiatus in production until Kingston University and the Association for Scottish Literary Studies joined with Queen Margaret in a relaunch under the expanded title and remit in 2010-11. Since then, publication has been regular, despite occasional temporary glitches of the kind associated with producing an online journal. As Editor of *IJOST* and Co-editor with my colleague Dr Ksenija Horvat of *IJOSTS*, I have now seen through ten volumes and the time has come for me to stand aside. My Kingston colleague, Dr Trish Reid, will take over my co-editing role working alongside Dr Horvat from the next volume. It has been an enormous honour and pleasure to be part of this project and to work with the outstanding teams of editors – Ksenija Horvat, Trish Reid, Matthew Pateman, Simon Brown, Richard Butt, Steve Cramer and the late Bill Findlay – and the distinguished members of our International Advisory Boards who have supported *IJOSTS* through its first ten volumes.

To mark the occasion, I have been, in effect, guest editor of this volume. However, before I address its contents, it may be appropriate to reflect a little on developments in the journal since its foundation in 2000. A key one is the involvement since 2010 of a partnership of scholarly institutions in its publication rather than a single institution. This has provided a stability for the journal, where dependence on one single institution in its initial phase did not allow sufficient security for its uninterrupted survival. It is a stroke of good fortune that it was possible to relaunch through the current partnership arrangement, one which enabled us to migrate from a QM server to that of Ubiquity Press without endangering the future of the journal. A second key development has been the natural evolution of the journal to include screen within its remit. In fact, one earlier issue in 2002 included articles on television topics, so that the addition of 'Screen' to the title recognised a natural progression rather than a disruptive change. Thirdly, the occasional involvement of guest editors has allowed thematic issues, which are now, as with the last volume on Gaelic-language drama, able to provide concentrated collections of articles on coherent themes, without excluding one-off articles. Fourthly, the development of the journal has marked the increasing interest internationally in

Scottish theatre and screen as research topics. There is clear evidence to justify this last claim.

From the first, our Advisory Board included renowned international figures. Our first volume, including as it did two issues, was – judging by its content – more of a ‘Scottish’ journal than an ‘International’ one, except in aspiration. Of its nine peer-reviewed articles, five were written by contributors from Scottish institutions, two from institutions in the rest of the UK and two from abroad. The change represented by the make-up of this current volume is startling: of seven articles, only two are from Scottish institutions and one from the rest of the UK, while four are from overseas institutions, both American and European. The pattern is clear even if one looks across a range of volumes. The balance of articles’ origins in the first three volumes was: Scottish institutions 18 – Rest of UK 6 – Overseas 2. For the most recent three volumes, including this one, the distribution is: Scottish institutions 8 – Rest of UK 3 – Overseas 8. The change in distribution is clear and highlights the internationalism now prevalent in the journal’s authorial content. In percentage terms the shift is from a 69 percent preponderance of Scottish-based articles with only 8 percent from abroad and 23 percent from the rest of the UK to a roughly comparable 16 percent from the rest of the UK, but an emerging balance between Scottish-based material and that from overseas so that, in volumes 8-10, each of those sectors provided 42 percent of the articles. This marks a shift in interest and scholarly research into Scottish theatre and screen which is much to be welcomed. Perhaps *IJOSTS* has itself helped influence this welcome development. Given that particular context above all others, I am happy to hand over my responsibilities and offer my continuing colleague Ksenija Horvat and my successor Trish Reid best wishes for future volumes

This volume of the *International Journal of Scottish Theatre and Screen* follows the model inaugurated with volume 9 last year of a single annual volume with most of its articles relating to a main theme, but additional single articles on topics unrelated to that theme. The new model allows a focus in each volume on a particular theme, sometimes under guest editors, while not excluding free-standing articles by an overly exclusive thematic approach. Happily, it also permits a technically more efficient publication process. The main theme of this volume is language choice and ideologies of identity: five of its seven peer-reviewed articles focus on aspect of this theme.

The first article ‘Versions of ideological language and community identity in recent Scots-language drama’, explores attitudes to the use of Scots by playwrights since the

middle of the last century, identifying, in particular, changes in attitudes to the use of Scots in the 1970s. As the article observes, underlying its discussion 'is a recognition that language is profoundly a cultural artefact and its definition and usage intensely political'. It explores the ways in which the use of Scots – and varieties of Scots – reflect changes in the ideological implications of the plays written by Scottish dramatists over the last eight decades, while making a case for the re-evaluation of the experiments of Robert McLellan in the middle years of the twentieth century.

This article is followed by Maria Elena Capitani's 'The Sense of (Un)Belonging: David Greig's (Un?)Scottishness in *Pyrenees* and *Damascus*'. Capitani begins with the striking sentence: 'David Greig's biographical journey and theatrical trajectory blend his Scottish roots with wider transnational routes.' She develops an argument out of this helpful homophone and a close reading of Greig's plays under discussion to outline ways in which Greig's sense of working in – and, indeed, belonging to – a specifically Scottish cultural context, earlier elusive, has over time become more clearly, if subtly, delineated. Capitani recognises that Greig's exploration of issues of identity is never simple, but that his dramaturgy and approach to questions of '(Un)Belonging' have shown fascinating developments over the years.

After one article directly on ideologies of language use and another on aspects of identity and (un)belonging in plays by David Greig, the next three articles focus on the use of language and its ideological signification in the work of four specific playwrights.

The first of these is Gioia Angeletti's 'The Language of Resistance and the Power of the Female Voice in Sue Glover's *Bondagers* (1991)'. Angeletti guides the reader, through close attention to the language of Glover's play, to an appreciation of the thesis she persuasively develops, that 'language and gender politics are inextricably interlaced in this play'. She highlights the ways in which women's voices are foregrounded in the play, while men's voices are obscured, perceived only through the mediation of the women's perceptions and judgement of them. As Angeletti argues, the play's rhythmic language offers a means of constructing hierarchies of power, status and identity, which may or may not be stable over time.

Following Angeletti's close reading of Glover's play, the fourth article, by Andras Beck – 'The Domestication of Otherness and the Politics of Language in Jo Clifford's and Rona Munro's Versions of Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*' – also reads text closely. In doing so, Beck addresses the issue of domestication or foreignisation in the final translation

for playwrights translating into target languages. By adopting this approach, he is able to discuss the differing political and social contexts of the two translations he explores. This enables him, in turn, to draw attention to the quite different ideological underpinnings of each version, not least through the degree of domestication undertaken or not undertaken by Clifford and Munro.

The final article of this thematic group is Paula Sledzinska's 'Staging Contemporary Identities: National Theatre of Scotland's *Glasgow Girls* through the prism of Multimodal Discourse Analysis'. Sledzinska offers a clear exploration of the background and underlying cultural implications of this lively and powerful musical play. In doing so, she considers language in a commonplace linguistic sense, but also music as language and ideological signifier. Thus, she not only draws attention to the ideological implications of the play's language, but also the implications of the choice of musical modes for the political and social meanings embedded in the play. Her approach opens up refreshing perspectives on the ways in which the play's dramaturgical methods achieve their impact.

Two freestanding peer-reviewed articles complement the thematic articles on theatre subjects with their focus on different aspects of screen. The first of these is 'A Trip 'Doon the Watter' during the Glasgow Fair: Working Class Leisure Patterns and the Role of the Scenic Film at the Turn of the Century' by Samantha Wilson. Wilson explores ways in which film in its earliest years from the 1890s opened up horizons for working people, both by the ways it framed the possibilities of tourism and leisure activity and by the ways in which it might include workers from particular communities in film screenings. Wilson illuminates aspects of early film and its employment in Scotland which place it in the context of not only screen studies, but the study of tourism and its development. The second screen article, Alfonso Muñoz-Corcuera's 'Emerging Adulthood and the Peter Pan Generation in Damion Dietz's *Neverland* (2003)' offers a fascinating analysis of the context and content of one of the less well-known films inspired by and derived from J M Barrie's *Peter Pan*. Muñoz-Corcuera offers a detailed analysis of *Neverland*, its characterisation and structure and sets it in the broader framework of generational change and societal attitudes embodying differing conceptions of what is real and what is fantasy. In this, he draws to our attention one of the more quirky and challenging derivatives of Barrie's enduring myth of the boy who never grew up.

This volume's forum article is by Ksenija Horvat, offering a personal account of the ways in which over the last half century – in effect since the 1963 founding of the Traverse Theatre in James Court off Edinburgh's Lawnmarket, though for its first ten years it was not

necessarily a new writing theatre – support for new writing in Scottish theatre has developed. Dr Horvat offers a fresh overview of these developments and also takes the opportunity to address and correct a canard that has emerged about the calling of the meeting which established the Scottish Society of Playwrights in 1973, which has led to the misattribution of the initiative to the detriment of the reputation of the trio who actually instigated the meeting, Hector MacMillan, Ena Lamont Stewart and John Hall, and to clarify the process by which Playwrights Studio Scotland was established. Dr Horvat does a real service in clearing away some misunderstandings about these events and setting the record straight.