'And Scotland will march again'. The language of political song in 19th- and 20th-century Scotland

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1   Some background notes

On the tenth anniversary of Hamish Henderson's death, it may be fitting to pay a small tribute to his work as a poet, song-writer and folklorist by taking a look at the language of political song in Scotland over the last two centuries. Starting from the texts currently available in 'The Word on the Street' pages in the website of the National Library of Scotland, in 'The Voice of Radicalism' pages in the website of the University of Aberdeen and in other materials specially collected for this study, I aim to discuss the main ways in which rhetorical strategies of personalization and involvement appear to occur in the texts under discussion.

While Dossena (2011) provides a brief overview of the importance of political song in the history of Scots usage, particularly in Late Modern times, this contribution intends to focus on pragmatic choices that are additional to code selection. It is of course beyond the scope of this study to discuss the relationship between lyrics and tunes, as the notation of earlier texts has not always survived, and tunes have often been borrowed from already popular songs. What is much more interesting here is the linguistic dimension of the virtual dialogue set up with the listeners, and the ways in which active participation in 'the cause' is encouraged. From the methodological point of view, the investigation will place itself within the framework of current computer-assisted discourse studies, in which quantitative analyses combine with qualitative readings of the texts.

The topic under investigation elicits interest in many respects. First of all, Scots (and Scottish) political song has very deep roots: Jacobite songs are a very well-known set of texts and tunes in which support could be expressed in more or less veiled terms, often in the thin guise of passionate love songs. Hanoverian loyalists also had their song lore (McAleer 1962), but the publicity given to the lyrics and tunes associated with the Stuart side by Robert Burns's adaptations and additions contributed greatly to their popularity, and more texts were written in the nineteenth century by

important literary figures like James Hogg and Lady Nairne. Nor could we dismiss emigration songs as devoid of political interest: frequent references to the causes of emigration, whether in resignation or in despair, convey specific stance on such causes. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, broadsheet ballads and songs were powerful tools of political propaganda on the occasion of (local) elections. Finally, the twentieth century has witnessed countless occasions for marches in which the humorous adaptation of popular tunes or the creation of new ones enabled the expression of popular feelings that it might have been difficult to articulate in other as efficient ways. Among these, McVicar (2010) and McCulloch (2011) discuss the musical counterculture of the 1960s.[1] Protest songs and appeals for reform (often in relation to the choice of a certain candidate or course of action) thus make up a complex body of texts in which various pragmatic strategies are seen to be at work: the listeners' interest and solidarity are invoked or assumed to be shared through skilful use of linguistic choices meant to make the text acceptable and indeed memorably appealing. While verbal aggression is not unknown, humour is often employed to redress the most serious face-threats, or in fact to stress them, such as we see in the hyperbolic statements of the flyting tradition. Also, the occurrence of proper names may identify the actual object of praise or indeed of insults, providing readers with a specific target for solidarity or contempt. The main linguistic strategies employed in these texts may therefore provide a worthwhile object of study; although it might appear that some features are actually typical, such as exhortations and repetitions, which in many languages have been a predictable form of poetic appeal throughout the centuries, a more accurate investigation of the lyrics is in order for the identification of patterns beyond quantitative data.

1.1 The corpus under investigation: Scots and (Scottish) English texts

The corpus on which this study is based comprises the texts of 65 songs and ballads; while the vast majority of these (58) date from the nineteenth

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[1] In addition, see the songs listed at
http://www.scotsindependent.org/songbook/index.htm and
http://www.scottishrepublicansocialistmovement.org/Pages/SRSMSongbook.aspx. Useful resources on this topic are at the Centre for Political Song of Glasgow Caledonian University, http://www.gcu.ac.uk/politicalsong/. As for the material collected by Hamish Henderson, the archives of the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh and the online 'Kist o Riches' (http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/) are invaluable repositories (see Bort 2011). On Henderson's activities as a scholar and a folklorist, see Neat (2007-2009).

century, seven well-known twentieth-century texts have been included in an attempt to see how far these may and actually do reflect older pragmatic patterns. The decision to focus on the nineteenth century is dictated by an interest in popular writing and culture of the times, with the aim to shed more light on what uses were frequent in Late Modern English, beyond what is observed in literary and normative texts. As regards language, 38 texts are (mostly) in English and 27 are (mostly) in Scots; however, the well-known Scots-English continuum[2] that is such an important trait in many texts, not least literary ones, makes it difficult to assess the extent to which some texts could be placed in one category or the other, and indeed it is the occasional occurrence of a Scots word or phrase that may function as a kind of 'wink' to the listener, such as in the example below, in which Scots occurs at the beginning and towards the end of the text – in the former case it is to draw the attention of the audience; in the latter, it is to frame a proverbial saying ('The De'il maun hae his ain!'):

The Bells are a' ringing (1832)[3]
O cam' ye down frae London, man,
Or cam' ye here yestreen?
Then sit down in the muckle chair,
And tell us what ye've seen.

That the bells are a' ringin',
And the folks are a' singin',
And the Tories they are swingin',
By the necks fast at hame.

O yes, the news indeed are great,
For the noble Earl Grey
Has made the Bills for to pass,
And freedom's won the day.

There is mirth and there is joy,
In cottage and in hall;

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[2] According to Henderson (1983: 101), 'a curious 'bilingualism in one language' has been a characteristic of Scots folksong at least since the beginning of the seventeenth century'.
[3] Dedicated to the passing of the Great Reform Act of 1832, which extended the franchise to numerous middle-class men, but not to the working classes.

For Liberty bids us rejoice,
And we obey her call.

The Tories they are wearing off,
Corruption's growing blue,
And we never were so happy;
A' our days, as we are now.

And who will now presume
To usurp our rights again,
O gie them hemp enough, my lads,
The De'il maun hae his ain!

Hear's a health to every man,
And worthy Joseph Hume,
Liberty in after times,
Shall smile upon his tomb.

Indeed, Scots does seem to occur more frequently in the more aggressive texts. As noted in an earlier, preliminary study (Dossena 2011: 3), political activism seems to manage both form and content, with language choices that convey the encoder's political attitude to specific language policies; in Jacobite and emigrant songs we find typical overt Scotticisms like *bonnie, lad, claymore, glen, shieling* and *clansmen*, but syntax is normally English, with the exception of modal usage like in *will ye no*, or verb forms like *kent* and *wad*. This is even more the case in music hall pieces, where a sprinkling of Scots words, such as *gloaming*, is deemed sufficient to give the song a distinctly tartanized flavour. In fact, such language choices only reinforce the role of English as the standard medium. In political satire, instead, such as in the Tory pamphlet *Whig-Radical Festival Extraordinary!* (1835 – see *The Voice of Radicalism*), or indeed in Hamish Henderson's texts, Scots is used as a fully-fledged 'language of the people' (Donaldson 1989).[4]

In the 1830s the tensions between the Tories, the Whigs and the Radicals gave rise to many texts, and indeed the corpus under investigation includes several references to Sir John Campbell, a London-based lawyer and Whig who stood as a Parliamentary candidate for Edinburgh in 1834, 1835 and 1837, and to James Aytoun (1797-1881), a well-known member of

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[4] On Henderson's attitudes to Scots and poetic diction (and divergences with Hugh MacDiarmid in that respect), see Finlay (1998) and Gibson (2009).

the Radical Party in Edinburgh, who stood in the same election. Similarly, Lord James Abercrombie (1776-1858) is mentioned several times: also a Whig, he was MP for Edinburgh from 1832-9, and Speaker of the House of Commons from 1835-9.

In the quotation below, Campbell is criticized in Scots for his London commitments, supposed to have tainted his identity:

Anither New Sang. Air "Wae betide the Whigs o' Fife" **(1830-40)**
I.
He swears that he was cleck'd in Fife
That he's lo'ed Scotland a' his life,
That o' her cause in every strife
He will be the promoter.
An' aff he's set frae Lunnon town
Wi' English law an' English gown,
An' to Auld Reekie he is born
To catch a Scottish voter. […]

III.
A Scotsman! faith ye're bauld to own't,
Ye've fyled your nest and then ye've flown't,
An' never ance looked back upon't,
Since frae it ye could totter.
The cockney wi' his buttered toast
Has sought us out since you were lost-
I think ye scarce your birth should boast
Before a Scottish voter.

On the other hand, Aytoun is praised in perfectly standard English, which suggests that – in this debate – choice of code is not necessarily related to more or less radical views.

Aytoun, The Friend of the People!! A New Song.
Tune "Arethusa" **(1830-40)**
Come all Reformers of the Town,
Since Jeffrey now has got the Gown,
And pitch your voice to the highest tone,
To sing huzza for Aytoun.
He is a friend to liberty,

>Free trade and prosperity;
>
>He's a friend to our cause,
>
>He shall gain applause;
>
>When the whigs against him shall take the field,
>
>Aytoun shall ne'er to their standard yield,
>
>Huzza for honest Aytoun.

Abercrombie, instead, is given a Scots diminutive in the following example:

>**A New Whig Garland.** Tune "A begging we will go" **(1830-40)**
>
>[…] there's Jamie Abercrombie, lads,
>
>A town's-bred bird, I swear,
>
>Who to your cause and interests true,
>
>No pains did ever spare.

The attitude to Scots is quite different in the twentieth-century texts pertaining to the anti-Polaris campaign of the 60s. Most typically, this is seen in the 1962 album by the Glasgow Song Guild, *Ding Dong Dollar*,[5] which includes *Coronation Coronach*, a republican text arguing for its views first and foremost on historical reasons:[6]

>Noo Scotland hasnae got a King,
>
>An it hasnae got a Queen;
>
>For ye cannae hae the second Liz
>
>When the first yin's never been

In the texts authored by Hamish Henderson, instead, the poetic quality of Scots is the most significant trait to emerge – a trait that had already been stressed in Burns's Jacobite poems, such as *The Lovely Lass of Inverness* (1794):[7]

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[5] In the title song, to the tune of 'She'll be coming round the mountain', the chorus sings:
>Oh ye cannae spend a dollar when ye're deid, No ye cannae spend a dollar when ye're deid
>
>Singing, Ding Dong Dollar, everybody holler, Ye cannae spend a dollar when ye're deid.

On the creation and adaptation of lyrics as a collective effort see McCulloch (2011).

[6] See the notes in the Smithsonian Folkways site:
http://www.folkways.si.edu/TrackDetails.aspx?itemid=17883.

[7] On the links between Scots, poetic diction and nationalism see, most importantly, McClure (2000).

The lovely lass o' Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For, e'en to morn she cries, alas!
And aye the saut tear blin's her e'e.
"Drumossie moor, Drumossie day-
A waefu' day it was to me!
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear, and brethren three.
"Their winding-sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growin' green to see;
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's e'e!
"Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be;
For mony a heart thou has made sair,
That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee!"

Henderson's *Freedom Come All Ye* (1960, in Ross 2000: 143) opens with the memorable image of 'mair nor a roch wind blawin' through the great glen o the warld the day', a metaphor of peace, freedom, and equality which is clearly easy to interpret in the light of the anti-imperialistic campaigns of the time, but which may also sound prophetic when we think of the 'black boy frae yont Nyanga'[8] who 'dings the fell gallows o' the burghers doon', and are tempted to relate this – again metaphorically – not only to the figure of Nelson Mandela, but also, in a contemporary context, to another figure who would make history: the first African-American President of the United States of America, Barack H. Obama:

Roch the wind in the clear day dawin'
Blaws the cloods heelster-gowdie o'er the bay
But there's mair nor a roch wind blawin'
Through the great glen o' the warld the day
It's a thocht that would gar oor rottans
A' thae rogues that gang gallus, fresh and gay

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[8] Nyanga is a township in Cape Town, South Africa, in which protests occurred against the apartheid laws passed in 1960. Henderson also wrote other songs about South Africa, the most famous of which is probably *Rivonia* (in Ross 2000: 150-151), based on the tune of a Spanish Civil War song, 'Ay Carmela'. Mandela and Henderson met when the former was presented with the Freedom of the City of Glasgow in 1993.

Tak' the road tae seek ither loanin's
Their ill ploys tae sport and play

Nae mair will our bonnie callants
Merch tae war when oor braggarts crousely craw
Nor wee weans frae pitheid an clachan
Mourn the ships sailin doun the Broomielaw
Broken faimlies in lands we've hairriet
Will curse 'Scotlan the Brave' nae mair, nae mair
Black an white ane-til-ither mairriet
Mak the vile barracks o thair maisters bare

Sae come aa ye at hame wi freedom
Never heed whit the houdies croak for Doom
In yer hoose aa the bairns o Adam
Will find breid, barley-bree an paintit room
When Maclean meets wi's friens in Springburn
Aa thae roses an geans will turn tae blume
An yon black boy frae yont Nyanga
Dings the fell gallows o the burghers doun.

While metaphors are of course one of the basic tools of poetic diction, in an earlier text, *John McLean's March* (1948, in Ross 2000: 126-127), Henderson had used Scots as the language of the people, actually imitating speech among friends and comrades of diverse geographical provenance:

Hey Mac, did you see him as he cam' doon by Gorgie
Awa' o'er the Lammerlaw or north o' the Tay
Yon man is comin' and the hale toon is turnin' oot
We're a' sure he'll win back tae Glesga the day

The jiners and hauders-on are marchin' frae Clydebank
Come on noo and hear him he'll be ower thrang tae bide
Turn oot Jock and Jimmy leave the crane and the muckle gantry
Great John MacLean has come hame tae the Clyde

Argyle Street and London Road's the route that we're marchin'
The lads frae the Broomielaw are here tae a man
Hey Neil whaur's your hauderums, ye big Hielan' teuchter

Get your pipes mate an' march at the heid o' the clan

Hello Pat Malone, I knew you'd be here, son
The red and the green, lad, we'll wear side by side
The Gorbals is his the day and Glesga belangs tae him
Great John MacLean has come hame tae the Clyde

Forward to Glesga Green we'll march in good order
Wull grips his banner weel (that boy isna blate).
Ay there, there's Johnnie noo – that's him there, the bonnie fechter,
Lenin's his fiere, lad, and Liebknecht's his mate.

Tak' tent when he's speakin', for they'll mind what he said here
In Glesga, oor city – and the haill warld beside.
Och aye, lad, the scarlet's bonnie: here's tae ye, Hielan' Shony
Oor John MacLean has come hame tae the Clyde

Ah weel when it's ower I'll awa' back tae Springburn
Come hame for your tea, John, we'll soon hae ye fed
It's hard work the speakin' and I'm sure you'll be tired the nicht
I'll sleep on the flair Mac an' gie John the bed

The hale city's quiet noo, it kens that he's restin'
At hame wi' his Glesga freends, their fame an' their pride
The red will be worn, my lads, and Scotland will march again
Great John MacLean has come hame tae the Clyde

Indeed, the imitation of speech is an important element in most texts, which address their audience and attempt to involve them through the use of various personalization strategies; these will be the object of the next sections.

2   Personalization strategies in the corpus under investigation

While the corpus under investigation is clearly too small to enable the identification of reliable quantitative patterns (it comprises 22,507 tokens and 4250 types, for a type/token ratio of 19), it is nonetheless possible to discuss the use of some particularly interesting lexical items, the greater or lesser frequency of which may contribute to the level of involvement and

personalization achieved in discourse. Such items concern the vocabulary through which political, national and/or social identity is construed, how action is encouraged and expected (happy) outcomes are predicted, and how concepts, actions and protagonists are presented and evaluated.

2.1 The construction of identity: proper names, personal pronouns and place names

As we saw above, protagonists can be named (and nicknamed) so that the referent is identified without ambiguities; on the other hand, general (stereotypical) names like *Mac*, *Jock*, or *Pat Malone*, are emblematic of a certain geographical identity. Indeed, political identity may and often does coincide with national identity; however, a closer look at data may provide further interesting findings, especially when we consider personal pronouns. In Table 1 below, for instance, we see that the typical *us* vs *them* opposition is actually made up of more complex distributions:

Pronoun	Occurrences	Pronoun	Occurrences	Pronoun	Occurrences
1ps		**2ps**		**3ps-m**	
I	223	Thou	2	He	166
Me	43	Thee	10	Him	75
My	152	Thy	11	His	178
Mine	1	Thine	0		
Total	**419**		**23**		**419**
				3ps-f	
				She	25
				Her	33
				Hers	0
Total					**58**
1pp		**2ps/p**		**3pp**	
We	119	You	117	They	143
Us	69	Ye	123	Them	81
Our	157	Your	88	Their	97
Ours	2	Yours	0	Theirs	0
Total	**347**		**328**		**321**
Total*	**766 (40%)**		**351 (18%)**		**798 (42%)**

* 1915 tokens – the third-person neutral pronoun is omitted, as it occurs in existential or endophoric uses, but not as person deixis.

Table 1 – Frequency of personal pronouns

First-person uses, which account for about the same percentage as third-person ones, are slightly more numerous when singular pronouns are concerned, which seems to indicate that the assumption of personal responsibility for the views that are expressed, or indeed for the actions on which judgement is (indirectly) passed, is more frequent than the expression of collective identity – see the examples below:

> **Toddlin' In**. Tune "Bonnie Strathyre" **(1835)**
> While I keep the rabble aye under my thumb,
> I'll aye be elected whatever may come.
> Wi' ilka ten pounder nane's better than I,
> An' O but I'm proud o' his company.
> Todlin in, todlin in,
> I gar the ten pounders come todlin in.

> **I still maun be a Baillie**. Tune "Vicar of Bray" **(1835)**
> For mony a year, my worthy friends,
> Ye ken I liv'd a Tory,
> The Corrupt rotten system I
> Still made my boast and glory.
> Retrenchment and Reform were words
> My vera' soul abhorred;
> In ilka plan to haud them doun
> I cordially concurred.
> Through a' my public life it's been
> The rule I've practis'd daily,
> That whether Whigs or Tory's reign,
> I still maun be a Bailie.

Similarly, third-person singular pronouns are more frequent than plural ones, as the protagonists of the songs and ballads (Aytoun, Abercrombie, but also McLean) are given centre-stage:

> **Aytoun, The Friend of the People!!** A New Song. Tune "Arethusa"
> **(1830-40)**
> […] Aytoun's the man whom we desire,
> He never has shrunk from the hottest fire;

Hamish Henderson, *John McLean's March* **(1948)**
[…] Great John MacLean has come hame tae the Clyde

First-person and third-person plural pronouns are about as frequent as second-person ones (both in singular and plural uses, though the former is only observed in the imitation of dialogue). This relative infrequency of second-person pronouns is probably related to the almost accusing tone which they can assume, such as in *Ye Jacobites by Name* (see Dury 2000: 169-171), and as the following two examples suggest:

Abercromby's Answer, or The Exchequer Garland.
Another excellent New Song. Tune "Arethusa". **(c. 1832)**
1
Ye Whigs of high and low degree,
Come pipe all hands on deck d'ye see,
And teach all the crew to sing out for me,
"Huzzah for Abercrombie"! […]
4
So ye Reformers stand by me,
And when I in Parliament shall be,
Then you shall see what -you shall see,
If you vote for Abercrombie!

And ilka Mearns man and bairn,
My Parody and Song shall learn (1830-50)
If you do not propose and elect him again,
You disgrace the distinction of Mearns-shire men.

Within this framework, the infrequency of *thou* is also understood, which only occurs in poetic apostrophes, and contrasts with more frequent occurrences of *thee* and *thy* in pledges:

The Scottish Emigrant's Farewell (Alexander Hume, **1811-1859**)
Fareweel, fareweel, my native home
Thy lanely glens and heath-clad mountains
        […] Thou land wi' love an' freedom crown'd,
        […] My heart, aye Scottish to the core,
        Shall cling to thee wi' warm devotion,

As regards political labels, item frequency is of course dependent on the kind of materials included in the corpus, which – in turn – depends on the collection from which the corpus is derived: according to Table 2, Whigs appear to feature much more prominently than Tories or indeed Radicals, while Reformers is a label encompassing more than one approach to political issues.

Label	Occurrences
Whig(s)	70
Lad(die)(s)	49
Tory (-ies)	47
Friend(s), freen(s)	40
Scots, Scotch, Scottish (-man, -men)	27
Reformer(s)	18
Radical(s)	13
English	6
British	3

**Table 2 – Political and geographical labels
recorded in the corpus under discussion**

Instances of the use of geopolitical labels are given below:

Anither New Sang. AIR "Wae betide the Whigs o' Fife." **(1830-40)**
[…] A Scotsman!! wae's me for the same
I thought that nane that owned the name
Wad heard his kintra urge her claim,
An' nae assistance brought her.

**A NEW SONG. Dedicated to the Reform Committee of Dalkeith in
honour of the triumph of Reform. (1832?)**
[…] Let Brougham and Grey, and a' that may, Stand true to British
freedom,
To steer the helm o' the state,

HUZZA! FOR PROVOST SPITTAL!!! AN EXCELLENT NEW
SONG. Tune "THE ARETHUSA." **(1833)**
[…] Reform's not worth a single fig,
Unless it serve to help a Whig;
With much ado,
They carried it thro'
For themselves alone, and not for you,
You vile and low-bred Radical crew,
That refuse to vote for Spittal.

Uses of 'friends', or 'freens', and 'lad(die)s', instead, shed light on the kind
of positive face-enhancing moves that occur in this kind of persuasive texts:

A New Whig Garland. Tune "A begging we will go" **(1830-40)**
[…] If these our Members be, my lads,
Our cannons loud shall roar,
And open trade be carried on
O'er all the Indian shore.
Then honest lads, beware of lies,
Believe no idle story,
But strike at once for freedom' cause,

Aytoun the Union Laddie. Air "The New Highland Laddie" **(1830-40)**
The Whigs think they are grand and great,
But O they're proud and idly gaudy.
How much unlike the manly gait
Of Aytoun our dear Union Laddie!
O my charming Union Laddie,
Our meet and graceful Union Laddie;
What man would e'er a Whig compare
With Aytoun our dear Union Laddie!

Nor is national or indeed local identity contrasted with other labels when
place names are employed; perhaps predictably, Scotland is the centre of
attention, but this is not necessarily in opposition to English, British or other
identities; the Highlands, however, elicit relatively little interest (see Table 3
below):

Place Name	Occurrences
Scotland	23
Britain	7
Edinburgh	6
England	6
Auld Reekie	5
France	4
Glasgow	4
Ireland	4
London	4
Scotia	4
America	3
Highland(s)	2

Table 3 – Place names recorded in the corpus under discussion

As for the poetic names *Scotia* and *Caledonia*, these occur in cases where the country is personalized and/or associated with its heroic past – an important feature in literary diction, but quite infrequent in folk culture, where Latinate forms are normally dispreferred:

Dark Bonnymuir (1820)
As evening dashed on the western ocean,
Caledonia stood perched on the waves of the Clyde; […]
No longer the enemies of justice and freedom,
Shall make the sons of Scotia, in poverty to mourn;

The Hale Rick-ma-Tick. Air "Whole Hog or None" **(1879)**
When first I heard the news I wi' joy did dance, sing and whistle,
To see England's Rose sae nicely won by Scotia's hardy Thistle […]
I dauner'd oot the ither day the length o' George's Square,
To inspect the statues o' the great that I heard had been placed there,
Whilst gazing in astonishment I felt stung to the quick,
When I saw they hadna Rabbie Burns 'mang the hale rick-ma-tick.

2.2 Prophecies and exhortations (interjections, imperatives and modality)

Argumentative discourse in politics aims to appeal to recipients, inviting them to share views and act accordingly; for this reason, we may expect involvement strategies like interjections and imperatives to occur quite frequently. In addition, deontic and dynamic modality may be expected to play an important part in the definition of projects, the outline of outcomes, and the expression of confidence in general.

An overview of the uses of modal auxiliaries, given in Table 4, shows the frequency with which promises and predictions account for a considerable part of instances:

Modal Auxiliary	Occurrences
Will	155
Can	78
Shall	68
May	63
Would, wad	53
Must	48
Should	29
Could	19
Might	11

Table 4 – Modal auxiliaries in the corpus under discussion

The case of *shall* is particularly striking, as it is quite infrequent in Scottish use, but in these texts it is seen to occur in significant pragmatic moves:

Huzza! for Provost Aytoun!! A New Song. Tune "The Arethusa" **(1833)**
[…] O Jamie Aytoun, worthy soul!
Head of the People and the Poll!
It seems at first a little droll
To call you Provost Aytoun.
Yet Provost you shall surely be,
Or woe unto the Thirty-three!

Aytoun, The Friend of the People!! A New Song.
Tune "Arethusa." **(1830-40)**
[…] He's a friend to our cause,
He shall gain applause;
When the whigs against him shall take the field,
Aytoun shall ne'er to their standard yield,
Huzza for honest Aytoun. […]
While we cry huzza for Aytoun.
Freedom shall our watchword be,
Our motto peace and liberty,
For our banners we shall wave,
O'er the heads of the brave;
Our triumph then shall be complete,
For the whigs will get a sad defeat,
When the people cry for Aytoun.

On the other hand, uses of tentative forms in the conditional (*should*, *could*, *might*) are rather marginal, as argumentative discourse disfavours the expression of hesitation and uncertainty; even *may*, which is normally found in the expression of epistemic modality, is seen to occur here as the expression of heartfelt wishes:

Young Jamie Aytoun. Tune "Auld Rob Morris" **(1841)**
[…] Ye may think wi' ye're specks ye can see i' the dark,
But Aytoun's no fit for my Parliament wark:
I rather wad want than hae him for a year?
Sae mair of Jem Aytoun I never will hear.

Huzza for Reform and the Garland of Green! A New Song. Tune "Sprig of Shillelah" **(1830-40)**
Let them boast of the Shamrock, the Thistle, and Rose,
I sing of what's fairer then any of those?
Of the cause of Reform and the Garland of Green:
For green is the colour that gladdens the sight,
'Tis the Livery of Nature - 'tis Aytoun's delight,
And long may that colour triumphant adorn,
The HERO by whom 'tis so worthily worn,
Then Huzza for Reform and the Garland the Green!

As for imperatives, it is interesting to note the frequency of the verb *come*, which invites proximity: not only are listeners encouraged to approach the singer to listen to the song, they are encouraged to stand by his views (and sing along, a powerful token of active participation), as expressed also with uses of *join* (see Table 5):

Huzza! for Provost Aytoun!! A New Song.
Tune "The Arethusa" **(1833)**
I.
COME all Reformers, sing again,
For what Reformer can refrain,
On hearing the heart-string strain,
Huzza for honest Aytoun?

The Downfall of Spittal! A New Song. Tune "Which Nobody Can Deny"
(1833-37)
[…] COME join in my chorus, true Aytounites all,
And sing of our triumph and SPITTAL'S down-fall,

**New Political Song, All about John Murray, the Piper, and Mr
Aytoun, the Friend of the People, and Staunch Reformer (1839-1841)**
Come join in my song,
All people who long
To see Pensions cut off with a sweep,

Imperatives	Occurrences	Exhortations	Occurrences
Come	77	Hurrah	15
Sing	36	Cheer(s)	4
Go	23	Huzzah	2
Vote, v.	22		
Join	8		
March, v.	5		
Kick, v.	4		

**Table 5 – Imperatives and exhortations
recorded in the corpus under discussion**

Sing is of course the main verb that can be associated with this text type, to which cheers and cries of hurrah are added for the expression of enthusiastic support:

> **Answer for the Whigs (1830-40)**
> […] when the lovely Bill appears,
> The Bill of true Reform,
> We'll up and sing unto our Peers,
> And so avert the storm

> **Aytoun, The Friend of the People!!** A New Song.
> Tune "Arethusa" **(1830-40)**
> Come all Reformers of the Town,
> Since Jeffrey now has got the Gown,
> And pitch your voice to the highest tone,
> To sing huzza for Aytoun.

> **The Hale Rick-ma-Tick**. Air "Whole Hog or None" **(1879)**
> Attention, freens, and listen while I sing to yon a sang,
> And tell ye what I think is richt, and what I think is wrang,
> Owre a' the principal topics, I'll rin in succession quick,
> And gi'e you my opinion o' the hale rick-ma-tick.
> So then, freens, I pray you give attention,
> And many various subject I unto you will mention,
> So list while I lean upon my old fashioned stick,[9]
> And I'll gi'e ye my opinion on the hale rick-ma-tick.

2.3 Freedom is a noble thing – evaluative language in political song

The emotional expressions of support we saw above suggest that, in the case of songs and ballads, political discourse does not rely exclusively on rational argumentation; in this respect, a study of evaluative language can be useful, starting from the nouns and adjectives that feature more prominently in the texts, according to the word list that a concordancing programme (in this case, WordSmith Tools 4.0) enables to create – see Table 6.

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[9] This evokes the stereotypical image of the nineteenth-century ballad singer, Glasgow's epic figure of Hawkie (see Dossena 2010).

Lexical Item	Occurrences
Heart(s), (-y, -less)	42
Good	36
Freedom	30
Honest(y)	25
Brave	22
Land	18
People	17
Right(s)	12
Free	9
Liberty	9
Mind	8
Bonnie	7
Justice	6
Braw	3
Slave	3
Servant	0
Slavery	0

Table 6 – Lexical items expressing (evaluated) concepts and commitment

Among these lexical items, the relative frequency of *heart* suggests that feelings are expected to play a considerable part in political decisions, though rational considerations concerning *honesty* and *justice* are also very important. As for the object on which this powerful emotional investment is made, *freedom* is of course the key element; *liberty* occurs much less frequently on account of its more abstract value. *Land*, *people*, *rights* and what is *right* are crucial, and they get emphasized to stress the collective interest of an overarching project. On the other hand, *slaves*, *slavery* and indeed *servants* hardly make any appearance in the corpus – freedom is to be pursued, but the condition from which emancipation is desired, is not made explicit.[10]

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[10] Interestingly, McAllister (2012) highlights important links between Burns's poetry (and, in particular, *Scots wha hae*) and the American emancipation movement in the 1820s.

Answer for the Whigs (1830-40)
In truth, good sir, we gladly hear,
Good honest Ayton's praise;
But much we marvel at your jeer
On Whigs of our own days.
How much in freedom's sacred cause,
Life's energies they spend; […]
Good sir, in freedom's cause
No banners black are seen;

The Bells are a' ringing (1832)
[…] O yes, the news indeed are great,
For the noble Earl Grey
Has made the Bills for to pass,
And freedom's won the day.
There is mirth and there is joy,
In cottage and in hall;
For Liberty bids us rejoice,
And we obey her call.

2.4   Humour and nostalgia

Going beyond mere quantitative findings concerning lexical choices, it is striking to see how more extensive discourse stretches contribute to the persuasive force of the texts: irony and indeed sarcasm are powerful tools of political discourse, as witnessed by the constant popularity of cartoons and caricatures.[11] Verbal aggression contrasts with nostalgia, but both may be tokens of resistance: in emigrants' songs, comments like 'yet still the blood is strong' (*Canadian Boat Song*, 1829) promise the preservation of memory, which may one day be the starting point of a return journey, whether real or metaphorical.[12] At the same time, instances of self-evident mock philosophy like 'ye cannae spend a dollar when ye're deid' (*Ding Dong Dollar*) appeal to the 'pith of sense' to which already Burns had appealed in his *A Man's a Man for a' that*. Indeed, metaphors and hyperbolic uses provide the linguistic texture by means of which meanings are made memorable: involvement is also a function of the way in which words can be recognized, made personal and perhaps repeated to another listener, so that the message

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[11] See for instance the political cartoons concerning the Red Clydeside movement at http://gdl.cdlr.strath.ac.uk/redclyde/redclyindexcartoons.html.

[12] On the (re)construction of identity see Dossena (2012) and Dossena (forthcoming).

may spread further and be adapted to other contexts, such as in the case of the recent *Road of Tears*, by the Battlefield Band (2006) in which the Highland Clearances, the forced removal of the Cherokees (the 'trail of tears'), and the 2003 invasion of Iraq are seen as events whose common denominator is oppression:

> **The Battlefiled Band,** *The Road of Tears* **(2006)**
> They came at dawn from out the darkness
> Swords and torches in their hands
> They said it was the chieftains orders
> Clear the hillsides and the glens
> No more we'd smell the broom and the heather
> Share the bannock with our kin
> Be laid to rest beside our fathers
> It almost broke our hearts and minds
> To board the ship, the ship of tears, To board the ship, the ship of tears
>
> We crossed the sea to flee the hunger
> Wasted rags of skin and bone
> The fields we left were black and barren
> A ravaged land no longer home
> The coffin ships were filled with mourning
> We'd one last look back to the land
> The quiet men, the women keening
> It almost broke our hearts and minds
> To leave the fields. the fields of tears, To leave the fields, the fields of tears
>
> They came in floods in covered wagons
> Drove across our ancient lands
> They said to scorn our elders wisdom
> Take the path their lord commands
> They stole our hills, they stole our rivers
> The mother earth with whom we're joined
> They lead us from our spirit fathers
> It almost broke our hearts and minds
> To walk the trail, the trail of tears, To walk the trail, the trail of tears
>
> They came in hordes across the desert
> Storms of dust that sear the skin

They said they'd come for our oppressor
They would make a meal of him
They said that we would earn our freedom
And come to see their way is right
But still we weep and we are bleeding
They have not won our hearts and minds
We're on the road, the road of tears, We're on the road, the road of tears
It never ends the road of tears, the road of tears, the road of tears

3   Concluding remarks

Song and music have always played a remarkable part in Scotland's history – not only for the contribution given to the different political movements by stirring tunes (not least based on pibroch music) and powerful lyrics, but also on account of the symbolic value that music can have: it is probably no accident that the 1707 Union was seen as 'the end to an auld song', in the words with which Chancellor Seafield closed the final session of the Scottish Parliament, while at the opening of the new session, on 1 July 1999, MSPs joined Sheena Wellington in her rendition of Burns's *A Man's a Man for a' that*.

Poetry and lyrics have often been cognate expressions of feelings and argumentation: their study cannot therefore be merely quantitative; the way in which lexical items concur to the definition of stance and evaluate concepts, supporters, and opponents results in a complex network in which also syntax and indeed choice of code play fundamental roles. In this overview I have attempted to highlight some traits occurring in nineteenth-century texts and relate them to much more modern ones: within this framework, the strategies contributing to the definition of socio-spatial identity have appeared to be particularly interesting, as proximity seems to be construed on the basis of (supposedly) shared opinions and evaluations. In these texts both singers and listeners are expected to be – quite literally – 'on the same page'; only in relatively few cases do we come across persuasive texts which aim to change the listeners' views: most of them aim to reinforce consensus, and actually encourage solidarity, perhaps the main object of truly democratic political discourse.

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