Eadar Dà Chànan: Self-Translation, the Bilingual Edition and Modern Scottish Gaelic Poetry

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Contents

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is all my own work and composition. Some arguments and notions presented in this thesis have developed from an MSc dissertation entitled 'Translator's Task, Translator's Trial – translating Scottish Gaelic Poetry', submitted to the University of Edinburgh in 2001.

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Introduction

Self-translation has become a firmly established translation practice in connection with contemporary Scottish Gaelic poetry, so much so that the corpus of contemporary Gaelic poetry might be more realistically understood as referring to a bilingual corpus of Gaelic originals and their English translations provided by the author.[1] This was of course not always the case. Rather, today's situation has to be seen as the result of a steady development over the past sixty years or so which began with initial attempts by Gaelic authors such as Sorley MacLean (Somhairle MacGill-Eain) and Derick Thomson (Ruaraidh MacThòmais) to enter into a professional dialogue with others involved with literary writing and appreciation in Scotland and beyond. During the 1930s and 1940s, working most intensely towards the publication of his renowned poetry collection *Dàin do Eimhir*, MacLean had close friends in Hugh MacDiarmid, Douglas Young, Robert Garioch and other influential Scottish poets, all of them highly aware of the importance and potential of the linguistic diversity within Scottish society. As a result, we find some of MacLean's poetry translated into Scots by his literary friends and colleagues. *Dàin do Eimhir*, which was finally published in 1943, could well have been published with a selection of Young's translations into Scots. Eventually, however, a selection of MacLean's own prose translations into English were printed at the end of the volume (Whyte, 2002, p. 37-8). This choice indicates an approach to Gaelic poetry publishing which was to become established over the following half century, namely to be inclusive towards the Anglophone world whilst maintaining authorial authority throughout the publication. Some years later, in 1951, the first collection by Thomson entitled *An Dealbh Briste* appeared. Thomson, the founder of the highly influential Gaelic publisher *Gairm* and the associated Gaelic periodical of the same name and later to become Professor of Celtic at Glasgow University, had a keen interest in placing contemporary Gaelic writing in the wider intellectual and aesthetic context of modern times. His own poetry publications show a development from offering a selection of English translations at the end of an otherwise Gaelic collection towards bilingual publications which give all poems *en-face* in Gaelic and

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[1] Note that throughout this thesis Gaelic refers to Scottish Gaelic rather than Irish Gaelic, the latter being referred to as Irish only.

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English whilst using English only for most paratextual features, in other words signifying a steady departure from Gaelic as literary medium for publication.

By the 1990s, the English version translated by the author had become a conventional feature in Gaelic poetry collections. This at least is suggested by prevailing publication practices which print the Gaelic and the English versions *en-face*, with no mention of the translation process and English as the favoured language for paratext, including titles as they appear on the spine of the book and introductions to the authors and their work on the back cover. The notion of authorisation commonly accredited to self-translation in combination with the *en-face* layout of the bilingual edition suggests a high degree of equivalence between the two texts. It is therefore likely that the English text will be read as the version of the poem which allows for the most direct and transparent access to the poem in Gaelic. Consequently, the English version translated by the author can indeed be argued to have acquired canonical status.

This thesis thus identifies the issue of self-translation in combination with the bilingual edition as a fundamental one to the discussion of Scottish Gaelic literature and translation. As yet, such a translation/publication format is genre-specific, in that it is for the most part only poetry which reaches a wider readership through the authors' own translations of their Gaelic work. As is apparent (see Chapter 2.3), the reason for providing facing English translations with Gaelic poetry are wide-reaching, ranging from the desire to invite both learners and native speakers of Gaelic to partake in the appreciation of modern literary works written in Gaelic to the desire to remind the Anglophone majority culture that 'we are still here', therefore reaching for a non-Gaelic-speaking audience. With Gaelic prose, however, the situation regarding translation could not be more different. As can be gathered from common publication formats, translation activity has not played a major role with Gaelic prose writing at all, with authors such as Iain Crichton Smith (Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn) and Norman and Alasdair Campbell (Tormod and Alasdair Caimbeul) writing for a Gaelic-only readership (whether real or ideal), ever since modern prose writing in Gaelic achieved greater prominence in the 1960s. The present boost to

Gaelic prose writing in the shape of the Ùr-Sgeul initiative continues and strengthens the monolingual approach to Gaelic prose publications to a quantitative degree never experienced before. Poetry, on the other hand, continues to be published bilingually, which poses certain questions. Why do authors of contemporary Gaelic poetry feel the need to translate, when Gaelic prose is published monolingually? Is translation a necessity or an excuse? Indeed, do the reasons given by authors and editors align with the impact of prevailing translation and publication format on the reception of Gaelic poetry? Does the difference in genre mean that Gaelic prose is more easily read than contemporary abstract poetry? Is translation an aid in crossing the barrier of a new literary aesthetics which entails inventive language use which is less embedded in context than is the case with prose? Finally, does the higher prestige accorded to Gaelic poetry over the centuries in comparison to prose makes it more likely to function as a cultural ambassador? These questions will feed into the present analyses of the specific translation phenomenon of self-translation in the specific literary context of Gaelic poetry at a specific point in time, covering the second half of the twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first.

Given that the common target language for Gaelic poetry is English, i.e. the neighbouring language of far greater cultural prestige, we are firmly in the context of an imbalanced intercultural relationship. This thesis, then, attempts to unravel the problem of translation in the minority literature context of modern Gaelic poetry, whilst contemplating possible consequences of prevailing translation practices and attitudes amongst authors, editors and publishers of Gaelic literary texts for the survival of Gaelic as a thriving language and literary medium. As Pascale Casanova observes with regard to extra-textual considerations with a majority of authors in small languages as part of their positioning in a wider literary market:

> The strategies of such writers – which are never implemented in a wholly conscious way – can […] be described as sorts of very complex equations, containing two, three, or four unknowns, that take into account simultaneously the literariness of their national language, their political situation, their degree of involvement in a national struggle, their determination to achieve recognition in their literary centres, the ethnocentrism and blindness of these same centres, and the necessity of making them aware of the difference of authors on the

periphery. Only by examining this strange dialectic, which authors on the periphery alone understand, is it possible to comprehend the issue of language in the dominated countries of the literary world in all its dimensions – emotional, subjective, individual, collective, political. (2004, p. 259)

In addressing a literature written in a minority language, we are obviously concerned with issues of language use and ideology. As Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o observes, a 'specific culture is not transmitted through language in its universality, but in its particularity as the language of a specific community […] with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world' (1986, pp. 15-16). Bridging the gap from the collective to the individual, Mikhael Bakhtin argues that 'each word […] is a little arena for the clash and criss-crossing of differently oriented social accents. A word in the mouth of a particular individual person is a product of the living interaction of social forces' (Morris, 1994, p. 58). It is the entanglement of collective and individual identities and realities for the author writing in Gaelic which will be probed in the present discussion, contemplating whether prevailing translation practices with Gaelic poetry give voice to this literature in expanding its focus beyond its original world or whether, in effect, this literature is silenced both at home and beyond. Any possible answer to this will depend on a chosen perspective. The focus adopted in this thesis is on the state of Gaelic as a literary medium within its own cultural environment rather than beyond.

Research into self-translation has up to now concentrated heavily on the author as a bilingual person and his or her attitude towards the texts. In a recent issue of *In Other Words*, Maria Fillipakopoulou argues in favour of an historicising approach towards the study of self-translation, focusing on questions addressing what she calls:

pressures relating to constraints of systematic nature, related, for instance, to languages of limited diffusion and their role vis-à-vis majority languages; [to] power differentials, shorthand for the real differences in prestige and impact between major and minor languages and literatures. (2005, p. 24)

In terms of translation studies theory, we are taking the 'cultural turn' by moving the focus of examination from translation as text towards 'translation as culture and

politics' (Munday, 2001, p. 127, as cited in Chapter 1.1.7). As Anthony Pym puts it, 'we would like to know more about who is doing the mediating, for whom, within what networks, and with what social effects' (2004, p. 3, as cited in Chapter 1.1.7). Given that established translation and publication dynamics cannot be seen in isolation from the socio-ideological conditions informing the nature of contemporary writing in Gaelic, both as a process and a product, these then are the very questions which have to be asked in order to scrutinise the translation dynamics that inform the existence of Gaelic literature as it is lived today.

Following an historicising approach, rather than adhering to the traditional normative approach to translation studies, entails that we are not merely concerned with the analysis of text-internal features. Rather, we need to consult historical evidence of publication and translation practices and critical writing, whilst reflecting such dynamics in the light of literary and translation studies on a theoretical level, before contemplating the actual relationship between the versions making up the bilingual Gaelic/English poetry pair. This thesis will thus follow a descriptive rather than a prescriptive approach to viewing a particular translation scenario. Chapter 1 aims to test the grounds of postcolonial literary and translation theory as appropriate conceptual framework for interpreting an intercultural communication which takes place between partners of unequal status in terms of their cultural and linguistic prestige. As Sherry Simon puts it, 'cultural traffic does not circulate freely about the globe'; rather, 'its flow is regulated by the existence and conditions of trade routes, the availability of willing vehicles and the needs and pleasures which cultural commerce caters to' (2000, p. 12). As a result, intercultural communication is 'not to be equated with the logic of the gift but with the rules of commodity exchange' (ibid., p. 12). With postcolonial studies, then, we are consulting a theoretical framework which is most concerned with scrutinising the power dynamics informing the negotiation of identities in the process of such an intercultural trade. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the critical debate on translation surrounding modern Gaelic literature, taking into account both published statements and questionnaire replies by those involved in the making and publication of Gaelic poetry. In Chapter 3 the thesis pays attention to the particular genre of translation at the heart of the

translation environment discussed here, i.e. poetry translation. In Chapter 4 the thesis investigates the particular type of translation we are witnessing with modern Gaelic poetry, namely self-translation. Bringing the different theoretical avenues together, Chapter 5 offers an interpretative view with regard to the impact of self-translation and the bilingual edition on the perception of texts published in such a format and with regard to wider-reaching implications for the development of Gaelic poetry as a genre appreciated by its own language community. Chapter 6 reflects theoretical considerations in the light of a comparative reading of the Gaelic/English self-translated poetry-pair. Throughout the argument, translation as an expression of difference rather than sameness emerges as the essential quality to intercultural communication, which, as an underlying paradigm, becomes even more instrumental in a minority language context. In that respect, it is not merely the aim to evaluate prevailing translation and publication practices in their effectiveness towards Gaelic poetry as an autonomously developing literary corpus, but, moreover, to re-evaluate translation as a consciously employed device in the formation of cultural identity, advocating translation environments which are beneficial towards Gaelic poetry as an independent literary genre which functions within its own speech-community. Scrutinising the phenomenon of self-translation in combination with the bilingual edition from a variety of possible and applicable perspectives, this thesis is of comparative interest to a variety of theoretical contexts such as postcolonial studies, minority translation studies, the study of self-translation and Celtic Studies.

1   Gaelic Scotland – A Postcolonial Site?

Iomallachd

Chan eil iomallachd sa Ghàidhealtachd ann –
le càr cumhachdach
ruigear an t-àite taobh a-staigh latha;
’s e luimead na h-oirthir
a shàraich na daoine
is a chuir thar lear iad
a tha gar tàladh an-diugh,
na làraichean suarach a dh’fhàg iad
cho miannaichte ri gin san rìoghachd.

Och, an iomallachd, càit a bheil thu?
Càit ach air oir lom nam bailtean,
sna towerblocks eadar motorways
far am fuadaichear na daoine
gu iomall a’ chumhachd,
an aon fhiaradh goirt nan sùilean
’s a chithear an aodann sepia nan eilthireach
 (a bha mise riamh an dùil
gum biodh an Nàdar air dèanamh àlainn).

Meg Bateman (1997, p. 72)[1]

One could ask whether contemplating theory is a fruitful endeavour in a context which depends for its very continuity on individual creative efforts, namely that of Gaelic poetry. Yet again, what is theory if not exploring different ways of thinking and adopting different perspectives in order to make sense of a given situation? With Gaelic poetry, then, postcolonial literary and translation theory might well offer insights which are helpful in aiding thinking about a literary environment which

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[1] ‘The Gàidhealtachd is not remote - / with a powerful car / the place can be reached within a day; / it is the bleakness of the coast / that vexed people / and sent them overseas / which attracts us today; / the petty ruins they left / as desired as any in the kingdom // Alas, remoteness, where are you / where but at the bare edge of towns / in towerblocks between motorways / where people are cleared / to the edge of power / the same sore squint in their eyes / that is seen in the sepia faces of the emigrants / (that I had always expected / Nature to have made beautiful)’ [my translation]; Note that throughout the thesis I provide translations in footnotes and brackets for quoted lines of Gaelic poetry. I am following an interlineal (Hervey *et al.*, 2000, p. 231) approach (to stay as close as possible to the Gaelic text). Translations are based on dictionary entries in Dwelly (1994), *An Stòr-dàta Bhriathrachais Gàidhlig* and MacBain (1982) and are not to be taken as transparent or definitive.

shows considerable signs of friction, given literary discussions evolving around issues such as the subject-matter appropriate to Gaelic poetry, the inferiority of the 'original' Gaelic writing compared to the English 'translation' prepared by self-translating authors, the need for translation to reach an audience both at home and beyond, the advantages and disadvantages of such translation dynamics (all of these issues are discussed in Chapter 2), or a dictionary-dependency on the part of contemporary writers, as hinted at in Alasdair Campbell's satirical story 'Visiting the Bard' (2003).

The following chapter will search for a meaningful theoretical framework in which to place and interpret the literary dynamics surrounding the corpus of Gaelic poetry. To start with, some ways in which Gaelic society has been influenced by the British colonial enterprise will be contemplated before exploring the usefulness of the postcolonial studies context for the examination of modern Gaelic literature, particularly poetry. It will be noted that although issues are raised within postcolonial studies which are of relevance to minority cultures and literatures within Europe, such as the importance of language in relation to cultural identity or the hybrid nature of literature in a post-colonial era due to the increasing reality of culture as a contact zone, these cultures are consciously excluded from the field of postcolonial literary studies as it is established in the English-speaking world.[2] Such an attitude has been justified on two bases, namely on political grounds (i.e. the minority cultures within Europe are too close to the colonising forces to be properly identified as the colonised) and on linguistic grounds (i.e. minority literatures which use languages other than English are excluded from the canon of works considered by Anglophone postcolonial literary studies). Nevertheless, thinking within the paradigms of postcolonial discourse is of importance to the present study, since we are seeking

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[2] Note that other than in quotations I am making a distinction between 'post-colonial' and 'postcolonial' throughout the thesis. I am employing the term 'post-colonial' as reference to the historically determined condition of the former colonized nations and cultures as unfolding in post-independence times taking into account both 'neo-colonial' and 'anti-colonial' dynamics. With 'postcolonial' I am referring to the theoretical framework that is 'postcolonial theory' which aims to scrutinise 'relations of domination' (Loomba, 1998, p. 19) between cultures and nations based on an understanding that the colonial enterprise has profoundly shaped the nature of the relationships between societies in today's world of economic and cultural globalisation. For a discussion of 'postcolonial' versus 'post-colonial' see Loomba (1998, pp. 18-19) or Ashcroft *et al.* (2000, pp. 186-92), also cf. 1.1.5 below.

insights from a field of study which inevitably is concerned with power structures present in the making of cultures. At the same time, this chapter will identify shortcomings of postcolonial literary studies with regard to the subject matter of this thesis. It will therefore be a natural step to progress to the narrower field of postcolonial translation studies which, not surprisingly, is more firmly concerned with the power relations between cultures and languages, given that translation is concerned with the creation of meaning across cultures and languages.

Given the specific sociolinguistic dynamics surrounding Gaelic poetry, the theoretical explorations of this chapter will move on to the more specific level of minority translation studies. Here the emphasis will be on the influence of translation in the shaping of inter-cultural relationships marked by highly asymmetric power relationships. During the course of this theoretical discussion, the concept of cultural diversity will emerge as an issue of paramount importance to the present research context. Thus, this chapter will end by making a case for the visibility of Gaelic poetry in the name of genuine cultural diversity.

1.1 Gaelic Literature and Postcolonial Theory

1.1.1 Historical Background

The late 18th and early 19th centuries witnessed a process known today as the Highland Clearances, which was in effect the out-migration, sometimes forced, of a majority of the population of the Scottish Highlands due to intensified sheep farming in the name of a more effective economic land use (Devine, 1999, pp. 176-78). According to Kenneth MacKinnon, for the Gaelic speech community this meant 'the removal of its heartland' as 'effectively this was to reorientate the linguistic geography of Scotland in reducing the Gaelic areas to the very fringes of northern and western coastal areas and to the Hebrides' (1974, p. 47). Yet, it was not economic exploitation alone which influenced the lives of the Gaelic population in a most profound way, as there was also an active interference with language use in the context of education. As Robert Dunbar explains, 'by the mid-nineteenth century, a fairly widespread network of charitable schools, mainly run by Protestant churches

or charitable institutions linked to them, operated through the medium of Gaelic in large parts of Gaelic Scotland' (2006, p. 4). In 1872, the establishment of state-funded education throughout Scotland, however, entailed the eradication of Gaelic from the medium of education pursuant to an Education Act which established English as the sole linguistic medium for teaching. As Dunbar summarises developments since then:

> A 1918 amendment to the Education Act, which has been carried forward in subsequent education legislation, including section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, provides for the teaching of Gaelic in Gaelic-speaking areas. However, the precise meaning of the terms 'teaching of Gaelic' and 'Gaelic-speaking areas' is unclear, and this provision has been of limited practical value; in particular, this legislative provision did not result in the development of GME [i.e. Gaelic Medium Education]. Although Gaelic was subsequently taught as a subject, usually through the medium of English, the pattern of state-supported English-medium education in Gaelic Scotland established in 1872 has generally had a significant and highly negative impact on the maintenance and intergenerational transmission of Gaelic.(ibid., p. 4)

Such education policy succeeded in rendering the Gaelic language largely invisible and inaudible in the class room and in effect ensured the integration of the Gaelic speech community into English-language Britain (MacKinnon, 1974, pp. 54-74, Dunbar, 2006, p. 4). Gaelic Scotland therefore had its share of what in postcolonial literary studies is identified as the 'two indivisible foundations of imperial authority - knowledge and power' (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1995, p. 1, citing Said, 1978, p. 32). As the editors of *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* explain:

> the most formidable ally of economic and political control had long been the business of 'knowing' other peoples because this 'knowing' underpinned imperial dominance and became the mode by which they were increasingly persuaded to know themselves [...] A consequence of this process of knowing became the export to the colonies of European language, literature and learning as part of a civilising mission which involved the suppression of a vast wealth of indigenous cultures beneath the weight of imperial control. (ibid., 1995, p. 1)

Dynamics paramount to the colonial enterprise are most certainly confirmed in our context as Gaelic society was collectively and strategically forced to integrate into a system of knowledge enforced by the very source of economic power.

1.1.2   Exclusion of European Minority Literatures from a Postcolonial
          Corpus: On Political Grounds

The term 'European' in the foregoing extract is critical. With postcolonial literary studies, we observe the apparent dichotomy between Europe as coloniser and non-European societies as colonised. In his article 'A Passage to Scotland: Scottish Literature and the British Postcolonial Condition', Berthold Schoene makes a convincing case for Scottish literature as post-colonial, arguing that works dealing with the effects of the Clearances such as Fionn MacColla's *And the Cock Crew* (1945) and Iain Crichton Smith's *Consider the Lilies* (1968) would make excellent samples of literary work to be analysed from a postcolonial perspective (Schoene, 1995, p. 109). More importantly, Schoene points towards the misconception of the British Empire as a homogeneous entity, as it is perceived by the authors of *The Empire Writes Back*, one of the key texts of postcolonial literary studies, who argue that:

> while it is possible to argue that [Irish, Welsh and Scottish societies] were the first victims of English expansion, their subsequent complicity in the British imperial enterprise makes it difficult for colonized peoples outside Britain to accept their identity as post-colonial. (Ashcroft *et al.*, 2002, pp. 31-32, cited in Schoene, 1995, p. 107)

Although the above statement ignores the differences in the colonial histories of Ireland, Wales and Scotland, it shows an awareness of the impact of British colonial forces upon these societies. Significantly, however, they are, by the writer's preferences, defined back into the homogeneous whole of Britain - again by outside forces, namely 'the colonized peoples outside Britain'. The attitude towards the corpus of literature written in Scottish Gaelic adopted by Anglophone postcolonial literary studies is thus a decisively shut door. Such an approach, however, denies the reality of a post-colonial existence, as lived by minority societies at the margin of

today's United Kingdom. For the centre of colonial power does not only conceive of the 'outsider' as those 'who roamed far away on the edges of the world' but also as 'those who (like the Irish) lurked uncomfortably nearer home' (Loomba, 1998, p. 107). As Edward Said argues, it is 'true [that] the physical, geographical connections are closer between England and Ireland than between England and India, or between France and Algeria or Senegal. But the imperial relationship is there in all cases' (1994, p. 275)

We might also argue that classifying nations into those that are colonisers and those who are colonised may depict the interplay between societies and sections thereof in too simplistic a manner. In her study of colonial and postcolonial discourse, Ania Loomba argues that 'in reality any simple binary opposition between "colonisers" and "colonised" or between races is undercut by the fact that there are enormous cultural and racial differences within each of these categories as well as cross-overs between them' (1998, p. 105) What is more, a simplistic binary perspective denies the collaboration of certain sections of the colonised society with the colonising force in most colonial contexts (Said, 1993, pp. 316-17). From a diachronic point of view, people who have suffered from colonial powers might themselves adopt colonial attitudes in a new social or geographical setting. In any case, ignoring 'tensions about power and subjectivity […] central to the study of colonialism' (Loomba, 1998, p. 43) amongst nations within Europe prevents the interpretation of these particular kinds of imbalanced power relationships in the light of postcolonial thought. Yet such an approach to critical analysis might well be beneficial for what, in some cases, have become minority cultures with minority languages at their cores

1.1.3 Gaelic in Scotland: Decline in Language Use

Looking at today's Gaelic Scotland, we have a community twice removed from state power with a minority language at its core which has frequently been doomed to occupy a space of no return. As a result, measures are needed that go far beyond mere language maintenance towards proactive language development. In a letter to Douglas Young dated 27 May 1943, just before the publication of his acclaimed poetry collection *Dàin do Eimhir* (MacGill-Eain, 1943), Sorley MacLean (Somhairle

MacGill-Eain) contemplates creative yet sensitive approaches towards the development of Gaelic vocabulary to ensure the language's relevance to all areas of modern life (MacGill-Eain, letters). By June, his mood had deteriorated dramatically:

> The whole prospect of Gaelic appals me, the more I think of the difficulties and the likelihood of its extinction in a generation or two. A […] language with […] no modern prose of any account, no philosophical or technical vocabulary to speak of, no correct usage except among old people and a few university students, colloquially full of gross English idiom lately taken over, exact shades of meanings of most words not to be found in any of its dictionaries and dialectally varying enormously (what chance of the appreciation of the overtones of poetry, except amongst a handful?). Above all, all economic, social and political factors working against it, and, with that, the notorious, moral cowardice of the Highlanders themselves. (ibid., 15 June 1943)

Some sixty-five years later, we have a much-shrunken Gaelic population, and what is highly important for Gaelic as a literary medium, we find that most of the native Gaelic speakers are really English readers, due to the continuous absence of Gaelic as a natural medium for reading and writing in both education and Gaelic society as a whole (Leirsinn, 1997, General Register Office for Scotland, 2005, HMIE, 2005, NicAoidh, 2006, p. 85). In an article discussing publication activities in twentieth-century Gaelic Scotland, Joan MacDonald notes that:

> although most Gaelic speakers could, if pressed, read any Gaelic text, most are not sufficiently at ease with the written word in Gaelic to enjoy the experience. Hence, there is still not a wide and willing market for a variety of Gaelic publications. (1997, p. 77)

Gaelic, however, is not naturally an oral language with inherent qualities which resist participation in the written medium; rather, it is simply underdeveloped with regard to the written medium, particularly in terms of reception.[3] As a result of the social history surrounding Gaelic communities, Gaelic did not enjoy the space granted to other languages such as German or English to develop its full potential according to the needs (i.e. modern vocabulary) and opportunities (i.e. the written medium) of

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[3] Here we have to acknowledge recent efforts in the shape of the Ùr-Sgeul initiative to boost Gaelic prose writing published in a monolingual format. These efforts have resulted in a number of highly publicised publications. For further discussion see 4.1.1 and 6.1.

modern life. We might want to acknowledge such dynamics the as rather pronounced consequences of a colonial past.

1.1.4   Exclusion of European Minority Languages from a Postcolonial Corpus: On Linguistic Grounds

Although control over language is clearly identified as 'one of the main features of colonial oppression', with language becoming 'the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of "truth", "order" and "reality" become established' (Ashcroft *et al*., 2002, p.7), postcolonial theory nevertheless seems reluctant to address the issue of language choice and subsequent language use. In the introduction to *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, the editors state that:

> the reader […] recognises, but does not directly address, the importance of the continuing body of work in indigenous languages. The 'silencing' of the post-colonial voice to which much recent theory alludes is in many cases a metaphoric rather than a literal one. […] Without endorsing a naively 'nativist' position post-colonial theory needs to be aware that it is engaged in a project which supplements rather than replaces the continuing study and promotion of the indigenous languages of post-colonial societies. (Ashcroft *et al*., 1995, p. 4)

There is a sense of parallelism here, with the new literatures in the language of the former coloniser and the literatures in the indigenous languages perceived to exist side by side without affecting each other's condition, and without authors having to make crucial choices answering social and political dynamics whilst moving between the two (see e.g. Egri Ku-Mesu, 1998). The academic field of postcolonial literary studies as conducted in the Anglophone world prefers to focus on the discussion of post-colonial writing in English and 'the process by which the language, with its power, and the writing, with its signification of authority, has been wrested from the dominant European culture' (Ashcroft *et al*., 2002, p.7).[4] Indeed, as Máirín Nic Eoin observes, considering language choices for Irish authors:

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[4] For the role of translation in this context see Bassnett and Trivedi, who point out that post-colonial writing is only identified as such if it is indeed published in English. Such publications may well

> The view that the language of the coloniser can be appropriated and creatively used for their own ends by the colonised is now almost an orthodoxy within post-colonial criticism, and attempts to argue in favour of the use, or return to, indigenous languages as literary media are often attacked as smacking of essentialism and narrow-minded nationalism. The question of language rights and language choices are [*sic*] seldom given due recognition and neither is the relationship between writers and the communities they seek to reach or represent. (2004, p. 128)

The world of literature in a post-colonial era favours the focus on an appropriation of the English language, making the presence of the colonised known through the medium of English, by adopting a variety of strategies such as the use of untranslated words from indigenous languages, the use of vernacular language, code-switching, syntactic fusion, interlanguage etc. (see Ashcroft *et al.*, 2002, pp. 58-76). In conclusion, post-colonial writers are celebrated for having 'contributed to the transformation of English literature and to the dismantling of those ideological assumptions that have buttressed the canon of that literature as an elite Western discourse' (ibid., 2002, p. 76). The subject of Anglophone postcolonial studies, i.e. the new literatures in English, is thus a medium highly beneficial to English. As Ashcroft *et al.* explain:

> because language is such a versatile tool, English is continually changing and 'growing' (becoming an 'english') because it realizes potentials which are then accorded to it as properties. Thus English is no different from any other language in its potential versatility. It merely appears more versatile because it has been used by a greater variety of people […] The application of a language to different uses is therefore a continuous process. And these uses themselves become the language. (ibid., 2002, p. 39)

Continuous development and expansion for English as a language, literature and culture is ensured. Given such dynamics, the hybrid in the shape of the new literatures in English might well develop into the 'hardier' (Nic Eoin, 2004, p. 128)

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involve translation. Such is the recognition potential of English that Bassnett and Trivedi ask the question: 'can one be thought to be post-colonial even before or without being translated into English' (1999, p. 11).

one compared to the inevitably hybrid texts written in today's minority languages (cf. 1.1.6.1 below for a discussion of the latter). Yet, what is the situation with the native languages of those very speakers who continue to contribute towards such wealth?

1.1.3.1   The Importance of Language or the Postcolonial Paradox

It is this crucial understanding of language development through the very use of language which lies at the heart of the following poignant remark by the Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, author of *Decolonising the Mind*, another key text of postcolonial studies:

> Why, we may ask, should an African writer, or any writer, become so obsessed by taking from his mother-tongue to enrich other tongues? Why should he see it as his particular mission? We never asked ourselves: how can we enrich our languages? How can we 'prey' on the rich humanist and democratic heritage in the struggle of other peoples in other times and other places to enrich our own? […] why not create literary monuments in our own language? (1986, p. 8)

We have a clear shift in focus away from English towards the indigenous language which is viewed in its own right, its needs understood in the light of its colonial past. As such, the development of a language in use is stressed, with 'language [being] both a product of that succession of the separate generations, as well as being a bank for the way of reflecting those modifications of collective experience in the production and reproduction of their life' (wa Thiong'o, 1997, p. 58, cited in Casanova, 2004, p. 275). Furthermore, wa Thiong'o makes the link between language as a self-sufficient system of communication shared by a community and the inevitable interdependencies between languages in the face of a shared past of colonial contact, when he states that 'in making their choices, Kenyan writers should remember that the struggle of our languages against domination by those of Europe is part of a wider historical struggle of the Kenyan national culture against imperialist domination' (ibid., p. 58, cited in Casanova, 2004, p. 275)[5]

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[5] Note here also the apparent dichotomy between 'the European languages' and the 'the colonised languages in Africa'. My objections to such a dichotomy hold, given the above argument. Here, however, it is important to note that there is a choice with regards to the language chosen by writers from a minority culture background.

The natural use and development of a language as shared by a speech community are not straightforward matters in a post-colonial era marked by a highly mobile world population, a similarly mobile world trade, and an increased ease of information exchange in the face of globalisation (Cronin, 2003), even although language is still frequently retained as one of the last stable and defining attributes of cultural difference in minority culture contexts today (cf. Cronin, 2005, p. 14 and Nic Eoin, 2004, p. 126-7). The very variables shaping the identity of any given society as a whole become more and more multi-faceted and therefore ambiguous (cf. Glaser, 2007).[6] In the following short paragraph, Loomba summarises some of the frictional language choice issues highlighted in the work of wa Thiong'o:

> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o invokes the multiple of connections between language and culture, and argues that colonialism made inroads into the latter through control of the former. For him, the 'literature by Africans in European languages was specifically that of the nationalistic bourgeoisie in its creators, in its thematic concerns and its consumption' (1986: 20). This literature was part of the 'great anti-colonial and anti-imperialist upheaval' all over the globe, but became increasingly cynical and disillusioned with those who came to power in once-colonised countries, and then bedevilled by its own contradictions because it wanted to address 'the people' who were not schooled in European languages (1986: 21). Ngũgĩ casts a division between writers who were part of these people and wrote in indigenous languages, and those who clung to foreign languages, thus suggesting an organic overlap between political and cultural identities and the medium of literary expression. (1998, p. 92, citing wa Thiong'o, 1986)

As Salman Rushdie recalls, at a colloquium in Sweden addressing the topic of 'Commonwealth Literature', wa Thiong'o 'expressed his rejection of the English language by reading his own work in Swahili, with a Swedish version read by his translator, leaving the rest of us completely bemused' (1991, pp. 62-63, cited in Casanova, 2004, p. 276).

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[6] This study looks specifically at the diverse spectrum of identities existing and emerging within contemporary Gaelic society whilst evaluating Gaelic as a language as a marker for different Gaelic identities.

It is interesting to observe that with regard to language use in Africa, the indigenous languages are more threatened by neighbouring African languages of considerably more prestige, with the European languages 'firmly entrenched as prestige speech varieties'. As Grenoble and Whaley explain, 'they are used by the ruling elite and in higher education and politics' and as a result 'colonial languages do not constitute significant aspects of Local or Regional contexts in many parts of Africa' (1998, p. 43). Writing in English, that is producing African literature in English, could thus fairly be argued to be somewhat elitist, with a clear orientation towards literary appreciation by the Western European and American world of literature. With minority languages in close proximity to English such as Irish, Welsh and Gaelic, however, the choice of English is far less an elitist one – it is an everyday reality. Although with some forms of literature one could of course argue that, taking into account traditional art forms practised by minority cultures, contemporary writing could be described as elitist in that it looks for inspiration and appreciation away from the indigenous audience (cf. Whyte, 2004, pp. 66, as discussed in 2.2.1). However, the choice of a majority language over lesser-used languages within Europe and vice versa has considerable implications for the state of the involved languages in terms of actual language use in all its nuances (i.e. vocabulary maintenance and development, fluency of communication, literacy skills etc.). The implications of language choices by writers from European minority backgrounds therefore have very real and immediate consequences for the continuation of language diversity in a post-colonial Europe, which in itself is a valid argument towards the inclusion of European minority literatures in the corpus discussed by postcolonial literary studies, if only to avoid the label 'elitist'. Having contemplated the appropriateness of viewing our present research subject from a post-colonial perspective, I am thus advocating the inclusion of Gaelic literature in the postcolonial studies corpus. However, it is not only the analysis of the dynamics and qualities of post-colonial literatures which makes postcolonial studies an attractive research area, but also a postcolonial awareness in thinking about literary dynamics between cultures. Therefore, I would now like to consider the usefulness of a postcolonial discourse to the context of the Gaelic literary world.

1.1.5   Post-Colonially Conditioned vs. Postcolonial Discourse

Apart from conceiving of post-colonial as a historically determined condition, Loomba argues that 'the word "postcolonial" is useful as a generalisation to the extent that "it refers to a *process* of disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome, which takes many forms and is probably inescapable for all those whose worlds have been marked by that set of phenomena"' (1998, p. 19, citing Hulme, 1995, p. 120). The argument is thus in favour of using the term 'postcolonial' in a 'descriptive' rather than an 'evaluative' way (ibid., p. 19). With regard to modern Gaelic poetry, then, I would like argue in favour of applying postcolonial reading strategies to the dynamics at the heart of the Gaelic literary world with a postcolonial discourse 'indicat[ing] a new way of thinking in which cultural, intellectual, economic or political processes are seen to work together in the formation, perpetuation and dismantling of colonialism' (ibid., p. 54), especially since the power dynamics defining the status of Gaelic as a minority language and literature are still at work

It is fair to argue that Gaelic literature has not positioned itself as consciously post-colonial in terms of content, or postcolonial in terms of form and critical discourse, in ways texts such as J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) or Hari Kunzru's *The Impressionist* (2002), two celebrated examples of their genre, have. However, traces of a (post)colonial conditioning are nevertheless to be found within the corpus of literature in Gaelic. Arguably, these traces are the continuation of a specific kind of discourse which has always been present in the border zone between Gaelic and Anglophone British society throughout its history of shared contact. Exploring a perspective on Gaelic society, we find the following manifestation of stereotypical perceptions of the cultural Other in the diary of Dr. Johnson, which incidentally gives an insight into the dimensions of societal changes in the Highlands and Islands as enforced by central British government, in the post-Jacobite era:

> There was perhaps never any change of national manners so quick, so great, and so general, as that which has operated in the Highlands, by the last conquest, and the subsequent laws. We came thither too late to see what we expected, a people of peculiar appearance, and a system

of antiquated life. The clans retain little now of their original character, their ferocity of temper is softened, their military ardour is extinguished, their dignity of independence is depressed, their contempt of government subdued, and the reverence for their chiefs abated. Of what they had before the late conquest of their country, there remain only their language and their poverty. Their language is attacked on every side. Schools are erected, in which English only is taught, and there were lately some who thought it reasonable to refuse them a version of the holy scriptures, that they might have no monument of their mother-tongue. (Chapman, 1970, p. 51)

Above and beyond the expectation of the cultural Other as 'people of peculiar appearance' with a 'system of antiquated life' which firmly moves within the boundaries of the established colonial discourse reiterating stereotypes of the Other as uncivilised and primitive whilst strangely attractive in their Otherness, there is a sense of strong of silencing the Other, of rendering their Otherness invisible, in the above extract. Hand in hand with such a view goes the perception of the native as inarticulate, which is another stereotypical observation by the self-declared cultural superior. That such attitudes have retained currency is revealed in the following remark by J. M. Bumsted in the Introduction to *The People's Clearance*, that 'attempting to deal with the motivations of a population which largely lacked the skills of writing and the ability of fluent self-expression is not an easy task' (1982, p. xiv). The silencing of the 'native other' finally results in their invisibility which in turn presumes an empty land, with neither people nor language rendering the land meaningful. This is one of the most pronounced colonial and indeed neo-colonial perceptions of the land belonging to others – the land that lies empty, in the waiting to be filled with meaning by the civilised (cf. Bassnett and Trivedi, 1999, p. 4):

It is the desolateness of this place that day after day fills my mind with its perspective. A line of cliffs, oblique against the sky, and the sea leaden beyond. To the west and south, mountains, heaped under cloud. To the north, beyond the marshy river mouth, empty grasslands, rolling level to the pole. (Malouf, 1980, p. 15)

In the first chapter of his novel *Imaginary Life*, Malouf certainly does not paint a very romantic picture of the desolate land that is his exile home amongst 'these dour people' (ibid., p. 17) who are the natives to this foreign land. Rather throughout the text there is a sense of a struggle towards filling the place with words and thus to

make it kind and inhabitable, in other words familiar. 'Iomallachd', the poem heading this chapter, also evokes the notion of the empty land. Bateman's poem, however, plays with it by revealing it to be clashing with the hidden history that made the place what it is to today, namely that of hardship and subsequent emigration, i.e. the ordinary history of human-kind, as the last few lines 'an aon fhiaradh goirt nan sùilean / 's a chithear an aodann nan eilthireach / (a bha mise riamh an dùil / gum biodh an Nàdar air dèanamh àlainn)' (the same sore squint in their eyes / that is seen in the sepia faces of the emigrants / that I had always expected / Nature to have made beautiful) suggest.

1.1.6   (Post-)Colonial Subject Matter within Gaelic Poetry: The Hybrid

Contemporary poetry in Gaelic shows quite a few traces of colonial friction, mostly concentrating, not surprisingly, on the issue of language. Take for instance the following poem by Myles Campbell (Whyte, 1991a, p. 34).

> Cogadh an Dà Chànain
>
> 'S mi an leanabh sàraicht',
> an dithis gam altramas.
> Fhuair mi 'n t-uachdar om mhàthair
> ach om mhuime bainne lom.
>
> Tha mo bheul sgìth de chìch na tè ud,
> an sgalag! an tràill!
> a tha air iomadh muinntireas fhaicinn,
> a' reic a bainne ris a' mhòr-shluagh –
> 's beag an t-iongnadh a cìoch a bhith cas.
> Tha a bainne geur a' dol
> tarsainn m' anail
> agus a' fàgail blas searbh na mo bheul.
> Cha ghabh ìm no càis' a dhèanamh dheth.
>
> 'S chan e sin,
> ach tha e sabaid
> airson uachdranachd
> air an stapag mhilis
> a tha daonnan nam bhràigh.[7]

---

[7] 'I, an oppressed child / with the two nursing me / from my mother I got cream / from my foster-mother but skimmed milk / My mouth is tired of the latter's breast / the servant! the slave! / who has

Dealing with the issue of identity, itself a very common theme in post-colonial literatures, there is a sense of nostalgia in this poem triggered by the 'sweet stapag' (a traditional Gaelic sweet made of meal, cream and milk) that is in danger of being assimilated into the despised 'foster culture'. There is indeed a tendency towards nostalgic essentialist perspectives on the past in contemporary Gaelic poetry. With regard to the Gaelic/English anthology *An Aghaidh na Sìorraidheachd* (Whyte, 1991a), Paul Barnaby observes 'grief, resignation, [and] rage in the face of Anglicisation' concluding that 'if the very existence of the anthology points to a continuing Gaelic tradition, the poets' work appears more an act of cultural defiance than national re-creation' (2002, p. 93).[8] Preoccupation with the pure essence of the past, however, becomes a fruitless endeavour if we share a perception of the nature of culture as suggested by Stuart Hall:

> The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as a simple, factual 'past' since our relation to it, like the child's relation to the mother, is always-already 'after the break' […] Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning. (1990, p. 226, cited in Gardiner, 1996, p. 36, Gardiner's brackets)

Inevitable and continuous change is the very subject matter of the poem *Am Bodach-Ròcais* (MacAulay, 1976, p. 165) by Derick Thomson (Ruaraidh MacThòmais) which results in a burning sensation which might well force a renewed positioning:

Am Bodach-Ròcais

An oidhch' ud
thàinig am bodach-ròcais dh'an taigh-chéilidh:
fear caol àrd dubh
is aodach dubh air.
Shuidh e air an t-séis

---

given plenty favours / selling her milk to the multitude – / no wonder her breast falls steeply / her milk runs sour / over my breath / leaving a sharp taste in my mouth / not butter nor cheese can be made from it / And that's not all / it is fighting / for supremacy / over the sweet stapag / that is in my heart yet.' [my translation]

[8] Paul Barnaby is referring to poems such as Meg Bateman's 'Alba fo Dhìmeas' (Whyte, 1991a, p. 10), Aonghas MacNeacail's 'fòrladh dhachaigh' (ibid., p. 124) and Anne Frater's 'Ar Cànan 's ar Clò' (ibid., p. 62).

is thuit na cairtean ás ar làmhan.
Bha fear a sud
ag innse sgeulachd air Conall Gulban
is reodh na faclan air a bhilean.
Bha boireannach 'na suidh' air stòl
ag òran, 's thug e 'n toradh ás a' cheòl.
Ach cha do dh'fhàg e falamh sinn:
thug e òran nuadh dhuinn
is sgeulachdan na h-àird an Ear,
is sprùilleach de dh'fheallsanachd Geneva,
is sguab e 'n teine á meadhon an làir
's chuir e 'n tùrlach loisgeach nar broillichean.[9]

This poem is the scene of what Mikhail Bakhtin describes as:

> a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation, or by some other factor. (Morris, 1994, p. 117)

This definition is Bakhtin's reply to the self-imposed question 'What is hybridization?'. Being 'one of the most recurrent conceptual leitmotivs in postcolonial cultural criticism' (Ben Beya, 2001), hybridity as a concept is frequently scrutinised by postcolonial critics. Yet, not surprisingly, the concern with the 'hybridised nature of post-colonial culture' is once more focusing on the new literatures in what has been identified as 'english' (Ashcroft *et al*., 2002, p. 39, as discussed above):

> lay[ing] emphasis on the survival even under the most potent oppression of the distinctive aspects of the culture of the oppressed, and show[ing] how these become an integral part of the new

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[9] 'That night / the scarecrow came to the ceilidh house / a thin tall black-haired man / with black clothes / He sat on the bench / and the cards fell out of our hands / There was a man there / telling a story about Conall Gulban / and the words froze on his lips / A woman was sitting on a stool / singing, and he took the beauty out of the music / But he did not leave us empty: / he gave us new songs / and stories from the East / and bits and pieces of the philosophy of Geneva / and he swept the fire from the middle of the floor / and put a burning fire into our hearts.' [my translation]; Note Thomson has 'Middle East' in the fourth last line of his self-translation into English, which might be the intended meaning for the Gaelic 'àird an Ear', however, the Gaelic only manages to denote 'eastern direction'. This, incidentally, is an example of hybridity (cf. 1.1.6.1), in that the Gaelic original is stretched according to the English text which, considering it appears in the shape of an en-face self-translation, attracts attention to itself as the site of the creative impulse and succeeds in asserting interpretative authority over the original Gaelic (for further discussion see Chapter 6.2).

formations which arise from the clash of cultures characteristic of imperialism. (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1995, p. 183)

Hybridity is thus a tool that 'subverts the narrative of colonial power and dominant cultures […] by the very entry of the formerly-excluded subjects into the mainstream discourse' (Ben Beya, 2001). As such, it is a conscious subversive effort. Yet hybridity could be conceived of in a rather more inevitable way. As Michaela Wolf puts it, 'cultural hybridity is produced at the moment of the colonial encounter when *self* and *other* are inseparable from mutual contamination by each other' (2000, p. 134, referring to Bhabha's understanding of hybridity). In what follows the question will thus be asked how the concept of hybridity relates to the specific literary context of Gaelic poetry.

1.1.6.1   The Subversive Hybrid vs. the Inevitable Hybrid: Towards Heteroglossia

Adopting a perspective on the politically and culturally dominated, the subversive hybrid becomes the inevitable hybrid. With contemporary Gaelic poetry, the hybrid character of the medium becomes undeniably visible through the physical *en-face* presence of English in Gaelic poetry publications (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of this publication practice and Chapter 6 for a comparative reading of the bilingual Gaelic/English poetry corpus). Yet much more inevitable and less visible is the phenomenon of hybridity as literary reality during the process of creative writing and reading given the bilingual and bi-cultural existence of both authors and readers (as discussed in Chapters 2 and 5). Gaelic poetry has indeed been famously described as 'English verse in Gaelic' (MacInnes, 1998, p. 342, also see Chapters 2.2.5 and 5.3.2.3 for further discussion).[10] To conceive of contemporary poetry in Gaelic in such a way, however, establishes a dichotomy in thinking which is in danger of denying a whole world of influences on Gaelic poets and their writing. Here, the

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[10] Note Nic Eoin's observation with regard to the inevitable nature of hybridity in an Irish literary context: 'Accusations of *"Béarlachas"*, of the use of non-native structures, of idiom and metaphor borrowed from English, of unnatural coinings, have occurred in every generation. The existence of such Englishisms merely reflect one simple linguistic fact: that Irish has been subject for centuries to the influence of English and that its survival as a living language has occurred in a situation of active and unequal language-contact' (2004, p. 135).

work of poets such as Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh, with his Gaelic translations of haikus from various languages comes to mind, or Rody Gorman and his poetic engagement with the work of a variety of international poets (see *rodygorman*). We might furthermore want to consider Gaelic poet Christopher Whyte, whose most recent and as yet largely unpublished work shows traces of a very intimate literary engagement with the original writings of poets such as Joseph Brodsky, Luis Cernuda, Miklós Radnóti or Marina Tsvetaeva, which Whyte encourages to feed back into his own poetry in the shape of epigraphs, direct allusions and, no doubt, more elusive lyrical responses resulting in a kind of lyrical conversation.[11]

At this point, I would like to refer once more to the concept of hybridity. Mikhail Bakhtin, whose theoretical explorations are deeply concerned with the creation of meaning through language, believes that:

> hybridization is one of the most important modes in the historical life and evolution of all languages. We may even say that language and languages change historically primarily by means of hybridization, by means of a mixing of various 'languages' co-existing within the boundaries of a single dialect, a single national language, a single branch, a single group of different branches or different groups of such branches […] .(Morris, 1994 p. 117)

This argument is supportive of the argument by wa Thiong'o towards the shift of literary attention towards enhancing indigenous languages through welcoming the riches of other languages and cultures, thus adopting a perspective which perceives culture inevitably as 'a complex history of intercultural interdependence rather than a straightforward narrative of cultural independence' (Cronin, 2005, p. 17). Labelling contemporary Gaelic poetry as 'English verse in Gaelic', therefore, is saying 'this is not Gaelic', without asking what it is or trying to trace the influences on these literary texts and what they might have to offer to the potential reader. What is important, however, is to note that, whatever the influences upon it, with poetry written in Gaelic, the language that is being used and shaped is Gaelic. We might

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[11] Note, that four of Whyte's most recent poems were published in 2006 and 2007 in issues 6 and 7 of the journal *Gath*.

therefore argue that rather than reading 'English verse in Gaelic', we are in the presence of a rather positive translation environment, namely that of heteroglossia.

I am favouring the term heteroglossia over hybridity (both are used by Bakhtin and both I take to mean the many voices in the one text) since with the influence of postcolonial studies the term hybridity is, as we have seen, too occupied already to denote the influences on the new literatures in English.[12] The term heteroglossia then allows for an alternative focus, namely that on the inevitable new influences on texts in lesser-used languages. What is more, it is based on the Bakhtinian understanding that 'every utterance contains within it the trace of other utterances' and foregrounds the coming together of different social voices in the one text (Morris, 1994, p. 249). This itself is significant, since it raises the awareness that with the influences on modern (i.e. from the 1930s onwards) and more contemporary poetry in Gaelic, the hybrid nature of the poetry is not merely driven by linguistic influences from outwith the world of Gaelic ethno-linguistic spheres, but it is also due to different social backgrounds asserting their shaping influence on the texts (i.e. the urban, the abstract intellectual, the non-native, the European etc.).

1.1.7   Translation as a Tool towards the Revitalisation of the Target
              Language

As the case has been made by postcolonial studies, it is the language receiving the new influences which is the beneficiary of such experimental innovation. Similarly, translation itself is often defined as a source of enrichment for the target language, literature and culture, used at times as a deliberate tool towards cultural revitalisation.[13] Acknowledging the colonial condition for an Irish context with reference to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Cronin observes that 'the

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[12] Note however Cronin (2003, p. 154) who employs the term of heteroglossia to denote translation practices which are a conscious efforts to subvert established literary Anglophone discourse in an effort to create an alternative Hiberno-English literary identity.

[13] A prominent example is that of the conscious efforts towards the development of literary stylistics and the literary canon by German authors during the romantic period (cf. Berman, 1992, Casanova, 2004, p. 14). For this idea in a postcolonial context see Vieira, 1999 which considers the invigorating impact of translation on Brazilian writing and the cannibalistic metaphor which sees translation as 'blood transfusion, where the emphasis is on the health and nourishment of the translator' (Bassnett and Trivedi, 1999, p. 5).

language of the public domain, of power and intellectual influence, was English. In translation terms, this implied that the major target language, the language of public, prestigious and politically effective translation was English' (1996, p. 92). As Cronin explains:

> In order to counter erroneous, Anglocentric views of Irish history and literature, it was felt necessary to demonstrate, using the evidence of Irish texts, that certain received notions with respect to Irish culture were based on misrepresentation and falsehoods. The language of public debate under the new dispensation was English and the evidence, therefore, had to be made available in English. A paradoxical consequence of translation activity in this colonial context was that the scholars and translators who were most to the fore in defending the intrinsic value of native Irish language and culture made a significant contribution, through translation, to the strengthening of the English language in Ireland and to the marginalisation of Irish in the public life of the country. (ibid., p. 92)

Bridging the gap to contemporary times, Pól Ó Muirí argues with regard to translation of contemporary Irish poetry into English that 'translation, then, is to provide new material for English poetry. It is to be a bridge from "us" to "them"' (1993, p. 15). With Gaelic poetry, the direction of translation which has increasingly been favoured over the past decades is out of Gaelic rather than into it. What is more, it is the neighbouring majority language English which has become the most established target language of choice, with bilingual *en-face* editions as the firmly established preferred publication format for Gaelic poetry. Consequently, Gaelic poetry has hardly found itself occupying a literary space without the presence of English in terms of primary, paratextual and intertextual literary appreciation over the past decades (see Chapter 2). Considering this, the notion of literature in the contact zone as established by postcolonial thinking is revealed to be of considerable relevance with regard to the specific literary environment this thesis is concerned with. In what follows the notion of the contact zone will be considered more closely.

1.1.8   Writing and Translating Gaelic Poetry: Literature in the Contact Zone

As Wilson McLeod observes, 'the role of translation is fundamental to contemporary Gaelic poetry, for matters have reached the stage where hardly any volume of Gaelic

poetry is published without accompanying *en face* English translation' (1998, p. 151). We are firmly in the contact zone, a concept established by Mary Louise Pratt in the context of postcolonial literary criticism. In an article subtitled 'Border Writing in Quebec', translation studies scholar Sherry Simon celebrates the contact zone as a creative space where translation and interlingual writing meet. She defines it as a 'place where cultures, previously separated, come together and establish ongoing relations' (1999a, p. 58). Accepting that 'historically, these zones have grown out of colonial domination', she asserts that 'increasingly, however, we find that Western society as a whole has turned into an immense contact zone, where intercultural relations contribute to the internal life of all national cultures' (ibid., p. 58). She re-evaluates the very activity of translation in today's world, stating that 'the place of the translator is no longer an exclusive site. It overlaps with that of the writer and, in fact, of the contemporary Western citizen' (ibid., p. 59). If we look back to Pratt, however, we find the contact zone defined as 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today' (1999, p. 584). Revealingly, McLeod interprets prevailing publication practices of Gaelic verse as 'reflection of and metaphor for the decline of Gaelic as living language' (1998, p. 151, this point will be discussed further in Chapter 2.2.4) – a decline which is the real manifestation of asymmetrical power relations during the 'aftermath' of colonial encounters within Britain (as discussed above in 1.1.1). I would like to suggest, therefore, that the contact zone as a concept is relevant to the situation of Gaelic poetry in a twofold way. First of all, Gaelic poetry occupies a bilingual literary space which has effects both on writers and the creation process and on readers and the reception process. Secondly, the effects of an existence in the contact zone has a profound impact on the actual primary texts that make up Gaelic poetry, namely the Gaelic/English poetry pair with regard to each text individually and in relation to each other. In Chapter 6, a comparative reading of Gaelic poems and their English counterparts as resulting from self-translation will highlight such effects by examining the relationship between the two texts as they appear on the page. Furthermore, it will be considered

how dynamics have shifted in that relationship due to changing socio-linguistic conditions (see Chapter 6.2).

Moving away from text-internal qualities by considering the literary space surrounding Gaelic poetry, that is viewing the Gaelic literary world in the light of postcolonial discourse, we are in fact taking what has been named within translation studies as the 'cultural turn'. We are moving away from the notion of translation as 'purely an aesthetic act', with 'ideological problems' being 'disregarded' (Bassnett and Trivedi, 1999, p. 6). In other words, the focus of examination is moving from translation as text towards 'translation as culture and politics' (Munday, 2001, p. 127, also see Gentzler, 1998). Over the past decades, translation studies theory is increasingly concerned with 'historicizing the phenomenon of translation itself' (Lefevere, 1998, p. 12). The focus is on the dynamics of translation as intercultural mediation rather than on normative evaluations of texts in translation. Michael Cronin argues towards understanding 'translation in all its dimensions as cultural, because culture is about a whole set of human activities, not one subset that is privileged by the gaze of the commanding other' (1998, p. 155). Consequently, as Anthony Pym puts it, 'we would like to know more about who is doing the mediating, for whom, within what networks, and with what social effects' (2004, p. 3, see Chapter 5 for concluding remarks). As Maria Filippakopoulou recently highlighted, for the study of self-translation this entails abandoning the inner spheres of the author's intentions and practices and posing questions instead with regard to extra-textual motivations of the self-translating author and the consequences of such choices for the appreciation of a minority literature (2005). For the study of self-translation with a literature written in a minority language, such an approach is essential towards an understanding of the literary and social dynamics at work. Let us now, however, return to translation in general, considering the role and impact of translation on intercultural negotiations as perceived by those translation studies scholars who have taken the aforementioned 'cultural turn'.

1.1.9   Translation as Intercultural Communication

Schäffner and Adab clearly advocate an understanding of translation as intercultural activity, arguing that:

> the concept of culture as a totality of knowledge, proficiency and perception is fundamental to any approach to translation. If translation is defined as source text induced text production, translation into a foreign language will always be an instance of intercultural communication. The translator will have to bridge the gap, small or large, between two cultures. Culture is to be understood not in the narrower sense of man's advanced intellectual development as reflected in the arts, but in the broader anthropological sense of all socially conditioned aspects of human life. (1997, pp. 328-29)

Schäffner and Adab thus place translation in a wider anthropological context. Wolf expands on this point, observing that 'when "translating between cultures" there is a lot of overlap between ethnography and translation, ethnography being understood as a part of anthropology, and therein mainly as an act of representation or rather textualization of something observed' (1997, p. 123). In order to illuminate the fruitful potential of such interdisciplinary discussion, I would like to invoke the definition of culture as established by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz:

> The concept of culture I espouse […] is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning. (1993, p. 5)

Geertz thus understands culture as being incessantly involved in a process of being reshaped by each individual member of that culture. A further insight we gain from Geertz' argument is that culture is not a static object leading an independent existence ready for us to pay attention to it, use it, or ignore it if needs be, but rather a dynamic concept which is constantly being re-interpreted by individuals finding themselves at certain intersections of such 'webs of significance'. As mediator between cultures, then, the translator too is such a creative, shaping and interpreting force. Such an understanding of the translator's role is significant in the specific

context of this thesis, given that translation is performed mostly by the authors of the original text and therefore often seen as an activity of secondary nature to original writing, as questionnaire replies by Gaelic authors addressing their motivations with regard to original writing in Gaelic and self-translation into English reveal (as discussed in Chapter 2.3). What is more, the mediation between two cultures rarely occurs between two cultures of similar standing in terms of cultural, social and political prestige. With that being the case, the role of the translator as conscious mediator becomes even more pronounced. Let us now pay attention to how translation studies deals with the asymmetric nature of intercultural relationships.

1.1.9.1   Translation and Asymmetric Power Relationships between Cultures

The meeting of cultures, which translation always is, is inevitably informed by the differing levels of cultural prestige. Naturally, as translation studies scholar Tejaswini Niranjana believes, 'in a postcolonial context the problematic of *translation* becomes a significant site for raising questions of representation, power, and historicity' (1992, p. 1). As Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi put it 'translation is not an innocent, transparent activity but is highly charged with significance at every stage; it rarely, if ever, involves a relationship of equality between texts, authors or systems' (1999, p. 2). Niranjana develops the argument, explaining that 'translation […] produces strategies of containment. By employing certain modes of representing the other – which it thereby also brings into being – translation reinforces hegemonic versions of the colonized, helping them acquire the status of […] objects without history' (1992, p. 3). According to Maria Tymoczko, with postcolonial translation theory 'the discourse about translation and power reached a qualitative new level' since 'it is one of the few viable contemporary theoretical or critical approaches that actually deal overtly and concretely with oppression and cultural coercion, issues that command so much intellectual attention at present' (2000, p. 32) Thus, translation is vitally important in relation to identity formation and cultural representation (ibid., p. 31). Simon emphasises the value of translation studies research towards an understanding of power relationship between cultures, believing that 'translation research maps out the intellectual and linguistic points of

contact between cultures, and makes visible the political pressures that activate them' (Simon, 1996, p. 136). Translation research which has thus taken the 'cultural turn' not only shows up colonising practices translators have been involved in over centuries (cf. Venuti, 1995), but raises an awareness of issues with regard to power relations at the heart of translation *per se*. Yet, just as with postcolonial literary theory, we might find that with our particular translation context of Gaelic poetry, we might not altogether be at home with postcolonial translation theory.

1.1.9.2   Postcolonial Translation Studies: As Exclusive as Postcolonial Literary Studies?

In order to see where the discrepancy between the present object of study and the field of postcolonial translation theory lies, it is necessary to recall Niranjana's argument as referred to above. As she states herself, it is her concern as translation studies theorist to 'probe the absence, lack, or repression of an awareness of asymmetry and historicity in several kinds of writing on translation' (1992, p. 9). Cronin, who has devoted extensive research to the circumstances of translation in Ireland, however, observes that *Siting Translation*, the publication in which Niranjana presents her research:

> bears eloquent testimony to the continued operation of the ahistoricity, exclusion and essentialism it so deplores in conventional translation theories and colonial narratives. Throughout the study references are repeatedly made to 'European languages' (p. 164), 'European descriptions' (p. 166), European attitudes, narratives and values. There is no attempt made to 'account for the asymmetry and inequality of relations between people, races, languages' in Europe itself. The history of the evolving power relationships between the many languages in Europe is ignored and we are presented with the ahistorical, essentialist concept of 'Europe' with its implicitly homogenous translation strategies. (1995, p. 85, citing Niranjana, 1992)

Hence, postcolonial translation theory shows traces of the same exclusive approach as we have noted with postcolonial literary theory in that it defines Western culture as a homogeneous whole with no acknowledgement of the minority cultures within. As such, we can benefit from the study of postcolonial translation theory in

becoming aware of the socio-political environments for translation, with translation understood as being vital in the representation and subsequent appreciation of cultures. Furthermore, we have noted the importance of the translator as mediator in such translation environments. Yet, we are yet in need of a theoretical home for our particular translation environment of Gaelic poetry, which is marked by its highly asymmetrical relationship to the majority language English and its associated cultural 'webs of significance' in terms of linguistic and cultural status. It is, therefore, fruitful at this stage to pay attention to the specific research field of minority translation studies.

1.2   The Study of Translation and Minority

Translation studies has adopted a more inclusive approach towards the analysis of power relations as they inform translation processes by increasingly paying attention to the concept of 'minority'. As we have noted above, postcolonial translation studies bears traces of a similarly exclusive approach towards European minority cultures as we have already witnessed with postcolonial literary studies. Scholars researching the field of translation in a minority context could indeed be said to pursue their work as a reaction to such exclusive approaches. At the heart of their research lies the realisation that there is a need to address forceful underlying power dynamics within society as such and between cultures of different standing in terms of access to mainstream networks of cultural acknowledgement and appreciation. In order to consider the appropriateness of minority translation studies to our present research context, it will be beneficial to look into the definition of 'minority' first of all.

1.2.1   What is Minority?

Lawrence Venuti, one of the most prolific scholars concerned with translation in a minority context, defines the concept of minority as follows:

> I understand 'minority' to mean a cultural or political position that is subordinate, whether the social context that so defines it is local, national or global. This position is occupied by languages and literatures that lack prestige or authority, the non-standard and the

non-canonical, what is not spoken or read much by a hegemonic culture. Yet minorities also include the nations and social groups that are affiliated with these languages and literatures, the politically weak or underrepresented, the colonized and the disenfranchised, the exploited and the stigmatized. (1998, p. 135)

Venuti's definition, which views minority from a hegemonic perspective, raises awareness of the diversity of contexts in which minority becomes an issue. Similarly, there is an equal variety of translational contexts, i.e. relating to a people, a culture, a language, a gender, a class etc., in which the awareness of minority will influence our understanding of translational action. Most notably, for instance, minority translation studies is concerned with gender and feminist issues. Another field of interest is the treatment of camp literature in translation (cf. Venuti, 1998). As such, cultural minorities are in a constant struggle to raise their profile, which implies that their status as minority is understood to be negotiable and flexible. This can only happen if, as Venuti explains, 'the terms "majority" and "minority" are relative, depending on one another for their definition and always dependent on a historically existing, even if changing, situation' (ibid., p. 135). As Michael Cronin states, '"minority" is the expression of a relation not an essence' (1995, pp. 86-87).

With regard to minority languages, Cronin further states that this relation can manifest itself in two forms, namely 'diachronic' and 'spatial'. Defining both relationships, he explains that:

> the *diachronic* relation that defines a minority language is an historical experience that destabilises the linguistic relations in one country so that languages find themselves in an asymmetrical relationship […] the position of a language changed from majority to minority status as a result of political development over time […]. Languages that derive their minority status from *spatial* realignments find themselves in close proximity to countries where the language has majority status. Thus, in terms of opportunities for translators, publishing outlets for translations, readers for translated works and the proper development of translation studies, the situation [for spatially determined languages] is markedly different from the position of languages whose status is diachronically determined and do not have a larger linguistic hinterland that provides a source of *patronage* notion for translation activity. (1995, p. 86, his italics)

Both kinds of relations have very distinct implications for the reality of translation (both as a process and as a product) of and for a minority as such, and both have to be analysed on the basis of their specific minority circumstances. With regard to the research field of this thesis, then, the minority character of Gaelic can be defined in its diachronic relation to its past. As such, we are concerned with the forces which have led to the destabilisation of Gaelic as a language and thus as a literary medium. With regard to minority language translation, then, I would like to argue that an understanding of minority as a relative, dynamic and, therefore, changeable phenomenon is highly enabling, in that it allows for a proactive attitude towards 'altering the state' of minority positively and productively. Here the role of translation has to be carefully considered for, as we have already noted, translation is not innocent. Conceiving of translation in this way is highly significant in the context of minority literature as discussed in the following section.

1.2.2 Minority Translation: A Double Edged Sword

As Cronin argues, this 'unequal relationship between a major and a minority language […] makes conventional approaches to translation problematic' (1996, p. 185). In fact, translation itself becomes a double-edged sword for minorities. On the one hand, every minority language group depends for its daily survival on the practice of translation as a tool to communicate with the wider world. As Venuti argues, such communication is informed 'by the need to traffic in the hegemonic lingua francas to preserve political autonomy and promote economic growth' (1998, p. 137). On the other hand, translation endangers the survival of the minority language, in that it inevitably strengthens the majority language in its oppressive character, while confining the minority language to the margins of a linguistic community, finally pushing it into disappearance. As Cronin succinctly puts it, 'translation is both predator and deliverer, enemy and friend' (1998, p. 148). He illustrates his point by referring to the example of bilingual Irish/English publications of modern Irish poetry:

> The translators and editors of translation anthologies defended their
> work on the grounds that the translations would bring the work of

Irish-language poets to a wider audience […]. The acceptance of translation by many prominent poets in the Irish language could be seen as an endorsement of a policy of openness, delivering poets in a minority language from the invisibility of small readerships. However, the target-language, English, was not innocent. In a situation of diglossia where the minority language is competing for the attention of the same group of speakers, Irish people, then translation cannot be divorced from issues of power and cultural recuperation. (1995, p. 92)

With many minorities the language of reading and writing as the result of cultural colonialism will be the language of the coloniser, i.e. the neighbouring majority language. As a result, the minority language is confined to the spheres of oral communication. Hence, the task of competing for visibility with the majority language on the pages of literary publications might well be an overwhelming, if not an impossible one.

1.2.3   Invisibility of Minority

Pointing to what he calls the 'otherwise excellent *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*' (Baker, 1998) Cronin notes that:

there is no single, separate entry for translation and minority languages. There are informative and insightful historical entries on languages that have at various stages occupied a minor position in world culture but the absence of a specific theoretical focus on the translation problematic for minority languages is significant […] The silence is all the more surprising in that minority-language cultures are translation cultures *par excellence*. (2003, p. 139, his italics)

Similarly, the publication that could be called the handbook for translation studies students and scholars, Jeremy Munday's *Introducing Translation Studies* (2001) has no single entry for minority translation. Cronin's work is indeed acknowledged, but under the culturally specific heading 'The Irish Context', which, interestingly enough, given the above discussion with regard to postcolonial studies and its relation to European minority languages, is embedded within the chapter on postcolonial translation theory (ibid., p. 137-38).

Recalling Venuti's definition of minority, we are already aware of the 'lack of prestige or authority' attached to it. Minority equals 'the non-standard', 'the non-canonical', it *is* 'what is not spoken or read much by a hegemonic culture'. Considering that statistics show substantial evidence for translational activity from English – a language which might be considered as the quintessential majority language – into other languages, whereas very little translational activity can be registered from other languages into English (cf. Cronin, 2003, pp. 133-34), and keeping in mind the size and, therefore, inevitable influence of the English language book market (see Venuti, 1995, pp. 12-17), we realise the active impact translation has on the formation of the canon as such. Such influence reveals itself even more dramatically in the under-representation, and hence invisibility, of minority language works in the canon from the perspective of the centres of mainstream worldwide publishing. The character of intercultural communication appears to be one-way.[14] As Venuti argues, 'these translation patterns point to a trade imbalance with serious cultural ramifications' (ibid., p. 14). With his recent publication *Modern Scottish Poetry*, Whyte (2004) has taken a novel approach towards viewing the corpus of poetry written in Scotland over the past decades by taking the Gaelic poets out of their ghetto existence of small sub-chapters on to each and every relevant page, on par and critically intertwined with their fellow poets who chose to write in English and Scots. Arguably, this has raised their profile by treating them inclusively rather than exclusively from an Anglophone literary criticism perspective.

The invisibility of minority language works in the literary canons of hegemonic cultures is inevitably accompanied by the invisibility of the minority language itself. Once more, let us consider the English language book market. Even if only a relatively small proportion of works find their way to an English-speaking audience via translation, paradoxically, the market for the majority language audience seems

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[14] Note, that this argument does not contradict the one made in Chapter 5, which suggests that writing in a minority language can lead to more public attention than writing in a proximate major language. The label 'Celtic', for instance, might well succeed in winning considerable public and market attention internationally (see for instance Chapter 6.2. with regard to a German market for Gaelic literature, also cf. Chapter 5.2.6 for a discussion of the attractiveness of minority culture output to majority culture audiences). On the whole, however, the intercultural communication occurs unidirectionally, namely out of English, with literature as much as with other forms of media such as popular music, television or cinema.

to be a highly attractive and financially viable platform for minority language authors, so that minority language writers are forced to publish their work in majority-language translation. Furthermore, the realities with regard to financial viability of minority language works have led to the frequent practice of self-translation amongst minority language writers, which is in danger of rendering the very process of translation invisible, especially where publication practices support such invisibility by failing to acknowledge translation as part of the publication. That in turn renders the translator invisible, which is alarming given the struggle amongst translators and those involved in translation studies research to raise the very visibility of the performer of translation as a creative agent (cf. Venuti, 1995). Considering the phenomenon of self-translation in a minority language context, it will thus be important to see how minority translation studies views the role of the translator.

1.2.4   The Role of the Translator

Minority language works which have appeared for majority-language markets often risk falling victim to translation strategies which effectively substitute domestic, linguistic and literary conventions for foreign aspects of the original work, resulting in a fluent translation which succeeds in hiding the linguistic and cultural 'origin' of the original work. As Venuti illuminates:

> a fluent strategy performs a labor of acculturation, which domesticates
> the foreign text, making it intelligible and even familiar to the target-
> language reader, providing him or her with the narcissistic experience
> of recognizing his or her own culture in a cultural other, enacting an
> imperialism that extends the dominion of transparency with other
> ideological discourses over a different culture. (1992, p. 5)

With the bilingual *en-face* edition, one could argue that the very presence of the original will necessarily draw attention to it. However, as I will discuss in relation to self-translation (see Chapter 4) and with relation to reading patterns with a bilingual edition in a minority language context (see Chapter 5), *en-face* publication formats are likely to result in leaving the original text disregarded, which in turn hides the differences between the two texts (as they are discussed in Chapter 6.2). As such, we

are in the presence of a highly fluent translation strategy, one indeed which suggests that the essence of the original is perfectly conveyed in the facing text, and all the more so since the author him/herself has undertaken the translation task.

Particularly with self-translation, it is easy to lose sight of the translator, since he or she is also the author, that is he/she is at the same time occupying a much more prestigious position than that of the translator. Yet, since it is nevertheless the author-as-translator who is the performer of translational action which in some cases represents what Venuti calls 'a fluent strategy' (even if only suggested by publication formats such as the bilingual *en-face* poetry edition), the role of the author as translator needs to be emphasised. Whereas it is the aim of translation studies theorists such as Venuti to raise awareness of fluent translation strategies, it is the responsibility of the translator, even if it is the author of the original text, to establish alternative strategies which aim at 'receiving the Foreign as the Foreign', as Antoine Berman memorably put it (2000, p. 285-86). Given that the translator of minority languages works within a field of asymmetric power relations between cultures and languages, and furthermore, acknowledging that such power relations are the result of historically determined realities, one could argue that the role of the translator in the context of minority translation cannot escape being politicised (this point is further discussed in Chapter 5.2.2). If that reality is accepted, the responsibility of the translator towards the minority language, and inevitably towards its status as a living language, cannot be overstated. As we are concerned with minority as expressed in linguistic terms, and thus with the influence of translation on the well-being of a language of minority status, it will now be the task to consider to what degree the study of endangered languages might be helpful with regard to the present discussion.

1.3   The Study of Endangered Languages

Advancing from the exclusive tendencies as noted with both post-colonial literary and translation studies with regard to the lesser-used languages within Europe, we note that with minority translation studies the issue of power differences between

languages in general is addressed. What is more, minority translation studies provides a forum, however small, for the languages within Europe to address their struggle for visibility in relation to the few major languages such as French, Spanish, German and English. As we have seen, however, minority studies is a field which applies itself not necessarily to languages only, since minority can express itself in every sphere of society. Moving on from examining minority towards inquiring about languages, which due to historical circumstances and developments struggle towards being fully used in all their capacities by their native speech community, we must inevitably be drawn towards the study of endangered languages.[15]

As publications such as *Endangered Languages: Current Issues and Future Prospects* edited by Lenore A. Grenoble and Lindsay Whaley show, the study of endangered languages is concerned with 'issues surrounding language loss', with the particular publication in question 'bring[ing] together work by theoretical linguists, field linguists, and non-linguist members of minority communities to provide an integrated view of how language is lost, from sociological and economics as well as

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[15] The terminology relating to languages which struggle for linguistic and literary survival is not always consistent. Discussing the phenomenon of literary revivals with minority languages, Joan-Lluís Marfany states that 'there is no convenient blanket term applicable to the diversity of language contemplated here.' He opts for the term 'minority languages', 'not out of preference, let alone conviction' as he explains, 'but simply in conformity with the most widespread usage' (2004, p. 137). Marfany points towards R. A. Houston (2003) for further discussion of terminological problems. Throughout this thesis 'minority' has and will be frequently used as an attribute of Gaelic as a literature and a language, even although it might appear in its adjectival form of 'minoritised' in order to emphasise historical processes that have led to the status of Gaelic as minoritised. Nevertheless, alternative terms will be briefly considered here with regard to both their usefulness to the present discussion and an understanding of Gaelic as a minority language literature on the whole. As Emily McEwan-Fujita illustrates in her poignantly entitled article 'Gaelic doomed as speakers die out', some scholars favour a more 'morbidly' coloured use of terminology in the public discourse concerning minority languages in general and specifically the state of Gaelic in Scotland (2006). Similarly, Joshua A. Fishman prefers to highlight the devastating future prospects for languages of minority status when he refers to them as 'threatened languages' (1991). Houston resorts to 'lesser-used' languages whereas Einar Haugen prefers 'undeveloped' stating that an undeveloped language is a language which 'has not been employed in all the functions that a language can perform in a society larger than that of the local tribe or peasant village.' (1966, p. 927). Houston's and Haugen's terms are useful as they emphasise that languages are not naturally inferior to others, but rather that as a result of historical developments some have been 'used' more in certain areas of societal life which meant that they 'developed' accordingly. Useful here could be the term 'under-used' in that it highlights the relative and possibly dynamic nature of language development, i.e. through 'use' the language would stand a chance to shed the attribute 'under'. Furthermore, thinking of minority languages as 'under-used' allows us to enquire about specific historical relationships of a language to different environments of language use. This allows us to enquire as to which particular aspect of language use a language is 'under-used', may that be traditional song, literacy, storytelling, academic writing or scientific terminology, for instance. This thesis will use a variety of terms to vary the emphasis of the argument.

from linguistic perspectives' (1998, p. i, also cf. Grenoble and Whaley, 2006). Drawing on these different resources, the study of endangered languages has highlighted similar language use patterns recurring the world over, as a result of Western European colonial enterprises, both beyond and within its cultural boundaries:

> The fundamental cause for the disappearance of a human language is well known. Speakers abandon their native tongue in adaptation to an environment where use of that language is no longer advantageous to them. This much about language death is simple and uncontroversial. (ibid., p. 22)

It takes a very individual analysis to identify why a particular language has weakened in the face of a neighbouring stronger language within what Grenoble and Whaley identify as 'an intricate matrix of variables' taking into account 'the community's self-identity, its relationship with other groups, the degree of political autonomy, its access to avenues of material prosperity, etc.' (ibid., p. 22). Nevertheless, shared patterns emerge such as minority language communities and their lack of access to the powers of politics, media and education, their problematic relationship with literacy in the indigenous language in the face of an education system which predominantly ensures literacy in the culturally dominant language of hegemonic status, as well as the impoverishment of the local minority language community in the face of demographic attractions of urban centres (Grenoble and Whaley, 1998). Indeed, these are issues which find their way into the corpus of literature that is contemporary Gaelic poetry. Poems such as the celebrated 'Hallaig' by Sorley MacLean (MacGill-Eain/MacLean, 1990, p. 226) or Meg Bateman's more recent 'Iomallachd' (1997, p. 72) deal with the history of demographic displacement of the Gaelic-speaking community of the Highlands and Islands during the time of the Clearances and beyond. In his poem 'oideachadh ceart' (1996, p. 12), Aonghas MacNeacail addresses the subsequent invisibility of such events within what is taught and taken to be history. Also of interest here is MacNeacail's poem 'cùnntas' (Burgess and O'Rourke, 1999, p. 102) which deals with the inevitable isolation of authors choosing to write in the language of a minoritised culture (as referred to in 5.2.1).

The study of endangered languages is concerned with identifying the causes for language endangerment. One such unifying force towards the decrease of language diversity has been named as the acculturation in nation-building projects with language as a marker of cultural identity which is therefore consciously chosen by policy-makers as a focus of attention in the creation of a cultural homogeneous whole infiltrating the entirety of what is perceived to be the nation. As Thomas Hylland Eriksen explains:

> linguistic processes taking place in a society can be regarded as indicators of many other aspects of that society. When languages die and give way to majority or dominant languages, this indicates that the groups inhabiting the area in question become culturally more like one another and, usually, more tightly integrated at the abstract level of the state. Linguistic unification, or homogenisation, is thus an integral aspect of most nation-building projects […] The outcome of such 'acculturation' has frequently been the loss of tradition and cultural autonomy to measure up to the exigencies of modernity. (1992, p. 315)

Language in use is always positioned in a network of linguistic hegemony and power, and the use of language has consequences:

> In defining minority languages as deficient, the hegemonic (national) language justifies its exclusive use in education and other official contexts, and thus efficiently prevents non-fluent users from attaining power. Further, such a ranking of languages, when sanctioned in several sectors in society such as the school system, the mass media and the political system, also encourages a mass of inferiority complexes and the eventual abandonment of maternal languages among minorities. (ibid., p. 318)[16]

One of the major focus points of the study of endangered languages as a field is the importance of language in the shaping of national and personal identities. As we can see from the work of R. McKenna Brown, the importance of language use extends beyond mere communication because it is also firmly accepted within the spheres of literature. As Brown argues:

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[16] See the questionnaire reply comment regarding the quest for the wider audience as a sign of cultural inferiority in the light of the Anglophone majority culture, as referred to in 2.3.6.

literature, both in spoken and written forms, is a key crossover point between the life of a language and the lives of its speakers. Literature gives a language prestige; and knowledge of its literature enriches a language's utility for its speakers. Both act to built the loyalty of speakers to their own language. All these effects then reinforce one another in a virtuous circle. (2002, p. 1)

As such the study of endangered languages deals extensively with the issues of literacy (Ostler and Rudes, 2000, Grenoble and Whaley, 1998) and literary developments (Brown, 2002) in the light of the fragile state of these languages as a medium for written and read literary communication. Conclusions with regard to what is best for each individual language situation are commonly drawn from case studies whilst at the same time common dynamics with minority languages are identified, as I have pointed to above. Furthermore, it is the awareness, acceptance and indeed promotion of language diversity that, naturally, emerges from the heart of the field of study concerned with endangered languages (Grenoble and Whaley, 1998) which is of paramount importance to the present study, since only the acceptance of difference between languages and their literatures leads to the concern for their survival and a critical engagement with translation in minority language contexts. The following paragraphs will therefore deal with the idea of language diversity in detail.

1.4   Diversity: Theoretical Implications

Insisting on the idea of difference between societies, cultures and languages and thus acknowledging diversity as the essential paradigm to the coexistence of societies and their cultures in the context of a world community might, however, lead us down a path where we ironically reiterate a discourse which has so successfully supported the colonial enterprise. Such a discourse relies on the idea of difference by defining the Other as uncivilised and inevitably inferior (as briefly hinted at above in Chapter 1.1.5). Once described as such, the Other can justifiably be declared to be in need of being made to conform to the coloniser's understanding and organisation of society for their own good and for the good of human-kind on the whole. Of course, this binary perception of the world with 'the definition of civilisation and barbarism

rest[ing] on the production of an irreconcilable difference between "black" and "white", self and other' (Loomba, 1998, p. 57) is not confined to the times of colonial enterprises by Western European nations alone.[17] 'As a matter of fact', as Loomba has it, 'all these images about the other were moulded and remoulded through various histories of contact' between societies (ibid., p. 58). She nevertheless argues that with regard to these images colonialism was 'perhaps the most important crucible for their affirmation as well as reconstruction' (ibid., p. 58). A dichotomous world view of this kind relies heavily on stereotypes since they allow for the other to be reduced 'to a single and manageable form'. Consequently, 'the function of stereotypes is to perpetuate an artificial sense of difference between "self" and "other"' (ibid., pp. 59-60, referring to Gilman, 1985, p. 18). In what follows it will be explored how such a binary view of 'self' and 'other', which stands in the way of genuine diversity, has affected the relationship between Gaelic society and its neighbouring culture of majority status..

1.4.1 'Self' versus 'Other' in a Gaelic Context

The other is clearly perceived to belong to an 'alien social system' (Loomba, 1998, p. 60, citing White, 1987, p. 165). There is ample evidence throughout the centuries that Gaelic society at the northern margin of the British Isles has been viewed precisely in the light of such a binary perception of 'self' and 'other' from the centrifugal perspective of the political and cultural centres (see also Tymoczko, 1999, p. 20). Such attitudes are evident, for instance, in the wording of the Statutes of Iona of 1609, the governmental document ordering a legislation which led to the reorganisation of Highland society by James VI. As Michael Lynch explains:

> the legislation embodied in the Statutes of Iona […] unequivocally stigmatised what it called 'Irish' manners, dress and customs; it forced clan chiefs to have their eldest sons and daughters educated on the mainland, safely removed from 'barbarous' influences and taught to 'speak, read and write in English'. (1992, p. 241)

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[17] Present world politics suggest that such a perception of the world is indeed part of the human condition at all times, with both the Western predominantly Christian world and the Eastern Muslim world relying on the 'self' and 'other' rhetoric to justify their causes and actions.

Such legislation was seen as necessary in an attempt to 'bring the Highlands and Isles to civility' (ibid., p. 241). Displaying a more positive if romanticising attitude, Dr Samuel Johnson retrospectively endows Gaelic society with 'savage virtues and barbarous grandeur' (Chapman, 1970, p. 51). Even today, traces of such a perception can still be found as the following remarks in a feature in the *Observer* newspaper regarding the community buy-out of the South Uist estate show. The author chooses to reiterate stereotypes regarding the backwardness of the island's community in support of her preconceived notion that 'given how remote the Outer Hebrides are, it's hardly surprising they appear to be caught in a time warp' (Johnstone, 2006). The author goes on to assert that:

> the islands remain relatively untouched by modern life, which has undoubtedly helped to preserve their beauty. There are modern cars on the one main road and a couple of supermarkets, but the fields are still dotted with rope-tied haystacks in the summer and Fifties tractors. And this feels as close to wilderness as you can get in the British Isles - huge skies and big horizons, ruined houses and barren moors. (ibid.)

Finally, on the basis of her observations she comes to the conclusion that 'if you saw someone dragging a dead body up the hill at midnight, it would come as no surprise' which once again evokes the image of the wild savage at the isolated margin of an otherwise civilised society (ibid.).

A binary discourse of this kind is inevitably answered by 'the colonised' or 'the other' in a similarly binary if reciprocal discourse of 'us' and 'other' with 'us' as the uprooted victim of the colonised forces left to lament an irretrievable past and 'the other' as oppressing force which brought the change unto 'us' from the outside without 'us' having asked for or contributed to it. With his poem 'Bhuainn agus Dhuinn' (Whyte, 1991a, p. 50), Maoilios Caimbeul bears witness to such a division, as the following extracts show:

> Thàinig iad is thug iad bhuainn,
> ar saorsa an toiseach,
> an t-saorsa a sabaid gus dìon.
> […]

Thàinig iad is thug iad bhuainn
comas tighinn beò air an tìr,
[…]

Thàinig iad is thug iad dhuinn
foghlam ùr is innealan ùra.
[…]

Thug iad bhuainn an seann eòlas,
na sgeòil air an t-seann dòigh,
ar dualchas, agus nan àite chuir iad
òrain ùra bha dèanamh a' chridhe às ùr.[18]

Advocating diversity, then, are we in danger of reiterating a discourse which has provided the foundation for colonial attitudes and activities (Loomba, 1998, p. 104)? What is more, are we falling into the trap of ethnocentrism once we go down the road of demanding the acknowledgement of diversity between societies and cultures? How indeed does diversity relate to ethnocentrism?

1.4.2 Diversity and Ethnocentrism

The argument that cultures need to shut themselves off from others in order not to be 'contaminated' or 'diluted' by the features of another, and therefore to ensure cultural diversity, has been made.[19] In his controversial lecture 'Race et culture', Claude Lévi-Strauss argued openly in favour of an ethnocentric approach towards intercultural communication arguing that 'relative incommunicability':

> may even be the price to be paid so that the systems of value of each spiritual family or each community are preserved and find within themselves the resources necessary for their renewal. If […] human societies exhibit a certain optimal diversity beyond which they cannot go, but below which they can no longer descent without danger, we must recognize that, to a large extent, this diversity results from the desire of each culture to resist the cultures surrounding it, to

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[18] 'They came and they took from us / our freedom at first / the freedom to fight to protect … // They came and they took from us / the ability to come alive on the land … // They came and they gave us / new education and new machines … // They took from us the old knowledge / the stories of the old way / our heritage, and in their place they put / new songs which made the heart anew…' [my translation]

[19] See Glaser (2007) for a discussion of cultural essentialism as opposed to cultural relativism in the context of Sorbian and Gaelic society.

distinguish itself from them – in short to be itself. (1971, cited in Geertz, 1986, p. 107)

If humanity were to free itself of ethnocentrism altogether, Lévi-Strauss argues the consequences by visualising a world 'whose cultures, all passionately fond of one another, would aspire only to celebrate one another, in such confusion that each would lose any attraction it could have for the others and its own reason for existing' (ibid., cited in Geertz, 1986, p. 107). We are therefore still left with the consideration that by insisting on diversity and its visibility we are participating in an argument which on the one hand has helped colonial discourse to flourish whilst on the other hand it has promoted ethnocentrism. Both discourses lead a rather problematic relationship with the concept of tolerance as basis for intercultural understanding and acceptance. Before attempting to answer this question, I would first like to take a closer look at what has been argued by those studying endangered languages to be lost with the loss of language diversity.

1.4.3   Loss of Language Diversity: What is Lost?

Looking back towards the study of endangered languages, thus abandoning the sphere of abstract theoretical explorations with regard to the viability of diversity and considering more practical implications of the loss of diversity, we come across the deep conviction amongst scholars that 'the loss of language is tragic precisely because they are not interchangeable, precisely because they represent the distillation of the thoughts and communication of a people over their entire history' (Mithun, 1998, p. 189). Yet, what is it that is lost once a language ceases to be spoken? For one thing, different languages have developed different grammars, with different people choosing to foreground different grammatically expressed units of information. Inevitably, the greater diversity in language use, the greater our understanding of what is humanly possible in terms of the expressiveness of grammatical features. As Ken Hale explains:

> Imagine that English was the only language. What would we know about universal grammar and about the potential diversity of surface form? We would know a lot, to be sure, since the observed form of

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English is *determined* by universal grammar. We would know a lot, and of what we did not know, we would be *blissfully* ignorant. But fortunately, English is not the only language. [Thus], we can ask ourselves what each language adds to what we know […]. When we do this, the role of diversity in linguistic science becomes explosively obvious. (1998, pp. 193-94, his italics)

Pointing towards unique and highly developed features of a language, Nancy C. Dorian states that 'Gaelic, for instance, has a very rich system of emphatic suffixes which can attach to nouns, adjectives, many pronouns and a few verbal forms' which 'lend Gaelic a distinctive flavor and constitute a rich discourse device' (1998, p. 8). Furthermore, as already noted above with regard to the Irish context (see Chapter 1.1.7), language diversity ensures the diversity of recorded history, be that in the shape of oral memory, story telling and songs, place names, manuscripts or historical writing. Moreover, the diversity of language signifies the diversity of aesthetics and creativity of human-kind given that, as Marianne Mithun asserts:

language represents the most creative, pervasive aspect of culture, the most intimate side of the mind. The loss of language diversity will mean that we will never even have the opportunity to appreciate the full creative capacities of the human mind. (1998, p. 189)

Hale goes so far as to judge this asset to language diversity as 'of supreme significance', arguing that:

a language and the intellectual productions of its speakers are often inseparable. Some forms of verbal art – verse, song, or chant – depend crucially on morphological and phonological, even syntactic, properties of the language, quite literally. Even where the dependence is not so organic as this, an intellectual tradition may be so thoroughly a part of a people's linguistic ethnography as to be, in effect, inseparable from the language. (1992, p. 36)

With regard to the particular cultural context surrounding the Irish language, Nic Eoin argues that with the loss of Irish 'we would lose that creative dynamic which comes into play when perspectives of more than one language are brought to bear on any particular cultural situation' (2004, p. 127). In that respect, as she further postulates, 'losing Irish would not merely involve severing a link with our cultural past, but would also limit the possibilities for new kinds of cultural fusion in the

future' (ibid., p. 127) A perception of language diversity as guarantor for diverse perspectives fuelling interpretative creativity has implications for the prospect of translation between cultures in that the above argument taken to its hypothetical conclusion evokes the notion of literature as being essentially untranslatable, which effectively means that translation will always result in a target text which is defined by its difference compared to the source text (for more on this, refer to Chapter 3.2). Indeed, as has been highlighted by minority translation studies, translation becomes possible only if there is anything to translate, i.e. if there is difference (Cronin, 2003, p. 169, also see MacAulay, 1994, p. 53-54, as quoted in Chapter 2.2.1). Consequently, our awareness of difference does not only influence our appreciation of each other's past and present conditions; rather, a genuinely aware approach to difference will have an effect on the future state of relations between cultures, as Hale points out:

> While it is good and commendable to record and document fading traditions, and in some cases this is absolutely necessary to avert total loss of cultural wealth, the greater goal must be that of safeguarding diversity in the world of people. For that is the circumstance in which diverse and interesting intellectual traditions can grow. (1992, p. 41)

That in itself is a good enough reason to embrace diversity, yet we could argue, that an appreciation of diverse cultural expressions is potentially open-ended, limitless, and therefore a question of potential rather than real ability to take it all in. Going by the same argument, we could say that if there is no limit to diversity, we have to accept the fact that each individual will in their lifetime experience only a minute fraction of what exists in the world in terms of cultural and linguistic diversity. Hence, there is no lower limit to what one should take in either. Indeed, intellectual stimuli might not be desired by everyone and can hardly be prescribed. Neither might we be interested in the grammatical capability of human-kind. We might want to embrace the comfort of the familiar and known. Indeed we might feel discomfort at the prospect of alternative and, very likely, unsettling accounts of history. The point I am trying to make is that the above arguments are only valid as long as people *perceive* them as valid. We are therefore in need of a more compelling argument towards the appreciation and safeguarding of linguistic and cultural diversity.

1.4.4   Diversity: Understanding through Difference

I would like to move towards the argument of understanding and acceptance of the other(s) through diversity. It is a compelling argument since the concept of understanding through recognising the known could convince only if there was a likely chance that at some point soon in history we will all be culturally the same, sharing similar sensibilities. Yet, that seems not only not desirable, but also highly unlikely, and indeed anthropologists clearly believe that 'no one can say that we face the prospects of an absolutely depauperate planet or a true global monoculture' (Harmon, 2001, p. 63, also cf. Geertz, 1986, p. 122). To the contrary, as David Harmon argues, 'seeking a holistic understanding of diversity, we gain a more accurate picture of how each of us, as individuals, shares in the life of humankind' (ibid., p. 53). Diversity is recognized as a quintessential paradigm to the human condition' and, thus, 'is not just one need on par with dozens of others. It is the means through which our consciousness function operates, and if consciousness is what makes us human, then diversity makes us human' (ibid., p. 64). As Harmon illuminates further, 'diversity – the fact that, conceptually, perceptually, ontologically, things are different – is the ultimate unconscious presupposition. We do not often think about the meaning of diversity because it is the only "way of putting things" human beings have' (ibid., p. 54). Yet, consciousness comes into being only by realising differences, since 'we can only grasp what is universal by first recognizing what is different' (ibid., p. 54). A disregard for diversity would therefore lead us into 'the blind alley of ethnocentrism' (ibid., p. 54). Genuine cultural diversity is thus a counterbalance to cultural ignorance and complacency in the face of challenges posed by the other, and therefore is a vital ingredient in what Joshua Fishman calls the 'constant rehumanization of humanity in the face of materialism' (1982, p. 6, cited in Harmon, 2001, p. 63). In line with the premise that 'unity does not require uniformity' (Harmon, 2001, p. 66) Geertz has the following to answer to Leví-Strauss' affirmation of the need for ethnocentrism:

> The image of a world full of people so passionately fond of each other's cultures that they aspire only to celebrate one another does not seem to me a clear and present danger; the image of one full of people

happily apotheosising their heroes and diabolising their enemies alas does. (1986, p. 122)

Consequently, it is Geertz's contention that '"understanding" in the sense of comprehension, perception, and insight needs to be distinguished from "understanding" in the sense of agreement of opinion, union of sentiment, or commonality of commitment' (ibid., p. 122). In conclusion he asserts that 'we must learn to grasp what we cannot embrace' (ibid., p. 122). Cultural and linguistic diversity is thus an essential ingredient towards 'pan-human creativity, problem solving and mutual cross-cultural acceptance' (Fishman, 1982, pp. 1 and 10, cited in Glaser, 2007, p. 66). The argument is towards understanding through difference rather than an illusion of understanding through presumably recognised sameness. Let us finally in this chapter view diversity in relation to translation, particularly minority translation.

1.4.5   Diversity and Translation

As this thesis is concerned with the translation environment for Gaelic poetry over the past half-century, we have to ask how the discussion of diversity informs our thinking about translation in a minority literature context. Not surprisingly, Cronin has addressed this very issue, posing the question 'are we left with a choice between openness without diversity and a diversity without openness?', before contemplating:

> To begin to answer the questions is first of all to question the questions. It does not necessarily follow from a translation perspective that closure preserves specificity. Languages grow not only because of detailed interaction with a specific natural and cultural environment but because they come into contact and learn (translate) from other cultures. (2003, p. 167)

As such, translation can be a potent component in contributing to diversity, in that it bridges the gap between languages and cultures and is therefore capable of bringing existing differences to the fore, thus highlighting the condition that is cultural and linguistic diversity. Translation, however, does not contribute to diversity *per se*,

since approaches to translation vary according to the purpose of the translation in the target culture (as discussed in Chapter 3.1):

> The problem for minority or endangered languages is not so much the fact of contact as the form of contact. Translation as a particular kind of contact is threatening and oppressive if the speakers of minority languages have no control over the translation process and cannot use translation as an enabling force but have to suffer it as a disabling intrusion [cf. Chapter 2.3]. For this reason, translation as a positive force for language and cultural maintenance cannot be dissociated from a broader conception of the political process. (Cronin, 2003, p. 167)

It is thus inevitable that translational action finds itself embedded in a network of broader social and political realities. Translational action therefore cannot fail to be positioned in such a network and thus to be shaped by it whilst feeding back into it (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion). As we have established the need for diversity it will be important to ask how, with translation, such diversity can be real and not, as Venuti notably remarks, the 'narcissistic experience of recognizing his or her own culture in a cultural other' (Venuti, 1992, p. 5). This thesis will therefore consider different translation approaches and their validity in the quest for cultural diversity in the particular context of Gaelic poetry (see Chapter 5 for further discussion).

1.5 Concluding Remarks

Notions from postcolonial literary theory cannot fail to be attractive and insightful to the study of modern Gaelic poetry as a literary genre in its specific socio-cultural environment, given that postcolonial studies necessarily addresses questions of asymmetrical power dynamics between cultures. Considering, however, that postcolonialism as a term and as a field of study has recently come under criticism for losing its validity by being too inclusive, generalising and, therefore, indeed too elusive (Loomba, 1998, p. 13-18, Ashcroft *et al.*, 1995, p. 2), postcolonial studies has tightened their criteria towards the object of study. Gaelic literature seems to be excluded from the corpus of that domain on two accounts. It does not fit the definition of a post-colonial literature in terms of historical developments since it

cannot be pressed into the arguably misleading dichotomy of 'Europe' versus 'indigenous' at the heart of postcolonial thought – a dichotomy perpetuated by postcolonial translation theory. Furthermore, Gaelic literature simply uses the wrong language. It was, however, not the main objective of this chapter to make the case for Gaelic literature to be welcomed into the corpus of post-colonial literatures. Rather, it is important to acknowledge the relevance of concepts brought to the fore by postcolonial studies to the present situation of the literary world surrounding Gaelic poetry such as the inevitable fact of hybridity and difference in the contact zone of today's global world, the creation and manipulation of meaning in and beyond the act of communication, as well as the prospect of language development through use and appropriation.

As translation studies is naturally concerned with dynamics across cultures and languages, we find that an attempt is made to investigate minority translation in its own right. In doing so, approaches towards translation studies are increasingly historicising in nature. An analysis of Gaelic literary dynamics seems thus more at home within a theoretical framework, which raises issues with regard to the effectiveness of different translation practices in a minority literature context, whilst highlighting the role of the translator as conscious mediator between translation partners of unequal status, namely that of minority translation studies.

This chapter aimed to place the situation of modern Gaelic poetry in a wider context, which seems logical considering that it is its relation to the neighbouring majority culture and language of English which has shaped the existence of Gaelic literature most profoundly. Such a wider context inevitably results in contemplating cultural and linguistic diversity since there would be little need to be concerned with the maintenance and development of any literature written in a language of minority status, should diversity of this kind be undesirable. Having thus established a theoretical framework that places Gaelic literature in a historical and critical context, the view will be narrowed with the following chapter, which considers the discussion evolving around the present situation of Gaelic poetry within the world of Gaelic literature itself. In order to do so, evidence will be gathered from a review of

publication practices since the 1940s (see section 2.1), critical articles (see section 2.2) and questionnaire replies (see section 2.3).

Death is always strange. She remembered the day her husband had died. When the last sound escaped him, she had continued to search his long familiar face for signs of life, swearing she could feel the warmth of his breath on her fingers. It seemed stranger still today. Trapped on a piece of paper, written in an unknown foreign tongue, it was somehow less real than it might otherwise have been. She shook her head and turned angrily towards the headmaster.

'Is that the way they tell people? A piece of paper […] A language that few here can understand […] Is that how they tell a mother that her son is dead?'

The headmaster shrugged his shoulders hopelessly, searching for the right reply.

She stood up. As she did so, a single tear fell down her cheek. She brushed it away angrily with the back of her hand. She would not cry here. In a room full of English books, her mourning would seem odd and out of place. Instead, she would return home. Her tears would fall there freely, untroubled by the language which had come to bring her death.

From 'The Coming of English' by Donald S. Murray

(1990, p.53)

Reading the above extract from Donald S. Murray's contribution to the special edition of the literary magazine *Chapman* entitled *The State of Scotland – A Predicament for the Scottish Writer?* one can sense the disturbing atmosphere created by one language infiltrating the cultural and personal spaces of another. This chapter, then, explores the literary space occupied by Gaelic poetry today and the conditions shaping it. The focus is on poetry, since this is the genre which is most tightly surrounded by translation activity. The literary space occupied by modern

Gaelic poetry is that of a literature in a minority language, which means that writing and reading processes are subject to the kind of bilingual friction that is present in the 'contact zone' between languages of unequal status. In order to overcome such friction, writers resort to translation and in particular to self-translation. As we have established in Chapter 1.1.8, 'the role of translation is fundamental to contemporary Gaelic poetry' given the omnipresence of the English *en-face* translation (McLeod, 1998, p. 151). Identifying thus a literature in a state of crisis, given the importance of poetry to the corpus of modern Gaelic literature, McLeod's article is significant in that it is the first critical piece of writing appearing in an established Scottish literary magazine to address both the reality-reflecting as well as the reality-shaping impact of translation in a Gaelic literary context. As such McLeod's article interrupted the silent obedience of the Gaelic literary world in the face of translation dynamics which so forcefully inform its very being.

Since 1998, the year his article appeared, matters have changed to a degree. *Gairm*, the long-standing magazine publishing Gaelic prose and poetry in monolingual format has ceased publication, but has been succeeded by *Gath*, following its predecessor's footsteps closely. Also, Gaelic poetry appears in a bilingual Irish-Gaelic format offering both translations into Gaelic and Irish and glossaries in the new series of poetry anthologies, *An Guth*, edited by Rody Gorman (Gorman, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007). There is, furthermore, a relatively small scale (since hand-made and not subsidised) monolingual Gaelic poetry collection series by Diehard Publishers (Gorman, 1999, Whyte, 2002a and Caimbeul, M. 2003). Finally, there has been an enormous boost to Gaelic prose writing published in a Gaelic monolingual format since 2003 in the shape of the highly significant Ùr-Sgeul series (see *ùr-sgeul*) as initiated and looked after, both in terms of financial support and sheer man power, by Comhairle nan Leabhraichean (The Gaelic Books Council). Also note a forthcoming Gaelic novella publication series by the Sandstone Press (MacDonald, 2007 and Newton, 2007, cf. *meanmnach*)[1]. These recent developments might indeed be understood as reactions to the state of crisis mentioned. Nevertheless, translation into English continues to have a firm grip on modern Gaelic literature publications as

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[1] These publications originated as web-based downloads.

it has done for the past sixty years or so. It is therefore surprising to find a relatively small debate with regard to translation activities surrounding modern Gaelic literature surfacing every once in a while in the published domain. It will be the task of this chapter to trace that debate and to highlight the issues raised. I will initially give an idea of how publication practices have developed with modern poetry written in Gaelic. Furthermore, conditions surrounding contemporary Gaelic writing as a process and product will be identified as these will serve as a basis for reflection once we enter the discussion of translation attitudes and practices later in the chapter. It is not only the aim of this chapter to identify the issues at the core of the Gaelic-related debate on translation, but also to allow different voices to enter into discussion not only across the space of published pages but also across time. It thus supports the aim of the present thesis to highlight the development of modern Gaelic literature as a process and a product in view of its relationship to the English language. Before considering both published opinions expressed by critics regarding translation with Gaelic poetry and contemplations by those writing, editing and publishing Gaelic poetry as gathered particularly for the present research, it will be beneficial to look at translation and publication practices as they become evident from the corpus of published poetry books since the 1940s – the decade which saw the emergence of a new poetry in Gaelic with the publication of *Dàin do Eimhir* (MacGill-Eain, 1943) by Sorley MacLean (Somhairle MacGill-Eain)

2.1 Gaelic Poetry Publication Practices since 1940

The following discussion presents a number of key poetry publications which illuminate the development of Gaelic poetry publication over the past seven decades. Considering modern Gaelic poetry collections by individual Gaelic authors, influential publications such as MacLean's *Dàin do Eimhir agus Dàin Eile* (MacGill-Eain, 1943)[2] or *Fuaran Sléibh* (1948) by George Campbell Hay (Deòrsa Caimbeul Hay or Deòrsa Mac Iain Deòrsa) remind us that English translations were finding their way into such publications already in the 1940s. The two publications contain a

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[2] Note that the original publication gives the author's name as Somhairle MacGhillEathain. I am, however, giving the usual Gaelic spelling of his name as I will do with poet's names in general throughout the thesis to ensure consistency. Black (1999) serves as a reference in this connection.

selection of English prose translations printed in smaller type at the end of the collection. This practice, which placed the Gaelic reader at the centre of attention whilst acknowledging the need to address a wider English-speaking readership, continued throughout the following decades, with Hay's *Mochtàr is Dùghall* as one of the last collections published in this way (1982). As early as 1950, however, the first fully bilingual Gaelic/English publication appeared: Neil Ross' *Armageddon* (1950). Besides the translations, English was also the chosen medium for the 'Foreword', which is consistent with a long-standing history of diglossia favouring English as the language for general critical writing in introductions and notes in publications presenting poetry in Gaelic (cf. Mac-Dhonuill, 1751, Mackay, 1829, Nic a' Phearsoin, 1891, Watson, 1932 etc).

Historically speaking, a diglossic approach to publishing Gaelic literary texts was not just confined to poetry publications.[3] With regard to poetry, however, academic editing of texts from different literary periods has established English as the language for paratext, i.e. the language of critical appreciation. Such is the established pattern that periodicals such as the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* or *Scottish Gaelic Studies* often quote Gaelic poetry without translations in an otherwise monolingual English articles. Here the anticipated reader is expected to deal monolingually with the primary texts in Gaelic, with critical thoughts conveyed through the medium of English. As early as at the turn of the last century, however, publishers such as John Grant of Edinburgh adopted a bilingual approach to presenting edited Gaelic poetry collections which does not rely on any Gaelic reading knowledge on the part of the reader, providing English translations in addition to English paratext (cf. Mackenzie, 1907 and Calder, 1912). Likewise, the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society has provided English translations for original Gaelic poetry from different centuries in its publications since the 1930s (cf. Matheson, 1938, MacLeod, 1978 or Meek, 1995) whilst also experimenting with different approaches such as Gaelic-only poetry surrounded by English paratext (Thomson, 1996b) or monolingual (Meek, 1998). It may be observed, then, that there is a varied range of publication models with regard to the linguistic make-up of publications of Gaelic

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[3] For an example of prose writing published with English paratext, see MacLeod (1899).

poetry, with monolingual Gaelic publishing continued by the influential Gaelic periodical *Gairm* and a number of its associated book publications since 1952, with the final issue of the magazine published in 2002.

Viewing Gaelic poetry publications over the decades, various approaches with regard to language use can indeed be observed. With Iain Crichton Smith (Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn), for instance, we have an author who clearly distinguishes between his Gaelic and his English audience in that he provides each with a monolingual publication. Although with *Bìobuill is Sanasan-Reice* (Mac a' Ghobhainn, 1965) – a poetry collection published under his Gaelic name Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn – English prose translations are provided at the end of the book, subsequent publications such as *Rabhdan is Rudan* (Mac a' Ghobhainn, 1973), *Eadar Fealla-Dha is Glaschu* (Mac a' Ghobhainn, 1974), *Na h-Ainmhidhean* (Mac a' Ghobhainn, 1979), *Na h-Eilthirich* (Mac a' Ghobhainn, 1983), *An t-Eilean agus an Cànan* (Mac a' Ghobhainn, 1987) and *The Permanent Island. Gaelic Poems Translated by the Author* (Smith, 1975) – a publication which named Iain Crichton Smith as the author – appeared as monolingual collections. Contrastingly, there are collections such as Tormod Calum Dòmhnallach's *Fàd* (1978) or *Tiugainn Do Sgalpaigh* by Seonaidh Moireasdan (1999) which are bilingual in that they include original texts in both languages which are not the outcome of translation, thus reflecting the bilingual creativity of the author. It is striking that both publications choose not to emphasise the presence of English on their front covers, but instead choose Gaelic as the language for paratextual purposes.

Throughout the 1970s monolingual Gaelic publications dominated. Similarly, the early 1990s proved a fruitful period for monolingual Gaelic publications. The year 1991, for instance, saw a number of publications of poetry which could be characterised as local poetry, a poetry which is connected to local places and local people, such as *Na Cnuic 's na Glinn*, edited by Niall M. Brownlie and published by An Comunn Gàidhealach in Inverness (1991), Coinneach Dòmhnallach's *Carragh na Cuimhne*, published by An Comunn Gàidhealach in Stornoway (1991), and Aonghas MacGhillFhaolain's *Beagan Bàrdachd a Uibhist a Tuath*, published by Comunn

Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath (1991). As is apparent with these publications, the publishers are based in Gaelic-speaking areas During the same year, however, a bilingual anthology presenting the work of eight contemporary Gaelic poets appeared under the title of *An Aghaidh na Sìorraidheachd / In the Face of Eternity* (Whyte, 1991a). The bilingual format of this publication can indeed be viewed as a natural progression from an earlier, highly influential, anthology of modern Gaelic poetry entitled *Nua-Bhàrdachd Ghàidhlig / Modern Scottish Gaelic Poets* (MacAulay, 1976) which also presented paratextual features in both Gaelic and English. Given the bilingual *en-face* format with English as the predominant language for paratextual features, *An Aghaidh na Sìorraidheachd* was, however, more clearly aimed at a wider English-speaking audience. Since then, this anthology has attracted considerable attention and has become a point of reference with respect to contemporary Gaelic poetry. During the mid-1990s, a considerable number of poetry collections were published which followed a similar bilingual publication format. Examples are Catriona NicGumaraid's / Catriona Montgomery's *Rè na h-Oidhche / The Length of the Night* (1994), Anna Frater's / Anne Frater's *Fon t-Slige / Under the Shell* (1995), Rody Gorman's *Fax and other poems* (1996), Aonghas MacNeacail's *Oideachadh Ceart agus Dàin Eile / A Proper Schooling and Other Poems* (1996) and Meg Bateman's *Aotromachd agus dàin eile / Lightness and Other Poems* (1997). It is these publications in particular which Wilson McLeod identified as indicative of the decline of Scottish Gaelic as a literary and living language (McLeod, 1998). English not only dominates the pages of these books but also the outside book-covers in that literary and biographical introductions and the publishing information tend to be given in English only. Further, in a departure from earlier publication practices, the translator's name is rarely given. In fact there is no external indication that these collections contain translations at all. Thus, both the English and the Gaelic poems could theoretically be considered the originals. Acknowledging that 'publishing practices of even recent decades show a range of options – printing translations in less privileged typeface in less privileged places, translating some poems in a collection but not all, publishing some collections without translations' (McLeod, 1998, p. 151), the argument is that the notion of 'bilingual' in bilingual poetry publication becomes increasingly subject to degree with most recent publications

clearly favouring English, i.e. the target language, as the natural linguistic medium for the publication environment catering for Gaelic poetry.

Taking into consideration the evidence of Gaelic poetry publications, we might well be led to conclude that Gaelic poetry in the latter half of the twentieth century is a poetry in translation. Yet, it is noteworthy that the translation activity from Gaelic into English is not the only one pursued by Gaelic authors, as revealed by publications such as George Campbell Hay's *O Na Ceithir Airdean* (1952) which includes translations from Italian, Arabic, Greek, Icelandic, Finnish, French etc., John Maclean's *Odusseia Hòmair* (1976), Donnchadh MacIlliosa's *Seachd Luinneagan le Shakespeare* (1988), *Bardachd Raibeirt Burns an Gàidhlig*, translated by Ruairidh MacDhomhnaill (Burns, 1992) and *Bàrdachd na Roinn-Eorpa an Gàidhlig / European Poetry in Gaelic*[4] (MacThòmais/Thomson, 1990). Further, some Gaelic authors such as Mary Montgomery (Màiri NicGumaraid) with *Eadar Mi 's a' Bhreug* (NicGumaraid, 1988) and *Ruithmean 's Neo-Rannan / Rainn agus Neamhrainn* (NicGumaraid, 1997), Meg Bateman with *Órain Ghaoil / Amhráin Ghrá* (1990) and Myles Campbell (Maoilios Caimbeul) with *A' Càradh an Rathaid / Ag Cóiriú an Róid* (Caimbeul, 1988) and *Breac a' Mhuiltein* (2007) have chosen to address an Irish-speaking readership through Irish translations rather than providing English translations for an English-speaking readership. It is likewise interesting that some recent publications such as *Bho Chluaidh gu Calasraid / From the Clyde to Callander* (1999) by Michael Newton, a book which has every page in Gaelic-English format, including paratext, thus giving space to Gaelic as language for criticism, show an increased awareness of the need to emphasise Gaelic as literary language. Noteworthy here also are recent monolingual academically edited anthologies such as Colm Ó Baoill's *Iain Dubh* (1994) and *Duanaire Colach 1537-1757* (1997) or Dòmhnall Eachann Meek's *Màiri Mhòr nan Oran. Taghadh de a h-Orain* (1998).[5] Moreover, we have to acknowledge that a small number of publications which originally appeared in a monolingual English format were

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[4] Note that the translations presented in this anthology have been done by a number of poets who usually write original Gaelic poetry.

[5] Note that two forthcoming editions for the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society of the work by eighteenth-century poet Dùghall Bochanan and twentieth-century prose writer Tòmas MacCalmain edited by Meek will be in a Gaelic-only format.

republished with the Gaelic originals printed on their pages as is the case with *The World of Rob Donn* by Ian Grimble (first published as monolingual English edition in 1979, revised bilingual edition in 1999). Similarly, Iain Crichton Smith's translations of Sorley MacLean's poetry were published without the originals in 1973, whereas the originals appear in the latest 1999 edition (MacGill-Eain, 1999). Here, I would like to point towards the monolingual diehard series of Gaelic poetry as referred to above. Whereas this series, which presents poetry written from an intellectual and international perspective, is a conscious effort to promote monolingual Gaelic poetry publications, Alastair MacNeill Scouller, the editor of *Moch is Anmoch* (1998), has decided to provide the readership with facing English translations of the locally coloured poems by Donald A. MacNeill and other Colonsay bards. Thus, these two publication formats create a mirror image of earlier publication practices. Here, we should also consider *Smuaintean fo Éiseabhal / Thoughts under Easaval* (MacDonald, 2000), a publication edited by Ronald Black which presents and critically assesses the poetry of the local Uist bard Dòmhnall Aonghais Bhàin.[6] The interesting feature of this publication is that the life and work of this Uist poet are introduced in both Gaelic and in English with each introduction written by a different author, and therefore there has been no translation of the critical Gaelic writing. Rather, both the Gaelic- and the English-speaking readership are treated separately and independently. Noteworthy also is Rody Gorman's *Air a' Charbad fo Thalamh / On the Underground* (2000) which not only departs from the practice of self-translations, but also offers a number of translations for one original. Such a practice succeeds in pointing towards the element of choice on the part of the translator in the translational process, thus showing up the arbitrariness of every translation result while firmly establishing the original as the source text. Similarly,

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[6] See also the revised edition of the poetry of North Uist bard Dòmhnall Ruadh Chorùna (Dòmhnallach, 1995), which expands on the first monolingual Gaelic edition (1969) by including English translations of the poetry and songs as well as providing English translations for introductions to the bard and his work. Interestingly, however, this publication initially suggests to address a Gaelic-only readership by mere presence of a monolingual Gaelic front cover. Also see MacDhòmhnaill (1998), which presents the poetry of local South Uist bard Dòmhnall Iain MacDhòmhnaill / Donald John MacDonald in an English-only format apart from the actual original poetry, which is printed alongside the English translations provided by the editor. Also note MacDonald (1999) which presents the songs of another South Uist bard: Dòmhnall Ailean Dhòmhnaill na Bainich / Donald Allan MacDonald. Whereas the primary material is given in bilingual Gaelic/English format, the critical discussion of the bard's life and work is given in a monolingual English format with Gaelic quotations remaining untranslated.

Christopher Whyte re-establishes the Gaelic poem as the original in a poetry collection published in 2007 by the Scottish Poetry Library (MhicGhilleBhàin/Whyte, 2007). This small anthology, entitled *Dreuchd an Fhigheadair / The Weaver's Task: A Gaelic Sampler*, gives a selection of modern Gaelic poems as they were chosen by contemporary non-Gaelic-speaking poets in an attempt to create a new poem in English, working from a literal translation of the original poem prepared by somebody other than the original author.

Recently, with the Gaelic periodical *Gath* (established in 2003), the idea behind *Gairm* is confirmed in the shape of a monolingual publication offering a variety of new writing in a Gaelic-only format. Rody Gorman is maintaining the Irish link, editing the annual anthology *An Guth* (2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007) which features new poetry in Irish and Gaelic with translations or word lists bridging the gap between the two languages. His own recent publication *Chernilo* (2006) is a collection of selected and new poems in both Gaelic and Irish. Both the *An Guth* series and *Chernilo* are published by Dublin-based publisher Coiscéim. Last but not least, monolingual Gaelic poetry publications continue sporadically on a local level with the most recent example being *Clachan Crìche* (Comann Eachdraidh Tholastaidh bho Thuath, 2006), a monolingual collection of poems composed in Tolsta, Lewis, between 1850 and 2000. Noteworthy here is also the recent publication *Inbhir Àsdal nam Buadh: Òrain agus Dàin le Iain Camshron* (Wentworth and Caimbeul, 2006), which uses Gaelic for paratext as far as publication details and the title page (which has a short subtitle in English at the bottom of the page) are concerned. The back cover of the book gives a short paragraph in Gaelic followed by a translation into English. Secondary texts are mostly in Gaelic followed by an English translation with a personal note by Hector MacKenzie given in English only. The primary text has the Gaelic songs and poems followed below by English prose translations. Most interesting here is that the notes at the end of the book are given in Gaelic only with no English translation or explanation provided. As such we must assume that those notes were not deemed important for an English-speaking audience. Alternatively, we might interpret such a

publication practice as a gesture towards the Gaelic reader and Gaelic as a language in general.

Returning to poetry collections by contemporary Gaelic poets, most recent publications seem to favour the established bilingual *en-face* format. *Dannsam Led Fhaileas / Let Me Dance with Your Shadow* (Mac an t-Saoir/MacIntyre, 2006) by Martin MacIntyre (Màrtainn Mac an t-Saoir), the first Gaelic literature publication by the Edinburgh-based Luath Press, Meg Bateman's *Soirbheas / Fair Wind* (2007) and Aonghas MacNeacail's *Laoidh an Donais Òig / Hymn to a Young Demon* (2007) certainly seek appreciation from an English-speaking audience. Interesting to observe is the use of Gaelic for paratextual features in those recent publications, which might well be read as an attempt to 're-Gaelicise' the bilingual edition, at least to some degree.[7] With these publications the authors are first introduced in Gaelic on the back cover, which suggests that the following English sentences are translations of the preceding Gaelic. A similar approach is followed throughout the books, with Gaelic appearing in the 'Taing / Acknowledgements' section of *Soirbheas / Fair Wind*, in the content sections of these publications and in the introduction and footnotes alongside the English in *Dannsam Led Fhaileas / Let Me Dance with Your Shadow*. In effect, Gaelic is re-evaluated as natural linguistic medium for paratextual features, nevertheless confirming the need for English in order to communicate with a readership. It is no longer presented as inferior to English in that respect. Although any translation activity remains unacknowledged, as it does with Bateman's *Soirbheas / Fair Wind*, such practice can still be inferred by the reader from the comment on the very last page of MacIntyre's edtion that one of the poems in Gaelic does not easily translate into English and therefore remains untranslated (Mac an t-Saoir/MacIntyre, 2006, p. 124). In addition to this, we find a number of English poems untranslated into Gaelic in this collection. As a result, the bilingual nature of the author is emphasised, with bilingualism as an immediate reality. In other words, the two languages do not exist side by side separated in the author's mind but are

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[7] The English translations in Bateman (2007) are given in italics, which arguably interrupts the illusion of sameness between the texts. This practice goes back to *Nua-Bhàrdachd Ghàidhlig* (MacAulay, 1976), which, however, has the Gaelic original on the right-hand page, whereas in *Soirbheas / Fair Wind* the Gaelic originals appear on the left-hand page.

present at one and the same time for one and the same purpose, be that original writing or translation – incidentally two categories of writing which do not necessarily apply to one particular text in its entirety but might well shift in the one text alone (see Chapter 6.2 for a more detailed discussion of this manifestation of literary bilingualism within the corpus of Gaelic poetry).

Having thus considered publication and translation practices as evident from the corpus of Gaelic poetry in publication over the past six decades, we realise that although different approaches have been tried with regard to publishing Gaelic poetry adopting bilingual formats to varying degrees, be that with anthologies of poetry from throughout the centuries or with original poetry by single authors, traditional, modern or contemporary in style, English is an established medium for paratextual devices. Furthermore, the English facing page has become an altogether unmarked publication practice. Moreover, with regard to modern and contemporary poetry self-translation reigns and yet remains unmentioned. With these observations in mind, it will now be the task to consider what Gaelic authors and critics have expressed over past decades concerning Gaelic poetry and translation.

2.2   Gaelic-Related Debate on the Translation of Poetry

To start the overview with regard to the debate on translation in a Gaelic context to date, this chapter refers to a printed discussion entitled 'English as a Function for Gaelic' as published in 1978-9. From there, the focus of the discussion will shift towards a second wave of translation debate set off by an article entitled 'Packaging Gaelic Poetry' by Wilson McLeod as published in the literary magazine *Chapman* (1998). The other fertile source revealing attitudes and approaches to writing and translation of Gaelic literature are book reviews in both English and Gaelic which address not only the texts of the publications discussed but the general dynamics in the development of modern Gaelic literature, as well as giving insights into attitudes on the part of a Gaelic readership. Since the height of discussion as manifested by the 1998 *Chapman* debate and book reviews of that period, the sole voice addressing the issue of translation and particularly self-translation and the state of Gaelic writing in

general appears to be that of Christopher Whyte, who is acutely aware of the need to address the conditions for contemporary Gaelic writing 'lest their abnormality should become so familiar and habitual as to appear normal' (1997, p. 45). Before raising issues with regard to Gaelic poetry and translation as raised by Whyte and others, however, I will consider briefly the very nature of the writing that is Gaelic poetry by taking into account authors' and readers' perspectives as well as language maintenance issues.

2.2.1   Writing in Gaelic: Implications for Authors, Audience and Gaelic as Literature and Language

Writing in Gaelic means writing in a minority language, and if we understand Scottish literature as minority literature in an English language context, Gaelic writing is indeed twice removed from the sphere of mainstream majority literature. One recurring issue with authors and critics addressing the state of modern Gaelic writing is the readership that may be anticipated. In his article 'Rage Against the Dying of', Gaelic poet Aonghas MacNeacail explores the issue by asking what kind of audience a Gaelic poet is likely to attract (1990). In search of the 'competent, confident general reader', he suggests that:

> those who fit the description are likely to have studied Gaelic throughout their secondary schooling, and probably beyond. As a proportion of the eighty thousand [Gaelic speakers recorded in the 1981 census], they represent only a fragment. Even if we isolate this fragment, numbering no more than a couple of thousand *at most*, as a total potential readership a Gaelic writer may expect to command, we must accept that such a readership will be no more homogenous than any other reading public. Gaelic literary tastes like those of other societies, run the gamut from Peoples' Friend to Pound or Pliny. In such circumstances, the most popular Gaelic author will quickly recognise that writing solely in their native language is not a commercially viable venture. (ibid., p. 56)

As becomes apparent from the development of MacNeacail's argument, when contemplating the nature of the Gaelic readership we are not merely concerned with numbers. As we have seen in Chapter 1, Gaelic native speakers are rarely habitual Gaelic readers and thus lack confidence in their reading abilities (cf. MacDonald,

1997).[8] Explicitly pointing towards the relationship between modern Gaelic poetry and the written medium as impacting on the development of Gaelic literary aesthetics, Donald MacAulay states that:

> Modern poetry resides primarily in the written medium (however much it is influenced by the oral). In this way it has altered the nature of Gaelic literature and hence the definition of Gaelic culture. This, and its introduction of exotic elements, and forms such as *vers libre*, are its crucial cultural contribution. It has made the Gaelic world conscious of the written medium and has thus pointed up the importance of publishing, the remarkable development of which, with the establishment of *Gairm* Publications at the beginning of the fifties, followed by the Gaelic Books Council in 1968 and *Acair* plc at the end of 1978, has wrought an important cultural transformation. (1994, p. 53)

As becomes apparent, it is not the written medium alone which presents itself as unfamiliar to a Gaelic audience but moreover what is written and how.

In his recent book *Modern Scottish Poetry*, Whyte draws attention to the development and nature of contemporary poetry in Gaelic focusing on Sorley MacLean (Whyte, 2004), the poet who is seen as a milestone in the development of Gaelic poetry from traditional to modern in character. His argument unfolds thus:

> Iain Crichton Smith described *Dàin do Eimhir agus Dàin eile* as 'the greatest Gaelic book of this century'. This is no exaggeration. As an individual, MacLean was both bilingual and bicultural. He exploited his position in a poetic sequence which draws on the achievements of high Modernism and European Symbolism: It revives tropes and attitudes of the Provençal troubadours in a manner indebted to Pound, while also taking note of Scottish Modernism in MacDiarmid's work of the 1920s. At the same time it mobilises elements of the Gaelic tradition, in particular anonymous songs and the work of eighteenth-century love poet William Ross. Although MacLean was very much cast as a representative of Gaelic Scotland when his writing was rediscovered and justly celebrated in the 1980s and afterwards, the resulting mix is comparatively unGaelic, elitist rather then populist,

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[8] Also note MacNeacail's argument that with the Gaelic/English parallel-text version of the New Testament as the most commonly read text by a Gaelic readership (1990, p. 65) 'many who can read substantial chapters of the Bible with confidence will baulk at a short piece written in their own colloquial speech patterns' (ibid., p. 56).

and permeable only with difficulty to the community which uses the language in its day to day existence. (2004, p. 66)

Before the introduction of a new style of poetry from the 1940s onwards by the poets represented in the landmark publication of *Nua-Bhàrdachd Ghàidhlig / Modern Scottish Gaelic Poems* (MacAulay, 1976), 'the meaningful literature of the Gaelic community was largely oral – traditional verse, folktale and anecdote, and lore, traditional and biblical in origin, of course' as is argued by MacAulay (1994, p. 48). Gaelic poetry thus tended to be traditional in form and aesthetics, essentially bearing the characteristics of song, frequently fulfilling the function of recording local history whilst following traditional conventions in terms of prosody and imagery.[9] Ever since, however, Gaelic poetry developed towards a genre that showed influences from literatures of other cultures, resulting in poetry which was increasingly individual and intellectual both in terms of form and content. In his article 'New Gaelic Writing', Derick S. Thomson refers to the poem *A' Mheanbhchuileag* by Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh (1980) as 'a very far cry from village poetry. It is too far for the reader whose tent is pitched, and he will scoff at it' (Thomson, 1981-2, p. 34).[10] To this day the polarities in the expectation and appreciation of Gaelic poetry remain. In the April 2004 edition of *Am Paipear*, the local Uist newspaper, we find the following remark by Aonghas Caimbeul:

> Cho fads a tha mi a' bruidhinn air bàird is fheudar dhomh a ràdh gum b' fheàrr leamsa fada fada leithid Dòmhnall Ailein, Dòmhnall Ruadh Phàislig agus Ruairidh (an Case) Caimbeul na a h-uile Somhairle a bha riamh ann, agus tha mi gu math cinnteach gun can muinntir Uibhist sin cuideachd, gach aon dhiubh. (2004, p. 15)[11]

The simple conclusion is that, as MacAulay asserts in his introduction to *Nua-Bhàrdachd Ghàidhlig*, 'modern Gaelic poetry differs from traditional poetry in

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[9] For further discussion of the development of Gaelic poetry in the twentieth century see e.g. the introduction to Black (1999) and Thomson (1974a).

[10] Also note Thomson's argument that 'Gaelic literature was by no means always parochial in the past, but recent centuries have fostered a parochial view of it. The official schooling system did, and even ardent Gaels sometimes continue that view, without, I suspect, quite knowing what they do' (1981-2, p. 34).

[11] 'While I'm talking about poets I must say that I prefer by far the likes of Dòmhnall Ailein, Dòmhnall Ruadh Phàislig and Ruairidh (an Case) Caimbeul to all the Somhairles that have ever existed and I am quite certain that Uist people would say the same, every one of them.' [my translation]

content, attitude and form' (1976, p. 46). Yet, what has fuelled this development which is still such a potent bone of contention?

Referring to the 'great five' poets (Black, 1999) - Somhairle MacGill-Eain / Sorley MacLean, Deòrsa Mac Iain Deòrsa / George Campbell Hay, Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn / Iain Crichton Smith, Ruaraidh MacThòmais / Derick Thomson and Dòmhnall MacAmhlaigh / Donald MacAulay - whose poetry appeared in *Nua-Bhàrdachd Ghàidhlig* (MacAulay, 1976) and is taken to signify the emergence of modern Gaelic poetry as such, MacAulay emphasises their bi-cultural nature.

> Most of this poetry has been written by people who have been transplanted out of their native communities into the ubiquitous outside world. Certainly this is true of the contributors to this anthology; they were all processed out in the course of their education, there being often no secondary school in their community, and certainly no university. (ibid., p. 47)

What is more, MacAulay emphasises the impact the fact of being 'processed out' had on the nature of this new emerging poetry:

> Their move into the outside world and their contact with their contemporaries especially at their universities has given them a broader vision of life and a greater experience for exotic literary tastes – a new context in which to see their community and its art. At the same time it has created in them a conviction that they have lost a great deal in exchange for what they have gained. They are strongly dependent emotionally on the communities which were the source of their formative experiences and, of course, of their language but their outside experience has bred an intellectual independence. (ibid., pp. 47-8)

Not surprisingly, it is this generation which was the first to consciously and consequently seek the literary exchange with the Anglophone world, often as personified by colleagues and literary friends. During the 1930s and 1940s, a time of intense literary creativity for MacLean, he had close friends in Hugh MacDiarmid, Douglas Young, Robert Garioch and other influential Scottish poets, all greatly aware of the importance and potential of the linguistic diversity present within Scottish society. Similarly, Thomson was concerned to raise the profile of the

contemporary Gaelic poet within the wider Scottish literary world and beyond, as the bilingual publications by *Gairm*, the publisher associated closely with him, his own critical writing in English and his, to varying degrees, bilingual poetry publications show. Furthermore, in publishers such as Macdonald Publishers of Edinburgh these poets found publishing partners who were highly supportive of such efforts (personal correspondence with Tessa Ransford).

Yet, the changes in 'content, attitude, and form' which marked the development of Gaelic poetry during the twentieth century also meant paving the way towards a bipolar understanding of what Gaelic poetry is, with 'traditional verse' on the one side of the spectrum and 'un-Gaelic modern *vers libre*' on the other (cf. Glaser, 2007). What becomes invisible within such a two-dimensional discourse is the varied developments of Gaelic poetry over the centuries, which has seen periods of development and stagnation due to social realities shaping the Gaelic world and its literature at each particular time. MacAulay offers an alternative perspective, arguing that:

> the older poetic tradition was closely tied in with a particular form of social structure. As this social structure disintegrated and was gradually eroded and replaced during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and as new life-styles were introduced at a time of rapidly increasing contact with the outside world, the poetry gradually became attenuated. This attenuation can be seen in many ways. The repertoire of the poets became narrowed and stereotyped. The intellectual content of the poetry diminished. An excessive parochialism developed, and with it a sentimentality and a lack of realism, especially in the poetry of the city-based exiles. This attenuation is also to be seen in the fabric of the poetry itself - in the decay of rhetorical power; in the lack of inventiveness and over-reliance on formula; in the mixed metaphor; and in the replacement of rhythmic subtleness with dead regularities. (1976, pp. 46-7)[12]

Similarly, this establishes a dichotomy which is equally misleading, namely that of *bàrd baile* (i.e. the village bard) and *bàrd ùr* (i.e. the modern bard) (cf. Black, 1999, also cf. Chapter 6) in that it projects a rather rigid perception of the parochial vs. the farsighted intellectual which in turn has implications for the qualitative evaluation of

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[12] See Gillies (2006) for further discussion.

each poetry, leading, for instance, to defensive remarks justifying the validity of traditional verse such as 'chan eil sian ann coltach ri bàird baile! Agus ma dh'fhaodas mi ràdh, rinn Dòmhnall Ailein an t-òran gaoil a b'fheàrr a chaidh riamh a dhèanamh ann an Gàidhlig. Se sin "Gruagach Òg an Fhuilt Bhàin"' (Caimbeul, A. 2004, p. 15).[13] With regard to the poetry of Donald MacIntyre (Dòmhnall Mac an t-Saoir),[14] Bill Innes exclaims that:

> it infuriates me when he is dismissed as a 'bard-baile' - a village bard. Like his nephew Donald John MacDonald […] he had a better command of the complex rules of Gaelic traditional poetry than most of the illustrious giants of the past and his poetry demands to be read aloud (in a Uist accent!). He is remembered today only for the funny songs but the great 700 line epic 'Aeolus agus am Balg' with which he won the Bardic crown in 1938 is one of the most important works ever composed in Gaelic. (1997)

If contemporary Gaelic poetry has departed from its predecessors in terms of the medium through which it reaches its audience as well as in aesthetic terms, we have to acknowledge that things are not as clear-cut as David Black suggests when he argues that 'writers in Scots and Gaelic know very well they are aiming for a local readership' (1990, p. 33) Indeed, we have to acknowledge that the notion of a defined readership is an elusive one with regard to contemporary poetry in Gaelic.

Pointing towards the locale with regard to literary innovations with modern poetry in Gaelic, MacAulay points out that 'these efforts were conducted in the Gaelic émigré community, in the city, where there was access to printing presses and model for "literature" and publication' (1994, p. 48). We are therefore in the company of an educated urban middle class in Scotland. It is here where contemporary Gaelic writing is appreciated, i.e. in university Celtic departments, at public readings of Gaelic poetry or in the shape of literary awards.[15] This is, however, not a new

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[13] 'There is no such a thing as village poetry! And if I may say so, Dòmhnall Ailein composed the best love song that was ever composed in Gaelic – "Gruagach Òg an Fhuilt Bhàin."' [my translation]
[14] See Black (1999) for samples and some discussion of his life and poetry.
[15] Cf. Christopher Whyte, joint winner of the Saltire Society Scottish First Book of the Year Award for his poetry collection *Uirsgeul / Myth* (1991b) in 1991, Aonghas MacNeacail, winner of the Stakis Prize for Scottish Writer of the Year with his third collection *Oideachadh Ceart agus Dàin Eile /A Proper Schooling and Other Poems* (1996) in 1997, and Martin MacIntyre, winner of the Saltire Book of the Year Award in 2004 with his short story collection *Ath-Aithne* (Mac an t-Saoir, 2003).

phenomenon. In an article addressing the 'Gaelic Renaissance c. 1900-1930', Thomson observes similar dynamics, arguing that the growth of Gaelic prose publishing observable during the period had 'a strongly Lowland location, for reasons related almost entirely to social and economic factors such as the existence of printing and publishing facilities in Lowland towns and the heavy influx of Highlanders to these places' (2000, p. 286).[16] Yet, making a comparison to Catalan, another of Europe's lesser-used languages, Whyte observes that:

> whereas a significant section of the Catalan bourgeoisie continues to prefer the Catalan language to Spanish, the same cannot be said of the middle classes in Scotland, who show not the slightest interest in speaking either Scots or Gaelic on a day-to-day basis, or in using these languages for education or commerce. (2000, p. 180).

The one medium in which the make-up of the audience is apparent and not merely guesswork is that of the public poetry reading. According to Whyte's experience, 'what you expect is that no-one in the audience, or one or two at most, if you are lucky, will know the language, or possess sufficient fluency in it to understand the poem you are reading' (ibid., p. 181).[17] Hence, focusing on an educated middle class in Scotland the implications in terms of language use are obvious with translations into English as a necessary aid for reaching an audience initially before becoming the norm. Although, as already mentioned, there is increasing evidence of Gaelic monolingual publishing, there is a prevailing understanding amongst Gaelic poets and editors that translations into English will be inevitable (Whyte, 2002b, p. 67). The Gaelic text publications over the past decade by commercial mainstream

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[16] In recent years Gaelic poetry readings have also increasingly featured in the Highlands and Islands as part of book festivals such as 'Faclan', the Hebridean Book Festival, established in 2006 and featuring poets such Meg Bateman and Rody Gorman besides authors who publish prose under the Ùr-Sgeul umbrella, or Aos-Dana, the Skye book festival which forms part of the Fèis and Eilein and features poets such as Myles Campbell, Meg Bateman, Rody Gorman and Angus Peter Campbell (Aonghas Pàdraig Caimbeul). Similarly, book launches featuring Ùr-Sgeul publications have taken place both in Lowland and Highland venues.

[17] Whyte goes on to discuss the bilingual reading practices with poetry readings, contemplating in which order to present the Gaelic and the English texts as well as the impact the chosen order has on the Gaelic original in terms of audience reception. He points towards the notion of the Gaelic original as an afterthought when read after the English version whilst also acknowledging the paradox situation of creating mere sound waves by reading the Gaelic first. Also note the following observation by Aonghas MacNeacail (referred to as Angus Nicolson here) with regard to MacLean: 'it is I think significant that when Sorley does a reading of poetry he always begins by explaining the images, then he reads the Gaelic original, and follows that up by reading the English translation, which he always stresses is not to be taken as a poem in itself' (Thompson, 1978-9, p. 7).

publishers such as Birlinn and Polygon provide ample evidence of this (also see Chapter 2.3 for comments by authors, editors and publishers addressing this issue). Indeed, as Whyte recalls, 'when Ian [King] and Sally [Evans] brought out Rody Gorman's *Cùis-ghaoil* […] from their Diehard Press, with no facing English versions, binding each copy by hand at home, fellow publishers viewed the initiative with incredulity' (2000, p. 182). English *en-face* publications are thus perceived to be the norm with Gaelic poetry publications.

An increasingly bi-discursive approach to Gaelic poetry publishing which has the original poetry in Gaelic besides translations and critical writing and other paratextual features in English furthermore has an impact on the general linguistic make-up of any critical appreciation of the poetry in question. As McLeod points out, towards the close of the 20th century 'there is almost no literary criticism in Gaelic, and the sole general work on the subject of Gaelic poetry, Derick Thomson's *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry* (1974b), is remarkable for not containing a single word of Gaelic poetry, relying exclusively on English translations' (McLeod, 1998, p. 151). It could be argued that the choice of language with this publication acknowledges and pays tribute to the 'new audience' as identified above. However, the acceptance of English as the most useful language for Gaelic literary criticism and its continuous employment has had a significant impact on its development as a language itself, as is illustrated by William Gillies (Uilleam MacGillìosa) in his review of *Nua-Bhàrdachd Ghàidhlig / Modern Scottish Gaelic Poems* (MacAulay, 1976). With reference to the Gaelic introduction by the editor Donald MacAulay, Gillies states:

> Tha mise a' moladh na h-òraide seo a chionn 's gum bheil dòigh-sgrùdaidh MhicAmhlaidh fosgailte soilleir: cha diùlt e mion obraichean dreuchd na bàrdachd a nochdadh dhuinn – agus bha siod a dhìth oirnn, gun teagamh a thaobh obrachadh na bàrdachd ùire ann an Gàidhlig. Ge tà, tha mi a' toirt taing do Dhia gun d'fhuair sinn Beurla cuide ris a' Ghàidhlig. Chan e Gàidhlig Bheàrnaraidh a tha a' cur ceist orm an seo, ach faclan ùra fada grannda a dheilbh airson nòiseanan a bhios gan cleachdadh sna cànainean móra ann an sgrùdadh litreachas agus an leithid. (MacGillìosa, 1976-7, p. 87)[18]

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[18] 'I am praising this essay because MacAulay's analysis is frank and clear: he does not refuse to show us the detailed working of the craft of poetry: and we needed that, without a doubt, with regard to the

Gillies interprets the situation as follows:

> Nise, tha deagh-fhios agam dé a bha san amharc aige: aig deireadh an latha tha an nua-bhàrdachd seo nas càirdeil ri bàrdachd na linne seo anns an Roinn-Eòrpa na ri bàrdachd Ghàidhlig sam bith, agus is ann a réir gnàthasan-mìneachaidh na bàrdachd choimhich as soirbhe a mhìnicheas tu mothachadh an 'nua-bhàird Ghàidhealaich'. (ibid., p. 87)[19]

The dilemma becomes apparent. On the one hand, Gillies says 'cha toigh leam diamhaireachd ann an obair mìneachaidh, ga b'e dé a b'adhbhar dhi'[20], on the other hand he states 'tha amharus agam gur h-e tha ceàrr oirnn cho gann 's a tha sinn de sgrìobhadh air litreachas Gàidhlig ann an Gàidhlig airson Gàidheil' (ibid., p. 87).[21] Since Gillies made his observations, the situation has not changed a great deal. As we have seen above, amongst a majority of publications discussing Gaelic poetry through the medium of English, there have been some monolingual poetry publications which include critical writing in Gaelic (cf. Meek, 1998, Ó Baoill 1994). Furthermore, a number of the papers addressing literary issues in Gaelic as printed in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* are in monolingual Gaelic format. Similarly, the conference proceedings of *Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig*, the biannual Gaelic research conference, present papers in Gaelic (cf. McLeod *et al.*, 2006 and Munro, 2007). Furthermore, *Gath* provides space for short Gaelic articles. Yet, the need for the development of Gaelic as an independent linguistic medium for any kind of critical discourse as shared and understood by the speakers and readers of the language is still pressing, for as MacAulay argues 'without it, considering the problems of knowledge and understanding which Gaelic culture faces, there is a danger that [Gaelic] will finally, for all the admirable fiscal and political structures put in place, be defined out – translated into non-distinctiveness' (1994, p. 53-4).

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working of the new poetry in Gaelic. Having said that, I thank God that we have the English beside the Gaelic. It's not the Berneray Gaelic that makes me puzzled here, but the new long horrible words that have been contrived to refer to notions which are used in literary criticism in the big languages.' [my translation]

[19] 'Now, I know well what he had in mind: at the end of the day, this new poetry has more in common with today's European poetry than with any Gaelic poetry. And it is according to the interpretive practices of this foreign poetry that you can explain most successfully the perception of the 'new Gaelic poets.' [my translation]

[20] 'I don't like obscurity in critical writing, whatever the reason for it.' [my translation]

[21] 'I suspect that what is wrong with us is how lacking we are in writing about Gaelic literature in Gaelic for Gaels.' [my translation]

The consequence is that the writer in Gaelic cannot enjoy the freedom of using words or concepts possibly unknown to the audience with the language providing a strong enough context for interpretation. The ability and willingness to make sense on the part of the reader might be lost. In a Gaelic context the following conviction by Alasdair Gray reveals a real danger for Gaelic as a language and literature in that such dynamics can not be taken for granted anymore:

> Any writers in English – if their range of reading is sufficiently wide – can take an exciting but generally unfamiliar word heard in a nearby street and, if it is useful, make the meaning and nuances plain to a reader from a different English idiom through the context in which it is marshalled. They can also use the prevailing diction of their locality, and if the thought and feeling is sufficiently strong and well expressed folk from other places who like good writing will teach themselves to understand. (1990, p. 8)

As we have seen, the minority existence of Gaelic as a literature and language affects the lives of authors and readers of Gaelic texts alike. In what follows, I will explore how the bilingual nature of Gaelic authors and readers, which in itself is intrinsically linked to the reality of Gaelic as a minority language, leaves its traces on the shared medium of Gaelic literary writing.

2.2.1.1   The Bilingual Existence of Authors and Readerships

The condition of bilingualism and thus biculturalism is undeniably present   in modern Gaelic society and cannot fail to influence the medium of contemporary Gaelic poetry as a process and product since, as Whyte has it, 'these Gaelic poets have no homeland where, whatever political ideology holds sway, the language can evolve and alter on the lips of monoglots' (1997, p. 45). In his analyses of MacNeacail's poetry, Whyte highlights the implications of a stagnating language development with minority languages for the medium of poetry itself. He argues that:

> Using 'natural' imagery can get round Gaelic's lack of contemporary vocabulary. The danger, however, is of strengthening 'ecological' projections onto Gaelic, as nearer to the earth and the elements, older, wiser, closer to our origins […] than English. A language fighting for

its survival would do well to be wary of reification of this sort. (Whyte, 2004, p. 229)[22]

Therefore, we are not in the company of what MacAulay calls a 'perfectly balanced bilingualism' – a notion he contemplates only to arrive at the conclusion that it would 'not bear scrutiny' (1994, p. 53). With regard to the reading practices of Gaelic native speakers, we find the following expressed by Iain Crichton Smith when asked 'Why do you write in both languages?' in an interview with Mario Relich:

> I think maybe because from the time I was very, very young I was reading English books, when I was ill. In those days there were no children's books in Gaelic at all, and I got into the habit of reading books in English all the time. I was probably reading the same kind of books as a Scottish child who didn't know Gaelic, or an English child.
>   So it may be because of this penetration of my psyche at a very early age by English books. By reading so much, I became very interested in poetry by English writers rather than Gaelic writers. (1998, p. 115)

Similarly, MacNeacail explains:

> school was totally an English-language institution. In secondary school Gaelic would be chosen as a subject rather than French. The syllabus was geared entirely to native-speakers. A course which relied heavily on complex eighteenth-century verse and dry nineteenth century prose deterred all but the most linguistically gifted learner, yet English was the medium of instruction. Our native language was presented to us as an archaic curiosity. Not surprisingly, any adolescent fantasies I had of following a literary career presupposed that the language of the living art was English. Perhaps it's also not surprising that I left school at sixteen, somewhat disenchanted, and headed for Glasgow. My early attempts at writing were, therefore, in English. (1995, p. 65)

Furthermore, a development in the attitude of authors towards the bilingual nature of their writing is perceivable. With Sorley MacLean, for instance, we have an author

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[22] Also note that MacNeacail refers to the importance of consulting dictionaries for stretching one's vocabulary in his article 'Rage Against the Dying of' (1990, p. 54), a practice which is treated in a highly satirical manner and presented as inherent to the practice of modern Gaelic poets in Alasdair Campbell's 'Visiting the Bard' (2003). Alasdair Campbell himself has had a long and productive career as Gaelic author Alasdair Caimbeul (cf. 1992), mostly known for his prose and drama writing.

who, at an early stage in his literary career, made the choice of writing creatively in Gaelic only. This was no doubt an aesthetic choice. Yet, it was also fuelled by an interest in preserving and developing the language as can be gathered from his correspondence with Douglas Young (MacGill-Eain, letters) regarding the publication of his first collection *Dàin do Eimhir agus Dàin Eile* (MacGill-Eain, 1943), and as he asserts in the following remark:

> My obsession was the preservation of the Gaelic language so that there would be people left in the world who could hear its great songs as they really were. No poetry could be translated, still less could song poetry, and the great language of Gaelic song made me fanatical about the beauty of the Gaelic language and its astonishing ability to indicate shades and positions of emphasis with natural inversions and the use of particles. (MacLean, 1982, p. 500)

From the correspondence with Douglas Young, however, one can clearly perceive the agony with which he viewed and experienced the writing process that went alongside with his original writing, namely the translation of his Gaelic poems into English, 'my own translations are hellish at best' (MacGill-Eain, letters, 30 March 1943). In another letter he states that he would prefer Young's translations to be published rather than his own, stating that 'my bald English will look awful scarecrows' (ibid., 25 April 1942). Then we have Iain Crichton Smith, a truly bilingual writer who published both Gaelic and English original work both in the genres of prose and poetry. Although he is a self-translating author, he seems to perceive of different readerships for his writings in the two languages, with his English and Gaelic texts appearing in separate books rather than *en-face* (cf. Chapter 2.2). Finally we arrive at the latest generation of poets writing in Gaelic. MacNeacail, for instance, has publications of both Gaelic and English original texts, with English publication in English format only, and Gaelic publications including *en-face* English translations. With MacNeacail, then, we witness the imbalanced situation where his English texts will not undergo the process of translation, whereas writing in Gaelic almost always results in translation into English (Whyte, 2004, p. 227, also cf. Chapter 2.3 for an author's perspective). From a historically oriented point of view then, it becomes apparent that Gaelic poetry has undergone a development over the past six decades which moves from embracing Gaelic as the

sole language for the creative output besides a selection of translations into English towards the firm embrace of English as an equal partner in terms of the literary creation that is self-translation and as a general linguistic medium for Gaelic literary publications.

2.2.2   The Early Debate

As noted above, the winter of 1978-9 saw the publication of a two-page debate on translation in the magazine *Books in Scotland* entitled 'English as a Function for Gaelic' in which author and political activist Frank Thompson addresses Gaelic poets Iain Crichton Smith and Angus Nicolson (Thompson, 1978-9).[23] The title of the debate strikes me as both radical and incredible since the power relationship between the majority language English and the minority language Gaelic is confidently turned on its head and thus challenged. I would like to suggest that a certain amount of innocence with regard to translation practices fuels the strikingly positive premise to this debate, which, nevertheless, cannot but reveal the problematic nature of translational activity surrounding Gaelic literature by way of context.[24] At the outset of the debate translation is clearly understood as a means towards reaching a wider readership and therefore towards gaining wider recognition for the author. In that respect, translation is identified as a pragmatic choice, as necessity even. Consider the introductory paragraph:

> Many of the writers known today, both dead and living, would be unknown were it not for translation of their work opening up new audiences. If translation is necessary for writers in majority languages to gain recognition, the same applies to writers in languages such as Gaelic. (ibid., p. 6)

Indeed, Nicolson confirms, having asked himself 'why bother to translate at all', that 'the answer, if there was one, was simply that there was a bigger publication potential in English. Which was rather sad in the context of the truer and more

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[23] Note that Angus Nicolson is the same poet this thesis has already referred to as Aonghas MacNeacail; see my discussion regarding the Names of Gaelic poets below.

[24] Such context is hinted at during some minor (since somewhat sketchy) avenues of discussion taken up during the debate such as the questioning of the desirability of translation out of Gaelic (cf. Thompson, 1978-9, p. 7).

original creative product' (ibid., p. 6). The initial argument seems to be that translation is a necessary tool for any culture, be it of majority or minority status in its relationship to other languages, that cannot be avoided and therefore has to be embraced. What is interesting here is the understanding that the recipients of the translation is the English reader to whom the original texts are foreign. Hence translation allows for a relationship between the source text and a target audience, as well as the source author and the target culture. Nicolson thus characterises translation from Gaelic into English as follows:

> It is useful. It all depends what is intended by the translation. I suppose that at the least it brings to English audiences writers in another language […] I would say also that if the poet is good enough, then a translation of some of his work would be beneficial to his reputation. (ibid., p. 7)

This small extract clearly identifies an English audience for English translations, which, as we will see below, is not entirely the case anymore with more recent debates, with a Gaelic audience more literate in English also being named. Furthermore, this early debate also clearly presumes an awareness on the reader's part that they are indeed dealing with a translation when reading the English version of a Gaelic poem, as becomes clear when Smith suggests that 'the main thing is of course getting the "sense" of a poem across in translation: That I think is what people look for, because they know that they are looking at something not quite original' (ibid., p. 6).

Throughout the debate an understanding seems to prevail that author and translator are separate individuals. The issue of self-translation, which was certainly already well-established at the time, is hardly mentioned let alone discussed. In fact, it is the idea of the collaborative nature of translation which sparks the following rather radical remark by Nicolson:

> Some writers have been very well served by their translators. Take Neruda, for instance. One of the best translators of Neruda is Alasdair Reid, who happens to be a Scot. Maybe what we should try to aim for is a group of non-Gaels who have learned Gaelic to obtain a fluency in the language so as to be able to translate with the necessary feeling

so that what comes through is the 'sense' and feeling that Iain has mentioned. (Thompson, 1978-9, p. 7)

As such, the debate certainly carries a positive and productive undertone, suggesting ways in which translation can have a positive effect on the minority literature. Notable here is also the interesting suggestion that translation into English might indeed stimulate original writing in Gaelic, as suggested by Thompson in his question to Smith of whether he believes 'that the prospect of being translated in English, thereby giving you a wider readership, would encourage Gaelic writers to produce more in their own language' arguing that 'that alone would help strengthen Gaelic as literary medium' (ibid., p. 6). Smith's reply 'I think this is very true' is highly interesting but fails to explore this idea further. He does, however, continue by pointing out that translation is not necessarily a matter-of-fact tool ready to be used whatever the literary situation and indeed the literary text, raising the point that 'the problem might be in assessing how far one language can translate effectively into another.' This he considers especially true for poetry, declaring that 'it is easier for prose to be translated than poetry, for some obvious reasons' (ibid., p. 6). This is particularly interesting as the Gaelic literary context shows a great amount of translation with poetry and very little translation activity with Gaelic prose.

A considerable part of the debate is taken up by a discussion of the particularities of translation as a process and product, with questions such as what is the essence of a text that should be carried over into the translation, or faithful versus free translations, being addressed. The aim clearly is to identify translation approaches that serve both the original author and his or her text, as well as the language which is the literary medium of the original text. This strikes me as interesting since this sort of translation argument is entirely absent from today's debate, as we shall see below. On the one hand, this can be seen as reflecting the development the study of translation as a field of research has undergone in general, with a tendency over recent decades towards viewing translation dynamics from a 'historicising' point of view, i.e. viewing translation practices and products in their historical socio-political context with regard to their impact on that very context (cf. Lefevere, 1998, p. 12), rather than treating translation from an exclusively text-based evaluative perspective

(as referred to in Chapter 1.1.8). On the other hand, it might suggest a development of translation activity in a Gaelic context, which has left Gaelic texts in such dependency on English translations that today it might be a luxury to talk about how to translate. Nevertheless, in this earlier debate there is an understanding that translation impacts on a culture beyond its existence as a literary event, as becomes apparent in the following statement by Smith, in which he demands a selective approach towards translation from Gaelic into English:

> If Gaelic is to gain at all, then whoever is being translated must have reached a certain level of attainment in Gaelic writing. The same is true with writers in other languages. Once they have achieved a literary reputation, then they seem to be translated. Gaelic literature must always be seen to have this quality of work being in it, that is if translation is to work to the good of Gaelic as well as the writers using the language. (Thompson, 1978-9, p. 8)

Besides the difficulty and possibly undesirability of identifying an instance of judgement for such an evaluation, such a selective approach has a twofold impact on the appreciation of Gaelic literature. Firstly, the appreciation of any text written in Gaelic occurs initially through the medium of that language, independent of a possible future appreciation by a majority language readership. Secondly, the understanding that Gaelic as a text and as a language comes first with Gaelic literature when facing the prospect of translation into the majority language of English retains a temporal and interpretational distance between the two texts, which is understood as imperative for the independent status of Gaelic as a language and literature. This in itself is a crucial understanding given a development in translation and publication practices which has increasingly narrowed the gap between the two texts by relying on first-time publications of Gaelic poetry material which present self-translated poetry pairs in Gaelic and English on facing pages. Not only is the gap narrowed by the very immediate nature of self-translation with recent authors (cf. Chapter 4.2) and the physical closeness of the texts (see Chapter 5) but moreover by the fact that with contemporary poetry in Gaelic the reader cannot refer to the independently published monolingual Gaelic literary corpus (see 2.2.5 below).

Returning to what I have identified as an early debate addressing translation issues, benefits of another translation practice are pointed out in an article by Iain Crichton Smith entitled 'On Translation'. In this article Smith identifies translation of literary texts into Gaelic as a kind of translation practice which would be beneficial to the development of Gaelic as a literature and language, stating his belief that 'there is room for far more translation into Gaelic from good work. And I believe this would serve a useful purpose' (1967, p. 10). Indeed, he envisages translations of international poetry into Gaelic as 'not simply translations but new poems which would become part of the corpus of our literature', which would mean that 'they would, ideally speaking, be Gaelic poems' (ibid., p. 10). Here again, a brief excursion into more recent developments within the world of Gaelic poetic creativity is of value as it reveals that the Gaelic literary corpus may not only be increased by translations of foreign language poems into Gaelic but also through another way of engaging with translation. As described by Whyte, an engagement with Gaelic texts as prerequisite for translation into other languages can also succeed in increasing the amount of original material. Whyte describes his own experience of becoming a Gaelic writer thus:

> The next stage with Sorley MacLean came about seven years later, in Rome, when I put nearly all the fifty or so poems in the 'Dàin do Eimhir' cycle into Italian. I believe it was that experience that allowed me to become a Gaelic poet, or perhaps just to have the illusion of becoming one. (2002b, p. 69)

Once Whyte has established himself as a poet writing original texts in Gaelic, translation into Gaelic became a further part of the creative process. Such translation engagement may indeed have a positive effect on Gaelic, not merely by enlarging the corpus of Gaelic poetry through translated texts alone as suggested by Smith, but by constituting a creative impulse with the translation functioning as what Whyte describes as a 'launch pad for a new poem' (ibid., p. 66). Both scenarios carry the potential to increase the corpus of Gaelic literary material. Thus, we might want to conclude that translation in itself is not inherently dangerous for the preservation of a minority language and its literature, but that it matters which approach is chosen. Such an understanding of translation firmly establishes the translator as a cultural

agent having a high responsibility and therefore demands conscious choices and an acute awareness of the impact of translational action. This is significant in a self-translation context which does not refer to either the translator or the translation process in publications. In order to fully understand the impacts of translation activity on Gaelic literature, I would like to look at the debate around translation in a Gaelic context as it was rekindled in 1998 with the publication of three essays on the topic of translation in *Chapman*. Before doing so, however, it will be beneficial to consider opinions and attitudes towards on translation and publication practices with Gaelic poetry that have been voiced in reaction to a highly celebrated recent publication venture under the title of *An Leabhar Mòr / The Great Book of Gaelic* (Maclean and Dorgan, 2002).

2.2.3   An Leabhar Mòr

According to its website, the *An Leabhar Mòr* project, which is dedicated to poetry both in Irish and Scottish Gaelic as composed over the centuries, has 'generated an international touring exhibition of 100 artworks, a book publication, a website, a TV documentary, a series of BBC radio programmes, a music CD, a schools pack and an events programme' with the final outcome being a 'visual anthology in one bound volume' (*An Leabhar Mòr*). As such, the project has received enthusiastic attention and praise for raising the awareness of Irish and Scottish Gaelic literatures and arts. The language featuring most prominently in the actual book publication is English. English translations are provided as well as English introductory texts. In a review in *The Scotsman*, Jim Gilchrist briefly raises the issue of translation, referring to the reasoning against translation amongst Irish poets. He argues:

> Sympathetic outsiders may feel somewhat slighted; after all, as Anderson puts it: 'The new courage of Gaelic owes something to the encouragement of strangers.' However, such necessary arguments will doubtless bubble on, with An Leabhar Mòr as a timely and beguilingly beautiful focus – translations included. (2003, p. 17)

Interesting here is the perception of the debate of translation as being somehow at the periphery of attention rather than being of central importance in the appreciation of

today's Gaelic poetry publications, 'bubbling on' there somewhere. The more important influence of the publication seems to be perceived as raising the profile of Gaelic in an English-speaking world, as can be perceived in Ronald Black's statement quoted in the review:

> I've always considered it very important to make Gaelic an open book for everyone, and An Leabhar Mòr contributes to that in a significant way. It takes poems of all eras, and lays them open with translation, not least in the way they have been illustrated. (Gilchrist, 2003, p. 17)

At the opposite end of the spectrum, however, we find voices such as the following by Màiri Rhind, Gaelic reviewer of *An Leabhar Mòr* for the Ross-shire Journal (2003, p.7), which express a rather contrasting view describing this particular publication project thus:

> Tha na còig ro-ràdhan aon-chànanach ge tà 's tha e gu math tàmailteach dhomhsa gur ann sa Bheurla air fad 'sa tha iad seo […] Tha seo a' fàgail 'An Leabhair Mhòir' 'na leabhar beagan nas lugha mar chuimhneachan air a' chultar choitcheann a th'ann eadar Alba is Eireann. Tha e a' fàgail 'An Leabhair Mhòir' 'na leabhar Beurla agus tha cothrom air chall. (ibid., p. 7)[25]

It has to be acknowledged here that the specific publication approach in terms of language use with *An Leabhar Mòr* has to be seen in the light of the development of Gaelic publishing on the whole. As MacAulay explains:

> The publication of translations along with the verse has allowed access to it for non-Gaelic speakers and there is no doubt that, as a result, the status of Gaelic poets and poetry has risen in the eyes of non-Gaels. Gaelic literature has become a more acceptable commodity for mainstream publishers and cultural entrepreneurs, and indeed for all who see themselves as connoisseurs of literary forms. And this has enhanced the status of Gaelic culture, which is a highly desirable development. (1994, p. 53)

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[25] 'The five prefaces are monolingual, however, and I find it quite scandalous that they are entirely in English. That leaves the "Leabhar Mòr" as little more than a reminder of the common culture between Scotland and Ireland. It leaves the "Leabhar Mòr" as an English book and an opportunity has been lost.' [my translation]

What is revealed is the ever-present focus of attention towards the majority language audience as the guarantor of recognition and thus flourishing and continuation of Gaelic literature. Adopting such a perspective, however, risks losing sight of the native speakers of the language – an attitude which certainly leaves its mark with native speakers, as this somewhat cynical remark by Rhind shows:

> Chan eil fhios agamsa ach bha, 's dòcha, na daoine a thug seachad an t-airgead air a shon a' toirt mholaidhean seachad a thaobh cànain. Bidh cuid ag radha, tha mi cinnteach, gun cur [*sic*] leabhar mar seo sa Bheurla a' Gàidhlig mu choinneamh barrachd dhaoine – 'se sin na feadhainn aig nach eil Gàidhlig.
> Ach ged a bhios seo fìor gu leòr gu cinnteach tha leabhraichean sa Bheurla ann mar thà [*sic*] far am faighear bàrdachd Ghàidhlig agus eadartheangachaidhean Beurla cuideachd. Mar eisimpleir na leabhraichean sgoinneil a thug Raghnall Mac'Ille Dhuibh a-mach bho chionn ghoirid – agus is iongantach mur a h-eil esan ag obair an dràsta fhèin air leabhraichean eile de bhardachd Ghàidhlig bho na linntean nach do rinn e fhathast. (2003, p. 7)[26]

Placing such concerns in the theoretical framework of 'reversing language shift' (cf. Fishman, 1991), Alison Lang identifies prestigious cultural projects such as *An Leabhar Mòr* as Gaelic-labelled and funded accordingly, yet as failing to contribute towards reversing language shift because they use English as the linguistic medium for communicating the event (Lang, 2006). As Calum MacLean states in the introduction to *An Leabhar Mòr*, the project is perceived by its makers as a 'modest, but significant and optimistic step' towards encouraging artists to 'recognise [the] acceleration in language death as an appropriate subject matter for literature, drama, music and visual arts and as yet uncategorized artforms' so as to ensure that 'the issue will come alive in the minds of the general public' (MacLean and Dorgan, 2002, p. 3). Lang points towards the inevitable logic behind such an approach stating that:

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[26] 'I don't know, but maybe the people who provided the money for it were celebrating the language. Some would say, I am sure, that this kind of book in English brings Gaelic to the attention of more people – that is those who don't have Gaelic.
　　But even if this was true enough, surely there are already books in English offering Gaelic poetry alongside English translations. Take, for instance, the excellent books Ronald Black has brought out recently – and I would be surprised if he wasn't working this very moment on other books about Gaelic poetry of centuries he hasn't covered yet.' [my translation]

> Is e an t-uallach a tha air sgrìobhadairean agus luchd-ealain gu bhith a' dèiligeadh ri bàs cànain mar chuspair ealain no litreachais, gus aire a' phobaill a thoirt don chùis agus inntinn a' phobaill fhosgladh, ach chan eil dleastanas air an sgrìobhadair no air an neach-ealain a bhith ag amas ri suidheachadh a' chànain atharrachadh. (2006, p. 201)[27]

She goes on to ask the question:

> Ma thig crìoch air dleastanas luchd-ealain agus sgrìobhadairean nuair a bhios iad air cunnart an t-suidheachaidh a chlàradh, a bheil e an uair sin an urra ri feadhainn eile – luchd-planaidh agus luchd-leasachaidh – fuasgladh a lorg gus stad a chur air crìonadh a' chànain agus ath-bheothachadh a chur an gnìomh, no a bheil uallach air an neach-ealain a bhith sàs anns an obair seo cuideachd? (ibid., p. 201)[28]

It is the question of whether art in its very existence as a socially interactive medium exists outside the world of politics or whether art is as much a shaping force with regard to political realities as any other form of social interaction within any given society (see Chapter 5.2.2 for a detailed discussion). With Gaelic being a minority language, the attribute 'political' is most obviously attached to language use in this particular cultural context. In other words, the artist who uses Gaelic as a label for his or her work moves within the spheres of language politics, not necessarily in terms of contents but most certainly in terms of form, for every form of artistic expression, be that music, literature or visual arts, communicates with an audience through language use. Talking from a Fishmanian point of view, i.e. from a point of view concerned with actively reversing language shift, Lang explains:

> Tha na Fishmanaich a' faicinn cunnart anns an teachdaireachd seo gu bheil Gàidhlig ceart gu leòr na h-àite fhèin, ann am bàrdachd is ceòl, ach gur i Beurla a bhios daoine a' bruidhinn agus a' sgrìobhadh gu h-àbhaisteach. Agus sin cnag na cùise […] às aonais cleachdadh a' chànain, cha tig àbhaisteachadh, ann an raointean culturach is ealain no raointean cleachdaidh sam bith eile. (2006, p. 201)[29]

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[27] 'It is the responsibility of writers and artists to deal with language death as subject matter for art and literature, to alert the public to the subject and to open the public's mind, but it is not the duty of writers or artists to aim at changing the situation of the language.' [my translation]

[28] 'If the artists' and writers' duty ends once they have noted the danger of the situation, is it then the responsibility of other people, planners and developers, to search for ways to stop language decline in support of revitalisation, or is it the responsibilities of artists too to engage in this work?' [my translation]

[29] 'Fishmanians see a danger in this message that Gaelic is all right in its own place, in poetry and music, but that English is what is spoken and written habitually. And that is the crux of the matter […]

From the perspective of reversing language shift, the conclusion is that cultural practices which promote a minority language mainly through the medium of the majority language helps to weaken an under-developed language further by denying it a development towards a habitual medium for cultural communication (also see Lang and McLeod, 2005).[30] Keeping such a reasoning in mind, it will now be the task to see how recent arguments around the issue of Gaelic poetry and translation have evolved with respect to issues of language use and translation.

2.2.4   Gaelic Poetry and Translation: The *Chapman* Debate

In 1998, the Scottish literary magazine *Chapman* provided considerable space to a debate addressing the nature and consequences of translation activities in a Gaelic literary context. Wilson McLeod initiated the debate with an article aptly entitled 'The Packaging of Gaelic Poetry' in which he points towards the ever-increasing practice of *en-face* English translations in Gaelic poetry publication and anthologies as well as the ever-more dominant role of English, finding its way as sole language onto spines and covers of books presenting Gaelic poetry. The 'bilingual' in bilingual poetry publication therefore appears to be a relative and dynamic occurrence, with the English language increasingly gaining space, thus marginalizing the language of the original poetry and therefore, as I would like to argue, declaring it incapable of presenting its original texts to a readership. The issue of space is emphasised by McLeod when he observes that 'there is now practically no contemporary Gaelic poetry (outside *Gairm*, the one Gaelic magazine) that appears independently and stands on its own without an English *doppelgänger*' (McLeod, 1998, p. 151).[31] As we have noted in Chapter 1.1.8, McLeod interprets such practices as a 'reflection of and metaphor for' the decline of Gaelic as a living language (ibid., p. 151). Pointing towards the underlying logic, he expands by explaining that:

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without language use there will be no normalisation, whether in the domains of culture and art or in any other domains of use.' [my translation]

[30] Also see Chalmers and Danson (2006) for an alternative view on this matter. The present thesis will present its own conclusion with regard to the usefulness of majority-language use in the cultural domain of a minority language, in this particular case the usefulness of English facing self-translation and English paratext in contemporary poetry publications, in Chapter 5.

[31] As pointed out, *Gairm* has ceased to exist since these comments were made, having been replaced by the new Gaelic journal *Gath*.

The Gaelic speech community has shrunk by three quarters over the last century, from a population substantially monoglot to a bilingual population dominant in Gaelic, to a bilingual population ever more obviously dominant in English. With English being universal, Gaelic is no longer needed for communication, indeed no longer *needed* at all. In a sense, then, packaging Gaelic poetry in such a way as to push it into a kind of existential limbo is only appropriate. The utilitarian logic seems impeccable: Why bother with the expense of printing Gaelic introductions when everyone can read English? Why bother with printing Gaelic versions of the poems? And the inevitable last question: why bother with Gaelic at all? (ibid., p. 151)

Poet Aonghas MacNeacail, himself a native speaker in contrast to McLeod, does not agree with McLeod's conclusion. In his article 'Being Gaelic and Otherwise', he argues for a development of Gaelic in creative terms, stating his belief that:

The process of renewal and experiment can never end – whatever language, or dialect, you choose [to write in]. Those who see Gaelic as immune to, beyond, or protected from such exposures are engaged in an act of denial which can only ultimately destroy what they would most dearly wish to conserve. (MacNeacail, 1998, p. 154)

Moreover, he is convinced that translations are a necessary medium for Gaelic poets to enter a creative exchange with both poets and audiences beyond the Gaelic speaking world. That such contact is not merely based on intellectual, aesthetic considerations but also economic ones goes without saying. As MacNeacail argues, 'that very question of numbers is a crucial factor. At the basic economical level, it makes our books more viable and we, surely, are entitled as any other serious writers to seek viability' (ibid., p. 155).[32] The final argument he offers in support of translation grows from an interest in inviting members of such new audiences to develop an interest in Gaelic as both a literature and a language. He is convinced that

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[32] Compare this with earlier statements such as 'I would be inclined to think that literary recognition would be uppermost in most writers' minds, rather than the commercial reputation, which would of course be attractive to publishers. First of all we must remember that the creation of a poem is a non-commercial act. Only when the poem is complete do you look at the second phase, that is possible publication' (Thompson, 1978-9, p. 7) and 'the most popular Gaelic author will quickly recognise that writing solely in their native language is not a commercially viable venture. It's as well that Gaelic writers are not primarily motivated by the size of the potential audience, nor by the likelihood of any significant financial benefit accruing from their labour' (MacNeacail, 1990, p. 56).

'we also offer yet another door, however narrow, for those who are curious about Gaelic to peer in, and perhaps eventually to step into our world' (ibid., p. 155).

As we can see, both writers place the discussion about translation in a political context. McLeod thus argues that 'the problem is fundamentally a political one: today's Gaelic denying approach needs to be recognised and named for what it is and what it says' (1998, p. 151). MacNeacail on the other hand asks, 'why shouldn't we argue that translation is also, and overtly, a political act, in that it offers a reminder to the outside world that "We are still here"?' (1998, p. 155). In this respect, the editorial note by Joy Hendry to the *Chapman* issue entitled *The State of Scotland – A Predicament for the Scottish Writer?* is revealing. Summarising the contributions to the magazine, she concludes that:

> Many things emerge, particularly the urgency of the translation problem for Scots and Gaelic, which need political action to ensure their survival. People must realise that the decision to use and preserve a language is political and cultural. Each contribution here confirms that politics and culture are inseparable. (Hendry, 1990, p. 1)

If the very act of using a language in original writing is political action and therefore has a great reality-shaping impact on a language and a culture, then the same must be true for translation, as I would like to argue.

In his article 'Bilingual Poetry', Peter France too moves his argument towards the political aspects of translation (1998). France emphasises the fact that when talking about translations in a Scottish Gaelic context we have to acknowledge that we have entered the discussion of power-struggles between cultures. In that respect, translations from Gaelic into English, hence into the language which played a considerable role in turning Gaelic into a minority language in the first place, might be seen in the light of colonial activity:

> If the publishing of Gaelic bilingual translations is a tricky issue, it is no doubt because it raises questions of the relation not so much between texts as between cultures. This links up with the growing discussion in recent years about the political significance of translation. There is by now a well-established school of thought that

sees in translation a kind of aggression or colonisation. Far from being a handmaiden here, the translator is a raider, bringing home booty which is then made available like tea or sugar to consumers in the dominant culture. (France, 1998, p. 159)

In accepting this, I am re-inviting the general argument into our Gaelic-focused discussion that, as France puts it, 'Western discourse colonises by imposing its own preconceived patterns on the Other' (ibid., pp. 159-60, cf. Chapter 1). Pól Ó Muirí evokes a colonial discourse analysis when addressing the issue of an increased translation activity from Irish into English with contemporary Irish poetry:

My main contention, then, is that this new rapport between Irish poets of both languages, as expressed in these various anthologies, is bogus. We are simply witnessing poets while away the dark winter nights by translating Irish poetry. It occurs to me that translation, in this instance, has a lot more to do with colonialisation – a desire to scavenge rather than a desire to propagate. It is patronage and pity. (1993, p. 16)

In the introduction to his bilingual anthology of 20th century Gaelic poetry, then, Ronald Black comes to the conclusion that 'by this argument poets who translate themselves are quislings' (1999, p. lxv).

Yet, it is not poetry alone which is taken as the booty. A well-documented translational activity serving the colonial discourse is the adaptation of place-, family- and first names as they occur within a colonised culture to the orthographic and lexical conventions of the colonising culture. Brian Friel's play *Translations* (2000) illuminates such multi-layered translational activity in the context of the 1833 Ordnance Survey, which recorded local Irish language placenames while simultaneously rendering them into English. Furthermore, the play concentrates on the effect this practice has on the people of the rural community it is set in, one such effect being the Anglicisation of personal names:

Manus: […] What's 'incorrect ' about the placenames we have here?
Owen: Nothing at all. They're just going to be standardised.
Manus: You mean changed into English?
Owen: Where there's ambiguity, they'll be Anglicised.
Manus: And they call you Roland! They both call you Roland!

Owen:	Shhhhh. Isn't it ridiculous? They seem to get it wrong from the very beginning – or else they can't pronounce Owen. I was afraid some of you bastards would laugh.
Manus:	Aren't you going to tell them?
Owen:	Yes – yes – soon – soon.
Manus:	But they...
Owen:	Easy man, easy, Owen – Roland – what the hell. It's only a name. It's the same me, isn't it? Well, isn't it? (Friel, 2000, pp. 36-7)

Looking at any anthology of modern Gaelic poetry, we realise that the poet represented lead a life of double identity. Hence the Gaelic world knows the poet of 'Glac a' Bhàis' as Somhairle MacGill-Eain (MacGill-Eain/MacLean, 1990, p. 210) whereas the English world knows him as Sorley MacLean, the author of 'Death Valley' (ibid., p. 211) The author of 'Na h-Eilthirich' (Black, 1999, p. 530) is known both as Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn and Iain Crichton Smith. Even Anna Frater's name needs to be ever so slightly changed to Anne Frater in an English context. There are, however, exceptions to the rule such as Aonghas MacNeacail, Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh, Rody Gorman and Meg Bateman.[33] Such dual existence not only finds its way into library catalogues but also onto front-book covers of poetry collection. Comparing the situation to neighbouring minority literatures of Celtic origin this seems to be a phenomenon which is quite unique to the Scottish literary world. Irish-language poets, for instance, present themselves almost invariably to their readership by one name only, which is derived either from Irish or English. With regard to Scottish Gaelic, the phenomenon of dual Gaelic/Anglophone identity as revealed by the use of names is part of a wider societal diglossia not confined merely to the world of literature and as such can be interpreted as a concrete example of how continuous cultural and linguistic contact within the English/Gaelic contact zone over centuries has left visible traces within today's Gaelic world.[34]

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[33] Note, however, the variety of cultural backgrounds with these four authors. MacNeacail is a native Gaelic speaker who started off his writing career as Angus Nicolson. Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh is a learner preferring to lead a literary life under the Gaelicised version of his name. Rody Gorman is originally from Ireland and uses the English form of his name. Finally, Meg Bateman is a learner with an English name who chooses not to change it at all.

[34] Note, however, that there is evidence of 'Gaelicisation' of English names within the Gaelic literary world, as we have seen with Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh and as can be observed with Christopher Whyte, for instance, who has edited his recent poetry collection as Crisdean MhicGhilleBhàin / Christopher Whyte (2007) after having his poetry published under Crisdean Whyte at other times. However, as I would like to argue, with the Anglicisation of Gaelic names the phenomenon of double identity was initiated.

Returning to France's 1998 essay, he concludes not by stating that translation as such has to be considered as essentially dangerous in this particular context, but by arguing that we should instead concentrate on the question of *how* to translate:

> It isn't necessarily so much the fact of translation which critics see as harmful, as the manner. The norm for most literary translators has been for a long time to make a text that seems to belong naturally to its new culture – as a child I read Jules Verne without thinking it originated somewhere else. Against this, much current thinking about translation argues for 'foreignisation', rubbing the reader's nose into the strangeness of what he or she is reading. (1998, p. 160)

The case is made, therefore, for translation strategies which work against the invisibility and, in turn, marginalisation of Gaelic as language and a literature. Such strategies would actively support the existence of Gaelic poetry in its own right rather than passively looking on to its development into a poetry-in-translation. The reality of translation practices surrounding Gaelic poetry is, however, one which renders the translation process invisible and therefore presents English translations as an equivalent mirror image of the Gaelic original, which, in turn, is rendered dispensable. This brings us to the phenomenon of self-translation as discussed by those involved with Gaelic literature.

2.2.5   Gaelic Poetry and Self-Translation

Reviewing *Fax and other poems* by Rody Gorman (1996) and *All My Braided Colours* by Siùsaidh NicNèill (1996), John MacInnes makes the following comment regarding the nature of contemporary Gaelic poetry in general, a comment which has resonated considerably in Gaelic literary circles ever since (cf. Black, 1999, p. lxiv, Whyte, 2000, p. 183):

> Now the buoyancy and assurance have vanished and the rich tonality of oral poetry have been replaced by a new, bare, formal poetic that expresses with far greater subtlety the uncertainties of the complex, 'modern' world. This can be very austere. At one extreme, indeed, there is hardly a discernable rhythmic pulse. The real vitality is in the ideas that a poem expresses. One great advantage is that the poetry translates easily and elegantly into English; and sometimes, to quote

Thurber, 'it loses something in the original'. (MacInnes, 1998, pp. 342-43)

MacInnes' adopted punch line has to be seen in reference to the traditional understanding of translation as a process where qualities of the original text are inevitably lost in the production of the target text. Whyte adds to this discussion arguing that:

> Aside from issues of evaluation, such comments show a failure to grasp the nature of the poetic process, whatever the stature of the person engaged in it. Such people imagine that you will write the same poem indifferently, whatever language you are using, when in fact the poem proceeds from the language and is an event, no matter how minor, in the life of that language. (2000, p. 183)

It is the notion of equivalence that lurks behind the above exchange of thoughts, a notion which has been identified at least as problematic in more recent translation studies (see Chapter 3.2). Source and target text will differ, however close the translator tries to stay to the original. Particularly with poetry, a literary medium which realises its expression on a variety of levels such as grammar, syntax, connotation, prosody etc., the translator will indeed have to choose which of these aspects to either follow closely or disregard at any particular point in the poem. Translation studies terms such as generalisation, explicitation, compensation etc.(cf. Chapter 6.2.1 for a discussion in relation to examples of Gaelic poetry) reveal an understanding that a translation is an event which both loses and gains in the light of the original. As such, translation is a process marked by difference rather than equivalence.

What is important, though, is the fact that recent poetry in Gaelic is *perceived* as 'English verse in Gaelic' (MacInnes, 1998, p. 342). In other words, the creative impulse is understood to originate in English with the author thinking in English and being immersed its literary conventions and aesthetics. This leads many commentators to view the Gaelic originals as inferior to the English translations, which, according to the above statement is experienced as richer. Such an attitude, however, still considers the Gaelic writing to be the original writing. This

observation becomes important in the light of the following statement by Whyte in which he says that 'more than once I have been asked if I write the translation first, then put the poem into Gaelic' (2000, p. 83). Indeed, this point is made by MacAulay when he admits that 'reading the latest (bilingual) anthology *An Aghaidh na Sìorraidheachd* [Whyte, 1991a] I was concerned to find that with some poems I felt unable to determine, from reading them, which was the translation and which the original' (MacAulay, 1994, p. 53). With these two remarks the collapse of the traditional distinction between the original and the translation, between original writing and translational activity, becomes evident. As McLeod argues:

> Presenting [Gaelic] poetry in such a fashion has serious consequences. The two texts can be understood as two functionally equivalent versions of the same thing, the same ideal 'original' – the differences being essentially one of format, like the differences between the compact disc or vinyl version of 'the same' record. Or the two texts can be seen as two distinct and different compositions, two 'originals' of essentially identical legitimacy and importance, each the fruit of the author's labour, and not necessarily dependent on each other. What no longer seems a realistic interpretation is the most obvious one – that the Gaelic texts are the originals, and their English translations are ancillary and mediated compositions in whose production 'something has been lost'. (1998, p. 149)

It is precisely because of the practice of self-translation that the above statements regarding the perceived nature and status of original texts and translations in a Gaelic context become possible. With regard to such a breakdown of boundaries, MacAulay notes that:

> There is, for example, an assumption articulated (and defended) by some people in the literary establishment, and elsewhere, in Scotland that the translation can somehow be an adequate substitute for the original – not the best available to one because one does not know the language of the original and so can have no direct access to it, which is a reasonable point of view, but that the translation itself is somehow equally valued with the original. (1994, p. 53)

Such assumption becomes evident as soon as Gaelic texts are critically evaluated, as in the case of Scottish Writer of the Year award winner Aonghas MacNeacail, who explains that 'they took the translations at face value and read them as workable

poetry' (1998, p. 149). Another such case is highlighted by Whyte, who points out that none of the contributions to the publication *Sorley MacLean - Critical Essays* states whether it was the original Gaelic texts or his own English translation which served as a basis for critical analysis (2002b, p. 70, referring to Ross and Hendry, 1986). The ultimate conclusion from this evidence is that translations of Gaelic poems, given that they have been produced by the author of the original text, have acquired canonical status.

It is therefore not surprising that translations by the authors themselves are frequently employed as interpretation aids as the following extract from MacInnes' article 'Language, Metre and Diction in the Poetry of MacLean' demonstrates:

> From the poet's own translations it is evident that he sometimes focuses sharply and individualistically on a particular point in the semantic range of a word. 'Labhar', for instance, in its general import 'loud', is almost always translated 'eloquent'. This meaning is known neither in literature nor in contemporary spoken Gaelic. But it may have been used in that sense in certain contexts in the past: Dwelly's Dictionary [1994] gives 'eloquent' as the fourth sense of the word. […] Wherever such extensions of meaning have their source, they are to be regarded as an enrichment of the language. (1986, pp. 146-47)

Another example comes from Whyte's critical analysis of MacNeacail's poetry as presented in his recent book *Modern Scottish Poetry*, in which he points towards the realisation of the poem title 'seunaidhean', usually meaning 'charms' or 'enchantment', as 'telepathies' which leads him to the conclusion that 'readers who have both languages are being encouraged to redefine, to re-experience the Gaelic text in terms of its English double, as if the facing versions constituted an overarching whole, more complete than either of its components could ever hope to be' (2004, p. 227). Furthermore, John MacInnes observes that:

> NicNèill, intriguingly, translates *cùramach*, 'careful, concerned, circumspect', as 'Presbyterian'. The explanation is that a specialised, ecclesiastical sense of *cùram* (the noun), 'spiritual concern, conviction of sin' – a concept far older than Presbyterian, and even dialectically limited – has been pressed into service. But one needs the English translation to spot the originality. (1998, p. 343)

Accepting the English translation as definitive interpretation furthermore asserts the problematic notion of one-to-one equivalence, thus succeeding in making invisible the transformation at linguistic and stylistic levels every text goes through in translation. Therefore, the visibility of choice and ambiguity is denied and, inevitably, the excitement of discovering differences in perceiving the world and its phenomena which is at the heart of cultural exchange is taken away. As Whyte argues:

> Any translation must choose between a number of possible resonances. When, as it is the case with Sorley MacLean, the poet himself does this, the effect can be to produce an official interpretation, one that restricts and deadens the range of possible readings of the poem. Under these conditions, translation, which ought to be an enlivening, enriching practice, especially when it takes place within a small but linguistically various culture such as Scotland's, strays from its purpose of disseminating and diffusing meaning. If translation can be defined paradoxically as a form of creative misunderstanding, the facing English versions by the original author which have become more or less mandatory in the case of Scottish Gaelic poetry cannot be regarded as translations in the true sense. The Gaelic originals risk being excised as an excrescence.(2004, p. 89)

Translation thus becomes a kind of strait-jacket for Gaelic literature which denies the reader the experience of interpretation and re-interpretation when re-reading a text. With the self-translation as convenient interpretation aid at a reader's glance away from the Gaelic poem, the appreciation of the poem seems to happen more firmly within the realm of lexical meaning and the interpretation of imagery. Such reading patterns take away, however, from the sonic features of the original poem. The danger is thus of distracting attention from a formal aspect of poetry which is of vital importance to every lyrical text, even if it belongs to the genre of *vers libre*. With regard to connotative and denotative meaning, the presence of the self-translated text written in a language which is of far higher prestige as a literary medium in use also renders it likely that the imagery of the original is reflected upon in English, a language other than the original with its own history of thought, aesthetics and stylistics. There is no development of independent thought in the original language with English chosen as the language for deep reflective engagement with the original

text (see Chapter 5 for a full discussion).[35] As we have seen above, such a pattern of engagement is confirmed by the absence of critical appreciation of Gaelic literature published in Gaelic. In the light of an already 'lesser-used' language this can only be disadvantageous, with English as a literature and a language most likely to be the beneficiary. Reversing the focus back onto Gaelic, however, Whyte poses the question whether the 'specific and peculiar' bilingual existence of Gaelic poetry today 'reveals a weakening of the Celtic language, a perceived need to help it along, to offer it completion' (2004, p. 227).

If the facing English text can be perceived to offer completion to the text in Gaelic, the original, both as a text and a language, becomes retrospectively incomplete. Inevitably, this adds to the superior status of the English poem in the Gaelic/English text pair (see Chapter 4.4.1 for a discussion from a translation studies perspective). In this respect, it is interesting to consider the following observation by Whyte with regard to translation in general:

> I […] have to confess that, once a translation is completed, I hardly ever go back to the original text. Having put an Akhmatova elegy, or Mörike's poem about a Christmas rose into Gaelic, or a poem by Cernuda into English, my translation generally takes the place, for me, of the poem I was working from. (2002b, p. 66)

Viewing such dynamics in the light of self-translation, we could hypothetically argue that there is now no place anymore where the original is complete. Whyte himself contemplates: 'Can you imagine the kind of mess this creates when the original is one's own?' (letter to author, July 4/5 2002). Where with Akhmatova and Mörike the original texts remained complete at least with their authors, with self-translation even the author might well lose sight of the first version of his/her text and thus move on beyond the original. It is the close proximity of both texts with self-translation with regard to the very translation process, which in the case of contemporary Gaelic poets is more or less an event that happens simultaneously to the original writing

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[35] Note the following statement by MacNeacail: 'I was a Gaelic writer. It mattered a great deal, of course: but I *had* spent most of my adult life surrounded by the English language, and had devoted most of my creative energies to working in that language. The need to let Gaelic dominate the creative imagination required that I change habits of thinking which had become ingrained' (1995, p. 71, his italics)

process, and with regard to the publication format, i.e. facing each other, which denies the Gaelic poem a sense of completeness. As such, the poem in Gaelic has no independent existence, either as a process or as a fixed reference as original text preceding the translation in publication (see section 4.2 for further discussion).

Considering the above, the practice of self-translation can fairly be argued to have a significant impact not only on the status of the translation as canonical in terms of the author's corpus of work, but to be a shaping agent in the composition of an author's canon itself. As pointed out by Whyte, this is true with regard to MacLean's work as the practice of self-translation:

> brings about a distortion from which the 'Dàin do Eimhir' sequence of love poems has suffered notably. MacLean's poetic output is identified, to all intents and purposes, with his own translations into English. Those parts of the 1943 collection which where not available in English could, it seems, be ignored. (2002c, p. 39)

Therefore, translations resulting from self-translation do not merely succeed in having original status bestowed upon them, thus making the unique linguistic and stylistic features of the actual original writing invisible, they also succeed in making untranslated originals invisible altogether, thus erasing them from the canon. In that respect, the practice of self-translation in a Gaelic context reinforces invisibility, the very condition characterising and concluding the existence of minority (as discussed in section 1.2.3). If this is the case for individual authors, it is also true for Gaelic literature in general. As we have seen above, recognition of Gaelic authors in Scottish literary circles and beyond depend greatly on translation which in a Gaelic literary context becomes self-translation, which leads to the exclusion of authors from a corpus of Gaelic literary works to which they have contributed significantly in a monolingual manner. Here however, we also have to address the issue of the perceiver of any corpus, with a corpus not being a static concept yet rather depending on whose eyes look onto it. A native Gaelic reader from Ness, Lewis, might view the prose and poetry works of John Murray (Iain Moireach) or Alasdair and Norman Campbell (Alasdair and Tormod Caimbeul) at the core of the corpus of modern Gaelic writing, whereas members of the established literary circle in Scotland might perceive of contemporary Gaelic writing as essentially that by poets such as Sorley

MacLean, Aonghas MacNeacail or Meg Bateman. Having thus highlighted the effects of self-translation on the 'original' Gaelic version, the following section will shed some more light on the nature of the relationship between the two texts in the self-translated Gaelic/English poetry pair.

2.2.6   Translation vs. Version

It is striking that most of the authors writing on translation in a Gaelic context employ the term 'version' when referring to English translations of Gaelic originals with remarkable ease (Black, 1999, France, 1998, MacNeacail, 1998). English translations are frequently referred to as 'versions' by editors of anthologies, for example. One such instance is the introduction to *Writing the Wind* by Thomas Rain Crowe:

> Many of the authors represented here […] took on the task of translating their own work, which in most cases turned out brilliantly (with the possible exceptions of a few poems, where a collaborative effort was found to be helpful – between poet and editors – in reaching the best possible *versions* of the work). (1997, pp. 10-11, my emphasis)

In the foreword to *An Aghaidh na Sìorraidheachd* by Whyte we read that 'each poet has supplied a brief essay to preface the selection, as well as providing English *versions* of the poems, many of them prepared especially for this volume' (1991a, p. v, my emphasis). In the *Dictionary of Translation Studies* 'version' is defined as a 'term commonly used to describe a TT [target text] which in the view of the commentator departs too far from the original to be termed a translation' (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997, s.v. *version*). Such departures are especially defined in terms of contents. Similarly, Susan Bassnett suggest that referring to a 'version' implies a 'degree of variation from the source text' at the heart of the issue 'so that a "translation" might be perceived closer to the original' (2000, p. 100, cited in Krebs, 2005, p. 156). According to John Hollander it is the 'unique properties of a particular rendering in question' which define a version rather than a translation (1966, p. 220, quoted in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997, s.v. *version*). It may well be that such specialised translation studies meaning did not enter into the statements by the

editors quoted above. Furthermore, the tendency for English translations of Gaelic poetry is more often than not the result of a an overall rather literal translation strategy, even if the English texts departs from the poem in Gaelic at times (as discussed in sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2). What then are the unique properties of the target texts? I would like to argue that the answer does not so much lie within the contents but with the perception of these translations. English translations are perceived as versions because they have moved away from the original not in terms of semantic, linguistic or text-type features but in terms of their existence as free-standing poems of canonical status in the eyes of the recipients of Gaelic poetry, even if those happen to be literate in Gaelic. Indeed, discussing the use of 'version' with self-translation is closely linked to the question of the relationship between source and target text in terms of status. As Rainer Grutman summarises in his entry on auto-translation (i.e. self-translation) in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation*:

> In terms of its production, an auto-translation […] differs from a normal one, if only it is more of a double writing process than a two-stage-reading-writing activity. As a result, the original's precedence is no longer a matter of 'status and standing', of authority, but becomes 'purely temporal in character' (Fitch 1988: 131). The distinction between original and self-translation therefore collapses, in which both texts are referred to as 'variants' or 'version' of equal status (Fitch 1988: 132-3). (1998, pp.19-20, his references)[36]

Indeed, with respect to Gaelic poetry it is mostly 'self-translations' which are termed as versions. If, on the other hand, Gaelic poems are translated by somebody other than the author, the resulting texts will most likely be called translations, even if, as is the case with Iain Crichton Smith's translations of Sorley MacLean's poems, the translations depart considerably more from their originals in terms of content and stylistics than the author's own translations (MacGill-Eain, 1999). The term 'version' does therefore not refer to a translation studies perception but to a socio-ideological one. We might also want to consider that, particularly with poets such as MacLean for whom Gaelic is the first language, the use of 'version' reflects professional modesty in that the poet as English learner does not accredit himself as professional

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[36] See Chapter 4.4.1 for further discussion of this issue from a translation studies perspective.

'translator' into his second language, i.e. not claiming to be involved in translation proper (William Gillies, personal communication). However, I would like to argue that the term 'version' as employed by authors and editors of Gaelic poetry today reflects the independence and equality of the English text with regard to the Gaelic original in terms of canonical status.

2.3   The Questionnaires

Questionnaires were sent to 39 authors, 20 editors and 23 publishers of Gaelic literature. Information as gathered from the returned questionnaires (25 authors, 13 editors, 10 publishers) has been compiled into a database which allows for an insight into the translation and publication dynamics in a Scottish Gaelic context. A small number of authors and editors replied in letter format, which resulted in more general contemplations with regard to translation of Gaelic poetry rather than direct answers to the specific questions posed. Four authors and one publisher requested to be interviewed instead of completing the questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire-based research is not a detailed presentation of empirical data relating to translation activity in the present context; rather, prevailing tendencies are observed whilst individual attitudes are noted, both of which feed into the discussion of the present subject throughout the thesis. One such observation which reflects on a general attitude towards translation in a Gaelic context is the following made by one of the editors of Gaelic poetry anthologies:

> Sometimes, in the course of translating […] I became quite irritated, and fretted crossly about the publisher's lack of awareness of how 'demanding' a task it was, and how many conceptual bridges had to be crossed, feelings suppressed etc., on my part. (E1, see Appendix A)

Translation is rarely seen as a creative form of literary expression, indeed, one self-translating author went so far as to describe translation as 'a necessary evil' (A1). Another self-translating author, who is also involved with editing and translating poetry anthologies, remarked 'I deem [translation] low-level creativity. You are not in the abyss, creating something out of nothing. The work has already been done' (A2). Another author stated, 'I regard the English translation as just that – a

translation. I do not care if it does not read poetically in English – the poetry was written in Gaelic' (A1). Finally, this author referred to translation as 'not creative in the same way' as original writing (A3). In contrast, there were authors who saw self-translation as a kind of 'double creation' (A5) or 'a twin idiom' (A6), without, however, expanding on these notions. The overall impression from replies was that, although translation has such a presence and persistence in a Gaelic literary context, it remains yet to be acknowledged and employed as a diverse and proactive means towards inter-cultural negotiation.

The general hypothesis of this thesis is that self-translation involving Gaelic and English is a natural result of an imbalanced bilingual language reality for the Gaelic literary world, whilst, at the same time, it determines and strengthens that very reality. As we have found, some translation theorists argue that self-translation undermines the status of the original as original more effectively than translation done by somebody other than the author (cf. Chapter 4). As this thesis employs the skopos theory of translation as theoretical framework (cf. Chapter 3.2), it will be the purpose of this chapter to reveal what Gaelic authors who do translate themselves perceive to be the reasons and purposes for their translation action, and indeed what authors who do not translate themselves state as their reasons and purposes for that translation choice. In doing so, it will be possible to consider whether the stated purposes are mirrored by the actual reality of existence for the Gaelic text in Gaelic poetry publications (cf. Chapter 5).

2.3.1 Authors' replies

The questionnaires were sent to authors in order to record the various translation activities present in the context of modern poetry in Gaelic. The expectation was to uncover a variety of different translation practices, such as translation from mother tongue into second language and vice versa, translation into English as well as into other languages, translation into Gaelic as well as out of Gaelic etc. Evidence from the replies shows that there is indeed a wide variety of translation activity. Authors translate from their first language, Gaelic, into their second language English, as well

as from their second language, Gaelic, into their first language, English. Learners of Gaelic, who live with the language to different degrees, have a considerable impact on the make-up of contemporary poetry in Gaelic.

Gaelic poetry has taken on different identities in a variety of languages such as Irish, Welsh, Albanian, Catalan, Croatian, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Polish. Furthermore, poems in a range of languages have been translated into Gaelic. Indeed, there are voices strongly advocating such translation activity. As one of the authors states:

> I would reiterate that for me the translation of world literature INTO Gaelic is the absolute priority, rather than the translation OUT of Gaelic into English which simply confirms the English-speakers in their monolingual complacency - for them world literature does not exist until it is handed to them on an English plate. For me it is a MASSIVE miscalculation of the 'powers-that-be' in the upper-echelons of Irish & Scottish Gaelic publishing that there is not in progress an ongoing programme of publication of world-literature (best sellers included) for adults into our Gaelic languages. The stock answer is that Ireland in the early days wasted good talent translating mediocre pot-boilers, and that we mustn't make that mistake again, but rather nurture our own talent. OK, but surely it is not THAT or NOTHING! There are plenty of literate folk in Gaelic who are not capable of writing a novel, but are perfectly capable of translating John Grisham. And bringing established popular books into Gaelic would provide a huge incentive for readers, and stimulating new literary 'models' for writers. (A7, author's capitals)

Seen in this perspective, translation into Gaelic is an effort to make 'Gaelic […] big enough to "live in"', as the same author puts it, arguing that 'at the moment it is not. It is like squeezing your head into a thimble to try to live intellectually through what is available in Gaelic (even including Irish)' (A7) Furthermore, consider another author's reply addressing the choice of material for translation into Gaelic:

> Generally I choose works which I feel have something to say about the environment or the social condition of the Gael. Many minority cultures worldwide have, or are undergoing, the same kind of 'assimilate or perish' that we have experienced, or are experiencing. Different peoples have handled this in different ways, with differing philosophies. I believe it is crucial for us all to resist homogenisation. (A8)

Although, some authors are thus involved with translation into Gaelic, for the majority of modern Gaelic poets involved with translation the main translation direction is out of Gaelic into English, usually translating their own texts. There is indeed little evidence of passing the task of translation on to another author or translator or of collaboration between authors and translators, with the exception of two authors, one of them working in collaboration with other Scottish poets/translators with the outcome not yet published, and the other working in an Gaelic-Irish context.[37]

A further aim of the questionnaire was to record the number of authors who choose not to translate themselves and the particularities of such a (non)translation choice. As one author confirms his previously publicised decision to abandon self-translation (cf. Chapter 5.2.3), stating that 'in the case of someone who has learned Gaelic, to publish one's own translations can seriously undermine perceptions of one's work' (A9). Referring to the publication of one poem in particular, this author's decision not to translate into English was driven by linguistic reasons with the specificity of gender expressed differently in Gaelic ('e' translates as both 'he' and 'it') than in English. Generally she believes that 'translating into English would have meant becoming a poet in another language.' Interesting here is the statement which seems to suggest that Gaelic poetry has positively moved beyond its bilingual era:

> A few years ago I did translate my work into English, which was pretty much the fashion at the time. Now, with growing confidence among publishers, an untranslated Gaelic text is considered marketable. I think this is a conscious shrugging off of the ubiquitous romantic teuchtar image which was popularly and fondly believed to be entertaining but incapable of 'making it' in the 'real' world – allowing non-Gaels to broker our place in the world through their command of the powerful medium of English. The appearance of unmediated Gaelic disempowers the kail-yard highlanders. I would also suggest that after a few years of this solo run of Gaelic, years in which we can gain internal confidence to stand as a culture fully the

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[37] The lack of conventional translation in this context, i.e. the translation task being performed by somebody other than the author, may be argued to reflect the policy by Comhairle nan Leabhraichean to provide financial assistance for publications with considerable Gaelic contents, both monolingual and bilingual in format, with no grants-giving policy covering translation work from Gaelic into English. As a result, poetry publications do not necessarily appear monolingually; rather, the translation work remains with the authors, thus becoming an integral part of their writing process in preparation of the collection (see Chapter 6.1 for further information).

equal of any in the world, we can be more confident of getting the message of our words across through translation. (A8)

Another poet, makes the point that there is 'too much English around already!', adding that 'the difficulty of translating not just the meaning of the words but the range of referents inherent within the culture is for me insurmountable' (A10). It is noteworthy here that with the exception of one author who has earned himself a considerable reputation as an English-language novelist and Gaelic poet,[38] the voices against (self-)translation belong to poets not yet widely published.[39] Arguably, then, these convictions might be fuelled by an idealism which is not so much concerned with being widely recognised or financially rewarded. In any case, the presence of these voices does not translate into a monolingual corpus of Gaelic poetry.

With regard to an anthology featuring Gaelic poets who have translated their own work into English, one of the editors stated that the translations were provided by himself with the poets' own translations being avoided 'as a matter of policy' (E7). The reasoning behind the policy is explained in the introduction to the anthology in question, in which the editor states that 'the intention here has been not so much to downgrade the English versions provided by some of the poets themselves as to privilege the Gaelic in a special way' (MacMillan and Byrne, 2003, p. iii).

2.3.2   Reasons for Translating into English

2.3.2.1   Financial Considerations

It is difficult to conclude from the questionnaire responses to what degree financial viability is the motivator towards translation, since translation is not just the choice of authors but also that of editors and publishers. In addition, Gaelic writing is highly

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[38] Note, however, that this author owes his reputation as a Gaelic poet as much to his bilingually published work as to monolingual publications of his poetry in the journals *Gairm* and *Gath* and one poetry collection which is part of the monolingual series of Gaelic poetry collections published by Diehard.

[39] Note, however, that with Myles Campbell, a widely-published poet, for instance, the issue of abandoning self-translation is less relevant, since he places his published poetry mostly in a monolingual Gaelic context (Caimbeul, 1994 and 2003) or in an Irish/Gaelic context (Caimbeul, 1980, 1988 and 2007), with only one bilingual edition of his poetry published in 1987.

subsidised, which complicates the picture, as a high degree of subsidy should mean that market rules dictating the need for translation are neutralised and, as a result, the need for translation on the basis of financial viability should be less pressing. As both monolingual and bilingual poetry editions receive financial support from funding bodies such as Comhairle nan Leabhraichean, the decision to subsidise appears not to be made on the basis of easing the financial burden on monolingual poetry publications. It is nevertheless observable that with minor exceptions the poets who are published usually engage in self-translation.

With regard to publishers, a university-based Gaelic publisher, who has been most influential to the world of Gaelic literature in publication throughout the second half of the twentieth century, states that English translations 'help' in making the publishing of Gaelic poetry financially viable (P1). Another publisher, this time one of the most commercially successful Scottish-based publishers, who works mostly on monolingual English publications with a series of bilingual poetry anthologies as part of their catalogue, regards English translations as 'essential' (P2). At the other end of the spectrum we have a small family business, who produce their poetry collections in a hand-made manner:

> I've never known a customer to refuse to buy one because it didn't have a baby-text. My sales seem to be holding their own quite well, though whether that is because folk have gotten fed-up with parallel text, or, de facto, Gaelic-only books have twice as much in them, or whether it's because my books are just plain prettier and better made than the others, I do not know. I don't care who buys my books, or why. I just make them and sell them. (P3)

Producing hand-made books entails, of course, that the print run of editions is smaller than with mainstream publishers. It has to be noted, then, that publishers of Gaelic publications are far from being a homogeneous group; rather, we witness a variety of approaches to publication.[40] Furthermore, there are literary societies and associations with a Scottish-wide focus, who do not perceive it to be their role to

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[40] The small publisher of a hand-made monolingual Gaelic poetry series, for instance, does not receive any funding from Comhairle nan Leabhraichean whereas the English-language mainstream publisher of bilingual Gaelic poetry anthologies receives partial funding for individual publications. In addition, that the Ùr-Sgeul series of prose publications is supported financially, along with input in terms of editing, proof-reading, publicity etc., by Comhairle nan Leabhraichean.

publish in a Gaelic-only format, with the English translations appearing due to cultural considerations rather than financial ones. Interestingly, note the following reply by a member of staff of one such organisation, concerning bilingual Gaelic/English publications:

> We receive funding from the SAC to publish works of Scottish literature. We are also a not-for-profit charitable organisation. The purpose of the bilingual publications is simply to ensure that great works of Scottish literature are available for scholars and readers, regardless of profitability. However, it should be noted that [one of our Gaelic poetry anthologies] has sold considerably better than some of our other, monolingual Annual Volumes, and [another] has sold at such a level that it would have been commercially viable to a normal for-profit publisher. In fact, when we sell out of copies (as we probably will in the next couple of years) I expect that a commercial publisher […] will pick up the edition and print their own. (P4)

Looking to the editors' responses, the need for translations seems confirmed in statements such as '[translation] undoubtedly enhances market appeal' (E7) for Gaelic poetry, indeed they are deemed 'essential' (E3), a 'very important consideration for publishers (mainstream)!' (E4). Another editor argues that English translations are 'absolutely crucial', adding that 'though I understand people's reservations about this, as about subtitles in Gaelic language TV programmes […], I do see the English text as a necessary device, rather than as a cultural surrender' (E5). A slightly different perspective, however, is adopted by this editor addressing the issue of translation:

> I think that they do help to sell Gaelic literature, but it is at a price! Unquestionably, my two books have been doing well for their publishers […], but are they really Gaelic books? Potentially a bilingual book has double the selling-power, but… .(E1)

Indeed, there is a sense of an increasing acceptance of a translation 'treatment' for Gaelic poetry over time, which has resulted in an increasingly bilingual format with a complete bilingual corpus perceived as the ultimate conclusion to such a development, as is demonstrated in the following reply by an editor of a number of poetry anthologies and collections covering both the literary output of different

Gaelic literary eras as well as more recent 'local' Gaelic poetry from the Western Isles. In relation to the latter, he comments:

> [this particular anthology] also has local South Uist relevance of course, but the poems in it had already been given the [bilingual] treatment [which gives a selection of poems in translation with a number of poems remaining untranslated] in the form of John Lorne Campbell's *Bàrdachd Mhgr Ailein* of 1965. (To be more accurate, in *Bàrdachd Mhgr Ailein* all the poems were given in the body of the book in Gaelic only, and at the end of the book are English précis of all of the poems, and English prose translations of some of them.) I felt that the logical next stage was parallel English translations of all of the poems. (E6)

Patterns therefore develop and become established (also cf. Chapter 4.2.1) and, in turn, become a decisive force, determining the translation environment for Gaelic poetry. We may therefore have poets whose entire work exists in a self-translated bilingual Gaelic/English format, even if the poetry has eventually been published in an Irish/Gaelic format (A11). With regard to the linguistic make-up of paratextual features, a publisher of mostly monolingual Gaelic books replies: 'Gaelic [is] used in notes for our bilingual poetry book. [The] author had written these in English but we persuaded him to put them in Gaelic!' (P5). With regard to the bilingual format of the primary text chosen for that particular publication, the publisher states that they finally agreed to a bilingual format since 'the author of the poetry book we published kept saying it would be very useful for learners of Gaelic – some of them his own friends!!' (P5).

2.3.2.2   Ideological Considerations

The most common reply from editors, publishers and authors when asked about the reasons determining the presence of English translations in Gaelic literature publications was to 'widen the audience'. Furthermore, translations are also addressing learners of Gaelic, and, in addition, they were perceived to be helpful tools for Gaelic native speakers who might not necessarily be confident in reading their language. This is particularly the case with anthologies which present poetry from past centuries. As one editor reflects:

If I am put in a really tight corner, and if I am forced to reflect on the Gaelic world as it now is, and the capacity of younger Gaelic readers to understand upper-register Gaelic, I have to accept that, for some folk, my books have another value, namely that of helping readers with relatively little feeling for older Gaelic to come to terms with the style and spirit of an earlier era through the medium of English. (E1)

Similarly, another editor commented with regard to an anthology of 17th century Gaelic poetry:

[This] is one volume in a projected series by [a main Scottish publisher] to make Gaelic poetry through the ages widely accessible to Gaelic and English speakers. The language is sufficiently different from modern Gaelic for the translations to be useful cribs for Gaelic speakers on occasions. (E2)

Contemplating the anticipated readership, this particular editor admits the complexity of the very issue:

You can't simply say that native Gaelic speakers should be given Gaelic only and learners and non-Gaelic speakers should be given both Gaelic and English. [A 'local' poet] whose life and work is currently appearing under my editorship in [a local newspaper] […] wrote to me in Gaelic then added this PS in English: 'Hope you will submit both English & Gaelic copies as I know some very good kind people who don't read Gaelic well – but are true Gaels!!' I obeyed his instructions, and submitted his [poem] in both Gaelic and English versions. (E6)[41]

Moreover, consider this reply from one of the authors:

I have always been very unsure of myself as a 'real' writer and, despite the praises of Iain [Crichton] Smith, Somhairle MacLean and other friends, I have not been interested in gaining access to the wider audience that English might make available. Yet as the strength and depth of the native Gaelic community dwindles, my attitude to

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[41] It was also suggested by this editor that for a Gaelic native speaker the Gaelic might sound through the English translation, with the English translation as multi-layered text for those who are familiar with Gaelic poetry orally (personal correspondence). Arguably, however, a kind of reading which evokes the Gaelic source text in the English translation works best with material the reader is familiar with in its oral format, either as a style or as a specific text. It might, however, be a less successful reading pattern with more innovative literary writing.

translation of my work is changing, though I still feel uneasy about it.
(A12)

2.3.3   Reasons for Self-Translation

A number of authors identified self-translation as a reflection of their bilingual existence, both in creative ways (seeing the same idea expressed in the other language) and in external social ways (to allow the work to be shared by those who don't have Gaelic, which in some cases were clearly identified as friends and family). As one of the authors states:

> I translate my own work into English, almost as a matter of course, because it extends my audience considerably. I also like the challenge of making it work in the second language. (I would, however, not translate my own poems in English into Gaelic). (A13)

Similarly, another author of both prose and poetry points towards the desire to 'communicate to [a] wider audience' as well as 'get[ting a] bilingual perspective on what I'm actually trying to say' (A5). For this particular poet, the reasons for self-translation include 'the interest of seeing the same ideas from the slightly different perspective of another language; the enjoyment of translation; the desire to let friends and family without Gaelic understand something of my excitement' (A2).

Other considerations leading to self-translation are the desires 'to avoid inaccuracy' (A4), 'to rescue my work from mistranslation' (A7) or indeed a sense of 'ownership' and 'autonomy' (A3). In her reply to the questionnaire, this author stated that for her self-translation meant not only 'ownership' over her work but also 'keeping the emphasis on the Gaelic original' (A1). For some, self-translation is simply a natural choice: 'I was willing, I could' (A5), whereas others pointed out the lack of choice as there are no resources in support of collaboration. As one author replied, 'it embarrasses me that I cannot really offer money for this, nor is money generally forthcoming from a public source to provide Gaelic poets with English versions by other, competent and qualified hands' (A9).

2.3.4   Bilingual Publication Format: Poetry versus Prose

The development of publication conventions as observed above does not necessarily impact across genres. Consider the following reply by a staff member of a Literary Association which publishes Gaelic literature in their series of Scottish literary texts:

> the Gaelic originals, in the case of poetry, are usually accompanied by translations into English (or sometimes Scots) provided by the authors. This is done to make the Gaelic work more accessible and give the poems a wider audience. With short fiction in Gaelic (which we occasionally publish) we don't provide translations, as we can't afford to provide the necessary space in the book. (P4)

Similarly, a publisher clearly dedicated to monolingual Gaelic prose publications, state that 'if we were to publish more bilingual texts, which is very unlikely, it would probably be poetry' (P5). This author approaches the genre issue from a text-internal perspective, explaining that:

> Tha mi nas deònaiche eadar-theangachadh a dhèanamh air mo bhàrdachd oir faodaidh tu 'versions' a dhèanamh: ged a tha cuid air iarraidh orm chan eil mi smaointinn gun urrainn dhomh an nobhail agam […] eadar-theangachadh dhan Bheurla oir bhiodh tu a' spìonadh nam freumhan às.[42] (A14)

As another author explains, his own involvement with self-translation was genre dependent. He translated 'poetry from [the] start' whereas with prose self-translation occurred 'later, due to demand', with the monolingual Gaelic format being the 'the accepted norm' (A5). Furthermore, his self-translation process is a more simultaneous one with regard to poetry in comparison to prose, which is a more delayed process. Comparing the two literary genres, the same author names 'readers in general but specifically Gaelic readers and Scottish readers' as anticipated audience for his poetry, whereas his Gaelic prose writing is aiming at 'Scottish Gaelic readers' only (A5).

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[42] 'I am more willing to produce translations for my poetry since you can create 'versions': although there are some who want me to, I don't think I can translate my novel […] into English, since that would mean pulling out its roots.' [my translation]

2.3.5   The Gaelic and the English in the Self-Translated Poetry Pair

Predominantly writing prose and drama in Gaelic, this author puts himself into the role of the reader of contemporary Gaelic poetry contemplating that:

> When I read works by modern Gaelic poets and their translations of these […] I often wonder where the poet is located. I find it difficult to read these as separate poems, however well crafted, deeming them to be the 'above the ocean' part of the iceberg. (A12)

Another author, whose literary work has not yet appeared widely in published format, takes the argument to a different level, arguing that:

> The danger of writing for an English audience – a snare into which a number of Gaelic artists have fallen, unconsciously or indeed willingly – is that the minority writer writes what s/he knows will appeal to the already-existing prejudices of the metropolitan readership. It's a game Gaels have played profitably for several centuries, but I'm not prepared to give it a go. (A10)[43]

In correspondence sent subsequent to his questionnaire reply he expands on his views on contemporary poetry and its linguistic make-up, stating that:

> by playing to the Celtic kailyard you sell more books! The problem is also one of referents - when writing in Gaelic for a Gaelic audience, you can expect the readers to pick up on nuances inherent in the words you use referring to the wider Gaelic poetic tradition. However, if you're writing bilingual stuff (which they do), then the whole point is that you want your words to be as limpid as possible, one Gaelic word simply corresponding to one English word. This can be good for a poet's style, but clearly it's not necessarily Gaelic poetry that comes out! Difficulty in meaning means difficulty in translation, which isn't a good thing as far as they're concerned. Thus a lot of what passes for Gaelic poetry nowadays is rather thin, not really coming out of anywhere in particular. Then there are matters of prosody, but I'll stop

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[43] Cf. the argument by Irish writer Tomás Mac Síomóin: 'When one writes for another readership - and there are people currently writing in Irish who are writing for an audience other than that which will read their work in Irish - one moulds, consciously or unconsciously, one's writing and set of one's mind around the stereotypes which the other readership finds acceptable […]. The stereotype of what is Gaelic is that something which relates to long ago, it relates to a rural way of life, to folklore. It is nothing to do with science, nothing to do with the other countries, nothing to do with city life' (Ó Cearnaigh, 1993, p. 63).

there! My own aim is to put stuff together that is impossible to translate! (A10)

Regardless of the relationship between the poetry pair or the impact that relationship has on the inherent qualities displayed by each text separately, the English and Gaelic versions of what is named as Gaelic poetry have become 'inseparable' as a result of the continuous self-translation practice with Gaelic poetry over the past decades (P6).

2.3.6   Considering an Audience

Addressing the issue of the potential audience for the bilingual Gaelic/English poetry edition, this publisher notes that:

> in any bilingual publication, there is always the risk of putting off
> people who do not speak the language of the original, and who might
> (even subconsciously) feel that, because they can only access the
> translations, they would be missing something. However, there is also
> a 'loyal' audience for Gaelic material, who are a) starved of new
> books in Gaelic, and b) wish to support what little Gaelic publishing
> there is, and will actively pursue new publications. (P4)

Such tendencies are confirmed by another publisher with a specific Scottish focus, who stated that 'we have found there are many non Gaelic speakers with an interest in Gaelic culture and ideas' (P7). Noting that with regard to paratext in his own anthologies 'the monolingual policy was intended to meet the needs of a wide readership, and [...] English was chosen for that reason', one of the editors concludes that considering the actual linguistic make-up of the readership 'it could actually be argued that, as a result, both [these anthologies] are books in English basically for English readers (predominantly).' He goes on to argue that:

> [Translation] is an activity for the benefit of the 'external' readership,
> most of the time, and it can be construed negatively as part of the
> Gaelic people's attempt to remind others that they are still in
> existence, and that they need to show how valuable their work is. At
> that level it could be read as a sign of cultural immaturity and lack of
> confidence relative to a majority culture. (E1)

Putting it concisely, another editor argues that 'the arbiters of taste are English speaking. Most modern exponents of nua-bhàrdachd [i.e. the new poetry in Gaelic] owe their reputations to their English translations' (E3).[44]

The consequence of such bilingual publishing, then, is the appearance of transparency which results in a perceived 'ease of reference'. As one of the editors argues:

> I prefer to avoid this format in any case, because although it reminds non-Gaels that they are not reading an original text, it inevitably reduces the status and impact of the original for Gaelic speakers, especially given the literacy imbalance between Gaelic and English (at the slightest occasion of uncertainty or difficulty, the eye will invariably stray to the English for a quick 'solution'). (E7)

With regard to two anthologies he has recently edited, another editor explains that: '[One of them] has the translations as a block following the originals. This was regarded as good practice, as it kept students from having too easy an access to the translation! [The other *en-face* anthology] is bad practice!' (E1).

2.3.7 Translatability and the Impact on the Source Corpus

The translation process does not merely affect the reception of the Gaelic text in the bilingual poetry pair; rather, the choice of original Gaelic poetry that is published is influenced by its relative susceptibility to translation. In his reply to the question of how the prospect of translation shaped the selection of original material considered for publication this editor replied:

> Only in the sense that awareness of non-Gaelic speaking audience for the Anthology influenced the choice of some material, particularly in the case of verse in the traditional sung tradition. If I found that I

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[44] Note Joan MacDonald's argument that 'despite […] collections [such as Donald MacIntyre's *Sporan Dhòmhnaill*, and Murdo MacFarlane's *An Toinneamh Diomhair*], and their popularity amongst a Gaelic audience (neither is translated into English and is therefore inaccessible to those who do not speak Gaelic) it is poetry of the more modern forms which has gained the high ground in terms of general recognition' (1997, p. 77, referring to MacMillan, 1968 and MacPhàrlain, 1973, also cf. Whyte, 2000, p. 181, as referred to in Chapter 4.4).

could not produce an English version which would mediate to the original's advantage, I would choose another work (by the same poet). (E7)

Similarly, another editor replied, 'the choice would tend towards translation-friendly material as opposed to language-specific work' (E8). With regard to one of his poetry collections, one author pointed out that the book 'has some poems in the back of the book which remain un-translated since they appear untranslatable' (A13). Likewise, another author replied to the question of when he chooses not to translate his work as follows: 'ma tha e ro dhoirbh, no nan cailleadh e brìgh san eadar-theangachadh'[45] (A14). Furthermore, one of the editors replied with regard to one of his anthologies, 'I did make at least one decision to exclude a long poem on account of the effort required to translate it.'

2.3.8   Self-Translation and the Bilingual Edition: Concerns

As we can see from the following reply, this particular poet holds a complex view of the phenomenon of self-translation. He summarises his concerns as follows::

> a number of considerations make me wary of translating my poetry (although, as you can see I have succumbed to the temptation): 1. the intrinsic difficulty of translating from one culture to another 2. by translating your work, you may be sure that most people will read the translation (and judge your original work by it) 3. the language being in such a parlous state, you want to give learners of the language something to read in the original, without always giving a translation 4. by translating into the majority culture you are in effect saying that you want recognition, or financial gain, from the speakers of the majority language. But then the recognition you get is not for the original (untranslatable?) work but for the translation. This seems to me a conceit and a deceit. Also recognition from within your own culture should be a greater reward. (A15)

Furthermore, there is evidence of an awareness that the bilingual facing-pages format for Gaelic poetry is not beneficial in terms of developing a Gaelic readership both

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[45] 'if it is too difficult or would lose sense/force in translation' [my translation]

amongst Gaelic learners and native speakers.[46] As one of the predominantly Gaelic publishers points out, '[we do not] really *want* to publish material in English as we believe it stops *reluctant* Gaelic readers from ever trying, or bothering, to read the Gaelic text' (P5, their italics), a thought which is echoed by one of the editors above. Rather, as this particular publisher further explains, the concern is to develop a confident Gaelic readership:

> I've always felt that it's a great pity people (scholars in particular!) use English when writing *about* their particular collections of poetry, or whatever. What a wasted opportunity. The language of description and analysis of texts has been completely un-developed, or at least under-developed. When I see a bilingual edition of something, I again feel it's a waste, except probably for the odd learner here and there. People who are not very fluent readers of Gaelic will possibly not even try to read the Gaelic text. (And there are many native Gaelic speakers who had little chance to improve their reading skills in schools in the past!) (P5, their italics)

Such a concern is also voiced by editors who have been intensively involved with the translation of Gaelic poetry of all literary eras, as can be seen with the reply from one of the editors, who stated 'I would much prefer to enhance Gaelic language capacity through editions such as my [monolingual book], which is an all-Gaelic compilation' (E1), and from another editor, who commented 'I am very much aware of need for Gaelic editions (i.e. where paratext is in Gaelic, whether or not all the primary texts are)' (E7).

2.4   Concluding Remarks

It is interesting to observe that already in 1978-9 there was an apparent need for a discussion addressing the issue of translation which very much focused on identifying the positive attributes of translation into English, therefore advocating a translation practice which might succeed in strengthening Gaelic, thereby implying an awareness of the problematic, even damaging role that translation into a majority language can play in this minority language environment. Whereas the early debate

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[46] Cf. MacDonald (1997, p. 77) who clearly points towards the fact that literacy in Gaelic is not necessarily non-existent but rather is in need of being encouraged and developed, as referred to in Chapter 1.1.3.

revolves mostly around issues of stylistic translation choices and therefore addresses the relationship between the original text and the translation from a normative point of view, the more recent concerns with translation deal more with the effect translation into English has on Gaelic as a literature and language. Whereas the early debate still assumes traditional translation dichotomies such as the original vs. the translation, the author vs. the translator, the original audience vs. the audience for the translation, this becomes progressively acknowledged as more and more blurred, with self-translation being a decisive force in this development. Even although both translation and self-translation have to be understood as logical solutions to the changing reality of Gaelic literature in terms of the medium through which it reaches an audience and changes in literary aesthetics, we also have to acknowledge that both practices, in the way they are employed in today's Gaelic literary world, will further the marginalisation of Gaelic as a literature and language, with invisibility as the final conclusion. In this light we might want to consider the comments of David Black who, addressing the predicament of the Scottish writer with regard to language use, reveals that 'to write in English is paradoxical. It gives access to the world beyond the Scottish border; but it also disguises the real difference' (1990, p. 33). I would like to extend this conclusion to the practice of self-translation of Gaelic poetry into English. What is disguised is the substantial and inevitable differences between the Gaelic and the English text in terms of lexis, grammar, syntax, imagery, cultural connotations, prosody etc (see Chapter 6 for a comparative reading). These are the differences which are paramount to distinguishing between literatures springing from different languages and cultures. Furthermore, we have seen that invisibility does not merely affect the texts as published events, but moreover influences the perception of the corpus of Gaelic literature both in terms of the written material and its exponents, which furthermore has an effect on the definition of a Gaelic readership. Whereas in 1978-9 Nicolson asks: 'Why bother to translate at all?' (Thompson, 1978-9, p. 6), twenty years later McLeod poses the question of 'why bother with Gaelic at all' (1998, p. 151). These two short statements reveal the truly alarming nature of the development of Gaelic literature over the past decades from a 'literature-for-translation' into a 'literature-in-translation' (Cronin, 1998, p. 158). What is surprising is that in the twenty years between the two statements such

development progressed without being addressed at all. Referring to Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill's poem 'Ceist na Teangan' which appears as the frontispiece in *An Leabhar Mòr* (MacLean and Dorgan, 2002), Rhind makes the following observation with which I want to close this chapter: 'Tha an tè a rinn a' bhàrdachd a' coimhead air cànan mar bhàta a thèid an sud 's an seo far am beir an sruth e. Ged is dealbh snog tha sud chanainn gur e freagairt na ceist, a thaobh na Gàidhlige co-dhiù, gun tèid bàta na Gàidhlig leis an t-sruth – mur cleachd daoine i' (2003, p. 7).[47]

Moving on from explorations of literary writing, translating and publishing in the culturally defined context of Gaelic poetry, the following chapter is concerned with the dynamics informing the translation of poetry, thus paying attention to the specific literary genre of the literary corpus at the heart of this thesis.

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[47] 'The author of this poem looks at language as a boat moving back and forth wherever the current leads it. Although this is a nice image I would say that that is the answer to the question, as far as Gaelic is concerned anyway – that Gaelic will go adrift – if people don't use it.' [my translation]

Mar a Thubhairt a' Chrè ris a' Chrèadhadair

Is aithne dhomh do làmhan
an subailteachd an ciùine
thomhais mi gach meur dhiubh
faid' a leud a trì-fillteachd
cruinnead eagsamhail nan roinn
caochanan gach luirge
cruadal d' òrdaig dhanarra
a h-ainneart nach gabh faothachadh.

Tha eagal orm ro dhealbhadh:
carson nach deach mo dhearmad
gu sultmhor dràbach somalta
an tèarmann na talmhainn
nam làthaich liath-ghlais fhuar-shiltich
a' deoghal cìoch mo mhàthar truim
caillt' an loch-bhlèin garbh-shlios
an neo-chumadh gam shàsachadh?

Is borb dian gun tròcair thu,
dhlùthaich thu orm gun fhaireachadh –
cha toir mi dhut na dh'iarradh tu
is cealgach faoin do dhòchasan
's tu smaoineachadh ri cumadh fiùghail
a tharraing a-mach bhom fhrionasachd
ghabh thu ort 's tu ladarna
comh-èigmeachadh gu pearsantachd.

Ach thionndaidh thu mi
        ann an leabaidh do làmhan
d' fhaigse a' leaghadh
        mo thiughaid raig

aig suathadh do bhlàiths
        thòisich mo ghluasad
thàinig m'fhiosrachadh
        bhod anail gun fhois.

A chruthadair neo-ghlic
        's tu struidheil de ghibhtean
co às a fhuair thu
        uimhir de ghaoil

a sgapadh gun chiall
      a chaitheamh neo-chùramach
mise gam bheairteachadh
      thusa gun lùghdachadh?

Is e freumh mo dhìlse
      do mhiann do-shàsaicht'
truimead do làmhan
      air rèidheachd mo chrè

mise gad fhreagairt
      an iomadach cruitheachd
aighear ar cleasa
      co-chòrdadh ar ruin.[1]

Christopher Whyte (1991, p. 204)

This poem by Christopher Whyte intriguingly draws the reader into the exhilarating journey of passionate, and ultimately conscious, intimacy undertaken by the somewhat unusual pair in the context of love poetry. This might at least be one of the contexts in which to view this poem. There are, of course, others. Witness the following thoughts by poetry translator Willis Barnstone:

> An Artist translator is a master potter. The potter transforms the spirit of an old pot, the recollection of its shape, into a new pot. Mastery lies in the manipulation of the clay. She pours content into a form of her own creation in her own language. The translator is the Chinese ceramist who re-creates the spirit and produces the vessel in which that spirit lives. (1995)

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[1] 'I know your hands / their suppleness their calmness / I measured every finger / its length its width its three-dimensions / the varied roundness of each part / the eddy of every print / the severity of your thumb / its violence that will not grant relief // I am afraid of taking shape / why did I not go unnoticed / corpulent sodden complacent / in the sanctuary of the ground / a grey-green cold dripping mire / sucking my heavy mother's breast / lost in the groin of some rough hill side / satiated by shapelessness // You are wild keen without mercy / you approached me without warning - / I will not give you what you want / treacherous and vain your hopes / and you think you can draw a worthy shape / from my fretfulness / you set out being impudent / to force me into personality / But you turned me / in the bed of your hands / your closeness melting / my rigid denseness / rubbing your warmth / I started moving / I drew awareness / from your constant breath // You foolish creator / squandering gifts / were did you get / that amount of love // scattering without reason / using carelessly / enriching me / without getting poorer // The root of my loyalty / is your insatiable zeal / the heaviness of your hands / on the readiness of my clay / I answer you / in many shapes / joyful our play / in agreement our desire' [my translation]

Having read these lines, the poem suddenly reveals another potential dimension for interpretation – the artist in his struggle to create with the medium of creation, the clay, proving a stubborn mass before giving in to being shaped whilst still maintaining a sense of autonomy at the end of the creative process. Another instance exemplifying the ambiguity inherent within the interpretation of any literary text at any given point of reading comes once more from Whyte. Reflecting upon his conscious efforts to, as he puts it himself, 'leave the necessary margin of ambivalence' in his poetry, he comments that 'the technique worked, in so far as William Neill endearingly, in a review, spoke of the poet entering a Roman kitchen to hear his wife announce the arrival of the swallows. He not only made me heterosexual, but married me as well!' (2002d). As he reflects further:

> Perhaps I should be grateful. Reviewers of my first volume struggled to get past a spluttering disbelief at what they had encountered. Poetry, in Gaelic, celebrating same sex love. That was what led me, at the time Ronald Black was writing his introduction to *An Tuil*, to explicitly veto any mention of my sexuality, and to say that no, thank you very much, I would not refer to it in my biography at the back of the book. I was afraid that would prevent people looking beyond, seeing anything but scandal in the poetry. (ibid.)

This short extract from a paper given at a conference in Glasgow in 2001 illustrates how any meaning of a literary text is inevitably relative to the reader and his/her wealth of knowledge and awareness with regard to a particular literature set in a particular culture, or section thereof, at a particular time, however much such an awareness, or indeed the lack of it, is attempted to be manipulated by the author.

As literary text, Whyte's 'Mar a Thubhairt a' Chrè ris a' Chrèadhadair' has triggered a number of translations resulting in poems in Albanian, German, and, not surprisingly, English. Not only does meaning unfold from within the Gaelic poem according to whatever intertextual situation it is placed in at the time of reading, but also Whyte's poem results in the continual creation of multifarious meanings whenever its translations are read – meanings that will not only differ from each other but also from any reading of the Gaelic poem. Of course, I am referring to a minute fraction of instances of encounter between a text and its individual reader

within the vast world of poetry, yet these very instances nevertheless set the tone for this chapter which seeks to explore the relationship between poetry and translation whilst reflecting on the particular dynamics at the heart of both kinds of writing in their own right. It highlights the main issues at the heart of the debate around the nature of poetry translation as engaged with by both theorists and practitioners. This chapter identifies the varied efforts by those involved with the medium to come to terms with what appears a highly demanding translation practice, both with regard to theoretical and practical implications, since the impossibility of carrying meaning in all its potential facets from one language to another is particularly highlighted by poetry translation. This chapter will therefore explore where meaning occurs within the written literary text. It will therefore have to consider what theorists have found both within the field of literary criticism and within translation studies. Staying more firmly within the theoretical field of translation studies, the notion of equivalence will be examined, which is a natural progression of the argument, since the validity of the notion of equivalence as underlying characteristics of the relationship between source and target text is inevitably linked to our understanding of what meaning is and where in the life of a text and its re-incarnations in the shape of translations it occurs. Finally, this chapter will consider implications from the argument as it unfolds for an understanding of the nature of the translation of poetry.

Having placed the Gaelic situation in a wider historical context of postcolonial discourse (see Chapter 1) before viewing the context from within (see Chapter 2) we have now arrived at the point where we are concerned with the actual literary genre we are dealing with in the light of the literary practice by which its reality is vehemently marked, namely that of translation. In order to achieve this task this chapter will adopt a translation studies perspective, considering dynamics surrounding translation of poetry in general, regardless of the particular cultural settings. As we will find, this chapter with its specific focus will support the thesis on the whole in its contention that the underlying parameter to the process of intercultural communication is the inescapable reality of difference rather than sameness. Having thus investigated the particularities with the translation of poetry, we take a step back towards a general understanding of translation as action, calling upon the skopos theory of translation in order to define parameters which prove

fruitful in the attempt to make sense of the specific translation environment this thesis is concerned with.

3.1   Poetry and Translation

3.1.1   The Writing that is Poetry vs. the Writing that is Poetry Translation

Before discussing the subject of poetry translation, it is necessary to consider briefly the particular nature of the genre we are dealing with, since the textual and formal characteristics unique to poetry inevitably inform any approach towards translation. As David Connolly observes 'poetry represents writing in its most compact, condensed and heightened form, in which the language is predominantly connotational rather than denotational and in which content and form are inseparably linked' (1998, p. 171). As a result, the distinctive attribute that distinguishes poetry from other forms of literary writing is what Octavio Paz identifies as 'the immobility of signs' (1992, p. 158) as he elaborates:

> Poetry radically transforms language, and it does so in a direction opposite to that of prose: in one case, the mobility of characters tends to fix a single meaning; in the other, the plurality of meanings tends to fix the characters: Language, of course, is a system of mobile signs that may be interchangeable to some degree; one word can be replaced by another, and each phrase can be expressed (translated) by another. To paraphrase Peirce, we might say that the meaning of a word is always another word: Whenever we ask, 'What does this phrase mean?' the reply is another phrase. Yet once we move into the terrain of poetry, we find that words have lost their mobility and their interchangeability. The meanings of a poem are multiple and changeable; the words of that poem are unique and irreplaceable. To change them would be to destroy the poem. (ibid., pp. 158-9)

It is, therefore, not surprising that poetry translation is commonly regarded as the most demanding kind of translation. Indeed, discussing 'Poetry Translation' in the *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation*, Connolly observes that 'much of the discussion consists of a theoretical questioning of the very possibility of poetry translation' (1998, p. 170). Yet, within the world of literature across space and time poetry translation as a practice is 'universally accepted and has been for at least 2000

years, during which translation has influenced and often became part of the canon of the TL poetic tradition' (ibid., p. 170). A German pupil might well forget for a moment that Shakespeare did not actually write in German, just as an English-speaking student might acquire familiarity with the works of Goethe or Heine without having to set an eye on the original texts in German.

Yet, in as much as poetry in translation is accepted by those who read it, it remains a heatedly discussed issue amongst those critically thinking about this translation practice, since, as Jakobson states, with poetry 'the question of translation becomes much more entangled and controversial' (1992, p. 149). He elaborates his point by explaining that:

> In poetry, verbal equations become a constructive principle of the text. Syntactic and morphological categories, roots, and affixes, phonemes and their components (distinctive features) – in short, any constituents of the verbal code – are confronted, juxtaposed, brought into contiguous relation according to the principle of similarity and contrast and carry their own autonomous signification. The pun, or to use a more erudite, and perhaps more precise term – paronomasia, reigns over poetic art, and whether its rule is absolute or limited, poetry by definition is untranslatable. (ibid., 1992, p. 151)

Referring to his own style of composition, Welsh language author Twm Morys describes the experience of seeing his texts in English translations as follows:

> the strict-metre poet's work is at least three quarters as old as Christ. His craft has become another language yet again within the language. His words have a comet-tail of reference and nuance. They really do lose so much in translation as to make the effort almost worthless, like passing around a bottle of non-alcoholic wine. Whenever I've seen pieces of mine in English, I've only dimly recognized them, like friends who have been in some terrible accident. (2003, p. 55)

For Italian-based English-language author and translator Tim Parks the limitations of translatability are expressed in what he observes as a 'loss of depth' (2000, p. 54) in translations of literary texts. Indeed, this observation leads him to the rather radical pronouncement that:

> [it is] my own growing conviction that a very great deal of literature, poetry, and prose can only be truly exciting and efficacious in its original language, a conviction that goes hand in hand with my decision not to write any more in Italian, never to translate into Italian, and never to translate except for the purposes of elucidation. (ibid., p. 53)[2]

As becomes apparent, his views are so strong with regard to the impossibility of carrying meaning across languages that even the writing in his second language, in other words the inner self-translation resulting in a text written in a language other than the mother tongue, proves an impossible task since it is unrewarding.

In contrast, there are voices who perceive poetry translation in more positive terms, expressing equally passionate attitudes, as is evident with Susan Bassnett who believes that there is:

> a great deal of nonsense written about poetry and translation […] of which probably the best known is Robert Frost's immensely silly remark that 'poetry is what gets lost in translation', which implies that poetry is some intangible, ineffable thing (a presence? a spirit?) which, although constructed *in* language cannot be transported *across* languages. (1998b, p. 57)

Similarly, Paz shows an emotionally engaged reaction to the notion of essential untranslatability:

> I must confess that I find this idea offensive, not only because it conflicts with my personal conviction that poetry is universal, but also because it is based on an erroneous conception of what translation is. Not everyone shares my view, and many modern poets insist that poetry is untranslatable. Perhaps their opinion comes from their inordinate attachment to verbal matter, or perhaps they have become ensnared in the trap of subjectivity. A mortal trap, as Quevedo warns: 'the waters of the abyss / where I came to love myself.' (1992, p. 155)

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[2] It is interesting to perceive that an attitude towards translation even within the same person can be evolving over a period of a few years only, leading to quite the opposite standpoint, as becomes apparent when reading the concluding lines of Parks' discussion of his publication *Translating Style*: 'however intimate the translator may become with the writer, there is always a huge distance between original and translation. Which isn't a reason for not translating' (1997).

As is apparent, the practice of poetry translation carries the potential to trigger highly engaged and divisive debates trying to come to terms with 'what happened at Babel – disaster for some, promise of new possibilities for others' (France, 1997, p. 5). This context, then, raises essential questions with regard to translation as a possible and worthwhile practice leading both theorists and practitioners to utter the kind of radical and opposed statements noted above. At this point, then, it is beneficial to consider more general theoretical explorations which address the processes of writing and reading, in order to reach an understanding of the process of translation in itself before viewing the specific context of poetry and translation in the light of such explorations.

3.1.2   The Death of the Author: A Literary Criticism Perspective

The year 1968 saw the publication of Roland Barthes' influential article 'La mort de l'auteur' later translated into English by Stephen Heath as 'The Death of the Author' (Barthes, 1977). With this article, Barthes challenges the established perception of the author as the unquestionable source of conclusive meaning, in full control of the process that manifests the realisation of his or her intentions. From the perspective of poststructuralist thinking, Barthes' argument can be seen as an attempt to dismantle what Foucault identifies as 'the solid and fundamental unit of the author and the work' (1988, p. 197). In doing so he reacts to a process in history which Michel Foucault describes as 'the coming into being of the notion of 'author' [which] constitutes the privileged moment of *individualization* in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and the sciences' (ibid., p. 197). As David Lodge explains, that moment was highly encouraged by both the physical and metaphysical conditions during the era of humanism and capitalism (1988, p. 196). With regard to the impact such an acquired notion of the 'author' has on the understanding of the concept of the 'text', namely as an entity progressing from a pre-written to a post-written state of existence, Barthes observes that:

> The author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a *before* and *after*. The Author is thought to *nourish* the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for

it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as father is to child. (1977, p. 145, his italics)

Yet, it is Barthes' contention that there is no such thing as a single authorial meaning, or as he puts it 'a text is not a line of words releasing a single "theological" meaning (the "message" of the Author-God)' (ibid., p. 146). Rather 'text' is in need of being re-defined as 'a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture' (ibid., p. 146). Such an understanding acknowledges that each act of writing is inevitably drawing on other 'text' and as such becomes a form of translation. As Paz observes:

> Each text is unique, yet at the same time it is the translation of another text. No text can be completely original because language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation – first from the nonverbal world, and then, because each sign and each phrase is a translation of another sign, another phrase. (1992, p. 154)[3]

In conclusion Paz offers the definition of writing, be it literary or non-literary, 'as a growing heap of texts, each slightly different from the one that came before it: translations of translations of translations' (ibid., p. 154). Thus, according to Barthes, the only authorial attribute the writer is still endowed with is that of the 'power […] to mix writings, to encounter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any of them' (1977, p. 146). As such writing in itself is translation. Indeed, 'did [the author] wish to *express himself*, he ought at least to know that the inner 'thing' he thinks to 'translate' is itself only a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words, and so on indefinitely' (ibid., p. 146, his italics).

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[3] Note that such a perception relates to postcolonial translation studies. In their introduction to *Postcolonial Translation. Theory and Practice* (Bassnett and Trivedi, 1999), Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi refer to Paz's understanding of writing as translation when they point towards the efforts to destabilise the very notion of 'originality' in a postcolonial context, which is on the one hand concerned with undermining the concept of Europe as 'the great Original' (ibid., 1999, p. 4) and the superior status of original writing over translation on the other hand (ibid., 1999, p. 2).

3.1.2.1   The Death of the Author and the Coming into Being of Meaning

Barthes demands the breakdown of the dichotomous understanding of the author as the source of original meaning and the text as the space which manifests absolute meaning as intended and placed by the author. In doing so, he forces us to adopt a different perspective, namely that towards the reader, arguing that:

> a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. (1977, p. 148)

In that 'the modern scriptor is born simultaneously with the text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, is not the subject with the book as predicate; there is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is eternally written *here and now*' (ibid., p. 145, his italics). This is not to say that we deny the existence of the author. In many cases we might be thankful for the physical existence of authors and their work, for they have created their composition of words and quotations called texts, which gave us great pleasure in reading. Rather, we have to realise that we will not be able to grasp the essence of the actual living person called author and his or her real conditions at the point of writing. All we can do, if indeed we wish to do so, is to inform ourselves through the use of other texts – historical, anecdotal, autobiographical, critical etc. In effect, the author 'becomes, as it were, a paper-author: his life […] no longer the origin of his fictions but a fiction contributing to his work' (Barthes, 1977, p. 161). This reminds us of the notion of the implied author (cf. Nelles, 1993, Schiavi, 1996) as inferred by the reader. However, as William Nelles defines it, the implied author is recognised by the reader within the text only (1993, p. 24), which is too narrow a definition to be productive for this particular argument. Furthermore, the implied author can be fully accessed only by the implied reader, which in itself is a construct in relation to the historical author (ibid., pp. 31-2). Therefore, as I would like to argue, the sphere where implied author and implied reader meet is an entirely hypothetical one, which denies the concrete

and real moment of reading as the instance which realises actual meaning (as discussed in Chapter 5). I would therefore like to argue towards the use of the term 'inferred author' as established by Gérard Genette and Gene Moore (cf. Nelles, 1993, p. 24), which is rejected by Nelles, yet which seems more appropriate with regard to the present discussion in that it stresses the active role of the reader in creating the image of the author (ibid., p. 24). Furthermore, such an active role on the part of each individual reader in the creation of meaning cannot but be exposed to sources outside the literary text, in both their presence and absence, which are of shaping influence in forming the identity of the author as inferred by the reader.

It may well be the case that Barthes has initiated an argument, which, in its final conclusion appears less liberating than hoped for, as is discussed by Foucault who argues that 'to imagine writing as absence seems to be a simple repetition, in transcendental terms, of both the religious principle of the work's survival, its perpetuation beyond the author's death, and its enigmatic *excess* in relation to him' (1988, p. 200). We might also want to consider Rosemary Arrojo's criticism of Barthes. Drawing on the Derridean notion of deconstruction, she argues that:

> Barthes's theory of reading does not seem to take into account that, after the deconstruction of the notion of traditional authorship as the absolute, controlling origin of meaning, any act of reading, like any piece of writing, will necessarily be circumscribed by its own context and history, and will, therefore, also be given to intertextuality and to *différance*. (1997, p. 26, her italics)

However, the present study is not concerned with the evaluation of Barthes' insistence on the death of the author. What is important is that Barthes' radical position allows us to come to the understanding that the reader of a text is inevitably denied any transparent access to the meaning of the text as intended by the author, since both the realisation of the author's intentions and the reception of the text are conditioned by the intertextuality of language and writing as experienced by the reader. Therefore, there is no absolute meaning, rather meaning itself becomes relative, determined incessantly by the intertextual conditions of each and every act of its creation that is reading.

3.1.2.2   The Death of the Author: A Translation Studies Perspective

It is obvious that the combination of a poststructuralist understanding of the coming into being of meaning as relying on the persona of the reader together with the deconstruction of meaning as a fixed and enduring entity[4] has profound implications for our understanding of translation. As Derrida convincingly puts it:

> Difference is never pure, no more so is translation, and for the notion of translation we would have to substitute a notion of *transformation*: a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another. We will never have, and in fact never had, to do with some 'transport' of pure signifiers from one language to another, or within one and the same language, that the signifying instrument would leave virgin and untouched. (2004, pp. 19-20)

Translation thus becomes an activity relative to the translator's reference points at any particular moment, as well as to given linguistic parameters idiosyncratic to the languages involved. As such, translation functions by 'bringing texts together in a play of multiple meanings' (Bassnett, 1996, p. 11). The result is a target text which is defined by its difference from the source text since, as Arrojo summarises, **'**the acceptance of the impossibility of reaching any pure origin, or that which could be immortal, univocal or beyond any perspective, is, thus, also the acceptance of the inevitability of interference in any act of alleged re-creation' (1997, p. 22).

According to Lawrence Venuti, translation is therefore defined as 'transformative and interrogative' and thus the very point at which 'the deconstruction of the foreign text' takes place (1992, p. 8). Due to the relative nature of each process that is reading and translating, every target text will be different from another, even if the source text is the same. Translation, one could argue, is therefore the very writing practice, which gives testimony to deconstructionist theoretical explorations, which after decades of poststructuralist thought, remains in need of being pointed out, as a recent article by J. Peder Zane (2006), documenting the continuous unawareness by the general readership of the translator as an intervening creative force with the text in translation, shows. The existence of such an awareness, however, implies that, as

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[4] Note that Venuti refers to meaning as 'differential plurality' (1992, p. 12).

Arrojo has it, translation 'give[s] up its generally humble and impossible pretension at being transparent or invisible and becomes "strong" and "forceful"' (1997, pp. 24-5, referring to Venuti, 1992) which in turn 'releases [translation] from its subordination to the foreign text and makes possible the development of a hermeneutic that reads the translation as a text in its own right, as a weave of connotations, allusions, and discourses specific to the target-language culture' (Venuti, 1992, p. 8). In that way, we might perceive translation as writing, which answers the perception of writing as translation as noted in the context of literary criticism. Thus we might argue that undeniably 'all texts are originals because each translation has its own distinctive character. Up to a point, each translation is a creation and thus constitutes a unique text' (Paz, 1992, p. 154). Here we have come full circle, since if we cannot accept the author as the ultimate source of meaning, neither can we install the translator, who has become the author of his or her text, as a stable source of meaning. As Arrojo has it:

> If the death of traditional authorship implies the birth of the reader and the acceptance of the interpreter's inevitable visibility, and if the translator that is thus born cannot be omnipotent and cannot control what will be done with the goals and options of his or her translation, the most important consequence poststructuralism could bring to translation studies is precisely a thorough revision of the relationships that have generally been established between originals and translations, between authors and translators, and between translators and their readers, which are no longer adequately described in terms of the traditional notions of meaning recovery, fidelity or equivalence. (1997, p. 30)

Arrojo here destabilises the notion of equivalence, which has served as a vital point of reference over the history of translation studies. The notion of equivalence is furthermore a vital one to be considered in a Gaelic poetry context, with the bilingual edition presenting self-translations by the poet as quintessential perpetuation of the notion of equivalence at the heart of translation (cf. Chapters 2, 4 and 5). In what follows the notion of equivalence will therefore be explored in more detail.

3.1.3   The Notion of Equivalence: Equivalence vs. Difference

Translation Studies theorists like Eugene Nida, Peter Newmark or Werner Koller, whose work is most extensively concerned with the notion of equivalence and who are therefore most associated with this notion, have devoted significant research towards establishing typologies of the various kinds and levels of equivalence linking source and target texts (Munday, 2001, pp. 35-49). Not surprisingly, such approaches accept the notion of equivalence not merely as valid but even as essential with regard to the evaluation of the relationship between any given source and target text. Consequently, such approaches adopt perspectives from within the concept of equivalence, thus placing equivalence firmly at the heart of what Theo Hermans calls the 'ideology of translation' (Schäffner, 1999, p. 81). For the purpose of the present study, however, it will be important to move away from these linguistically orientated prescriptive approaches in order to consider the notion of equivalence from outwith its commonly accepted fields of influence. It is therefore the task in hand to assess critically the validity of the very concept of equivalence as an applicable point of reference for the appreciation of translation as process and product.[5]

Hermans, a translation studies scholar who has most prominently voiced his concern with regard to equivalence as a prime definition of the relationship between source and target texts, argues that 'equivalence may be understood as a belief structure, the creation of a pragmatically necessary illusion' (1999, p. 98), pointing to 'our standard metaphors of translation' which 'incessantly rehearse this idea in casting translation as a transparent pane of glass, a simulacrum, a replica.' (ibid., p. 98) Similarly, Anthony Pym observes that:

> the most general level of translational form can be projected as 'equivalence', roughly understood as translation's capacity to be received as if it were the source text. This 'as if' (*as if* the translation were the source text) indicates a fictional status, a belief, or at least a willing suspension of disbelief on the part of the person doing the

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[5] Cf. Pym (1995) for a brief historically grounded overview of the debate regarding the notion of equivalence amongst translation studies scholars.

receiving. The creation or maintenance of the fiction is, by my definition, one of the aims of a translation. (1998, p. 156, his italics)

Engaging with Pym's argument, Hermans elaborates that 'as long as there is nothing to jolt us out of our willing suspension of disbelief we assume that to all intents and purposes the replica is "as good as" and therefore equivalent to the real thing' (1999, p. 98). Pym, however, clearly points towards the necessity of the illusion of equivalence when he argues that 'nothing we recognize as translational communication can function without the belief, no matter how misfounded, that the translation can be received as if it were the source text' (1998, p. 157). In conclusion, Pym argues:

> if there is no such belief, no such form of operation, the communication might well be something else, reported speech, commentary or the like. This is voodoo, of course. A translation performs or fails as an ideal translation because people believe it can do so, just as a dollar note performs as an ideal bearer of a certain value. If people stopped believing, we would no longer have any translation, nor many banknotes. (ibid., p. 157)

The practical implications of such a perspective on translation are that, as Hermans observes, 'for those of us without Russian the Penguin Dostoevsky *is* Dostoevsky' (1999, p. 97, his italics). Similarly, Katja Krebs highlights the fact 'we read *the* Sartre or *the* Tolstoi and teach the original Ibsen or Strindberg to our students, even though very few of us have access to the French, Russian or Scandinavian source' (2005, p. 22, her italics). Indeed, the habitual substitution of the translated text for the source text by readers of literature has the profound effect that 'very rarely, if at all, do we talk about translation as a manipulation or re-writing of a source' (ibid., p. 22). Such a treatment, or non-treatment, of literature in translation by a reading audience is hardly surprising nor can it be condemned, given that even researchers within the field of translation studies have found it difficult to disregard the notion of equivalence. As Gideon Toury argued during the early 1980s, when the notion of equivalence came under close scrutiny by translation studies theorists (cf. Pym, 1995):

> Every move from the general definitions of 'translation' on, towards the problems inherent in translation studies, involves an examination of that property of translation, forming an essential part of its definition, […] namely, the notion of 'equivalence'. To be sure, the specification given to this notion is the crux of every theory of translation, and more than anything else it bears witness to its real scope and objects, possibilities and limitations, and dictates its methods. (Toury, 1981, p. 11)

Thus, as Garnier puts it, the notion of equivalence might be described as the 'philosopher's stone' of translation theorists (1985, p. 44, as referred to in Hewson, 1997, p. 49, n. 4).

Toury, then, takes the notion of equivalence and carries it beyond its established 'directive and normative' sense, thus departing from it, towards what he defines as '*poetics of translation*, both in its *descriptive* an in its *historical* facets' (1981, p. 9, his italics). He is, thus, moving away from the traditionally dominating source-text-oriented translation theory approach towards a target-text-oriented analysis of translation as process and, moreover, as product, thus abandoning a practice which:

> concern[s] themselves mainly with *potential* translation, or even with *translatability*, rather than with *actual* translation, hence with the *act of translating* which actually proceeds from ST, rather than with *translations* as actual textual-linguistic products (instances of performance), which belong first and foremost to the system of texts written in TL (in spite of the undeniable relationships obtaining between them and SL texts). (ibid., pp. 9-10, his italics)

In doing so, rather than employing a different terminology for his translation theory, Toury chooses to recycle the term equivalence, redefining it as the actual relationship between the source and the target text, which can be studied and which sheds light on the function of the target text in the target literature/culture. As Munday explains, by 'accepting as given that a TT is "equivalent" to its ST', i.e. that the target text stands in relation to the source text, Toury enables translation theory to proceed to 'identify the web of relations between the two' (2001, p. 50) – a 'web of relations' which, according to Toury, 'cannot be defined in essential terms' (Schäffner, 1999, p. 72). Therefore, we are in the situation where the one term 'equivalence' denotes entirely different concepts, which, both to avoid misunderstanding and to ensure productive

communication, needs to be explained whenever the term is employed. As Toury points out, 'since the seemingly single term actually belongs to two different sets of terms, there is no *logical contradiction* in a sentence such as "the equivalence revealed by translation x is no equivalence"' (1981, p. 13, his italics) as 'it should be interpreted as meaning: "equivalence$_2$ is not equivalence$_1$"' (ibid., p. 13) with the latter relating to the '*theoretical* term, denoting an abstract, ideal relationship' and the former standing as '*descriptive* term, denoting concrete objects – actual relationships between actual utterances in two different languages (and literatures)' (ibid., p. 13, his italics). Furthermore, Pym, who identifies the notion of equivalence as a necessary illusion for translation as a concept to exist, as mentioned above, defends and redefines it as a notion that 'refers to the relation operative not between a source text and a target text but between a target text and the reader prepared to believe and trust its status as an "equivalent" of an unseen source' (1998, p. 107, cited in Krebs, 2005, pp. 22-3) .

Hermans, however, launches a more resolute attack against the notion of equivalence arguing that by 'hauling the same tainted concept, even in diluted form, into the theoretical discourse without problematizing it destroys the possibility of critical interrogation', thus 'blur[ring] precisely the aspects of non-equivalence, of manipulation and displacement' and, therefore, inevitably 'obscuring difference' (Schäffner, 1999, p. 73). In so arguing, he encounters vigorous opposition from fellow theorists, as can be witnessed with the following remark by Peter Newmark, made during a published debate on equivalence:

> I think that all translation is approximate, and by this you mean rough, or you can mean as close as possible. When one says that one is aiming to find an equivalent, what all translators do, then I see nothing wrong with this. The attempt to dismiss this […] is misjudged. I think it is perverse to start with the difference as opposed to the equivalence. (ibid., p. 72)

Gunilla Anderman tries to shed light on the apparent unease with defining translation as difference rather than equivalence, arguing that:

> as children we do start assuming sameness. A child is totally narcissistic and as it grows up it comes to realise that there are

differences. But most people still assume sameness, and therefore it is only people who are in a situation in which they combine two cultures permanently, who are aware of the fact that one might possibly start from difference, but that is an acquired awareness. I think perhaps that the idea of starting from sameness is more intuitive whereas starting with difference is counter-intuitive if you are monocultural. (ibid., p. 81)

Theo Hermans continues the argument by illuminating that:

What I think I gain from approaching things through difference rather than sameness is the fact that every translation involves already as a starting point a text which is different and which you know you are not going to recreate as it is, because the language in which you work is different, the context is different, the purpose for which you provide the translation is different from the purpose for which the source text was provided. (ibid., p. 82)

In fact, Hermans tries to liberate the idea of translation as difference from its negative connotations, asserting that 'difference has nothing to do with errors or with making mistakes, but it has to do with the historicity of translation' (ibid., p. 82).

Perceiving translation as difference has vital implications for a vast number, if not the majority, of translation environments since, as Hermans points out, it 'is not just a matter of norms and values slanting perception, but also of translation taking place in a context of power differentials' (1999, p. 97). Such dynamics at the heart of translation have been pointed out in Chapter 1 and they are indeed well documented by theorists working within postcolonial translation studies (cf. Niranjana, 1992, Tymoczko, 1999, Bassnett and Trivedi, 1999). In this light, Newmark's insistence on equivalence believing that 'translation, in its democratic sense, has extraordinary power to produce friendship' (Schäffner, 1999, p. 74) appears to be highly idealistic in nature. Hermans' more realistic response is to point towards the refusal of a number of contemporary Irish poets to have their poetry translated into English, which he identifies as 'an obvious instance of the political significance of non-translation, occur[ing] in a context in which languages like English and Irish are not on equal footing' (1999, p. 97). He thus asserts that 'the suggestion of equal value in the term "equivalence" renders it inappropriate in such context' (ibid., p. 97). It is indeed a crucial realisation, as I would like to argue that friendship, as introduced to

the debate by Newmark above, or mutual respect, which might be more important in the context of intercultural communication, might well be achieved through recognition of difference rather than through assertion of sameness, with the latter approach succeeding in suppressing inevitable difference (see Chapter 1.4.4). I would also like to argue that particularly in the context of minority translation, the insistence on difference as an essential quality to translation, is a vital instance where the gap between theory and practice, which so often is observed in discussion around translation, and poetry translation in particular (cf. Connolly, 1998, p. 172), is bridged. This will become apparent as the present discussion concerned with the status of the Gaelic poem in the Gaelic/English poetry pair evolves (see Chapter 5 for concluding thoughts).

3.1.4   Difference between Writing and Translating

Battling with the notion of writing in its two different guises as translation or original writing, those involved with literature have increasingly drawn attention to the intertwined nature of the two processes. We may recall Paz's understanding of writing as 'translations of translations of translations' (1992, p. 154) or indeed Roland Barthes' definition of writing as 'the inner "thing" he [the author] thinks to "translate"' (1977, p. 146). Furthermore, as we have seen, such an approach towards writing implies that every translation is also an original text since 'each translation has its own distinctive character' (Paz, 1992, p. 154). How, then, may we still address the one text as original and the other as translation? By implication, what is the justification for translation studies as a subject in its own right? The answer is simple, and convincingly put by Paz, himself a renowned poet and translator:

> The poet, immersed in the movement of language, in constant verbal preoccupation, chooses a few words – or is chosen by them. As he combines them, he constructs his poem: a verbal object made of irreplaceable and immovable characters. The translator's starting point is not the language in movement that provides the poet's raw material, but the fixed language of the poem. A language congealed, yet living. His procedure is the inverse of the poet's: he is not constructing an unalterable text from mobile characters, instead he is dismantling the elements of the text, freeing the signs into circulation, then returning them to language. (1992, p. 159)

Translation is thus a creative process which results in a text that is as carefully crafted and, thus, as fixed as the source text. What makes both processes different is that 'original creative writing' is not directly related to another text, therefore being inspired by the general condition of human-kind and the multitude of all the texts that came before, where translation also directly relates to the source text, however much change occurs in the process.

3.1.4.1   Poetry Translation: 'Transplanting the Seed'

Arguing that 'the source text and its translation are […] products functioning independently each within its own culture' with the '(newly) translated text only begin[ning] to signify when it is fed into and functions within the receiving culture', thereby establishing 'a series of relations within its own culture' which are 'inseparable from the meaning of the text', Lance Hewson firmly asserts the 'conception of translation as change' (1997, p. 49). The proof is in the reception. Thus, as Tim Parks observes, 'the rare bilingual person, the person most thoroughly grounded in two distinct conventions' must be 'struck by the utter difference of the same text in his two languages' as a result of being 'keenly aware of the distinct value structures implied by the two languages and the subversive force of whatever differences from convention are there established' (2000, p. 53). We may therefore agree with Hewson that inevitably 'changing cultures means changing meaning' (1997, p. 49).

Here I would like to return to our specific context of poetry translation. Taking into account the arguments so far, the prospect for the very possibility of achieving a translation of a poem appears rather bleak. Echoing Jakobson's conviction presented earlier that 'poetry by definition is untranslatable' (1992, p. 151), Yves Bonnefoy indeed affirms that 'the answer to the question, "Can one translate a poem?" is of course "no"' since 'the translator meets too many contradictions that he cannot eliminate; he must make too many sacrifices' (1992, p. 186). Therefore, inevitably, 'where a text has its felicities (accidental or not), its cruxes, its density – its unconscious – the translation must stick to the surface, even if its own cruxes crop up elsewhere. You can't translate a poem' (ibid., p. 187). Yet, Bonnefoy does not stop

there, since it is in the very nature of the translated text that 'its own cruxes crop up elsewhere'. So if translation is impossible, 'creative transposition', as Roman Jakobson believes, is not (1992, p. 151). Indeed, theorists and practitioners of poetry translation have offered different ways of describing what poetry in translation is. For Paz, then, it is a 'reproduction of the original poem in another poem that is […] less a copy than a transmutation' (1992, p. 160). The crucial understanding is that, as Bonnefoy puts it, 'the poem is a means, a spiritual statement, which is not, however, an end' (1992, pp. 187-8). Therefore, the translator embarking on the recreation of a poem in another language has to adopt a rather radical approach. He or she 'must realize that the poem is nothing and that translation is possible – which is not to say that it's easy; it is merely poetry re-begun' (ibid., p. 189). In her article 'Transplanting the Seed: Poetry and Translation', Bassnett invigorates Percy Bysshe Shelley's metaphorical treatment of the issue of poetry translation:

> It were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as to seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower – and this is the burthen of the curse of Babel. (Shelley, 1965, cited in Bassnett, 1998b, p. 58)

Acknowledging that 'this passage is sometimes taken as an example of the impossibility of translation', Bassnett takes the opportunity to re-evaluate the imagery used by Shelley as that of 'change and new growth' rather than that 'of loss and decay'. She thus emphasises that:

> though a poem cannot be transfused from one language to another, it can nevertheless be transplanted. The seed can be placed in new soil, for a new plant to develop. The task of the translator must be then be to determine and locate that seed and to set about the transplantation. (ibid., p. 58)

Such a positive attitude towards the translation of poetry is thus a conscious far cry from the common perception of the pursuit as '"secondary", "mechanical", "derivate"' with the resulting text a mere '"copy", a "substitute", a poor version of the superior original' standing 'in a lower position *vis-à-vis* the hegemonic position of the source text' (Bassnett, 1996, p. 12). Accepting what Hewson highlights as the

strength of the translator, namely the 'possible creative freedom the translator may enjoy, despite all the well-documented linguistic and cultural constraints' (1997, p. 56), we might want to agree with Bonnefoy's essentially positive contention that through translation 'what we can gain [...] by way of compensation, is the very thing we cannot grasp or hold: that is to say, the poetry of the other language' (1992, p. 188). Poetry translation is thus not the creation of text which stands as a transparent replica of an original poem, rather it is the creation of poem which is marked by difference in its relation to the original poem which is the source text to the translational process. Given, then, that with translation we are witnessing a process of transformation, rather than a transparent reflection and thus repetition of textual and literary qualities of the source text, we have to acknowledge that such a process will involve conscious decision-making on the part of the performer of translation action, i.e. the translator. In that respect, rather than being a process of random nature, the decision-making that leads to particular translation choices is informed by the purpose of the translation and its anticipated function in the target culture context. As this is the case with any translational action, the discussion will now move from the specific translation environment of poetry translation towards considering the nature of translation as a process in general.

3.2 Skopos Theory of Translation

The preceding chapter on Gaelic literature and translation has revealed some critical concern about the nature of translation in a Gaelic literary context as well as an absence of a critical examination and evaluation of translation attitudes and practices amongst most who are involved in the processes around the production and products of translation of Gaelic texts. It is therefore necessary to move beyond the genre of poetry and translation in terms of the critical evaluation of translation practices this thesis is concerned with whilst keeping in mind that difference has been established as the quintessential quality determining the relationship between source and target text with poetry translation as a translation context which most firmly confirms that quality. Introducing and employing skopos theory of translation as established by Hans J. Vermeer (cf. 1996) allows me to identify the instances which contribute

towards the problematic nature of translation in a Gaelic context as I will discuss in Chapter 5.[6] The choice of skopos theory is not merely an appropriate one in the present context, but also it is a compelling one given its status as a general theory of translation.

3.2.1 Skopos Theory of Translation: A General Translation Theory

Skopos theory is a general translation theory derived from action theory which defines translation as a purpose-driven communicative action. Thus, it is not an applied theory aiming at prescribing certain translation strategies demanded by specific translational tasks or circumstances. Skopos theory, therefore, occupies the highest level within the hierarchy of translation studies theories. As Vermeer argues:

> As the skopos is nothing other than the assumption that translating is acting and acting by definition presupposes a purpose (*skopos*), the skopos can be considered the highest general condition theoretically possible for translational acting and the highest possible general criterion for ordering the conditions of such acting, for it is derived from a higher-ranking general action theory. (1996, pp. 45-46)

Vermeer further identifies the translator as the agent who has to define 'the purpose and the "strategy" for designing the translation. The purpose for which a translator designs a translation ("translatum") […] is called the "skopos" of the text' (ibid., pp. 5-6).[7] The above argument clearly shows the strong emphasis skopos theory puts on the role of the translator as the 'actor', i.e. the individual who defines the purpose of the action and hence the skopos of the translation, in order to act consciously and productively in producing the translation. As Vermeer states, 'it is the translator's task and responsibility, whether in oral or in written translating, to decide what and

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[6] Note that Katharina Reiss is another scholar usually associated with skopos theory. However, she develops the argument in the light of text-type oriented translation studies (cf. Munday, 2001, p. 79), which takes skopos theory, which is a general translation theory, to rather specific spheres. It is, however, explicitly the general nature of skopos theory which makes it an attractive theory for this study, in that we can ask questions from a descriptive rather than prescriptive perspective on the present subject, thus following the demand for a historicizing approach towards the particular translation activity of self-translation (as identified in Chapter 1.1.8). I shall therefore avoid Reiss' work and develop my understanding of the theory and subsequent argument based on Vermeer (1996).
[7] Note that Vermeer acknowledges the decision-influencing instance of the commissioner of the translator. However, it is the translator who, in the end, is the acting agent who establishes a translation strategy according to the agreed skopos (cf. Vermeer, 1996, pp. 6-7).

how to translate according to a case-specific skopos' (ibid., p. 100). As Juliane House points out, 'in […] skopos theory, then, the translator is elevated to a much more important position than he is normally credited with – a fact that, as Wilss […] remarked, may indeed be one of the motivations for setting up skopos theory' (1997, p. 13, referring to Wilss, 1997).

3.2.2   Evaluation of Skopos Theory for the Present Study

Scholars who have attempted to evaluate skopos theory in the light of translation criticism have in the majority concentrated on the weight Vermeer appears to place on the target culture addressees. Christiane Nord understands that 'one of the main factors in the skopos of a communicative activity is the (intended) receiver or addressee with their specific communicative needs' (1997, p. 46). This seems to be a valid conclusion, keeping in mind Vermeer's statement that 'skopos theory strictly regards translating from the point of view of a text functioning in a target-culture for target-culture recipients' (1996, p. 50). However, it is important to note that such a 'functional approach to translating' (ibid., p. 4) does not necessarily need to result in domesticated translations which answer exclusively the expectations and needs of the target culture readership. Consequently, I would like to argue that Nord has left the path of skopos theory when she argues that:

> the TT [target-text] addressed to target-cultural readers/listeners and intended to be meaningful and functional for them, should naturally conform to the norms and conventions of the target culture (TC), taking into account what target-culture members can be expected to know or feel about the subject in question […] It is no longer the ST [source text] which sets the standards for the translator's decision in the translation process, but the intended receiver of the translation, whose reception will be entirely guided by TC expectations, conventions, norms, models, real-world knowledge, perspective, etc. (1997, p. 46)

Crucially, Nord departs from the general level of translation theory in that she 'prescribes' translation which follow target-culture 'conventions', 'norms' and 'models'. Yet, this was not intended by Vermeer. Although the fundamental aim of every translation is to reach a readership, i.e. target culture recipients, that does not

imply that the translation needs to perform what answers conventional expectations of that readership. The translator might in fact be drawn to translational activity precisely because he wants to offer a readership something which is different from its everyday reading or listening experience. The translator will then have to establish a translation strategy according to such specifically defined skopos. As should become clear, Nord has shifted emphasis away from the skopos of the translation to the target culture. Consequently, she has denied the translator the right to define specific skopi which in turn lead to translation strategy choices, ranging from source-text-oriented to target-text-oriented strategies. I am making this point, since translation criticism of this kind has confused the perception of skopos theory amongst translation studies theorists to a degree that it is often misinterpreted as prescriptive translation theory advocating domesticating translation strategies.

Reviewing approaches to evaluating translation quality, House points towards the 'extreme target-orientedness' of skopos theory, concluding in a rather polemical fashion that 'it may be understandable that [the] regard for the original text is alien to all those who seem to one-sidedly turn their attention to texts of quick consumption' (1997, p. 15). Although statements such as the above are not of great benefit to translation studies in general, it will be nevertheless helpful to ask where the misunderstanding has occurred. House's strong reaction to skopos theory was triggered by Vermeer's demand to 'de-throne' the original text:

> Was es […] gewiß nicht gibt, ist 'der' Ausgangstext. Es gibt nur einen je spezifisch interpretierten Ausgangstext, sozusagen den Ausgangstext-für-den-Rezipienten-X im Zeitpunkt-tx. 'Der' Ausgangstext kann also auch nicht Grundlage und Ausgangspunkt für 'die' Übersetzung sein (die es ebenso wenig gibt). Er ist entthront, die Translation dieser Fiktion enthoben. (1986, p. 42, cited in House, 1997, p. 14)[8]

The inverted commas here have to be understood in the light of Vermeer's post-structuralism-coloured statement that 'no text has one fixed meaning, each approach

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[8] 'What certainly does not exist is "the" source text. What exists is a specifically interpreted source-text, that is a source-text-for-the-recipient-X at the point-of-time-tx. Therefore, "the" source text cannot be the basis and point of departure for "the" translation (which does not exist either). It is de-throned, the translation relieved from that fiction.' [my translation]

is individual (and partly subjective), including that of the translator' (1996, p. 39, also see ibid, p. 70). In that way, the skopos theory of translation, which has been established as a general translation theory, does not adhere to the notion of meaning as statically fixed within the text placed there by the god-like figure of the author. Rather, text becomes meaningful at the time of interpretation, which is essentially a single moment in time shaped by its idiosyncratic social and cultural settings. Taking this as a fundamental axiom to his argument, Vermeer arrives at the following conclusion:

> One will have to decide before translating a text whether it is to be 'adapted' (to a certain extent), i.e. 'assimilated', to target-culture conditions, or whether it is meant to display perhaps even stress its 'foreign' aspect […]. One will have to make a choice. On both cases the text will be 'different' from what it was in its 'normal' source-culture situation, and its 'effect' will be different. (ibid., p. 39)

Considering that with our specific case of translation from Gaelic, a language which is the medium of expression for a rich cultural and literary heritage, yet which is struggling for survival, a particular sensitivity towards the source text should inform the translational process, and domesticating translation strategies might not necessarily be the most adequate for this particular translation activity. Thus, as general translation theory which acknowledges the need for different translation skopi according to different translation circumstances and which most importantly identifies the translator as defining and acting agent, I consider skopos theory as an adequate theoretical framework for our present study. With the following example I would like to point towards the kind of misinterpretation of skopos theory I have pointed to above. As Vermeer clearly states, it is not the concern of skopos theory to produce translations which yield in their entirety of linguistic, stylistic, semantic etc. features to the literary 'norms' and 'conventions' of the target culture. As he specifically explains:

> skopos theory thus in no way claims that the translated text should *ipso facto* conform to the target culture behaviour or expectation, that a translatum must always 'adapt' to the target culture. This is just one possibility: the theory equally well accommodates the opposite type of translation, deliberately marked, with the intention of expressing source-culture features by target-culture means. Everything between

these two extremes is likewise possible, including hybrid cases. To know what the point of a translation is, to be conscious of the action – that is the goal of skopos theory. (2000, p. 231, his italics)

Conceiving of translation as a consciously performed action with an awareness of the impact of translation choices on the functioning of the target text in its literary and social surroundings is imperative in the context of self-translating minority-language authors. As we are in a translation context where categories are not as clear-cut as with translation in general with the space occupied by source and target text, with source and target readership and source and target culture frequently overlapping, conscious choices only will result in catering towards any one of the above in particular.

Being concerned with education strategies which raise people's awareness of political, social and cultural realities in order to enable them to change the conditions which oppress them, the influential Brazilian theorist of education Paulo Freire employs the notion of 'conscientização' (i.e. conscientisation). He argues that:

> Reflection upon situationality is reflection about the very condition of existence: critical thinking by means of which men discover each other to be 'in a situation'. Only as […] men can come to perceive [this situation] as an objective-problematic situation – only then can commitment exist. Men *emerge* from their *submersion* and acquire the ability to *intervene* in reality as it is unveiled. *Intervention* in reality – historical awareness itself – thus represents a step forward from *emergence*, and results from the *conscientização* of the situation. *Conscientização* is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence. (1970, p. 100-1, his italics)

From within translation studies, Michaela Wolf recognises that '"conscientisation" mainly means the search for access to a critical consciousness' (2003, p. 126, see Chapter 5.3.1 for Wolf's employment of the notion of 'conscientisation' in the context of translation). Raising consciousness with regard to translation thus raises awareness with regard to the impact of translation choices on both source and target texts and its cultural surroundings amongst both writers and readers.

3.2.3 Skopos Theory and the Demand for Stating Translation Strategies

As I have stated above, it is the translator who defines the skopos for the individual translation or, at least, agrees to the skopos as defined by the commissioner. This in turn will lead him/her to a certain translation strategy which determines each conscious translational action and ensures that these actions will add up to a homogeneous whole that, in the end, is the target text. It is, therefore, the translator who can be held responsible for his/her decisions. As Vermeer argues, 'for many years I have been demanding with other authors that the translator should always provide his translation with a clear statement as to why – i.e. for which skopos – and how he has translated a text' (1996, p. 39). Thus, as Vermeer has it, 'the recipient of the target-text knows what he is getting and can evaluate the *translatum* [i.e. the translated text as a product] according to his own opinion and expectations and needs and then accept or reject it, if so required, 'compare' it to a source-text(eme)' (ibid., p. 107, his italics). This particular point is of special importance to the discussion of translation of minority languages, as it asserts the need to make the translation process, which always is interference, visible. The mere fact of the visibility of translational action with minority languages ensures a conscious reading or non-reading of both source and target text as what they are.

3.3 Concluding Remarks

In order to be able to reflect on the particular dynamics of poetry translation, it is necessary to consider the nature of writing and translation in general. Within literary criticism, poststructuralism and deconstruction have led to an awareness that meaning as inherent within writing is never a stable, absolute and eternal access to the intentions of the author, rather it is relative to the one who comes to the text as a reader. As the act of translating also involves a process of reading, every text which is written by the translator will bear the marks of transformation, given the interpretative nature of the translation process, however visible those marks may be. Inevitably, translation is never a transparent reflection of the text it translates. Moreover, during the translation process, the source text will not just travel from the

eyes of one person (the author) to another (the translator), but also from one language to another, each with its own distinct sonic, grammatical, syntactic and semantic qualities and literary conventions. With poetry then the intricate task of translation becomes even more complex given that this literary medium relies on all these qualities in a most compressed and sculpted form. It is simply impossible to produce a replica of the source poem, instead there will be instances of compensation as pointed out by Bonnefoy above (also cf. Hervey *et al.*, 2000, pp. 26-32, p. 229). These instances of compensation highlight most clearly both the creative freedom with which translators can potentially work and the creative impact of that work on the target text. Consequently, equivalence reveals itself as an illusion which denies the translator his or her due in terms of the professional and creative work performed. Yet, what is even more important, to perceive translation as a writing process marked by equivalence rather than difference, thus subscribing to the notion of transparency of the target text allowing for a full view onto the source text, has an important impact on translation environments shared by languages of unequal power status and their cultures, as is the case with the translation environment this study is concerned with. Viewing translation as a writing process marked by difference both puts in perspective the apparent ease with which the translation of Gaelic poetry into English is attributed (as discussed in Chapter 2.3), and questions the lack of acknowledgment of the translation process as such within publications and as part of critical debates (as noted in Chapter 2.1). Not only is it simply fictitious that in such an environment source and target texts are equals, but rather, the illusion of one-to-one equivalence, which in turn creates a sense of transparency, has real consequences for the reception, or indeed non-reception, of both source and target texts. This in itself can impact profoundly on the state of well-being of the languages and literatures involved.

Employing the general translation theory of skopos theory allows for analysing the process at the heart of translational activity. Arguing the general character of skopos theory Vermeer states that 'by definition a general theory claims to be not-culture-specific. But it is not extra-cultural. It is […] valid for all cultures, not belonging to one in particular' (1996, p. 24). Vermeer places translation firmly in a cultural

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context, seeing the translator not only as mediator between two languages but moreover as mediator between cultures. Skopos theory, furthermore, identifies the following general parameters to translational action which are of great importance to the specific case of minority literature translation: a) every translational action has a purpose, b) it is the translator who defines this purpose, i.e. the skopos of the translation and subsequently the translation strategy which will best serve the case-specific skopos and c) such translation strategy should be stated. Skopos theory argues for the conscientisation of translational activity which, as I would like to argue, is the prerequisite for a conscious reading of texts in translation (cf. Chapter 5.3.1).

As such, the theoretical explorations discussed in this chapter, both at the general level of translation action and at the specific level of poetry translation, are of practical value with regard to the specific translation practices we witness with Gaelic poetry as will be discussed in Chapter 5. Having explored the specific translation environment for the genre of poetry it will, however, be the first task to investigate the specific translation practice of self-translation whilst keeping the explorations of this chapter in mind.

4   Self-Translation

samhla

sàth le d'léirsinn an sgàile, tha mise (sùil d'fhaileis) an seo
an clachan, an coire, an cochall do chridhe
mar phasgadh de shoillse reòit ann an linne céir

tha mi nam chidhis de dhathan, ach ged a bhiodh
eallaichean sùghar nan coille 'g abachadh nam ghruaidhe
am faic thu 'm madadh liath mireadh gu socair eadar na meuran

am faic thu portan is rodan a' dannsa gu tiamhaidh fon chliabh
is nathair air spiris an ugainn, a' deothal do bhriathran gum fiaradh
agus siud, far nach robh dùil, air chùl clagainn, iolaire briathradh

gum bi an teist mar a bha, cho cruaidh, cuairteach ri slige cnò
ach, ged nach brist mi tro bhàrr mo ghréidhidh le sùrd
an tàmh tha mi luaineach, an tosd tha mi fuaimneach

aonghas macneacail (1996, p. 36)[1]

As the previous chapters have shown, the phenomenon of self-translation reigns firmly in the domain of modern Gaelic poetry. In the preceding chapter, which was concerned with translation of poetry in particular, it has become apparent that, given the genre at issue, we are dealing with a translation environment which reveals most profoundly how inevitably translation is marked by the difference between source and target text rather than a widely assumed sameness. Furthermore, translation *per se* has been identified as an action performed by the translator which functions as much in its cultural and social surroundings as original writing by mere virtue of aiming at being consumed. With this chapter, then, I seek to explore the dynamics at the heart of self-translation as a particular translation instance in order to understand the role of that particular translation practice more fully in the minority language

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[1] 'Stab with your eyesight the veil, I (the eye of your shadow) am here / in the village, in the corrie, in the husk of your heart / like a bundle of light frozen in a pool of wax // I am a mask of colours, and although / the sappy loads of the forest were ripening in my cheek / do you see the grey hound sporting quietly between the fingers // do you see crab and rat dancing plaintively under the creel/chest / and a snake on the roost of the chest/throat, sucking your words to pervert them / and there, where it was not expected, behind the skull, an eagle enunciating // that the testimony will be as it was, as hard and enclosing as a shell of a nut / yet, although I will not break through the surface that preserves me readily / in rest I am restless, in silence I am noisy' [my translation]

context of Gaelic poetry. To start with, we need to realise that the very possibility of self-translation demands certain socio-cultural attributes. Thus, bilingualism and biculturalism will be identified as essential preconditions to this particular translation practice before I discuss what makes self-translation the phenomenon it is. In doing so, this chapter will map out the main assumptions and concepts surrounding the phenomenon of self-translation as highlighted by those involved with research in the field over the past decades. Attention will be paid to the question of how self-translation differs from translation work done by somebody other than the author of the source text. This will lead me to the important question of how the status of source and target text relate to each other when the translator is also the author of the former. Comparing self-translation to conventional translation, this chapter concludes that a shift in focus from self-translation as a process towards self-translation as a product will be necessary if we want to grasp the actual nature of the phenomenon. The argument will thus be towards examining self-translations as texts that are received by a readership, thus directing our attention away from the creative bilingual work as performed by the author towards its life as an appreciated artistic object. Such a shift in focus, which entails taking into account literary dynamics as socially determined and shared, allows for an understanding of how present translation and publication practices influence the appreciation of Gaelic poetry today. Let me first of all, however, draw attention to the phenomenon of literary bilingualism as an essential precondition to self-translation.

4.1   Literary Bilingualism

Consulting the relatively small amount of critical writing on the phenomenon of self-translation, it becomes apparent that the bilingual and bicultural existence of the authors is a major focus. Examples include studies by Elizabeth Klosty Beaujour, who sheds light on Russian self-translators who emigrated to Paris at the time of the Russian Revolution (1989), by Corinne Scheiner, who examines self-translation dynamics in relation to Samuel Beckett and Vladimir Nabokov (2000, also see Fitch, 1988) and by Verena Jung, who looks at academic self-translation in an English-German context (2002). All provide a detailed analysis of the particularities of the

author's bilingual/bicultural circumstances, which lead to self-translation. As Jung asserts, 'sufficient preconditions to predict reliability that an author will become a self-translator do not exist, however, it seems important to establish the necessary preconditions' (Jung, 2002, p. 18). All the above authors make a point of identifying bilingualism and, importantly, biculturalism as necessary preconditions. Given the importance of bilingualism, Hokenson and Munson explain:

> The self-translated, bilingual text was commonplace in the multilingual world of medieval and early modern Europe, frequently bridging Latin and the vernaculars. While self-translation persisted among cultured elites, it diminished during the consolidation of the nation-states, in the long era of nationalistic monolingualism, only to resurge in the postcolonial era. (2007, p. i)

In his preface to Uriel Weinreich's *Languages in Contact*, André Martinet states with regard to the bilingual author that:

> the clash, in the same individual, of two languages of comparable social and cultural value, both spoken by millions of cultural unilinguals, may be psychologically most spectacular, but unless we have to do with a literary genius, the permanent linguistic traces of such a clash will be nil. (1963, pp. vii-viii, quoted in Scheiner, 2000, p. 32)

Nonetheless, 'although intended to account for Weinreich's exclusion of the bilingual author from his study', as Corinne Scheiner argues:

> Martinet's remark […] provides the perfect point of departure for a discussion of literary bilingualism and, in particular bi-discursivity; for, these authors do leave traces of their bilingualism and biculturalism in their texts and […] in the multiple versions of a given text. (2002, p. 32)

Given that with this study we are in the context of a minority culture which lives in a contact zone it shares with a dominating language of much greater 'social and cultural value', bilingualism and biculturalism have a very immediate impact on the make-up of the Gaelic speech community, with immediate and permanent linguistic traces of a bilingual/bicultural reality in its members. Consequently, the corpus of Gaelic poetry mirrors the clash between cultures within the individual writer,

inevitably bearing witness to the inescapable bilingual/bicultural everyday reality of each and every writer, genius or not, and of the reader who comes to that literature from within the Gaelic speech community. Faced with a situation where the large majority of the corpus of modern Gaelic poetry exists in bilingual format and reaches its audience in the shape of the en-face bilingual edition, we have to acknowledge that the reality of Gaelic poetry has increasingly become a bilingual one, in terms of the writing process (as is evident from the questionnaire replies presented in Chapter 2.3 and the further discussion in Chapter 6.1), the literary text(s) as a product (as we have seen in Chapter 2.1 and 2.2) and the reception of the text pair (as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5). Yet, as the following section shows, the self-translated text pair is not the only possible literary expression of an author's bilingual existence.

4.1.1   Bilingual Reality Reflected in Literary Bilingualism

There are different expressions of bilingualism in literary writing, varying from the use of two or more languages in one text to the use of different languages in multiple otherwise monolingual texts, with the latter involving self-translation. The former is a kind of writing which closely reflects actual bilingual language use. Indeed, it is argued by scholars concerned with literary bilingualism that it is therefore a practice of writing which is more relevant to the bilingual readership. It is William Mackey's contention, for instance, that:

> a bicultural writer describing a bicultural milieu to a bicultural audience cannot afford to ignore the bilingual nature of either, for to do so is to risk irrelevance. If the audience itself is in the habit of switching from one language to the other, so must the characters. (1993, p. 59)

Bilingual writing in one text has only recently found its way into the corpus of modern Gaelic literature. Considering recently published prose writing, we find that code-switching is a frequently employed literary device by Gaelic novelists and short story writers in otherwise monolingual publications (cf. Mac an t-Saoir, 2005, Caimbeul, T. 2006 and Caimbeul, A. P. 2007a). With Gaelic literature, the genre of

the text seems to determine which bilingual format is chosen by the author, since with Gaelic poetry code-switching of the kind we find in the work of Irish poets such as Michael Davitt (2000), Cathal Ó Searcaigh (2000) or Gearóid Mac Lochlainn (2002) remains largely unexplored (see Chapter 6.2.3 for sporadic examples of the use of English in Gaelic poetry). With Gaelic poetry, we have a clear tendency towards bilingualism expressed through self-translation, resulting in a text pair rather than bilingual traces in one text. One could therefore argue that the monolingual nature of the poem in Gaelic is a conscious stylistic choice, which carries its burdens with regard to use and development of vocabulary. Therefore, for any contemporary author, writing more or less strictly in Gaelic only does not mean writing from a natural bilingual place occupied by the poet in every day life. Rather, it is a conscious going there in the first place. Translating back into English straight away, or indeed simultaneously, could therefore be viewed as an immediate turning back. Furthermore, we have to acknowledge that for a Gaelic readership the monolingual Gaelic poem is not a natural place either in terms of language use, which might make an immediate turn towards the English facing text compulsory (see Chapter 5 and 6 for further discussion). In our specific literary context, then, literary bilingualism as expressed through translation is not entirely unproblematic. As noted in Chapter 1.2.2, this is an established thought with minority translation studies. Before considering the texts resulting from self-translation as socially shared works of art, I will first consider some personal reflections by bilingual authors with regard to their bilingual writing.

4.1.2   Literary Bilingualism: A Problematic Phenomenon?

Although literary bilingualism is not an uncommon phenomenon, neither in the past (cf. Hokenson and Munson, 2007, as quoted above, also cf. Forster, 1970), nor in the present, as the Commonwealth literatures or the various literatures springing from cultures with minority languages at their core demonstrate, it is not always perceived as an innocent practice. With regard to authors switching languages during their literary career, Beaujour observes that 'if the modern writer gives up writing in the first language (abandons the first husband or wife), he or she might experience the

pangs of infidelity and guilt, as well as a sense of self-mutilation' (1989, p. 42).
Here, Beaujour hints at the emotional involvement with language, literature and
culture that every writer has to deal with:

> The real problem with having two languages is neither technical nor
> neurophysiological; it is not linguistic interference but, rather,
> emotional interference […] The real obstacle, the emotional one, is at
> least partially due to the feeling shared by many bilingual writers that
> it is somehow *abnormal* to be able to write in two languages. Elsa
> Triolet is a case in point. At the end of her life, she still wrote of her
> bilingualism as a disease or an affliction: 'It's like an illness: I'm sick
> with bilingualism.' (ibid., p. 40, trans. and citing Triolet, 1969, p. 54,
> her italics)

To continue in Triolet's own words, 'to be bilingual is a bit like being a bigamist,
but to which one am I being unfaithful?' (1969, p. 54, trans. and cited in Beaujour,
1989, pp. 40-1). In another instance she exclaims, 'I am a bigamist. It's a crime in
the eyes of the law. As many lovers as you please, two legal husbands - impossible.
People look askance at me: to whom do I belong?' (ibid., p. 84, trans. and cited in
Beaujour, 1989, p. 77). It is all too obvious how the psychological effects of
linguistic interference of this kind might be even more pronounced with self-
translating authors in a minority language context. Indeed the awareness of such
emotional interference might well be the reason for consciously avoided self-
translation in a literary environment which demands that an author's work be
translated. As Irish language poet Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill explains, 'it is like some
sort of last barrier, a *cordon sanitaire* that keeps me sane, and genuinely bilingual,
when so many of the surrounding stimuli arouse my English side only to action'
(Hollo, 1998, p. 104). It is indeed the case that with modern Irish literature, another
literature produced by truly bilingual authors, we find not many traces of self-
translation at all.[2] It is interesting to observe such a striking difference in translation
attitudes and consequential practices between the two minority languages which
otherwise share so much in terms of their cultures, one literature arguably surviving

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[2] See Chapter 5.2.3 for examples of collaborative approaches to self-translation with Irish poetry.

on self-translation, the other avoiding it by resorting to collaboration between authors and translators instead (see Chapter 5.2.3).[3]

If there are authors who feel agony in the face of their bilingual writing, there are also others who are more at ease with their it. Pointing towards Russian-born writer Zinaïda Schakovskoy, who enjoyed a literary career writing in French between 1949-68 before returning to solely writing in her native language, Beaujour sheds some light on why that may be the case:

> Schakovskoy […] did not initially define herself as a Russian writer, and her commitment to Russian was initially less intense and emotionally exclusive than was that of other, slightly older writers of the 'first' emigration. Certainly this was due at least in part to her youth and to her having been deprived of a Russian secondary education and of any adolescent participation in the lively Russian cultural life that immediately preceded the revolution - years that were formative for both Nabokov and Triolet. That she was essentially an autodidact in both French and Russian, and that she acquired her impressive cultural baggage literally without benefit of context, may help to account for the psychological ease with which Schakovskoy ultimately moved back and forth between writing in French and in Russian. (1989, pp. 125-6)

Beaujour concludes that 'while Triolet agonized over being a linguistic bigamist, Schakovskoy does not worry about the illegitimacy of writing in two languages, and she has cheerfully declared that neither language is her legal husband: both are lovers' (ibid., p. 128). Amongst Gaelic poets we certainly find both attitudes. Sorley MacLean (Somhairle MacGill-Eain), for instance, having access to and using the two languages, Gaelic and English, consciously placed his creative impulse with his Gaelic original writing. This was, no doubt, due to aesthetic considerations. Nevertheless, his choice of language was also fuelled by the concern to preserve and develop Gaelic as a language and literature, as can be gathered from his correspondence with Douglas Young regarding the publication of his first collection *Dàin do Eimhir agus Dàin Eile* in 1943 (MacGill-Eain, letters, also cf. MacLean, 1982, p. 500). His concern with the state of Gaelic as a language capable and

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[3] Note, however, that translation activities which rely on collaboration do not prevent strong criticism from within the Irish language literary world. (cf. Jenkinson, 1989, pp. 27-34 and Pól Ó Muirí, 1993, pp. 15-17).

relevant with regard to modern life might be one reason for his rather discontented relationship to the practice of self-translation into English, calling his own self-translations 'hellish at best' (MacGill-Eain, letters, 30 March 1943, as referred to in Chapter 2.1). Recalling questionnaire replies with regard to reasons leading to self-translation into English by a younger generation of Gaelic poets such as 'I was willing, I could' (A5, as referred to in section 2.3), or the more celebratory statement which names 'the interest of seeing the same ideas from the slightly different perspective of another language, the enjoyment of translation, [and] the desire to let friends and family without Gaelic understand something of my excitement', we could argue that more recent writers view the bilingual nature of their literary lives as less psychologically problematic. In what follows, the discussion will nevertheless stay with psychological conditions informing literary bilingualism by addressing the notion of exile, both in terms of the author's personal experience and with regard to outer social realities.

4.1.3 Literary Bilingualism and Exile

As Beaujour observes, 'exile and bilingual writing are inextricably related in obvious ways in the lives and career […] of most […] bilingual writers currently or recently practising' (1989, p. 43). With a minority language and culture battling away in the contact zone it shares with a majority language and its associated culture, the condition of exile is instrumental in the make-up of individual and collective identities. In an extract advertising the conference 'The Local Babel: Non-English Writing in Scotland' (held in Glasgow in Spring 2003), Allan Cameron clearly identifies the importance of what he refers to as the 'internal exile' for the discussion of minority language writing in Scotland. With regard to the work by Iain Crichton Smith (Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn), an author writing original work in both English and Gaelic, who has dealt intensively with the notion of exile as prose texts such as *An t-Aonaran* (1976) or poems such as 'Na h-Eilthirich' (1983) show, Moray Watson points towards the 'metaphysical exile' which he describes as 'symbolic of a splitness of personality' (2002, p. 132).[4] In an interview with Smith,

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[4] Cf. Chapter 1.1.6 for more examples of poetry dealing with the idea of dual identity.

Mario Relich addresses the author noting that 'you do think of yourself as a double man, which implies a division within yourself […]. I understand that English, for instance, was at first a kind of oppressive language for you' (Relich, 1998, p. 113). In reply Smith contemplates:

> When I'm writing in English, it might be that I am not using the whole of myself. Then again, it may be that writing in Gaelic only, I wouldn't be using the whole of myself either. So there is this split in, I think, the personalities of people who grew up in the islands, between English and Gaelic, and maybe between emotion and education. (ibid., p. 113)

The following remark by Joseph Brodsky explores the psychological implications with regard to language affiliation on the part of the bilingual writer in the face of exile further:

> For one in our profession, the condition we call exile is, first of all, a linguistic event: an exiled writer is thrust, or retreats, into his mother tongue. From being his, so to speak, sword, it turns into his shield, into his [space] capsule. What started as a private, intimate affair with the language, in exile becomes fate - even before it becomes an obsession or a duty. (1988, p. 18, cited in Beaujour, 1989, pp. 158-9, her brackets)

With regard to the importance of language itself, the bilingual writer Julian Green believes that 'a man's language is so very much his own property that he almost identifies himself with it' (1985, p. 156, cited in Beaujour, 1989, p. 42). Consequently, as he argues, 'we are inclined to consider that what belongs to us and what we cherish most is somehow a part of ourselves. Our worth, our moral values, depend largely on the value of that very thing which we wish to make our own' (ibid., p. 156, cited in Beaujour, 1989, p. 42). Considering the poetry of Christopher Whyte, the 'linguistic event' that is exile does not have to be forced, nor does the language of the inner exile have to be the mother tongue, as he reveals in the following poem which translates into English as 'Mother-Tongue' (unpublished):

Màthair-Chainnt

Is ann a bh'agam an toiseach
bruadar den Ghàidhlig,
seòrsa uchd mo mhàthar
a bh' innte, fhathast blàth
le blàthas leanabachd a chaidh
a dhìochuimhneachadh, nach robh
riamh agam, a bha 'na mealladh,
ach a dh'fhaodainn teicheadh a-steach dhì
ri teàrainteachd a lorg, is socair,
àite far nach fhaigheadh duine mi.

Ach thuig mi gur e aisling
a th' anns a' mhàthair-chainnt,
nach teàrainteachd, no socair
ach doirbhe is coimheachas
a bha gam shìor-tharraing,
nach tèid leanabachd gun tairbhe
ath-chumadh ann an cainnt sam bith,
gur annsa leam a' chànain seo
bho nach eil i màthaireil.[5]

The author of this poem has chosen to literarily retreat into a language that felt natural, comfortable, and even innocent, yet that was not his own, or better not that of his mother. Reading on, we realise that Whyte is in fact questioning the very notion of a nurturing mother-tongue, and therefore that of cultural identity as a singular socially pre-determined condition. Rather identity is a conscious individual positioning.

Conceiving of exile as a separation from one's own native cultural home ground, exile as a 'linguistic event' is a phenomenon which is of particular relevance in the context of Gaelic poetry, for as Whyte has pointed out with regards to Gaelic writers, 'there is no homeland' (1997, p. 45, as referred to in Chapter 2.2.1.1) In this respect, what is also stressed by the very notion of exile is the moving of people in

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[5] 'What I had at first was / a dream of Gaelic, / like the breast of my mother / it was, still warm / with childlike warmth that had been / forgotten, that I / never had, that was tempting / yet that I could escape into / to find security, and comfort / a place where people would not find me. // But I realised it is only a dream / the mother-tongue, / that is was not security, nor comfort / but adversity and unfriendliness / that forever drew me in / childlikeness does not come without the gain / of re-shaping in any language / this language is dearer to me/ since it is not my mother-tongue.' [my translation]

between different cultural domains even if no physical movement is involved. As such, the close proximity between the majority language and the minority language means a cultural and linguistic mixing that creates a condition of exile which is not necessarily defined as absolute points of cultural and territorial reference, but rather as an inevitable condition whatever one's position at the time. Conceiving of exile furthermore as a condition which can be both forced and voluntary, we have to acknowledge that the immediate proximity between two cultures of different status leads to the creation of many different identities within that contact zone. With regard to writers, the condition called 'bilingual' thus finds manifold expressions, which will be explored further in the following discussion.

4.1.4   Literary Bilingualism: A Phenomenon of Many Faces!

Although there are a number of patterns that emerge as shared by bilingual writers, it is important to emphasise the uniqueness of each development in their careers, and indeed the idiosyncratic nature of their literary careers on the whole. Since all native speakers and readers of Gaelic are bilingual, the condition of literary bilingualism with both writers and readers of the text in Gaelic is all-inclusive. Nevertheless, the bilingual background to the poetry by Whyte could not be more different from that of Anne Frater's (Anna Frater), for instance. Whyte is an author who has chosen the metaphysical exile of writing poetry in a minority language he has adopted and which is confined to his poetic creation only, for his novels appear in English (see also Chapter 5.2.4 for a discussion of writing as a private space). Furthermore, Whyte addresses subject matters in his poetry which are seldom recognisable as specifically Gaelic (cf. Whyte, 1991 and 2002a, also refer to Chapter 6.1 for further discussion). In contrast, the poetry of Frater, a native speaker from Lewis, is deeply concerned with the local community in the face of the change and disappearance of a local Gaelic way of life (cf. Frater, 1995). If we view the literary genre of Gaelic poetry diachronically we also find that the bilingual nature of the writing of Sorley MacLean (MacGill-Eain, 1943) is different from that of Aonghas MacNeacail (1996). Indeed, as Beaujour states, 'Because the elements that determine the relationships of the languages commanded by any bi- or multilingual person are in

many respects idiosyncratic, it is almost impossible to measure or compare them' (1989, p. 118).

Beaujour, nevertheless, lists an entire catalogue of questions which help distinguish the different bilingual dynamics, taking into account 'family background', 'childhood and domestic language patterns', 'the nature of the writer's […] education' (1989, p. 119). With regard to the literary output of each individual author, she asks the question of 'whether the writer has produced a major body of work in both languages', 'whether there is a preponderance of one language over the other - and for which genres' (ibid., p. 119). Finally, she refers to a category of temporal distance between the writing of the two texts, asking whether both texts were created simultaneously or one after each other (this point is discussed with regard to self-translation in section 4.2). As we have seen in Chapter 2.3, the bilingual nature of writers in Gaelic is indeed a question of varying circumstances and attitudes. Under the surface, then, the literary genre of Gaelic literature is a many-faceted reality with regard to the bilingual dynamics particular to each writer according to their respective cultural and social backgrounds. Yet when it comes to the surface, i.e. the text as published on paper, the picture becomes a surprisingly homogeneous one, namely that of the poetry pair as the outcome of self-translation, with the Gaelic as the original and the English version as translation usually facing each other across the page, with little discussion of the fact of translation, at times without any mention of the process of translation at all. As such, what is a creative space full of variety becomes a manifestation of sameness once it reaches an audience.

4.2   Self-Translation: A Phenomenon of Many Faces

Self-translation, like literary bilingualism, is a phenomenon of many faces. According to Jung, there are a number of categories which help to identify different types of self-translation, such as unaided versus aided self-translation, a faithful versus a free approach towards self-translation, or simultaneous versus delayed self-translation (2002, pp. 22-9). There is also the question of whether the translation is

carried out into the native language or out of it, if a native language is indeed involved. However, individual self-translation processes might not necessarily easily fit these suggested categories. It might, for instance, be difficult to define just how faithful one given self-translation approach is compared to another. As this thesis has argued so far, translation is defined by difference, and as such locating faithfulness might well be disregarded as an unsatisfactory approach. In fact, as is shown in Chapter 6, which looks at the Gaelic/English poetry pairs resulting from self-translations by authors of Gaelic poetry, we find that closeness and apartness may occur side by side in one and the same text. It is, however, of interest to this particular study to consider different approaches with regard to the time interval that separates the original writing from the translational writing, since this influences the status of the original in comparison to the second language version as inferred by the reader, as has been touched upon in Chapter 2.2.5. With regard to Samuel Beckett's work, Beaujour observes that 'Beckett, who came quite early to the decision to transpose all his work from either language into the other, has for many years practiced something that is in fact a kind of dual creation, translating his work almost immediately after their composition' (1989, p. 112). 'Dual creation' as a term suggests that both texts are the outcome of creative writing, rather than resulting from translation, even although both texts relate to each other. A perception of this kind with regard to the relationship between both texts renders the distinction between original writing and translation impossible. Such a perception is even more pronounced where self-translation becomes a simultaneous part of the original writing process rather than being performed after the creation of the original work, that is to say delayed, with the latter more in line with translation as we know it, even if the translation approach is a free one (cf. Jung, 2002, pp. 26-9). Returning to a Gaelic context, Whyte states with regard to his own self-translation practice that:

> I did my best to let as long an interval as possible elapse between writing a text and translating it. I know that the attitude of other Gaelic poets is not the same. Meg Bateman, I think I am right in saying, tends to elaborate her English versions at the same time as, or immediately after, writing a poem in Gaelic. Aonghas MacNeacail regards himself as a poet in both Gaelic and English, and therefore assigns a value to his English versions very close to that of the Gaelic poems they are derived from. (2002b, pp. 67-8)

Clearly, the understanding is that the more simultaneous the process of writing one text in two languages is, the more the status of the original is undermined. Here, Whyte points towards the undermined status of the original in the very mind of the author him- or herself. This is mirrored by the reception of self-translations which are published simultaneously with the original writing in *en-face* format, as we have seen in section 2.2.5. Returning to the process of composition, however, we find that with more recent poets working in Gaelic, the simultaneousness of the writing and translation process has increased. With MacLean, for instance, the translation of his Gaelic texts happened after the composition of the originals, with a fair number of Gaelic poems remaining untranslated (MacGill-Eain, 1943). Taking into account different approaches to self-translating practices with regard to the time span between original composition and translation therefore also allows us to perceive of diachronic developments within the genre of modern Gaelic poetry (cf. Chapter 6.2).

Furthermore, Jung suggests a distinction between translations into the mother tongue and translations into the second language. Whereas Beaujour's study is concerned with Russian language authors establishing themselves as authors in their second languages with self-translation as essential milestone in that evolution, Jung's study of academic self-translation shows a different pattern, observing that 'most of the self-translators studied here have written in a language other then their mother tongue and then self-translated back into their mother tongue' (2002, p. 18). Here, I would like to point towards a kind of circular development as observed by Beaujour with the bilingual writers she has studied, which starts with a struggling phase of bringing mother tongue texts via self-translation into the language which guarantees readership at a particular point in time and locality in the author's life, whereas later on in the career the mature author enters the conscious and creative process of reconciling texts written in their second language with their mother tongue via self-translation. The bilingual nature of the author has come full circle. The breaking out of the mother tongue, which for a number of reasons is not desired as the sole literary language of the author, is followed by a breaking back into it, which in Beaujour's argument is presented as reconciliation. With this in mind, the evidence of translational direction in a Gaelic context seems somewhat ironic. Consider

MacLean's conscious decision to break out of an English language literary world and his conscious decision to write in Gaelic and then the need to break back into the English literary world again by means of self-translation in order to find literary appreciation, as suggested by literary friends and publishers.

Furthermore, perceiving of these language choice developments as a 'breaking in' and 'breaking out' implies moving from A (the cultural space of the source language) to B (the cultural space of the target language), which suggests that there are individual spaces A and B, which in a Gaelic context is a disputable perception of intercultural relations. Not even in the writing of MacLean has there been a purely Gaelic-only period. In that respect, his literary activity mirrors language reality. However, adopting a wider historical focus shows that over the past century Gaelic poetry has gone through the cycle of breaking into the majority language before breaking back, however tentative that development may be, into Gaelic only again. Examples of this are the monolingual publication series by Diehard publishing (Gorman, 1999, Whyte, 2002a and Caimbeul, M. 2003) or the Gaelic/Irish poetry collection series *An Guth* (Gorman, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007), which presents original work in both Gaelic and Irish.[6]

Away from the development of the individual, then, towards the group of national authors, we might not have a homogeneous group with regard to the bilingual make-up of each individual, but with regard to the receiving end of their texts, shared socio-literary conditions are a homogenising force resulting in established publication and translation formats for a whole genre. As one editor replied in the questionnaire with regard to publication choices with Gaelic poetry:

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[6] One could be under the impression that the monolingual Gaelic prose series Ùr-Sgeul is part of this development. However, it has to be noted that bilingual Gaelic/English publications of Gaelic poetry have, over the decades, been financially supported by Comhairle nan Leabhraichean (The Gaelic Books Council). As such, the consorted efforts with regard to monolingually published prose could arguably be seen as the continuation of a dichotomy in Gaelic publishing which has placed poetry much more firmly in the context of English translation and paratext throughout different periods (cf. Chapter 2.1), with prose mostly published in a Gaelic monolingual format. In that respect, recent Ùr-Sgeul publications could be seen as an effort to strengthen the genre of prose in a literary context which so far has relied on poetry as its more prestigious expression, rather than a counter-approach to bilingual publications.

> I think [they are] determined by the publishers' purse and language politics. Patterns are established, e.g. by Nua Bhàrdachd Ghàidhlig, edited by Donald MacAulay in 1976, which are then followed until debate arises. Examples of Irish publishing show up the poor status accorded to Gaelic on the grounds of pragmatism. Leabhar Mòr na Gàidhlig, for example, could not have been produced in Ireland in its English paratext format. Language politics have outgrown such pragmatism. (E2, see Appendix A)

If bound by group dynamics and by social surroundings, the individual as part of a collective might not move as fast as the individual that breaks out into a new cultural setting alone. Every breaking of established practices, be that for an individual or a collective group will have reasons driving it. The next paragraph will thus address possible reasons for self-translation.

4.2.1 Reasons for Self-Translation

Although the bilingual/bicultural existence of the author is an essential precondition for self-translation, it is not necessarily the force that drives the author towards it. Beaujour gives us an idea of what such forces might be, listing 'a lack of audience in the first language; the inappropriateness of the first language for what one now feels one has to say; the cultural context; money, opportunity to publish, etc., etc.' (1989, p. 52). In fact, these are factors that bear the power of turning a bilingual writer into 'a monolingual writer in an adoptive tongue' (ibid., p. 52). With regard to our own context, reasons such as financial viability, increase in readership as well as increased critical appreciation, are indeed given by authors for choosing to translate one's own Gaelic work into English, as we have seen in Chapter 2.3 (also cf. MacNeacail, 1998, p. 155). Furthermore, besides issues such as the protection of ownership over their literary creation, we have to acknowledge financial considerations such as the lack of funding for translation work as important factor in the consideration of self-translation over collaborative translation with Gaelic authors (see Chapter 2.3 for a more detailed discussion). Given the number of different reasons for self-translation, it is generally noticeable that Gaelic authors rate their engagement in translating their own work as an unsatisfactory activity, one that is inferior to creative writing. For some writers it is a process void of any

enjoyment altogether (cf. Whyte, 2002b, p. 68, as referred to below, and MacGill-Eain, letters, 30 March 1943, above). Experiencing self-translation in such a way is, however, not unique to authors working in a minority language who have to translate their work into a language of majority status, as the following explorations show.

4.2.2   Hatred of Self-Translation

The dismay in the face of self-translation is a phenomenon that does occur with bilingual authors. In fact, as Beaujour puts it, 'they hate it' (1989, p. 51) As she further explain:

> So unpleasant is the exercise of self-translation that it precipitates writers into finally committing themselves to their second language. No matter how daunting it used to seem, compared to self-translation, writing directly in the second language now appears far easier, even a relief. (ibid., pp. 51-2)

Following this argument, one might ask why most recent Gaelic poets do indeed choose to self-translate into English, rather than address the Anglophone literary world directly through 'original' writing which did not have a closely related predecessor in Gaelic.[7] Does a readerly appreciation of their literary texts depend on the language they choose to write in, i.e. Gaelic, even if the work eventually reaches its readership through English self-translations? In other words, would Gaelic authors lose their raison d'être if they were to write directly in English (refer to

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[7] Note that there are of course native Gaelic speakers who choose to be authors in English. One such example is Lewis-born author Donald S. Murray, who has named the dominant status of English as written and read language, i.e. English, as the socially experienced natural medium for reading and writing, within Gaelic society. Interestingly, he also mentioned that with writing in English he is somewhat removed from the often emotional subject matters of his writing (cf. the prose extract heading Chapter 1) which also deal with issues such as loss and exile within the local Gaelic community in the face of cultural change (interview). Witness his poem entitled 'Headstone' which is part of a series of 40 poems dealing with the historical changes in St. Kilda: '"With Christ which is far"; / both faith and English words / cut on the headstone / and used to ward / off grief / the father felt at seeing his son's / hand and heart loosen / on the thin rope / that harnessed life. // Far more painful to use Gaelic, / for to see such words / chiselled in the language / always on his lips / would have recalled that moment / breath slipped, / breaking loose / the grip faith held on the father's soul / allowing him to fall / deep / within doubt's darkness; / that place always just / a fingertip / away.' (Murray, 2004, p. 17)

Chapter 5.2.6 for a further discussion of this idea)? Furthermore, consider the following remark by Nabokov, as presented in Beaujour's study:

> In a letter to Wilson (January 9, 1942, *Letters*, 56), Nabokov complained that 'the translation of my Russian works is in itself a nightmare. If I were to do it myself, it would obviously prevent me from writing anything new. Correcting the efforts of my present translators would take almost as much time.' This situation improved when Nabokov became well known and could have the best translators available. (1989, p. 212)

Does the time spent on self-translation prevent Gaelic authors from creating new material? On the other hand, does the argument ring true that with each poem appearing twice, only half the amount of Gaelic original material is needed to prepare a collection of poetry for publication, as was suggested by one of the publishers replying to the questionnaire (P3, as cited Chapter 2.3.2.1)? Reflecting on the actual process of self-translation, Whyte confirms that:

> self-translation for me has been an activity without content, voided of all the rich echoes and interchanges I have so far attributed to the practice of translation. It is almost a question of voiding the poem of its content, which may, indeed, be the language in which it was written. (2002b, p. 68)

As Amanda Hopkinson observes in a recent issue of *In Other Words* dedicated to particular dynamics with self-translation, '"inter" or "self-translation" between multiple languages an individual may speak equally fluently is often surprisingly difficult' (2005, p. 1). As an example, she quotes the Welsh-language poet Menna Elfyn explaining that 'if she had wanted to put her poem into English, she'd have written it in English' (ibid., p. 1). This reiterates Beaujour's argument that it is less painful to become a creatively writing person in the second language rather than being involved in self-translation, since the very notion of repeating a poem in another language becomes for the author inconceivable. As we have seen above, Whyte's attitude reflects that of earlier poets, such as MacLean. Yet we have also noted that more recently the agony of having to deal with two languages has loosened its grip on authors in Gaelic (cf. 4.1.2 above). Indeed, contemporary Gaelic authors seem to move more freely now between Gaelic and English as languages for

their original writing. For example, Angus Peter Campbell (Aonghas Pàdraig Caimbeul) has recently published an English language collection of prose texts entitled *Invisible Islands* (Campbell, 2006). Similarly, Martin MacIntyre (Màrtainn Mac an t-Saoir) publishes original texts in both languages within the one book (Mac an t-Saoir, 2003 and 2006).[8] Whether it is a painful experience or not, however, one argument in favour of self-translation is the perceived naturalness, since 'who but the author' (MacNeacail, personal correspondence) should be destined to be the ideal translator of his/her text. This leads us to the very question researchers of self-translation have been battling with most intensively, namely that of whether the author is the ideal translator of his/her text.

4.3   Is the Author the Ideal Translator of His/Her Work?

The question of whether authors are the best translators of their own work lies at the heart of theoretical explorations around the issue of self-translation (cf. Fitch, 1985, Hutchinson, 1986 and Jung, 2002). In a Gaelic context, Whyte explicitly addresses this very question, quoting Paul Valéry in support of his argument:

> *There is no such thing as 'the real meaning' of a text.* The author has no special authority. Whatever he may have *wanted to say*, he has written what he has written. Once published, a text is, so to speak, a mechanism which everyone can use in his own way and as best he can: it is not certain that its constructor uses it better than the next man. Besides, if he really knows what he *wanted* to do, this knowledge always interferes with his perception of what he has *done*. (1971, p. 93, cited in Whyte, 2002b, p. 68, his italics)

He goes on to argue that 'if we take Valéry seriously (and I think we should), then the person least qualified to translate any poem is the person who wrote it' (Whyte, 2002b, p. 68). However, the opposite argument is also made, namely that self-translation is an ideal form of translation. Helena Tanqueiro, for instance, pronounces the self-translator to be a translator *sui generis* due to his/her privileged

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[8] Note, however, the bilingual approach by Iain Crichton Smith, who has written independently in English and in Gaelic with some texts relating to each other, i.e. resulting from some form of self-translation, most of which were nevertheless separately published in their respective monolingual format, both with regard to his poetry (cf. Chapter 2.1) and with regard to his prose writing.

position as author of the original, with a presumed direct access to original intentions, whilst being constrained in his/her choices by the existence of the original text as a finished piece of work (1999). Consider also the following statement by Peter Hutchinson:

> Very little has been written on the phenomenon of the 'ipso-translator' [i.e. self-translator], possibly because such figures are so few in number. Yet a study of the self-translations that do exist obviously holds considerable theoretical significance. With these we are in a position to study one of the major views of what translation should be: the text as it would have been written by the author if he had originally composed in the target language. (1986, p. 31)

Self-translating author Vilém Flusser goes as far as to pronounce that 'the only "true" translation is the one attempted by the author of the text to be translated' (unpublished, p.11, cited in Guldin, 2004, p. 99).

At the centre of this particular discussion is the desire to grasp the difference between translation as performed by somebody other than the author and translation as performed by the author of the original text. With regard to self-translation, Brian Fitch argues that 'the crux of the matter here is not the *product* but the *process* that gave birth to it' (1985, p. 112). According to his understanding 'the writer-translator is no doubt felt to have been in a better position to recapture the intentions of the author of the original than any other ordinary translator for the very good reason that those intentions were, in fact, his very own' (ibid., p. 112). With regard to the notion of the author's original intentions, Jung arrives at the conclusion that:

> The main difference between ordinary translators and self-translators […]is the fact that self-translators can access their original intention and the original cultural context or literary intertext of their original work better than ordinary translators. Although it can be argued that even self-translators cannot completely access their original intention or inner text, I would at least postulate that they can access the memory of an intention. (2002, p. 30)

Here I would like to turn to the poem introducing this chapter, since it evokes the notions of insidedness and outsidedness as definitive and inescapable positions during the moment of the encounter, which a reading always is. What makes self-

translation such an intriguing phenomenon is indeed the sense of the author being in his text, which implies an insidedness within the process of the coming into being of the work beyond the words written on the paper. According to Aonghas MacNeacail, the author of 'samhla' (1996, p. 36), the writing of this piece was prompted by seeing a portrait of himself by the artist Angela Cutlin. The resulting poem 'samhla' is an attempt to grasp the idea of 'what appears "on the face of it" compared to what is going on in the "inside" in any encounter' working with 'the image locked into the fabric of a photograph' (personal correspondence), and therefore locked in a particular time and revisited at another, the time of the encounter. The samhla-scenario leaves us (the third party onlooker besides the I that is depicted by the artist and the I that is looking) with a thick tapestry, resulting in a poem, which is highly visual, yet fails to conclude other than 'an tàmh tha mi luaineach, an tosd tha mi fuaimneach'.[9] The borderline is a blurred one, since the encounter happens between two selves of one and the same person. In that, this poem suggests that self-translation, be that the encounter of oneself or of one's text, is not necessarily as straightforward, uncomplicated and transparent as is suggested by those advocating self-translation as an ideal translation scenario. Rather then accessing 'original intention', 'the original cultural context or literary intertext' of the literary work, self-translation might be an instance of not being able to see quite so clearly.

Let us recapture the logic of the argument so far. Considering Valéry's argument, there is at least doubt as to whether the author's intention is what determines the meaning of a text. In fact, as we have seen in Chapter 3.2, the notion of the author's intention as the authoritative instance of conclusive meaning has been completely jettisoned by literary criticism in the post-structuralist era, and as such has been deconstructed as a valid axiom to the understanding of literature as process and product. Possible meanings of a text are thus created by each individual reader for, as Umberto Eco puts it, 'every reception of a work of art is both an *interpretation* and a *performance* of it, because in every reception the work takes a fresh

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[9] 'In stillness I am restless, in silence I am noisy' [my translation]; also cf. 'in stillness I move, my silence gives voice' [MacNeacail's self-translation]. For further reflection on 'samhla', see Whyte (1997, p. 46).

perspective for itself' (1979, p. 49). The author of the source text can thus not be pronounced the ideal person to translate his/her own text since she/he will translate her/his intentions (cf. Valéry, 1971, as cited above), or a memory of them (cf. Jung, 2002, p. 30, as mentioned above) but not the actual literary manifestation of these intentions within the text. What is in the text can be determined only by the reader, so each reader should ideally produce their own translation. Having established that the author cannot be bestowed with the privileged position of being the ideal translator, we are still left with the question of whether it should be the 'conventional' translator, to adopt Jung's terminology, who is then more likely to create a better translation than the author. Pursuing the discussion of whether it is the author or the 'conventional' translator who is the ideal translator of a particular work is a discussion which will lead either to the approval of the author as an ideal translator of his/her work or to the denial of such a position for the author. Indeed, as we have seen, the discussion is heated. What remains ignored, however, with such a discussion is, as evidence suggests (Jung, 1995 and 2002, Scheiner, 2000, also cf. Chapter 6), that both the target text as resulting from self-translation and the target text as the outcome of 'conventional' translation will be different from the source text, because both author and 'conventional' translator are readers of the text to be translated and as such will be creating individual meaning (cf. Fitch, 1985, p. 116). Thus, the difference I am referring to is not merely marked by the difference in language and the genre-specific stylistics that differ from language to language, but also by stylistic and thematic choices on behalf of the person translating. Pointing towards the difference between the two texts is important in that it affects the status of the two texts as inferred by a readership, as the following section will explore.

4.4   The Status of the Original and the Self-Translation

Disregarding the idiosyncratic nature of both source and target text respectively, the common treatment of self-translations is the non-acknowledgement of the translational activity altogether. Consequently, the process of self-translation is commonly rendered invisible. As Jung observes:

Self-translation is often […] not mentioned at all, as in the case of the Heym novels - none of the German reviews mentioned that these were novels translated from earlier English versions - (Jung 1995: 14) and this also applies to most of Beckett's self-translations (Fitch 1985: 112), which are therefore not treated as translations at all. (2002, pp. 16-7, her references)

There is also consensus amongst translation theorists with regard to the self-translation being given the status of the original (cf. Fitch, 1985, Grutman, 1998 and Jung, 2002). Those researching self-translation are indeed searching for answers to why self-translations are treated as originals. The above argument, which states that the author's intentions are *perceived* by a readership as being realised more transparently by the self-translating author than the 'conventional' translator could hope for, certainly weighs heavy in an attempt to answer this question. The status of the self-translation as second original has far-reaching consequences, as Jung points out when observing that:

Translators of works of which self-translations into a different language exist very often feel obliged to look both at the original and the self-translation before translating the work into their mother tongue. This was for example the case with […] the second translator of Nabokov's *Lolita* into German, Dieter E. Zimmer […], who looked at Nabokov's Russian self-translation whenever the American original seemed ambiguous. It is highly unlikely that they would have looked at an ordinary translation into a language different from the one they were requested to translate into. (2002, p. 28)

In a minority language scenario, we might want to add that the translator from a lesser-used language, i.e. a language other than the omnipresent majority language, will be forced to look at the majority-language translation for lack of knowledge of the language of the original. Here I am not diverting the argument from our focus on self-translation; rather, I want to point towards the relationship marked by imbalance of power and influence between minority languages such as Gaelic in our case and majority languages such as English, which certainly lead to a rather relaxed attitude towards the true original of a work to be translated. With regard to Gaelic poetry in translation other than into English, a German context, for instance, offers ample evidence of translators working from English self-translations of Gaelic poems by

authors such as Angus MacNeacail, Iain Crichton Smith and Sorley MacLean (see Chapter 6.2 for a detailed discussion).

Here we arrive at the very important question of the status of the original in relation to the self-translation. As Peter France puts it, 'there is one [translation] practice which does cast doubt on the normal original-translation hierarchy: self-translation', which he rightly identifies as 'the norm for Gaelic speaking poets' (1998, p. 159). He concludes that 'ideally we should be reading both versions, neither should destroy the other' before asserting that 'one would hope that this is how the collections of Sorley MacLean and aonghas macneacail are read by those who have both Gaelic and English' (ibid., p. 159). However, such an exclamation of hope carries doubt along with it. The expression of doubt is not surprising, given that with Gaelic poetry we are in a literary environment which succeeds not merely in pushing the Gaelic originals off the pages of publications, as we have noted in Chapter 2, but also out of the literary canon that provides the basis for critical appreciation of any national literature. This is certainly a point Whyte emphasises when he states that 'the widespread adulation with which Sorley MacLean came to be regarded in the 1980s, came overwhelmingly from people who where unable to read his work in the original, and who relied on the English translations for their knowledge of it' (2000, p. 181). Indeed, Whyte goes as far as to argue that, with regard to contemporary Gaelic poets opting for self-translation, 'they know that work which appears in Gaelic only will pass more or less unnoticed by readers and by the literary establishment in Scotland. That's what happened to Sorley MacLean: how could they expect to be more lucky?' (ibid., pp. 182-3). Such dynamics certainly suggest, that the original Gaelic writing with Gaelic poetry has lost its status as the essential point of reference for critical appreciation, with the self-translated English corpus produced by each author taken as his or her body of literary work since he or she was the translator. Furthermore, there is another attribute to the self-translated work by any particular author, which is simply that the translation process comes later that that of the original writing. How far this fact influences the perception of self-translated texts will be explored in the following paragraph.

4.4.1   The Retrospectively Incomplete Original

Another aspect to the perception of the source text's status in relation to the target text in a self-translation environment is that the original becomes retrospectively incomplete by the mere act of the author essentially re-writing his/her own literary creation in another language (as hinted at in Chapter 2.2.5). As Fitch explains:

> in the case of normal translation, the reception of the source-text is, in a certain sense, *suspended* by the coming into being of the target-text. What happens with the coming into existence of Beckett's second text, on the other hand, is quite different. Here it is not the reception of his first text that is thereby suspended but rather, paradoxically, its *production*. In other words, the second [*sic*] text is rendered *retroactively incomplete*: it is suddenly revealed to be *unfinished*. Since the author of the second version is the same as the author of the first, the latter is now seen to have merely suspended his enterprise when he finished writing his first text; the final realization of his work had thus been suspended, deferred. And it is the second version that will subsequently come to complete his first version. (1985, p. 117, his italics)[10]

Our 'aware[ness] in our reception of a work of art' which has us 'see it as the end product of an author's effort to arrange a sequence of communicative effects' (Eco, 1979, p. 49), as Eco puts it, becomes somewhat shaken, for there simply is no end. Yet, as deconstructionists such as Derrida argue, the 'structure of the original is marked by the requirement to be translated' as it is. Derrida defines the original as 'debtor' and 'petitioner' *per se*, arguing that 'it begins by lacking and by pleading for translation' (1992, p. 227). According to this argument, then, it makes little difference whether the target text is the result of self-translation or whether it has been translated by somebody other than the author. In Benjaminian terms, the translation ensures the after-life of the original text, it survives it (cf. Benjamin, 1969). As Susan Bassnett points out, 'Derrida suggests that effectively the translation *becomes* the original' (1998a, p. 25, her italics).

As Rainer Guldin suggests with regard to the self-translation dynamics which are the focus of his studies, namely as practised by Vilém Flusser, there is not merely a

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[10] Note that it is Scheiner (2002, footnote 20, p. 70) who points out the apparent mistake, since what this passage is trying to say is the first text becomes retroactively incomplete.

sense of the translation surviving the preceding source text but rather that with each newly translated text there is an accumulation of the realisation of all literary potential initiated by the original idea leading to the first source text:

> This shift from translating to rewriting has several consequences. The discrepancies between the different languages are turned into a creative moment. It is no longer the inevitable loss or change of semantic content and the possible structural disarray caused by translation that are at the centre of attention, but the innovative power of difference opening up new horizons and allowing for provocative insights. Even the function of retranslation has been changed drastically. It still leads the text back to its origins, in order for it to be checked for mistakes and undue alterations, but its main function now is to establish a final version that incorporates the richness accumulated in all the previous ones. (Guldin, 2004, p. 101)

Not surprisingly, Flusser hints at dynamics which declare each previous text incomplete with each process of rewriting, thus suggesting an accumulation of incompleteness, retrospectively viewing each preceding text:

> I shall find that my second German text will differ radically from the first one, although the thought expressed in both texts is still the same thought. One reason of course is the fact that in the second text all the other languages at my disposal are somehow present, and thus confer it a depth which is lacking in the first text. (unpublished, p. 10-11, cited in Guldin, 2004, p. 113)

Matters become more pragmatic, however, when it comes to the decision of which text to publish, i.e. which language version is favoured in the end. The final putting down of the text, i.e. fixing it, for publication is 'defeat', and as such the completion of a process that is accumulation (Guldin, 2004, p. 116-5). Thus an historicising angle enters the discussion at the very point where publication is concerned, as the appearance of the last version(s) in publication is conditioned by social factors such as preferences by publication houses, potential readerships and their reading preferences (ibid., p. 117).

In his discussion, Guldin evokes Benjamin's idea of 'pure language' (Benjamin, 1969) as that which lies beyond language, and exemplifies the infinite possibilities of creative expression through language, pure as in not being restricted by the structural

moulds of any particular language (Guldin, 2004, p. 114, also cf. Scheiner, 2002, pp. 68-77). According to Guldin, 'the translation process envisaged by Walter Benjamin gestures at a language, which would reunite the multiplicity of languages into the assembled fragments of a broken vessel' (2004, p. 114). He continues by asserting that 'the fragmentation of this vessel does not refer to the lost original unity of a sound initial vessel' (ibid., p. 114); rather, it demonstrates:

> the possibility of unity and totality in which the parts of the vessel remain as parts but within a generalised belonging together. Fundamental to such a totality is the presence of difference (involving) a harmony which is the *belonging together of differences*. (Benjamin, 1989, p. 98, cited in Guldin, 2004, p. 114, his italics and emendation).

This understanding directly contrasts with that proposed by Beaujour, when she states that:

> Because self-translation and the (frequently) attendant reworking makes a text retrospectively incomplete, both versions become avatars of a hypothetical total text in which the versions in both languages would rejoin one another and be reconciled (as in the 'pure' language evoked by Benjamin). (1989, p. 112)

This reiterates the idea of self-translation a translation practice which exemplifies a prime instance of reconciliation rather than an instance of undeniable difference.

4.5   Self-Translation: Wholeness vs. Difference

The argument for the reconciliation of the two linguistic and cultural spaces occupied by the one author leads Beaujour to introduce the notion of unity to the analysis of self-translation. It is her contention that:

> in the twilight of their careers, most bilingual writers are no longer content to have functioned separately in two different languages. They are in search of unity, and in their efforts to fully realize their *bi-destin*, or 'double destiny,' they want their collected works to exist in both languages […] The practice of self-translation by a mature writer who has successfully defined himself in more than one language is therefore a reassurance of wholeness. (1989, p. 111-12)

Although Beaujour acknowledges difference as underlying paradigm to self-translation as interlinguistic and intercultural communication when she argues that it 'draws the author's attention (and ours) to what must be lost, to the need to abandon hard-won formulations' (ibid., p. 175), she nevertheless reiterates the idea of unity and wholeness as the ultimate attribute to the bilingual author's body of work. As a result, she arrives at the conclusion that 'a *successful* self-translation is […] the ultimate triumph. It confirms the existence not only of the text, but of the self' (ibid., p. 175, her italics). It might well be the elusive nature of the argument which makes Scheiner strongly disagree. Disregarding the concepts of unity and wholeness as applicable to the context of self-translation, she asserts that 'a poetics of self-translation must […] focus on the differences between the two versions' (2002, p. 78). As she further explains:

> Far from being 'near-identical twins' (Connor, 88) which taken together constitute 'a single definitive work' (12), 'each [text] becomes merely a version of the other, and is apprehensible as itself only by virtue of its difference from its partner, which in turn has identity only in *its* difference from the other text' (112, Connor's italics). Indeed, Benjamin argues, 'no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original. For in its afterlife […] the original undergoes a change' (73). Translation, like repetition, does not reproduce the same; it produces difference. (ibid., pp. 78-9, referring to Connor, 1988 and Benjamin, 1969, her references)

Asserting that 'the phenomenon of so-called self-translation introduces another dimension to the question of when a translation may or may not be a translation' (Bassnett, 1998a, p. 30), Bassnett goes on to observe the differences between the two versions. Referring to Beckett's *Quatre poèmes* (1961), she argues that 'the meaning of […] lines in the two languages is completely different' (ibid., p. 31). This leads her to the question, 'Is the English therefore a translation?' and indeed 'given the difference in meaning, can we attribute any authority at all to the "original"?' (ibid., p. 31). This is an interesting development in argument, given the consideration above of whether there is indeed any difference between self-translation or 'conventional' translation, with Bassnett arguing that the

differentiation between translation and self-translation lies in the sheer amount of difference between versions of a text written by one and the same author in more than one language. Indeed, Bassnett further argues that extreme examples of translation, which might well be identified as non-translation, serve to prove the misleading nature of preconceived ideas about original and translation on the whole. Her understanding is that:

> What may be concluded from this short survey of problematic types of 'translation' is that the category of 'translation' is vague and unhelpful. This has been true for a long time, hence all the quibbling about determining the difference between 'adaptations' and 'versions' and 'imitations', all the arguing about degrees of faithfulness and unfaithfulness and the obsessive concern with the idea of an 'original'. (ibid., p. 38)

Why, then, with regard to translation in a minority language context, are we so concerned with the status of the original text written in the minority language in the face of the status of the text translated into the neighbouring majority language by the author? The answer lies not within the production or the product of self-translation, but rather with its reception, as I will now discuss.

4.6   Towards the Reception of Self-Translation

As mentioned above, there is consensus amongst scholars involved in researching the phenomenon of self-translation in a variety of cultural environments that self-translation is more likely to undermine the status of the original than translation done by somebody other than the author. Thus, the tendency towards the author's self-translation as being viewed as a substitute for the original is, therefore, not unique to Gaelic poetry (cf. Chapter 2.2.5), but is confirmed in general, regardless of the cultural context.   To make sense of such dynamics, Fitch reminds us, 'if no distinction is made between the two versions of a given work, it is because they appear to share a common *authorial intentionality*' (1985, p. 112, his italics). He then goes on to ask the logical question 'does this mean then that with the abandonment of the by now wholly discredited notion of intentionality as a pertinent factor in any account of the literary text […] the activity of self-translation thereby becomes

indistinguishable from that of any other form of translation?' (ibid., p. 112). This question is indeed posed by Jung when she argues that:

> Die beiden hier durchgeführten Selbstübersetzungsvergleiche legen dagegen nahe, daß die Autoren und Selbstübersetzer sich sehr wohl dem Ausgangstext verpflichtet und nicht von ihm entbunden fühlen. Sie sind eben nicht unabhängig Schaffende, sondern Leser und Übersetzer ihrer eigenen Werke, bemüht diese zu verstehen und dieses Verständnis weiterzugeben. Es stellt sich darum die Frage, inwieweit überhaupt eine grundsätzliche Unterscheidung zwischen der Selbstübersetzung und der 'herkömmlichen' Übersetzung beibehalten werden sollte. (1995, p. 105)[11]

If that is the case, does it matter then whether the translation is provided by the author or by somebody else? As Fitch suggests, 'in order to begin to clarify the situation, the basic distinction between the reception and the production of the text must be made' (1985, p. 113). For a shift of focus towards the latter I would like to consider Beaujour's conclusion with regard to D Barton Johnson's exclamation addressing Nabokov's translation work that 'if one of the greatest stylists of modern literature, a man bilingual from earliest childhood, cannot successfully translate his own poetry, then who can?' (Johnson, 1974, p. 39, cited in Beaujour, 1989, p. 117), when she argues that 'if Nabokov had not been the translator, we would not have *expected* a perfect transformation of a text in one language into one in another which would then make a flawless whole with the original' (Beaujour, 1989, p. 117, her italics). What is crucial is the expectation that the self-translated text should be a perfect replica of the translated text which usually leads to the treatment of the self-translation as substitute original on the assumption of sameness in intent and realisation of literary ideas and stylistics. As such, the particular qualities of self-translated texts and their relationship to the source text bear little on the status that text acquires by the mere fact of having been produced by the author of the original text. This is particularly illuminating in a minority language context where it is frequently the case that the original is effectively replaced by the self-translated text

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[11] 'The two comparative self-translation analyses conducted here suggest that the authors and self-translators feel rather committed to the source text and not released from it. They are precisely not independent creators, but readers and translators of their own works, anxious to understand them and to impart such understanding. The question arises as to what extent a fundamental distinction between self-translation and 'conventional' translation can be maintained at all.' [my translation]

for both the majority language readership and the minority language audience, which is often more literate in the majority language, as has become evident from the debate around translation issues in a Gaelic context (see Chapter 2.2.5).

4.7   Concluding Remarks

As we have seen in this chapter, both literary bilingualism and self-translation are phenomena of an idiosyncratic nature with regard to each particular author. As such both phenomena are of multi-faceted appearance. Yet, with regard to the literary world surrounding Gaelic poetry, we observe a strikingly homogeneous picture as it is created and perpetuated by publication practices favouring the bilingual edition presenting both the poet's Gaelic and English versions of his/her texts. We might first of all note, therefore, that publication practices fail to signify the complexity and diversity at the heart of the actual literary bilingualism present within the world of Gaelic literary writing.

Furthermore, as this chapter has revealed, with regard to the self-translated text tendencies are apparent which treat such a text as a second original, for the author's intentions are taken to be realised more immediately compared to translation done by somebody else. In other words, the closest possible likeness between the two versions is presumed, which is more likely to undermine the status of the original as such than it is with conventional translation. Indeed, the target text acquires the status of a text 'as it would have been written by the author if he had originally composed in the target language' (Hutchinson, 1986, p. 31). Consequently, self-translation may well be perceived as the ideal translation scenario (cf. Tanqueiro, 1999) which may serve as a reference point for what translation should be if performed by a translator who is not the author of the source text (cf. Hutchinson, 1986). This does not, however, take away from the understanding that self-translation is as much an expression of difference rather than sameness as any other form of translation, if not indeed more so. As Jeffrey M. Green argues, 'the bilingual writer translating his own work would be more likely to produce a parallel version of that work in the second language than a strict translation' (2001, p. 17, cited in Guldin, 2004, p. 100, also see Hokenson and Munson, 2007, p. 198). His answer then is that 'if it is a true

translation, then all translators should aspire to produce work of that kind' (Green, 2001, p. 17, cited in Guldin, 2004, p. 100). Hence, self-translation might well be exemplary in a general understanding of the potentials of translation, namely the original outcome of creative writing. As is indeed common practice (see above and Chapter 6), we may grant the target text resulting from self-translation original status. In conclusion, then, the realisation of difference as the essential combining force between source text and self-translation on the one hand remains truer to actual translation dynamics (as is discussed in Chapter 6) than perpetuating the reassuring assumption of sameness. On the other hand, if the acceptance of difference establishes self-translation as original writing, it in turn re-affirms the original status of the source text.

In affirming the need of destabilising the notion of the author as *the* authoritative instance with every text, the previous chapter granted the translator that his/her efforts are indeed worthwhile and that translation is therefore possible. This chapter has shown that with the particular translation practice of self-translation, it becomes even more important to depart from a perception of literature as centred on the author as invincible creator of meaning, since only by doing so will we search for meaning within the self-translated text pair rather than at some overarching sphere which holds grip on both texts. In adopting a perspective on the individual texts, we return to each text in its own right and its own position in the world.

Both the discussion with regard to the status of self-translation in comparison to the status of the original, as well as the argument regarding the nature of self-translation as expression of difference versus reconciliation and unity on the part of the author's literary identity, lead to a shift in focus from the production of self-translation to its reception. Such a shift in focus is enabling, since rather than wading in muddy fields of assumptions regarding an author's intention and motivation in relation to original writing and self-translation, we encounter the published text as a literary artefact existing in a literary world shared by many. This literary world is home to readers, reviewers, literary critics and publishers. With the following chapter, then, literary creation will be viewed as a dialogic act between author and reader, for, as Scheiner

points out 'it is precisely the notion of a dialogic relation between speaker (writer) and listener (reader) that justifies, indeed requires, a move away from examining the effects of bilingualism solely on the internal plane' (2002, p. 13).[12] Viewing literary production, with self-translation as one form of its expression, as an activity that is essentially a form of dialogue between the producer (author, translator, etc.) and receiver (audience, readership, translator) with both parties entering such dialogue on terms that are determined by their shared cultural environment, allows us to examine and understand the particularities of self-translation in a Gaelic context, taking into account not merely literary appreciation as such but also the function of published texts in the making and development of a flourishing and shared minority language literature and literacy.

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[12] Note recent research conducted by Jung (2004) which focuses on the anticipated readership and the literary environment which surrounds such readership as instrumental in the choices of a self-translating author.

5   Dialogism: The Quest for Meaning

Tha i ro ùrail dhomhs', a' chànain seo.
Tha na faclan ag amharc orm le seallaidhean
neo-chiontach, neo-amharasach, is gann
gun dùraig mi eadhon a bheantainn dhaibh
is iad cho fìreanta neo-thruaillte.[1]

> From 'Cnuasachd' by Christopher Whyte (1989-90, p. 83)

This chapter is concerned with the notion of meaning. One of the most prominent thinkers of the 20th century, who devoted his work to contemplating the coming into being of meaning, is the Russian literary critic Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin. His writings, which include works initially credited to Valentin Nikolaevich Voloshinov and Pavel Nikolaevich Medvedev and later identified as originating with Bakhtin (Hirschkop, 2001, p. 5), will form the basis for the argument this chapter aims to develop. Rather than approaching Bakhtin's writings from a more over-arching point of view, this chapter will take from the world of Bakhtinian thought what is most useful in opening up perspectives which may trigger relevant insights with regard to literary dynamics with Gaelic poetry. A broader approach would neither be within the scope of this thesis nor would it reflect its aim.[2]

Within linguistics and literary criticism, the perception of where meaning is to be located has shifted during the course of the past century from the author's intention as reliable reference point for the meaning of a text, via the linguistic system as most conclusive source of meaning, towards the reader as the creator of individual and multiple meanings (as is discussed in Chapters 3.2 and 4). With dialogism, however, both author and reader are acknowledged as meaningful contributors towards communication by locating meaning at the point of an utterance (i.e. actualised communication). Furthermore, dialogism asserts that every communication is marked by its historical/social context which contributes to its meaning, with the act

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[1] 'She is so very fresh to me, this language / the words look at me with / innocent, unsuspicious eyes, and I hardly / even dared to touch her mountains / and them so true and uncorrupted'. The title translates as 'musing, reflection, contemplation' etc. [my translation]
[2] For a critique of and a pointer towards approaches towards future critical engagement with Bakhtin's theoretical legacy see Hirschkop (1985).

of communication inevitably having an impact on the development of social and historical realities. Consequently, every utterance will have to position itself within the social framework in which it is embedded and which it cannot escape. Since every society relies on hegemonic forces for its very existence, such positioning will also be with regard to what is perceived as powerful within any given society.

According to Roland Barthes, then, language and discourse can be viewed as either functioning within the power structures that support the hegemony of a certain society (identified by Barthes as encratic) or conversely working against hegemonic forces (identified by Barthes as acratic in nature) (1986). With regard to Gaelic poetry, this chapter argues that present bilingual publication practices favouring self-translation are in effect encratic discourses. In other words, they function within given established power structures by thriving on them. Established translation and publication practices are thus a reflection of linguistically and culturally determined power structures present within the space shared by Gaelic and English as languages, literatures and cultures whilst at the same time reaffirming and consolidating present power dynamics at work within that space.

With a bilingual corpus of literature which relies on the practice of self-translation by the authors of the original texts, the location of meaning (i.e. the point of actualised communication where meaning comes into being) is important, for if meaning occurs at the point of contact between the text and the reader, one could come to the conclusion that, in a Gaelic literary context, meaning occurs more firmly within the domain of the English language, given established reading patterns with both Gaelic native speakers and learners of the language (as discussed in sections 1.1.3 and 2.2.5). This in turn cannot fail to have implications for the development of Gaelic as a language and as a literature. What remains unseen with a bilingual literature, which perpetuates and relies on the notion of one-to-one equivalence between texts, languages and cultures, is that which is different between the two texts and their contexts as I have hinted at in Chapter 1. For this reason, this chapter takes up the notion of difference as developed throughout the thesis, with Chapter 1 recognising the acceptance of difference as an essential prerequisite for cultural diversity,

Chapter 3 identifying the difference between source and target text as essential paradigm to translation *per se*, and, finally, Chapter 4 highlighting the difference between the text pair resulting from self-translation as inevitable reality that demands visibility if the source text is to be re-affirmed as such. Given that we are dealing with a literature written in a minority language, then, the re-affirmation of the source text as such is of great importance, as this chapter will show.

The social embeddedness of every act of communication, which is so resolutely stressed by Bakhtinian thought, evokes the idea of a literary space as explored by Pascale Casanova (2004), who has adopted a critical perspective which allows for engagement with literary texts beyond the boundaries of the written text. Instead, the literary text is viewed in its social, political and historical context. Adopting such a perspective in the world of Gaelic literature, we realise that the literary space occupied by Gaelic poetry, with regard to both its creation and reception, is firmly shared and determined by the Anglophone world. This chapter thus firmly embraces the idea of Gaelic poetry as existing in a literary 'contact zone' (a notion introduced in Chapter 1.1.8 and taken up in Chapters 2.2.4 and 4.1.3), which has significant implications not merely for the production of that literature as this thesis will highlight in Chapter 6, but also for its reception, as this chapter will illustrate.

This chapter thus provides space for all the previous arguments as established in the preceding chapters to come together and combine into reflections with regard to the actual relationship between texts and their audiences. This will allow us to draw conclusions with regard to the actual literary life led by the Gaelic-medium half of the bilingual corpus that is modern Gaelic poetry.

5.1 Dialogism: Communication as Two-Sided Act

As Pam Morris points out, at the heart of Bakhtin's thinking lies 'an innovative and dynamic perception of language' (1994, p. 1) which acknowledges language as a living medium in actual communication situations, i.e. it is concerned with utterances. Such a treatment of language as the medium for verbal communication in

general nevertheless allows for reflection in the particular literary environment of Gaelic poetry publishing since, as Bakhtin/Vološinov[3] argues:

> a book, i.e., a *verbal performance in print*, is also an element of verbal communication. It is something discussable in actual, real-life dialogue, but aside from that, it is calculated for active perception, involving attentive reading and inner responsiveness, and for organized, *printed* reaction in the various forms devised by the particular sphere of verbal communication in question (book reviews, critical surveys, defining influence on subsequent works, and so on). (Vološinov, 1986, p. 95)

In that respect Bakhtin's thinking is a reaction to, as he puts it, 'two basic trends' that can be observed when surveying the 'main arteries of philosophical and linguistic thought in modern times' (ibid., p. 47). The first trend is identified by Bakhtin as *individualistic subjectivism*, whereas the second one is termed *abstract objectivism* (ibid., p. 48, his italics). Bakhtin's analysis traces the first trend, i.e. *individualistic subjectivism*, back to Wilhelm von Humboldt's understanding of language as energeia, that is language as 'an unceasing process of creation realized in individual speech acts', rather than ergon, which refers to language as a 'ready-made product' (ibid., p. 48). Thus, as Bakhtin explains, *individual subjectivism*:

> considers the basis of language (language meaning all linguistic manifestations without exception) to be the individual creative act of speech. The source of language is the individual psyche. The laws of language creativity – and language is, it assumes, a continuous process, an unceasing creativity – are the laws of individual psychology, and these laws are just what the linguist and the philosopher of language are supposed to study. (ibid., p. 48)

Abstract objectivism, on the other hand, is identified as defining language as a stable linguistic system, which is the very instance where meaning is established and which is thus the worthwhile object of study. This trend finds its firmest manifestation in the Saussurian school of structuralist thinking. As Morris illuminates, 'if, for the first trend, language is an ever-flowing stream of speech acts in which nothing remains

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[3] From here onwards, I will refer to Bakhtin only, acknowledging the name given as the author in bracketed references.

fixed and identical to itself, then, for the second trend, language is the stationary rainbow arched over that stream' (1994, p. 26).

Both trends, however, are criticised by Bakhtin for failing to acknowledge the essentially communicative function of language, thus denying the interlocutor any active part in the communicative act (Morris, 1994, p. 4). Bakhtin's contention is that the:

> orientation of the word toward the addressee has an extremely high significance. In point of fact, *word is a two-sided act*. It is determined equally by *whose* word it is and *for whom* it is meant. As word, it is precisely *the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee*. Each and every word expresses the 'one' in relation to the 'other'. I give myself verbal shape from another's point of view, ultimately, from the point of view of the community to which I belong. A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another. If one end of the bridge depends on me, the other depends on my addressee. A word is territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor. (Vološinov, 1986, p. 86, his italics)

In this respect Bakhtin's quest for meaning seems to follow a path similar as that of Barthes, in that the former's firm acknowledgement of the presence of the listener and his/her role in the production of meaning parallels Barthes' insistence on the reader as a vital instance in the production of meaning. Here I would like to recall Barthes' assertion 'that the reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination' (1977, p. 148). The author's intention as a stable reference point for the location of meaning is abandoned since no two selves share a congruent view of the world. Therefore, it is impossible that any two or more individuals will share an identical semantic appreciation of reality. With the help of visual imagery, Bakhtin explores this idea of incongruent viewpoints further, stating that:

> this other human being whom I am contemplating, I shall always see and know something that he, from his place outside and over against me, cannot see himself: parts of his body that are inaccessible to his own gaze (his head, his face and its expression), the world behind his

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> back ... are accessible to me but not to him. As we gaze at each other, two different worlds are reflected in the pupils of our eyes […] to annihilate this difference completely, it would be necessary to merge into one, to become one and the same person. (Morris, 1994, p. 6)

Trying to grasp the concept of meaning in a struggle between the insidedness and outsidedness of the individual consciousnesses, Bakhtin is not the only critic to resort to visual imagery. Describing the dialogic nature of Joseph Beuys' perception of art, Michaud reminds those at the perceiving end of art that 'you who are looking, you, also, are an artist' (1988, p. 38). In his recent publication *What Good are the Arts*, John Carey reiterates that precise point with regard to literature, coining the term 'indistinctness' (2005, p. 213), which, as David Lodge explains further, is an 'idiosyncratic name for what other critics and theorists have called variously ambiguity, polysemy, indeterminacy; in other words, the capacity of poetic language to generate an inexhaustible but non-random supply of meaning in the consciousness of readers' (2005). Conceiving of the actual manifestation of meaning in such a way echoes Bakhtin's understanding that 'the principles of giving a form to the soul are the principles of giving a form to inner life *from outside*, from *another consciousness*; the artist's work proceeds here […] on the *boundaries*' (Morris, 1994, p. 6).

It is this very understanding of meaning, as ever regenerated at the point of the encounter, which leads Barthes to pronounce the death of the author (cf. Chapter 3.1). This might in fact be a choice in the name of sanity, in that a restricted perspective on the location of meaning might make things a little easier to handle. Such a perspective would certainly have granted the poem 'samhla', as discussed in Chapter 4.3, a little more clarity in terms of the identity of the 'I' and the 'you' in the poem. Bakhtin, however, in contrast to Barthes, chooses to let the speaker live, and thus remains true to the fundamental idea at the heart of his thinking that meaning occurs within an 'interindividual territory' (Vološinov, 1986, p. 12) with every reading becoming an instance of 'actualised meaning' based upon language 'not as words in the dictionary which have only meaning potential but as the actualized meaning of those words used in a specific utterance' (Morris, 1994, p. 5). For that reason, 'language exists on that creative borderzone or boundary between human

consciousnesses, between a self and other' (ibid., p. 5).[4] The attribute 'creative' here is important, as it points towards the fact that language changes and develops by being used. As such language and utterance are interdependent, continuously shaping each other. The idea of language use as paramount to the development of language as a shared social system will be explored further in the following section.

5.1.1   Language as Productive Force

There is not merely a synchronic dimension to language, which is revealed in its effect on the reader/listener at the time of hearing/reading, but in addition, language acts as a diachronic force in its own development as it is the 'responsive interaction between speakers, between self and other, that constitutes the capacity of language to produce new meaning' (Morris, 1994, p. 5). Such an understanding views the individual utterance as 'a responsive link in the continuous chain of other utterances which, in effect, constitutes the continuity of human consciousness'. Thus, at one and the same time, every individual utterance is 'of its own concrete contextual moment and part of the long evolution of social change' (ibid., p. 5). It is due to the dialogic nature of the location of meaning that the diachronic force in language is realised, for 'in the act of understanding, a struggle occurs that results in mutual change and enrichment' (ibid., p. 17). For Bakhtin, such a productive role of language implies the social embeddedness of the utterance and language:

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[4] The notion of the 'borderzone' here is very much the celebration of the aspect of creativity that informs meaningful instances. As such, the idea of the 'borderzone' as the meeting between the self and the other echoes Sherry Simon's idea of the 'contact zone' (as discussed in Chapter 1.1.8) which is similarly celebrated by Simon as the creative space where translation and interlingual writing mingle and stimulate intercultural expressiveness (1999a). Given the cultural context of the present thesis, however, the notion of the contact zone has been refined as that space where cultures of different socio-political prestige 'meet, clash, and grapple with each other' (Pratt, 1999, p. 584, as quoted in Chapter 1.1.8). Therefore, the present thesis is also concerned with power struggles as they occur in the contact zone, which leads us to realise that different forms of contact will have different implications for the thriving of a culture and its language. The notion of the 'borderzone' here is less problematic in that it is the inevitable meaningful instance of an utterance shared by the self and the other. Given, however, that Bakhtin points towards the social embeddedness of each utterance (see section 5.1.1), the notion of the 'borderzone' carries equal potential to raise questions with regard to its more problematic nature, as has been found with the notion of the 'contact zone'. What is important to the present argument is that meaning occurs between people and is thus relative rather than self-contained; as such, the 'borderzone' is inevitable. Given the imbalance of cultural and linguistic prestige and well-being between cultures, however, it is imperative to contemplate ways in which the creation of meaning is beneficial for all involved when cultures meet, i.e. when they relate to each other in the 'contact zone'.

Any utterance, no matter how weighty and complete in and of itself, *is only a moment in the continuous process of verbal communication. But that continuous verbal communication is, in turn, itself only a moment in the continuous, all-inclusive, generative process of a given social collective* […] It goes without saying that word cannot be divorced from this eternally generative, unified process of communication […] *Language acquires life and historically evolves precisely here, in concrete verbal communication, and not in the abstract linguistic system of language forms, nor in the individual psyche of speakers.* (Vološinov, 1986, p. 95, his italics)

Language thus is always in flux and alters on the lips of speakers. Yet, the moment of the utterance does not occur void of all social surroundings. Thus, as will be explored below, language use is an integral part of present social realities. In that respect, language is as much a shaping instance as a shaped one with regard to its social surroundings.

5.1.2   Language and the Social

As Corinne Scheiner points out, 'Vološinov and Bakhtin do not view dialogue as a bipartite structure consisting solely of the speaker and the listener but rather as a tripartite one, for it also comprises the relationship between the two participants, that is, the specific context in which the dialogue takes place' (2000, p. 85). Thus the shared cultural space, i.e. the *interindividual territory* mentioned above, is:

a territory that cannot be called 'natural' in the direct sense of the word: signs do not arise between any two members of the species *Homo sapiens*. It is essential that the two individuals be *organized socially*, that they compose a group (a social unit); only then can the medium of signs take shape between them. The individual consciousness not only cannot be used to explain anything, but, on the contrary, is itself in need of explanation from the vantage point of the social, ideological medium.
        The individual consciousness is a social-ideological fact. (Vološinov, 1986, p. 12, his italics)

Criticising Saussure's main thesis which, as Bakhtin summarises, states that '*language stands in opposition to utterance in the same way as does that which is social to that which is individual*', and thus arrives at the inevitable conclusion that

'the utterance, therefore, is considered a thoroughly individual entity' (Morris, 1994, p. 31, Bakhtin's italics), a dialogic theory of language realises that utterances require 'extraverbal commencement' (ibid., p. 60). As Bakhtin explains:

> the outwardly actualized utterance is an island rising from the boundless sea of inner speech; the dimensions and forms of this island are determined by the particular *situation* of the utterance and its *audience*. Situation and audience make inner speech undergo actualization into some kind of specific outer expression that is directly included into an unverbalized behavioral context and in that context is amplified by actions, behavior, or verbal responses of other participants of the utterance (Vološinov, 1986, p. 96, his italics)

It is a logical progression of the argument to find that a Bakhtinian perspective on meaning attempts to theorize language as 'a complex interrelation of the micro (individual) and macro (social) levels' (Morris, 1994, p. 11). Indeed, it is Barthes' contention that 'society, with its socio-economic and neurotic structures, intervenes, constructing language like a battleground' (1986, p. 106). This, of course, is a perception which rings particularly true with minority languages and is, as I would like to argue, highly relevant to interlingual translation, since every translation process inherently expresses the desire to communicate and thus turns 'inner speech' (which for authors expressing themselves in an 'underused' language might well be the experience of the writing) into an 'outer expression' (i.e. the translation that will reach a readership). As an instance of 'outer expression' the utterance, then, inevitably relates to society as a whole, indeed positions itself in it. The following paragraph enquires about the nature of such a positioning.

5.2   Encratic versus Acratic Discourse

As language functions within society, the utterance cannot fail to position itself within the power structures of any given society at any given time, for, as Michel Foucault puts it, 'power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere' (1990, p. 93, quoted in Loomba, 1998, p. 41). As Ania Loomba explains, the premise here is that 'power does not emanate from some central or hierarchical structure but flows through society in a sort of capillary

action' (1998, p. 41). Such an appreciation of power is shared by Barthes as Silvia Caporale Bizzini highlights:

> His definition of power, like that of Foucault, retreats from a vision of something unitary resting in the hands of a given hegemonic social group while at the same time being suffered by another group in society. Barthes does not examine power as a single force but considers it as a plurality: as a web of various and multiple powers that are spread along and throughout the texture of culture and society. For Barthes, power has always been present in the history of mankind: 'requiring a revolution to destroy it, [power] quickly revives, recrudescing in the new state of things'. What Barthes is stressing is that power has the knack of ubiquity, the capacity to transfer itself from one place to another depending on given moments or demands. (2000, p. 30-1, citing Barthes, 1978, p. 12, her translation and emendation)

Power, therefore, is a given within the multi-layered structures of society. Indeed, it defines those very structures. Given our research subject, then, we will have to inquire further about the nature of the relationship between power and language.

According to Barthes, this relationship is indeed inescapable since 'that object within which power has been inscribed since the very beginning of human existence is *language* or, to be more precise, its obligatory expression *speech*' (1978, p. 12, quoted in Bizzini, 2000, p. 31, her translation). In other words, 'if language exists as a system tying the individual to a determined organization, power, then, uses this system as a base to develop its web within the social structure' (Bizzini, 2000, p. 31). In a somewhat conclusive manner, Barthes goes so far as to argue that:

> If what we call freedom is not simply the capacity to abdicate from the exercise of power, but also – and above all – the capacity to submit to nobody whatsoever, then there cannot be freedom unless it be outside language. But unfortunately human language *has* no outside: it is a locked door. (1978, p. 15, quoted in Bizzini, 2000, p. 32, her translation and italics)

Following on from this argument, Barthes defines two types of languages on the basis of their relationship to power. Here he is concerned also with language as discourse. As he argues:

> There are languages which are articulated, which develop, and which are marked in the light (or the shadow) of Power, of its many state, institutional, ideological machineries; I shall call these *encratic* languages or discourses […]. And facing them, there are languages which are elaborated, which feel their way, and which are themselves outside of Power and/or against Power; I shall call these *acratic* languages or discourses. (1986, p. 107, his italics)

Here, the phrase 'outside of power' is misleading since, following the argument so far, power is everywhere. Discourse will therefore always be positioned within a net of given power dynamics. The point is, precisely, that discourse is always informed by socially and politically driven extra-discursive dynamics and in that it cannot be 'outside power'. What Barthes means here is a discourse, which is positioned outside or indeed against the hegemonic status quo in terms of political and cultural power in any given society. As Barthes elaborates, 'we cannot escape: by culture, by political choice, we must be committed, engage in one of the particular languages to which our world, our history compels us' (1986, p. 109). Describing the nature of encratic language, Barthes observes that it:

> is vague, diffuse, apparently "natural," and therefore not easily discerned: it is the language of mass culture (popular press, radio, television) and it is also, in a sense, the language of conversation, of public opinion (of the *doxa*): encratic language is both (a contradiction which constitutes its strength) *clandestine* (it is not easily recognizable) and *triumphant* (it is inescapable): I shall say that it is sticky. (ibid., pp. 107-8, his italics)[5]

Encratic language, which implies the extended notion of discourse, does not seek to draw attention to itself. This, as I would like to argue, is perfectly mirrored by the English-dominated bilingual self-translation publication practice with Gaelic poetry, since the use of English appears as natural in this publication environment with the process of translation remaining largely unacknowledged. Furthermore, it is interesting to observe that the notion of encratic vs. acratic language choice becomes highly relevant in the context of the literatures of minority cultures, since the choice for writers is indeed between two languages, i.e. separate linguistic systems, as opposed to merely discourse. The choice is between the underused indigenous

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[5] According to Barthes, he develops his argument on the basis of an the Aristotelian notion of doxa (1986, p. 120).

language, which exists outside the spheres of what is established as the culturally hegemonic and the language through which cultural hegemony is communicated and perpetuated. Speaking from a Korean language perspective, Yoon Ho-Byeong remarks that:

> In the global age, of course, no one can deny the necessity of speaking English fluently since it has its status as 'an encratic language' (dominant in the international society), while vernacular as 'an acratic' language (dominated but struggling not to be dominated). In competing with each other to get an initiative position, the more the importance of English is emphasized, the less space seems to be available for the vernacular to exist. The role of English in Korean intellectual society has been changed from 'language play' through 'language game' to 'language war'. (2005, p. 199)

Given, thus, that discourse relates to the *doxa*, i.e. to that which is established as the culturally hegemonic, it will be the task now to view the discourse of literary writing in Gaelic in relation to its social surroundings.

5.2.1 Writing in Gaelic: The (Para)Doxical Nature

As we have seen, the notion of discourse as either encratic or acratic in nature is closely related to what at the time is perceived as hegemonic discourse, i.e. as the discourse shared by the *doxa*. Returning to our specific literary environment of Gaelic poetry in publication, Christopher Whyte makes the following observation with regard to the task of reviewing bilingual poetry editions:

> The language issue has practical aspects for a reviewer. Am I expected to read the English translation on the right-hand page of two of these three books, and to review them as well as the original Gaelic? Would I be doing my job properly if I ignored them? Or is it sufficient to glance across from time to time when a word expression is unclear to me? What is the point of writing about the Gaelic for a readership which will be overwhelmingly confined to the English versions? Just what is the nature of the games we are playing with each other? And what is a critic to do when the margin of ambiguity crucial to any literary text is drastically reduced by the author's own interpretation, printed directly opposite it? (1996, p. 56)

Whyte seems to describe the whole process of writing initially in Gaelic and proceeding to self-translation into English in order then to present the Gaelic writing to a predominantly English reading audience in a bilingual edition, i.e. the reality of Gaelic poetry as living literary genre, as paradoxical. Following Barthes' argument with regard to the relationship which language as discourse maintains with power, however, we have to come to the conclusion that the literary discourse occupied by Gaelic poetry is entirely encratic in nature, in other words, it is conforming to the *doxa*, it is *doxical*.

If writing is dialogic in nature, where every 'utterance call[s] forth or provoke[s] a new word […] creat[ing] itself in anticipation of that response' (Morris, 1994, p. 13), if, as Barthes asserts, 'writing anticipates a state of reading' (1986, p. 110), and if Sartre is to be believed when he states that 'the operation of writing implies that of reading' and indeed there 'is no art except for and by others' (1995, p. 373). then writing in Gaelic could be argued to be paradoxical, in the sense of paradoxical as self-contradictory, absurd, or even counter-productive, with respect to what is perceived as the culturally hegemonic. As Aonghas MacNeacail reminds us in his poem 'cùnntas' (Burgess and O'Rourke, 1999, p. 102):

> tha mi nise
> uile
> anns na leabhraichean
>
> chan eil rathad eile
> air fhàgail
> a-mach
> chun a' ghàrraidh[6]

The elusive nature of whom to write for in Gaelic makes writing in Gaelic arguably *paradoxical* from a self-reflective minority language point of view. Yet, widening the view, the initial writing in Gaelic could also be described as *para-doxical*, to use Barthes' terminology, since it can be perceived as subversive. In another minority literature environment, namely that of Mayan literature, R. McKenna Brown argues

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[6] 'I am now / entirely / in the books // there is no other way / left / out / into the garden' [my translation]

just that, saying that 'to write exclusively in a Mayan language may be considered even subversive, because it excludes the non-Maya reader' (2000, p. 37). If original writing can be viewed in such a way, translational writing cannot escape similar treatment. Indeed, translation studies scholars concerned with power dynamics informing translation argue:

> '[Translation] is never innocent. There is always a context in which the translation takes place, always a history from which the text emerges and into which a text is transposed.' It is no longer possible to limit oneself to the word as a translation unit; one must take into consideration both the original and target cultures with which the translator is connected. He must be aware that all use of language implies manipulation and that therefore the result of his action could either be a Barthesian 'encratic' discourse (which proliferates within power) or and [sic] 'acratic' one (which proliferates outside of it). (Álvarez and Vidal, 1996, p. 7, citing Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990, their emendation)

With writing and translation defined as such powerful instances of manipulation working either in accordance with given power structures or against them, the question must be asked whether artistic expression can at all be detached from the sphere of politics.

5.2.2   Does Art Have to be Political?

Discussing the nature of translation in a minority language context, we have already established that it is impossible to divorce the creative from the political impact with translation action (see Chapter 1, also cf. Cronin, 2003, p. 167). Following the understanding of discourse as either acratic and encratic in nature in the light of a particular social setting at a particular moment in time, once more it seems inevitable to evoke the political dimension to creative action. Political scientist Chantal Mouffe defines 'the political' as 'the dimension of antagonism' that 'can merge out of any kind of relation', 'an ever-present possibility' (2001, p. 99), which is at work within the spheres of what she identifies as 'politics', i.e. 'the ensemble of discourses and practices, institutional or even artistic practices, that contribute to and reproduce a certain order' (ibid., p. 99). She goes on to argue that:

> Politics is always about the establishment, the reproduction, or the deconstruction of a hegemony, one that is always in relation to a potentially counter-hegemonic order. Since the dimension of 'the political' is always present, you can never have a complete, absolute, inclusive hegemony. In that context, artistic and cultural practices are absolutely central as one of the levels where identifications and forms of identity are constituted. One cannot make a distinction between political art and non-political art, because either form of artistic practice either contributes to the reproduction of the given common sense – and in that sense is political – or contributes to the deconstruction or critique of it. Every form of art has a political dimension. (ibid., pp. 99-100)

Consequently, the thing Beuys calls 'the *Gestaltung* of the world', that is the shaping or indeed the 'social in-forming' (Michaud, 1988, p. 43) of the world is not just, as Beuys affirms, a 'duty – the duty of everyone, at his place of work – to reform a sick world' (ibid., p. 41) but rather an escapable reality. Here we have to adopt once more a perspective which considers the collective of society, for, as Mouffe points out, 'if you start and finish with the individual, you can never really grasp the specificity of "the political," which is always a collective identification' (2001, p. 123). Indeed, Beuys does not let his discussion of the political dimension to art unfold from a prescriptive point of view either. Instead he stresses that '*Gestaltung* can thus be called "the same thing" as politics. Or rather – and better still – it renders "useless" the concept of politics' (Michaud, 1988, p. 43):

> I, personally, am involved only with representation, with form, which is to say, when I make a statement to the effect that I have nothing to do with politics, that means that I am involved with the formation of the world, the formation of the world seen as a sculpture, thus as evolution, transformation of this form into a new form. (ibid., pp. 43-4)

This rings very closely with the Bakhtinian thought that 'each of us occupies a unique time and place in life, an existence that is conceived not as a passive state but as an activity, an event' (Clark and Holquist, 1984, p. 64). It is, therefore, impossible for artistic expression to exist outside the spheres of the political, for artistic expression is also an engagement with society that will inevitably form, or to use Beuys' wording, 'in-form' society, for neither art nor society are self-contained independent units.

Having thus established the inevitable political dimension to the artistic act of creativity, two further points remain to be made at this point of the discussion. First of all, once we fully acknowledge that 'every form of art has a political dimension', we further have to acknowledge the importance of language in discourse for, as Beuys has it, 'politics finds its master in language' (Michaud, 1988, p. 44). Secondly, and this is a point which already becomes apparent once awareness is raised of the existence, and thus possibility, of encratic and acratic discourse in relation to power structures at the heart of every society, there must be choice in action, for 'if you don't have the choice, then the whole democratic process is completely meaningless' (Mouffe, 2001, p. 123). Here she asserts that 'to see that you can really exercise your rights, you need to be given alternatives' (ibid., p. 123). Combining the two we arrive at 'choices with regard to language use', which, for authors working from within minority cultures, are important choices to be made.

5.2.3   A Comparative View: Voices from the Irish, Welsh and
             Gaelic Literary Worlds

Recalling Wilson McLeod's contribution to the debate on Gaelic poetry and translation as published by *Chapman* in 1998, there is an awareness within the Gaelic literary world that the nature of contemporary Gaelic poetry writing and publishing has to be viewed in its political context. We recall McLeod's assertion that 'the problem is fundamentally a political one: today's Gaelic denying approach needs to be recognised and named for what it is and what it says' (1998, p. 151, as quoted in Chapter 2). We might also recall the reply by poet Aonghas MacNeacail in which he poses the question, 'Why shouldn't we argue that translation is also, and overtly, a political act, in that it offers a reminder to the outside world that "We are still here"?' (1998, p. 155, as quoted in Chapter 2). Such a position might well be regarded as subversive from the perspective of the mainstream literary world functioning through the use of a majority language. Yet, as we have seen, other minority language literatures have identified the exclusion rather than inclusion of the majority language audience as a subversive act of creativity (Brown, 2000). Language and translation choices lie at the heart of the matter, which is not surprising for a

literature written in a lesser-used language, in close proximity to a majority language of hegemonic standing. Echoing Peter France's conclusion as presented in the *Chapman* debate on Gaelic poetry and translation (1989), namely that it matters not so much whether the option is for or against translation, but rather how to translate and how to subsequently present the translation, Álvarez and Vidal argue that 'the subject who speaks and translates is not as responsible for what he or she says as for *what s/he does not say* and *how s/he says it*' (1996, p. 8, their italics). This assertion is closely linked to the awareness that translation processes can be fully understood only if we ask questions about 'how power enters into the process of "cultural translation"' (ibid., p. 8, citing Asad, 1986, p. 163), an awareness which remains little acknowledged within the Gaelic literary world.

It is intriguing to observe that with neighbouring minority cultures, namely Irish and Welsh, the situation seems quite different to that of the Gaelic literary world in that there appears to be a high level of consciousness regarding translation choices and their impact on the respective language of minority status. In his article 'Sleeping with the Enemy', Grahame Davies points towards conscious choices amongst Welsh language authors to ensure the health and wealth of contemporary and future writing in Welsh. Such choices include delayed translation, with the original writing in Welsh occurring first, considering English translation after a 'decent interval' only, or an avoidance of self-translation 'to prevent the danger of adulteration' (2004b, p. 61). As Gerwyn Wiliams, himself a Crowned Bard at the National Eisteddfod 1994, explains, those involved with Welsh literature perceive of Welsh poetry as:

> a defensive art form, since its very existence has been identified with the fate of the language, it is seen as the backbone to the Welsh language. Therefore attitudes towards English are all tied up with the fate of the Welsh language and for that reason it is not surprising that there are rather mixed feelings about English translation amongst those involved with Welsh literature. (personal correspondence)

Some poets go as far as to refuse to have their work translated into English altogether, with Twm Morys probably being the most prominent example. The following is his explanation regarding his decision to decline an invitation by editor

and translator Robert Minhinnick to be included in the bilingual anthology of Welsh poetry in English translation entitled *The Adulterer's Tongue* (Minhinnick, 2003):

> I declined Robert Minhinnick's invitation because I feel that poetry is a discourse, sometimes with oneself, sometimes with others. When I have occasionally wanted to reach an audience that does not speak Welsh I've written in English. Otherwise I write in Welsh because I'm speaking with Welsh-speaking people. If others would like to join in, well they can bloody well learn the language! The vast English-speaking world will be none the poorer for not being able to read the *cywyddau* of Twm Morys. But the little Welsh world, in my opinion, keeps a little more of its integrity if one or two of us elect to live out on the Craig Lwyd with Llywelyn ap y Moel. (2003, p. 55)

Neither does his work feature in *The Bloodaxe Book of Modern Welsh Poetry* (Elfyn and Rowlands, 2003), published in the same year, which has since acquired the status of a milestone in the history of Welsh poetry published in English translation.

In an Irish context, similar attitudes can be found, as the example of Biddy Jenkinson shows. She refuses to translate herself into English. What is more, she prefers her work to remain untranslated for the Anglophone world of Ireland altogether. This she regards as 'a small rude gesture to those who think that everything can be harvested and stored without loss in an English-speaking Ireland' (1989, p. 34). Putting it into metaphorical terms, she affirms that 'If I were a corncrake I would feel no obligation to have my skin cured, my tarsi injected with formalin so that I could fill a museum shelf in a world that saw no need for my kind' (ibid., p. 34). Regarding the 'question of recognition and writing in Irish', she states that:

> writing is a matter of love, the kind I have been describing, a sustaining through my veins and verbs of something infinitely precious, a stretching back along the road we have come, a stand here in the present among the outnumbered and beleaguered but determined survivors of Gaelic Ireland. (ibid., p. 33-4)

Referring to Tim Robinson, she signals her acute awareness that 'the cruel twists of history have put the survival of Irish in the hands of English' (ibid., p. 34). Therefore, to give creative expression in Irish any chance of prospering on its own terms and thus contribute to linguistic and cultural diversity within society as such,

Jenkinson agrees, quoting Robinson once more, that there is not just the need for 'the dedication of Irish Speakers' but also for 'a tolerance, indeed a positive welcoming among English Speakers, of cultural diversity, an awakening to the sanity of difference – and such wisdom is contrary to the stupefying mainstreams of our time' (ibid., p. 34).

With the following remarks a prolific Irish language poet, who replied to the questionnaire aimed at editors in his role as co-editor of a bilingual Irish-Scottish Gaelic poetry anthology, points towards standard approaches to poetry publication and translation shared by Irish-language authors which attempt a certain degree of separateness between the Irish-language and Anglophone literary spheres in Ireland in an attempt to preserve some 'sanity of difference':

> As a rule Irish-language poets don't like to translate their new work. […] There [is] a shared attitude that publishing your work in dual text format was giving it a second class status, knowing that most readers would probably go directly to the translation. Nowadays I don¹t mind giving the likes of [the literary journal] THE SHOP a new poem with a translation every now and then but not as a rule. Why bother writing in Irish at all if you have to translate. Why not just drop the Irish and use English for the 'original'? These are very profound issues of artistic purpose, balance and integrity and are also informed by the relationship of 'tiny, battered and bruised' Irish to world-dominating English in a society where the two languages share the same house in an upstairs downstairs relationship! (E8, see Appendix A)

With regard to self-translation, Cathal Ó Searcaigh contemplates the very practical implications such a translation practice, especially if habitually performed, would have on his original work, envisaging that he would be 'listening to the whisperings of English when I was writing and if I were to use a saying or word play in Gaelic that I could find no equivalence for in English then I would be under pressure to leave it out entirely' (Grigor, 2003). Pól Ó Muirí observes a 'tendency to promote the translation over the original text', which he identifies as 'surely worrying'. He concludes that:

> The exchange of ideas between Irish and English is not an equal one. English is the dominant partner and has imposed translation on the weaker language. It is not an example of Irish being taken out of the

ghetto (there is no ghetto) but of Irish being made to conform to the dominant language. (1993, p. 16)

It is this idea of conformity which is remarkable in this context. The bilingual minority/majority language edition is something of a comfort zone, because it treats the minority language as something easily consumable which does not challenge the reader to stretch beyond familiar linguistic and cultural boundaries or, as it could also be perceived, limits.

From the published corpus of Irish language poetry it becomes apparent that in comparison to the situation with Scottish Gaelic, poets writing in Irish show a more experimental attitude towards translation and the bilingual edition. Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill's work in publications is a case in point. Beside monolingual publications, we find her work published in English translation in bilingual *en-face* editions which all bear testimony to the creative collaboration work leading towards the bilingual poetry collection. The front cover of her renowned collection *Pharaoh's Daughter* (1990) lists thirteen translators amongst which we find Michael Hartnett, Seamus Heaney and Medbh McGuckian, to name but three, all following their own idiosyncratic approaches to translation. 1992 saw the publication of *The Astrakhan Cloak*, which names Paul Muldoon alongside Ní Dhomhnaill as author, with Muldoon providing English translations of Ní Dhomhnaill's poems in Irish. *The Water Horse* (1999) carries the names of Medbh McGuckian and Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin as translators on its front cover. It is, however, apparent that self-translation does occur in the context of Irish poetry publications, as Davitt's *Freacnairc Mhearcair / The Oomph of Quicksilver* (2000), which relies on a mixture of self-translations and translations by others, shows. It has to be noted, though, that this publication, which is clearly aimed at an English-speaking readership, as the publication format and the introduction in English by fellow poet and translator Louis de Paor signals, is only one amongst many published monolingually in Irish, with *Fardoras* (2003) as an example of a publication which has been celebrated as bearing witness to the healthy state of contemporary poetry in Irish.

Another highly acclaimed publication is the poetry collection *Sruth Teangacha / Stream of Tongues* by Gearóid Mac Lochlainn (2002), which interestingly relies on self-translation as well as collaboration with other authors. Throughout the publication translation as a fact of life for Irish language poetry is acknowledged, and, in fact, incorporated in the creative process of composing poetry which gets hold of its very subject matter as the following poem shows (ibid., p. 62):

Aistriúcháin
(*léamh filíochta, Meán Fómhair 1997*)

The act of poetry is a rebel act – Hartnett

Ní aistriúcháin a chloisfidh sibh anocht, a chairde,
mé aistrithe, athraithe is caolaithe
le huisce aeraithe an Bhéarla,
a dhéanfadh líomanáid shúilíneach
d'fhíon dearg mo chuid filíochta.
Ní bheidh mé aistrithe anocht.
I mean like, cad chuige a bhfuil mé anseo
ar chor ar bith?

An ea gur seo an faisean is úire?
Léamh dátheangach, *poetry* as Gaeilge.
An ea go bhfuil an saol ag athrú?
Ní féidir a bheith cinnte.
Amanna, éiríonn tú tuirseach
de chluasa falsa Éireannacha.
Féinsásamh an *monoglot* a deir leat –
'It sounds lovely. I wish I had the Irish.
Don't you do translations?'

Iad ag stánadh orm go mórshúileach
mar a stánfadh ar éan corr a chuireann
míchompord de chineál orthu.
Iad sásta go bhfuil sé thart,
sásta go bhfuil an file Béarla ag teacht i mo dhiaidh
le cúpla scéal grinn
a chuirfidh réiteach ar an snag san oíche.

Agus seo é anois againn
lena chuid cainte ar '*café culture*' is ar 'Seamus'.
Seo é le cruthú dóibh go bhfuil siad
leathanaigeanta cultúrtha,
go dtuigeann siad an pictiúr mór,
go dtuigeann siad filíocht.

Seo anois é.

Agus sin mise ansiúd thall i m'aonar,
i gcoirnéal mo ghruaime,
ag stánadh go héadmhar,
ólta ar fhíon rua mo chuid filíochta,

mo chuid filíochta Gaeilge
nár thuig éinne.

Mac Lochlainn's translation, which he prepared in collaboration with Frankie
Sewell, reads as follows (ibid., p. 63):

Translations
(*Poetry Reading, September 1997*)

Tonight, my friends, there will be no translations,
nothing trans-lated, altered, diluted
with hub-bubbly English
that turns my ferment of poems
to lemonade.
No, tonight, there will be no translations.
Séard atá á rá agam ná,
what am I doing here anyway?

Is this just the latest fashion, a fad-
the bilingual reading,
poetry 'as Gaeilge'?
Had the world gone mad?

Sometimes, you get tired talking
to lazy Irish ears. Tired
of self-satisfied monoglots who say
-It sounds lovely. I wish I had the Irish.
Don't you do translations?

There they are, gawping at me, wide-eyed,
like I'm some kind of odd-ball
just rolled out of lingo-land,
making them all uneasy.
And how glad they are when it's over
glad the 'English' poet is up next
with a few jokes to smooth over
the slight hitch in the evening.

And here he is
with his talk of 'café culture' and 'Seamus.'

Here he is to prove to them
they are witty, broad-minded and cultured;
that they get the gist of this poetry thing
that tops and tails the evening.
Here he is now.

And there's me in the corner,
alone, dejected,
gawping wide-eyed with jealousy,
drunk on the red wine of my poetry,

my 'Irish' poetry
that no-one understood.

The poem succeeds in laying bare the paradoxical nature of translation with minority literatures, by contradicting its content by the formal fact that the poem in Irish co-exists with its 'reliable' English counterpart, with 'reliable' referring to the presence of the English version rather than describing the translation as a true reflection of each poetic nuance that marks the text in Irish. In fact, the English version is a fairly free translation, which suggests that the poem in English grew from within its own linguistic and cultural framework after the initial translation stage. We observe a mirror pattern of language use, which has a mouth-music-style Irish phrase in the English translation compensating for an English phrase used to satirical effect in the Irish poem. A line translating literally as 'with the fizzy ('aerated') water of English' is realised as 'with hub-bubbly English', a line couplet reading literally 'as they would look at the odd man out (odd bird) / that puts some kind of discomfort on them' turns into the three lines 'like I'm some kind of odd-ball / just rolled out of lingo-land / making them all uneasy', 'aistrithe' (translated) becomes 'trans-lated'. As becomes apparent, both versions are quite separately catering for their respective intended readerships, which, in effect, evaluates the readership of the source text as much as that of the target text. A translation approach which therefore excepts and embraces difference may well be due to the understanding that if translation was an expression of sameness, it simply would be an impossible task As Mac Lochlainn puts it himself, 'the translator/translation is […] at a loss. Etymological associations and connotations, punning and onomatopoeic echoings are almost always certain to go' (Crowe, 2003):

But translation really gets into deep water as we move from the phonological system or sound system of one language into that of another. Each language has its own system of sounds and sound production. This also involves a different approach to the human vocal organs or speech apparatus. As poetry moves from the sound system of one language to that of another, music, rhythm and cadence is lost. The music peculiar and unique to that tongue is left behind. (ibid.)

Mac Lochlainn has, therefore, created a publication environment for his poetry which makes the fact of translation visible, thus stressing the fact of a process of transformation by way of subject matter, collaborative translation work and paratextual features such as the discussion of translation approaches in introduction and notes. In this way, Mac Lochlainn's publication reveals itself as belonging to, and being shaped by, the 'Republic' of Irish letters where 'English translations are a reality', whilst shaping itself accordingly by approaching translations 'cautiously for they often gain an autonomy of their own and eclipse the Irish.' As Thomas Rain Crowe puts it, with *Stream of Tongues*, Mac Lochlainn was eager 'not to let that happen' (ibid.).

For the bilingual Gaelic/English poetry edition this means that the potential reader does not necessarily have to engage with the linguistic and cultural environment of the original texts. From an Anglophone point of view, Gaelic is tamed, at least in this literary context. It does not sting and therefore does not hurt. The facing Gaelic text does not create any discomfort and does not challenge any possible ignorance towards the cultural and historical reality of an existing Gaelic past and present. To adopt Michael Cronin's words, 'the colonial Other is translated into terms of the Imperial Self, with the net result of alienation for the colonised and a fiction of understanding for the coloniser' (2003, p. 92). This is even more the case when the translations are provided by the author with no paratextual information pointing towards the fact that these are indeed translations. As Whyte observes:

I know that poets in both Ireland and Wales, not content with refusing to translate their poems into English, have forbidden any such translations to be published. Gaelic poets in Scotland do not feel themselves in a strong enough position to take up such a belligerent stance. (2000, p. 182-3)

The following is a questionnaire reply by one of the more widely published Gaelic poets dealing with this precise issue:

> I am aware of a degree of pressure to follow the Irish example of insisting on the independence of the original and the translation by using a different translator. For myself I don't mind if the boundary between the two is blurred. […] I usually experience someone else's translation of my work as a distortion. I work on the Gaelic much more than the English. I strive for alliteration, rhythmic patterns, references to Gaelic culture in the Gaelic. My English translations by contrast are rather less contrived; the Gaelic collocations of words from which the poetry springs may go unnoticed in the mind of an English reader - but this is a matter of the furnishings of the mind rather than the language. A Gaelic reader would pick up on those sensuosities (I doubt this word exists) whether in the original or in translation. (A2)

Another author states the following with regard to the same issue:

> Either English is or is not capable of absorbing/displacing Gaelic/German etc without spilling a drop. It is the presumption of the English-speaking community at large that English is entirely capable of such. But if this is the case, then we have no need for Gaelic or German or anything other than English. Ni Beurla a' chuis [*sic*, literally 'English does the business', my translation]. The only rationale for retaining languages other than English is that something gets lost in translation. It is my contention, a contention of which I am utterly convinced, that a phenomenal amount is lost in translation, even the most superb of translations. (A7)

As Irish poet Liam Prút states 'in the end, no Gaelic poet minds if their poems are read in English, Chinese, Croat or any other language at all, as long as the status of the original is not compromised' (Grigor, 2003). Yet this very statement nevertheless suggests a closeness between the Anglophone and the minority literatures in question here which indeed compromises that status, and that is not merely the status of the original as a text but of the original as an entire literature that is written and read. Returning to the Welsh context, we find Davies observing that:

> Despite my profound commitment to Welsh, the process of English has proved a bridge across which my creativity has travelled. Of course, I'm all for bridges, as long as the traffic across them isn't all

one way. This is where I face troubling questions. Much as I might wish it, how many people, if any, are really going to be drawn into a deeper acquaintance with Welsh through my translated work? I hope that there will be some, but I am not sure. What I do know is that translation has opened up a new territory for me to cross over into a different world. Where I go from here I don't know. (2004b, p. 60)

Davies continues by identifying translation into English as 'essentially an extractive industry, mining rich texts from the veins of the minority culture for the delectation of the majority' (ibid., p. 62), before making a convincing case for translations of literary works into Welsh rather than out of it.[7] Similarly, one of the editors of Gaelic poetry voiced his concern in reply to the questionnaire that translation of Gaelic poetry into English as presented in a bilingual edition might be an activity in which 'very little is gained for the "donor" (Gaelic) culture' as it is a pursuit 'for the benefit of the "external" readership, most of the time' (E1), thus leaving important issues with regard to an 'internal' readership out of sight. One such issue is the development of a substantial literary corpus with minority languages. In a Gaelic context, the case for translation into Gaelic was already made by Iain Crichton Smith (Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn) as early as 1967, when he gestured at the open spaces in the Gaelic literary corpus needing to be filled (Smith, 1967, p. 10). As yet, such a translation project remains largely unexplored, particularly for adult literature. Another issue is to further the maturity of adult literacy in the context of an 'underused' language. As a staff member of a Highland-based publisher of Gaelic literature reflects:

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[7] Also note the following: Davies' article 'Sleeping with the Enemy' as published in the *New Welsh Review* (2004b) starts off with 'Adultery, bloodshed, war. Yes, it's the world of literary translation in Wales.' The same article as published a year later in *Five Essays on Translation* (Davies, 2005) we find 'Adultery, addiction, bloodshed, war. Yes, it's the world of literary translation in Wales.' In October 2005 during a plenary discussion as part of the Third Mercator Symposium on Translation and Media in Minority Languages in Aberystwyth, Davies voiced very little in terms of a critical attitude towards translation . Asking Davies after the discussion about this whilst pointing towards the highly critical and passionate voice that could be perceived in his article, he said that since he first wrote this article, his attitude had changed. The addition of the word 'addiction' in the later version of his article might well suggest a kind of 'giving in' to the attraction of publication through the medium of English. This case indeed exemplifies the sheer magnitude of the attractiveness of English, given that there is a considerable awareness amongst Welsh-language authors of the problematic relationship between a minority language and translation into a majority language. We should, however, also note that this is an isolated example of one author's approach and does not necessarily represent a broader trend.

> When I see a bilingual edition of something, I […] feel it's a waste, except probably for the odd learner here and there. People who are not very fluent readers of Gaelic will possibly not even try to read the Gaelic text. (And there are many native Gaelic speakers who had little chance to improve their reading skills in schools in the past!) Clàr doesn't really *want* to publish material in English as we believe it stops *reluctant* Gaelic readers from ever trying, or bothering, to read the Gaelic text. (P5)

Besides an awareness that translation practices which impact positively on Gaelic literature and general efforts towards reversing language shift differ from those of the opposite effect, the need to provide monolingual texts for Gaelic readers is clearly identified.

It is noticeable here that in both the Welsh and Irish literary circles, it is the authors who strongly express their reservations with regard to translations, whereas in the Scottish Gaelic context such reservations are more likely to be voiced by editors (see comments by E1 and E7 in Chapter 2.3), or publishers (see P5 and P3 as cited in Chapter 2.3). Concerns regarding translation, and self-translation in particular, are rarely brought to the fore by the authors of the poetry. Only one poet of considerable reputation, for whom Gaelic is a second language, namely Christopher Whyte, has decided to abandon self-translation, resorting to monolingual publication or collaborative work where translations are required, as the practice of self-translation 'undermines the credibility of the whole process' of writing in Gaelic in the first place since, as he explains, 'readers of both will pronounce the translation superior to the Gaelic original (one of the more subtle methods native speakers have come up with to disqualify learners who attempt to join their language community)' (2000, p. 183). The following paragraph looks more closely at the attitude Whyte shows with regard to writing in Gaelic, as there is an interesting dichotomy between the very personal process that is the actual writing and the social-ideologically driven choices of publication, rendering the product of writing into a socially shared artefact.

5.2.4 Writing as Private Space

In a letter addressing issues raised by the present research, Whyte points towards the 'essentially and irremediably private nature of the choice' of writing in Gaelic (letter to author, July 4/5 2002). He elaborates on this point by letting a fellow European poet speak in his place. Quoting extracts from the writings of Slovak writer Martin M. Šimecka entitled 'Story About a Language', Whyte highlights dynamics which deeply resonate with him as a poet writing in Gaelic, a language which is not his mother tongue:

> I created for myself an area of careless freedom that had no other effect or meaning beyond the one I granted it […]. I was sure that I bore no responsibility for my writings about love and death beyond a literary responsibility, and even that was a responsibility to myself. I knew intimately the few dozen of my readers […]. The Slovak language was admirably suitable for my writing. I purged it of all the clichés and ideological connections used by the regime. […]. I found myself in the realm of naive and pure words freed from social and ideological detritus, in the realm of words that was ideal for my desire for naivety and purity. (ibid., citing Šimecka, 1999, pp. 180-81)

Whyte's choice of Gaelic reflects a conscious choice of literary language in which he could write 'with enchanting and utter freedom (though not without constant worries about solipsism)' (ibid.). In his poem 'Cnuasachd', an extract of which precedes this chapter, Whyte deals with this very idea in a lyrical manner. His poem 'Màthair-Chainnt' (unpublished), which I have referred to in Chapter 4, reveals the poet's struggle even to determine what exactly the attraction of that chosen private space is (nach teàrainteach, no socair / ach doirbhe is coimheachas / a bha gam shìor-tharraing).[8] Yet, whatever the precise nature of the relationship between language and poet on a personal and creative level, his choice was that of a minority language, which might well have added to the attraction yet also brought with it an awareness that matters with a minority language cannot easily be divorced from ideologically and politically driven motivations (as we have seen in Chapter 1.2). Not surprisingly, Whyte acknowledges that 'I cannot help worrying that those who speak the language

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[8] '… / that is was not security, nor comfort / but adversity and unfriendliness / that forever drew me in…' [my translation]

every day or fight for its social and political status would see me as a renegade or simply irresponsible' (letter to author, July 4/5 2002).

How then can such an understanding of the space that is writing be reconciled with Bakhtin's conviction that 'the act of speaking is more than simply preparing a message; it is actively anticipating its reception, that is to say, imagining the world and disposition of the listener' (Brown, 2000, p. 35)? One could argue, that the presence of translation, in particular self-translation, leads us away from the personal space in that the quest for an audience beyond a Gaelic-reading one becomes apparent. Here I would like to recall the argument made in Chapter 3.1, that in terms of a general understanding of translation action every translation answers a particular skopos, i.e. fulfils a certain purpose, and is shaped accordingly both as a process as well as a product (see also section 5.3 below). With Gaelic poetry, then, the translation by the author reveals the desire to communicate where communication through the original writing is deemed to fail by not attracting a substantial readership, whether that desire originated with the author, the publisher or indeed the audience. By the same argument, the contrary approach to translation, i.e. non-translation in Gaelic poetry publications, would reveal a different attitude towards the desire to establish a communication with a wider readership. As Whyte states, 'At some level I feel that if people are really interested in my work, then they should take the trouble to learn Gaelic in order to read it, unrealistic as such expectations may be' (letter to author, July 4/5 2002). The idea of poetic language as a private space does not contradict the perception of literature in publication as a shared social genre. Indeed, it is an acute awareness of the literary space as a shared social genre which leads some authors to abandon self-translation, where the majority opts for bilingual editions presenting self-translations. Translation and publication choices are therefore a means of communicating a text within the spheres of the socially shared genre of literature. In that respect, translation and publication choices reveal where in the complex world of literary production and appreciation each text aims at positioning itself.

5.2.5   The World Republic of Letters and Literary Prestige

To understand the vastly complex nature of literary writing both as a process and a product originating from a specific cultural context requires adopting a perspective that views literary production in its socio-political context, as is argued by Pascale Casanova:

> The persistent tendency of critics to isolate texts from one another prevents them from seeing in its entirety the configuration (to use Michel Foucault's term) to which all texts belong; that is the totality of texts and literary and aesthetic debates with which a particular work of literature enters into relation and resonances, and which forms the true basis for its singularity, its real originality. (2004, p. 3)

For literary writing from within a minority language, this means adopting a perspective which views minority language literatures in 'its dialogic posture between two worlds' (Brown, 2000. p. 35), that is to say, between the world occupied by the minority language and that occupied by the majority language which is marked by dynamics answering to what Casanova calls 'literary prestige'. As Casanova illuminates, well-established prestigious literatures depend on:

> the existence of a more or less extensive professional 'milieu', a restricted and cultivated public […], a specialized press, and sought-after publishers with distinguished lists who compete with one another; on respected judges of talent, whose reputation and authority as discoverers of unknown literary texts may be national or international; and, of course, on celebrated writers wholly devoted to the task of writing. (2004, p. 15)

Similarly, the lack of any or all the above within a certain culture signifies a lack of literary prestige for the literature of that culture. Given that literature is thus viewed as occupying a literary space which is a network designed by social and market realities, it is not surprising that language itself, and especially the choice of language, is identified as 'another major component of literary capital' (ibid., p. 17). Here Casanova observes that 'the political sociology of language studies the usage and relative "value" of languages only in political and economic terms, ignoring that

which, in the world of letters, defines their linguistic and literary capital – what I propose to call *literariness*' (ibid., p. 17, her italics). As she goes on to argue:

> Literary value therefore attaches to certain languages, along with purely literary effects (notably connected with translation) that cannot be reduced to the strictly linguistic capital possessed by a particular language or to the prestige associated with the use of a particular language in the world of scholarship, politics, and economics. (ibid., p. 18)

In his letter, Whyte directly addresses the issue of language choice in the light of literary prestige. This time he chooses to quote Sándor Márai:

> There are five hundred million English speakers, and yet there lived and still live many outstanding English writers whose work is almost completely unknown to those five hundred million people: large dimensions do not offer huge possibilities to a writer in the creative sense of the word. It is astonishing how individual writers and their life's work can disappear without trace within a major language […]. It is no misfortune to write in an isolated, threatened language, provided there are people who understand it - rather it is a powerful encouragement... within the 'major' languages writers can be horrendously alone and unattended to - it may well be harder to break out of this differently structured, large scale isolation than from the marginalised condition of a small language. (letter to author, July 4/5 2002, citing Sándor Márai, 1959, Whyte's translation)

This stands in contrast to the following attitude towards the lesser-used language which can also be detected amongst authors writing in a minority language as is pointed out by Albert Memmi:

> The mother tongue of the colonized [writer] […] has no dignity in his [own] country or in the concert of peoples. If he wishes to practice a trade, make a place for himself, exist in public life and in the world, he must first submit to the language of others, that of the colonizers, his masters. In the linguistic conflict that goes on inside the colonized [writer], his mother tongue ends up being humiliated, crushed. And since this contempt has an objective basis, he ends up sharing it himself. (1957, p. 126, cited in Casanova, 2004, pp. 258-9, her emendation)

Both attitudes are highly interesting in that they relate to historically changing attitudes present within the world of Gaelic poetry and in doing so reveal a

development. With poets such as Sorley MacLean (Somhairle MacGill-Eain) and Derick Thomson (Ruaraidh MacThòmais), we have authors who chose to write in their mother tongue and to work against the lack of prestige, which was very much acknowledged by these authors by the mere fact that they were increasingly seeking a readership via English translations. This in itself has led towards an increased appreciation of Gaelic poetry within the English-reading literary world in Scotland and beyond, with Gaelic poetry now being regarded as an attractive literary world to which to belong. The advantages of working in a relatively small literary world as suggested by Márai in terms of recognition are, as I would like to argue, further amplified by translation into the neighbouring language of higher prestige, in that a highly developed literary infrastructure provides the opportunity for increased literary prestige. In addition to that, the perceived strangeness and marginality of the source language and culture may add to the attractiveness of the texts in the more prestigious target culture. In that respect, the anticipated 'otherness' of Gaelic poetry as perceived by an English-language readership may well increase the attention paid to it in an Anglophone world.

5.2.6   The Lure of the Foreign

Whyte has already mentioned dynamics with regard to Gaelic poetry and the prospects of publication elsewhere, arguing that 'the danger is that [one] may fall victim to positive discrimination […]. My own experience suggests that it is actually easier to get into print if one writes in Gaelic than in either of Scotland's two other literary languages' (1996, pp. 57-8). In the introduction to *An Tuil*, Ronald Black highlights similar issues, referring to Stephanie Wolfe Murray of the Scottish-based publishers Canongate, who explains that:

> we have published quite a few original works by Scottish authors and poets although not as many as I would have liked. It is a hard slog, financially unrewarding. With the exception of Gaelic poetry, our poetry books do not make any money. (Black 1999, lxvi)

The recent success of a number of anthologies (MacDhòmhnaill, 1998, Black, 1999, MacDonald, 2000, Black, 2001, Meek, 2003 and McLeod and Bateman, 2007)

suggest that Birlinn, a competitive, market-orientated and highly successful publishing company based in Edinburgh, have also found the positive market value of Gaelic poetry in English translations confirmed.[9]

Similar dynamics are noted with neighbouring minority languages, with Grahame Davies observing an increased interest in Welsh literature in English, with grants offered to broaden the corpus of available publications (2004a, p. 7). With regard to Irish language literature in English translation, Ó Muirí likewise notes 'a growth of poetry translation from the Irish language', with an increased presence of bilingual poetry anthologies (1993, p. 15). As we have seen (cf. Chapter 2.3), the bilingual edition of Gaelic poetry can be attractive for the Gaelic speaker who, through education, has become an English reader. Furthermore, Black points out that Gaelic poetry editions offering English translations on the facing page turn such a publication into 'a sort of learner's textbook', therefore having its profitability potential increased by appealing to those who want to learn Gaelic (personal correspondence). Yet, the enthusiasm for consuming what is labelled Gaelic in an English-speaking world is not entirely restricted to literature. The growing Anglophone market for Gaelic song and traditional music recordings (cf. Lang and McLeod, 2005) is another example of the apparent attractiveness of Gaelic as a cultural label. On the one hand, this could be seen as a positive development in that the profile of Gaelic song and music is raised. On the other hand, however, the continuous marketing of Gaelic culture in an 'Xian via Yish' way (cf. Fishman, 1991), i.e. suggesting transparent access to the cultural goods of a minority or threatened language and culture through the linguistic and cultural domain of the hegemonic language, might well trigger the perception of 'Gaelic culture for sale' (cf. Lang and McLeod, 2005, also see Chapter 2.2.3). Similarly, the appeal of 'celtic'-labelled religious orientations could be seen in such lights, i.e. as unquestioned consumption of the 'other' which is perceived to be unearthed from hidden grounds by the hegemonic culture. As such, cultural consumption of this kind might also be fuelled by the romantic notion of the other at the margin of the world, with '"primitive" people who preserve aspects of culture and society which have

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[9] Note that McLeod and Bateman (2007) has considerably more Gaelic-medium paratext than previous Birlinn publications as the result of the editors' request.

been lost, discarded or destroyed elsewhere' (Meek, 2000, p. 57, also cf. Chapter 1). The power of 'Gaelic' as a label for a text or a discourse is apparently potent, which is interesting in the light of the otherwise rather apprehensive attitude towards Gaelic in socio-political settings concerned with the promotion of actual language use. In what follows, I will again adopt a general view on translation as purpose-driven action, in order to comprehend fully the problematic relationship Gaelic poetry shares with its facing English counterparts provided by the Gaelic author.

5.3   Skopos Theory of Translation and the Format of Literary Publications

Considering communication as dialogically orientated with literary writing as a written act of verbal communication which 'already anticipates that active response in the receiving other and so shapes itself to take it into account' (Morris, 1994, p. 5), the English self-translation in the bilingual edition is a highly significant act in that it signifies a conscious effort to communicate, i.e. to reach an audience which the original text is presumed to fail to reach (as pointed out in section 5.2.4). This brings us back to skopos theory, as discussed in Chapter 3. Skopos theory of translation is a general translation theory which defines translation as a purpose-driven action, with the translator as responsible performer of translational action, who is conscious of what skopos (i.e. purpose) underlies each translation activity, since different translation choices will have different impacts on the reception of the translated text (Vermeer, 1996). I would like to argue that considering skopos theory in the context of Gaelic literature is, on the one hand, highly enabling, in that it raises consciousness regarding acts of translation whilst highlighting the fact that translational action inevitably has an impact on the reception of the source literature in question. With regard to choices between different translation approaches, on the other hand, considering skopos theory is revealing in that it allows us to ask whether translation and publication practices surrounding Gaelic poetry fit the purpose of promoting the development of literacy amongst learners and native speakers, or indeed of keeping the emphasis on the original poetry, as has been argued by some authors and editors (see Chapter 2.3). Within the publication itself, it is the

paratextual spaces which provide the opportunity to state a particular skopos, in other words, to inform the readership about who a particular publication is addressed at and what it is aiming to achieve. By the same argument, a lack of paratext is just as revealing with regard to the purpose of any particular publication format. I will therefore now consider the importance of paratext with regard to literary publications in general in order to draw conclusion with respect to our specific cultural context.

5.3.1 Paratext

To realise any defined skopos in a translation publication, the translator/editor does not just have the primary literary text to work with. With translation in particular, it is the paratextual possibilities which allow for the space to raise a readership's consciousness with regard to the translation process which preceded the publication, i.e. supporting the process of conscientisation (as discussed in Chapter 3.2.2) with regard to the translation process. As Wolf defines it, 'paratexts as carriers of messages which accompany the text are inevitably part of the literary discourse by which the literary text is constituted. They surround a text in order to make it present and to assure its reception and its consumption' (2003, p. 120-1). In his influential study of the phenomena of paratextual devices, Gerard Genette argues that a:

> text rarely appears in its naked state without reinforcement and accompaniment of a certain number of productions, themselves verbal or not, like an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations [...] in order to present it, in the usual sense of this verb, but also in its strongest meaning: [...] to assure its presence in the world, its 'reception' and its consumption. (1991, p. 261)

Genette develops his argument further by suggesting that, through mere transcription, every text is bestowed with a material context, which induces the existence of paratext. As he concludes, 'seen in this way, one can probably suggest that there does not exist, and there never has existed, a text without paratext' (ibid., p. 263). Similarly, I would like to argue that no translated text exists without paratext for here too one is concerned with paratextual features which are frequently omitted in the process of translation editing and publishing, such as the name of the translator, the languages involved, translation strategies etc. The 'influence of

paratext on the text's reception', which Wolf so clearly identifies with regard to translational activity, can manifest itself in rather dramatic ways in a minority literature context (2003, p.121). We might arrive at the conclusion, that through presenting or withholding information in the space reserved for paratext, the appearance of a literature of a certain cultural community, especially if we consider cultural communities with a minority language at its core, might be manipulated into an existence as a literature that is either visible or invisible. It is the awareness of such manipulating potential of paratext, then, that makes it possible for editors and publishers to re-establish the visibility of minority literatures, especially if such literatures depend largely on translation in their struggle both for recognition as works of art and for financial viability. In other words, as Wolf states, citing Genette, '"each context creates a paratext": to know or not to know the context creates two different readings' (ibid., p. 121).

Considering our specific case of Gaelic poetry in translation, I would like to argue that paratextual devices could play an important role in making Gaelic poetry visible as poetry which is composed in Gaelic and which leads an independent life in a world in which the need for English translations seems undeniable. Overtly pointing towards the translation process which has led to a particular publication is a concrete step towards the visibility of Gaelic poetry. Contemplating the function of paratext in the context of feminist-oriented translation approaches, Wolf argues that rich paratextual tapestry as a means towards 'feminist "conscientisation" not only fosters the translator's visibility (an aspect very dear to feminist translation), but also promotes feminist subjectivities and enriches our cultural background' (2003, p. 128). Similarly, one could argue that paratextual devices are of paramount importance to a literary context which is concerned with the well-being of a minority language literature. Incidentally, the insistence on the importance of paratextual features for the visibility of the translation process also raises the profile of the translator as creative and manipulating agent, both within the primary literary text and with regard to the surrounding publication space, both of which cannot fail to raise the visibility of the original literature. Having thus established that every publication has various options to communicate with its readership, we will now

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have to seek answers as to what bilingual Gaelic/English poetry books based on self-translation aim to communicate to their readerships. In that respect, these publications will be viewed beyond the primary literary texts, while reflecting back on how the 'packaging' of the literature in question will affect the reception of the primary literary texts at the heart of the publications.

5.3.2   Location of Meaning with Bilingual Gaelic/English Poetry

As Bakhtin insists, the coming into being of meaning is inescapably a dialogical event. As Clark and Holquist elaborate, 'the Bakhtinian self is never whole, since it can exist only dialogically. It is not a substance or essence in its own right but exists only in a tensile relationship with all that is other and, most important, with other selves' (1984, p. 65). By extension of the argument, the self that is the text can also be argued to have 'no meaning "in itself," for without the environment to engage and test its capacity to respond, it would have no living existence' (ibid., p. 66). Consequently:

> there is no reason for saying that meaning belongs to a word as such. In essence, meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers; that is, meaning is realized only in the process of active, responsive understanding […]. It is like an electric spark that occurs only when two different terminals are hooked together. Those who ignore theme (which is accessible only to active, responsive understanding) and who, in attempting to define the meaning of a word, approach its lower, stable, self-identical limit, want, in effect, to turn on a light bulb after having switched off the current. Only the current of verbal intercourse endows a word with the light of meaning. (Morris, 1994, pp. 35-6)

Considering reading patterns with regard to the bilingual en-face edition in a special edition of *Visible Language* dedicated to bilingualism in literature, Lance Hewson observes that, with the bilingual edition, '[the] translation […] is taken to be *the* translation of a work' (1993, p. 150). Furthermore, he reminds us that 'it should not be forgotten that such an edition contrasts directly with the source text published by itself in its original culture, and the target text published without reference to the source text' (ibid., p. 155). Arguing that, with the text published in its original format

only, it is firmly embedded in the source culture it sprang from, inviting the reader to appreciate the text from within such a perspective – and this I consider of crucial importance in the context of Gaelic literature – Hewson contrasts the position that the bilingual edition 'is, in Meschonnic's terminology, "decentered" towards the second language-culture, seen in the light of the translation it has undergone' (ibid., p. 155, referring to Meschonnic, 1973, p. 30). He arrives at the conclusion that:

> in the bilingual edition, the very presence of a target text on the facing page acts as a magnet attracting the target language reader back towards his or her own culture, thus biasing the reader and presenting him or her with a version of the text which will inevitably have adopted some of the target language norms. (ibid., p. 155)

Considering that with both Gaelic native speakers and Gaelic learners, it will most likely be a reader more used to reading in English who comes to the bilingual edition, we could argue that the English text has the potential for releasing an even greater magnetic force in comparison to the version in Gaelic than an English text in any bilingual edition shared with a language of equal status in terms of language use. As one of the editors replied to the questionnaire, there is the real chance that 'at the slightest occasion of uncertainty or difficulty, the eye will invariably stray to the English for a quick "solution"' which 'inevitably reduces the status and impact of the original for Gaelic speakers, especially given the literacy imbalance between Gaelic and English' (E7, as cited in Chapter 2.3.6).[10]

This is a fair assumption, and indeed such reading patterns have been confirmed in close reading session in support of this thesis (as discussed in section 5.4.3. below). Here it is useful to enquire about research in support of the argument that the presence of a majority language text attracts considerable more attention from the reader than the facing text in the minority language

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[10] Note anthology publications which do not present source and target texts en-face, but rather print one text following the other (MacMillan and Byrne, 2003), or place the translation at the bottom of the page in footnote-like text format (Byrne, 2003) as conscious efforts to interrupt established publication formats.

5.3.2.1   Stroop Effect

To date there appears to be a lack of research which investigates reading patterns with the bilingual edition in a minority language contexts. Furthermore, it remains to be investigated how the impact on literacy levels with speakers and learners of underused languages differs between monolingual and bilingual teaching or reading material.[11] Generally bilingual editions are evaluated in the light of their impact beyond the minority language target audience, as is the confirmed perception amongst many of those working within the Gaelic literary world (as has been discussed in sections 2.2 and 2.3). Indeed, some scholars concerned with endangered languages and their relation to literacy view the bilingual edition as a 'useful aid to language learning particularly with the help of a dictionary' (Blythe and Kofod, 2002, pp. 72-3). Some research has been conducted, however, within the field of cognitive psychology with regard to bilingualism which can throw some light on the issue of reading patterns with speakers of underused languages. Even more interestingly, such research, namely the measurement of the Stroop phenomenon with bilingual subjects, has involved native Gaelic speakers. As the authors of the experiment explain, 'the traditional Stroop task requires subjects to name the colour of print in which a word is presented' (Gerhan *et al.*, 1995, p. 89, referring to Stroop, 1935). The Stroop effect itself can be described as a delay in naming what has cognitively been recognised, working on the basic assumption that 'when the word is the name of a colour other than that in which it is written, this process takes longer than when word and colour are congruent' (ibid., p. 89). This particular experiment, however, was based on 'an object-word Stroop-based task':

> Forty adult speakers of English and Gaelic, living on the Isle of
> Lewis, Scotland, aged 18-65, participated in the experiment. All were
> bilingual, using Gaelic as their preferred spoken language, but rarely
> for written communication (until recently, Gaelic was not taught in

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[11] This has been confirmed in personal correspondence with Cor van der Meer from the Mercator-Education research and documentation centre based in Ljouwert/Leeuwarden, Netherlands. Also consider a reply by Lance Hewson to my query for information with regard to such a research 'When I wrote the article you refer to, it was very much based on my own subjective observations. I've never found much written on the subject […] I always thought there was room for some original research' (personal correspondence).

schools on the island). They constituted a relatively homogeneous sample of subjects, with clearly established linguistic primacy. They differed from other bilingual populations studied in that the process of reading was more automatic for their non-preferred language. (ibid., p. 90)

The findings of the experiment suggested a hierarchical order of inter-lingual and intra-lingual interference with 'the effect produced by Gaelic labelling and responses [being] significantly less than that evoked by English labelling and English responses' (ibid., p. 91). In that respect, 'inter-lingual effects were observed in English and Gaelic', yet, significantly, 'intra-linguistic effects were virtually absent when distractor labels were in Gaelic, the language in which these subjects were less familiar in written form' (ibid., p. 91). The experiment, therefore, found that 'the reading of English words [was] more automatic than the reading of Gaelic, despite Gaelic being the subjects' preferred spoken language' (ibid., p. 89).

Here we have to acknowledge, however, that the Stroop phenomenon works across different media of cognitive recognition, i.e. from the non-verbal visual (i.e. colours and objects) to the verbal visual (i.e. the written word). To confirm the conclusion of English as the more automated reading process with the bilingual Gaelic/English edition, and thus the more engaging based on research concerned with the written medium only, it would be possible to conduct eye-tracking research as performed by the Department of Psychology at the University of Edinburgh (also cf. Pollatsek and Rayner, 1989). Using eye-tracking technology, this research can record and analyse reading patterns across pages. In a Gaelic context, one should take into account different levels of literacy including native speakers, initial learners as well as advanced learners; also different kind of texts would need to be taken into account with traditional material versus 'modern' material etc. I strongly suspect that such research would find that the English version will indeed function as a magnet, thus confirming what has already been argued, namely that present publication practices with Gaelic poetry are in danger of hindering the development of Gaelic as a read language and literature, in that they reinforce a reading pattern that is already in place. At this point in the discussion it is useful to re-visit postcolonial literary criticism, as we will have to rely on theoretical explorations in order to arrive at a

deeper understanding of reading patterns with the bilingual poetry edition based on self-translation in a minority language context.

5.3.2.2   Location of Meaning: A Postcolonial Studies Perspective

As becomes apparent with Bill Ashcroft's 'Constitutive graphonomy' (1995, pp. 298-99), postcolonial thinking owes much to Bakhtinian thinking when it comes to defining where meaning occurs in communication between humans. This is not surprising, given that both Bakhtin's thinking and postcolonial theory are concerned with re-thinking and re-locating the instances of meaningful communication during a century which has seen an increasing consciousness of the perspective-dependent and ambiguous nature of authority and truth, and which in turn has proceeded to deconstruct stable reference points for universal meaning. Contemplating the coming into being of meaning, Homi Bhabha argues that 'the pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement' (1995, p. 208). Rather, as Ashcroft explains:

> the written text is a social situation. That is to say, it has its existence in something more than the marks on the page, namely in the participations of social beings whom we call writers and readers, who constitute the writing as communication. (1995, p. 298)

Meaning thus occurs at the point of a voicing and a perception of the utterance at a real moment in time conditioned by historical and social forces. As such:

> Meaning is no longer constructed by the […] author […] and offered as a gift to a passive recipient self […]. Meaning is produced by the fully social interaction of all participants 'in the creative event, which does not for a single instant cease to be an event of living communication involving all.' (Morris, 1994, p. 8, citing Vološinov, 1987, p. 107)

With regard to the social conditioning of such an utterance, Loomba emphasises that 'the sign, or words, need a community with shared assumptions to confer them with meaning' (1998, p. 35). What is more, according to Bakhtinian thought *words are always filled with content and meaning drawn from behavior or ideology*. That is the

way we understand words, and we can respond only to words that engage us behaviorally or ideologically' (Morris, 1994, p. 33, her italics). Indeed, Loomba comes to the conclusion that 'on the basis of this, we can think of language as ideological rather than objective' (1998, p. 35). As has already been suggested with Gaelic poetry, the behavioural engagement lies with English, which therefore adds to the attraction of the English text. In terms of ideological engagement, we have seen in Chapter 2 that there is still a reluctance amongst Gaelic native speakers to accept modern poetry in Gaelic with its intellectually driven ambitions, which stand in such stark contrast to traditional Gaelic verse. Consequently, the actual engagement with a text during any reading of Gaelic poetry could at least be questioned as to whether that reading process is an actual engagement with Gaelic poetry, for, as Morris summarises Bakhtin:

> the task of understanding does not basically amount to recognizing the form used, but rather to understanding it in a particular, concrete context, to understanding its meaning in a particular utterance, i.e., it amounts to understanding its novelty and not to recognizing its identity. (1994, p. 33)

Having consulted research conducted in the field of cognitive psychology and postcolonial theory concerned with the location of meaning, it will now be the task to draw conclusions with regard to reading patterns with the bilingual Gaelic/English poetry edition before contemplating the skopos behind such a publication format.

5.3.2.3   Reading Patterns with Bilingual Gaelic/English Poetry Editions

As Susan Bassnett points out with regard to en-face texts, 'surely the printing of these two versions side by side means that we read both texts and grapple with the dialectical relationship between them. If they were published separately we could perfectly well just read one of them and be satisfied' (1998a, p. 31). The bilingual Gaelic/English edition, then, inevitably invites a reading which views the Gaelic and the English text comparatively, with the word 'x' in Gaelic realised as the word 'y' in English. With the poem preceding Chapter 4 then, the reader unfamiliar with the word 'cidhis', a word which is not necessarily part of an active Gaelic vocabulary,

will learn by glancing over to the English version of the text that it means 'mask', i.e. Gaelic 'cidhis' equals English 'mask'. Such reading practices, which interpret the Gaelic in terms of the facing English, are not merely restricted to the level of individual words. Staying with 'samhla', the line 'ged nach brist mi tro bhàrr mo ghrèidhidh le sùrd' was revealed as somewhat ambiguous during close reading sessions (see Appendix B), with informants struggling with the imagery and turning immediately to the line in English which reads 'though I may not burst through the film that embalms me', and gains attractiveness over the Gaelic by mere fact of clarity. Indeed, MacNeacail confirms that with both 'cidhis' and 'grèidheadh' the dictionary served as point of reference during the writing process (personal correspondence). With regard to the reading process, this means, however, that the meaningful engagement with the poem occurs more firmly with the English text, whereas with the monolingual text in Gaelic the denotative meaning remains supported by the surrounding words in the same language. What is more, an invited parallel reading of the two different language versions might well end up in linear reading of the English language version given the attractiveness of the English text stemming from its relatively easier readability compared to the Gaelic text. Given prevailing publication practices and reception dynamics, one could conclude that modern Gaelic poetry becomes most meaningful in the shape of its English 'doppelgänger' (McLeod, 1998, p. 151). The corpus of modern Gaelic verse could thus fairly be argued to be a Gaelic flavoured extension to the already large canon of literature in English. As such it ironically fits the criteria for inclusion in the corpus of the new literatures in English (see Chapter 1).

This leads me back to considering the skopos of such publications. If not informed about the purpose of a particular translation, readers may yet infer underlying agendas by noting particular publication approaches. With the bilingual Gaelic/English edition of contemporary poetry by single authors, as they have been published increasingly since the early 1990s, we observe a lack of paratext which points towards the translation process that leads to the final format of the publication, in other words, the translation is not identified as such nor is the translation process discussed. Furthermore, English is the preferred choice for paratextual devices

generally. Given, moreover, that an *en-face* publication format suggests equivalence by virtue of showing the text in one language as mirrored by the text in the other, the Gaelic/English poetry publication allows for smooth consumption through the medium of English, suitable to raise the profile of individual authors and Gaelic poetry on the whole in an English-speaking world. In such a light, the seemingly ideologically driven exclamation, 'We are still here' (MacNeacail, 1998, p. 155, as referred to in Chapter 2.2.4), which suggests language loyalty and therefore a political positioning with regard to language maintenance and development, poses the question of who is the 'we' and who is addressed if made from within a literary world which embraces and relies on the majority culture for its very existence. Note the following point made by an editor in reply to the questionnaire which suggests that seeking the attention of a wider audience through translation:

> can be construed negatively as part of the Gaelic people's attempt to remind others that they are still in existence, and that they need to show how valuable their work is. At that level it could be read as a sign of cultural immaturity and lack of confidence relative to a majority culture. (E1)

The focus, thus, is directed outwardly towards a cultural appreciation by the neighbouring culture of globally acknowledged high prestige. Such a focus, however, diverts attention away from the minority source culture which after all provides the linguistic and literary medium for the source texts. If the agenda, however, was more driven by the needs of the source culture, publication and translation choices would more likely reflect such needs, such translation into the minority language in support of a more robust corpus of literary texts or for monolingual publications to enhance both confidence and pleasure in reading literary texts written in the minority language for a readership consisting of native speakers and learners alike.

I would like to argue that prevailing translation and publication practices with Gaelic poetry may be identified as encratic in nature in that they work within prevailing power-structures which are fertile grounds to the majority culture of hegemonic standing. Prevailing publication formats cannot, therefore, be described as acratic, since they do not function as a (counter-)reaction to a particular language reality

which minoritises Gaelic as a language and literature, even if that is the purpose (skopos) as is implied by some Gaelic authors (see questionnaire replies in Chapter 2.3). Rather, translation and publication practices most commonly applied to Gaelic poetry publications today can fairly be said to be a reflection and a result of language hierarchies surrounding Scottish Gaelic, with English being the more habitual language for the written medium at home as well as being the language which most likely ensures wider critical appreciation (see Chapter 2 for a full discussion). At the same time, however, they support and strengthen such hierarchies, thus functioning as marginalising and therefore minoritising forces in shaping the existence of Gaelic as a literature and language. English translations become the canonical texts which are quoted in critical writing and which are the basis for assessing the worth of the author, which in turn has substantial implications for the development of Gaelic as a language and literature and the development of a Gaelic readership. Considering the more personal motivations leading to translation and self-translation in particular, such as self-translation due to a desire of ownership over the text, as creative expression of the bilingual identity lived by the author, I observe a clash in interest between the individual acts of creativity performed by writers and the effects such individual acts have on the collective medium that is Gaelic poetry.

Moreover, the continuous presentation of their 'native' literature along with the English back-up version, particularly in its modern appearance which on the whole is moving away from traditional literary conventions quite considerably, poses a threat to the very willingness on the part of the Gaelic readership to make sense of the text in Gaelic. This in turn prepares the path for native Gaels to discard what is presented as a Gaelic text as not Gaelic in nature at all, thus denying the development of Gaelic literature as natural in the light of inter-cultural exchange in general in a worldwide context of modernisation, urbanisation and globalisation. As discussed in Chapter 2.2, recent Gaelic poetry has been described as 'English verse in Gaelic' (MacInnes, 1998, p. 342). Similarly, in the introduction to *An Tuil* Black states that 'items like 'Fontana Maggiore' [by Christopher Whyte] […] happened to read beautifully in English, but sprang entirely from non-Gaelic models and sensitivities, and appeared not to have an independent Gaelic existence, to the extent that the Gaelic versions

could not easily be understood without reference to the English' (Black, 1999, p. lxiv). In itself, this statement could be argued to be highly problematic in the light of the discredited notion of 'cultural essence' particularly in postmodern and postcolonial cultural studies (cf. Chapter 1). Furthermore, offering 'Fontana Maggiore' to a Gaelic native speaker in a close reading session, the first instinct was to consult the English translation. Having covered the English translation, I asked my informant to stay with the original. On the basis of the version in Gaelic, the poem was then described as 'convoluted in parts', showing, nevertheless, a 'very clever use of words'. Ultimately, my informant remarked that the poem 'reads well' once engaged with. It could therefore also be argued that the illusion of one-to-one equivalence created by facing translations provided by the author succeeds in rendering the differences between the two texts virtually invisible. As such, established translation and publication practices with Gaelic poetry do not conceive of translation as 'find[ing] its "truth" only when it engages meaningfully with alterities, the differences, the strangeness of the text', as Sherry Simon summarises Berman's understanding of what translation engages with (1999b, pp. 114-5). Thus, by extension of the argument, the poetic dynamics as they unfold in the Gaelic text are likely to remain hidden from the sight of the majority of readers given the prevailing reading patterns. Thus the difference between the two texts remains concealed.

5.4   Difference

With translation and publication practices which create and rely on the illusion of one-to-one equivalence, and thus suggesting transparency, it is important to note that what is difficult to remain aware of as a reader beyond the mere visually-triggered awareness of two texts in two different languages is precisely the textual differences between the texts. For one thing, these are the inevitable subtle differences in translation especially with poetry caused by differing rhythmic and sonic qualities of words between languages, incongruent semantic ranges of words etc. as discussed in Chapter 3. Yet, with Gaelic poetry, there seem to be more pronounced differences, which cannot necessarily be explained on the basis of language difference alone.

To give an example, when reading Aonghas MacNeacail's 'beul beag' (little mouth) (1996, p. 8), a shift in tense is noticeable across the two texts which results in a very different poem in English compared to the poem in Gaelic. Reading the Gaelic, we find a narrative voice addressing a small mouth (beul beag), which is busy making all sorts of shapes and sounds. At the start of each stanza we have the syntactically similar lines 'an inns' thu dhomh', 'an seinn thu dhomh', 'an ith thu mi',[12] based upon the interrogative form of the verb in the present habitual/future tense. These lines suggest an effort by the narrator to make sense of what this little mouth is trying to express on its way to finding words, along with a sense of awe in the light of the sheer stamina and expressiveness of the mouth. At the same time, the lines might be read as humble requests fuelling the game between the two characters who share the space of the poem. In MacNeacail's English translation, however, we find the imperatives 'tell me', 'sing to me', and suddenly the conditional 'would you eat me', which significantly depart from the tone of the poem in Gaelic, abandoning the ambiguity in terms of tense with the original poem, along with the persuasive attitude of tenderness we find in the Gaelic text (see Chapter 6.2 for a full discussion of the relationship between the Gaelic and the English versions in the Gaelic/English poetry pair). Here we have a translation prepared by the author of the original text which results in marked differences between the two texts, more marked than might have been the case if the text had been translated by someone other than the author. This leads me to consider the idea of difference with self-translation in more detail at this point.

5.4.1   Self-Translation and Difference

As I have shown in Chapter 4, some research with regard to self-translation acknowledges difference as the unifying force between the self-translated texts and the originals, as the example of Scheiner's doctoral research shows. She firmly embraces the idea that such difference is due to the social and cultural embeddedness

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[12] 'will you tell me', 'will you sing to me', 'will you eat me' [my translation]

of each text in its own right. In that, she acknowledges her debt to Bakhtin's thinking:

> it is futile to posit the existence of a transcendental referent in the form of a pre-linguistic Ur-text that in some manner confers unity to a given text and its self-translation; the two texts remain marked by difference. […] The self-translated text can never provide a perfect replica of the original for the two do not arise from the same context. As Bassnett puts it, translation is 'one of the processes of literary manipulation, whereby texts are rewritten across linguistic boundaries and that rewriting takes place in a very clearly inscribed cultural and historical context'. (Scheiner, 2000, pp. 87-8, citing Bassnett, 1992, p. xvii)

Following the basic dialogic perception of the '"one" or self' as existing only 'in relation to that of the "other"' with 'identity [as] defined on the external rather than internal plane', self-translation becomes as much an activity where the 'individual defines him-/herself in relation to society' (ibid., p. 88) rather than on the basis of an author's intentionality as any other writing.

> Indeed, a dialogic view of the self directly contradicts Beaujour's argument that the bilingual author engages in self-translation in an attempt to repair 'a profound irreducible psychic split'; the self is not a unitary entity to begin with so it is pointless to speak of reconciliation. (ibid., p. 88, referring to Beaujour, 1989, p. 43)

In fact, Scheiner's explorations reveal that Beaujour's perception of self-translation as 'external representation of what is an internal battle' stands in direct contrast to Bakhtin's understanding that 'orientation in one's own soul (introspection) is in actuality inseparable from orientation in the particular social situation in which the experience occurs' (ibid., p. 37). In our specific case, self-translation can be perceived as the proof of the matter, in that it is the very arm that stretches out to a readership, its very raison d'être being the reality of a social situation in which writing and publication occur. We might well come to share Scheiner's view that 'self-translation does not serve as a means for the bilingual self-translating author to reconcile the two parts of his or her split self, but rather may reveal this author's search for the self in all its multiplicity' (ibid., pp. 88-9). With regard to a minority literature, an author will have to position his or her multiple selves within a literary

world which occupies a space of multiple realities with regard to potential audiences, literary appreciation and, to put it bluntly, literary markets. For literatures written in lesser-used languages these markets vary in terms of the extent to which they exist or indeed in which they guarantee financial viability of literary publications.

5.5   Concluding Remarks

This chapter began by viewing communication as a dialogic act, which, once such an understanding is applied to literature, means that the location of meaning with literary texts lies with the communicative act that is reading, and involves those who compose and those who consume. Furthermore, since each of the participants in this communicative act, i.e. writers, translators, publishers, readers etc., are never positioned outside a social reality determined by societal dynamics at any given time, such dialogic act is informed by the third dimension of social embeddedness. Such an understanding of literature necessarily views writing and reading as actions which cannot escape the social scenario surrounding the literary context in which they take place. These actions become in turn a shaping force in the fabric of present social settings. In that respect, this chapter established a view of Gaelic poetry not as a literary genre merely waiting to be read, but rather as a socially determined cultural genre which becomes meaningful at the time of communication between all agents involved, i.e. author, translator, reader etc. Realising the actual existence of Gaelic poetry as a poetry in a contact zone which is visibly apparent in the bilingual en-face Gaelic/English edition highlights the awareness that each specific action with regard to writing, translating and publishing Gaelic poetry will have implications with regard to the understanding of Gaelic poetry as a literary genre, and with regard to its perception, with each action inviting and ensuring certain readings.

Taking into account the reality of Gaelic as a minority language which due to historical forces has not had the chance to develop its full potential as a written and read language (as discussed in Chapter 1), this chapter arrives at the conclusion that present translation and publication practices with modern Gaelic poetry publications are both a reflection of language realities with regard to literacy and literary prestige

as well as powerful forces in the manifestation of such minoritising realities. The argument in support of a reception of Gaelic poetry in its own right is thus evolving along the underlying thread of difference, which has been identified in Chapter 1 as essential to the condition of human kind and to the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity. Chapter 3.2 has furthermore identified translation as the quintessential instance where the inevitability of cultural differences is revealed, with the product of translation itself marked by difference rather than sameness. It is argued in Chapter 4 that this also applies to the particular practice of self-translation. On a pragmatic level, then, this chapter supports the argument that realising and accepting the differences between the text in Gaelic and in English is an essential step towards the re-evaluation of poetry in Gaelic as an independently standing literary corpus. The following chapter is concerned precisely with the differences, alterities and strangenesses which are revealed in a comparative reading of the Gaelic and the English texts in the bilingual Gaelic/English poetry corpus, which leads us to look at the actual poetry in more detail.

6 Contemporary Gaelic Poetry and Translation: A Comparative Reading of the Self-Translated Text Pair

Facail

Nuair a thig a' bhalbhachd
oirnn, nuair nach dùisg
am facal mac-talla,
nuair nach cluinn
an talla mac-facail
nuair a shìolaidheas an sùgh
a tha cumail lìomh ann an ruith na cainnte,
saoil am bi sinn ann idir,
a seas an iomhaigh
anns an àile thana sin?

Nuair nach fidir
Feur-leughaidh gu bheil facal
a-mach ás àite
a dh'aon-ghnothaich,
nuair a bhios an obair-ghrèis
air a tharraingeachadh ris an t-sìoda,
nuair a bhios an ceòl
flat,
saoil a soirbhich
an gaol?[1]

'Facail' by Derick Thomson (MacThòmais/Thomson, 1982, p. 258)

Not existing in a local vacuum, Gaelic literature is continuously involved in the process of negotiating its literary and cultural identity in the light of global realities both within and beyond its own boundaries to a degree that we might want to question the validity of the term boundaries altogether, and embrace the notion of the contact zone (cf. Chapter 1) as a more apt reference frame for perception. Given such a perception, we will have to ask the question what precisely is the relationship between the Gaelic poem and its English counterpart translated by the author. In fact,

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[1] 'When silence comes / over us, when the word / does not waken an echo, / when the hall does not hear / the son-of-a-word / when the juice subsides / that keeps the shine in the flow of speech / I wonder, will we be there at all / will the image hold up / in that thin air // when will not comprehend / the reader that a word / is out of place / deliberately / when the embroidery / is stitched onto the silk / when the music is / flat /I wonder, will succeed / the love.' [my translation]

the word 'precisely' in that question may well be revealed as an impossible characteristic of the analysis, since cultural contact and subsequent closeness and infiltration, or, to use a more positive word, stimulation, also mean that the cultural identities, be it of texts, their authors or their audiences, become less clear cut and identifiable in their origins. Considering that with contemporary Gaelic poetry, the English 'doppelgänger' (McLeod, 1998, p. 151, as referred to in Chapter 5.3.2.3) does not only demand physical space in poetry collections but moreover asserts its presence during the very process of creative writing, the question of 'Where do we find the poem?' will reveal significant characteristics informing the relationship between the two text versions in the self-translated poetry pair. The poems that are examined here are mainly those chosen to appear in a forthcoming anthology of Scottish poems in German. As such, they form a corpus which, after careful consideration by the editors, is thought to be a representative cross-section of contemporary poetry in Gaelic relative to the space that is deemed appropriate to Gaelic poetry in such a book publication.

To start this chapter, however, the present-day world of Gaelic poetry publishing will be considered briefly. Having looked at the bilingual Gaelic/English poetry corpus, this chapter will then move beyond the Gaelic/English contact zone to reveal just how powerful self-translation into English is in shaping the reality of Gaelic poetry by considering its extension into a third cultural space, namely a German one. The reason for this choice is twofold. To start with, compared to other non-Celtic European literary worlds, the German one has offered considerable space to Gaelic poetry in translation. That is, of course, in relative terms, given the minority status of Gaelic as a language and a literature. Furthermore, choosing the German literary environment, I was able to adopt the perspective of a potential translator of Gaelic poetry into a third language. Such a viewpoint is revealing with regard to the relationship between the poem in Gaelic and in English, since translation choices always involve an acute analysis of the source text at hand, which in this case is a source text pair. Then again, working from within a third cultural space, translation decisions are still influenced by the socio-cultural conditions surrounding the source text(s), which inevitably force decisions with regard to which text(s) to choose as the

source in the translation process. Finally, leaving the immediate cultural setting for Gaelic poetry can be perceived as liberating, given that, as we have concluded in Chapter 1, minority is a relative phenomenon, depending on the cultural partner it engages with at a particular point in time. Therefore, translation into a third language may well be a more progressive choice for poetry in Gaelic than the incessant repetition of the facing English version.

6.1   Gaelic Poetry Publishing Today: An Interpretative View

As established at the outset of this thesis, the bilingual Gaelic/English edition, published most commonly with accompanying monolingual English paratext, has increasingly been the favoured publication format with contemporary Gaelic poetry collections over the past two to three decades. Consequently, with Gaelic poetry publications no distinction between the wider audience and a 'home audience' is made. The Gaelic reader of poetry is not catered for by being offered monolingual Gaelic poetry publications – a publication practice which, incidentally, would also provide the space to introduce authors and their work through the medium of Gaelic.[2] As we have also noted in Chapters 2 and 4.2, a new poetry publication venture has been initiated and edited by Rody Gorman, who has brought together contemporary poetry written in both Irish and Scottish Gaelic, giving space to both literatures as original texts and as translations of each other on the pages of the four issues of the poetry anthology *An Guth* published so far (Gorman 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007). As Gorman explains, the interest in putting *An Guth* together was fuelled by very practical considerations:

> Generally speaking […] the world of Gaelic poetry is not in a healthy state, and the opportunities for publication are really limited. Publication outlets aren't that plentiful. There are a few in Ireland but they are virtually non-existent in Scotland. So, I am pleased that there is now this new outlet for the poetry. (Urpeth, 2004, p. 1)

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[2] Note, however, that the situation with prose is different, as pointed out elsewhere (cf. sections 2.3.4 and 4.2), with the Ùr-Sgeul series of novels and short stories as the continuation of a monolingual approach to Gaelic prose publications, if to a far greater extent and in a far more prestigious manner.

In a 2005 paper, Alison Lang and Wilson McLeod note that:

> Gaelic publishing is generally frail, particularly with regard to periodicals; at the moment, there is but a single Gaelic magazine, the semiannual *Gath*, while Breton — hardly the best supported of minority languages in Europe! — has some 10-12 magazines/journals (monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly) for a comparable or slightly smaller number of readers of the language. (2005, p. 9)

This situation may well signify the concluding stages of a development of publication practices which saw Gaelic poetry accompanied by a selection of English prose translations by the author as early as the 1940s (cf. MacGill-Eain/MacLean 1943) and a progression towards original Gaelic poetry as raison d'être for otherwise essentially English language publications during the 1990s and onwards, with no significant effort to develop a monolingual market for poetry in Gaelic. Here we may note the recent flourishing of bilingual Gaelic poetry anthologies covering different aspects of the literary output over the centuries, with the celebrated *An Leabhar Mòr: The Great Book of Gaelic* (MacLean and Dorgan, 2002) as the most significant manifestation of a publication format with predominantly English paratext (cf. Chapter 2). If we look at the corpus of recently published poetry in Gaelic, we have also noted a series of Gaelic monolingual poetry publications by the small independent publishing house, Diehard Publishers, which is dedicated to contemporary Scottish poetry and has a particular interest in contemporary Gaelic verse. Their Gaelic publications, three collections in all over the past seven years (Gorman, 1999, Whyte, 2002a, Caimbeul, M. 2003), might appear to be a substantial and encouraging contribution to the bibliography of monolingual Gaelic publishing. Yet, it has to be noted that this is a series of beautifully looking hand-made books of rather small circulation with no subsidy to allow for promotion of the publications in order to encourage sales.[3] The Diehard series could, in fact, be perceived as a conscious effort of an acratic nature (as defined in Chapter 5.2) at a time when the publication environment for Gaelic poetry clearly favours the bilingual edition, however invisible the results of those efforts remain in terms of the presence of their

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[3] Note that the monolingual Gaelic series published by Diehard does not appear in the catalogue of Comhairle nan Leabhraichean (The Gaelic Books Council). Similarly Diehard does not appear on the drop-down menu listing Gaelic publishers on the webpage of Comhairle nan Leabhraichean (*gaelicbooks*).

publications in the corpus of available poetry publications. Like the monolingual efforts of Diehard publishing, the monolingual Ùr-Sgeul series could also be seen as acratic in nature at a time when hardly any Gaelic prose fiction was being published, with influential Scottish publishers such as Polygon and Birlinn interested in poetry only, and that published in a bilingual format. Returning thus to Barthes distinction of acratic versus encratic discourse with regard to power structures present with every form of discourse, we may observe his contention that:

> This opposition does not exclude nuances within each type; but, structurally, its simplicity remains valid as long as power and non-power are in their place; it can be (provisionally) blurred only in the rare cases where there is a mutation of power (of the sites of power); thus, in the case of the political language in a revolutionary period: revolutionary language issues from the preceding acratic language; in shifting over to power, it retains its acratic character, as long as there is an active struggle within the Revolution; but once this struggle dies down, once the state is in place, the former Revolutionary language itself becomes *doxa*, encratic discourse. (1986, pp. 120-21)

It could, therefore, be argued that the significant developments since 2003 with regard to Gaelic literature publication as manifested in the Ùr-Sgeul series of monolingual Gaelic prose publications have established a new encratic discourse, in which monolingual Gaelic prose has moved from a relatively small scale existence of a minority literature within its own boundaries, via a revolutionary discourse breaking the mould of a small literature by the sheer amount of publicity and texts published, towards an established discourse which is recognised by the literary establishment in Scotland. Testimony here are the instant listing the novel *An Oidhche Mus Do Sheòl Sinn* (2003) by Aonghas Pàdraig Caimbeul (Angus Peter Campbell) amongst the 100 best Scottish books of all time as published by the *List Magazine* (cf. Maley, 2005, p. 6), the inclusion of two of Màrtainn Mac an t-Saoir's (Martin MacIntyre's) prose publications under the Ùr-Sgeul umbrella on short lists of the Saltire Society literary awards (cf. Hutchinson, 2007) and the promotion of Ùr-Sgeul publications at the Edinburgh International Book Festival over the past five years.

With regard to poetry, however, a heavy reliance on the English-language market over recent decades has meant that very little has been achieved in developing an indigenous monolingual market. The reality for poetry therefore continues to be a bilingual one, with the exception of a small amount of poetry published twice a year in *Gath*,[4] a more substantial amount appearing yearly in the Irish-Gaelic anthology *An Guth*, and the infrequent locally-oriented monolingual publication (cf. Comann Eachdraidh Tholastaidh bho Thuath, 2006). With very few publications since the mid 1990s besides a small hand-made monolingual series published by Diehard (Gorman, 1999, Whyte 2002a and Caimbeul, 2003), a new wave of contemporary Gaelic poetry collections by single authors shows the continuation of this genre as a bilingual self-translated literature (cf. Mac an t-Saoir, 2006, Bateman, 2007, MacNeacail, 2007).[5] The corpus of contemporary literary writing in Gaelic thus leads a dichotomous existence. Whereas prose is looked after by Comhairle nan Leabhraichean by means of the dedicated in-house publication initiative Ùr-Sgeul,[6] thus ensuring the development of a monolingual market for this particular genre of Gaelic literature which throughout the history of Gaelic literature has admittedly been less prolific than the genre of poetry, the publication of Gaelic poetry is continued by Scottish-wide commercial publishers, who, given their core readership, naturally treat Gaelic poetry in a bilingual way.[7] With regard to the resulting bilingual poetry editions, Comhairle nan Leabhraichean provides writing bursaries (cf. Mac an t-Saoir, 2006), financial help towards the publication (cf. MacNeacail,

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[4] It was the original intention to publish this journal four times a year, thus following on from the quarterly appearance of its predecessor *Gairm*. However, a lack of human resources has resulted in the journal being published twice a year for most of its young existence.

[5] Here the demise of *Gairm* as a journal and, more importantly, as a publisher of both monolingual and bilingual poetry publications covering a variety of authors from the 1950s to the late 1990s leaves Gaelic poetry publications published in Scotland mostly in the hands of Edinburgh-based Polygon publishers (MacNeacail, 1996, Bateman, 1997, Gorman, 1996, Gorman, 2000, Bateman, 2007, MacNeacail 2007), an imprint of Birlinn Limited, a publishing house which has over recent years successfully published bilingual anthologies of Gaelic poetry from throughout the centuries.

[6] For information on authors, interviews and sample readings see http://www.ur-sgeul.com/digital/index.html.

[7] Note Aonghas Pàdraig Caimbeul's first poetry collection (2007b), which presents his poetry tri-lingually, giving the author's Gaelic and English version beside translations into Scots by J Derrick McClure. Using Scots as well as collaborating with a translator suggests a novel approach towards translation in the context of Gaelic poetry. Nevertheless, the established publication format which sees English translations by the author facing the Gaelic poems has been adhered to.

1996, Gorman, 2000, Mac an t-Saoir, 2006 etc.) as well as editorial advice.[8] Arguably, an initiative equal to that of Ùr-Sgeul for prose would be beneficial to the development of a monolingual publication environment for poetry. John Storey of Comhairle nan Leabhraichean suggests:

> One way of encouraging Gaelic-only poetry publications would be to formalise and increase the grant-funding system on a sliding-scale percentage basis i.e. the introduction of a more concrete, clearer system to encourage monolingual Gaelic publications. The higher the Gaelic content, the greater the financial support. To some extent this exists, but it needs to be formalised, and publishers need to be encouraged to consider the Gaelic-only option. Yes, if that means additional funding from, say, Bord na Gàidhlig, for a new scheme, similar to Ùr-Sgeul, for Gaelic poetry, then that should be considered. (personal correspondence)

The Gaelic literary world thus provides visible proof that literature is not merely the creative effort of authors as appreciated by their readers, but rather it is also what is promoted to be written and read by individuals, organisations or publishing houses as intervening forces (cf. Casanova, 2004, as referred to in Chapter 5).

6.2 Gaelic/English Self-Translation: Finding the Poem in the Gaelic/English Contact Zone

6.2.1 Translation Loss

A comparative reading of Gaelic poems and the authors' self-translations reveals common instances of translation loss, in other words 'any feature of inexact correspondence between ST [source text] and TT [target text]' (Hervey *et al*., 2000, p. 234).[9] There are instances of explicitation (cf. Klaudy, 1998, pp. 80-81), for instance. In Bateman's poem 'Iomallachd' (1997, p. 72), the line 'chan eil

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[8] Birlinn publishers, for instances, receive publication grants from Comhairle nan Leabhraichean for their bilingual publications which may cover up to 50% of the publication costs.

[9] Note that the present comparative reading of a selected corpus of Gaelic poetry and English self-translations does not follow an approach as established by corpus-based translation studies as this relatively small corpus is not arranged in electronic format and therefore does not fit the definition of corpus as 'any collection of running texts […] held in electronic form and analysable automatically or semi-automatically (rather than manually) (Kenny, 1998, p. 50, citing Baker, 1995, p. 226).

iomallachd sa Ghàidhealtachd ann' (there is no remoteness at all in the Gàidhealtachd) reads in the author's translation as 'the Highlands are not remote anymore' adding a temporal dimension to the observation, and therefore explicitly pointing towards the historically changing moments in the history of the Gàidhealtachd this poem explores. In the author's English translation of 'Am Bodach-Ròcais' (MacAulay, 1976, p. 165) by Derick Thomson (Ruaraidh MacThòmais) the scarecrow 'did not leave us empty-handed' where the Gaelic reads as 'Ach cha do dh`fhàg e falamh sinn' (he did not leave us empty). In the same poem 'sgeulachd air Conall Gulban' (a story about Conall Gulban) is explicitly realised as 'a folktale about Conall Gulban'. In Christopher Whyte's 'Mar a Thubhairt a' Chrè ris a' Chreadhadair' (as the potter said to the clay) (1991, p. 204), the poem introducing Chapter 3, the use of adjectives is more explicit in the English translation compared to the Gaelic original with 'frionasachd' (fretfulness) turning into 'resistance', or 'ladarna' (bold/impudent) becoming 'ill-advisedly'. Beside explicitation there are also instances of generalisation (Hervey *et al*., 2000, pp. 82-3), as is evident with regard to the different realisation of gender in Gaelic and English. Both clay and potter in Whyte's poem are explicitly male-gendered in the Gaelic text, whereas they remain unmarked in terms of gender in the English version. Similarly, the scarecrow in Thomson's poem is male in gender, as the reader of the Gaelic realises in the title already, whereas the reader of the English will be aware of such a gender only by relating the pronoun 'he' to the scarecrow in the poem. Noteworthy here is also the realisation of 'fear-leughaidh' (man of reading) as 'reader' in Thomson's self-translation of 'Facail' (MacThòmais/Thomson, 1982, p. 258), the poem that introduces this chapter. The English translation disguises the attitude towards the reader as explicitly male, as it is present in the Gaelic text. Furthermore, we find lexical or grammatical units not realised in the English translation at all. In 'Cogadh an Dà Chànain' (Whyte, 1991, p. 34) by Myles Campbell (Maoilios Caimbeul) the lines 'Fhuair mi 't-uachdar om mhàthair / ach om mhuime bainne lom' (from my mother I received cream / but from my nurse skimmed milk) are realised as 'I received cream from my mother, / from my nurse the skimmed'. In the poem 'Cearcall mun Ghealaich' by Catriona Montgomery (Catrìona NicGumaraid) (NicGumaraid/Montgomery, 1994, p. 16) we find 'as mo

shealladh' (out of my sight) translated as 'out of sight'. We also find compensation in the English self-translations (Hervey *et al*., 2000, pp. 26-35) with regard to prosody for instance. Whereas Thomson's 'Facail' relies on assonance on 'a' throughout the poem, his English self-translation relies on a combination of alliteration (on 'w', 'h' and 's') and assonance (on 'o') (also see 6.2.3 below).

As is apparent, with common instances of translation loss we are not merely concerned with what is not achieved in the translation, i.e. with what is lost, but also with what is achieved in addition to what the source text offers, i.e. with what is gained. Our particular translation context thus confirms dynamics which are inherent in translation *per se*, for as Sara Laviosa-Braithwaite explains, 'in the process of translation […] the dissolution of the original set of textual relations is inevitable and can never be fully recreated' (1998, p. 290). There are, however, instances where translation loss, which commonly merely alters the poetics of the target text slightly compared to the source text, can have a more dramatic impact on the relationship between the source and target text and bring about drastic discrepancies between each text's poetics. Take for instance the following stanza from Aonghas MacNeacail's poem 'Oideachadh Ceart' (1996, p. 12):

cha b'eachdraidh ach cuimhne	it wasn't history but memory
long nan daoine	the emigrant ships
seòladh a-mach	sailing out
tro cheathach sgeòil	through a fog of stories
mu éiginn morair	of landlords' anguish
mu chruaidh-chàs morair	of landlords' distress
mun cùram dhan tuathan,	their concern for their tenants
mu shaidhbhreas a' feitheamh	the riches waiting
ceann thall na slighe,	beyond the voyage,
long nan daoine	the emigrant ships
seòladh a-mach,	sailing out
sgioba de chnuimheagan acrach	a crew of starved maggots
paisgte na clàir,	wrapped in their timbers,
cha b'eachdraidh ach fathann[10]	it wasn't history but rumour[11]

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[10] 'It wasn't history but memory / the 'boat of the people' / sailing out / through a mist of stories / about landlord's troubles / about landlord's hardship / about his concern for his tenants, / about riches waiting / at the other side of the journey, / the 'boat of the people' / sailing out, / a crew of hungry maggots / wrapped in her timbers / it wasn't history but rumour' [my translation]; Note also that in the Gaelic original we have 'na' (in her) with the pronoun clearly referring to the boat, in the English version we have 'their' which allows for a variety of possible references, although it becomes clear

The reference to 'long nan daoine' (boat of the people) evokes historical events which saw the attempted abduction of people from the Hebrides to be shipped to America and sold as slaves in 1739 (Black, 1999, p. 768, n. 98). In the translation we find 'the emigrant ships' which in its plural appearance is a more abstract concept embracing the entire history of the Clearances and their social and emotional consequences for the Gaels. Similarly, consider the following extract from the second stanza of Bateman's 'Iomallachd' (1997, p. 72):

Och, an iomallachd, càit a bheil thu?	Alas, remoteness, where are you?
Càit ach air oir lom nam bailtean,	Where but at the bleak edge of the cities,
sna towerblocks eadar motorways	in the towerblocks between motorways
far am fuadaichear na daoine	where people are removed,
gu iomall a' cumhachd[12]	edged out from power[13]

Here, the lines 'far am fuadaichear na daoine / gu iomall a' cumhachd' (where the people are cleared / to the edge of power), referring to a modern-day urban existence, are a clear reference to the Clearances ('fuadaichean'), triggering a whole array of connotations with one single word which fails to be equalled by Bateman's own rendering 'where people are removed'. The use of 'fuadaichear' further contributes to the overall coherence of the poem by connecting back to the first stanza which focuses on the Highlands and its people, which allows for reflection on the social history of the Gaels.

Chan eil iomallachd sa Ghàidhealtachd ann– The Highlands are not remote any
more-

le càr cumhachdach	with a powerful car
ruigear an t-àite taobh a-staigh latha;	you can reach the place in a day;
's e luimead na h-oirthir	it is the bleakness of the coast
a shàraich na daoine	that wore the people down
is a chuir thar lear iad	and sent them overseas
a tha gar tàladh an-diugh,	that draws us today,
na làraichean suarach a dh'fhàg iad	the miserable sites they have left
cho miannaiche ri gin san rìoghachd.[14]	as desired as any in the land.[15]

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through context that it is 'the boats' that are referred to, nevertheless leaving room for confusion, with cohesion achieved differently in both poems.

[11] MacNeacail's self-translation as facing the Gaelic poem in MacNeacail (1996, p. 13).

[12] 'Alas, remoteness, where are you / where but on the bare edge of towns / in towerblocks between motorways / where the people are cleared / to the edge of power' [my translation]

[13] Bateman's self-translation as facing the Gaelic poem in Bateman (1997, p. 73).

Such coherence is lost in the translation. Rather we are witnessing a site of fragmentation, which is echoed by the fragmented nature of the two lines in English reading 'where people are removed, / edged out from power', which contrast with the syntactically flowing, since connected, lines as they are present in the Gaelic poem – 'far am fuadaichear na daoine / gu iomall a' chumhachd'. Whereas fragmentation might be a frequent and conscious poetic choice on the part of the Gaelic self-translating author,[16] employed to work the English target text as carefully as the Gaelic source text, there are instances of translation loss which are more marked, in that the result is an unexpected departure in the target text from the poetic coherence of the original in terms of content and form.

In 'Facail', the poem introducing this chapter (MacThòmais/Thomson, 1982, p. 258) which contemplates the impact of language loss, Thomson coins the phrase 'mac-facail' (son-of-a-word) which is a word play echoing the phrase 'mac-talla' (echo) earlier in the poem. The idea is that the community will not be able to detect the nuances in the resonances of words anymore, i.e. the echoes ('mac-talla') or the 'son of a word' ('mac-facail'). The latter is rendered in English as 'the son-word' which seems confusing since it suggests a particular word or kind of word, rather than resonances of each and every word in all its multitude. Similarly, in the English version of 'An t-Sealg' (MacThòmais/Thomson, 1991, p. 87), a poem addressing the approach of death, Derick Thomson interrupts the coherence of the poem by switching between a neuter and a male realisation of the Gaelic pronoun 'e' (he, it) which in the original refers back to the masculine 'bàs' (death). This is unfortunate in a poem which comes to life through the personification of death as a hunter:

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[14] 'There is no remoteness in the Gàidhealtachd – / with a powerful car / the place can be reached within a day; / it is the bleakness of the coast / that vexed the people / and sent them overseas / that is attracting us today, / the petty ruins they left / as desired as any in the kingdom.' [my translation]
[15] Bateman's self-translation as facing the Gaelic poem in Bateman (1997, p. 73).
[16] See also the last stanza of 'Bisearta' (Byrne, 2003, p. 176) by George Campbell Hay (Deòrsa Mac Iain Dheòrsa or Deòrsa Caimbeul Hay): 'Tha 'n dreòs 'na oillt air fàire, / 'na fhàinne ròis is òir am bun nan speuran' (the blaze is a terror on the horizon, / is a ring of rose and gold at the bottom of the sky) translated as 'The blaze, a horror on the skyline, / a ring of rose and gold at the foot of the sky', or the syntactically straightforward comparison 'cho cruaidh, cuairteach ri slige cnò' (as hard, enclosing as a shell of a nut) in MacNeacail's 'samhla' (1996, p. 36) which is realised as 'hard, enclosing, shell of a nut'.

Tha ’m bàs a’ sealg air mo chrìochan a-nis,	Death hunts on my territory now,
a’ leagail companaich m’òige,	bringing down my youthful companions,
a’ tighinn le a ghaiseadh	coming with its blight
air falt liath don tug mi urram,	to grey-haired ones I honoured,
a’ lìonadh a mhàlaid	filling his satchel
leis a’ ghòraich ’s leis a’ ghliocas.	with folly and wisdom.
Bha uair a bha e sealg air a’ chreachann:	Once it hunted on the scree:
tha e nis a’ creachadh air a’ chòmhnard.[17]	now it plunders on the plain.[18]

Finally, another remarkable example comes from Catriona Montgomery's self-translation of 'Cearcall mun Ghealaich' (NicGumaraid/Montgomery, 1994, p. 16) which initially follows the original closely, even rendering the title in a rather marked way as 'circle about the moon'. That in itself could be regarded as an instance of foreignisation, in that the realisation of the preposition in the translation directly reflects the use of preposition in the source text. This would echo translation practices adopted by Sorley MacLean (Somhairle MacGill-Eain), author of the renowned collection *Dàin do Eimhir* (MacGill-Eain/MacLean, 1943), who crafted his translations as highly literal reflections of his original poetry and never as poetry in its own right, with the original poems of paramount importance and lyrical authority (cf. Chapter 2.2.1). Yet, Montgomery's initial stylistic choice seems to clash with the rather loose translation approach throughout the rest of the poem. The English version reads like a synopsis of the Gaelic original which nevertheless departs from the original poem in terms of semantic detail.[19] Here is the first stanza:

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[17] 'Death is hunting on my boundaries now / knocking down the companions of my youth, / coming with his/its blight / on grey hair I honoured, // filling his/its satchel / with folly and with wisdom. / There was a time he/it hunted on the scree: / now he plunders on the plain.' [my translation]; Note also, that 'companaich m'òige' (companions of my youth) in line two is translated as 'my youthful companions' which triggers different connotations, with the former suggesting old age coming upon friends of one's younger years and the latter suggesting the untimely death of one's young friends. Interesting also is the realisation of the synecdoche 'air falt liath' (on grey hair) in line four of the first stanza as the descriptive 'the grey-haired ones', which results in the loss of a convincing lyrical metaphor.

[18] Thomson's self-translation as facing the Gaelic poem in MacThòmais/Thomson (1991, p. 86)

[19] For a translation which follows the semantic patterns of the Gaelic poem closely see MacMillan and Byrne (2003, pp. 165-66), where the original is followed by a translation provided by the Gaelic editor Michel Byrne. He translates the first stanza as follows: 'In the great year of the storm / I saw a circle round the moon / and the sheaves of barley / went streaming down to the shore, / and all three of us stood there / (myself, my sister, my father) / watching our handiwork / vanish out of view'.

Bliadhna mhòr na stoirme	The year of the big storm
chunnaic mi cearcall mun ghealaich	I saw a circle about the moon
's dh'fhalbh na h-adagan eòrna	and the stooks of barley streamed to the sea
'nan sruth sios chun a' chladaich,	my father my sister and I stood
is sheas sinn nar triùir ann	watching the work of our hands rush from sight[20]

(mi fhèin, mo phiuthar is m'athair)
a' faicinn obair ar làimhe
na deann-ruith à sealladh.[21]

Throughout the English translation the line structure of the original is abandoned. The prosodic pattern of the poem in Gaelic leaves no impact on the English version as well as certain semantic units simply remain untranslated.

This is significant in the light of the following observation by Verena Jung, a translation studies scholar who has conducted a considerable amount of research on the specific translation phenomenon of self-translation:

> While self-translators are almost expected to make major changes, so far these changes have not been adequately related to the target audience. They have tended to be attributed to the higher creative potential of the self-translator (Fitch, 1988, p. 131) or criticised as an unacceptable liberty (Faiq, 1997, p. 11) taken by the self-translator as 'dictator'. (2004, p. 532, her references)

In this instance, the target audience seems to be disregarded since there is no evidence of an effort to show the English readership the poetic wealth of the original. This exposes an interesting attitude, possibly unique to the poet/self-translator who writes in a minority language which largely depends on the readers of the English translations to reach an audience. Self-translation here might happen due to outside forces rather than to the internal bilingual creative urge on the poet's part. What becomes apparent is a paradoxical attitude towards translation into English, embracing and indifferent at the same time. It is interesting to note that such an indifference with regard to translation into English is indeed confirmed in questionnaire replies (see Chapter 2.3) where, although some authors acknowledged

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[20] Montgomery's self-translation as facing the Gaelic poem in Montgomery (1994, p. 14).

[21] 'The great year of the storm / I saw a circle around the moon / and the sheaves of barley disappeared / streaming down towards the shore / and the three of us stood their / (myself, my sister and my father) / watching the work of our hands / rushing out of sight.' [my translation]

the desire to play with the same idea in both their languages as a result of their bilingual identity, there was a recurring sense of translation into English being experienced as a secondary activity, a necessity, not as a creative literary endeavour.

6.2.2   Gaelic/English Self-Translation and Interlingual Interference

Already with MacLean's poetry we witness the tendency amongst readers and critics to take the self-translated text as a definite point of interpretation (as demonstrated in Chapter 2.2.5). This might be due to discrepancies between connotational meaning in the two language versions or, as hinted at by John MacInnes, due to an intralingual development, which leaves certain connotations of words obscure with others more prominently in use (1986, pp. 146-47, as cited in 2.2.5). Given such dynamics, we might want to argue that with MacLean's poetry translations are taken as an interpretation tool due to an intralingual development within the Gaelic language in that certain words used by the author might by now be obscure and not part of an active Gaelic vocabulary anymore. Yet, increasingly, provision of English translations has become an interlingual endeavour. In 'Ceòl' (MacThòmais/Thomson, 1991, p. 97), Thomson introduces the idea of 'electro-magnetic particles' to the poetic sphere of Gaelic. However, the Gaelic 'smùr an dealain-thàirnidh' remains obscure without its English counterpart.

Chuala mi ceòl 'na mo latha   I have heard music in my time
nach cluinnear a chaoidh tuilleadh,   that will never be heard again,
cha tog inneal-clàraidh e,   no recording instrument will pick it up,
cha lean e ri smùr an dealain-thàirnidh,[22]   it will not adhere to electro-magnetic
                                                                      particles[23]

Stretching Gaelic in such a way is not unique to poetry (cf. *Stòr-dàta Bhriathrachais Gàidhlig* and McNeir, 2001), yet with Gaelic becoming the mirror image of English concepts and idioms, the need for English is compelling. Note the line 'no mar mhagnet airgeadach' (or like a silver magnet) by Iain Crichton Smith (Iain Mac a'

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[22] 'I have heard a music in my day / that will not be heard ever again / a recording instrument will not pick it up / it will not stick to the dust of electric-pulling.' [my translation]
[23] Thomson's self-translation as facing the Gaelic poem in Thomson/MacThòmais (1991, p. 96).

Ghobhainn) which resorts to the direct import of the word 'magnet' in 'Na h-Eilthirich' (MacAulay, 1976, p. 187).[24]

The direct use of English in the Gaelic texts does occur in Gaelic poetry, even if not amounting to frequent code-switching as observed in Chapter 4.1.1., as the example of Smith's 'Na h-Eilthirich' shows. In Bateman's 'Iomallachd' (1997, p. 72), the poem introducing Chapter 1, we find the phenomenon of 'iomallachd' (remoteness) 'sna towerblocks eadar motorways' (in the towerblocks between motorways). In 'Facail' (MacThòmais/Thomson, 1982, p. 258) Thomson uses the adjective 'flat' pondering resonances of Gaelic music/culture in today's Gaelic world. Similarly, Mary Montgomery (Màiri NicGumaraid) uses English words and phrases to satirical effect in her politically charged poems addressing the influences of incomers, particularly to the islands (cf. Whyte, 1991, pp. 182, 188). The use of English becomes a conscious tool employed by the author to highlight linguistic and social friction in a bicultural world, thus adding an important layer to the meaning of the poetry in Gaelic which remains invisible in the translation where the English word becomes just one amongst many.

Dependency on English as a conclusive point of reference does not merely occupy the word level but also enters the very sphere of imagery. MacNeacail's 'samhla', the poem which introduces Chapter 4, is a poem describing a metaphorical journey through a person's body. Throughout the poem the imagery is clear in English, explicitly naming body parts such as 'rib-cage' or 'collar-bone'. With 'cliabh' commonly meaning 'creel' rather than 'rib-cage', the Gaelic 'am faic thu portan is rodan a' dannsa gu tiamhaidh fon chliabh' (do you see a crab and a rat dancing melancholically under the creel/chest), however, remains arbitrary. Close reading sessions with native speakers (see Appendix B) also showed that 'ugann' was taken to mean 'collar-bone' in the light of the English translation only.[25] In 'Mar a Thubhairt a' Chrè ris a' Chreadhadair' (Whyte, 1991, p. 204) Whyte is concerned with the anatomy of the hand. In Gaelic we find reference to 'cruinnead eagsamhail

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[24] Note that Thomson (1996a) has 'iùil-tharraingeach' for 'magnetic' and 'clach-iùil' for 'magnet'.
[25] Also note that *Stòr-dàta* gives 'cnàimh-na-uga' (bone of the throat/upper part of the chest) for collar-bone.

nan roinn / caochanan gach luirge' (the varying roundness of the parts/divisions / eddy/streamlet of every mark/print). Considering the vast semantic range of 'roinn' (share, portion, division, proportion etc.) and 'lorg' generally meaning 'mark, print', the English translation 'the varying roundness of each joint / the eddy of each fingertip' exerts authority over the poem by virtue of clarity, with the Gaelic relying on the reader to make the connection between words and imagery. In such cases the Gaelic remains at best elusively ambiguous which, after all, is an inherent quality of poetic creation, yet inevitably draws the reader's attention to the clarity of the English text, since a readerly response is usually to interpret and in turn to understand. At worst, however, the Gaelic text remains meaningless, since any potential meaning as it lingers in the Gaelic text – a text which might well be composed of new, unfamiliar or uncommon words and phrases, both given the poetic nature of the genre and the particular minority existence of the language involved – is positively invited to unfold within the realm of English due to the authoritative nature of the self-translated text (Chapter 4) and the illusion of one-to-one equivalence created by the bilingual en-face edition (cf. Chapter 5).

Recalling that we are in the presence of an unequal language pair with respect to actual language use, the following observation by Michael Cronin is highly relevant:

> Minority languages that are under pressure from powerful major languages can succumb at lexical and syntactic levels so that over time they become mirror-images of the dominant language. Through imitation, they lack the specificity that invites imitation. As a result of continuous translation, they can no longer be translated. There is nothing left to translate. (2003, p. 141)

This is taking the hypothetical argument to its extreme, yet an awareness of the reasoning is important. Here a translation environment beyond the Gaelic/English contact zone becomes revealing (see Chapter 6.3). With the poetry of Sorley MacLean, the translator working into a third language might at times disagree with MacLean's English self-translations and therefore consciously decide to disregard his English self-translations in the translation process at all times due to the sheer superiority of the poem in Gaelic. To give an example, in MacLean's highly regarded

poem 'Glac a' Bhàis' (MacGill-Eain/MacLean, 1990, p. 210), we find the mention of 'gun deòin' as one possible attribute to soldiers' involvements in battle action.

An robh an gille air an dream	Was the boy of the band
a mhàb na h-Iùdhaich	who abused the Jews
's na Comunnaich, no air an dream	and Communists, or of the greater
bu mhotha, dhiùbh-san	band of those
a threòraicheadh bho thoiseach àl	led, from the beginning of generations,
gun deòin gu buaireadh	unwillingly to the trial
agus bruaillean cuthaich gach blàir	and mad delirium of every war
air sgàth uachdaran?[26]	for the sake of rulers?[27]

Literally, 'gun deòin' translates as 'without will'. MacLean, however, chooses to translate as 'unwillingly'. In the English translation, the soldiers are characterised as having a conscious 'will, wish, desire, intention', hence having a clear negative opinion about the regime which forces them to fight in its name. A literal translation, on the other hand, attributes the soldiers with the lack of any will, and hence there is a lack of political interpretation of their situation as soldiers and possible political commitment against aggressive regimes. Considering the particular context of this poem, the choice of translating following the literal translation rather than MacLean's English translation seems valid. Note that Thomson (1996a) gives 'aindeònach' instead of 'gun deòin' for 'unwilling(ly)'.[28] With poems such as MacNeacail's 'samhla', however, the second last line 'ach, ged nach brist mi tro bhàrr mo ghréidhidh le sùrd' might well lead the translator to consult the English version for confirmation of the imagery, with the English line 'but, though I may not burst through the film that embalms me' potentially becoming the source text for the translation task at hand.[29] As such, we are witnessing a real manifestation of a

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[26] 'Was the boy one of those who abused Jews and communists, or was he part of the bigger group who where led from the beginning of generations without will into the turmoil and insane confusion of every battle for the sake of rulers' [my translation]. MacLean's own translation reads as follows: 'Was the boy of the band / who abused the Jews / and Communists, or of the greater / band of those // led, from the beginning of generations, / unwillingly to the trial / and mad delirium of every war / for the sake of rulers?' [my translation]

[27] MacLean's translation as facing the original Gaelic poem in MacGill-Eain/MacLean (1990, p. 211).

[28] For more examples see Krause (2001, pp. 84-87).

[29] Close reading sessions have revealed that the second last line of MacNeacail's 'samhla' remains obscure in Gaelic, with 'gréidhidh' commonly used as 'pickled' which also expresses a sense of 'preserving', yet does not capture the image as it was intended as can be inferred from the English version. Personal communication with the author revealed that the point of reference for the use of

theoretical consideration with regard to self-translation as referred to in Chapter 4.4.1, in that the Gaelic poem becomes retrospectively incomplete with an interpretative closure occurring with the poem in English. Interestingly, however, the concluding line 'an tàmh tha mi luaineach, an tosd tha mi fuaimneach' will attract the translator's attention back to the Gaelic by sheer lyrical power achieved through syntactical symmetry, prosodic elegance and subtleness of a nevertheless very visual imagery, all of which are not matched by the English translation 'in stillness I move, my silence gives voice'. With more recent poetry in Gaelic we, therefore, have ample evidence of the Gaelic text being more convincing, as is the case with MacLean's poetry, be that due to coherence of imagery (as noted with MacNeacail's 'beul beag' in Chapter 5.5) or due to prosodic tension. We have to note, however, that the opposite is also true, which suggests a development with poetry in Gaelic over the past six decades which reveals an increased presence of English in the bilingual existence of Gaelic authors.

6.2.3   Gaelic/English Self-Translation and Prosody

The development of the relationship between the original and the translation in terms of prosody is an interesting one to observe. Whereas MacLean appears to pay little attention to sound in his English self-translations compared to the sonic feast offered in his original poetry, we perceive an increasing presence of prosody in English self-translations over the past decades. Once more, consider Thomson's translation of 'Facail' (MacThòmais/Thomson, 1982) where rhythm suddenly seems to swell and get hold of the text in lines seven to ten, whereas the original sounds mainly through a combination of alliteration and assonance throughout, as is apparent in the following extract:

'gréidhidh' lies with Dwelly's (1994) entry which gives 'dressing, act of dressing victuals' as well as a more refined entry of 'dressing of leather'. The mere involvement of the dictionary in the process of the composition of the poem suggests a strength of the imagery in English in terms of recognition and comprehension that cannot be matched by the imagery in Gaelic.

Nuair a thig a' bhalbhachd	When stillness comes
oirnn, nuair nach dùisg	over us, when the word
am facal mac-talla,	does not waken an echo,
nuair nach cluinn	when the hall does not hear
an talla mac-facail	the son-word,
nuair a shiolaidheas an sùgh	when the sap subsides
	> / / > / / >
a tha cumail lìomh ann an ruith na cainnte,	that keeps a glow in the rhythm of speech
	> / / > / / > / /
saoil am bi sinn ann idir,	will we, I wonder, exist at all,
	/ / > / / >
a seas an iomhaigh	will the image survive
/ / >/ > / /	/ > / >
anns an àile thana sin?	in that thin air?

Poetic tension in terms of prosody moves back and forth between the Gaelic and the
English text succeeding in attracting our attention.

In MacNeacail's 'samhla' the rhythmically beautiful line 'an clachan, an coire, an
cochall do chridhe' (in the village [with a parish church], in the corrie, in the husk of
your heart) is realised in English as 'in kirkton, in corrie, in the husk of your heart'.
This is the first stanza which is host to the imagery discussed:

> sàth le d'léirsinn an sgàile, tha mise (sùil d'fhaileis) an seo
> an <u>c</u>lachan, an <u>c</u>oire, an <u>c</u>ochall do <u>ch</u>ridhe
> mar phasgadh de shoillse reòit ann an linne céir[30]

MacNeacail's self-translation of these lines reads as follows:

> pierce the veil with your vision, I (your shadow's eye) am present
> in kirkton, in corrie, in the husk of your heart
> like a folding of light in a pool of wax[31]

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[30] 'Stab the veil with your vision, I (the eye of your shadow) am here / in the village, in the corrie, in
the husk of your heart / like a bundle of light frozen in a pool of wax' [my translation]
[31] MacNeacail's self-translation as facing the Gaelic poem in MacNeacail (1996, p. 37).

The English version departs quite drastically from the version of the poem in Gaelic, in that we can perceive different aspects of images being foregrounded in the two versions. The 'frozen' quality of the light in the pool of wax which adds to the imagery in Gaelic fails to be visualised in the English version. With regard to prosody, then, it is noticeable that with the English version an attempt has been made to equal the rhythmic qualities of the Gaelic. This is achieved, however, at the expense of coherence in terms of imagery as present in the original with 'clachan', 'coire' and 'cochall' entering a genitive relationship with 'cridhe' which remains obscure in English. Taking into account the work of poets such as MacNeacail, Bateman or Whyte, whose work reveals a particular concern with prosody in the times of *vers libre*, we find indeed that their poetry is as finely scanned in the English version as it is in Gaelic.[32] Given, then, that languages differ greatly in their sonic fabric and that the author/translator makes choices according to the semantic as much as the sonic qualities of every word, we have to acknowledge that here we are in the presence of difference rather than equivalence between the two language versions, which confirms our understanding of what translation is, as it has developed throughout this thesis, namely the manifestation of difference rather than sameness.

6.2.4   Gaelic/English Self-Translation and Imagery: The Two Versions
          Going Separate Ways

Indeed, the phenomenon of the two versions going separate ways is not confined to prosody but is also present with regard to imagery. Take for instance the extract from Bateman's 'Iomallachd' referred to above ('far am fuadaichear na daoine / gu iomall a' chumhachd' literally meaning 'where people were cleared / to the edge of power'). The intransitive use of 'removed' suggests a general state of being rather than demographic movement. The two poems clearly depart from each other. Similar dynamics are pointed out by Whyte with regard to MacNeacail's bilingual poetry corpus. Addressing MacNeacail's 'Cathadh Mór' (1986), Whyte observes that:

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[32] See also Whyte (2004, pp. 232-33) on MacNeacail. Note that with regard to the work by Whyte, this observation refers to the period of his creative work which did involve self-translation.

The Gaelic 'siosarnaich shocair aig lòineag air bradhadair' translates literally as 'gentle hissing of a snowflake on firewood', while the accompanying English reads 'somewhere sibilant crystals turn steam on the fireglow'. The English is richer and more evocative then the Gaelic, positioning the speaker with 'somewhere' and emphasising the coming together of contrasting elements with 'steam' and 'fireglow'. Nor are we aware of the fire's luminosity in the Gaelic. Rather than the English offering a version of the Gaelic which is the 'original', both realisations of the poem need to be taken into account if we are to experience its full effect. (2004, p. 230)

At the end of his 'Am Bodach-Rocais' (MacAulay, 1976, p. 165), a poem embracing new influences on Gaelic life, Thomson translates 'tùrlach loisgeach' (burning bonfire) as 'searing bonfire', turning the 'burning' experience which might well be one marked by enthusiasm into something cruel and painful. Given that 'tùrlach' is a word not widely known, whereas 'loisgeach' is a common everyday word, the discrepancy between the adjectives in the two language versions might be resolved by the Gaelic reader by bestowing 'searing' qualities on to 'tùrlach' rather than accepting a difference between the two poems caused by the self-translating author.

6.2.5   The Gaelic Text in the Gaelic/English Poetry Pair

Observed dynamics at the heart of a bilingual creative writing which results in the Gaelic/English self-translated poetry pair could be celebrated as creative expression of the truly bilingual author. Yet, as Whyte observes in MacNeacail's case, such bilingualism is not necessarily balanced 'in that almost without exception he offers a facing English translation for his Gaelic work, but not the other way round. His poetry in Gaelic and English has, then, a doubleness which his poetry in English only lacks' (2004, p. 227, cf. Chapter 2.2.1) Here, I would like to recall Pratt's definition of the contact zone as 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today' (1999, p. 584, as cited in Chapter 1.1.8). Indeed, the increased physical presence and interlingual influence of English on Gaelic poetry leading the bilingual reader to find the poem back and forth between the facing versions is not only the result of the bilingual nature of the individual author but rather has to be seen in the

light of social conditions prevailing within Gaelic literature as a collective medium. As noted by Whyte in Chapter 2.2.1, contemporary Gaelic poets 'have no homeland where […] the language can evolve and alter on the lips of monoglots' (1997, p. 45). Even with regard to the very contact zone celebrated by Simon, Ralph Sarkonak and Richard Hodgson note that 'it could no doubt be safely said that for many of our Québécois friends and colleagues, bilingualism is not just intellectually invalid but politically incorrect in the Canadian sense of things, since it is taken as proof of the assimilation of the linguistic minority by the dominant, even colonizing force of the majority' (1993, p. 37, note 10). In a Gaelic context, the author writes not only for a numerically restricted audience but also for one which struggles to be a Gaelic readership. Highly dense, noun-based poems such as 'samhla' or 'Mar a Thubhairt a' Chrè ris a' Chreadhadair' might, therefore, alienate the Gaelic reader who not only possesses a wider passive vocabulary in English than in Gaelic but also, and this is particularly so for Gaelic native speakers, lacks the experience of reading such pieces in Gaelic.

Considering, as we have identified earlier in the thesis (cf. Chapter 1.1.3), that with Gaelic learners and native speakers it will be most likely that a reader more used to reading and better read in English than in her/his native Gaelic will come to the bilingual edition, it is difficult to deny the attraction of the English text in the Gaelic/English poetry pair. In addition to that, we have established that research conducted in a variety of cultural environments has found that self-translation is more likely to undermine the status of the original than translation done by somebody other than the author, with the self-translation taken as a second original (cf. Chapter 4). Furthermore, we have considered the contention that with regard to the bilingual edition in particular the status of the perceived original is further undermined since '[the] translation […] is taken to be *the* translation of a work' (Hewson, 1993, p. 150, as cited in Chapter 5.5.3). The combination of self-translation and bilingual en-face edition thus provides a highly rigid format for Gaelic as literature and language, leaving little space for flexibility for the original, with the interpretative engagement on the reader's part occurring through English rather than Gaelic. Therefore, the bilingual en-face edition could fairly be argued to

be a hindrance to the internal development of Gaelic as a literature and language, in that it is supporting a reading pattern that is already there. This is confirmed by the corpus of poetry itself, in that the reliance on English as interpretative force as well as a source for vocabulary and imagery is both evident (cf. above and Chapter 2) and understandable. Yet such reliance inevitably disregards what is nevertheless present in the original Gaelic poetry, which at times can be a fuller realised poem than the English self-translation. However, the illusion of one-to-one equivalence created by facing translations provided by the author inevitably renders the differences between the two texts virtually invisible, hiding the poetic dynamics as they unfold in the Gaelic texts from the sight of the majority of readers, given the prevailing reading patterns, which in turn remain unchallenged.

Rather than 'celebrating the joyous carnival of cultural differences', contemporary translation and publication practices dominating the contact zone which is Gaelic verse might well be evidence of bilingualism's 'uglier face', resulting in 'some kind of double monolingualism' (Grutman, 1993, p. 224). I would thus like to argue for the re-evaluation of translation in this particular contact zone as a site of friction and differences between languages and cultures in need of translation and publication practices which resist the illusion of one-to-one equivalence, such as non-translation, collaborative translation with clear reference to the translation process or indeed multiple translation. As Robert Bringhurst aptly puts it, 'the greatest threat to communication is not difference, but sameness. Communication ceases when one being is not different from another: when there is nothing strange to wonder at and no new information to exchange' (Sarkonak and Hodgson, 1993, p. 36, citing Bringhurst, 1992, p. 85). Only through making the differences between the Gaelic and the English poem visible is the Gaelic poem invited to be read as a poem in its own right and to be evaluated independently from its facing English counterpart. Considering a third cultural space, as I will do in looking at a German context for Gaelic poetry in translation, provides an outside perspective on the world of Gaelic poetry which, on the one hand, allows for reflections on the standing of the poem in Gaelic compared to the English version while, on the other hand, offering an alternative space for Gaelic poetry to exist in.

6.3   Beyond the Gaelic/English Contact Zone: Gaelic Poetry in Germany

Exploring the kind of Gaelic literary material which has been translated into German, one soon realises that it is mostly Gaelic poetry which has made that translation journey. This is hardly surprising, given the fundamental role verse plays within the sphere of Gaelic literature in relation to both traditional and modern material. Although only a relatively small selection of Gaelic poetry has found its way to a German audience, a closer look at the corpus of modern Gaelic poetry translated into languages other than English as recorded in the Bibliography of Scottish Literature in Translation (*boslit*) reveals that translations into German make up a rather robust corpus compared to Gaelic poetry that has been translated into other European languages, matched only by material available in Welsh and Irish translation. Initially, Gaelic poetry reached a German audience to a great extent via poetry events such as the tour of six Scottish poets through parts of western and southern Germany in 1985 with Aonghas MacNeacail representing Gaelic (MacNeacail, 1985), the poetry event 'Vier schottische Dichter' held in Austria in 1988 with Sorley MacLean reading his poetry (Ó Riain, 1988), or the 'Lyrikertreffen' in Münster in 1997 which MacLean had agreed to attend shortly before his death and which nevertheless printed samples of his poetry in a subsequent poetry collection (Schulte *et al.*, 1997). Such an active engagement with literature across cultural frontiers might partly explain the fact that it is the poetry of Gaelic poets writing since the 1940s which features most prominently in the material available in German translation. Going back to the printed page, however, we find that a collection entirely devoted to Scottish Gaelic poetry has yet to be published. Either some examples of the work by poets such as MacLean and Iain Crichton Smith appear as small sections in poetry magazines such as *Litfass* (Staudacher and Weiland, 1991) and *Schreibheft* (Wehr, 1999) or Gaelic poetry is placed in its pan-Celtic context, as in *Und suchte Meine Zunge ab nach Worten* (Mc Tigue, 1996) and *Keltische Sprachinseln* (Heinz, 2001), or in its Scottish context such as in *Intime Weiten* (Galbraith, 2006).

Reading the available material, the enormous influence English exercises on this part of the cultural exchange between Gaelic Scotland and Germany is striking. Only about a third of the material listed in the BOSLIT catalogue consists of translations for which the Gaelic originals have functioned as source texts, with the remaining material clearly echoing English translations of Gaelic original texts in terms of syntactic, stylistic and lexical choices. Thus, in the context of German translations of Gaelic poetry the terms 'original' and 'source text' do not necessarily refer to the same text. In some cases, the Gaelic poem is, nevertheless, given the status of the original by printing it alongside the German translation, even if it is clearly acknowledged that the translator has worked from the English. Such is the case with Peter Waterhouse's translations of MacLean's poetry as they appear in *Schreibheft* (Wehr, 1999). Whereas here the languages involved are clear to the reader, there are other publications which give the Gaelic poems alongside the German translation which itself echoes the English translation without acknowledging English as mediating language. We are witnessing a highly complex translation scenario due to the multi-layered linguistic make-up of the processes and texts involved.

As we have established, the combination of self-translation and bilingual en-face editions of poetry is a potent publication format that cannot help influencing the nature of modern Gaelic literature. A look beyond the world of Gaelic/English publications reveals just how powerful such an influence is. Witness the following statement by Iain Galbraith with regard to a forthcoming anthology of twentieth-century Scottish poetry in German:

> Gaelic poetry from 'Hallaig' to 'cùnntas', as it were, has existed in a permanent state of tension with the English language. To remove that tension in an anthology which purports to translate Gaelic poems not only as individual texts, but as texts that exist or have originated in a Scottish context, would be to remove them to a convenient utopia – a non-place or un-reality – whose isolation from the current polyvocal site of their primary engagement would seem to add to rather than resolve their history of displacement. (2000, pp. 162-63)

Made from an English-speaking audience's point of view, the comment denies the fact that in the case of Sorley MacLean, the author of 'Hallaig', the majority of his

early work was published in the first place without English translations in 1943 (MacGill-Eain, 1943). However, it is the very history of displacement which leaves Galbraith's proposed editorial choice vulnerable to criticism. Taking his argument to its hypothetical conclusion, it seems as if we cannot do anything to 'place' Gaelic poetry, for it has been permanently displaced by English from a monolingual existence to a post-colonial bilingual one. Trying to free it from that existence would displace it once more into utopia. Considering that Gaelic poetry hardly finds itself published in its own right without English translations, therefore being the victim of highly asymmetric power relations, a bilingual Gaelic/English publication practice facing the German translation places Gaelic poetry once more firmly in its minority context in a publication space which could welcome Gaelic poetry as equal literary partner. A chance is lost to work against the continuous 'minoritising' forces facing Gaelic. It is fair to argue, that a German audience should be aware of the cultural background of Gaelic poetry, but rather than reiterating the actual publication practices which have led to the marginalisation of Gaelic poetry in the first place, referring to literary dynamics surrounding Gaelic poetry in paratextual devices such as introductions or notes on poems and authors might be more beneficial to Gaelic poetry in its own right.

As we have already noted, with MacLean we have a bilingual poet who consciously placed his creative efforts with his Gaelic mother tongue, which is also to be understood as a reflection of his awareness of the need of Gaelic to be maintained and developed in the face of its living reality as a marginalized language and literature (MacGill-Eain, letters and MacLean, 1982, p. 500, as referred to in Chapter 4). Furthermore, we have noted his dismay in the face of English self-translation. It could be argued that MacLean's attitude towards his translations stems partly from his decision to resort to highly literal translation after the writing of the originals, with a clear understanding that his English translations are not poetry in their own right. It is interesting, therefore, to witness his complaint with regard to his own translation of 'An Cuilthionn' (MacGill-Eain/MacLean, 1990, p. 64), saying that 'my English version has not even the merit of very strict literal accuracy as I find more and more when I look over it' (MacGill-Eain, letters, 15 June 1943). In this case the translator working directly from Gaelic into German might consciously disregard the

English translations by the Gaelic author. Yet, with MacNeacail, the author of 'cùnntas', and other more recent authors, close reading of both the Gaelic and the English texts reveals a movement of the creative impulse between the two texts, as has been shown in Chapter 6.2. As we have seen, the interplay between the two texts is there in terms of imagery, stylistics and prosody, so the translator into a third language may well choose to consult both texts. On the other had, however, a potential translator might still disregard the English translation by the author on the basis that it is the actual Gaelic poetry which is desired as the source of the translation rather than Gaelic/English poetry.

As mentioned above, in the case of MacLean's poetry, German versions have reached an audience via MacLean's English translations, in which case one could argue that the English versions should be printed. If MacNeacail's poetry is translated directly from Gaelic into German, as is the case with *Keltische Sprachinseln* (Heinz, 2001), the English version might well not be printed. Both practices would be justified, if the intention of the publication was to show the reader which languages were involved in the translation process, i.e. which texts served as originals. Yet, considering what has been mentioned with regard to the actual creative processes the authors were involved in and their attitudes towards writing in Gaelic, such an approach to publication would give a distorted perception of the Gaelic poets' creative engagements on the part of the German reader. We face a dilemma which can be answered only by conscious and proactive publication decisions which either place Gaelic poetry firmly in its minority context or release it from such a context.

Focusing back on the immediate literary world of Gaelic poetry, I have suggested translation practices beneficial to Gaelic poetry, namely non-translation, collaborative translation or multiple translation (see Chapter 6.2.5). Having explored Gaelic poetry from the perspective of a German literary space, I would suggest that translation of Gaelic poetry into languages other than English becomes another possible translation activity which is beneficial for the development of Gaelic as an independent and healthy literature. If we indeed perceive 'minority' as an

'expression of a relation not an essence' (Cronin 1995, pp. 86-87, as cited to in Chapter 1.2.1) with 'the terms "majority" and "minority" […] depending on one another for their definition and always dependent on a historically existing, even if changing, situation' (Venuti, 1998, p 135, as cited to in Chapter 1.2.1), it could be argued that the minority status of Gaelic in relation to English is not at all paralleled in its relation to other cultures and languages such as German. Translating into German or another language besides English, that is into a language other than its immediate linguistic neighbour of overwhelming cultural prestige, might well help to create a positive translation environment for Gaelic poetry. Such involvement with translation would introduce the work of Gaelic poets to a wider audience, as well as strengthening Gaelic as a living language and literature, in that people beyond the British Isles would become aware of its existence and be invited to engage with it. Furthermore, such a translation environment could lead to creative collaborations between authors and translators, which would ensure an active engagement with the Gaelic language in terms of actual communication.

It would be ideal if German translators were able to work directly from the Gaelic texts. However, there are obvious hurdles on the way to such an ideal state of affairs. As yet, there is still a need for English, even if the translator works directly from the original in Gaelic. Whereas translators working from Irish into German have access to an Irish-German dictionary (Feito and Schleicher, 1999), translators from Gaelic into German cannot resort to such resources. There are as yet no adequate translation tools directly linking Gaelic with German.[33] Direct translation, even if we have to go via English translation tools, will nevertheless result in preserving aspects of the original poetry which would most likely be lost if the English translation functions as the sole source text. One such aspect would be the friction between English and Gaelic both in terms of language and culture, as portrayed within the Gaelic

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[33] Michael Klevenhaus is currently working on a two-directional dictionary, which he hopes to publish in book format. For updates on progress as well as information on language courses and a variety of other events such as the Gaelic film festival in Germany see http://www.schottisch-gaelisch.de (*schottisch-gaelisch*), the website of the Zentrum für Gälische Sprache und Kultur in Deutschland (Centre for Gaelic language and culture in Germany). It is very encouraging to see that this website is a truly bilingual German – Gaelic medium; Also see http://www.sksk.de (*sksk*), the website of the Studienhaus für Keltische Sprachen und Kulturen (study centre for Celtic languages and cultures) who are also involved both in the actual teaching and the development of teaching material of Welsh, Irish and Scottish Gaelic.

originals. We have noted the conscious use of English in the poetry of Bateman, Thomson or Mary Montgomery in Chapter 6.2.2. Moreover, we are likely to lose certain perceptions of the physical world as they unfold in the original Gaelic poetry. The scarecrow in Thomson's 'Am Bodach-Ròcais' (MacAulay, 1976, p. 165) is of male gender and thus has an identity which is lost in the English version. It is intriguing to see how Judith Schachtmann, in collaboration with Sabine Heinz, has preserved the original gender in her German translation 'Der Vogelscheuch' (Heinz, 2001, p. 159). This results in the German text sounding somewhat foreign, since the choice of the male gender contrasts with the usually female gendered scarecrows in German. Furthermore, when working directly from the Gaelic, translators might be inspired by the rhythm and rhyme patterns as they sound in the original. Especially with poets like MacLean this is very rewarding, since his poetry is so intimately in tune with the sonic qualities of the Gaelic language and traditional Gaelic verse. The result may be a German text with its very own flow of sounds echoing the features of the original such as numbers of syllables and stresses in a line, *aicill* rhyme based on assonance linking the end of a line with a word in the middle of the next line, the general use of assonance and alliteration, or the lexical play with words and their roots (cf. Krause, 2001, pp. 95-99).

It is encouraging to perceive the general tendency towards translation directly from Gaelic into German. Publications such as *Und suchte meine Zunge ab nach Worten* (Mc Tigue, 1996), *Keltische Sprachinseln* (Heinz, 2001) and *Literamus* (Greis and Otto, 2001) and *Intime Weiten* (Galbraith, 2006) confirm such a development. Furthermore, as already mentioned, Iain Galbraith is currently editing an anthology of twentieth-century Scottish poetry in which considerable attention is paid to Gaelic poetry. With this anthology too, an effort will be made to work with translators working directly from Gaelic into German (Galbraith, 2000). This is not to say that translations such as Peter Waterhouse's rendition of MacLean's poetry are not beautifully crafted and a fair introduction to MacLean's work for a German audience. The point, though, is that with direct translation the actual engagement with languages during the translation process lies with the Gaelic language. That in itself

could be argued to be crucial from the point of view of what has become a 'lesser used language'.

Recent years have seen a development of what could be called international literary exchange projects supported by the European Union. One of them is the *EmLit Project* (Burnett, 2003) as part of the *EnterText* online journal facilitated by Brunel University. Texts from nineteen languages which have been identified as minority languages in a European context have been translated into the five major languages of Europe – English, German, French, Spanish and Italian. Translators have initially worked from the authors' self-translations before entering into collaboration work with the authors and other translators. An introduction to the particular situation of every language and literature precedes each language chapter. The Gaelic authors represented are Meg Bateman, Aonghas MacNeacail and Myles Campbell. It is noteworthy here that audio files of the readings of the original texts are provided (Burnett, 2003). Another platform for literary exchange between a variety of languages, often in the shape of poetry and translation workshops, is *Literature Across Frontiers* which describes itself as 'a programme of literary exchange and policy debate operating through partnership with European organisations engaged in the international promotion of literature and support for literary translation' (*Literature Across Frontiers*). One of its aims is to promote the works of authors of smaller languages through the medium of English, French and German. *Literature Across Frontiers* is also the publisher of the online literary review journal, *Transcript*, which devoted one of their issues to new writing in Irish and Scottish Gaelic in 2002 (*Transcript*). Interesting here is the emphasis on new prose writings as they appear as part of the above-mentioned Ùr-Sgeul series. There are links to German and French language versions of the website, yet, whereas information about the authors is available in those languages, the original material remains to be translated as yet. Finally, the Berlin-based project *Lyrikline.org* offers another forum for poets from a variety of countries to meet, show their work and get involved in translation. As part of the 'Poesiefestival Berlin' hosted by *Lyrikline.org* in June 2004, twelve German language poets were invited to translate works by visiting poets writing in Irish, Gaelic, Welsh and Breton, and they were encouraged to be

translated by these writers in return. The result was an engaging, and what is more, truly two-way 'VERSschmuggel' (verse smuggling), relying on interlineal translations provided in the case of the Gaelic material by translators with both Gaelic and German. With the poetry of Meg Bateman and Aonghas MacNeacail, the two poets representing Gaelic poetry, the English versions are nevertheless part of their contributions to the material available on the website, which is not surprising given that English is one of the languages, beside German, French, Slovenian and Turkish, through which this project finds its audience. It is interesting however, that the majority of Irish-language poets involved in the project present their work in Irish and German only, with no version in English provided. It is also noteworthy that the website shows additional information on the languages and authors involved as well as providing audio recordings of the original poetry (*Lyrikline.org*).

Unfortunately, recent developments have meant that the BOSLIT catalogue had to abandon regular updates, which leaves such promising and exciting developments unrecorded. Unrecorded, therefore, also remains another rather interesting development which puts the German audience into a somewhat privileged position compared to their English-speaking counterparts – multiple translation. Both during the *EmLit Project* and as part of the 'Poesiefestival Berlin' 2004, Meg Bateman's poem 'Ealghol: Dà Shealladh' (Blake *et al.*, 2000, p. 136) was translated into German. Bateman's Gaelic poem reads as follows:

> Ealghol: Dà Shealladh
>
> Choimhead mi an t-seann chairt-phuist,
> na taighean mar fhàs às an talamh,
> na h-aonaichean nam baidealan os an cionn,
> nan comharra air mòrachd Dhè,
> mus d' rinneadh goireas de bheanntan,
> no sgaradh eadar obair is fois,
> eadar an naomh is an saoghalta…
> is shìn mi chun a' bhodaich i.

"Eil sin cur cianalas ort, a Lachaidh?"
dh'fhaighnich mi, 's e na thosd ga sgrùdadh.
"Hoigh, òinseach, chan eil idir!
'S e cuimhne gun aithne a bh' agam oirrese,"
is stiùir e ri bò air thùs an deilbh.
"Siud a' Leadaidh Bhuidhe, an dàrna laogh aig a' Leadaidh Ruadh –
dh'aithnichinn, fhios agad, bò sam bith
a bhuineadh dhan àite seo rim bheò-sa."[34]

Jan Wagner's translation resulting from the 'Poesiefestival Berlin' 2004, working from a direct Gaelic-German crib translation and in collaboration with the author, is a rather free rendition which nevertheless echoes the fine semantic nuances of the original whilst standing as a beautifully crafted and highly engaging German text in its own right. His German translation reads as follows:

Elgol: Zwei Ansichten

Ich sah mir die alte Ansichtskarte an,
die Häuser, die aus dem Boden zu wachsen schienen,
die Gipfel, die hinter ihnen aufragten,
um Gottes Herrlichkeit zu preisen,
bevor man die Berge zu verwalten begann,
die Arbeit vom Vergnügen trennte,
Heiliges von Weltlichem…
und reichte sie dem alten Mann.

"Wirst du da wehmütig, Lachie?", fragte ich ihn,
als er sie schweigend unter die Lupe nahm.
"Wehmütig? Iwo. Ich habe nur versucht,
mich an ihren Namen zu erinnern",
und er zeigte auf eine Kuh im Vordergrund.
"Die Gelbe Gräfin, zweites Kalb der Roten -
Undenkbar, daß ich eine Kuh

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[34] 'I looked at the old postcard / the houses as if grown from the earth/soil / the peaks towering above them / a symbol of God's majesty / before the mountains were made a leisure facility / a separation between work and rest / between the sacred and the secular…/ and I handed it to the old man. "Does is make you nostalgic, Lachie?" / I asked, while he looked at it in silence/ "Ach, you silly girl, not at all! / I just couldn't quite remember her," / and he pointed to the cow in the foreground of the picture, / "That's the Yellow Lady, Brown Lady's second calf - / I used to recognise every cow, you know / that belonged to this place in my lifetime."' [my translation]; Bateman translates as: 'I looked at the old post-card, / the houses like a growth from the soil, / the peaks towering above them, / a sign of the majesty of God, / before an amenity was made of mountains, / or a divide between work and play, / between the sacred and the secular… / and I passed the picture to the old man. // "Does it make you sad, Lachie?" I asked / as he scrutinised it in silence. / "Sad? Bah! Not at all! / I just couldn't place her for a moment", / and he pointed to a cow in the foreground. / "That's Yellow Lady, Red Lady's second calf - / I'd know any cow, you see, / that belonged here in my life-time."' (*Lyrikline.org*)

aus dieser Gegend nicht erkenne."[35]

<div align="right">

trans. Jan Wagner

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Reading Karl Thielecke's translation, which forms part of the *EmLit* project, it appears as if the primary engagement lies with Bateman's English translation (which in itself follows the Gaelic closely, it has to be noted). Nevertheless, such 'twice-removed-ness' has caused the translation to lose sight at times of the poetics as they develop in the original with the coherence of the text in German suffering:

Elgol: Zwei Ansichten

Ich schaute mir die alte Postkarte an,
die Häuser waren wie ein Gewächs der Erde,
die Gipfel, die sich über ihnen türmten,
wie ein Zeichen der Majestät Gottes,
bevor man eine Freizeiteinrichtung aus den Bergen gemacht hatte,
oder eine Kluft zwischen Arbeit und Freizeit,
zwischen dem was heilig, und dem, was weltlich ist …
und ich reichte dem alten Mann das Bild.
"Macht es dich traurig, Lachie?" fragte ich
während er es still betrachtete.
"Traurig? Ach was! Überhaupt nicht!
Ich konnte sie bloß einen Augenblick lang nicht einordnen,"
und er zeigte auf eine Kuh im Vordergrund.
"Das ist die Gelbe Dame, das zweite Kalb der Roten Dame –
Ich würde nämlich jede Kuh erkennen,
die zu meinen Lebzeiten hierher gehörte." [36]

<div align="right">

trans. Karl Thielecke

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[35] 'I looked at the old picture postcard / the houses which seemed to grow out of the soil / the summits which rose behind them / to praise God's glory / before they started to administer the mountains / which separated work from pleasure / the sacred from the secular… / and handed it to the old man. "Does it make you feel nostalgic, Lachie?" I asked him / as he scrutinised it closely / "Nostalgic? Away. I just tried / to remember her name" / and he pointed to the cow in the foreground / The Yellow Countess, second calf of the Red one - / Incredible, that I should not / recognise a cow from this area."' [my translation]

[36] 'I looked at the old postcard / the houses were like a plant from the earth / the summits which towered over them / like a sign of the majesty of God / before a leisure facility was made from the mountains / or a gulf between work and spare time / between that which is sacred and that which is secular… / and I handed the old man the picture / "Does it make you sad, Lachie?" I asked / Whilst he looked at it quietly / "Sad? No! Not at all! / I just couldn't place her there for a moment" / and he pointed to a cow in the foreground / "That is Yellow Lady, the second calf of Red Lady - / Because I would recognise every cow / which belonged here in my lifetime."' [my translation]

'Traurig', for instance is a translation of 'sad', which appears in Bateman's English self-translation, but does not convey the sense of nostalgia which is vital towards the poetics of the poem. Otherwise, we have a translation which has abandoned the snapshot-like 'train-of-thought' appearance of the imagery, which is convincingly captured by Wagner's translation, by changing the substantive quality of the poem into a syntactically fully realised text employing verbs and adjectives. Interestingly, it is curiously fitting that it should be a poem with a subtitle translating as 'Two Views' that receives a treatment which succeeds in revealing the highly ambiguous and relative nature of translation, which in turn positively emphasises the status of the original.

Just how relative the relation between an original text and its translation might be can be experienced when reading Aonghas MacNeacail's 'seo mo dhàn' (Gorman, 2004, p. 135) in comparison to a German translation by Michael Donhauser. Here is MacNeacail's poem:

seo mo dhàn
a bhith nam bhàrd
a' seinn gu h-àrd
is gaoth na
buidhre sèideadh

seo mo chàs
a bhith nam bhàrd
a' seinn gu h-àrd
gun chluas a bheir
dhomh èisteachd

seo mo thlàths
a bhith nam bhàrd
a' seinn gu h-àrd
am briathran
siùbhlach grèiseach

oir seo mo dhàn
is mi nam bhàrd,
bhith seinn gu h-àrd,
a dh'aindeoin
leòr no èiginn[37]

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[37] 'This is my poem/fate / to be a poet / singing loudly / and the wind / in deafness blowing.

The German translation 'dies ist mein Geschick' by Donhauser which also materialised as part of the 'Poesiefestival Berlin', 2004 reads as follows:

> dies ist mein Geschick
> dass ich Dichter bin
> denn laut ist mein Lied
> obwohl der Wind
> weht ohne Sinn
>
> dies ist mein Verdienst
> dass ich Dichter bin
> denn tief ist mein Lied
> obwohl kein Ohr
> die Wahrheit vernimmt
>
> dies ist meine List
> dass ich Dichter bin
> denn schlau ist mein Lied
> dass wendig die Worte
> und glänzend sind
>
> dies ist mein Gedicht
> da ich Dichter bin
> denn leicht ist mein Lied
> dass es den Reichtum
> wie die Not besingt.[38]

Whereas in terms of prosody the German translation achieves its qualities by following the sound patterns of the original as closely as possible, in terms of the lexical make-up the German text seems to depart from its original quite considerably. The German poem is taking off into a multi-faceted world of the bard's creativity, thus adding a new quality to his craft with every stanza, where in the original we find the recurring and thus mesmerizing chant 'a' seinn gu h-àrd'. This is a beautiful

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This is my predicament / to be a poet / singing loudly / with no ear/ that will listen to me.
This is my pleasure / to be a poet / singing loudly / the words / flowing ornate.
Since this is my fate/poem / being a poet / to sing loudly / despite / plenty or hardship.' [my translation]

[38] 'This is my expertise/fate / that I am a poet / since loud is my song / although the wind / blows without sense.
This is my achievement / that I am a poet / since deep is my song / although no ear / will hear the truth. This is my cunning / that I am a poet / since clever is my song / that the words are agile / and bright. This is my poem / since I am a poet / for light is my song / that about wealth / and hardship it will sing.' [my translation]

example of the literary creativity that can be sparked by an original text in the environment of collaborative translation.

6.4   Future Research: Heteroglossia and Postcolonial Traces in Contemporary Gaelic Poetry

Recalling the discussion around the issue of diversity and its relationship to cultural essentialism as addressed in Chapter 1.4.5, we find Michael Cronin posing the question whether there can be cultural diversity without closing off cultural boundaries to intercultural exchange. In other words, is it 'possible to have a polyglossia without monoglossia […]?' (2003, p. 167). As we recall, his own approach to solving the problem is to question the validity of the dichotic supposition to the discussion as revealed by the question posed, asserting that 'languages grow not only because of detailed interaction with a specific natural and cultural environment but because they come into contact and learn (translate) from other cultures' (ibid., p. 167, as cited in Chapter 1.4.5). With regard to the role of translation with minority languages, Cronin thus makes the fundamental observation that the problem is not so much that there is contact between cultures, but rather how such inter-cultural contact takes shape. As he puts it:

> the problem for minority or endangered languages is not so much the fact of contact as the form of contact. Translation as a particular kind of contact is threatening and oppressive if the speakers of minority languages have no control over the translation process and cannot use translation as an enabling force but have to suffer it as a disabling intrusion. (ibid., p. 167, as cited in Chapter 1.4.5)

As is evident from questionnaire replies, translation in a Gaelic context may indeed be described as intrusive (the need to translate, not an activity of creative expression, a necessary evil) and oppressive (no choice but to translate and self-translate). In contrast, heteroglossia as a form of inevitable indirect translation in a minority language context (cf. Chapter 1.1.6.1) exemplifies a translation environment which might be perceived as stimulating, in that new original writing is the outcome, and enabling, in that new avenues of literary creativity are pursued. As we have noted in Chapter 1, it is the target text which benefits most from innovative language use, as

is the case with the new literatures in English, with translation as a source of literary and cultural enrichment for the target language (cf. Chapter 1.1.4 and 1.1.7). This evokes Bakhtin's understanding of writing as a form of dialogism which acknowledges

> the positive creativity of dialogic 'borderzones [where] new trends and new disciplines usually originate'. In contrast to the sacred and authoritarian word 'that retards and freezes thought' he […] upholds the generative dynamics of opposition. (Morris, 1994, p. 15, citing Bakhtin, 1986, p. 137)

As we remember from Chapter 5.1.2, 'in the act of understanding, a struggle occurs that results in mutual change and enrichment' (ibid., p. 17, as cited in 5.1.2). This is not to say that in the relatively fragile environment of a minority language literature considerations with regard to a continuous development of linguistic traditions can be disregarded. Indeed, the study of endangered languages is invaluable for highlighting the need to develop minority literatures with an eye towards established linguistic conventions such as cognitive metaphor, for instance (cf. Ahlers, 2002, p. 40) On the other hand, new developments are inevitable since, as Ken Hale points out, in the case of many minority language contexts 'the cultural context of the original tradition is irrecoverable' (1992, p. 41 as referred to in Chapter 1.4.3), and therefore such inevitable developments need to be embraced. With regard to the particular case of contemporary poetry written in Gaelic, Whyte asks:

> How long can poets go on finding further applications for a hopelessly hackneyed repertory, where boats and shovels and ropes can be talked about, but cars, trains, Black and Decker power drills and (God forbid) en electric food mixer are taboo? […] This is the main source of the disquiet I mentioned, a sense that Gaelic poetry may be writing itself into a dead end. (1996 p. 57)[39]

Fulfilling the stereotypes with regard to the choice of subject matter in texts written in minority languages is a well-established concept in postcolonial literary theory (cf. Robinson, 1997). The vicious-circle nature of the argument becomes apparent. On the one hand, authors are accused of writing for translation, writing according to the

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[39] Also recall Barnaby (2002, p. 93) as referred to in Chapter 1.1.5.

stereotypes established with regard to the source culture by the target culture. On the other hand, authors who choose to write innovatively are being accused of not reflecting the source-culture which, in a minority culture context all too often is synonymous with adopting the standards of the neighbouring majority literature (cf. 1.1.6.1). Consider John MacInnes' reflections:

> In present-day Gaelic verse (as opposed to the more traditional song, still being composed orally) there is no essential distinction between the works of such 'New Gaels' [referring to Rody Gorman and Siùsaidh NicNeill] and that of their native-speaking counterparts. Both are the products of a bilingual, even cosmopolitan, culture in which English is increasingly pervasive in its influences on prose and poetry alike, as on the language generally. Few of the verse forms and structures now in normal use have a deep root in Gaelic metrical tradition. This is but one token of the twentieth-century literary revolution which has produced a few masters and many apprentices. (1998, p. 342)

Yet, as the above comparative reading of the Gaelic and English versions of recent poetry in Gaelic has revealed, we find a significant level of differences between the two texts. The argument is a highly complex one indeed, since it is difficult to determine clear-cut cultural origins of influences on contemporary poetry. Furthermore, it is difficult to predict how Gaelic would have dealt differently with the development of a modern literary genre if it had been less under the influence of English. In other words, it is impossible to determine which new developments stem from inevitable development of any literary genre in any language at any time and which are due to the minoritised nature of Gaelic. One conclusion is indeed to acknowledge the extent to which a change happened and furthermore the abruptness of the development. Another conclusion is the need for research which traces the heteroglossic voices within contemporary Gaelic poetry, with findings likely to point to Irish, German or Russian influences as well as English ones.[40] Another research avenue is the consideration of traces of a postcolonial conditioning within the corpus of Gaelic literature, such as the comparative readings of Irish and Scottish Gaelic poetry with regard to differing attitudes towards and alliances with British war efforts during the 20th century (Titley, 2006). Staying with postcolonial

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[40] Cf. for instance the influence of Rilke's 'Römische Fontäne' (2001, p. 152) on Whyte's 'Fontana Maggiore' (Black, 1999, p. 662), as pointed out by the author of the latter (personal correspondence).

conditioning it would be interesting to re-read MacNeacail's 'oideachadh ceart' (MacNeacail, 1996) in the light of Christopher Hadfield's article 'A Tissue of Lies: History Versus Myth in the Nature of Time' (Hadfield, 2002). I would therefore like to suggest that there is more scope for comparative research addressing the Gaelic language corpus of Gaelic poetry, for as Osip Mandelshtam puts it, 'language alone can be acknowledged as the criterion of unity for the literature of a given people, of its unconditional unity, all other criteria being secondary, transitory, and arbitrary' (cited in Beaujour, 1989, p. 42). Inevitably, all 'other criteria' will reveal the diverse nature of literary expression, which makes such proposed future research all the more important and interesting.

Returning to translation in its conventional format, i.e. the translation of a literary text of a source culture into another text functioning in a target culture by another author/translator, future research might look at the corpus of foreign literature in Gaelic translation, be that from neighbouring languages such as Welsh and Irish or other more distant languages. Here, specific literary contexts could be explored with regard to their influence on the choices of source languages and texts. Furthermore, the difference between direct translation, i.e. the Gaelic poet-translator knows both languages involved, and translation via a third language, i.e. the Gaelic poet-translator works from a previous translation in a language he knows such as English, may be investigated both on a text-internal and a text-external level. Such research would stress the need for bi-directional translation activities involving Gaelic poetry and other Gaelic literary genres in putting translation into Gaelic on the map in a translation environment which so far has predominantly paid attention to translation out of Gaelic.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

As noted in Chapter 2, there are certain labels attached to contemporary Gaelic poetry which demand to be examined in a thesis which looks at self-translation and the bilingual edition in a Gaelic literary context. Gaelic poetry has been described as 'English verse in Gaelic', with the Gaelic original being perceived as the text which

suffers loss in the translation process, the assumption being that although the Gaelic text might have come first during the writing process, textual features such as context, semantics and form originate with Anglophone aesthetics. The idea to read Gaelic poetry and English translations as prepared by the author comparatively was, therefore, triggered by the interest in investigating in what ways the Gaelic poem has indeed moved towards the English over the past half century. Has it increasingly become a mirror-image of poetry in English? Findings from the comparative reading suggest a rather complex relationship between the Gaelic/English poetry pair, revealing a somewhat ironic dichotomy which might be described thus: even though there are instances which suggest a working of the English translation as poetry in its own right in that attention is paid to the English text beyond the mere level of literal translation (at times we might suspect the English version to be the origin of the poetic impulse, due to a mere clarity of imagery and semantics), we also find substantial evidence of a less attentive approach towards the English translation, with the Gaelic poem more convincing in terms of image coherence and prosody.

On the basis of this finding, there are two possible conclusions. First, one could argue that the two versions need to be taken into account to come to a full appreciation of self-translated Gaelic poetry. Second, one could contend, that in order to evaluate contemporary Gaelic poetry, one needs to read the original, in other words, one needs to appreciate Gaelic poetry in its own right, since otherwise one is not actually talking about Gaelic poetry. Wherever the stronger version might be locatable in a reading that fluctuates between the two poems, this argument holds true. In reality, the poetry pair is likely to be appreciated mostly via the English version by a majority of its readers. Reading in such a way, we do not notice the instances where the English version is (slightly or manifestly) more convincing or indeed authoritative. As a result, we are not actually appreciating Gaelic poetry, i.e. we do not notice the instances where the poem in Gaelic lets us down or simply leaves us uninvolved. If on the other hand, the Gaelic version stands out in comparison to its English counterpart, we do not notice either. If Gaelic is to be evaluated on text-internal grounds, therefore, there needs to be a monolingual corpus which allows for such a reading, since issues of interpretation and aesthetic

appreciation go beyond mere literary engagement with the text, on the part of both readers and writers, involving socially shared dynamics of language use and literary appreciation.

Looking beyond the Gaelic/English contact zone confirms the significant influence English translation has on the corpus of Gaelic poetry. However, it also offers a translation environment which potentially allows Gaelic poetry to breathe the air of an equal literary partner. Given also, that such a context relies on the translation involvement by somebody other that the author, the creative engagement with the Gaelic poem is spread beyond the author, which I consider a positive impact on a poetry which all too often remains most fully realised within the person who wrote the poem in Gaelic. In other words, a translation context involving languages other than English ensures a literary context for collaborative creativity. Such would, furthermore, be the attribute of translation from other languages into Gaelic, be that in the shape of translation which acknowledges the entirety of the source text as such, or as a result of a more elusive translation approach which engages with foreign literatures and their authors to enrich Gaelic original writing.

Conclusion

The present discussion set out by exploring the value of postcolonial literary and translation theory for interpreting the culture of translation in the context of modern Gaelic poetry. As we have found, Gaelic literature does not fit the criteria for inclusion into the generally accepted canon of postcolonial literatures since the minority cultures within Britain are argued not to fit the definition of 'the colonised', given their involvement with the British colonial enterprise as part of the colonising forces abroad. However, it does not follow from such an argument that 'home' minority cultures have not been continuously manipulated by the powers of the political, economical and cultural centres which have left identities at the margins of today's United Kingdom as fragmented and hybridised as any other culture living with the effects of a colonial past. Furthermore, within postcolonial studies one of the major focus points is the use and appropriation of language – arguably the most obvious, since determinable, marker of cultural identity – as a creative and productive part of intercultural communication. The awareness of the importance of language use does not, however, result in the welcoming of the world's literatures written in lesser-used or less prestigious languages into the canon of postcolonial literatures by postcolonial studies, since they simply use the wrong languages. Rather, the field of Anglophone postcolonial studies is concerned with the appropriation of English as a literary medium in accordance with the needs of expression of a variety of post-colonial identities, i.e. with subverting the culturally established narrative of the Western European and American cultural hegemony by expressing that of the colonised in ways that show their differences in terms of perspectives, histories and cultural communication. The Gaelic literary corpus is therefore not entirely at home within postcolonial studies. Defending its ground, i.e. insisting on a postcolonial treatment of Gaelic literature by postcolonial criticism, might well entail the loss of critical energies. Nevertheless, directing our focus towards Gaelic, contemplating established notions within a postcolonial literary framework is beneficial for a critical appreciation of Gaelic literature since it highlights the inevitable fact of multiple and hybrid identities and their negotiability in the historically conditioned contact zones of today's globalised world.

As translation studies is inevitably concerned with intercultural communication across languages, it is natural to consult the findings of this field of research. With the rise of postcolonial studies, translation studies has experienced a shift in approach from the normative towards the historicist, thus widening the focus of investigation beyond the text as a literary unit towards the text as embedded in and answering to surrounding societal realities. Such an understanding has left its mark on minority translation studies in particular, which, as a result, considers the effectiveness of different translation practices towards the cultural negotiation of minority literatures. With regard to Gaelic literature, then, the minority status is due to Gaelic being a lesser-used language. Any form of inter-cultural negotiation is, thus, firmly grounded in the context of language contact between cultures of unequal cultural and political status – a context which commonly results in the invisibility of the language of lesser status due to established historical patterns which absorb the culturally different into the culturally hegemonic. If we are concerned with the visibility of a minority language, in other words with ensuring genuine language diversity, we must inevitably recognise difference as an essential qualification for inter-cultural understanding and acceptance.

As we have found, the critical treatment of translation in connection with Gaelic poetry is rather limited in extent. From comments by authors, editors and publishers, it becomes apparent that translation is at times seen as a necessary task offering little creative gratification; it is commonly perceived as a tool for reaching a wider audience. As such the impulse originates outwith the creative spheres of the authors, with translation performed due to societal forces at work within a minority literature. Consulting critical debates, two printed discussions are noteworthy, one involving the authors Angus Nicolson (since known as Aonghas MacNeacail) and Iain Crichton Smith (also known as Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn) (Thompson, 1978-9, pp. 6-8), and the other involving language activist and researcher Wilson McLeod, Gaelic poet Aonghas MacNeacail and literary scholar Peter France in *Chapman* magazine (McLeod, 1998, MacNeacail, 1998 and France, 1998). Subsequent contributions to the debate addressing the issue of Gaelic literature and translation mainly originate

with Gaelic poet and critic Christopher Whyte (2000, 2002b, 2004). The extent of the debate might be small, yet the development of the argument is significant. In the late 1970s the discussion mostly revolved around normative issues such as the quality of the work to be translated and the evaluation of the translation process. Furthermore, the benefits of translation for Gaelic poets and their poetry are still contemplated on the basis of established translation dichotomies such as the original versus the translation, the author versus the translator and the source readership versus the target readership. In 1998, the debate is a great deal more polarised. The disputed question is whether prevailing translation practices, which see original Gaelic poetry facing English translations by the authors, are indeed useful for both learners and native speakers and beneficial for the well-being of Gaelic poetry, or whether such a publication format furthers the marginalisation and subsequent invisibility of the poetry in question, given the invalidation of established translation dichotomies. If the question posed in the late 1970s was 'Why bother to translate at all?' (Thompson, 1978-9, p. 6) the question posed twenty years on is 'why bother with Gaelic at all?' (McLeod, 1998, p. 151).

In order to grasp the nature of this particular translation practice, it is necessary to view it as a specific phenomenon in all its facets. To evaluate the nature of translational writing, we have to take into account the notion of meaning. With the deconstruction of the author's intentions as the conclusive source of literary meaning the notion of meaning itself has become less of a stable, absolute and eternal phenomenon; rather, it has been recognised as relative and incessantly recreated by each individual reader who comes to the text. Since translation always involves a process of reading, the resulting target text will answer as much to the relative nature of meaning as any other reading of a text. As a result, translation is never the ultimate and transparent realisation of a text in another language, for the translator has acted as an intervening force whilst overcoming the gap between idiosyncratic sonic, grammatical, semantic and stylistic qualities that make up the individual fabric of a language.

Taking into account the specific genre of literature that is most profoundly affected by translation activity, namely poetry, we realise that the task of translation becomes even more intricate, with poetic meaning manifested most profoundly in a compressed and sculpted realisation of particular qualities displayed by a language. An exact replica of a poem in translation is therefore impossible, which is not to say that translation, i.e. the rewriting of a text in another language, is not possible. Consequently, the established notion of equivalence reveals itself as an illusion which denies the act of translation its text-manipulating potential and the actor of translation his or her creative involvement during the translational process. With regard to a translation environment shared by languages and literatures of unequal status, with the minority language commonly fulfilling the role of the source text, it is even more important to accept translation as a writing process marked by difference rather than equivalence. Only by questioning the notion of transparency between the texts will we be able to realise that the poetry written in Gaelic is not the same as the poetry translated by the author into English, even though with the latter we might still be reading poetry. Furthermore, perceiving translation as a manifestation of difference between texts, languages and cultures highlights the continuous non-acknowledgement of both the process within poetry publications by individual authors and the impact of translation on the literary genre of Gaelic poetry in general by those involved in its making and publication.

As it has been observed by those involved with the study of self-translation, the target text resulting from such a translation practice commonly undermines the status of the original text, with the self-translated text taken to be a true reflection of the author's original intentions in a way no translation by somebody other than the author could ever achieve. The text as translated by the author becomes the text as it would have been written originally by the author in the target language. Such a perception, however, poses certain problems. If the self-translation indeed signifies the text as it would have been written in the target language, we would have to assume that it adheres to norms and conventions of the target language, literature and culture. That in itself suggests a degree of differences between the two texts, which is indeed what translation scholars have found, namely commonly occurring significant

departures of the target text from the source text with self-translating authors, more marked than with translations by the hand of somebody other than the author. Consequently, self-translation constitutes an example of translation as original writing. As a result, we should indeed bestow original status onto the second language version. The problem in our specific scenario is that, having acquired original status, the facing self-translated text in English renders the original Gaelic poem invisible. In other words, the poem is not necessarily read and appreciated in its Gaelic version. Here we enter the realm of perception. The perception of the self-translation as a second original commonly disregards the first original and therefore remains unaware of the marked differences between the text-pair. Only the awareness of difference, however, ensures a reading which acknowledges distinct lexical, grammatical, syntactical, stylistic and prosodic features of both texts, realising their idiosyncratic relation to their respective cultural contexts, both as a text written by the author and read by a readership.

The published text, like any other artistic expression, is a dialogic act. In other words, the creation of meaning is a communicative act involving both the author and the reader. Gaelic poetry is thus not merely what is written by individual authors, but rather what is read by a readership once it has been put out into the public domain by agents that make and shape publications. Since all the parties involved in the world of literature, i.e. authors, publishers, editors, funding bodies, translators, readers, reviewers etc., are always also part of social realities informing a certain culture at a certain time, the dialogic act becomes a tripartite phenomenon adding the dimension of social embeddedness. Functioning within certain social settings, the act of literature cannot escape shaping those very social settings in turn. The socially determined reality for Gaelic poetry is its existence in a Gaelic/English contact zone which finds its visible expression in the bilingual Gaelic/English *en-face* edition based on self-translation. Taking into account social factors such as the inferior status of Gaelic in comparison to English with regard to the size of its readership in general and even within its own speech group, as well as perception dynamics which view self-translations as perfect substitutes for the original writing, prevailing publication formats necessarily invite and ensure a certain reading, or indeed non-reading, of the

text in Gaelic. Prevailing translation and publication formats on the one hand reflect the minority status of Gaelic as a language and literature, in that they try to overcome the problems of a minority language in the face of a readership restricted in numbers and reading ability; yet, on the other hand, they are potent forces in maintaining that very status. The reader of Gaelic poetry is already socialised as a bilingual reader with more competence in English, if indeed he/she has any knowledge of Gaelic. Rather than challenging such reading patterns, the bilingual edition based on self-translation perpetuates them. The combination of the bilingual publication and self-translation perpetuates the view that it is perfectly possible to live yish in an xish way, to use Fishmanian terminology (see Fishman, 1991), i.e. to experience Gaelic culture through the medium of English, without any sense of loss. Rather, we are once more in the presence of difference which has been defined as essential to the human condition and a pan-human acceptance ensuring linguistic and cultural diversity. Furthermore, difference has been identified as an inevitable quality for inter-cultural communication in the shape of translation – a quality which becomes even more pronounced with self-translation. The awareness of difference between the Gaelic poem and the English self-translation, then, is a significant prerequisite for the evaluation of Gaelic as an independent literature.

Some contemporary Gaelic poetry has famously been described as 'English verse in Gaelic' (MacInnes, 1998, p. 342), which assumes English as the origin of both the creative impulse and aesthetic/stylistic references. As a comparative reading of the Gaelic/English self-translated poetry pair reveals, however, the relationship between the two poems is of a manifold and complex nature. One the one hand, we find evidence of attention being paid to the English poem in terms of imagery and prosody beyond a mere literal rendering of the Gaelic poem, suggesting a treatment of the English poem as poetry in its own right, with the English version at times exerting an interpretative grip on the poetry-pair by clarification of connotational meaning and imagery. Yet, there are also instances when the English poem appears to have received relatively little attention in comparison to the poem in Gaelic, so as to leave a finely tuned imagery present in Gaelic unrealised or interrupted in the English version. We also have evidence of the two versions going separate ways in

terms of connotational meaning, for instance, which suggests a different positioning of the two texts in their respective cultures. A comparative reading thus confirms that with the English version we are not reading a transparent double of the original, indeed, we are not witnessing the poetics as they unfold in the Gaelic text. Neither is reading the English version the same experience as reading the poem in Gaelic, given the nature of Gaelic as a lesser-used written and read language. Given prevailing reading patterns which result in the Gaelic/English poetry-pair being most likely appreciated via the poem in English by the majority of its readership, instances go unnoticed when the Gaelic poem leaves us uninvolved in the presence of a more authoritative English poem. Similarly, the reader of the poem in English will not realise when the poem in Gaelic stands out in terms of coherence of imagery and lyrical power. In either case, Gaelic poetry is not appreciated on its own merits.

In conclusion, I am arguing for a re-evaluation of translation in a Gaelic context as a site of friction and differences between languages and cultures which is in need of translation and publication practices that resist the illusion of transparency, such as non-translation, collaborative translation with clear reference to the translation process or indeed multiple translation. With reference to non-translation, it should be noted that there is a pressing need for concerted efforts to fund, co-ordinate and promote monolingual collections of Gaelic poetry by individual authors. There are also choices to be made with regard to the direction of the translation process and the languages involved. Gaelic literature may well benefit from translation if considered as a target literature more often rather than continually serving as a source of inspiration for its neighbouring majority language literature. In addition, translation efforts to render Gaelic texts into languages other than English provide another beneficial translation environment for Gaelic. It is most likely that such a translation environment would rely on, and therefore invite, creative collaborations between authors and translators, which, in itself, would ensure an active engagement with the Gaelic language in terms of actual communication – an arguably vital consideration in the context of any lesser-used language. Such alternative translation approaches are vital for overcoming the inertia that is currently perceived in acts of translation within Gaelic literary production in order to release the potential of translation as

creative, varied and stirring literary writing, allowing it to become a vitalising force within Gaelic literature.

Appendix A - Questionnaire Participants

List of editors cited in the thesis:

E1 – Gaelic scholar and widely published editor of Gaelic poetry anthologies

E2 – Gaelic scholar and editor of Gaelic poetry anthologies and widely recognised author of Gaelic poetry
[see also A2]

E3 – Gaelic scholar and editor of Gaelic poetry anthologies with an interest in locally coloured poetry

E4 – Gaelic scholar and editor of modern Gaelic poetry and widely recognised author of Gaelic poetry
[see also A4]

E5 – editor of Scottish poetry

E6 – Gaelic scholar and editor of several Gaelic poetry anthologies

E7 – Gaelic scholar and editor of Gaelic poetry

E8 – editor of Irish/Gaelic poetry anthology, prolific and widely published editor and author of poetry in Irish

List of authors cited in the thesis:

A1 – well-established island-based Gaelic poet

A2 – well-established island-based Gaelic poet, scholar and editor of Gaelic poetry anthologies
[see also E2]

A3 – author of Gaelic poetry, not yet widely published

A4 – widely recognised author of Gaelic poetry, scholar and editor of modern Gaelic poetry
[see also E4]

A5 – city-based recently successful, award-winning author of Gaelic poetry and prose

A6 – Highland-based author of Gaelic poetry, recently published

A7 – established Highland-based author of Gaelic poetry

A8 – award-winning island-based author of Gaelic poetry, not yet widely published

A9 – widely published author of Gaelic poetry and English prose, critic and editor of modern Gaelic poetry

A10 – city-based Gaelic scholar and author of Gaelic poetry, poetry not yet widely published

A11 – well-established island-based author of Gaelic poetry, published in Gaelic/Irish format mostly

A12 – island-based author of Gaelic plays, prose and some poetry

A13 – well-established and widely published award-winning Borders-based Gaelic broadcaster, journalist, scriptwriter and poet

A14 – island-based Gaelic broadcaster, journalist and award-winning author of Gaelic poetry and prose, widely published recently

A15 – island-based Gaelic poet, widely published and recognised, notably working in Gaelic-only and Gaelic/Irish publication environments

List of publishers cited in the thesis:

P1 – prolific university-affiliated publisher of Gaelic literature, no longer in existence
P2 – Lowland-based Scottish-wide commercial publisher
P3 – small publisher of hand-made collections of Scottish poetry
P4 – University-based publisher of academic writing of Scottish interest
P5 – Highland-based publisher of Gaelic literature
P6 – Devon-based publisher of poetry who has published Gaelic poetry
P7 – Association-affiliated publisher of literature of Scottish interest

Appendix B - Close Reading Session Participants

List of informants:

Mary Anne MacDonald	–	author and translator, Berneray, North Uist
Chrissie McCuish	–	retired head teacher of Berneray Primary School, North Uist
William MacDonald	–	Quality Improvement Officer, Lionacleit Education Centre, Benbecula

Appendix C - Publications

The following publications present arguments and findings which form part of the present thesis.

2005   'Finding the Poem - Modern Gaelic Verse and the Contact Zone' in *Forum*, issue 1 'Origins and Originality', Autumn. http://forum.llc.ed.ac.uk/issue1/Krause_Gaelic.pdf.

'Gaelic Scotland – A Postcolonial Site? In search of a meaningful theoretical framework to assess the dynamics of contemporary Scottish Gaelic verse' in *eSharp*, issue 6 'Identity and Marginality', volume 1, Autumn. http://www.sharp.arts.gla.ac.uk/issue6/Krause.pdf.

'The Quest for Visibility/a megmutatkozás vágya' translated by Sütö-Egeressy Zsuzsa in *Korunk*, Hungary, Oktober.

2006   'Voicing the minority: self-translation and the quest for the voice in Gaelic poetry', paper delivered at a postgraduate symposium at the University of East Anglia entitled 'Self and Identity in Translation', 4-5 February 2006, Norwich, publication forthcoming in Nikolaou, Paschalis and Kyritsi, Maria-Venetia (eds.) *Translating Selves. Experience and Identity between Languages and Literatures*, London and New York, Continuum Books, 2007.

'Gaelic Poetry in Germany', in Hubbard, Tom and Jack, R.D.S. (eds.) *Scotland in Europe*, Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 2006.

'Twins: Identical or not? The bilingual corpus of Scottish Gaelic Poetry', *In Other Words*, 27, Summer 2006.

'And what is wrong with theory? Postcolonial Theory and Contemporary Scottish Gaelic Poetry', paper delivered at Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 4, an interdisciplinary Gaelic conference held at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Skye, 18-21 July 2006; publication forthcoming in Munro, Gillian (ed.) *Cànan & Cultar/Language and Culture: Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 4 Proceedings*, Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, November 2007

Appendix D(a) – Author Questionnaire

1. Production/original:

- To what extent does (did) creative writing provide your income?

- To what extent does (did) writing in Gaelic provide your income?

- Why do (did) you write in Gaelic?

- Do you consider yourself bilingual (or multilingual), if yes could you please state the languages you live and work with?

- How do you perceive your languages in terms of status, i.e. which is your first language, which is the second etc.?

- How do you decide which of your languages will be the medium for a particular work (or indeed your work in general)?

2. Translation

2.1. Production/translation:

- Do you translate, or have you translated, works by other authors? What are the languages involved?

- Why do (did) you choose to translate works by other authors?

- Do (did) you enjoy translating works by other authors? Why or why not?

- Do (did) you choose to have your own work translated into other languages?

> If the answer is 'yes', please continue to answer the following questions.

> If the answer is 'no', please ignore the following questions and continue with section 3.

- If you have (had) your work translated what are (were) the languages your work is/was translated into?

- Why do (did) you feel it necessary to have your work translated or to translate it yourself into another language (English, Irish or any other language)?

- Do (did) you translate your own work yourself or do you pass this task on to somebody else?

- If you do (did) translate your own work, at which point in your career did you turn towards self-translation?

- What were the considerations that led to self-translation?

- If you have subsequently moved away from self-translation, at what point in your career did you do so and what were the reasons?

- If choices with regards to translation and self-translation have varied throughout your carrier, could you please comment?

- If you translate your own work does (did) this process involve collaboration with other translators/authors? If yes, why do/did you choose to do so?

- Do (did) you enjoy translating your own work?

- Do (did) you translate simultaneously to the production of the original, just after you finished writing the original or with some time passing between writing the original and translating it? If delayed, do/did you know when writing the original that you would translate at some stage?

- Does (did) the time span between the creation of the original and the translation vary from work to work?

2.2. The text:

- Do (did) you perceive a clear distinction between the original and the translation or do you think of the two texts in terms of a 'double creation', seeing both texts essentially as originals?

- Do (did) you translate from your first language into your second language? Do you make this distinction in the first place?

- How does (did) the genre of your original composition affect the translation process and indeed what role does the prospect of translation play in the choice of genre for your original composition?

- Do (did) you choose to stay very close to the original or do (did) you choose a freer approach to translation; i.e. what do you consider important as essence that is carried from the original into the target language through translation?

2.3. Reception of the text:

- Do (did) you write each text with a clear audience/readership in mind? If so, could you describe the audience/readership you have had in mind?

- If your work appears in a bilingual Gaelic/English format, who is the anticipated audience/readership?

- How has the anticipated audience/readership for the translated text influenced your translation choice?

- According to your own experience, what is the role English translations can play with regard to financial viability of Gaelic literature publications?

 3. No translation

- Why did (do) you choose not to have your work translated or to translate it yourself?

- If your work appears in monolingual Gaelic format, who is the anticipated readership?

If there is anything else you would like to comment on, please do so.

Appendix D(b) – Editor Questionnaire

Did the Gaelic poetry publications you have edited appear in monolingual or bilingual format? Could you please name the languages involved.

If the choice was a bilingual edition giving translations alongside the Gaelic originals, was the selection of original Gaelic poems which were to appear in the publication affected by the prospect of offering a translation?

Why did you opt for translations alongside the Gaelic texts?

With regard to the translations, where did the translations originate?

If more than one translation of any one original already existed, what were the criteria for the final choice of which one to print?

If no previous translation existed, did you translate the texts yourself or did you pass this task on to somebody else?

If you chose to translate the texts yourself, could you please comment on the reasons leading to that choice?

What were the translation strategies you have followed, i.e. did you stay close to the original or did you follow a rather free approach to translation? Do your strategies vary with different publications?

Who is the anticipated readership for both the originals and the translations and the publication on the whole, and how does such anticipated audience influence your translation choices?

What is (was) the monolingual and/or bilingual policy with regard to paratext (i.e. any text surrounding the primary literary text such as introductions, forewords, text on the title page and book cover etc)?

If you have edited bilingual Gaelic/English (on facing pages) editions, how far and in which ways is the content of the edition (i.e. notes, introduction, new translation, modification of existing translation) determined by the anticipated readership?

According to your own experience, what is the role English translations can play with regard to financial viability of Gaelic literature publications?

If there is anything else you would like to comment on, please do so.

Appendix D(c) – Publisher Questionnaire

Could you please give me an idea of the size of your publication business, i.e. how many books a year do you publish?

What percentage of the books you publish are books that present Gaelic literature?

Do you receive funding for Gaelic literature publications? If yes, who do you receive funding from and what percentage of the overall cost is covered by such funding?

Do you publish books that present Gaelic texts amongst texts written in other languages, if yes what are the other languages?

If the Gaelic material appears in a books covering material from other languages, do you print the Gaelic originals or do you choose to present Gaelic literature in translation? Could you please comment on the reasons for your choices!

If you choose to print the Gaelic originals, do they appear in their original format only or do you print translations along with the originals and what are the languages involved? Could you please comment on the reasons for your choices!

Who is the anticipated readership of your Gaelic literature publications?

If you publish both monolingual and bilingual publications, please also comment on how the anticipated readership between monolingual publications and bilingual (multilingual) publications differs?

What is the format of the bilingual (Gaelic and translation) publications, (e.g. translation on facing page or below the original, lyrical or prose translations)?

What languages do you use in the paratext (i.e. any text surrounding the primary literary text such as introductions, forewords, text on the title page and book cover etc), and what policy underlies this practice?

If you publish bilingual Gaelic /English (facing pages) poetry publications, why do you choose to do so, considering that both Gaelic poetry and poetry in general are not considered the mainstream literature that will insure great sales? What is the purpose of such publications?

According to your own experience, what is the role English translations can play with regard to financial viability of Gaelic literature publications?

With regard to the bilingual Gaelic/English (on facing pages) edition, how far and in which ways is the content of the edition (i.e. notes, introduction, new translation, modification of existing translation) determined by the anticipated readership?

If the Gaelic texts appear alongside translations, were the translations produced by the author of the original Gaelic texts or did somebody else translate the original texts?

What are the criteria, which decide whether a publication is going to be monolingual or bilingual?

> What influence does the author have on this decision?

> How does the anticipated readership influence this decision?

> How does the genre of the text influence the choices with regards to monolingual/bilingual publications and their appearance?

Is there a genre of Gaelic text that is more suitable/viable to be published in Gaelic only rather than others?

Are there any figures that show how well the monolingual publication sells in comparison to the bilingual publication and vice versa? What are these figures, and how can they be interpreted?

If you have a long history of publishing Gaelic texts, have decisions with regard to the language choices and format of the publications changed over the years? Please comment.

If there is anything else you would like to comment on, please do so.

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[See also Caimbeul, Aonghas Pàdraig]

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