Variation in Gaelic Storytelling

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'I must not omit to relate their way of study, which is very singular: they shut their doors and windows for a day's time, and lie on their backs, with a stone upon their belly, and plaids about their heads, and their eyes being covered, they pump their brains for rhetorical encomium or panegyric; and indeed they furnish such a style from this dark cell, as is understood by very few....'

– Martin Martin's description of Scottish Gaelic 'orators' in
A description of the Western Isles of Scotland, circa 1695.

For centuries, scholars and commentators have been interested in the ways in which Gaelic storytellers, poets and other practitioners of the verbal arts have learned, remembered and performed their material. More recently, scholars have raised specific questions about memory and performance in relation to Gaelic storytelling. One of the most important issues which has arisen in this context has been the nature and role of variation in Gaelic storytelling. In his 1945 article 'The Gaelic Storyteller', James Delargy notably discusses the existence of both very conservative modes of storytelling, as well as freer, more improvisational styles, thus raising the question of whether, and to what extent, Gaelic stories differ from one telling to another. On the conservative side, he tells of individuals who practised their stories for hours before telling them, presumably going over sections and details which they had committed to memory. He also recounts instances of storytellers who had phenomenal memories and who seemed to be able to reproduce stories almost exactly as they had heard them. Indeed, comments of Delargy's such as 'I myself have heard the tale of *Diarmuid agus Gráinne* recited almost word for word from [Standish Hayes O' Grady's 1855] edition ... from the beginning to p. 92, by Séan Ó Conaill, the Kerry story-teller' (201), suggest that memorisation played an important role for some storytellers, and that there would have been very little variation between tellings of the same story as told by the same storyteller.

Such references to 'word for word' recitation are not uncommon, and have contributed to an impression that it has been the custom for Gaelic storytellers to be very faithful to a remembered original. Maartje Draak, for example, refers to the 'special aptitude' of Irish and Scottish storytellers for 'prodigious feats of memory' (48), and D.A. Binchy states that storytellers of old could 'repeat the stories word-perfect, without making the least slip – or if they did make a slip, [were] at once corrected by the audience ....' (9).[1]

However, in addition to the accounts of 'word perfect' recitation, we also find references to less fixed storytelling styles. In the same 1945 article in which he recounts Séan Ó Conaill's 'word for word' recitation, Delargy also describes the Gaelic storyteller as 'a conscious literary artist' (184), who strives to pass on his or her story 'as it has been received, unaltered, *not in regard to language*, but in form and plot' (194, emphasis mine), suggesting that the storyteller's use of language is a matter of personal choice rather than memorised recitation. In addition, he makes

comparisons between the medieval and modern storyteller which suggest that word for word recitation has not historically been the norm:

> ... the story-teller of the eighth century as well as his successor, the Gaelic sgéalaí of to-day, depended upon mnemonics and memorised tale-synopses, which they expanded later when called upon, impressing on their narrative all the skill derived from long training and experience (207).

He goes on to say that in medieval storytelling '...the narrative itself had no fixed form, its development depending entirely on the skill of the individual story-teller. The same holds good for the modern folk-tale' (209). Delargy thus describes both conservative, fixed modes of storytelling which border on memorisation, as well as more improvisational styles in which the story has 'no fixed form' – and in so doing raises fundamental questions about the nature of the tradition and the extent to which traditional material varies from one telling to another.

Alan Bruford raises similar questions in relation to Gaelic storytelling. In his 1978 article 'Recitation or Re-creation? Examples from South Uist Storytelling,' he addresses the question of how storytellers remember and tell stories, and the extent to which their use of language varies between different tellings of the same story. Noting Delargy's 1945 comment that tales had to be transmitted 'unaltered, not in regard to language, but in form and plot,' Bruford states that '... some Scottish Gaelic storytellers have tried to pass on their tales unaltered in language as well as plot' (1978: 27). He then goes on to consider how some of the twentieth century's most prominent South Uist storytellers remembered and told stories, concluding that there is a case to be made for believing that the model of '... narrative wording improvised on a memorised framework, but much of the dialogue learned by heart – was the most usual one for experienced storytellers in South Uist' (37). Here Bruford's penetrating and well documented discussion of the evidence recorded from a number of storytellers – including a consideration of highly similar versions from the storytelling brothers Duncan and Neil MacDonald, as well as the examination of more than one version of the same story from the same storyteller – draws attention to the significance of such issues for the field of storytelling scholarship, and points to the detailed examination of multiple recordings[2] from the same storyteller (or versions otherwise collected more than once) as one way forward for such investigation.

The Use of Sound Recordings to Study Storytelling
Other scholars also have suggested that our understanding could be advanced through the study of recordings of Gaelic storytellers. Those who have made explicit reference to such research include James Delargy (1945), Maartje Draak (1957), James Ross (1959) and Seán Ó Coileáin (1977, 1978).

As early as 1945, James Delargy makes specific reference to the role recordings could play in the study of Gaelic stories:

> By using the Ediphone recording machine in our work of collection we have been able to preserve traditional features of story-telling which are lost when tales are written slowly from dictation. It would be unwise to form conclusions about the style of Gaelic folk-tales based on an examination of much of what has been published hitherto (207).

In 1959, James Ross also drew attention to the possibility of studying sound recordings in order to improve our understanding of Gaelic storytelling. Writing in response to some of Milman Parry's ideas about the use and role of formulae in oral verse,[3] Ross raises the question of whether Gaelic storytellers traditionally have made use of spontaneous composition in their storytelling, saying:

> ... it is not certain that extemporizing played any fundamental part in the transmission of such tales. With the advent of the tape recorder, the comparative study of different tellings of the same tale from the same teller has been made possible (12).

Ross goes on to say that for at least one storyteller who had been recorded, Duncan MacDonald of South Uist, the stories were not impromptu creations but rather very precise versions of an already prepared story.

In the 1970s, Seán Ó Coileáin also called for the study of multiple recordings from the same storyteller. Responding to ideas made popular by Albert Lord and the subsequent proponents of Oral Formulaic Theory,[4] he suggests that Gaelic storytelling is less 'conservative' and more 'formulaic' than previously had been believed to be the case. Arguing that prevailing ideas about Gaelic storytelling were based more on assumptions than on observations, he makes the following statement:

> Despite the amount of fieldwork carried out I know of no experiment to test the degree to which a storyteller reproduced a tale as narrated to him, or the variation which might occur in a tale as told by the same narrator on two or more occasions. (Such duplicate recordings as were made more or less by accident would repay further study in this regard). It was probably thought unnecessary to conduct such an experiment.... (12).

In more recent decades, scholars of other traditions also have made the case for using multiple recordings as a way to investigate features of traditional narrative. In a 1986 article entitled 'Folk-Narrative Performance and Tape Transcription, Theory Versus Practice,' Herbert Halpert and J.D.A. Widdowson, referring to stories collected in Newfoundland, also raise the possibility of studying variation between recorded texts. They conclude that although such a method is desirable and potentially valuable, it had not been used much in published scholarship up to that point:

> ...when one seeks demonstrations of the fact that a tale lives in different performances by the same teller through the publication of more than one telling by even a single performer, the publishing record is indeed scant (42).

The authors go on to state that their own interest in such a study is prompted by the hope that through the use of very accurately transcribed recordings – stories transcribed 'as literally and exactly as possible' – they will be able to 'reflect oral storytelling styles with some accuracy ... so as to reveal aspects of storytelling style not visible in more literary transcriptions' (46).

More recently, Lauri Honko has discussed the practice of collecting the same items of traditional material from the same tradition bearer or group of tradition

bearers on multiple occasions. According to Honko, such repeated collection helps to create a 'thick corpus' of material which, he says, is crucial to the study of 'organic variation' in traditional material. According to Honko,

> By producing 'thickness' of text and context through multiple documentation of expressions of folklore in their varying manifestations in performance within a 'biologically' definable tradition bearer, community or environment it [fieldwork-based research] has created a solid field of observation conducive to the understanding of prime 'causes' or sources of variation, i.e. the mental processes of oral textualisation and construction of meaning (17).

The terminology may be new, but concepts such as 'thick corpus' and 'organic variation' are not unfamiliar in the context of Gaelic storytelling scholarship. James Ross's 1959 call to compare different tellings of the same tale from the same storyteller anticipates Honko's view that the repeated collection of traditional material from the same teller or group of tellers can reveal variation which otherwise would not be apparent to scholars. Honko goes on to say that such repeated collection '…has proved to be worth its weight in gold in the analysis of discourse and variation' (21).

While scholars such as Maartje Draak and Alan Bruford (1978) have made limited use of multiple recordings to compare different versions of the same story as told by the same storyteller, there have been no large scale studies of Gaelic storytelling which have employed this method until recently. However, beginning in 1993 I undertook a detailed study of one Scottish Gaelic storyteller, Mr Brian Stewart, which made use of this method in order to analyse Mr Stewart's storytelling.[5]

Brian Stewart

Brian Stewart, a storyteller from Sutherland in the north of Scotland, was recorded by the School of Scottish Studies for the first time in 1958, when two of his stories were recorded by Hamish Henderson. He was recorded again for both the School of Scottish Studies and the Linguistic Survey of Scotland between 1973 and 1978, during which time almost all of the stories in his repertoire were recorded. Finally, between 1993 and 1995, I recorded all of Mr Stewart's stories from him again. During both the 1973-1978 and 1993-1995 periods, most of Mr Stewart's stories were recorded more than once. This has resulted in a body of 39 different recordings of nine separate stories, with four or five separate recordings of each of the stories. Such a large body of multiple recordings from the same storyteller presents a unique opportunity to study one man's storytelling over time and to investigate some fundamental questions about Mr Stewart's storytelling dynamic and techniques.[6]

In my doctoral study of Brian Stewart, the separately recorded stories are compared to each other in terms of story structure, episodic content and language in order to discover patterns of variation and similarity between the story versions and to identify important features of Mr Stewart's storytelling. In order to compare the stories at the episodic level, the stories were initially analysed in terms of their basic plot structures. This enabled discussion of both the structural features of Brian Stewart's storytelling as well as a comparison of episodic content, considering such topics as the use of repetition, the relationship between story structure and memory, the borrowing of motifs and characters between stories, and the implications of Mr Stewart's storytelling behaviour for his relationship to, and understanding of, the

stories. The final section of the analysis consisted of a comparison of the stories in terms of Brian Stewart's use of language, particularly his use of formalised or set language, and the patterns of such language use both in individual story groups (i.e. groups of separate recordings of the same story), as well as across the entire body of stories. It is with the results of this analysis of Mr Stewart's use of language that the rest of this article is concerned.

Before proceeding to the analysis, some information about Mr Stewart and the provenance of his stories is in order. Brian Stewart was born on 20 February 1911 in the north of Scotland to a family of Gaelic-speaking travellers. His given name was Alasdair, but throughout his life he was known as 'Brian', a nickname that stemmed from the place of his birth, *Ach a'Bhràigh* ('field of the brae').[7] The family were based at Rhemarstaig, near Lairg, in the winter, but travelled during the summer. They were tinsmiths and horse traders. Mr Stewart inherited his stories from his father's side of the family. It was from his father's mother, Susie Stewart, born in Argyll in 1846, that he learned his stories as a boy, as well as from his uncle (Susie's son), Alasdair Stewart, often known as '*Ailidh Dall*' ('Blind Alasdair'). Although *Ailidh Dall* has been described by Calum Maclean as 'the best Gaelic storyteller ever recorded on the mainland of Scotland,'[8] Ailidh himself has said that he learned many of his stories from his mother Susie; and from what Brian Stewart told me, it seems clear that Susie was the master storyteller in the family. Brian Stewart therefore learned his craft from two storytellers whose skills were formidable.[9] Mr Stewart died on 17 June 2008.

The Stewarts appear to have excelled at long heroic tales, and of the nine stories considered in this article, eight are native heroic or international wonder tales, some of which contain Fenian material. This means that they represent the type of long hero stories and adventures which, according to accounts, were extremely popular amongst the Gaels up to modern times, and thus arguably best represent the native Gaelic storytelling tradition.[10]

The nine stories considered in my analysis are as follows:
1. *Am Bodach Baigeir* ('The Old Beggar') – a version of AT 303.[11]
2. *Stòiridh a'Chaimbeulaich* ('Campbell's Story') – related to AT 880, 884A and 890.
3. *Stòiridh a'Chòcaire* ('The Story of the Cook') – a version of AT 300.
4. *Stòiridh an Eich Dhuibh* ('The Story of the Black Horse') – related to AT 531.
5. *Gille nan Cochulla Craicinn* ('The Lad of the Skin Coverings') – related to *Cèadach*, a native hero tale.
6. *Stòiridh Ladhair* ('The Story of Ladhar') – a native hero tale.
7. *Stòiridh Loircein* ('The Story of Loircean') – related to AT 301 and the native hero tale *Eachtra Iollainn Airmdheirg.*
8. *Am Maraiche Màirneal* ('The Seaworthy Mariner') – related to AT 433B.
9. *Stòiridh Oisean as dèidh na Fèinn'* ('The Story of Ossian after the Fenians') – a native hero tale.

Analysis – Use of Language

When the multiple recordings of Brian Stewart's stories are compared to each other in terms of phrasing and language, the outstanding feature which emerges is Mr Stewart's use of various kinds of set language. By 'set language' I mean phrases and dialogue which occured in the same way and in the same context each time Brian Stewart told a particular story. This language could also be called 'formulaic'. Such set language is characteristic of Gaelic storytelling, and has been discussed in the scholarly literature.[12] However, it has not been defined rigorously (although Bruford's

chapters on the development of words and runs in Gaelic storytelling [1969: 167-209] are very useful), perhaps because the use of set language is so widespread that it would be difficult to define narrowly. James Ross does give a general definition of such language when he refers to '...numerous recurrent expressions...frequently involving rhythm and alliteration' (10). Bruford, too, discusses runs and set phrases, defining runs as '... set passages of florid description which are introduced by story-tellers into any hero-tale where the appropriate action comes in....' and adds that they are '... recited by heart, the same narrator using exactly the same words whenever a situation occurs....' (1969: 36).[13] He also makes the important point that runs themselves are composed of shorter stock phrases which, in his words, 'may be put together to form a run or used separately' (1969: 37). These comments provide a useful starting point for our discussion, for the set language which Brian Stewart used exhibits, to varying degrees, all of these characteristics: sometimes his set phrases exhibit rhythm and alliteration, and sometimes they occur in exactly the same form in the same place in different tellings of the same story. However, in order to fully understand Mr Stewart's set language, we must first try to define it with more precision, after which we may examine the role it played in his storytelling.

Different Types of Set Language

Type 1 Set Language
For the purposes of comparison, I have divided Brian Stewart's set language into three different types. The first – Type 1 Set Language – comprises phrases, epithets, formulae and dialogue which are recognisably drawn from what Bruford refers to as 'the common stock' (1969: 223, n. 21) of storytelling language which seems to have been widespread in Gaelic Scotland and Ireland. This language is often rhythmic and alliterative, is highly fixed, and often sounds archaic. In addition, it is often traceable to manuscript sources. Another notable feature of Type 1 set language is that it may occur in more than one different story (as opposed to more than one recorded version of the *same* story) in similar contexts. Thus such language represents a kind of common stock of storytelling language which could have been drawn upon freely by storytellers as required, and which may have become widespread through just such a practice. Brian Stewart has some Type 1 set language in his storytelling, although most of his fixed language is comprised of the next two types, Type 2 and Type 3.

Type 2 Set Language
The next type of set language which Brian Stewart used is highly similar to Type 1, with the exception that these set phrases and pieces of dialogue occur only in different recorded versions of the *same* story, rather than moving between the stories. In other words, Brian Stewart may have used these rhythmic and alliterative phrases in a highly identical form from one version of a story to another, but this same dialogue or phrasing does not occur in the other stories which he told. While such set language may have originated from a common stock of fixed language which was used freely in the storytelling past, the language appears to have become attached to particular stories in Mr Stewart's repertoire, and thus does not appear to represent a free or arbitrary use of stock elements on his part. Like Type 1, this language often appears to be specialised, and comprises phrases, dialogue or formulae which are sometimes traceable to a specific manuscript tradition. The distinction between Type 1 and Type 2 is a subtle one, but it may provide important information about the ways in which the tradition has evolved.[14]   I also have included in the Type 2 category language

which is not noticeably drawn from traditional idiom, but which nevertheless seems to have become fixed in Brian Stewart's storytelling. Thus there are some phrases which seem quite ordinary, but which repeatedly occurred in Brian Stewart's separate tellings of the same stories in the same form, and which also occurred in versions of these stories recorded from *other* members of the Stewart family, giving weight to the supposition that such language or wording may have become associated with a particular story in the Stewart family tradition.[15]

Much of Brian Stewart's Type 2 set language consists of dialogue, which is not surprising, as fixed dialogue is typical of other Gaelic storytellers as well. Donald Archie MacDonald tells us that the language used for runs and dialogue is that which is most often fixed: *''Se còmhradh an t-àite eile, a bharrachd air na ruitheannan, far am bheil teacs dualach air fàs stèidhichte....'* ['Dialogue is the other area, in addition to the runs, where text tends to become fixed...'] (1989 218, n. 31). Alan Bruford also points to the fixed nature of dialogue, saying, 'The dialogue in standard situations in folk-tales naturally tends to be standardized....' (1969: 195). Brian Stewart's Type 2 set language also included the type of fixed phrases or names which are no longer very meaningful, either to the listener or to the storyteller himself. These meaningless but apparently archaic or corrupt words and phrases are most often associated with one particular story in Brian Stewart's repertoire, as if Mr Stewart had learned them as part of a fixed pattern and retained them as necessary, albeit meaningless, parts of the story.[16]

Type 3 Set Language: 'Similar' Language

The third kind of set language used by Brian Stewart consists of dialogue and other phrasing which does not seem to be identifiably archaic, rhythmic, or otherwise 'special,' but which nevertheless recurs from story to story in a highly similar form. This type of language is not so much 'set' as 'similar,' and its use in Brian Stewart's stories is widespread. Thus the dialogue in almost all of Brian's stories, if not of Type 1 or Type 2, is almost always Type 3. In these cases, the dialogue of the different story versions is not identical, but the degree of similarity is striking, and the overall impression is that the language of the stories is very much 'the same'. Such 'ordinary' but strikingly similar language is not unexpected in Gaelic storytelling: Alan Bruford encountered the same type of language as used by South Uist storytellers. Discussing Angus MacLellan's use of such language (1978: 39), Bruford says that '[t]he language used is in no way remarkable, but the wording ... remains remarkably constant.'

Type 3 language is the most difficult of the three language types to characterise, as it refers to a large proportion of the language which Brian Stewart used. It is generally comprised of ordinary language which nevertheless seems to have assumed some sort of settled shape in Brian's storytelling, and which he deployed in much the same way and with much the same effect each time he told a story. Type 3 set language, like Type 2 set language, occurs in different recorded versions of the same story, rather than occurring across the repertoire in more than one story. Rather than representing standardised storytelling language which Mr Stewart was drawing on at will to construct the story, this type of similar language appears to indicate that Brian had internalised certain patterns of language which he associated with specific stories, and reserved such language for the particular story in question as part of an attempt to be faithful to a remembered original. It is not possible to say whether Brian developed this practice on his own, or whether he learned it from the storytelling of other tradition bearers. (Further study of the limited evidence from other Stewart storytellers might help to shed light on whether this practice may have been common

in the Stewart family). While the use of highly similar language from telling to telling of the same story does not represent memorisation, it seems likely that this process of associating language patterns with a particular story (be they patterns originating with the storyteller or patterns learned from other storytellers) is related to the process of memorisation in some way.

It may be useful to consider the example of another storyteller whose use of language has received some attention from scholars, that of Duncan MacDonald of South Uist (see Draak; MacDonald 1989, 1983; and Bruford 1969, 1978, 1983). By all accounts, Duncan MacDonald was a conservative storyteller who often told stories in a highly similar form from one telling to another, and whose brother Neil also told stories in much the same way. Although Duncan and his brother '... learned some of their father's tales virtually word for word' (Bruford 1978: 34), MacDonald also narrated many other tales in a less fixed form. Bruford describes these latter stories as being comprised of '... narrative wording improvised on a memorised framework, but much of the dialogue learned by heart' (1978: 37). Bruford also hypothesises that Duncan MacDonald

> ...learned the story in the form of tableaux and some set passages of dialogue and description, and gradually came to use a settled form of words from his own mind and the common stock for the rest (1969: 223, n. 21).

This idea that MacDonald 'came to use a settled form of words from his own mind and the common stock' is most interesting, and the same could be said to be generally true of Brian Stewart; for even when Brian did use traditional formulae from 'the common stock', these seem to have been limited to specific story contexts, rather than representing a more spontaneous use of this material as the moment requires. For Brian Stewart, the Type 1 and Type 2 phrases *usually* appear in the same stories in the same places; and the rest of his fixed language – the Type 3 'similar' language – appears to represent a form of ordinary language which has settled into a fairly predictable form and which he associated with specific stories. (Whether this ordinary language originated with Brian Stewart or whether it represents the ordinary language of the stories as used by his grandmother Susie and those from whom she heard the stories is another question which cannot be answered with any certainty. Often the Type 3 language is very 'ordinary', but when the extent of its similarity from one telling to another becomes apparent, it is clear that this language is more stylised or formulaic than would be supposed at first glance.

Runs

Before turning to a more detailed examination of the different types of fixed language, it is worth noting that I have not singled out 'runs' for special mention in my discussion of Brian Stewart's use of language. This is due to the fact that although the use of long runs appears to have been highly characteristic of many Gaelic storytellers, Brian himself used very few long runs, and the vast majority of his set language consists of short stock phrases or dialogue.[17] One possible reason for this is that although Brian, along with others of his generation, was exposed to a fairly active storytelling tradition in his youth, the tradition was in decline throughout his life, and his exposure to it decreased as time passed. A storyteller thus removed from an active storytelling context might lose the ability to use and easily manipulate some of the

longer and more complex set pieces or runs, while keeping the shorter, more memorable phrases in active use. Interestingly, the great nineteenth century story collector John F. Campbell of Islay commented that when a 'narrator has been long absent from his native place, or has ceased to be a regular storyteller' the stories 'are told with less peculiar language,'[18] by which presumably Campbell meant runs and other traditional idiom. Perhaps his comments apply equally well to Brian Stewart. There is also the possibility that Brian simply was not exposed to many long runs in the stories which he heard from his grandmother and uncle. However, as Brian reported that his grandmother Susie's stories usually lasted about an hour, it seems that she must have told the stories in such a way as to make them longer than Brian's versions, which typically lasted no more than twenty-five minutes. Together with the evidence provided in stories from *Ailidh Dall* (Susie's son) which have more long runs than Brian's, it seems reasonable to suppose that she would have used some long runs in her storytelling. Therefore, perhaps the answer to the question of the paucity of long runs in Brian's repertoire is indeed that his lack of exposure to frequent storytelling for most of his life left him with a lesser command of traditional idiom and imagery than would have been ordinary for storytellers of previous generations.[19] Whatever the explanation for the lack of long runs, the result is that this discussion is primarily concerned with the other varieties of fixed language in Brian Stewart's storytelling.

Examples of Set Language

Type 1 Set Language - Examples
Having described the kinds of set language which Brian used, it will be useful to look at some examples of each type. Type 1 set language has been defined as rhythmic or alliterative language comprising phrases, epithets, formulae and dialogue which are recognisably drawn from the common stock of storytelling idiom or which appear to derive from an old motif or manuscript tradition, and which was used by Brian in more than one different story (as opposed to more than one version of the *same* story). A good example of Type 1 language is to be found in the dialogue used when one character puts another character under binding obligations ('*geasan*') in Brian's stories. The following example comes from Brian's 1978 recording of '*Stòiridh Ladhair*,' and occurs at a point in the story when the king has played and lost a game of dice to an unknown woman. For her prize, the woman puts the king under obligation to obtain '*fios feagal an aon sgeul*' ('true knowledge of the one tale').[20] The woman puts the king under '*geasan*' as follows:

> '*Mo chrosan 's mo gheasan,' thuirt i, 'trì buaraichean matha sìdh nach stad oidhch' a's gach taigh dhut gus a'faigh thu dhomh-as fios feagal an aon sgeul.*'[21]

> 'My spells and my crosses,' she said, 'the three fetters of the fairy [women] that you shall not stop a night in [any] house until you obtain for me 'true knowledge of the one tale' (i.e., the object of the quest).'

This is in fact a rather short version of a formula common in Gaelic stories which is used to place characters under obligation, numerous examples of which can be found in collections of Gaelic stories (see e.g. J.G. McKay 1940: 228 and following) and in the archives of the School of Scottish Studies.[22] It is not surprising,

then, that Brian used this formula in more than one story (both in '*Stòiridh Ladhair*' and '*Stòiridh an Eich Dhuibh*'), and if we compare the phrase as it is used above with the phrase as it appears in Brian's 1974 recording of '*Stòiridh an Eich Dhuibh*,' it is clear that the formula as he used it in the two different stories is more or less constant. In '*Stòiridh an Eich Dhuibh*,' the be-spelling phrase is used at a point in the story when a strand of hair falls out of a prince's pocket while he is dancing at a king's ball, and the king puts the prince under obligations to find the woman whose hair it is:

> '*Tha mo chrosan 's mo gheasan,' thuirt e ris, 'trì buaraichean mathra sìdh nach stad oidhch' a's gach taigh dhut, gus a'faigh thus' dhomh-as am boirionnach bha 'caith' an fhalt a bha sin.*'[23]

> 'My spells and my crosses,' he said to him, 'the three fetters of the fairy [women] that you shall not stop a night in [any] house until you obtain for me the woman whose hair that was (i.e., the object of the quest).'

In another recording of '*Stòiridh an Eich Dhuibh*' from 1974, the be-spelling formula is all but identical:

> '*Mo chrosan 's mo gheasan,' thuirt e, 'trì buaraichean mathr' sìdh, nach stad oidhch' a's gach taigh dhut-as gus a'faigh thus' dhomh-as a'boirionnach bha 'caith' an fhalt bha sin.*'[24]

> My spells and my crosses,' he said, 'the three fetters of the fairy [women] that you shall not stop a night in [any] house until you obtain for me the woman whose hair that was (i.e., the object of the quest).'

Another example of an established formulaic phrase is to be found in Brian's tellings of '*Stòiridh Ladhair*'. Here the hero of the story, Ladhar, approaches a giant's castle and shouts out that he has come to obtain '*ceann fear agus filidh*' (literally 'the head of a man and a poet').[25] The giant's men come out of the castle and Ladhar seizes on the one who has the slimmest leg and the largest head, using him as a club with which to knock the brains out of the other men.[26]
In his 1978 version of '*Stòiridh Ladhair*,' Brian's words are as follows:

> ...*'s rug e air a'fear bu chaoil' cas agus bu mhoth' ceann, agus sgleog e 'n t-eanchainn às an fheadhainn eil' leis.*[27]

> ...and he seized on the man with the slimmest leg and the largest head, and he bashed the brains out of the others with him.

 In Brian's 1994 version of the same story the words are almost identical:

> ... *rug e air a'fear bu, bu mhoth' ceann 's bu chaoil' cas, 's sgleoc e an t-eanchainn às an fheadhainn eil'.*

> ...he seized on the man with the, the largest head and the slimmest leg, and he bashed the brains out of the other ones.

Brian also used the same formula in 'Stòiridh Loircein'. In this scenario, the hero approaches a giant's castle and shouts out that he has come to retrieve his father's teeth, which have been stolen by the giant. The giant's men then come out of the castle and Loircean seizes on the man who has the slimmest leg and the largest head as described above. Compare the phrase as recorded in 1974:

> *...rug e air a'fear, 'fear bu mhòth' ceann dhiubh, 's bu chaoile cas. 'S rug e air 'chasan, 's sgleog e 'n t-eanchainn ás an fheadhainn aig an doras.*[28]

> ...he seized on the man, the man with the biggest head of them, and the slimmest leg. And he seized on his legs, and he bashed the brains out of the ones at the door.

Other recognisably formulaic language includes stock descriptions, such as the effort which a hero makes to lift his sword and kill his enemy in a battle. In Brian's 1973 version of 'Stòiridh a'Chòcaire,' when the hero is about to kill a giant and cut off his two heads, the action is described as follows:

> *...thug e an sin <u>an</u> <u>togail</u> <u>mhòr</u>, <u>èibhinn</u>, <u>aighearach</u> dhan a'chlaidheamh aig', 's sgud e an dà cheann dheth.*[29]

> ...then he gave the <u>great</u>, <u>boisterous</u>, <u>joyful</u> <u>heave</u> to his sword, and he cut the two heads off him.

In the May 1978 recording of 'Stòiridh Ladhair,' the same phrase is used when the king kills a giant:

> *... 's, thug e <u>'n</u> <u>togail</u> <u>mhòr</u>, <u>èibhinn</u>, <u>aighearach</u> dhan fhomhair 's chuir e ri talamh e 's, gheàrr e 'n ceann dheth, leis 'chlaidheamh aig'.*[30]

> ... and, he gave the <u>great</u>, <u>boisterous</u>, <u>joyful</u> <u>heave</u> to the giant and he put him to the ground and, he cut the head off him, with his sword.

Brian also used this same phrase in a similar context in his 1974 recording of 'Stòiridh Loircein':

> *...'s, thug e <u>an</u> <u>togail</u> <u>mhòr</u>, <u>èibhinn</u>, <u>aighearach</u> ud dhan fhomhair, 's chuir e air a dhruim e 's, sgud e an ceann deth.*[31]

> ... and, he gave that <u>great</u>, <u>boisterous</u>, <u>joyful</u> <u>heave</u> to the giant, and he put him on his back and, he cut the head off him.

This is a good example of Brian Stewart's use of the same formulaic phrase in three different stories in an identical form each time.[32]

Type 2 Set Language - Examples

We turn now to some examples of Type 2 set language, which has already been defined in detail above. As already noted, Type 2 set language is very similar to Type 1 set language, the main difference being that Type 2 language only appears in versions of the same story, rather than in recordings of different stories. Thus it appears that this set language had become associated in Brian's storytelling with specific story contexts.

To begin with an example of language which is recognisably formulaic and drawn from the common storytelling stock, but which appears in only one of Brian Stewart's stories, let us look at the situation in which two characters play a game of cards or dice, and the loser of the game asks the winner to name his or her prize. Here the stock phrase is '*Tog brìgh do chluich*' – 'name the price of your gaming' (i.e., name your prize). This phrase is characteristic of a common gaming motif which often appears in Gaelic stories,[33] but it only occurs in Brian's recordings of '*Stòiridh Ladhair*'. Another example of a formula which only occurs in one of Brian's stories is the phrasing which he used in the story '*Am Bodach Baigeir*' to describe how the hero of the story chases after a fox. Consider the following examples from all four recordings of the story:

> **Example 1:**
> *'S dar a b'ìosal air-eas b'àird' air a' t-seannach's dar a b'àird' air-eas b'ìosal air an t-seannach, gus do ruig e taighean caol, fad', dubh.*[34]
>
> And when he was lowest the fox was highest and when he was highest the fox was lowest, until he reached a narrow, long, black little house.
>
> **Example 2:**
> *Agus, eh, dar chaidh e as dèidh 'seannach, far a' b'ìosal air-eas b'àird' air a' t-seannach, 's far a' b'àird' air-eas b'ìosal air an t-seannach, gus do ruig e taighean fad', dubh ann a' sin.*[35]
>
> [And, eh, when he went after the fox, where he was lowest the fox was highest, and where he was highest the fox was lowest, until he reached a long, black little house there.
>
> **Example 3:**
> *Far a' b'àird'air-eas b'ìosal air a' t-seannach, 's far a' b'ìosal air-eas b'àird' air a' t-seannach gus do ruig e taighean fad', duaichnidh.*[36]
>
> Where he was highest the fox was lowest, and where he was lowest the fox was highest until he reached a long, gloomy little house.
>
> **Example 4:**
> *Far a' b'ìosal air-eas b'àird' air an t-seannach, ach. Ruig es' taigh fad', caol, dubh ann a' sin 's, ghnog e aig a' doras.*[37]
>
> Where he was lowest the fox was highest, but. He reached a long, narrow, black house there and, he knocked at the door.

Notice that here the formula, which involves rhythm and alliteration, occurs in much the same way in each version, even in the 1993 version (example 4). Notice also that there is a second stock phrase in the excerpt, a description of the house which the hero reaches as being '*caol, fad, dubh*' ('narrow, long, black'), or a slightly varied version thereof.

For two more examples from '*Am Bodach Baigeir*', we turn to the point in the story when the hero (and subsequently the hero's brother) has reached the 'long, narrow, black house' and hears a knock at the door. When he asks who is there, a voice replies in highly stylised speech that it is 'the speckled hen of the one night'. Compare the following excerpts from the various recordings of the story:

Example 1:
'*O chan eil ach cearc bhruc na h-aon oidhch'. Bios i null air beinn, 's bios i nall air beinn, 's bios i oidhch' a' seo.*'[38]

'Oh it's just the speckled hen of the one night. She's hither and thither on the mountain, and she's a night here.'

Example 2:
'*O chan eil,' thuirt is', 'ach cearc bhruc na h-aon oidhch'. Bios i null air oidhch', 's bios i nall air oidhch', 's bios i oidhch' a'seo.*'[39]

'O it's only,' she said, 'the speckled hen of the one night. She's hither and thither at night, and she's a night here.'

Example 3:
'*Ooo,' thuirt i ris, 'cearc bhruc na h-aon oidhch'. Bios i a-null air oidh– beinn, 's bios i a-nall air beinn, 's bios i oidhch' a' seo.*'[40]

'Ooo,' she said to him, 'the speckled hen of the one night. She's hither and thither at night– on the mountain, and she's a night here.'

Example 4:
'*O chan eil ach cearc bhruc na h-aon oidhch'. Bios i null air beinn, 's bios i a-nall air beinn, 's bios i oidhch' a' seo.*'[41]

'O it's only the speckled hen of the one night. She's hither and thither on the mountain, and she's a night here.'

Note that here the speech is just as formalised as the Type 1 speech discussed above, the chief difference being that these phrases only occur in versions of the story '*Am Bodach Baigeir*'. Similarly, when the hag enters the house and begins to get bigger and bigger, the hero comments on this transformation and the dialogue is again formulaic:

Example 1:
'*Dhia, a Chaillich,' thuirt e, 'tha thu 'fàs mòr.'*
'*Och chan eil ach m'iteagan 's m'oiteagan,' thuirt i, 'tha breò ris na h-èibhlean.*'[42]

'God, old woman,' he said, 'you are growing large.'
'Och, it's just my feathers and my down,' she said, 'flaring up by the embers.'[43]

Example 2:
… '*Dhia, a Chaillich, tha thu 'fas mòr.*'
'*Och,*' *thuirt i ris,* '*m'iteagan 's m'oiteagan tha breò ris na h-èibhlean.*'[44]

… 'God, old woman, you are growing large.'
'Och,' she said to him, '[it's] my feathers and my down flaring up by the embers.'

Example 3:
'*Tha thu 'fàs mòr, a Chaillich.*'
Agus, '*Och,*' *thuirt i,* '*chan eil ach m'iteagan is m'oiteagan,*' *thuirt i,* '*tha breò ris na h-èibhlean.*'[45]

'You are growing large, old woman.'
And, 'Och,' she said, 'it's only my feathers and my down,' she said, 'flaring up by the embers.'

Example 4:
'*O mo chreach, a Chailleach!*' *thuirt e,* '*tha thu 'fàs mòr.*'
'*O,*' *thuirt i,* '*m'iteagan is m'oiteagan tha breò ris na h-èibhlean.*'[46]

'Alas, old woman!' he said, 'you are growing large.'
'Oh,' she said, '[it's] my feathers and my down flaring up by the embers.'

Type 2 Set Language – Examples of More 'Ordinary' Formulae
Also included in the Type 2 category is some language which, although still formulaic, is closer to 'ordinary' language (and indeed to Type 3 language, which is discussed below) than the examples at the more formal end of the spectrum. One such example occurs in '*Am Bodach Baigeir,*' this time near the beginning of the story. Here the hero is in bed with his wife, and he hears a sound outside his house. He asks his wife what the noise is and his wife replies that it is a fox that wants chasing. The hero then replies, '*O uill, ma fhuair e 'ruagadh riamh gheobh e 'ruagadh a-nochd*' ('Well, if he ever got chasing, he'll get chasing tonight'). Here the language used does not have as unusual a ring to it as some of the phrases we have already considered, but there is still an element of rhythmic repetition and symmetry to the phrase, and each time Brian Stewart uses it, it occurs in a highly similar form. Compare the following examples of the phrase as it occurs in different recordings of '*Am Bodach Baigeir*':
Example 1:
'*O uill, ma fhuair e 'ruagadh riamh gheobh e 'ruagadh a-nochd.*'
'Oh well, if he ever got chasing, he'll get chasing tonight.'[47]

Example 2:
'*O ma tha e ag iarraidh 'ruagadh riamh, gheobh e 'ruagadh a-nochd.*'[48]
['Oh if he is ever wanting chasing, he'll get chasing tonight.']

Example 3:
'*Uill, ma fhuair e 'ruagadh riamh,*' *thuirt e riutha (sic),* '*gheobh e 'ruagadh nochd.*'[49]
'Well, if he ever got chasing,' he said to them (*sic*), 'he'll get chasing tonight.'
Example 4:
'*Uill, ma fhuair e 'ruagadh riamh gheobh e 'ruagadh a-nochd.*'[50]
'Well, if he ever got chasing he'll get chasing tonight.'

Example 5:
'*Uill, ma fhuair e 'ruagadh riamh,*' *thuirt e,* '*gheobh e 'ruagadh a-nochd.*'[51]
'Well, if he ever got chasing,' he said, 'he'll get chasing tonight.'

Example 6:
'*Uill,*' *thuirt e,* '*ma fhuair e 'ruagadh riamh gheobh e 'ruagadh a-nochd.*'[52]
['Well,' he said, 'if he ever got chasing he'll get chasing tonight.']

Example 7:
'*Och, ma fhuair e 'ruagadh a-riamh, gheobh e 'ruagadh a-nochd.*'[53]
'Och, if he ever got chasing, he'll get chasing tonight.'

Thus while the language may at first glance appear to be 'ordinary,' the repetition of this phrase in every recorded version of the story shows that it functions as stock dialogue which plays a formulaic role, i.e., it expresses the same idea in a given context. The phrase is also somewhat rhythmic and alliterative, which helps to identify it as 'special' language, rather than being 'ordinary' language, and these characteristics almost certainly helped Brian Stewart to retain the phrasing in this settled form.

Formulae Specific to Brian Stewart's Storytelling of to his Immediate Family
When considering the Type 2 set language which is on the more 'ordinary' end of the spectrum, it is striking that while some of these phrases are seemingly commonplace and not particularly memorable, Mr Stewart still managed to remember and use them in the same way over a span of decades. Moreover, some of these seemingly mundane phrases were also used by other members of Brian's family when they told stories, providing further evidence that the phrases were indeed fixed and functioned as formulae. For instance, in Brian Stewart's 1974 version of '*Stòiridh Ladhair*', the king loses a game of dice to an otherworldly woman, and is set under obligations by her to obtain '*fios feagal an aon sgeu*l' ('true knowledge of the one tale'). The king then asks the woman if anyone has ever succeeded in such a quest, to which she replies that some have succeeded and some have not:

Agus, thuirt i, thuirt e rith' rithist, 'An d'fhuair gin riamh e?'
'Cuid a fhuair, 's cuid nach d'fhuair.'[54]

And, she said, he said to her again, 'Has anyone ever obtained it?'
'Some have, and some have not.'

This phrasing is seemingly mundane, but in the April 1995 recording of this story, Brian used the same exact dialogue, this time when the woman sends the king on a quest for '*ceann fear agus filidh*' (literally 'the head of a man and a poet' – see note 25). The dialogue is as follows:

'An d'fhuair gin riamh e?'
'Cuid a fhuair, cuid nach d'fhuair.'

'Has anyone ever obtained it?'
'Some have, some have not.'

Interestingly, this is the first time in 21 years that Brian had used this dialogue in a recorded version of the story. What is more remarkable still is that his cousin, Mary Stewart (the daughter of *Ailidh Dall*, Brian's uncle), used the same dialogue in her 1957 recording of the story '*Gille nan Cochulla Craicinn*'. Here Fionn asks *Gille nan Cochulla Craicinn* ('the lad of the skin coverings') to go to '*Eilean nam Fear Mòr*' ('the Isle of the Big Men') to obtain '*Còrn an Leathraich*' (a magic drinking horn) for him. *Gille nan Cochulla Craicinn* asks whether anyone has ever succeeded in this quest, and as in Brian's stories, Fionn replies that some have succeeded and some have not:

'D'fhuair gin a-riamh e?' thuirt Gille nan Cochulla Craicinn.
'Uill,' thuirt es', 'cuid a fhuair, cuid nach d'fhuair.'[55]

'Has anyone ever obtained it?' said the lad of the skin coverings.
'Well,' he said, 'some have, and some have not.'

Thus while this language is at first glance ordinary, it has taken on a formulaic function not only in Brian Stewart's storytelling, but in his cousin's storytelling as well. While Alan Bruford states that only language which is 'interesting enough to be worth remembering' (1969: 167) as well as easy to remember will be passed on in the oral tradition, here we have an example of a very ordinary piece of dialogue being faithfully retained. (Admittedly, the phrase *is* easy to remember, but it is certainly not striking). The fact that both Brian and Mary Stewart used this piece of set dialogue suggests that they heard it from the same source. Mary cited her grandmother Susie as the source for her version of '*Gille nan Cochulla Craicinn*', so it is fair to guess that both Brian and Mary heard this phrase from her. In addition to suggesting a common source, the use of the phrase by both cousins also indicates a high degree of fidelity to the original source of the story, even when the phrasing in question is not especially marked by alliteration or other similar memorable qualities. Here then we have an indication that the ethos of Brian Stewart's immediate storytelling context may have been a conservative one, which valued the faithful retention and telling of the stories in a given way, as they were originally heard. That said, the fact that this dialogue occurs in both Brian's version of '*Stòiridh Ladhair*' and Mary's version of '*Gille nan*

Cochulla Craicinn' may indicate that traditional idiom moved more freely between different stories in the Stewart family tradition than Brian's storytelling might suggest.

One other similar example is also of interest, both for the light it sheds on Brian Stewart's storytelling dynamic, as well as the insight it provides into the way in which he may have remembered details. In Brian's version of '*Stòiridh Ladhair*', the king is sent on a quest for '*ceann fear agus filidh*', which in the context of the story refers to a certain giant's head. The king is told that no one may accompany him on this quest, not even his faithful companion Ladhar, a detail which remained in Brian's memory and in his tellings of the story. In the 1974 recording of the story, Brian could not remember the content of this episode, but he remembered the fact that the king has to go on a quest for something and that Ladhar cannot accompany him on his quest. In the following transcription, we can witness Brian rehearsing the story in an effort to remember what happens, saying:

> *Ceann fear agus filidh. 'S chan fhaodadh gin bhith cuide ris ach, eh, e fhèin. Chan fhaodadh e Ladhar thoir' leis. Chan fhaodadh e creutair thoir leis ach e fhèin. Ach seall, cha, chan eil cuimhn', cuimhn' agam, ged a bheireadh si' an ceann dith, ciamar a bha ceann fear agus filidh.*[56]

> The head of '*fear agus filidh*'. And no one could be with him but, eh, himself. He couldn't take Ladhar with him. He couldn't take a single creature with him but himself. But see, I can't, I can't remember, even if you gave me the end of it, how it was with 'the head of a man and a poet'.

In Brian's other versions of the story, he used the same wording to refer to the fact that Ladhair could not accompany the king on his quest. In the May 1978 version, the king is told by the otherworldly woman that no one may accompany him on his quest. She says, '*Chan fhaod gin a dhol ann ach thu fhèin*' ('No one may go but yourself') and the king then relays this news to Ladhar:

> '*Chan fhaod thu bhith ann,*' *thuirt e,* '*Ladhar Laochain,*' *thuirt e,* '*chan fhaod thus' bhith ann.*'
> 'You may not be there,' he said, 'Ladhar, little hero,' he said, 'you may not be there.'[57]

Brian again used highly similar language in his 1994 and 1995 versions of the story. Compare the following excerpts:

Example 1:
Agus thuirt e ri Ladhar, 'Chan fhaod thus' bhith cuide rium an dràsdaich. Feumaidh mi fholbh leum fhèin.[58]
And he said to Ladhar, 'You may not be with me now. I must go by myself.'

Example 2:

> '*O, ma tha, Ladhair,' thuirt e, 'chan fhaod thus' a bhith ann. Chan*
> *fhaod thu, chan fhaod thu, thuirt i rium nach fhaodadh gin dhol, ach*
> *mi-fhèin.*'[59]
> 'Oh, well, Ladhar,' he said, 'you may not be there. You may not, you
> may not, she said to me that no one could go, except myself.'

Clearly Brian associated this phrasing with the story – even, as is evidenced in the
1974 recording, when he could not remember the actual content of this episode.

Brian's uncle *Ailidh Dall* also used the same wording in his own recording of
the story. Here the king is told by the otherworldly woman that he must go alone on a
quest to '*Eilean nam Fear Mòr*' ('the Isle of the Big Men'). The king's response, in
the form of his lament to Ladhar, is highly similar to the wording heard in Brian's
tellings: '*O Ladhar Laochain,' thuirt e ri Ladhar, 'chan fhaod thu bhith ann*' ('Oh
Ladhar, little hero,' he said to Ladhar, 'you may not be present').[60]

The fact that this same rather ordinary phrasing was used by both Brian and
his uncle, together with the above examples of Brian's highly similar language used in
his different recordings of this story, would be enough to provide a striking example
of seemingly mundane language taking on importance for our storyteller and being
retained by him in a fixed form. In addition, there is also evidence to suggest that this
detail of the king's having to complete his quest alone was an important trigger to
Brian's memory of the story. In a joint interview recorded with Brian Stewart and his
cousin Mary Stewart in November 1973[61] during which the two cousins discussed
'*Stòiridh Ladhair*,' both Brian and Mary clearly stated that Ladhar could not
accompany the king on his second quest, a fact which seemed to have stuck in both
their memories and which seemed to play an important role in the way in which they
remembered the structure of the story.[62]

There is some additional evidence which makes this case still more interesting.
In July 1995, I conducted an interview with Mr Alec John Williamson of Edderton, a
Gaelic-speaking traveller who is a cousin of Brian Stewart's, related to Brian through
his grandmother Susie. Susie's sister Cleimidh was Mr Williamson's great-
grandmother, and thus Mr Williamson is linked to Brian through the source of Brian's
stories. It was evident from my discussion with Mr Williamson that he had been
exposed to the same family storytelling context as Brian Stewart, and had heard many
of the same stories that Brian had heard. While asking Mr Williamson whether he
knew various stories, I mentioned '*Stòiridh Ladhair*,' whereupon Mr Williamson said
that he had heard the story, but could not tell it. He then immediately uttered the
phrase, '*Ladhair Laochain, chan fhaodhadh e a bhith ann*' ('Ladhar [the] little hero,
he could not be there'). Thus this same phrasing had stayed in Mr Williamson's
memory over the decades, and is all the more striking for the way in which Mr
Williamson spontaneously uttered it. Again, then, we see that a seemingly
unmemorable and 'ordinary' phrase can be remembered over time, and that somehow
the storyteller associates such language with a particular story – perhaps, in fact,
remembers the story *because* he or she has remembered the phrase. This evidence
contributes to an impression that the storytelling in Brian Stewart's immediate family
context was conservative in nature and that there was a common storytelling idiom
used by Brian and the storytellers in his family.

Type 3 Set Language - Examples
Type 3 set language has been described as language which, although not alliterative,
rhythmic, or otherwise 'special,' still occured again and again in Brian Stewart's

stories in a highly similar form each time it was used. Type 3 language does not refer to isolated sentences or pieces of dialogue, but to entire sections of stories which are highly similar from one telling to another. Indeed, such 'similar' language is the type of language which occured most frequently in Brian's storytelling, and it would be impossible to cite every example of it as some of these examples would comprise large chunks of entire stories. Thus while '*Stòiridh an Eich Dhuibh*', for example, has very little Type 1 or Type 2 set language, it is still the case that a very high proportion of the dialogue in the recordings of this story is highly similar from telling to telling. We can speculate that in the absence of traditional fomulae, perhaps the language which our storyteller used nevertheless tended to become fixed in set shapes or patterns. Let us consider a few examples.

In '*Stòiridh an Eich Dhuibh*,' a king's son is told by his stepmother that she would like to give him a present. The boy protests that he has never given his stepmother a present, but she tells him that this does not matter, and proceeds to offer him his choice of horse from her stables. Compare the similar language used in each of the recorded versions:

Example 1:
'*...Agus, tha mi ag iarraidh prèusant thoir' dhut.*'
'*Och,*' *thuirt 'balach rith'*, '*cha tug mis' riamh prèusant dhuibh fhèin.*'[63]

'...And, I want to give you a present.'
'Och,' said the boy to her, 'I've never given a present to yourself.'

Example 2:
'*O uill,*' *thuirt i,* '*cha tug mi prèusant riamh dhut.*'
'*Och,*' *thuirt a leas-mhac rith'*, '*cha tug mis' riamh prèusant riamh dhuibh fhèin.*'[64]

'Oh well,' she said, 'I've never given you a present.'
'Och,' said her stepson to her, 'I've never given a present to yourself.'

Example 3:
'*...Nis,*' *thuirt i ris,* '*seo,*' *thuirt i,* '*prèusant bhuam-as, aon 'sam bith dhe na h-eich tha sin. Aon 'sam bith a thogras thu, thoir leis 'sann leat-as a tha e.*'
'*Och uill,*' *thuirt e, am balach ris a' bhàn-righ,* '*cha tug mis' dad a-riamh, cha tug mis' prèusant dhui'-fhèin.*'[65]

'...Now,' she said to him, 'here is,' she said, 'a present from me, any one of the horses there. Whichever one you want, take it it's yours.'
'Och well,' he said, the boy to the queen, 'I've never given a thing, I've never given a present to yourself.'

Example 4:
Agus thuirt a' bhàn-righ ris' ma– a' ghille, '*Tha mi 'dol a thoir' dhut prèusant 'n diugh,*' *thuirt i.*
'*O,*' *thuirt a' gill' rith'*, '*cha tug mis' riamh prèusant dhuibh fhèin.*'[66]

> And the queen said to – the boy, 'I'm going to give you a present today,' she said.
> 'Oh,' said the boy to her, 'I've never given a present to yourself.'

As can be seen, all four versions above use highly similar language to express similar ideas. While the language is not absolutely identical in each excerpt, the degree of similarity is very high indeed, and this was very typical of Brian Stewart's storytelling across his repertoire.

Later in this story the hero finds a strand of hair on the road, and when he picks it up his horse advises him that he should not take the hair with him. The boy expresses surprise that the horse can speak, to which the horse replies that he 'has a certain amount of speech'. As above, this incident is expressed in highly similar language in each telling. Compare the four versions:

Example 1:
Thuirt an t-each ris, 'Cuir– fàg sin,' thuirt e, 'fàg a' falt sin no gheobh e ann an trioblaid thu.'
Thu' e sin sùil air an each 's thuirt e, 'Bheil bruidhinn agad-as?'
'O,' thuirt e, 'tha an uibhir sin de bhruidhinn agam. 'S tha mis' ag inns' dhut,' thuirt e, 'mur cuir thus' air folbh a' falt tha sin, gheobh thus' ann an trioblaid leis.'[67]

The horse said to him, 'Put– leave that,' he said, 'leave that hair or it will get you into trouble.'
He looked at the horse and he said, 'Can you speak?'
'Oh,' he said, 'I have a certain amount of speech. And I'm telling you,' he said, 'if you don't throw away that hair, you'll get into trouble with it.'

Example 2:
Thug an t-each dubh sùil air 's, thuirt e ris, 'Fàg a' falt sin,' thuirt e. Thug a' gil– am balach sùil air an each, thuirt e, 'Beil bruidhinn agad-as?' thuirt e.
'Uill,' thuirt e, 'tha an uibhir sin dhe bhruidhinn agam.' Thuirt e, 'Tha mis' 'g inns' dhut-as a' falt sin fhàgail, na gheobh e ann an trioblaid thu.'[68]

The horse looked at him and, he said to him, 'Leave that hair,' he said.
The lad– the boy looked at the horse, he said, 'Can you speak?' he said.
'Well,' he said, 'I have a certain amount of speech.' He said, 'I'm telling you to leave that hair, or it will get you into trouble.'

Example 3:
Thuirt an t-each ris, 'Nis,' thuirt es', 'cuimhnich, cuireas thu 'falt sin air folbh, cui– na tog, na cum sin. Tilg air folbh e.... Uill, uill, [mur thil'], tha mis' ag inns' dhut, gheobh sin ann an dragh thu.'
'Bheil thus' ag ràdh sin? Bheil thus' 'bruidhinn?' thuirt e.
'Uill tha an uibhir sin de bhruidhinn agam,' thuirt an t-each ris. 'Tha fhios agam,' thuirt e, 'gu' faigh e thus' ann an dragh.'[69]

The horse said to him, 'Now,' he said, 'remember, put that hair away, put– don't lift, don't keep that. Throw it away....Well, well, [if you don't], I'm telling you, that will get you into difficulty.'
'Are you saying that? Are you speaking?' he said.
'Well I have a certain amount of speech,' said the horse to him. 'I know,' he said, 'that it will get you into difficulty.'

Example 4:
Thionndaidh an t-each sin, 'Uill,' thuirt an t-each ris, 'n t-each dubh ris, 'Tilg sin air folbh,' thuirt e, 'na gheobh e ann a' mòran dragh thu. A' falt sin.'
'Och,' thuirt es', chuir e ['na] phòcaid e. 'Bheil bruidhinn agad-s'?'
'Tha an uibhir sin de bhruidhinn agam,' thuirt an t-each ris. 'Cuir thus' a' falt sin air folbh bhuat.'[70]

The horse turned then, 'Well,' said the horse to him, the black horse to him, 'Throw that away,' he said, 'or it will get you into a lot of difficulty, that hair.'
'Och,' he said, he put it [in his] pocket. 'Can you speak?'
'I have a certain amount of speech,' said the horse to him. 'Put that hair away from you.'

Here again the high degree of similarity between the language of these passages is evident. Note that some of the phrases appear to have become fixed. For example, when the horse admits that he has a certain degree of speech, the storyteller puts the same phrase into the horse's mouth each time: '*Tha an uibhir sin de bhruidhinn agam*' ('I have a certain amount of speech'). Perhaps this reflects a more general process whereby ordinary dialogue may become fixed and may even spread to other storytelling contexts.

Another example of 'similar' language is to be found in Brian Stewart's tellings of '*Stòiridh a' Chòcaire*'. In this story, the hero has attended a ball arranged by a princess. He has in fact rescued the princess from some giants, but the princess's father and the rest of the kingdom mistakenly believe that the princess has been rescued by the king's cook. To prove that the cook did not really rescue her, the princess sets up a test of strength whereby all the men at the ball must attempt to break an ox's shank bone with their bare hands. When the cook makes his attempt to break the bone, he hurts his hand and cries out in pain. However, when the true hero attempts the feat, he breaks the shank bone and his blow is so mighty that the four legs of the table crumble beneath it. The princess then asks her father which man he thinks saved her from the giants – the man who was able to break the ox's shank bone, or the man who was unable to do so. The king replies that he thinks that the man who could break the shank bone is the man who saved her, whereupon proof of this fact is offered and the story continues. Compare the following excerpts from the different versions to see how similar the language is from telling to telling:

Example 1:
Ach thàinig a' sin 'm balach bha seo air adhairt 's, thog e 'dhòrn 's bhuail e an cnàimh. 'S dar a bhuail e an cnàimh, dh'fholbh an cnàimh 'na smàl. Chuir e 'na smàl air a' bhòrd e, 's bhrist e 'bòrd cuide ris.

Agus chaidh sin 'chail' gus a' bhalach 's thuirt i ris a' rìgh, a h-athair, 'Cò,' thuirt i ris, 'shaoileadh sibh-s' a shàbhail mis' bho na fomhairean: am fear a bhrist an cnàimh na am fear nach do bhrist an cnàimh?' [71]

But then this boy came forward and, he raised his fist and he struck the bone. And when he struck the bone, the bone was crushed. He crushed it on the table, and he broke the table along with it. And then the girl went to the boy and she said to the king, her father, 'Who,' she said to him, 'would you think it was that saved me from the giants: the man who broke the bone, or the man who didn't break the bone?'

Example 2:
'S thog e 'dhòrn 's thug e daolong [72] *air a' chnàimh 's, chuir e an cnàimh 'na sgonn air a' bhòrd, 's dh'fhòlbh na ceithir casan bhon a' bhòrd. Bhrist e na ceithir casan. Agus thug a' sin nighean 'rìgh sùil air a h-àthair.*
'Nis,' thuirt i ri h-àthair, 'cò chreideadh sibh-s' an duin' a shàbhail mis' bho na fomhairean? An duin' a bhrist an cnàimh, no am fear nach do bhrist an cnàimh?' [73]

And he raised his fist and he gave a blow to the bone, and he crushed the bone on the table, and the four legs of the table collapsed. He broke the four legs.
And then the king's daughter looked at her father.
'Now,' she said to her father, 'who would you believe was the man who saved me from the giants? The man who broke the bone, or the man who didn't break the bone?]

Example 3:
Thog es' a dhòrn 's chuir e an cnàimh 'na sgonn air a' bhòrd.
Thuirt i sin ri a h-athair, 'Cò chreideadh si',' thuirt i, 'am fear a mharbh – a shàbhail mis' bho na fomhairean, 'm fear a bhrist an cnàimh, no am fear nach do bhrist e?' [74]

He raised his fist and he crushed the bone on the table.
Then she said to her father, 'Who would you believe,' she said, 'was the man who killed – who saved me from the giants, the man who broke the bone, or the man who didn't break it?'

Example 4:
Ach thog am balach aon dhorn, 's thug e aon bhuill' às, chuir e an cnàimh 'na smùid air a', air a' bhòrd.
'S char i nis gu h-athair, a' chail', 's thuirt i ris, 'Cò shaoileadh si',' thuirt i, 'am fear a shàbhail mis' bho na fomhairean? Am fear a bhrist an cnàimh, no am fear a chiùrr a làimh?' [75]

But the boy raised one fist, and he gave it one blow, he pulverised the bone on the, on the table.

And now she went to her father, the girl, and she said to him, 'Who would you think,' she said, 'was the man who saved me from the giants? The man who broke the bone, or the man who hurt his hand?'

This example of similar language occurring from version to version of the same story is highly representative of Brian Stewart's storytelling.[76] What is interesting is that although this language is clearly different from the examples of Type 1 and Type 2 set language examined above, there is nevertheless a similar dynamic behind all of these types of language, that keeps the overall pattern and shape of Brian Stewart's storytelling essentially the same. Of course there are instances in which Brian Stewart's language is more innovative, but in the vast majority of his storytelling, the dialogue and other wording exhibits sameness, not innovation. Moreover, because the language which Mr Stewart used throughout hisstories is a combination of this Type 3 'similar language' and the even more fixed Type 1 and Type 2 set language, the overall effect is an overwhelming impression that the story versions are highly similar to one another. Interestingly, this can give the overall impression that Brian Stewart's stories are always 'the same', even when the language used in different tellings is not identical.[77]

Frequency of Type 1 and Type 2 Set Language

While the Type 3 'similar language' was the norm for much of Brian Stewart's storytelling and was used widely in all of his stories, it is useful to ask whether the distribution of Type 1 and Type 2 set language reveals any patterns across the stories, and whether certain stories exhibit more or less Type 1 and Type 2 set language than others. The answer is that there is a marked difference between the nine different stories considered here in terms of how much of these types of set language occurs in them. The three stories which have the most Type 1 and Type 2 language are '*Am Bodach Baigeir*,' '*Gille nan Cochulla Craicinn*,' and '*Stòiridh Ladhair*'. Next come three stories with a lesser degree of Type 1 and Type 2 fixed language, '*Oisean as dèidh na Fèinn*'', '*Stòiridh a' Chòcaire*', and '*Stòiridh Loircein*'. Finally, '*Am Maraiche Màirneal*', '*Stòiridh an Eich Dhuibh*', and '*Stòiridh a' Chaimbeulaich*' exhibit almost no Type 1 or Type 2 set language. The distribution of Types 1 and 2 set language is illustrated in the following table:

TYPE 1 AND TYPE 2 LANGUAGE – HIGHEST AMOUNT	TYPE 1 AND TYPE 2 LANGUAGE – LESSER AMOUNT	TYPE 1 AND TYPE 2 LANGUAGE – LITTLE OR NONE
Am Bodach Baigeir *Gille nan Cochulla Craicinn* *Stòiridh Ladhair*	*Oisean as dèidh na Fèinn*' *Stòiridh a' Chòcaire* *Stòiridh Loircein*	*Am Maraiche Màirneal* *Stòiridh an Eich Dhuibh* *Stòiridh a' Chaimbeulaich*

This difference of language use in the various stories is significant, for it again points to a fixed storytelling dynamic on Brian Stewart's part. Not only is the fixed language highly stable from one telling of a story to another, but our storyteller also was consistent in his use of different types of fixed language within the different stories.

In considering the distribution of the Type 1 and Type 2 fixed language, perhaps it is not surprising that one of the stories which uses the most such language is '*Gille nan Cochulla Craicinn*,' which derives from the native tradition and may have found its way into the oral tradition from manuscripts.[78] Thus certain phrases and dialogue may have been associated with the story from an early time. Similarly, '*Stòiridh Loircein*' is related to '*Eachtra Iollainn Airmdheirg*', a popular native romance, as well as to the international tale type AT 301 which was very popular in Gaelic storytelling; and '*Stòiridh a' Chòcaire*' (AT 300) and '*Am Bodach Baigeir*' (AT 303) also belong to the international tale types which Delargy assures us comprise '... the oldest stratum of our existing body of [Gaelic] folk-tales....' (211). Along with '*Oisean as dèidh na Fèinn*'', these stories represent some of the most popular and widespread stories in the Gaelic tradition, and for this reason it is not surprising that these stories contain a higher proportion of stylised language representative of the common stock of storytelling idiom than do the other stories. '*Stòiridh Ladhair*' also contains a higher degree of Types 1 and 2 set language, but the history of the tale is unclear, making it harder to speculate on the reasons for this.

'*Stòiridh an Eich Dhuibh*', '*Stòiridh a' Chaimbeulaich*' and '*Am Maraiche Màirneal*' correspond to international tale types which do not seem to have been as popular in Scotland as the other six stories, and perhaps this accounts for the very small amount of Type 1 and Type 2 set language to be found in them; for if they were never widespread or popular, there may not have been a chance for certain stock language or phrases to become associated with them as integral parts of the story. Interestingly, very few versions of these stories have been collected in Scotland apart from those recorded from Brian Stewart and his family. For instance, in the case of '*Stòiridh a' Chaimbeulaich*', a story somewhat related to tale type AT 880 and 884A, the only two recorded Scottish versions of this tale come from Brian and from *Ailidh Dall*.[79] Similarly, only six versions of '*Am Maraiche Màirneal*' have been recorded in Scotland, three from Brian and his immediate family, and three more from other Gaelic-speaking travellers. As for '*Stòiridh an Eich Dhuibh*', two out of five Scottish versions come from Brian and *Ailidh Dall*. By contrast, for five out of six of the stories which contain a higher proportion of Types 1 and 2 set language, there have been at least ten versions of each story collected in Scotland in addition to the versions collected from the Stewart family.[80] Therefore, if '*Stòiridh an Eich Dhuibh*', '*Stòiridh a' Chaimbeulaich*' and '*Am Maraiche Màirneal*' were never as popular or widespread in Scotland as the other six stories, it is possible to speculate that the language associated with their telling may have been less influenced by the common stock of storytelling idiom, and may have developed with less exposure to such specialised language. This in turn would mean that these particular stories would have been less likely to develop a permanent association with Type 1 or Type 2 set language. Whatever the true reason for the distribution of such language, it is significant that the type of language used appears to depend on the particular story being told, for this indicates that Brian Stewart's use of language was, at least in part, dictated by the story itself rather than being a matter of personal choice.

Conclusions

Having used multiple recordings of the same stories from the same storyteller, it has been possible to compare Brian Stewart's stories to one another in order to discover patterns of language use in his storytelling. Brian Stewart's language has been divided into three different types of 'set' or 'similar' language. Type 1 set language has been described as having characteristics such as rhythm, alliteration and fixity, and as being

typical of traditional idiom or formulae from the common stock of Gaelic storytelling language. Type 2 set language is much the same, the main difference being that Type 1 set language appears in more than one of Brian Stewart's stories, while Type 2 set language appears only in different versions of the *same* story. Also included in the Type 2 category is language which is not noticeably archaic or traditional, but which nevertheless seems to have taken on a formulaic role for the storyteller. Type 3 language, by contrast, has been described as language which is not immediately identifiable as being formulaic, rhythmic, alliterative or otherwise 'special,' but which occurs in a highly similar form from one telling of a story to another.

While Brian Stewart did not tell his stories using the same exact words each time, and while he did not seem formally to have 'memorised' the language used in his stories in the general sense of that word, much of his language (Types 1 and 2) is the same from telling to telling. Furthermore, a good deal of the Type 3 language is highly similar from telling to telling, and so appears to have been nearly as fixed in our storyteller's mind as the Type 1 and Type 2 set language. The fact that certain phrases and formulae were used by our storyteller only in certain stories adds to the impression of fixity, while the fact that different stories consistently make use of different types of set language strongly indicates that Brian Stewart's use of language was highly dependent on the story he was telling. Thus while the examples of Type 1 and Type 2 set language make it clear that Brian Stewart had a command of a large amount of traditional storytelling idiom, his consistent use of this material in the same story contexts suggests that rather than representing a stock of language from which Brian Stewart may have selected at will, this language was actually an echo of the language of the stories as Mr Stewart first heard them and represented his attempt to tell the stories in the same way each time. The evidence of language use by members of Brian Stewart's immediate family lends further weight to this supposition. Thus while formulaic dialogue and other traditional devices may have been used by other storytellers for more spontaneous or flexible storytelling, Brian Stewart's use of these devices in consistently fixed contexts points not to a creative dynamic, but to a re-productive one.

While the comparison of the multiple recordings of Brian Stewart's stories has made certain patterns of language use visible, there is no doubt that more detailed comparisons of the recordings would repay further study. Similar scrutiny of the multiple recordings from members of Brian Stewart's immediate family, especially from his uncle *Ailidh Dall*, would also yield valuable results, as would the study of multiple story recordings from other Gaelic storytellers.

NOTES

[1] Many other writers have touched on the ethos of earlier storytellers and bards in more general discussions concerning the history of Gaelic narrative and the Gaelic literary tradition, including Flower; Murphy 1940, 1953, 1955a-b, 1961; Dillon; Carney; Knott; Binchy; Greene; Bergin; Mac Cana 1974, 1977, 1980, 1987 and Neat and MacInnes: 321-352. See also Almqvist, Ó Catháin and Ó Healaí (eds.) for many relevant articles, and C.I. Maclean 1952, 1954 for details of individual storytelling styles.

[2] Throughout this article I use the term 'multiple recordings' or 'multiply recorded' to refer to separate recordings made of the *same* story from the same storyteller on different occasions. Thus a 'multiply recorded story' refers to a story which has been recorded more than once from the same person, the resultant separate recordings being the 'multiple recordings'.

[3] Cf. Parry.

[4] Cf. Foley 1988, 1990.

[5] Cf. Zall 1998.

[6] In addition to the nine stories considered in my analysis, Mr Stewart also recorded songs, poetry, and additional stories or story fragments. However, for my analysis I have chosen the nine stories which Mr Stewart clearly knew well, and which he could tell to the best of his ability. These nine stories are also the ones for which there is a significant body of multiple recordings. Note that of the nine stories analysed, one of them (the 1994 recording of *Stòiridh Loircein*) is a conversation *about* the story during which Mr Stewart narrated various sections of the story. All other story versions analysed are complete tellings of the stories.

[7] *Ach a' Bhràigh* is located near Altandhu on the road past Achiltibuie on the Coigeach headland in Sutherland, at latitude 58 degrees north and longitude 5 degrees 25' west.

[8] Quoted by Hamish Henderson in Neat : 71.

[9] For fuller biographical information about Brian Stewart, see Zall 1998.

[10] For assertions that such tales have been highly esteemed in Gaelic tradition, see Bruford, 1987; Delargy: 192, 211; and MacDonald 1989: 187.

[11] 'AT' numbers refer to the Aarne-Thompson system of tale classification; see Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson 1961.

[12] See e.g. Bruford 1969 and 1983; Delargy; O' Nolan 1975, 1987; MacDonald 1989; and Ross. Donald MacAulay's 1982 article on 'Register Range and Choice in Scottish Gaelic' is also of interest.

[13] In the course of research presentations, it has been pointed out that linguistic formulae can also   incorporate variants. I am grateful to Dr John Shaw for bringing this to my attention.

[14] Dr John Shaw has made the elegant suggestion that the difference between the Type 1 and Type 2 set language in Brian Stewart's storytelling 'could still be important as a reflection of a larger process where a larger pool of floating formulae in an earlier, more extensive tradition turns into isolated, small pools 'as the tide recedes'.'

[15] While an exhaustive study of the evidence provided by other recordings from members of the Stewart family has not been carried out, it is hoped that the occasional reference to the evidence provided by these recordings will be a useful addition to this analysis. Also see Zall 2006   for some discussion of types of language in stories collected from some related Stewart tradition bearers.

[16] A practice which was apparently common amongst storytellers. See Delargy's discussion of the 'crua-Ghaoluinn' ('hard Irish') which was not intelligible to listeners (207).

[17] Examples of long runs can be found in Campbell. Similarly, see O' Nolan for many examples.

[18] Quoted by the Rev. Dr. George Henderson: 186-187.

[19] In addition to the question of runs, the lack of exposure to active storytelling during most of his life will also have had an influence on the other aspects of Brian Stewart's use of language.

[20] '*Fios feagal an aon sgeul*': the phrase is usually associated with spells of obligation which require a character to obtain knowledge of the fate of a certain king. Brian's term '*fios feagal an aon sgeul*' is related to similar terms found in versions of '*An Tuairsgeul Mòr*' and the Irish story '*Fios Fátha an aon scéil*,' also sometimes known as '*Fios Fátha an doimhin-scéil*.' See *Béaloideas* I, pg. 105, where '*fios fátha an doimhin-scéil*' is glossed as 'the significance of the profound tale' and there is more discussion of these terms. Cf. also Gillies 1981: 54 for discussion of Gaelic tales which deal with quests for '*fios fátha an aoinsgéil ar na mnáibh*' or similar. For a discussion of 'be-spelling incantations', see J.G. McKay 1940: 504.

[21] Linguistic Survey of Scotland tape T1006.

[22] Also see Bruford 1969: 196, where he cites the following formula as being 'normal in Scotland': '*Tha mi gad chur fo gheasaibh 's fo chrosaibh 's fo naoi buaraichean mnatha sìthle siubhla seachrain an laochan beag geàrr donn as miot' agus as mì-threòiriche na thu fhèin a thoirt do chìnn 's do chluais 's do chaitheamh beatha dhìot, ma nì thu stad choiseadh no chìnn gos am faigh thu mach....*' Brian's phrase '*matha*

sìdh' probably evolved from an earlier phrase such as the '*mnatha sìdh*' ('fairy women') which Bruford cites, or '*màthraichean sìdh*' ('fairy mothers'), an example of which can be found in MacNeil 1987: 52. In his discussion of be-spelling formulae, J.G. McKay (1940: 505) explains the reference to the fairy women's cow fetters as follows: 'The dreaded fairy-woman is also invoked against him. If he failed [to obtain the object demanded], she was to meet him, and strike him with the nine cow-fetters which she carried. It must be explained here that even the ordinary cow-fetter or cow-spancel of ordinary mortals was a most ominous instrument.... If struck by them a hero was supposed to be rendered so awkward and silly, so fey and unlucky, that the veriest scum of the populace would be able to overcome him in battle, and take his ear, and his head, and his means of life from him.'

[23] School of Scottish Studies Recording SA 1974/26/A1.

[24] Linguistic Survey of Scotland tape 954.

[25] '*Fear agus filidh*': a somewhat enigmatic term which Brian Stewart used. Literally it means 'a man and a poet'. It was suggested to me by the late Donald Archie MacDonald that the term may have evolved from the proper name '*Fearghus Filidh*' ('Fergus the Poet'), which could easily have evolved into '*fear agus filidh*' over the course of time.

[26] Bruford states that this is part of the '*teach na n-amhus*' motif, which he says may date to the sixteenth century or earlier (1969: 15).

[27] Linguistic Survey of Scotland tape 1006.

[28] School of Scottish Studies recording SA 1974/27/A-B1.

[29] Linguistic Survey of Scotland tape 965 (November 1973).

[30] Linguistic Survey of Scotland tape 1006.

[31] School of Scottish Studies recording SA 1974/27/A-B1.

[32] It should also be noted that Brian Stewart also used this same phrase in his 1974 version of '*Stòiridh a' Chòcaire*'.

[33] Alan Bruford identifies the motif as an old one (1969: 80).

[34] School of Scottish Studies recording SA 1974/32/B1.

[35] Linguistic Survey tape 954 (May 1974).

[36] Linguistic Survey tape 956 (1977).

[37] 24 September 1993. N.B. All recordings from 1993 or later were made by Carol Zall unless otherwise noted. Copies of all recordings discussed in this article have

been deposited into the archives of the School of Scottish Studies of the University of Edinburgh.

[38] School of Scottish Studies recording SA 1974/32/B1.

[39] Linguistic Survey tape 954 (May 1974).

[40] Linguistic Survey tape 956 (1977).

[41] 24 September 1993, Tape 1 of 1.

[42] School of Scottish Studies recording SA 1974/32/B1.

[43] The word '*m'oiteagan*' is something of a nonsense word which alliterates with '*m'iteagan*,' 'my feathers.' I have supplied the word 'down' in this and the following translations in order to provide an appropriate approximation of the phrase. In J.G. McKay 1960, the similar phrase '*Tha mo chiteagan [is mo thopagan] ag éirigh ris an teine*' is translated as 'It is only my duds and tufts standing out with the warmth of the fire' (304-305; see also 378-383). It is interesting to note that the word '*m'oiteaga*n' represents one of the 'nonsense words' which had no meaning for Brian, but which he preserved in his storytelling nonetheless.

[44] Linguistic Survey tape 954 (May 1974).

[45] Linguistic Survey tape 956 (1977).

[46] 24 September 1993, Tape 1 of 1.

[47] School of Scottish Studies recording SA 1974/32/B1.

[48] School of Scottish Studies recording SA 1974/32/B1.

[49] Linguistic Survey of Scotland Tape 954 (May 1974).

[50] Linguistic Survey of Scotland Tape 954 (May 1974).

[51] Linguistic Survey of Scotland Tape 956 (1977).

[52] Linguistic Survey of Scotland Tape 956 (1977).

[53] 24 September 1993, Tape 1 of 1.

[54] School of Scottish Studies recordiing SA 1974/32/A4.

[55] School of Scottish Studies recording SA 1957/48/A4 & B1.

[56] School of Scottish Studies recording SA 1974/32/A4.

[57] Linguistic Survey of Scotland Tape 1006.

[58] 14 May 1994.

[59] 1 April 1995.

[60] School of Scottish Studies recording SA 1957/37/1. Transcribed by Ian Paterson. Note that Ailidh Dall's story has been labelled '*Rìgh Òg na Frainge*' ('The young King of France') in the School of Scottish Studies transcription.

[61] Linguistic Survey of Scotland recording T964.

[62] See Zall 1998: 159-167 for a full discussion of this recording and its implications for how Brian and Mary Stewart remembered story structure.

[63] School of Scottish Studies recording SA 1974/26/A1.

[64] Linguistic Survey of Scotland Tape 954 (May 1974).

[65] April 1993, Tape 1 of 1.

[66] October 1993, Tape 1 of 1. This recording was made together with Dr John Shaw.

[67] School of Scottish Studies recording SA 1974/26/A1.

[68] Linguistic Survey of Scotland Tape 954 (May 1974).

[69] April 1993, Tape 1 of 1.

[70] October 1993, Tape 1 of 1.

[71] Linguistic Survey of Scotland Tape 965 (1973).

[72] This word, seemingly meaning 'a blow', appears in this story and in some other stories of Brian Stewart's in similar contexts, but I have not been able to identify it, despite consultation with others. I asked Brian about it in July 1997 and he seemed to know the word as '*dilong*' or '*daolong*' and repeated it back to me. There is an Old Irish verb '*dlongid*' meaning to split, cleave or cut away; perhaps the word in question is a derivative of this verb. See *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (1983: 220) for more details.

[73] School of Scottish Studies recording SA 1974/27/B3 & 28/A1.

[74] 24 September 1993, Tape 1 of 1.

[75] 18 September 1995.

[76] Those interested in further illustrations of similar language in Brian Stewart's stories should consult Appendix B in Zall 1998, which contains full transcriptions of all thirty-nine of the story recordings.

[77] In this regard it is interesting to note cognitive psychologist David C. Rubin's observation that because the 'concept of verbatim recall requires a record other than human memory,' '...verbatim recall in an oral culture means no more than accurate within the limits of human memory' (6-7). In other words, highly similar versions of a story might be considered by both storyteller and audience to be 'the same'.

[78] See Bruford 1969: 123 for his discussion of the Cèadach story, from which '*Gille nan Cochulla Craicinn*' appears to derive.

[79] A story recorded in Cowal in 1859 bears some resemblance to Ailidh Dall's version, but it is closer to AT 890; see '*Ursgeul*' ('The Chest') in Campbell vol. 2: 9-23.

[80] For '*Stòiridh Ladhair*,', however, only four versions have been collected in addition to the Stewart versions.

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