

As Others See Us

By The Unreliable Narrator

[...] others, when the bagpipe sings i' the nose,
Cannot contain their urine [...]
Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

The Scots are oddities, there's no denying it: the most reliably peculiar inhabitants of the British Isles, blessed with a plethora of shibboleths, a host of identity tags from kilts and cabers, haggises and havers, to Whisky Macs and heart attacks and MC1R on chromosome 16. The blood is strong, and it's all over the place. This issue is a tale of viewpoints, privileged and otherwise: join us as we dash past the funfair mirrors of other peoples' opinions, to seek out where Scotticism meets Exoticism.

"Who would deny that the Scots are barbarians?" asked Sir Henry Glanville, as he gingered up his English knights prior to the sack of Muslim Lisbon in 1147. "Yet, in our company, they have never yet broken the rules of loyalty and friendship." Shamed by this comparison, Glanville's men fell to, and agreed to join in with the butchery of the city's inhabitants. Another holy warrior, Louis IX of France — a saint, no less — also found a place for the Scots in his homilies, telling his son: "I would prefer that a Scot should come from Scotland and govern the people well and faithfully, than that you should be seen to govern badly". This was, of course, deep within the Middle Ages, when the Scots were from the savage fringes of the world, widely viewed as snaggle-toothed, tangle-haired, violent and incomprehensible. Much has changed since then.

Scotland is, more than most, a fictional nation: when so many strangers first spy us through the mists of wild Romance, is it any wonder that they expect to find a storybook realm of tartan tropery? As with much else, here we must point the finger at that Wizard of the North, Sir Walter Scott: his conjurations lie at the root of many of our best-known misrepresentations — including the ones we misrepresent to ourselves. Watch David Manderson whisk away the curtain in **Wattie Goes to Hollywood**.

Jen Hadfield is a poet with a powerful affinity to place. In **'Shetland' and the**

Intriguing Disappearance of the North-Boat she casts a knowing eye at how these northern isles are sometimes pictured by the outside world — notably in a recent BBC crime drama set on the islands. Our national broadcaster made free with the artistic license, apparently. Just a few little things: douce Glaswegian voices rather than Shetlandic; isolated insularity rather than cosmopolitan modernity; summer rather than winter. If culture is a commodity, care must be taken when others come to suck it out. And suckers of a different kind are brought to book in Ewan Morrison's leaked memo from a cultural cringe, ***Monetising Scottish Culture in an Independent Scotland***.

If one can be economical with the truth, can one be truthful with the economics? Evan Gottlieb explores the birth and strange career of Adam Smith's most (in)famous invention in **(Invisible) Hand Over Fist: On the Development and Legacy of Adam Smith's Famous Phrase**. Is there a riper field for misrepresentation than the Dismal Science? Meanwhile, Pauline Cairns Speitel picks out the trail of the Scottish Travellers, and shows the traces of their inside-outsider perceptions of Scotland and the Scots, pressed down in the language, in **A Dictionary of the Languages of Scottish Travellers**.

And so we turn to music to finish off our articles. Like bare legs and barbarism, the bagpipe was once common across all of Europe; somehow, though, this ancient instrument now is perceived as almost exclusively Scottish, and the Great Highland Bagpipe — *a phìob mhòr* — is viewed as the definitive example of the species. A strange beast, it continues to inspire and to terrify, to enthuse and to infuriate, from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Vivien Williams takes a look at the evolving perspectives from south of the Border in **The Scottish Bagpipe: Political and Religious Symbolism in English Literature and Satire**.

But we are not done, no, we are far from finished! We have the views of **John Burnside**, we have a comparison between those two Scottish tales of boys lost, ***Peter Pan and Trainspotting***, and we have a report on the state to date of **BOSLIT, the Bibliography of Scottish Literature in Translation**. Alison Grant pins down ***Craobh and Crann*** in our Gaelic place-names column, and Maggie Scott scrutinises the **Sassenach**. And when you're done with that, there are our **book reviews** and lists of **new publications** and conferences to keep you busy.

At last, to close: a fond and all-too-soon farewell to Gavin Wallace, a good friend,

supporter, and contributor to *The Bottle Imp* since our inception — we dedicate this issue to the memory of his humour, his hard work, and his unfailing help. We will miss him sorely.

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