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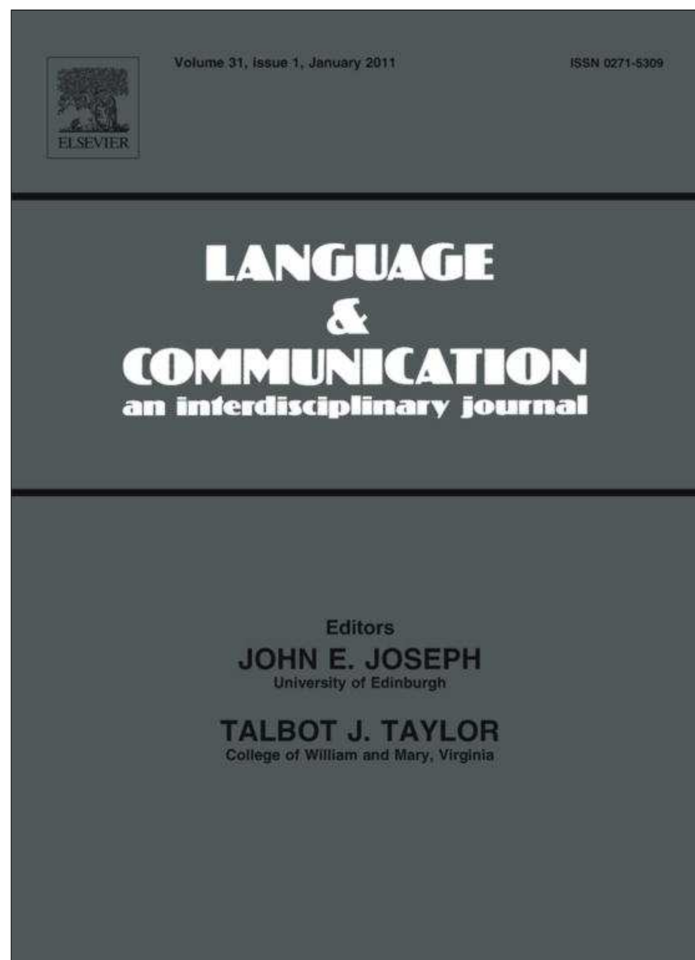

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Language revitalization discourses as metaculture: Gaelic in Scotland from the 18th to 20th centuries

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Discourses of Gaelic language revitalization in Scotland are analyzed as examples of Greg Urban's 'metaculture' in order to gain a better understanding of how people attempt sociolinguistic change through minority language revitalization efforts. After describing the 18th-century emergence of 'discourses of revitalization and redemption' about Gaelic, this paper analyzes seven different themes or predications about Gaelic made in the 18th through 20th centuries to justify its salvation. I demonstrate how the discourses constitute metacultural and meta-linguistic commentaries on cultural and linguistic practices, and how previously circulating elements of culture, including language ideologies and affective stances, are dialogically contained within each creative revitalizing response and facilitate its circulation.

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1. Introduction

In this paper I analyze discourses of Gaelic language revitalization efforts in Scotland as examples of Urban's (2001) 'metaculture' in order to gain a better understanding of how people may attempt and achieve social and linguistic change through minority language revitalization efforts. Metaculture may be defined as 'culture about culture,' or more specifically cultural forms or practices that comment on other cultural forms or practices, and in so doing impact their circulation. According to Urban, metacultural forms can only make sense, and thus be effective, because they incorporate 'a range of prior and seemingly disparate cultural elements' from the past (2001:5). In incorporating familiar past elements, metaculture actually facilitates the movement of culture in space and in time, pushing it into circulation (Urban, 2001:4).

Minority language revitalization efforts are a clear example of metaculture because they are cultural behavior and forms, yet are also integrally 'meta-level': language revitalization efforts, including discourses, are sociolinguistic responses to the linguistic and sociolinguistic changes wrought through processes of language shift. In other words, they are metapragmatic discourses explicitly attempting to change language structure, function, and social usage or undo previous changes (Silverstein, 1985). The metacultural forms of minority language revitalization efforts are new, yet they incorporate older elements that allow them to make sense to people and to be effective (Urban, 2001:4).

Scottish Gaelic is a minority language undergoing shift in Scotland. In 1700 it is estimated that about 25–30% of the Scottish population of 900,000 were Gaelic speakers, most of them monoglot (Jones and McLeod, 2007:21). In the first national census to include questions about Gaelic, in 1881, a total of 231,594 Gaelic speakers were enumerated, or 6.2% of Scotland's population. In the 2001 Scottish census, 93,282 people, or 1.8% of Scotland's enumerated 2001 population of 5062,011, were claimed to have various combinations of skills in understanding, speaking, reading, and/or writing Gaelic.

Discourses utilized by participants in the public discussion of Gaelic in Scotland since the 18th century can be divided into two main categories: discourses of language death and denigration, and discourses of language revitalization and redemption.

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I define the former as a set of predications about Gaelic and its speakers that participants utilize in order to declare, explain, justify, or advocate for the elimination of Gaelic, and/or to disparage the language or its speakers. I define the latter as responses to the former: a set of predications about Gaelic focused on proclaiming its virtues as justification for its preservation, salvation or revitalization. Although this paper focuses primarily on discourses of revitalization and redemption, both types of discourses have existed in a dialectical relationship in Scotland for centuries, and both are of importance for understanding semiotically-mediated processes of Gaelic language shift (on discourses of death and denigration see McEwan-Fujita, 2003, 2006).

After a discussion of the historical period in which redemptive and revitalizing discourses about Gaelic first emerged, I shall describe seven different common themes or predications of these discourses, giving historical examples from the 18th through 20th centuries for each and elucidating the fundamental metacultural aspects for each: how the discourses constitute metacultural and meta-linguistic commentaries on cultural and linguistic practices, and how previously circulating elements of culture (that is, elements of the presupposed context, Silverstein, 2003), including affective stances, ideologies of standard language, and discourses of Gaelic language death and denigration, are dialogically (Bakhtin, 1981) contained within each creative revitalizing response (Urban, 2001:222), making it seem familiar and understandable while also limiting the terms of the response.

2. The context of emergence

In the 15th and 16th centuries, Lowland Scottish denigration of Highlanders in royal decrees, travel accounts, and popular song had formed a distinct pattern in which

> the lines of opposition [were] already defined: Highlandmen are proud, obstinate, boastful, treacherous, violent, fickle, cowardly, and ragged; they speak very loudly in a barbarous language that nobody can understand, and there are altogether too many of them (Donaldson, 1988:49).

Scots- and English-speaking Lowlanders constituted Gaelic-speaking Highlanders as the 'other' of the Scottish nation, and assigned them the negative valence in sets of contrasting values: civilized/barbarous, honorable/dishonorable, human/animal (Chapman, 1982). For example, in the early 16th century, the Scottish poet William Dunbar wrote a carnivalesque scene of Highlanders entertaining the Devil in Hell (Bawcutt, 1996:185):

Thae tarmegantis, with tag and tatter,	*Those devils, in rags and tatters*
Full lowd in Ersche begowth to clatter,	*Full loud in Erse began to chatter,*
And roup lyk revin and ruke	*And croak like raven and rook*[a]

[a] Lines 115–118; translation compiled from Bawcutt's footnotes and glossary. The poem is of the 'Dance of the Sevin Deidly Sinnis' genre and is identified in anthologies by that name or by its first line, 'Of Februar the fyiftene nycht.'

The next several lines, not quoted here, relate that although the Devil himself had called for a 'Hieland padayne' or Highland festival to entertain him, these Highlanders chattering in Gaelic were too loud for him, so he 'smothered them with smoke' in the 'deepest pit of hell' according to the editor's translation.

A similarity of metaphors, in which the sound of Gaelic is compared to the sounds of birds or other animals, is found across several centuries and suggests the continuity of a symbolic system. An early 19th-century writer, explicitly refuting earlier redemptive praise for Gaelic, compared the sound of Gaelic to the sound of annoying birds in a heated chapter-length diatribe in his book on the Highlands:

> To the non-adept, all languages are equally dark; though the Italian may sound smoother than the Gaelic, (which a genuine Gael denies,) or the bubbling of the Hottentot and the croaking of the Overysselander, appear to be the cries of different animals. A convocation of Turkey cocks, indignant at the intrusion of a scarlet cloak on its debates, resents it in language quite as intelligible as that of the Synod of Highland drovers, and, to common ears, equally varied and copious (Macculloch, 1824:184).

If Gaelic speakers sounded no different than agitated turkeys to this author, he was in step with prevailing European colonial attitudes toward non-European languages. For example, clicks in southern African languages were compared to the same bird noises as Gaelic: 'hens' clucking, ducks' quacking, owls' hooting, magpies' chattering, or 'the noise of irritated turkey-cocks'' in a 1731 source (Irvine and Gal, 2000:40).

Explicit meta-level (meta-linguistic, metadiscursive, metapragmatic) praise for Gaelic, in contrast to the use of Gaelic as a medium for expression and communication about other matters, seems to have originated in response to the explicit devaluation of Gaelic in the social and political context of contact between speakers of Gaelic and speakers of varieties of Scots and English. The discourses of revitalization and redemption are clearly responses to discourses of death and denigration. One might therefore suppose that the identification and denigration of Highlanders as Gaelic speakers as such came first in strict chronological terms, and indeed the earliest known examples date from the 14th century C.E. (Withers, 1984:22). However, as early as the 16th century, the attack and denigration of Highlanders and the defense or valorization of Highlanders were

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each already being positioned as responses to the opposite position. One of the earliest recorded examples of anti-Highland discourse was framed as a response to pro-Highland, anti-Lowland discourse:

> Montgomerie, in his 'Ane Answer to ane Helandmannis Invective' written in the 1550s, went so far as to record 'How the first Helandman, of God was maid, of ane horss turd, in Argyle, as is said', and by the same period the difference between Scottish as nationality and Gaelic as a language divorced from Scottishness may even have been explicit in Scottish political circles (Withers, 1984:24).

Therefore, for the period we are discussing, from the 18th to 21 centuries, the denigrating discourses cannot usefully be considered as prior to the redemptive discourses, but rather as standing in dialectical relationship to them.

The first known explicitly revitalizing and redemptive discourses about Gaelic are contained in 18th-century Gaelic poems that draw on the conventions of the genre of Gaelic panegyric poetry, originally composed in the 13th through 17th centuries by professional poets in praise of noble patrons (MacInnes, 1979). The first poems in praise of the Gaelic language were not only prominent among the very first Gaelic poems to be printed on a press, but were also directly linked with the first attempts at scientific study, preservation, and standardization of Gaelic. The conditions of their composition included the breakdown of the clan system with its noble patronage for the hereditary bardic classes in Gaelic society. Poets were no longer able to make a living as poets and were forced to turn to other means of support. Although poets inherited the poetic genres and devices of the Classical period, they broke down the rigid boundaries and in a move 'little short of revolutionary,' turned from praising 'famous men' to praising 'women, creatures, things, [and] concepts,' including pets, places, ships, bagpipes, whisky, and the penis, as well as the Gaelic language (Black, 2007:114; also see Arbuthnot, 2002).

Thus at the same time Gaelic poets were culturally utilizing the bardic genres and conventions, they were metaculturally commenting upon them and undermining them, in part as a critique of their precarious new political economic position. That they were redemptively praising Gaelic and heroes of Gaelic at this time marks an emergent 'modern' approach to Gaelic not only as a medium of culture, but also as an object of metacultural and metadiscursive commentary, a language-object. The *moladh* or praise of Gaelic and its 'heroes' was the mode of indigenously-inflected modernity most supportive of their own efforts.

The first known poem in praise of Gaelic was the Reverend John Maclean's poem praising Edward Lhuyd for the first scientific research on Scottish Gaelic, one of 13 laudatory poems in Latin, Welsh, and Gaelic printed in the Preface of Edward Lhuyd's 1707 work *Archaeologia Brittanica: an Account of the Languages, Histories and Customs of Great Britain, from Travels through Wales, Cornwall, Bas-Bretagne, Ireland and Scotland* (Ó Baoill, 1979:244–245, 261). Lhuyd's work contained what some call the first Scottish Gaelic dictionary,[1] as well as observations of common features shared by the Celtic languages which demonstrated that they were Indo-European (Campbell and Thomson, 1963:xiii, xx–xxii). Lhuyd's study 'provided evidence to refute those who condemned the Celtic languages as barbarous dialects – an essential step in their cultural rehabilitation' (Durkacz, 1983:190). Indeed, 'the first 11 of the 13 poems were probably composed in order to counteract in some measure the criticisms of his work which Lhuyd had heard before the publication of *AB* and to which he alludes in his Preface (5th page)' (Ó Baoill, 1979:245). Lhuyd's research took place as the bardic tradition was going out of existence. In 1700, Lhuyd interviewed the Reverend John Beaton, minister of Kilninian in Mull, for his research. Celtic scholar John Lorne Campbell describes the meeting as 'altogether exceptional': 'the first Celtic scholar, in the modern sense of the word, met one of the last living persons who had had the ancient Gaelic bardic education' (Campbell and Thomson, 1963:xxi, 12–15).[2]

Maclean, or Maighstir Seathan (c. 1680–1756), became a minister in the Isle of Mull in 1702. Scholars speculate that he met Edward Lhuyd in Mull in 1699 or 1700 while a student at Glasgow University (Ó Baoill, 1979:lxiii). Maighstir Seathan may have been one of the two anonymous correspondents who prepared the Scottish Gaelic supplement to the first printed Irish Gaelic dictionary in Lhuyd's volume (Campbell and Thomson, 1963:xiv). Maighstir Seathan himself interviewed Rev. John Beaton at the request of Rev. Robert Wodrow, librarian at Glasgow University, 'to obtain... a wide range of information on topics including Highland history, language, tradition, archaeology and manuscripts' which he later conveyed to Wodrow in a letter (Ó Baoill, 1979:lxiii). Wodrow had received a 'questionnaire on the language and antiquities of the Highlands' in a letter from Lhuyd, and had been extremely eager to contact Beaton after hearing about Lhuyd's discovery of him and his manuscripts (Campbell and Thomson, 1963:3, 22). Maighstir Seathan's encounter, prompted by Wodrow's request, had an impact on the former's praise poem, numbered 17 in an annotated edition of Maclean poets: 'Obviously he [Mgr. Seathan] did not forget the information he passed on, for much of the antiquarian content of [poems] nos. 16 and 17 here is to be found in the letter to Wodrow' (Ó Baoill, 1979:lxiv, also see 94–95, 100–103).

The poetic praise of Maighstir Seathan will be analyzed in detail in the following section. However, its general characteristics can be discussed here. His praise for Gaelic, with its epithets drawn from the bardic tradition, may be viewed as dialogical. He described Gaelic as 'A widely-spoken, vigorous, sweet and melodious tongue,/A strong, polished, beautiful and accurate language [*A Teanga líonmhur, bhríoghmhur, bhlasda, bhínn,/'san chan'mhain thartrach, líobhtha, ghasta, ghrínn*]' (Ó Baoill, 1979:100–103). Each of the adjectives may be interpreted in context as a response, presupposing an allegation with a negative valence: Gaelic was not spoken widely but by small and shrinking numbers of people, was not vigorous but weak

[1] However, Robert Kirk had published a vocabulary with his Bible in 1690 which pre-dates the word-list published by Lhuyd (Black, 1986:16).

[2] Beaton's family had served as the hereditary physicians of the Lords of the Isles (Campbell and Thomson, 1963:12). When Beaton died some time before 1715, 'In him there passed the last learned representative of a family that had produced scholars for many generations; and only the MacVurichs in South Uist remained to continue the classical Gaelic tradition, and that for only a few more years' (Campbell and Thomson, 1963:22).

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or unhealthy, was not sweet but unpleasant to hear, not polished but rough and rude, not beautiful and accurate but ugly and vague. Maighstir Seathan piled up the descriptors because these epithets were the very stuff of Gaelic panegyric verse – the conventions of the genre. But these specific negative allegations were made in against Gaelic in subsequent centuries (McEwan-Fujita, 2003), and it is not unreasonable to suppose that Maighstir Seathan had already encountered them.

In the service of the Presbytery of Mull, Maighstir Seathan also had contact with mid-18th-century Gaelic poet Alexander MacDonald (c. 1698–c. 1770) (Ó Baoill, 1979:lxxiii, lxxvi). Circa 1738 MacDonald, also known as Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair (Thomson, 1996:75–82), composed the next known poem praising Gaelic. This one has been called the most influential of the sub-genre of poems praising the language and efforts to revive it (Jones and McLeod, 2007:24). MacMhaighstir Alasdair's poem, titled '*Moladh an úghdair do 'n tsean chánoin Ghailic*' ['The author's praise of the ancient Gaelic language'] (Mac-Dhonuill, 1751:1), was directly influenced in metre and style by Maclean's poem (Ó Baoill, 1979:261, 297). When MacMhaighstir Alasdair published it in 1751, it was the first secular Gaelic verse to appear in print since the poems printed in Lhuyd's preface.

MacMhaighstir Alasdair was involved in other pursuits such as Gaelic dictionary making, having started work on *A Galick and English vocabulary* in 1728, which was published for use in the schools of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, in which he also taught (A. MacDonald and Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, 1741). This dictionary-making activity, his teaching, and his poetical compositions were simultaneously new Gaelic cultural forms, and metacultural and meta-linguistic commentaries on Gaelic, aimed at strengthening the social position and reputation of Gaelic.

From the last quarter of the 18th century, more revitalizing and redemptive discourses appeared in connection with the controversies that emerged around James MacPherson's poems of Ossian. First published between 1760 and 1763, they appeared in collected form in 1765 as *The Works of Ossian, The Son of Fingal, Translated from the Galic Language by James Macpherson*. Although Macpherson claimed the poems to be English translations of third-century Gaelic originals, and he later produced an apparent back-translation of some of them, they have in fact been shown to be a pastiche of Gaelic oral literature, English and classical verse, and Biblical styles (Thomson, 1951). Macpherson put these poems forward in part as an act of cultural rehabilitation or re-valorization. His work was accepted as authentic and valorized throughout Europe, attracting the interest and aesthetic engagement of Herder, Goethe, and Mendelssohn, and the admiration of such figures as Napoleon Bonaparte. At the same time, many public intellectuals such as Samuel Johnson and David Hume questioned their authenticity, and a great deal of ink was spilled in public claims and counter-claims. The Highland Society of Scotland conducted an inquiry into their authenticity following Macpherson's death in 1796, and various treatises attempting to prove or disprove their authenticity continued to be written throughout the 19th century.

Samuel Johnson was a harsh critic of Macpherson and of Gaelic, but Krisztina Fenyö (2000:20–21) points out that Johnson seems to express contradictory attitudes about Gaelic. In his 1775 account of *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, Johnson wrote one of the most well-known put-downs of Gaelic as the language of savages: 'Of the Earse language, as I understand nothing, I cannot say more than I have been told. It is the rude speech of a barbarous people, who had few thoughts to express, and were content, as they conceived grossly, to be grossly understood' (Johnson and Boswell, 1984:116). Those who have been sympathetic to Gaelic have taken Johnson's published comments as a sign that he was completely biased against Gaelic (e.g., Macdhomhnuill, 1776:320, cited in Newton, 2000:192–193; MacKay, 1877:xviii; Durkacz, 1983). However, Johnson's comments have been interpreted outside of the context of his particular Enlightenment-era approach to language. As the author of *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), Johnson did not believe that Gaelic was hopelessly deficient; he believed that the shortfall he perceived in Gaelic could be remedied by the development of a written standard:

> After what has lately been talked of Highland bards, and Highland genius [a reference to James MacPherson's poems of Ossian], many will startle when they are told, that the Earse never was a written language; that there is not in the world an Earse manuscript a hundred years old; and that the sounds of the highlanders were never expressed by letters, till some little books of piety were translated, and a metrical version of the Psalms was made by the Synod of Argyle. Whoever therefore now writes in this language, spells according to his own perception of the sound, and his own idea of the power of the letters. The Welsh and the Irish are cultivated tongues. The Welsh, 200 years ago, insulted their English neighbours for the instability of their Orthography; while the Earse merely floated in the breath of the people, and could therefore receive little improvement.
>
> When a language begins to teem with books, it is tending to refinement; [...] [with writing] speech becomes embodied and permanent; [. . .] Exactness is first obtained, and afterwards elegance. But diction, merely vocal, is always in its childhood. [...] There may possibly be books without a polished language, but there can be no polished language without books (Johnson and Boswell, 1984:116).

This passage shows us that in fact, Johnson's comments against Gaelic were motivated primarily by an ideology of standard language in which written language is considered superior to oral language (Milroy and Milroy, 1999; McEwan-Fujita, 2010). Macpherson had made claims that his poems were translations of third century B.C.E. Gaelic manuscripts in his possession, but these manuscripts did not in fact exist (Johnson and Boswell, 1984:117–118; Fenyö, 2000:20–22). In expressing his opinion that the Ossian poems were fraudulent, Johnson disputed the antiquity of the Gaelic written tradition, hyperbolically denied the existence of any Gaelic manuscripts at all, and completely dismissed the aesthetic, codified, standardized, and literate dimensions of the centuries-old Gaelic tradition of learned poetic composition. Ironically, the highly codified

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written standard classical Gaelic of the professional poets had gone out of use in the previous century. Moreover, Johnson's own university, Oxford, had declined to purchase Lhuyd's collection of Gaelic manuscripts after Lhuyd's death (Campbell and Thomson, 1963:xiv–xv, 22).[3]

As this passage shows, Johnson was aware that Gaelic was written; what he criticized in Gaelic was the lack of a standardized orthography, albeit in unawareness that there had actually been one (see Ó Baoill, 2010:11–12). Johnson seems to have believed that Gaelic could indeed become a civilized, polished language if a standardized written form were developed for publishing written works. In the service of this goal, Johnson actually supported the publication of the second-earliest Gaelic grammar in 1778, as evidenced by the author's preface (Shaw, 1972:xxiii). Moreover, according to Boswell, Johnson shamed the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge into producing the first Gaelic translation of the New Testament, plans for which they had previously cancelled (Boswell, 1970:373–375; Johnson and Boswell, 1984:389–390).[4]

In the late 18th century and on into the 19th, the military subjugation of the Highlands and the popularity and controversy around Ossian contributed to the formation of various societies in London and Scotland to valorize and support the Gaelic language and the Highlands (Daiches, 1964; Durkacz, 1983:191–192; Black, 1986; Clyde, 1995; Robertson, 1997). The Gaelic Society of London was founded in 1777, just over 30 years after the defeat of the Jacobite forces at the Battle of Culloden; the Highland Society of London was founded in 1778, and what became the Highland Society of Scotland was founded in 1784 in Edinburgh (Black, 1986:2). McLeod points out that these societies sponsored and inspired new discourses of revitalization: 'In the wake of the Ossianic controversy, the rhetoric of Gaelic cultural self-defence became more insistent, especially in the many celebratory songs composed for Gaelic societies in the Lowlands and beyond' (Jones and McLeod, 2007:25; see e.g. M'Nish, 1828). The later 18th-century examples of discourses of revitalization were related to the efforts of the Highland Society of London and the Highland Society of Scotland: Duncan Bàn MacIntyre (1724–1812), known as Donnchadh Bàn, a poet whose early lifetime overlapped with MacMhaighstir Alasdair's later lifetime, was paid to compose a series of six panegyric poems praising Gaelic and the bagpipes between 1781 and 1789 (MacLeod, 1952:270–299). He recited the premiere of each poem at the Falkirk Tryst piping competition, sponsored by the Highland Society of London from 1781–1783 and by the Highland Society of Scotland from 1784 (analysis of revitalizing discourses from these poems follows in the next section) (Black, 1986:1–2, 7–9).

In the early 20th century, Gaelic intellectuals undertook new revitalization efforts motivated by 'a new Gaelic-centred form of Scottish nationalism that promoted Gaelic as the national language of Scotland' (Jones and McLeod, 2007:26). One of the most prominent was Ruairidh Erskine of Mar, 'whose periodicals (especially *Guth na Bliadhna*, 1904–1925) and other publications endeavoured to modernize the language in various respects, including the development of innovation in literature' (Jones and McLeod, 2007:26). These nationalist discourses of revitalization will be discussed in the following section. From the 1960s, there was a shift to greater activism on behalf of the language, premised on its claimed national significance. From the 1980s, activist efforts were joined (and in some cases supplanted) by the increased professionalization of Gaelic language revitalization efforts in the media, education, and language planning organizations. By the late 20th century, journalists and language planners had joined academics and a few politicians in the praising and promotion of Gaelic (McEwan-Fujita, 2003). This change from century to century indicates that language revitalization efforts are dialectical processes, in which the discourses creating indexicalities for Gaelic are linked to the prevailing cultural values and also to shifts in the political economic position of Gaelic speakers in Scotland.

3. Discourses of revitalization and redemption

The seven types of redemptive and romantic praise of Gaelic I have identified in the Scottish media and other publications make the following predications about Gaelic: (1) Gaelic is a living organism; (2) Gaelic is natural; (3) Gaelic is ancient; (4) Gaelic is 'copious,' capable of expressing anything, or particularly suitable for certain genres of expression; (5) Gaelic is a national language of Scotland; (6) Gaelic-English bilingualism is good for people; and (7) Gaelic is a valuable commodity. These predications are based on a 'metapragmatic theme' that 'conceptualizes Gaelic as a thing to be described' (Mertz, 1982:301). The objectification of Gaelic as an animate object marks a meta-level awareness of Gaelic that most likely emerged out of a situation of unequal contact between speakers of Gaelic and speakers of other languages.

This objectification has also arisen, I believe, as part of an ideology of standard language (Milroy and Milroy, 1999), an ideology which includes the propositions that a civilized or 'real' language has a single correct spoken form, which should

[3] Proponents of Gaelic immediately set about responding to Johnson's anti-Ossian and anti-Gaelic comments both in English-language print and in Gaelic oral-literary tradition. The latter is exemplified by Seumas Macintyre's song of dispraise for Johnson, an extended metaphorical satire depicting Johnson as various non-noble creatures and trees, and modeled on a popular panegyric poem abut the death of Alasdair MacDonald of Glengarry, c. 1721, by Sìleas na Ceapaich (Newton, 2009:291–292). Unfortunately the necessity to counter Johnson's statements with statements of fact about Gaelic continues today. Although Johnson was wrong about the lack of old Gaelic manuscripts (Thomson, 1951; Gillies, 1989), and Gaelic publishing has developed considerably from the eighteenth century to the present (Thomson, 1989), in the late twentieth century a writer for *The Economist* magazine erroneously took Johnson's 1775 comments as an accurate and current description of the state of Gaelic: 'Their only text is the Bible, and there is no tradition of writing letters' (Anonymous, 1998). This statement suggests the ease and willingness with which external commentators still accept denigrating and eliding observations of Gaelic rooted in an ideology of standard language.

[4] Fenyö also notes that Johnson's comment was likely prompted in part by his love of argument and challenge, his tendency to play devil's advocate, and his propensity for teasing his Scottish friend Boswell (2000:20–22).

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be based on a single correct written form; that non-standard forms are inadequate and inferior in comparison with the standard form; that language change, including the use of foreign loan-words, indicates decay of the language; and that non-standard, negatively evaluated speech indicates 'undesirable moral, intellectual, or social attributes of groups of speakers' (Milroy, 2000:63). Such an ideology, as Milroy points out, is held widely and tenaciously as 'common sense' in the face of evidence to the contrary, even by the speakers who would be most harshly judged according to its terms.

These predications also include a common element of positive affective stance[5] which can be summarized as the idea 'Gaelic is good and deserves support because...' prefacing each one of the seven predications above. Affective stance in language, like other kinds of stance, constitutes a meta-level commentary on language—a metacultural form. The positive affective stance is meant to counter the negative affective stance of attacks on the language and its speakers which the discourses frequently refer to, the most well-known (and often-quoted) being MacMhaighstir Alasdair's 'Still it [Gaelic] survived/And its voice will not be lost/Despite the deceit/And great ill-will of the Lowlanders [*Mhair i fòs/Is cha tèid a glòir air chall/Dh'aindeoin gò/Is mìoruin mhòir nan Gall*]' (Jones and McLeod, 2007:24). Speakers' affective stance-taking, which makes affect "intersubjectively accessible" (Urban, 2009:42) in discourse, is thus a key metacultural component in language revitalization discourses; this important point helps us understand the role played by affect in effecting the circluation of culture.

3.1. Gaelic is a living organism

The earliest examples of revitalization discourse, 18th-century Gaelic poems, used the metaphor of Gaelic as a living organism. This metaphor implies that a language is not a human behavior transmitted through socialization, but a living thing that moves through a life cycle. Maighstir Seathan's poem in praise of Lhuyd, published in 1707 in the preface of *Archaeologia Britannica*, first utilized the metaphor of death and revivification to describe the situation of Gaelic: 'Good luck, fond memory and success to the great Lhuyd/Who has awakened it [Gaelic] afresh from its grave [*Air sár o Líath, biodh ádh, is cuimhnu' is buáidh,/do rinn gu húr a dusgadh as a huáimh*]' (Ó Baoill, 1979:100–103). Robert Campbell, another Scot contemporary with Maighstir Seathan, likewise wrote in his own poem to Lhuyd in the same preface: 'You have awakened from the grave the hardy language that was extinguished [*Do duisgadh riot as anúaigh,/an chanamhuin chruaigh do bhi faoi small*]' (Campbell and Thomson, 1963:v). The metapragmatic and metaphorical awakening of Gaelic from its grave in 1707 presupposes (and further entails) a metaphorical discourse of the death of Gaelic (cf. Silverstein, 2003). These seem to have set the terms for later discourse, for the very title of Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair's self-published 1751 book of poetry containing his praise poem for Gaelic on the first page is *Ais-Eiridh na Sean Chánoin Albannaich*, 'The Resurrection of the Ancient Scottish Tongue.'

As stated earlier, it seems likely that the objectification of Gaelic as a living organism indexes a meta-level awareness of Gaelic that emerged out of a situation of unequal contact between speakers of Gaelic and speakers of other languages. A comparison with the situation of Ireland in this regard is instructive. Sarah McKibben (2000:89) found that 16th and 17th century Irish poets 'developed a literary *poetics of cultural crisis*' in response to English colonization, culminating in the first known use of the 'death metaphor' to describe Irish right at the end of the 17th century in 'Tuireadh na Gaedhilge agus Teastas na hÉireann' (A dirge for Irish and testimony of Ireland) by Seán Ó Gadhra:

> The poem fuses the elements of the rhetoric of cultural crisis, including the mockery of Irish people who ape English manners, poetry on the 'death of Ireland', derisive comments on users of English, and reflections on the lost status of poets and their language. This sober recapitulation condenses prior images into a single metaphor about the language itself. [...] Ó Gadhra sees imminent death for Irish not as a vernacular but as a learned language, and he eruditely memorialises himself (by name, in the third person, past tense) and his late colleagues as the last of the scholars. Once more, the metaphoric construct shows its strategic nature, since the poet's stature presumably increases in proportion to the putative decay of the tradition, which Ó Gadhra none the less in fact perpetuates by writing (McKibben, 2000:95).

Thus ideas about the death of learned Gaelic language and culture were circulating in Ireland at the very time when Lhuyd was conducting research in Scotland and Ireland for his volume. Although there is no evidence to suggest any influence on Lhuyd or Maighstir Seathan in this regard (Ó Baoill, personal communication), it is interesting at least to compare the reactions of Irish and Scottish Gaelic poets to deliberate military, political, and sociocultural attacks on their language, culture, and society.[6] For example, in the early 18th century Maighstir Seathan had written the poem 'Ge grianach an latha' (Though the day is sunny), which like the examples of several other Maclean poets of the previous century dealt with the subject '*dol sìos Chloinn Ghill-Eathain*', the decline of the formerly powerful Macleans who had experienced repeated misfortunes in the 17th century (Ó Baoill, 1979:xxxix, 90–99).

The death metaphor has continued to circulate through academia (Dorian, 1981; Hoenigswald, 1989:347; McKibben, 2000:96) and in the media to describe Gaelic and other 'endangered' languages. The 'pastoral' convention, predicated on a romantic notion of the 'vanishing primitive' perpetuated for Gaelic speakers since Macpherson's Ossian, is likely relevant

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[5] 'Ochs (1996:425) maintains that in stance, the categories of positive and negative affect are universally indexed, together with the affective categories of surprise and intensity/mitigation' (McEwan-Fujita, 2010:60).

[6] McKibben (2000:94, note 25) describes how the 17th century saw poets describing the denigration of Irish, and also 'a poet of the same generation, Séathrún Céitinn, [to whom] lines of correspondingly elevated praise for Irish area attributed, in 'Is milis an teanga an Ghaeilge' (The Irish language is a tongue most sweet).' This provides a useful comparison to the 18th-century situation in Scotland.

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to its continued circulation (Gal, 1989:316). We find the metaphor still in use to describe Gaelic at the end of the 20th century; for example, a 1989 article in the *Magazine* of *The Independent* newspaper (UK) titled 'The Last of the Gaels' started with the header, 'Once Scotland's national tongue, Gaelic is nearly dead.' The first two sentences of the article read:

> Six small children sit in a draughty school corridor in Broadford on the Isle of Skye reading and chatting in Gaelic. They are the last of a dying tribe, the northern remnant of what was once a glorious Celtic culture stretching far across the European continent (Dalrymple, 1989).

However, the metaphor of either a language or a 'tribe' as a still living, yet dying organism does not bear the weight of serious scrutiny in biological or social terms: the children described in this article are likely to produce offspring of their own some day before dying themselves, and some of these offspring may acquire Gaelic language proficiency. A language does not die when people die; rather, it undergoes processes of shift and obsolescence over a period of time when speakers cease to transmit the language to younger generations.

A decade later, on Thursday, 7 September 2000, at 10:40 p.m., BBC Two Scotland aired the Glasgow-based 'Newsnight Scotland.' Following a summary of the day's Scottish news, presenter Gordon Brewer introduced the program's main story on the release of a new report issued by the Taskforce on Public Funding of Gaelic, a committee appointed to re-evaluate the structure of Scottish public spending on Gaelic language planning efforts:

> Now, Gaelic appears to be dying, but is it worth resuscitating the patient? Tomorrow an official report will call for yet more government money to be spent to keep it going for another few years at least, I'll be talking to the author in a moment.

When Brewer interviewed his guest John Alec Macpherson, head of the Taskforce, Macpherson countered Brewer's challenge with the idea that there were three possible courses of action: letting Gaelic die, 'apply[ing] some palliative care' or using 'a radical remedy.' Here Macpherson took up the metaphor with a positive affective stance, bringing us full circle in a sense with the poem of Maighstir Seathan.

3.2. Gaelic is natural

While some observers, past and present, have disparagingly likened Gaelic to animal sounds or the flora and fauna of the Highlands (McEwan-Fujita, 2003:181–183), others from the romantic era onward made the comparison with nature favorably. One day in 1803, three centuries after the Scots poet Dunbar compared Gaelic speech to the croaking of ravens, the Wordsworths and Samuel Taylor Coleridge went out for a walk around Loch Lomond while on holiday in Scotland. Of that day, Dorothy Wordsworth wrote: 'We stopped suddenly at the sound of a *half-articulate Gaelic hooting* from the field close to us. It came from a little boy, whom we could see on the hill between us and the lake, wrapped up in a grey plaid...' (quoted in Womack (1989:111), emphasis added). The boy's Gaelic cries called his human status into question, but also helped to create the mysterious romance of the scene.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century commentators frequently compared the sound patterning of Gaelic preaching and worship to the sound of the ocean (Heath, 2002). For example, the folklorist Alexander Carmichael described Gaelic worship in the Outer Hebrides: 'Sometimes the hymn and the prayer are intoned in low tremulous unmeasured cadences like the moving and moaning, the soughing and the sighing, of the ever-murmuring sea on their own wild shores' (Carmichael 1972 [1900]:2, quoted in Heath (2002)). Carmichael, the author of the six volume collection of Gaelic folklore *Carmina Gadelica: Hymns and Incantations Collected in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in the Last Century*, was favorably disposed towards Gaelic and Gaelic speakers, to say the least. He felt, like many after him, that Celtic Christianity was somehow more spiritual and closer to nature than other forms of Christianity (Meek, 2000:60–66).

In 1999, nearly 500 years after Dunbar, 200 years after Wordsworth, and 100 years after Carmichael, journalists still utilized ostensibly complimentary 'natural' metaphors to describe Gaelic and its speakers. A description of Alasdair Morrison, an MSP who was the Minister for Gaelic, the Highlands and Islands, and Tourism at the time, stated that 'Gaelic drips from his gob like honey from a spoon...' (McNeil, 2000).[7] Another journalist described the Gaelic poet Sorley MacLean giving a reading as 'magnificent to hear and to behold – like some old, gnarled tree bent by the wind' (Glover, 2000). The positive natural qualities ascribed to Gaelic and Gaelic speakers with these metaphors seem to differentiate them from the disparaging descriptions of Gaelic as savage or animal-like (McEwan-Fujita, 2003). But whether the affect is positive or negative, the metaphors dehumanize Gaelic and remove it from a social context (cf., Chapman, 1982:129).

3.3. Gaelic is ancient

The invocation of distinguished genealogies in Gaelic panegyric poetry had been a convention and a duty of the professional poets (MacInnes, 1979). The earliest 18th-century examples of revitalization discourse apply this convention to the praise of Gae-

[7] The use of 'gob' as a vulgar slang term for the standard 'mouth' here is a carnivalesque device of inversion to generate humor, using a vulgar term to describe the mouth of a politician engaged in a formal parliamentary debate; the term may also creatively index the lower class status of the person as a Gaelic speaker (cf., Bourdieu, 1991:86–88 on *guele* vs. *bouche* in French; Chapman, 1992:30).

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lic. Maighstir Seathan's poem in Lhuyd's *Archaeologia Britannica* described the traditional (and mythical) history of the Gaels of Ireland and Scotland as the pedigree of the Gaelic language, as a short extract and the editor's notes to these lines demonstrate:

> 'When the descendants of Gaedheal Glas and of Mílidh,/no faint-hearted race, came from Spain/ [...] When that seed grew great, here and across the sea [i.e., in Scotland and in Ireland],/Gaelic obtained respect and was valued everywhere [*Air teachd on Spáin, do shliochd an Gháoidhil ghlais,/'sdo shliochd na Míligh 'nfhine nach budh tais;/ [...] Nuair a dhfás a mpór ud mór, a bhos is thál/'Bhi meas is prís fa 'n Ghaoidheilg ans gach ball*]' (Ó Baoill, 1979:100–101)
>
> In the pseudo-history of the Gaels drawn up by learned men between the 8th and 11th centuries, using old mythological tales and a large proportion of simple invention, Gaedheal Glas was the ancestor of all the Gaels. He was the son of Scota, daughter of Pharaoh (cf. line 129), and lived in Egypt at the time when the Israelites escaped by crossing the Red Sea (Exodus xiv). He was called *Glas* because of a wound received from a poisonous snake, and was cured by Moses (Macalister, *Lebor Gabála* II, pp. 52, 58–60). Seventeen generations later the descendants of Gaedhal Glas conquered Spain (Ibid, p. 76). Two generations after this they came to Ireland (Ibid, vol. V, pp. 20ff.), their leaders being the sons of Míl, or Míl Easpáine (Ibid, p. 24; *RC*, pp. 308–309).
>
> This traditional history, as relayed in the Lowland Scots context (*e.g.* Bellenden, *Boece*, vol. I, pp. 21–30), had some political importance in Scotland between the 13th century and 1603 (Matthews, 'Egyptians in Scotland'), and perhaps again for a short period after 1707 (*op. cit.*, p. 306) (Ó Baoill, 1979:262).

Maighstir Seathan also refers to 'a thousand years and more' when Gaelic 'held first place in the court of kings' (Ó Baoill, 1979:101), which the editor says refers to the time after the sons of Míl had supposedly reached Ireland contemporaneous with the reign of King David in Israel, which was dated by 17th century manuscript compilers to 1700 B.C.E. (Ó Baoill, 1979:262–263). Mgr. Seathan also claims St. Patrick and St. Columba as Gaelic speakers. As the editor indicates, tracing origins back to Biblical times and lands in premodern historical narratives was not uncommon; the national origin myth of Scotland in medieval times placed the true beginning of the Scottish nation in ancient Egypt, the ultimate validation of Scottish royalty and the nation: 'Whatever their political convictions, all Scots concurred in one central tenet of national pride: their country, by virtue of the succession, was the most ancient political fabric in Europe, perhaps in the world' (Donaldson, 1988:6–7).

As mentioned already, Ó Baoill has pointed out that Maighstir Seathan's own interaction with Rev. John Beaton, and subsequent incorporation of this ancient history into his poem, arose out of Lhuyd's own noting of traditional Gaelic history from Beaton (Ó Baoill, 1979:lxiii–lxv). Beaton's history itself was derived in part from manuscript sources such as Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (History of Ireland) (Campbell and Thomson, 1963:26), and others which were derived at least in part from Scottish Lowland sources (Ó Baoill, 1979:264).

Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair's praise poem for Gaelic, influenced by Maighstir Seathan's, also included the description of Gaelic's ancient pedigree and its association with the distant past and the Garden of Eden: It was [Gaelic] that Adam spoke/In his own Paradise/And Gaelic came fluently/from Eve's beautiful mouth ['*S i labhair Adhamh,/Ann a phárrais féin,/ 'S ba shiubhlach Gáilic/O bheul álainn Ebh*]' (Mac-Dhonuill, 1751:3–4, Jones and McLeod, 2007:25). In his own series of poems praising Gaelic in the latter half of the 18th century, Duncan Bàn MacIntyre likewise described Gaelic as the language of the Garden of Eden, of Noah's Ark, of the prophets, the Israelites in the wilderness, and the parting of the Red Sea, and the language that 'won supremacy over every kind of speech' at the Tower of Babel[8] (MacLeod, 1952).

In the wake of the controversy over the authenticity and age of Macpherson's Ossianic poems, some 19th-century Gaelic supporters attempted to prove that Gaelic was indeed ancient. Several wrote voluminously-titled books attempting to prove the ancient pedigree of Gaelic, its affinity with Hebrew, and the claim that the languages of Europe, or all the other languages of the world, were derived from it (e.g., Maclean, 1837; M'Intyre, 1866; MacKay, 1877).

In the 20th century, the appellation 'ancient language' for Gaelic has become a cliché in the media, frequently found in combination with other discourses of revitalization. For example, when the announcer introduced the story about Gaelic funding on 'Newsnight Scotland' in 2000, he moved seamlessly from the life/death metaphor to the 'ancient language' theme:

> Now, Gaelic appears to be dying, but is it worth resuscitating the patient? Tomorrow an official report will call for yet more government money to be spent to keep it going for another few years at least, I'll be talking to the author in a moment. But first, Isabel Fraser examines why an ancient language once spoken by half or more of Scotland's population, is now spoken by only one percent.

3.4. Gaelic is 'copious' or expressive

This argument counters the assertion that Gaelic is lacking in some way with assertions that Gaelic is 'copious,' or bursting with words, those units of referential meaning that are needed to describe the world 'out there' in standard language ideology (Silverstein, 1996). In response to Samuel Johnson's disparaging remarks about Gaelic published in 1775 (Johnson and Boswell, 1984), the Reverend Donald McNicol of Lismore wrote:

> I can aver for truth, before the world, that the Gaelic is as copious as the Greek, and not less suitable to poetry than the modern Italian. Things of foreign or of late invention, may not, probably, have obtained names in the Gaelic language; but

[8] '*'N uair a sgaoil na cainntean/Aig tùr aimhreidh mór,/Fhuair a' Ghàidhlig maighstireachd/'San am sim thar gach seòrs'*—' (MacLeod, 1952:286).

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> every object of nature, and every instrument of the common and general arts, has many vocables to express it, such as suit all the elegant variations that either the poet or the orator may chuse to make (McNicol, 1779:291–292; quoted in Durkacz, 1983:191).

Durkacz sees this as 'a cultural justification for the Gaelic language, perhaps the first attempted' (1983:191), though he does not take into account the earlier 18th-century examples of Gaelic poetry described above.

A more recent proponent of this view maintained that 'The Gaels have a word for it!' or at least that Gaelic can be made to have a word for it, no matter what 'it' is (Paterson, 1964). The purist dimension of this argument is that borrowing from English should be avoided and new Gaelic words must be coined by language planners to bring Gaelic fully up to date and prove that it is a 'modern' language in which one can discuss technology, current events, etc. However, because of the semiotic processes of language shift in which native speakers identify the language with the past (e.g. Mertz, 1982), native speakers do not always accept the lexical items that are coined as part of efforts to reverse language shift. The author of *The Gaels Have a Word for It!* noted with frustration the difference between coining new words in English and in Gaelic:

> The point which emerges, however, is that the English speaker, recognising the need for an expanding vocabulary, accepts unquestioningly the terms offered—and uses them. Unfortunately the Gaelic speaker is often too parochially minded to use a properly constituted Gaelic word if Pidgin-English such as Egsabision, dotair, trenn ['exhibition,' 'doctor,' 'train'] can fill the gap (Paterson, 1964:iv).

The Gaelic native speakers Paterson complained about refused the new 'properly constituted' coinages proffered in their stead because the origin of the new words was blatantly in the present, with a specific individual or institution, rather than with common usage.

A theme related to the assertion of 'copiousness' is the argument about Gaelic's inherent suitability or even superior ability for particular genres of expression, in implicit comparison with English. This concept in the Scottish Gaelic context arises in part from an indigenous aesthetic argument originally made by 18th-century Gaelic poets about the unique beauty of the Gaelic language, within the framework of a panegyric tradition originally directed at the poets' clan chief patrons (MacInnes, 1979). For example, Duncan Bàn MacIntyre wrote of Gaelic:

'S i 's treis' thoirt greis air àbhachd	' tis the most trenchant for a bout of wit,
'S a h-uil' àit 'n téid a luaidh;	wherever it is spoken;
'S i 's fheàrr gu adhbhar-ghàire,	' tis the best for jocularity,
'S as binne bhlàithe fuaim;	it has the sweetest, warmest sound;
'S i ceòl nam pìob 's nan clàrsach	' tis the music of the pipes and harps,
Luchd-dàn' is dhèanamh dhuan (MacLeod, 1952:272).	of minstrels and composers of songs (MacLeod, 1952:273).

As a poet, MacIntyre also described Gaelic's suitability for poetry, and perhaps unsurprisingly this was the area in which poet-commentators, and later proponents of Ossian, felt Gaelic to excel. In the late 18th and 19th centuries, the influence of Macpherson's Ossianic poems and the Romantic movement in general allowed for a favorable reinterpretation of the polarities of the characteristics ascribed to Gaelic speakers, at least for observers sympathetic to the Highlands or to Gaelic (Chapman, 1978). The new identification of Gaelic as 'the language of Ossian' meant that commentators foregrounded its capabilities related to the functions of poetry, including descriptive and expressive creativity, while erasing its other linguistic capabilities, including descriptive precision, abstraction, and a whole range of social functions.

For example, one Archibald Farquharson published in 1868 an exhortatory volume titled *An address to Highlanders respecting their native Gaelic: showing its and the broad Scotch's superiority over the artificial English for the family and the social circle, and also for lyric poetry*. In another example, Hugh Miller, a journalist sympathetic to the Highlands and Highlanders, wrote in an *Inverness Courier* newspaper review of English poetry by a Gaelic poet:

> The Gaelic, as a language, is singularly rich in the descriptive, but comparatively barren in the abstract. Phrenologists remark nearly the same thing of the Celtic head – the reflective organs are always less prominently developed than the knowing ones (Miller, 1838, cited in Fenyö (2000:7)).

Although Miller highlighted the ability of the Gaelic language, and Gaelic speakers' minds, to deal with the concrete stuff of poetry in the Ossianic mode—trees, rocks, and battles—he doubted the capacity of either the language or its speakers to handle abstract concepts.

The assertion that Gaelic is the best for humor and joking was repeated by Gaelic-English bilinguals during my participant-observation field research in 1999–2000, and similar views have been expressed by speakers of other minority languages (Weinreich, 1953:95; Tsitsipis, 1981:174), probably due to the common experiences of social processes of language shift. This argument of copiousness and superior expressive ability is nearly 200 years old, but late 20th-century journalists supportive of Gaelic still occasionally waxed lyrical about Gaelic's descriptive powers. For example:

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> Be warned, if Gaelic is lost, tomorrow's Highlanders will be entire strangers to the subtleties and elegance of a vast body of literature. They will lose a vocabulary of far greater shade and variety than English. (There are at least a dozen Gaelic words for love. There are also, not surprisingly, as many words to describe different kinds of rain.) (MacLeod, 1996).

This journalist evokes the modern myth of a hundred Eskimo words for snow as part of a naïve Whorfian perspective on language.[9] This argument is a direct response to the argument that Gaelic displays a deficit in comparison with English, still commonly recycled in late 20th century media (McEwan-Fujita, 2003:184–188; e.g. Clark, 1995). Here, Gaelic is still compared to English, but Gaelic is not insufficient in referential terms; rather, it is copious, and English instead is the language found lacking.

3.5. Gaelic is a national language of scotland

This discourse claims that Gaelic is a national language, if not the national language, of Scotland, justifying the claims by referring to the history of Gaelic as the language of Scotland's monarch, court, and the majority of its population in the early medieval period.[10] Neither Gaelic nor Scots has played any significant role in nationalist politics in Scotland up to the present day: 'The advent of nationalist politics in Scotland found the population already politically mobilised as an electorate and enjoying the normal standard of literacy for a developed country—in [Standard English]' (Macafee, 1985:9). That Scottish nationalists never were able to co-opt Gaelic as their own issue is partially due to the fact that 'the Gaelic militants of the Scots National League' were expelled from the forerunner of the Scottish National Party in 1933, when the party opted for a Unionist stance and the Gaelic supporters did not (Hanham, 1969:160).

As already mentioned, in the early to mid-20th century, Gaelic-centric Scottish nationalists such as Ruairidh Erskine of Mar promoted a nationalist view of Gaelic. One mid-century Gaelic grammar book, recently reprinted, stated at the beginning of Lesson One that 'Gaelic is the national language of Scotland. It isn't hard to learn... Thousands have mastered Gaelic. Add one more to the number and bring along others. Make Scotland once more a Gaelic Nation' (Paterson, 1997 [1952]:1). The Saltire Society published a booklet by the Gaelic professor and poet Derick Thomson which presents not impassioned pleas, but a summary of the history of Gaelic in Scotland to implicitly explain the title, 'Why Gaelic matters' (Thomson, 1984). In a brief section called 'The language as part of Scotland's identity,' Thomson makes a further statement after warning about the dangers of essentialism and over-generalization: 'Yet there is probably an irreducible element of Gaelic consciousness in the general make-up of Scots. We can touch lightly on some of the ways in which this comes about and manifests itself' (Thomson, 1984:21). He links the development of this consciousness to experience rather than to any innate qualities, and counts among the experiences the awareness of Gaelic's role in Scottish history, Scots' awareness of family links with the Highlands, acquaintance with Gaelic-speaking people, the use of Gaelic loan-words in English, and general familiarity with Gaelic music. He concludes the section, 'This much may be said: Gaelic is one of the touchstones of Scottish cultural and political pride. This is as it should be' (Thomson, 1984:21).

But by 1987 anthropologist Sharon Macdonald observed that '[o]n the whole... the idea that Gaelic was part of Scotland's heritage does not seem to have been widely received, and has had its only recognition within the academic realm,' most likely referring to Thomson's work just described (1987:295). However, in participant observation research she noted that some of the most enthusiastic proponents of Gaelic language revitalization in Scotland claim that Gaelic is of national significance and relevance for Scots (S. Macdonald, 1997:34–43).

The nationalist view of Gaelic has gained more support, at least superficially, with the devolution of Scottish government in 1999. The new Scottish Executive and Parliament began to adopt an unofficial position on Gaelic as a symbolic national language with such moves as bilingual Gaelic-English signs in the Scottish Parliament, and the Scottish Executive's appointment of a Minister for Gaelic to replace what was at the time a two-year-old Scottish Office (UK government) post. The Scottish Parliament appointed a Gaelic Parliamentary officer and convened a committee to work on a dictionary of Gaelic Parliamentary terminology, and hosted a 'Gaelic debate' in March 2000, together with two 'Gaelic' Parliamentary committee hearings, in October 1999 and May 2000. The debate and hearings were Gaelic-English bilingual events, with simultaneous translation provided from Gaelic into English, though not vice versa. The Scottish National Party MSP Mike Russell participated in the Gaelic debate by reading his own Gaelic speech in support of Gaelic. Although it is beyond the scope of this article, in 2005 the Scottish Parliament finally passed a Gaelic Language Act which established Bòrd na Gàidhlig and required devolved Scottish public bodies to develop Gaelic language plans.

Russell also appeared as a guest during the September 2000 'Newsnight Scotland' segment on Gaelic funding, briefly expressing a nationalist discourse of revitalization that went beyond Derick Thomson's 'pride' to argue for a spiritual component: '...if we can't have a debate about how to save something of vital importance to our nation, our culture, and indeed our souls, then we shouldn't be having a debate at all, we might as well just give up.' The 'we' indexed by Russell in this case was the Scottish people as a whole discussing 'our' nation and culture, but 'we' also simultaneously indexed the group gathered virtually in the studio by satellite links, indicating Russell's awareness that what was taking place was not a debate at all.

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[9] In fact anthropologist Franz Boas identified only four roots (see Martin, 1986; Pullum, 1991).

[10] One related older argument on behalf of Gaelic that is no longer in use pertained to the question of 'British national' unity: the unity of the United Kingdom. After the formation and success of the Highland Regiments overseas in expanding and consolidating the British Empire, some Gaelic advocates made a plea to retain and support the language in order to maintain Highlanders' superior morale and goodwill, so that they would remain good subjects and brave, hardy soldiers of the Empire (e.g., Shaw, 1972 [1778]:xvii–xviii; Sinclair, 1804:5–7).

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John Alec Macpherson, the 'Newsnight Scotland' guest whose viewpoint was most similar to Russell's, was the Chairperson of the Scottish Executive's Taskforce on Public Funding of Gaelic. This taskforce had produced a report in September 2000 titled 'Revitalising Gaelic: A National Asset,' the release of which occasioned the 'Newsnight Scotland' interview. The report recommended that the Scottish Executive create a small Department of the Gàidhealtachd within the Executive and establish and fund a Gaelic Development Agency responsible to the Scottish Executive and Scottish Parliament. However, it became apparent soon after the segment that these recommendations would probably not be carried out, calling into question the 'national' status of Gaelic.

The 'National Cultural Strategy' for Scotland, published in 2000 in a document titled *Creating Our Future: Minding Our Past*, indicated the most likely future for Gaelic. The glossy full-color Strategy document included a short section on the languages of Scotland. The document followed the national education guidelines in according no special status either to Gaelic or to Scots as indigenous languages differentiated from immigrant minority languages such as Urdu, Punjabi, and Cantonese in Scotland. The document promised somewhat vaguely that 'We shall establish an action group to investigate how the languages and cultural traditions of Scotland's ethnic minorities can be supported' (p. 25), but it is a 'Strategy' and not a 'Policy.' When the Strategy was first published, copies were delivered to the Comunn na Gàidhlig office. When an administrative assistant was unpacking the box and handing copies around, I asked if Gaelic was in it. She answered dryly, 'Gaelic's on page 25.' This was an apt description of the national role of Gaelic envisioned in the new Scottish government's plans—neatly compartmentalized, confined to a single page of a booklet.

3.6. Gaelic-English bilingualism is good for people

In late 20th-century Scotland, the increased visibility of Gaelic generated complaints from some journalists about the unpleasant burden of exposure to Gaelic as a foreign language. This seemingly arises from an ideological-affective complex (McEwan-Fujita, 2010) of anti-Gaelic prejudice and 'a belief in the onerousness of bi- or multilingualism' (Dorian, 1998:12). In this view, speaking more than one language is considered onerous not only at the societal level, but also at the individual level, with no intellectual, social, or financial rewards acknowledged for knowing or learning a second language (Dorian, 1998:11–12). Moreover, learning a second language, or even experiencing superficial exposure to it, is believed to cause confusion and impair the cognitive performance of children and adults (for an example of this in relationship to Gaelic in Nova Scotia, see Mertz, 1982).

This set of beliefs, which may be termed an ideology of monolingualism or subtractive bilingualism, was deliberately countered by Gaelic supporters in 1999 with a new emphasis on an ideology of additive bilingualism (Dorian, 1998) proclaiming that learning or knowing Gaelic in addition to English was beneficial to speakers. The 'Johnstone Report,' a research study on whether Gaelic Medium Education disadvantaged primary school pupils academically (Johnstone et al., 1999), was commissioned by the Education and Industry Department of the pre-devolution UK Scottish Office. The report was produced by the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research at Stirling University, and Stirling University education researcher Dr. Richard Johnstone coordinated the research project. The report was released in autumn 1999 and its most frequently repeated conclusion was: 'When compared with pupils taught through the medium of English... Gaelic-medium pupils do not appear to be disadvantaged in terms of their attainments in English and mathematics at P5 and P7' (Johnstone et al., 1999:1).

Comunn na Gàidhlig played up the results of this report in the national media as part of their effort to promote Gaelic Medium Education. They produced a press release welcoming the report and co-sponsored a panel discussion with Johnstone and parents in Inverness in October 1999 at a meeting on the feasibility of a Gaelic-medium primary school in Inverness. Scottish newspapers and a few English ones responded to the press release, covering the report alongside the opening in Glasgow of the first all-Gaelic primary school in Scotland. Each newspaper report repeated the same conclusions stated above, in articles that were neutral in tone. Alluding to the 'Johnstone Report' almost a year later on 'Newsnight Scotland', John Alec Macpherson stated: 'Bilingualism is an advantage. And this has been proven in studies, not only here with Gaelic medium education, but in various countries around the world.' This example shows us how revitalization discourse can circulate between the spheres of language planners, academia, and the media.

3.7. Gaelic is a commodity

Another example of the circulation of revitalization discourse between language planners, academics, and the media is provided by the final theme discussed here, the predication of Gaelic as a commodity. This is both an extension and transformation of the objectification of Gaelic in the discourses discussed earlier. It is a response to the discourses and values of capitalism since the late 18th century in which Gaelic was portrayed as a barrier to improvement and economic development of the Highlands, and a barrier to individual economic mobility. It also represents an adaptation of the ideology of neoliberalism, in which 'the market' became the moral arbiter of public policy. Since Thatcher's time as prime minister in the late 1980s, neoliberal ideologies have saturated the Scottish public sphere and civil society. Given this saturation, it is not surprising that minority language revitalization efforts have become subject to the same set of constraints as other areas of civil society and public policy. The commodification of Gaelic constituted a creative move within those constraints.

The process of commodifying the social behavior of Gaelic language use, transforming it variously into an asset, a market, an economic sector, or an economy, was primarily a discursive process. The language planning organization Comunn na

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Gàidhlig (CNAG) played a significant role in the 1990s in fostering an economically-focused type of language planning called 'Gaelic development,' and in developing and promoting the concept of the 'Gaelic economy' as part of this focus. However, when academic consultants eventually elaborated the ideology of a Gaelic economy and specified 'Gaelic goods and services' as its concrete realization, the consultants did so without reference to the social act of communicating through the medium of spoken or written Gaelic (McLeod, 2002). The result of this move was that the very issues of Gaelic speaking and transmission were obscured in language planning efforts. Funding for Gaelic revitalization was instead evaluated in terms of its cost effectiveness, defined as its relative ability to produce financial output for each pound of public funds spent on Gaelic, and its relative ability to create numbers of FTEs (full-time equivalent positions), compared to other publicly-funded programs.

One part of this story was the effort by CNAG to promote the discursive construction of the 'Gaelic economy' together with Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) by commissioning academic research on the topic.[11] In 1993, HIE and the Gaelic Television committee, with CNAG, jointly commissioned research on 'The Economics of Gaelic Language Development' from Alan Sproull, an economist at Glasgow Caledonian University (Sproull and Ashcroft, 1993). One chapter of the report was co-authored by the Director of the Fraser of Allander Institute, a prestigious Scottish economic and policy think-tank at Strathclyde University. The purpose of the study was to inform and influence public policy decisions in regard to Gaelic. These policy decisions would be based on principles of *cost effectiveness* and *value for money*; therefore, in that framework it was important for the commissioners of the study to be able to demonstrate with objective research that publicly-funded Gaelic language development programs were a cost effective method of regional economic development in the Highlands, providing good value for money, compared with other regional economic development programs (Sproull and Ashcroft, 1993:7).

In a section titled 'Conceptualising the Gaelic Economy,' Sproull stated that 'From the standpoint of economics, it makes little sense to define [a Gaelic economy] in terms of the acts of production and exchange which are conducted through the medium of Gaelic' (Sproull and Ashcroft, 1993:4). In other words, the Gaelic economy could not be meaningfully defined in terms of either the language of transaction or the language of production, apparently because these two factors could not be reliably measured. The language of transaction could vary from one moment to the next; for example, even in a shop where the employees could speak Gaelic, the language of transaction would be subject to Gaelic-English codeswitching depending on the linguistic competence and social inclinations of customers. Moreover, focusing on the Gaelic linguistic competence of the producers of goods and services would not allow the measurement of *all* activities producing 'Gaelic goods and services,' since not all Gaelic speakers were producing so-called 'Gaelic goods and services' while speaking Gaelic (e.g., Gaelic-speaking fishermen producing a catch of prawns) and not all producers of 'Gaelic goods and services' were Gaelic speakers (e.g., English-speaking camera operators producing a Gaelic television program). Thus a 'Gaelic economy' was defined by recourse to the primacy of vaguely defined Gaelic commodities, rather than with reference to the primacy of Gaelic as a medium of communication between people engaged in acts of production and exchange. The report defined the 'supply-side of the Gaelic economy' as 'all those activities (and jobs) whose principal purpose is the provision of Gaelic-related goods and services, including the promotion of the Gaelic culture and language.' More generally, the report defined the 'Gaelic economy' as 'the spatial area which stands to gain measurable economic benefits from the further development of the language.' This was a geographically-defined concept that was meant to apply to the Outer Hebrides, Skye, and parts of the Inner Hebrides 'where Gaelic still is, (or was until very recently), the first language of the community' (Sproull and Ashcroft, 1993:5–6).

The motivation for commissioning the report was indicated in its Executive Summary; it showed that in the neoliberal structure of Scottish development in the 1990s, economic development was increasingly de-centralized. Responsibility for local development was thrown back onto locally-focused agencies such as the local enterprise companies (LECs) of HIE and Scottish Enterprise, along with private and voluntary organizations which HIE and the Government expected to form funding partnerships with the LECs (McEwan-Fujita, 2005). Each of these organizations had a mandate that was defined according to a particular sector of society or the economy. During the 1980s and 1990s 'Gaelic' was fully co-opted into this structure and likewise defined as a 'sector.' The interviews I conducted and the documentation I reviewed made it clear that the extent to which Gaelic language revitalization efforts could proceed (let alone succeed) depended at least in part on participants' abilities to adapt their goals and methods to the prevailing neoliberal orientation.

The further dissemination and utilization of the Sproull report's conclusions was as important as the production of the report itself. After the report was released, CNAG distributed press releases announcing its conclusions that were subsequently written up as newspaper articles. CNAG also utilized the report in its own publications to justify its efforts. For example, in its 10-year progress report, the conclusions of the report were reiterated:

> A major economic research survey commissioned by Comunn na Gàidhlig in association with HIE and the Gaelic Television Committee (CTG) established that there is a strong relationship between the health and status of Gaelic and confidence and self-esteem within communities. The survey demonstrated that the Gaelic language and culture have considerable potential to confer economic as well as cultural benefits. The minimum estimated size of the overall Gaelic 'industry' in 1993 was almost 1000 full-time equivalent jobs and a total contribution to Scotland's Gross Domestic

[11] In 1991, the Highlands and Islands Development Board which had been in place since 1965 was dissolved, and a new entity, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), was formed to take its place. HIE's new responsibility included overseeing a network of ten newly-formed Local Enterprise Companies, or LECs, each one responsible for economic development in a particular local government region of the Highlands. The agenda of HIE and its new LEC network shifted to neoliberally focused 'enterprise development' projects.

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Product (GDP) of £41 million. The report concluded that 'policy support for Gaelic activities generates £1 for £1 [pound for pound] relatively more direct jobs than would be the case if the support was given to other sectors of the economy' (Comunn na Gàidhlig, 1994:25).

Not only did CNAG quote and promote the 1993 report, utilizing the economic research as proof of the validity of its efforts, but Sproull himself also re-used it as the main body of an academic article (1996) published in an 'economics of language' theme issue of the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* edited by François Grin. Both the 1993 study and a later study conducted by Sproull and a postgraduate student (Sproull and Chalmers, 1998) illustrate a close relationship between academic research and language revitalization efforts. Although both the 1993 and 1998 reports purported to be economic studies, they also had a strong sociological focus. Both reports involved the conducting of surveys and interviews, and substantial conclusions from both were based on the analysis of results from the surveys. The survey questions were focused on assessing factors such as 'social cohesion' and 'individual and community confidence.' The researchers (and by extension their sponsors) were trying to establish linkages between support for the Gaelic language, positive individual feelings and perceptions of one's community, and economic well-being in order to argue for the positive benefits of public policy support for Gaelic.

The professionalization and corporatization of Gaelic language planning, and the concomitant creation of the 'Gaelic economy' concept, did not take place in isolation. Other economically-oriented Celtic language planning efforts in Ireland and Wales provided precedents and exemplars. In Ireland, Bord na Gaeilge (the Irish Language Board) was established in 1978 and had already moved in a neoliberal direction in 1983, a decade before CNAG (Tovey 1988:63–65). In addition, Údarás na Gaeltachta, the Irish development agency for the Gaeltacht (the Irish government-designated Gaelic-speaking areas in the west of Ireland), which was established in 1979, has a Language and Culture Development Department responsible for integrating Irish social, cultural, and linguistic development with its regional economic development efforts.

Wales also provided a model for economically-oriented 'language development.' One key participant in the 'Gaelic economy' effort specifically mentioned to me in an interview that he was inspired by the organization *Menter a Busnes* [Enterprise and Business], a Welsh-language economic development company established in Wales in 1989 'which seeks to develop enterprise in its widest sense, and business in particular, as part of Welsh language and culture today.'[12] These precedents, together with the efforts to 'develop' Scottish Gaelic, were carried out in the context of the European Union, itself built on the neoliberal principles of the common market. The efforts at each level, EBLUL at the EU level and CNAG at the national and regional level, were reciprocally used and cited to support one another. For example, the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL) published a pamphlet titled 'The Diversity Dividend' (Price et al., 1997) which made a case for cultural and linguistic diversity being 'one of Europe's key resources' for economic growth. This report, authored principally by the executive manager responsible for research and development at Menter a Busnes, proposed an alternative to the modernist paradigm of economic development. It presented case studies of economically oriented language planning projects to prove that economic development did not necessarily require cultural homogenization (Nelde, Strubell, and Williams, 1996). The examples included Slovene and Friulan banking co-operatives, Údarás na Gaeltachta in Ireland, Menter a Busnes in Wales, the Basque co-operative movement Mondragón Cooperative Corporation, business networks in Valencia, Spain, for SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), EBLUL's own Economic Development Forum for European Lesser Used Language Communities, Comunn na Gàidhlig's linguistic and cultural tourism project Fàilte—and Sproull's 1993 report 'The Economics of Gaelic Language Development.'

4. Conclusion

The discourses of revitalization and redemption described in the preceding section constitute metacultural and metalinguistic commentaries on the cultural and linguistic practices of Gaelic speaking, commentaries composed of ideological and affective elements. They focused on representing Gaelic in a positive light and arguing for its maintenance or support, in dialogical response to the discourses of death and denigration which argued for the extinction of Gaelic.

The representations of Gaelic in the media that Scottish journalists and language planners utilized in the late 20th century represent recent iterations in a long historical process, for they recirculate representations of Gaelic from previous centuries. They also utilize the discursive resources of academic discussions about language shift, bilingualism, and economics to frame their appeals, observations, and condemnations, in a way that highlights the metacultural nature of research impossibility of finding a purely objective approach to language shift and revitalization.

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[12] Quoted from the Menter a Busnes website. URL: http://www.menterabusnes.co.uk/.

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