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Like Father, Like Son? Scots and Intra-Writer Variation in *The Mary Hamilton Papers*

Abstract

This chapter draws on letters from *The Mary Hamilton Papers* to explore Scots usage and identity in the 18th century. William Napier (1730–1775) and his son Francis (1758–1823) were frequent and close correspondents of the courtier and Bluestocking Mary Hamilton (1756–1816). Four Scots features are analysed: Scots spellings, Northern Subject Rule, and non-standard preterite and past participle verb forms from William Napier's correspondence, and Scots vocabulary from Francis's writings. Analysis of these features and comparison with contemporary metalinguistic commentary reveals that while William's usage reflects his own spoken and written norms as an educated Scotsman, Francis peppers his otherwise-standard English with Scottish terms, using them to present an identity as a down-to-earth Scotsman, in contrast with Hamilton's metropolitan Bluestocking persona.

1. Introduction

This study is based on data from letters written by William Napier (1730–1775) and his son Francis (1758–1823) to their relative, the courtier and Bluestocking Mary Hamilton (1756–1816), which form part of *The Mary Hamilton Papers* corpus (2023). In total, 44 of William's letters survive in the Hamilton archive, written between 1772 and 1775, while some 250 letters by Francis span 41 years, from 1775 until just after Hamilton's death in 1816. To trace the varying use and meanings of "Scots" for the two writers, four features are analysed from the Napiers' correspondence: Scots spellings, the Northern Subject Rule, and non-standard preterite and past participle forms in William's letters, and Scots vocabulary in Francis's correspondence. The investigation of these features demonstrates how intra-writer variation can be interpreted differently for each writer; while William Napier's variation illustrates the

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gradual Anglicisation of Scots during the later 18th century, Francis selectively deploys Scots as part of a repertoire of features to perform identity work (Coupland 2007).

1.2 Scots, enregisterment and identity

Up until the 16th century, Scots, a West Germanic language descending from Northumbrian varieties of Old English, was the language of the court, law and the Kirk[1] in Scotland and had a flourishing literature. Although it shares a common ancestor with Standard English, by 1700 separate developments in phonology, morphology and grammar, and differing language contact situations resulted in considerable differences between Scots and varieties south of the border (Millar 2010, 2012). The status of Scots as a dialect or an independent language has been much debated and, while many writers of Older Scots referred to their vernacular as *inglis*, from the 16th century at least some writers were aware of a difference between Scots and English, and were thinking of it as a separate language. Although Scots had been moving towards standardisation, with the Union of the Crowns (1603) James VI of Scotland/I of England moved the court to London, and many aristocrats followed him. This, combined with the Union of Parliaments in 1707, undermined the status of Scots, and led to its eventual Anglicisation and dialectalisation (Dossena 2005: 56–57, Millar 2012). Millar notes that "the Anglicisation of Scots was not an overnight affair. Scots features in orthography, lexis and grammar were gradually replaced by English ones from the mid-sixteenth century on" (2010: 253).

During the 18th century, Scots speakers were not only subject to the same pressures of conforming to the developing standard as English speakers south of the border, but were also acutely aware of the growing stigmatisation of their own native variety: "[t]he gentry faced a constant dilemma of navigating between the covert prestige of their mother tongue and the sophistication of the cosmopolitan standard" (Eyndhoven 2021: 246). The Select Society of Edinburgh was a group of elite intellectuals who met between 1754 and 1764, with the aim of improving public speaking through debating (Cruickshank 2013: 20), and following the success of Thomas Sheridan's elocution lectures, which were attended by large audiences in Edinburgh in 1761, a spin-off group, the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland was established (Dossena 2019: 27). However,

[1] "An informal name for: the Church of Scotland [...] Frequently used to distinguish the Church of Scotland from the Church of England, or from the Scottish Episcopal Church", *OED* s.v. *kirk* n. sense 2 [accessed 07/02/2023].

as written Scots retreated from many of its traditional domains, the vernacular revival, associated with writers such as Allan Ramsay (1684–1758) and Robert Burns (1759–1796), provided a new outlet for written Scots, at least in poetical and literary texts.

This awareness of Scots as a separate variety from the developing Standard English led to its early enregisterment. Enregisterment is described by Agha (2003: 231) as a process "through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms". This reification is brought about not only through overt awareness of features associated with a variety, but through speakers linking them with, and providing metalinguistic commentary about, social characteristics associated with that variety. According to Beal (2020: 52), "linguistic features come to be associated with social meanings and personae and can then be used by speakers or writers to invoke such meanings/personae"; she further posits that "ego-documents provide good evidence for the construction of social meaning and especially the agency of the writer in constructing a persona". Examining the letters of William and Francis Napier, however, it is clear that while both writers include Scotticisms in their letters to Mary Hamilton, these features lend themselves to differing interpretations. In this chapter I argue that while William's writing includes a greater range and number of Scots features, it is only in Francis's correspondence that we see evidence of Scotticisms contributing to identity fashioning.

1.3 The corpus

The Mary Hamilton Papers has been compiled as a digital edition and a linguistic corpus incorporating nearly 900,000 words of correspondence and diaries related to Mary Hamilton (see Denison et al. submitted). The collection includes over 3,000 letters, 38 diaries, and several manuscript books and catalogues compiled by Hamilton at various stages of her life. As of September 2023, the edition contained 3,201 items (including letters, notes and diaries), of which 1,598 have been transcribed. These items include 44 letters by William Napier totalling 30,976 words, and 127 out of a total 253 letters by Francis Napier totalling 57,745 words[2]

Table 1. Correspondence from the families of William (HAM/1/19) and Francis Napier (HAM/1/20).

Shelfmark	Writer	No. of letters	Addressee	Words

[2] https://www.maryhamiltonpapers.alc.manchester.ac.uk/ [accessed 17/10/22].

HAM/1/19	William Napier	44	Mary Hamilton	30,976
	Mary Anne Napier	21	Mary Hamilton	8,400
	Mary Anne Napier	1	Catherine Mary Hamilton	835
	Mainie-Schaw Napier	1	Mary Hamilton	239
Total:		67		40,450
HAM/1/20	Francis Napier	121	Mary Hamilton	54,387
	Francis Napier	3	Mary Hamilton and John Dickenson	2150
	Francis Napier	2	John Dickenson	1093
	Francis Napier	1	Louisa Dickenson	115
	Maria Napier	1	Mary Hamilton	420
	Mainie-Schaw Napier	1	Mary Hamilton	76
	Charles Napier	1	John Dickenson	324
Total:		130		58,565

As can be seen from Table 1, the items archived under classmarks HAM/1/19 and HAM/1/20 include letters written by other members of the Napier family, along with correspondence addressed to Hamilton's close relatives. For example, the earliest correspondence under HAM/1/19 is from William's wife Mary Anne Napier (1727–1774) to Mary Hamilton's mother, Mary Catherine Hamilton (née Dufresne, d.1778). Items under the HAM/1/20 classmark include letters to Mary Hamilton and her family from Francis Napier's family, including his wife Maria and son Charles (1794-1874). William's daughter Mainie-Schaw Napier (1756-1806) is the writer of two letters in *The Hamilton Papers*, in which she acts as amanuensis for her father and brother respectively, to convey news of deaths in the family. However, the majority of the surviving correspondence between the families is from William or Francis Napier to Mary Hamilton, and the present study considers only letters between these correspondents.

Hamilton was born into an aristocratic family, and as a young woman was engaged as sub-

governess to the younger daughters of King George III. However, the romantic attentions of George, Prince of Wales, and the long working hours left her unhappy and ill (Coulombeau 2021), and in 1782 she left court to live in London with friends. In London, Hamilton cultivated friendships with a number of Bluestockings, such as Mary Delany, Elizabeth Carter, Hannah More, and Elizabeth Vesey, and her diaries from the period document her involvement in the group, attending literary salons and parties and making longer visits to friends such as Charlotte Walsingham and Margaret Cavendish Bentinck, Duchess of Portland. Upon her marriage in 1785 to John Dickenson she lived first in Derbyshire, and later in Leighton Buzzard, before returning to London in 1809. Hamilton kept the correspondence she received in adulthood, and some of her letters and diaries show evidence of retrospective archiving activity later in her life. *The Mary Hamilton Papers* offer an excellent opportunity to study the language of the late-18th and early-19th centuries through a substantial collection of ego-documents representing around 249 writers. The majority of the correspondence in the collection (and all that concerning the Napiers) consists of in-letters (i.e., correspondence received by Hamilton, as opposed to out-letters that she wrote to others).

The Napiers were distant relatives of Mary Hamilton,[3] and the families were evidently close; often away from their Edinburgh home because of William's army career, the Napiers stayed on at least one occasion with the Hamiltons in Northamptonshire. Early letters from William Napier's wife Mary Anne recall the affectionate friendship between the families' children: "Mary Says I want to see Couse Hami again so does her Br[other] [Francis] though he is ashamed to talk of it" (HAM/1/19/1). William Napier acted as Hamilton's guardian after the death of her father in 1771 when she was 15 years old, a role which he took very seriously. Many of his letters consist of advice to Mary, and discuss topics such as philosophy and women's behaviour and education. William became 7th Lord Napier of Merchistoun after the death of his father in 1773, however ill health dogged his final years and he died two years later.

Francis Napier was William's only son. He inherited the title of 8th Lord Napier in 1775, and his correspondence with Hamilton seems to have begun at this point. Following his father into the army, Francis rose to the rank of major by 1784. In that year he married Maria Margaret Clavering (1756-1821), and after a number of years on army service in Ireland he settled with

[3] William Napier's wife, Mary Anne Napier (née Cathcart, 1727–1774), was the sister-in-law of Hamilton's paternal aunt, Jean Cathcart (née Hamilton, 1726–1771).

his family in Roxburghshire, where he bought an estate. After leaving the army in 1789, Francis devoted himself to managing his estate farms and, from 1793, to a political career in the House of Lords. His surviving letters in *The Mary Hamilton Papers* show a close and enduring relationship with Hamilton (Anson & Anson 1922: 194-195). Hamilton and Francis addressed each other as "brother" and "sister" and took an interest in topics such as each other's marriage plans, family news, and politics. It is possible that, in addition to their childhood friendship, their closeness was facilitated by the common experience of being orphaned in early adulthood (Francis's parents were both dead by 1775, Hamilton's by 1778), and the emotional, financial, and practical difficulties this entailed.

In spite of their closeness, however, Hamilton and the Napiers did not agree on all topics. A highly educated woman, Hamilton had a keen interest in intellectual pursuits, and in one letter to William Napier she asks for advice about learning Latin. William's response, however, is somewhat lukewarm: had Hamilton asked his advice before embarking on her study, "I should most certainly have perswaded you not to learn it" (HAM/1/19/18). For William, learning Latin is hard work, of use only to those in the "learned professions", and the subject matter potentially unsuitable for a young lady. His son Francis, moreover, demonstrates little interest or ambition in "deep study", either for himself or for young children who, he believes, should be "running about, laying in a Stock of health", rather than "enter[ing] into scientific conversations" (HAM/1/20/136). As regards his own son, he tells Hamilton:

(1) I comfort myself, that my Boy will not waste his Vigils, in deep Study. Like myself, I suspect, if he can procure Meat, drink, & cloathing, without much mental exertion, it would suit him as well, and he would be better contented, than even to gain admiſsion into Your Tribe [i.e. the Bluestockings]. (HAM/1/20/175)

Though perhaps uninterested in intellectual pursuits for their own sake, William and Francis were clearly well-educated gentlemen. While William objects to Mary's pursuit of Latin on moral grounds, Francis mines their differences in attitude for identity work (see 3.1).

2. William Napier

Three of the linguistic features under discussion – Scottish spellings, the Northern Subject Rule, and non-standard preterite and past participle verb forms – appear frequently in William Napier's letters. Together, they suggest a writer who, in spite of his broad adherence to

Standard English, retains a number of Scotticisms in his writing.

2.1 Scots spellings

A study of the writers of the *Hamilton Papers* reveals considerable spelling variation, and while William Napier is not the only writer with variable spelling, he is notable for his inclusion of a number of identifiably Scots spellings. Non-standard spellings observed in this study were compared with 18th-century forms listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) and *Dictionaries of the Scots Language* (*DSL*), and a selection of those labelled Scots[4] is given in Table 2 (total tokens of each lexical item in brackets):

Table 2. Selected Scots spellings in William Napier's letters.

Spelling	%
whither (29); *derect, derection* (12); *perscreption* (2); *prepair* (2); *regreat* (2)	100
correspondance, correspondant (14)	93
devert, deverting, deverted (3);	67
bliss(ing) (for *bless(ing)*) (10)	50
fitt (7)	43
secreat (4)	25
off (for *of*) (617)	23
toun (16)	6

As Table 2 shows, some of William's Scots spellings are categorical. For instance, he writes only *whither, derect, perscreption, prepair* and *regreat*, never *whether, direct, prescription, prepare* or *regret*. Other spellings, however, vary; *correspondant/ correspondance* (for *correspondent/ correspondence*) occurs with <a> spellings in 93% of cases, whereas *devert, bliss,* and *fitt* (*divert, bless, fit*) appear around half of the time, and *secreat* and *off* (for *secret, of*) only about a quarter of the time. *Toun* has one single occurrence, against William's more usual *town*. William's orthographical system is clearly a flexible one, tolerating plural spellings (Scots and their English equivalents) for at least some of the lexical items in Table 2.

Several of the spellings noted above are listed by *DSL* as occurring in Scots only for the

[4] With the exception of *whither,* none of the spellings in Table 2 are labelled as English by the *OED*. *Whither* is found in northern English usage, as well as Scots. in the eighteenth century.

period before 1700. At first sight this might suggest, given that William is writing in the 1770s, that his spelling practices are very conservative. However, a more detailed examination reveals that the large number of apparent pre-1700 spellings is caused by differences in the scope and compilation of the dictionaries consulted; *DSL* consists of two dictionaries, with different compilation and editorial principles. The *Dictionary of the Older Scots Tongue* covers the period up to 1700 and aims to include headwords for all Scots words, while the *Scottish National Dictionary* (*SND*) covers 1700-present, but only includes words not shared with English, or those with specific meanings which differ from English usage. In practice, this has two implications for our interpretation of William's Scots spellings. Firstly, it is difficult to judge how conservative William's spelling is; certainly, some of his frequent spellings are listed as current in Scotland for the 18th century, however, there is a group which, according to the *OED* also has a more widespread use at this date. Spellings such as *expence, perswade,* and *teizingly* also appear more widely among both Scottish and non-Scottish writers in the *Hamilton Papers*. *Expence* is the majority spelling for all correspondents in the corpus (including Mary Hamilton) regardless of their origin. *Teiz** is used by five writers (Catherine Hamilton (1738-1782), Henry Hamilton (1734-1796), Court Dewes (1742-1793), Ann Astley (c.1748-1836), and William Napier), accounting for a third of occurrences of the token, while <w> spellings of *persuade* occur in two other writers (Hannah More (1745-1833) and Frances Harpur (1744-1825)), though only once each. All these correspondents were born in the 1730s or 1740s, suggesting that age is a relevant factor in the distribution of such spellings in the corpus. These forms, therefore, place William's writing towards the conservative end of the scale for writers in the *Hamilton Papers*, but not outlandishly so.

Secondly, the fact that most of the spellings in Table 2 do not occur in the post-1700 *SND* can be attributed either to the relevant headword not appearing in that section of the dictionary (e.g. *tease/ teize*), or to the headword not being present in the sense in which William uses it (*whither, secret*). As the *SND* only records words whose form is the same in English where the meaning varies, this suggests that, on the whole, William utilises Scots orthography for words which belong both to Scots and to Standard English. That is, his vocabulary in the letters to Hamilton tends to avoid words which are exclusively Scots.

2.2 Northern Subject Rule

Another notable feature of William's letters is his use of the Northern Subject Rule. This feature, which is found from Late Middle English in several varieties of northern English, involves an alternative way of marking verbal concord:

> [T]he Standard English contrast between verbal *-s* in the third person singular and zero forms elsewhere is observed only where the subject is one of the closed set of simple personal pronouns: *he/she/it goes*; *I/you/we/they go*. All other subjects can take an invariant *-s* form of the verb. Moreover, the agreement contrast in the pronominal subjects is found consistently only when the subject directly precedes or follows the verb; in other cases, even *I*, *you*, *we* and *they* may take the *-s* form. (Pietsch 2005: 126)

William's letters include several examples of this concord pattern. For example, he writes:

(2) **few young Lady's likes** to have those things known (HAM/1/19/26)

(3) **I** never paid you a Comp^{t} in my Life nor never **deſigns** to do (HAM/1/19/45)

(4) You are My dear Ward quite mistaken in supposing the young people dont remember you, **the three eldest does** extremely well often **inquires** after you and now **joins** Lady Napier in best Comp^{ts} to you (HAM/1/19/55)

In example (2), the subject *few young lady's*, because it is not a personal pronoun, takes the verb *likes*, with an *-s* inflection. In (3), the first-person pronoun *I* is not adjacent to the present tense verb *designs*, while in (4) the subject *the three eldest [children]* takes three successive verbs with *-s*. Nevertheless, William does not adhere to the Northern Subject Rule at every opportunity:

(5) **Lady Napier & my Young Folks join** me in best Wishes to you & M^{rs} Hamilton (HAM/1/19/57)

(6) I am glad Fanchon is well as I hope **Cloe & Fairry ~~is~~ are** so too (HAM/1/19/56)

In (5), a closing salutation similar to example (4), the verb *join* conforms to the standard concord pattern, while in example (6) a self-correction emends the original 3rd person plural verb *is* to the standard form, *are*. It is not clear what prompted William to make this change. It is the only example in his surviving letters to Hamilton of an alteration in concord for a verb originally conforming to the Northern Subject Rule, although this particular letter does contain

other stylistic emendations, including interlinear additions and deletion of repeated words. It would therefore appear that the Northern Subject Rule is optional, though frequent in William's usage.

Although widespread in Older Scots, the Northern Subject Rule declined as a result of the Anglicisation of Scots, and by the 17th century the norm was for "a variable system that partially converges on the standard pattern" (Cole 2014: 45). This is indeed what can be observed in William's writing, and the feature is also shared by other members of the family. William's wife Mary Anne Napier writes to Hamilton: "my Br[other] I find has time to write to nobody himself; but **y^{r} Aunt & Cousins does**" (HAM/1/19/6), while Francis declares of his plans: "So **stands matters** at present" (HAM/1/20/19). Neither Mary Anne nor Francis use the Northern Subject Rule as frequently as William, and it is notable that Francis's two examples come from an early letter dated 1779. In contrast with his father, he appears to have dropped this Scots feature as he got older.[5]

2.3 Preterite and past participle verb forms

The final feature of William Napier's writing under consideration is his use of non-standard forms for preterite verbs and past participles. Unlike the Northern Subject Rule, which was apparently unnoticed by 18th-century grammarians (Beal 1997: 357), non-standard verb forms – in particular the distinction in strong verbs between preterites and past participles – are prominent in the lists of Scotticisms published in the latter half of the 18th century. Many of these lists share common entries, and according to Cruickshank (2013: 23) "there was common agreement about what constituted a Scotticism". Beattie devotes a section of his guide for correcting Scotticisms to preterites and past participles:

> *Broken*, *written,* &c. are participles. *Broke*, *wrote*, or *writ*, &c. are preterites; as *he broke the glass*, *he wrote* or *writ the book*. This is not always attended to by English writers, but it deserves attention. (Beattie 1797: 5; my italics, CW)

William is by no means the only writer in the *Hamilton Papers* to use forms like *I have wrote* or *I have broke*; such forms were widespread in English and Scottish 18th-century epistolary

[5] Francis's age-related change is explained by Raumolin-Brunberg's (2005: 46) observation that features which are acquired as categorical tend to remain stable in later life, whereas those acquired as variable are more likely to change in adulthood.

usage, even by writers such as Robert Lowth, whose *Short Introduction to English Grammar* first advocated the maintenance of separate grammatical forms (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2002). However, William routinely writes *broke, forgot, spoke, tore, traid* (English *trod*), and *wrote* for *broken, forgotten, spoken, torn, trodden,* and *written*.

A further set of verbal forms found in William's letters and discussed by 18th-century commentators includes strong verbs with a weak past tense, such as *keeped, catched*, *chused,* and *comed*. Beal (1997: 354) notes that Sinclair's *Observations on the Scottish Dialect* (1782) lists *keeped* and *catched* as Scotticisms.[6] Another commonly noted Scotticism, *aproven* for *approved* also appears when William discusses amusements that were "very much aproven of" (HAM/1/19/52).

In contrast with his father's usage, Francis is much less uniform in his use of past participle forms. For instance, while he only uses *broke*, rather than *broken*, *forgot* occurs six out of nine times, being gradually abandoned in favour of *forgotten*. In contrast, *wrote* is Francis's preferred form in his youth, though after 1784 only *written* appears. Thus, Francis demonstrates a general, though not uniform, trend away from Scots and non-standard features as he ages.

William Napier's usage can be classified as "covert Scotticisms", that is, Scots features used unselfconsciously, either because they are not enregistered as Scots (for instance, the Northern Subject Rule), or because they are also (in part) used by writers outside of Scotland (some of his spellings, or verbal forms). Despite the preterite and past participle verb forms being the subject of overt commentary from grammarians in the period, William continues to use Scots variants throughout his letters to Hamilton, and makes no comment about variation in this feature. Nevertheless, it is important to note that he does include the occasional metalinguistic comment, indicating an awareness of "correct" usage:

(7) Did Mrs Carter go to the Masquerade? I dare anſwer No, No, No, two of them might have been construed yes, but three of them is not liable to the ſame construction. (HAM/1/19/63)

Example (7) indicates William's awareness of arguments against multiple negation; if, mathematically, two negatives make a positive, the same must be true in language. While

[6] Beal (1997: 337) suggests that such lists be treated with caution, as they may show only what was considered to be a Scotticism, while in reality including features which deviated from London usage, though were not necessarily peculiar to Scotland.

multiple negation was criticised by 18th-century grammarians (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2012: 308, 326), the change to single negation among upper-class male writers was mostly complete by the end of the 16th century (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 145-6). William's metalinguistic references, then, do not appear to concern features which were new topics of concern to linguistic commentators in the second half of the 18th century.

The presence in his writing of Scots spellings and verbal forms may be reflective of William Napier's age; born in 1730, his formal education took place well before the boom in lists of Scotticisms and prescriptive grammars from the 1750s onwards, and, in the case of the morphosyntactic features, presumably reflects his own spoken forms.

3. Francis Napier

We have seen (2.2 and 2.3) that in many respects Francis Napier either avoids the Scots features present in his father's writing, or progressively moves away from them, to align more with Standard English as he grows older. However, one notable feature of Francis's later writing is his occasional use of Scots vocabulary. Francis consciously deploys this vocabulary along with a selection of other features, including banter and informal language, to perform identity work. As Bucholtz & Hall (2005) note, identity is created not through the deployment of one feature alone, but through a constellation of relevant linguistic behaviours, and an examination of Francis's banter and informal language helps reveal the role of Scots lexis in persona-building.

3.1 Language attitudes and banter

A notable feature of Francis's letters to Hamilton is the playful and ironic tone of some of his comments. Culpeper et al. identify several functions of mock impoliteness including fostering in-group solidarity, but note that "[t]easing, banter and other forms of mock impoliteness may also be drawn upon in accomplishing sensitive or delicate social actions, including criticisms, reproaches and complaints among intimates" (2017: 343). Francis certainly uses mock impoliteness to achieve this end, as can be seen from example (8), in which he complains that Hamilton has not replied to his last letter, sent three months previously:

(8) Last September I dispatched a letter to You dated Balgowan, since which time I have neither heard from or of You. I have daily examined the List of Marriages & Deaths but have been unsucceſsfull in every attempt to account for your Silence. Peace be with You. May your Repose be undisturbed. Best respects to all your Brother &

Sister Devils. (HAM/1/20/84)

However, the aim of most examples of Francis's mock impoliteness seems to be to reinforce solidarity with Hamilton. In several instances his apparent impoliteness is followed directly by evidence of affection and concern for Hamilton and her family. In example (9), Francis replies to an apparent apology for her slow reply:

(9) I do forgive You, tho' like the Witches, your petition is written backwards. My worthy Mate, took it for Greek & was astounded with your Learning, God bleſs You. Be good, get well, & come to Us soon. (HAM/1/20/119)

In this case, Hamilton had been prevented from replying by illness. Francis's forgiveness is followed in quick succession by his jocular (and recurrent) criticism of Hamilton's handwriting, a joke about the relative cleverness of his wife and Hamilton, and sincere wishes for her recovery.

In addition to mock impoliteness, Francis's letters are also a rich source of metalinguistic commentary. His comments regarding sending his son to England for his education clearly demonstrate his insecurity regarding the value of Scots:

(10) when my Boy is fit to go to School (not yet being two Years old) I propose educating him in England, for the sake of the language, and as You are of the Blue Stocking Tribe shall certainly consult you on the proper mode of conducting a matter of such importance. (HAM/1/20/105)

Although English was the language of education in 18th-century Scotland (Cruickshank 2013: 20), anxiety still remained concerning the use of Scots grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Numerous publications had targeted speakers of Scots throughout the period to aid the pursuit of writing and speaking standard English, and alongside lists of Scotticisms such as those by Beattie (1797), publications such as Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* also targeted identifiably Scots pronunciations for eradication: "[w]e sometimes hear a most absurd pronunciation of [Highlander] taken from the Scotch, as if written *Heelander*. This ought to be carefully avoided" (Walker 1791: s.v. *highlander*). Writing in 1788 about his son's future education, and with ambitions for his material success, Francis is certainly tapping into these contemporary concerns and negative attitudes to Scots.

Taken at face value, Francis's invocation of Hamilton's Bluestocking identity in example (10) might appear to be positive, equating the "Blue Stocking Tribe" with desirable, standard English. Nevertheless, elsewhere in his writings, Francis's stance regarding the Bluestockings evinces an ambivalent or critical attitude. His ambiguity is evident in example (11), on the one hand criticising the "indigent Merit" of Bluestockings such as Elizabeth Montagu and Charlotte Walsingham, while on the other occupying a more self-effacing stance concerning his own intellectual abilities:

(11) I never was very partial to your M^rs^ Montagu's & M^rs^ Walsingham's. Much vanity, much ostentation & pride, was endeavoured to be hid under an appearance of being learned & of protecting indigent Merit. I shall say no more on this subject, for fear of drawing the Tribe of Blue Stockings on my back, & I honestly confeſs myself unable to quote Horace or to Scratch with any of them.

Francis frequently groups Hamilton with the Bluestockings, in phrases like "you Blue Stocking Ladies" (HAM/1/20/175), or "your Blue Stocking Associates" (HAM/1/20/141). Similarly, the adjective *indigo* is used five times to position Hamilton squarely among the Bluestockings (e.g. "you & the rest of the Indigo Tribe" (HAM/1/20/90)), making fun of her bookishness. The teasing nature of many of these comments is important. Boxer & Cortés-Conde (1997: 285) note that teasing can be used as a bonding strategy, and that a tease demonstrating knowledge of the interlocutor and therefore a shared history often performs this kind of relational identity work. The surviving letters show how Hamilton and Francis's friendship was initially slow to rekindle, their correspondence only taking off on the death of Hamilton's mother in 1778. At this point, Francis's letters shift from their initial formality to a far more familiar tone, and the pair corresponded and met in person regularly. During winter and spring 1784 Hamilton's diaries record further regular visits by Francis during his stay in London just before his marriage (HAM/2/7 – HAM/2/10). By this time Hamilton had left court and her involvement with the Bluestocking network was at its most intense. Francis's teasing about Hamilton's Bluestocking affiliation therefore serves as a reminder, not only of their general shared history, but specifically of a happy time, of intimate friendship, and regular personal contact. Within this shared history, however, Francis's teasing is also used to set him apart from Hamilton; Hamilton is learned, metropolitan, and Bluestocking, while Francis builds a contrasting persona as a practical man with few intellectual pretensions.

In spite of Francis's professed resistance to Hamilton's intellectual interests, epistolary style

was clearly a topic of interest to the pair. Although only Francis's side of the correspondence survives, it is evident that style and letter-writing etiquette were subjects of banter and lively debate. In example (12) his response to Hamilton's assessment of a previous letter reveals the tension between their differing tastes:

(12) I would begin this Letter with a Proverb, but knowing the Indigo tint of your disposition, I am fearfull of being sent to Chesterfield for a rebuke. But, You are much satisfied with my last letter!!! Three points of Admiration are not sufficient to expreſs my feelings at so uncommon a declaration, & had it not been œconomy, to save my paper, I should have made three dozen. […] In the first place (since you dislike imprimis) [...] (HAM/1/20/109)

Hamilton had evidently been uncomplimentary over aspects of Francis's writing in the past, as revealed by Francis's mock-astonishment at her rare positive response. However, he is unable to continue the letter without a playful dig about her disapproval of *imprimis*, which he had used in his previous letter (and repeats in the present one). He also links Hamilton's admiration of Lord Chesterfield's writing with her "indigo" identity as a Bluestocking.[7] In alluding to the inclusion of a proverb in his letter, Francis presumably refers to Chesterfield's *Letter to His Son*, where the writer advises that "proverbial expressions, and trite sayings, are the flowers of rhetoric of a vulgar man […] A man of fashion never has recourse to proverbs, and vulgar aphorisms" (1774: 450). Despite Francis and Hamilton's shared knowledge of Chesterfield's aversion to proverbs, Francis jests about his rejection of Chesterfield's advice, ironically deferring to Hamilton's superior taste. Incidentally, of the six occurrences of the term *proverb* in the *Hamilton Papers*, four are by Francis's father William Napier, in phrases such as "the (old) proverb says" or "the old proverb is a good one" (HAM/1/19/19, 25, 33, 57). This rather reinforces the impression of William as a somewhat conservative and old-fashioned writer, and certainly not one (in contrast with his son) who engages frequently in discussions of epistolary style in his letters to Hamilton.

In spite of his rejection of Chesterfield's recommendations however, Francis certainly shows a knowledge of, and concern for, what grammarians write about good language in general, and Scotticisms in particular. In example (13), he comments on the correctness of

[7] Hamilton records her approval of Chesterfield's writing in her diary, upon seeing an autograph letter by "the Witty Lord Chesterfield", written in an "easy and lively" style (HAM/2/10).

whether or no, which is marked by several commentators as a Scotticism:

(13) it is a matter of perfect indifference to Me, whether I hear from You, or No. (Formerly I should have written Not, instead of No; but, as your great Parliamentary Speakers make use of the expreſsion, "Whether or No", I suppose, they do so, with the approbation of Your blue Stocking Friends). (HAM/1/20/140)

In *Scotticisms, Vulgar Anglicisms, and Grammatical Improprieties Corrected*, Mitchell (1799: 60) notes that:

> *No*, instead of *not*, is, in familiar discourse, very commonly used by all ranks of people in Scotland. […] Whether I will or *no*. – Whether I will or not. – In the former, the adjective is improperly used instead of the adverb.

Francis notes that his former preferred usage, *whether or not* conflicts with what he has heard in Parliament. He appeals to his status as a politician and his knowledge of "great parliamentary speakers" to justify his choice, but also to playfully spar with Hamilton in supposing that the Bluestockings (and therefore she herself) must approve of this deviation from the rules.

His association with politics and farming (he refers jokingly to himself as "farmer Francis" (HAM/1/20/114)) are two ways in which Francis asserts his knowledge and authenticity. In example (14) he responds to a question or remark in Hamilton's previous letter on the electoral negotiations of the Scottish Representative Peers. Francis's position as an electoral candidate allows him to position himself as more knowledgeable, and he enjoys teasing her about her intellectual pride, claiming she will be unable to understand the situation without his explanation:

(14) but tho', you have for some Years been domesticated, at a distance from the Capital, yet, you may poſsibly retain so much of your former Indigo corruption, as to flatter yourself, that your acuteneſs & penetration are fully sufficient to comprehend & unravel the Mysteries of Peerage Politics. (HAM/1/20/115)

Francis's repeated mocking stance toward the Bluestockings works to root their shared history in a time when they were close, but also acknowledges her intellectual abilities and prestigious social network. It distances him from Hamilton's metropolitan intellectualism, while helping

shape an identity that is rooted in his practical experience as, variously, a soldier, a gentleman farmer, or as a Member of Parliament. He also, in some ways, manages to juxtapose his persona against that of his father, avoiding the old-fashioned proverbs and the kinds of Scots features which attracted the criticism of contemporary commentators.

3.2 Informal language and Scots lexis

A further feature of Francis Napier's writing is his use of underlining for emphasis. His reasons for emphasis are varied, and include marking irony or banter (as in example (12)), as well as informal or slang usage. Several informal terms are accompanied by metalinguistic commentary:

(15) Give my Love to Your Hub, as You call him (HAM/1/20/201)

(16) I need not say how happy it would make Us, could You & Mr. D[ickenson] straggle (to make use of a genteel word) as far as Edinburgh (HAM/1/20/102)

(17) I received your Letter, & the inclosure for old Mother Carter [the Bluestocking Elizabeth Carter], yesterday. The latter, I instantly returned to its Travels, after having condescended to peruse it, according to Your Commands; but, my doing so, had nearly been attended with destruction to it, as the Butter it contained, made me Bilious, and gave me an instantaneous inclination to puke (saving your presence). It really entertains me to see how You blue Stocking Ladies compliment, and adore one another. (HAM/1/20/175)

In example (15), Francis draws attention to Hamilton's use of the informal *hub*, while his parenthetical comments in (16) and (17) comment on each term's perceived social usage or formality (genteel, impolite), and the overall effect of his choices is to give the correspondence an informal, intimate feel. A number of Francis's lexical choices (including some he underlines) are marked by the *OED* as slang (*gander month, rib*, *tony, stump* (v)), colloquial (*a bundle of nerves, beating up your quarters, noodle*), "chiefly dialect" (*chuckle-head*), humorous (*hub, falling on my marrowbones*), or derogatory (*pigging* 'to give birth'). Several are listed in Grose's *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785) (*pet, maggoty, gander-month, marrowbones, leading apes, tony, jerry, nettled*), showing that they were indeed perceived by contemporary audiences as informal.

Not only is Francis a frequent user of informal and slang terms (and often the only writer to use these particular examples in the *Hamilton Papers*), but in five cases his usage antedates the *OED*'s earliest attestations: *hub*, *bundle of nerves*, *Benedict*, *frump*, *saddle-sickness*. In contrast with his father's rather old-fashioned usage, then, Francis appears to be highly contemporary in his own lexical choices.

A further use of underlining and occasional glossing for Francis is for Scots terms. Topic is an important factor, as Scots words only appear in specific contexts, namely in discussions of Francis's home life at Wilton Lodge, or local places and customs.[8] Place of writing also has an impact; nearly all instances of Scots occur when Francis writes from Scotland. In example (18), he glosses *loch*, though more usually he underlines Scots terms, as in (19) and (20):

(18) He & my Nephew Sedley are just gone to fish for Pike, in a Loch (anglice, Lake) seven miles off. (HAM/1/20/188)

(19) My Seven home Brats have been laid up with the Blibes, Water Jags, or Chicken pox, whichever You please to call it. (HAM/1/20/162)

(20) When you mention Scots Music to me, You mistake my Taste. It is prohibited in my family, as I hate & detest all the miserable drawling drunts, called Scots Airs. (HAM/1/20/199)

Several of these terms are listed in the *DSL* and the *English Dialect Dictionary* as Scots or northern English, (e.g., *frump, passenger, scolding jade, puke, stump, blibes, water jags, colded, ordinar, drunt, clishmaclaver, bairn*), and through his use of underlining, Francis marks both slang and Scots terms as words which are somehow "not proper", needing special marking and consideration.

In only two instances does Francis provide Scots spellings for words which also occur in Standard English. In example (21) *guid* and *mon* are clearly marked as Scots by their

[8] Cruickshank (2013: 31) finds topic to be relevant in Lord Fife's choice of Scots lexis, typical triggers being agriculture and law, while location of writing is also relevant, with letters from Scotland containing more Scots than those written in England. Beal (2020) finds that local customs, flora and fauna attract Northumbrian dialect lexis in the writing of Thomas Bewick, with dialect and colloquial words frequently underlined.

orthography:[9]

(21) Not that I care about You, for we shall certainly quarrel. But, your Guid Mon & your Bairn are deserving of my regard. (HAM/1/20/141)

On first appearance, *guid* and *mon* appear to be similar to William Napier's spellings examined in section 2.1, however, William never writes *guid* or *mon*. Moreover, *goodman/ guidman* appears in the *DSL* with the meaning 'a husband' (*SND* s.v. *guidman* n.3), this meaning being archaic or dialectal in English usage from the 17th century. *Guid mon*, then, is a lexical item which is not distinguishable as Scots purely by its form alone, and it seems that Francis's motivation in using identifiably Scots orthography in this instance is to overtly mark *good man* as a Scots word, to be interpreted in its Scots meaning (Corbett 2013: 70).

What is notable about Francis Napier's use of Scots dialect terms is that they appear in his letters at a very specific time in his life. In August 1789, having spent the previous five years in Ireland in army service, Francis settled down in Scotland, buying Wilton Lodge and planning to sell his army commission. The family remained there until 1805, when Napier sold the property to repay debts. These years at Wilton Lodge seem to have been a particularly happy time for the family, and Napier's letters to Hamilton make frequent mention of his domestic life, his pride in running his farm estates, and later his life as a Member of Parliament. His affection for the area and pride in his local knowledge are also evident:

(22) It may be proper to explain to You, (as though You are of the Blue Stocking Society Yet you may not be perfectly acquainted with all the Geography of this Island) that Carter Fell is one of the highest of the Cheviot Mountains, which have been celebrated in Song. (HAM/1/20/130)

Scots lexis and mock impoliteness, indexing unpretentiousness, local knowledge and an authentic Scottishness on Francis's part all work to define him against Hamilton. However, he also has a strategy for using Scots as an in-group marker:

(23) Now, for domestic news, My Wife & eldest Daughter, well. My two younger Sons, & two Younger Daughters, Colded (if you dont understand the Expreſsion, apply to

[9] *Guid Man* also appears in HAM/1/20/153, with only *guid* marked as Scots.

my Countrywoman.) My eldest Son, supposed to be, well. My fat Uncle Patrick, confined with the Gout. Myself, in my Ordinar, (apply again to Countrywoman). (HAM/1/20/136)

(24) *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* exhibit too true an account of that Claſs of people in this Country. I doubt, whether Miſs Hamilton's Book will have the effect of reforming them, […] As for You, I doubt much whether, you can understand the language; but my friend Morrison may aſsist as an Interpreter. (HAM/1/20/235, my italics, CW)

Example (23) is Francis's first instance of Scots lexis in a letter to Hamilton. *Colded* and *Ordinar* appear underlined, in the same way that other ironic or informal terms are. What is striking is Francis's recommendation to Hamilton to ask his "Countrywoman" for help in understanding his letter. The "Countrywoman" in question is Hamilton's housekeeper Margaret Morrison, and Francis first mentions her in October 1794 (HAM/1/20/127), following his and Hamilton's much-anticipated meeting, their first in ten years. Francis's subsequent letters routinely include Morrison in compliments to the family. By referring Hamilton to her Scottish housekeeper for interpretation of his letters, Francis projects a persona of an "authentic" Scot with knowledge of the language. He clearly demarcates his own area of knowledge and expertise from Hamilton's through his emphasis of Hamilton's imagined inability to understand his own Scots, or, in (24), that of the novel *The Cottagers of Glenburnie*. Yet, in directing Hamilton to Morrison's interpretation, Francis offers her a way of becoming part of his group, demonstrating his knowledge of her domestic arrangements and inviting her to share in his knowledge. In this way then, Francis uses Scots lexis for both out-group and in-group purposes. Coupland refers to these processes of shaping a persona as "targeting", noting that identity projection can be aimed at individuals or at groups. He suggests that relationships can also be the target of identity work, "constructing meanings for 'us' together, 'how we are'" (Coupland 2007: 112). Francis's identity work can additionally be viewed, then, as a continual building and maintenance of his and Hamilton's relationship, reaching across temporal and geographical distances and compensating for their physical separation.

Francis Napier uses a selection of (predominantly lexical) features at his disposal to cultivate his relationship with Mary Hamilton and to project his identity. While Scots lexis and mock impoliteness are used to create his persona in opposition to Hamilton's, colloquial language and banter mixed with sincere messages serve to reinforce bonds of friendship and intimacy.

References to Morrison, meanwhile, are a means of including Hamilton in Francis's "Scottish" group. That these features only appear following in-person meetings after prolonged absence suggests that they also serve to recreate the warmth and humour present in their personal interactions.

4. Conclusion

The Mary Hamilton Papers are a rich source of evidence for intra-writer variation, and a comparison of the correspondence from two generations of the Napier family illuminates changing attitudes to Scots and its relationship with Standard English during the later 18th century. The ego documents presented in this chapter offer us the ability not only to trace their writers' attitudes through metalinguistic commentary, but also to combine them with analysis of each writer's usage.

William Napier's usage indicates an educated writer who generally adheres to Standard English, though with a considerable Scots residue in his writing. In many respects this fits the patterns observed for Scotticisms during this period; William's examples are for the most part covert Scotticisms, ones which slip through the net through their common usage outside Scotland, or by their failure to become part of the enregistered repertoire of Scots. William's formal education, in the 1730s and 1740s, took place before the first prescriptive publications on Scotticisms which became so popular later in the century, and there is little indication in his correspondence to Mary Hamilton that he is aware of, or regards himself as a writer of, Scotticisms. Furthermore, his letters, with their proverbs and jokes about multiple negation do not suggest a writer keenly interested in contemporary concerns and fashions regarding language use; indeed his main concern, writing in his capacity as Hamilton's guardian is the appropriate conduct of a young aristocratic woman and the maintenance of her reputation, and discussions concerning language are rather rare.

The evidence from Francis's letters, in contrast, indicates not only an awareness of Scots as a variety, but also a keen perception of its lower prestige compared with Standard English. This awareness allows him to deploy Scots vocabulary along with features such as mock impoliteness and informal language to construct a persona that stands in opposition to Hamilton, indexing values such as practicality, local knowledge, and anti-metropolitan, Scottish authenticity. At the same time, Francis's identity work helps him maintain his close relationship with Hamilton at times of separation. As Beal notes, "speakers or writers do not inevitably use the repertoires associated with their social class, geographical location and so

on, but make use of them to present themselves" (2020: 53). Francis could have used further Scots features to build his persona, for example the verbal forms or Northern Subject Rule that his early letters share with his father's writing. However, he is constrained by having to walk a middle path between the Standard English expected of a man of his social position and political ambitions, and the "unsophisticated" vernacular of the genuine Scot. In spite of the enregisterment of Scots and the understanding of (at least some) readers of what constituted Scotticisms, the only "safe" features available to him to express this identity are the lexical items, overt Scotticisms (Dossena 2005: 19–20) which had an acceptable circulation in the literature of Scottish writers at the time.

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