ARE THE BRETONS FRENCH?

THE CASE OF FRANÇOIS JAFFRENOU/TALDIR AB HERNIN

François Jaffrennou reached adulthood in 1900, in the heyday of both regionalism and pan-Celticism, at the end of a century of nation building. French by birth and by education, he spoke French and published in French. However he also wrote in and lived through other languages: Breton and Welsh, and preferred to go by a Breton name conferred on him by a Welsh Archdruid: Taldir ab Hernin.[1] Today he has no biography, and is out of print, but his hybrid œuvre, when approached multilingually, can reveal to us the tensions inherent in Breton identity.

One reason why the literatures of Brittany receive very little attention from scholars within French and francophone studies is that 'regional' literature has been dismissed as little more than a historical curiosity by scholars whose focus has remained firmly on the avant-garde, and on those writers sanctioned by the Parisian literary scene. Work on regionalism in literature from France has mostly relied on a centre-periphery model, concentrating on the peripheral author's position vis-à-vis Paris, centre of publishing and maker of literary reputations.[2] If attention has shifted away from Paris out onto the whole of *la francophonie* in recent decades, thanks to postcolonialism, both the regionalist and postcolonial approaches have limitations for understanding a writer such as Taldir. Postcolonialism has usefully taught us to consider all kinds of power relations and their imprint on literary texts, and it has brought some visibility to minority cultures, including Brittany.[3] However, early postcolonial criticism tended towards the monolingual, and 'even the linguistically mute'.[4] Also its focus on the *cause* of minor status frames the cultural battle 'vertically', causing us to overlook the 'lateral networks' *between* minority cultures.[5] Inter-Celtic relations have fallen outside the scope of both regionalism and postcolonialism, because of the centre-periphery model that is

the legacy of nineteenth-century nationalism. If the first generation of Bretons writing about Brittany in French in the 1830s (Brizeux, Souvestre, even La Villemarqué) have been described as 'writing to Paris',[6] then what we see in the case of Taldir appears to be an attempt to bypass the centre by 'writing to Wales'. But a comparative reading of his French, Breton and Welsh outputs reveals the complexity of what can be said to whom in a situation of power imbalance such as that between a minority culture and a dominant, centralizing State. Understanding the pressures of negotiating a hybrid Celtic-French identity will challenge our understanding of Frenchness, and force us to question the methodologies of our field.

Since the translingual turn, and the demise of the 'centre-periphery' model, the research terrain is becoming more hospitable to the output of a writer such as Taldir.[7] Shu-mei Shih and Françoise Lionnet have investigated the specific problems of minority cultures, and advocate a 'horizontal approach', one that 'brings postcolonial minor cultural formations across national boundaries into productive comparisons, and engage with multiple linguistic formations'.[8] Postcolonialism was 'overly concerned with a vertical analysis confined to one nation-state'.[9] Our centre-periphery blinkers hide the fact that networks of minoritized cultures produce creative interventions across and within national boundaries. With globalization we look less at the local against the centre, and more in terms of lateral non-hierarchical network structures.

Current work on regionalism transcends the 'centre-periphery' model and demonstrates that the 'regional' has its place in 'global' trends in literary studies; Cécile Roudeau argues that local literature must no longer be understood solely in relation to the nation state (the one to which it belongs), but rather be read on a global scale.[10] Valentina Gosetti similarly urges us to reclaim provincialism and to see the regional transnationally, and, taking inspiration from 'transcolonial' approaches, proposes the term

'transregionalism'.[11] Also inspired by postcolonialism, Alison Phipps has shown how the very idea of the multilingual needs to be decolonized.[12] Once we dispense with the hierarchy that puts State languages, colonial languages and otherwise prestigious languages above non-State or 'unwanted' languages, we see, as Gosetti puts it, that a speaker of Béarnais and French is every bit 'as translingual as Beckett'.[13] This way, to work on the local *is* to work on the global.

This article offers the output of Taldir around 1900 as a case of decolonized multilingualism. Rejecting the methodological nationalism and artificial monolingualism of French Studies it adopts a 'hierarchy-deprived translingual-writing lens' to look at Breton literature not only in its inevitable relationship with French but also in dialogue with Welsh, the language of another minority also located on the periphery.[14] Affirming Celticity and embracing Frenchness simultaneously is a delicate operation, but Taldir's way of being French was a reality for millions of French citizens. This fact has been obscured by our methodologies in literary studies because it is non-monolingual. By reading in a multilingual but decolonized way, we find here at the dawn of the twentieth century the postmonolingual condition. This material will allow us to ask: who are the Bretons? Are they Gauls, Celts or even Welsh? And also, more provocatively: are the Bretons French?

Taldir's work reaches out to a range of different cultures, both inter-Hexagonal such as the Félibriges, and pan-Celtic, such as Scotland and Ireland, but no dialogue is as prominent as that with Welsh culture. He claims to have known Wales since he was a child thanks to 'notre La Villemarqué', and that it was not difficult for him to learn the Welsh language.[15] Taldir made several trips to Wales, to attend *eisteddfodau* and other druidic gatherings (called *gorseddau*), but also to stay with the parents of his friend John Edwards in Blaenau Ffestiniog and visit poets and slate workers, publishing travelogues in Welsh, Breton and French.[16] In the period following the French Revolution, Romantic historians and writers

such as Breton-born Chateaubriand popularized the druids and mythologized the Celts. The Académie celtique was founded in 1805 to investigate the Celtic origins of France. While the Gaulish ancestry theory suited the needs of the new Republic, and shined a spotlight on Brittany as a last living link to France's past, the Bretons themselves gradually came to favour the theory of the emigration of Saints from Wales as their foundation story and explanation for their cultural difference.[17] By mid-century this idea had been popularized by Renan in his essay 'La Poésie des races celtiques',[18] and La Villemarqué had strengthened the special relationship with Wales through his visit, with a delegation of Bretons, to an *eisteddfod* in Abergavenny in 1838. Excitement peaked around 1900 with the Cardiff 'pan-Celtic' *eisteddfod* of 1899 which attracted a group of some twenty-five Bretons as well as representatives from Scotland and Ireland.[19]

This article interrogates the poetic output of Taldir around this time of peak Celtic interest (1899–1903) for what it tells us about Bretons' attitude towards Wales, but ultimately for how it helps us understand Frenchness and France. Rejecting the tradition of parallel text or 'en regard' bilingual editions, popular in Brittany (see contribution by Nelly Blanchard in this issue), the poems in his first collection in 1899 *An Hirvoudou* (The Sighs)[20] are in Breton only: 'Que le lecteur ne s'attende pas à y trouver la traduction française' he announces, dismissing French as a 'langue étrangère' on Breton soil. Though he signs himself here with his French name François Jaffrennou, his preface presents the writing as transnational (reminding us that some poems were previously published in Welsh reviews) as well as transregional and translingual (citing Provence). Thus the collection reaches both across and beyond the Hexagon.

His next book project, with Francis Vallée, *Gwerziou gant Abhervé ha Taldir*, was fully bilingual and printed as parallel text, though the Breton is accompanied by Welsh rather than French. [21] Placing Breton in parallel with French can be highly charged, and this kind of

translation out of minority languages into the languages of their oppressors has been dismissed as colonial.[22] The energy of this charge will be seized in the 1960s by the Breton poets of decolonization who use Breton-French parallel text in order to symbolize their generation's struggle to learn Breton as adults.[23] However, putting Breton in parallel with Welsh is an entirely different matter. These two languages are given equal status here, and the fact that the preface is Welsh-only implies a desire to bypass French culture altogether. Taldir reverses the tradition that began with the Breton revival in the 1830s whereby the Breton language had acted as guarantor of authenticity in books where the French language was more prominent.[24] Insofar as it seeks alternative dialogues and connections, this collection could be seen as a rejection of the Hexagon in favour of the more equitable context of the Celtic family.

Most of the *gwerz*[25] poems in this collection mention individuals whom Taldir and co-author Vallée met at the Cardiff National Eisteddfod of 1899: Hwfa Môn (the Archdruid who invested four of the Breton visitors as bards), Cochfarf (Mayor of Cardiff), Rev. Father Hayde who offered him accommodation in Cardiff, Lady Herbert, who welcomed them to Llanover. Other poems are dedicated to 'angelic' Welsh women such as Alice Matilda Langland Williams (1867–1950) (also known as Alys Mallt) and her sister Gwenfrida (Cate) Williams (also known as Gwenffrida ferch Brychan). The poem 'Rann ar c'hleze' (Split sword) describes one of the highlights of that visit: a ceremony to reunite the Welsh and Breton halves of a symbolic sword into a unified whole. The staging of this idea, first described in a poem by Lamartine, firmly connects the inter-Celtic journey of 1899 with the iconic trip to Abergavenny made by La Villemarqué and a delegation of Bretons in 1838, for which Lamartine's poem was composed.[26] Taldir's poem of rhyming couplets pivots on the idea of unity lost and refound, with repetition used to stress that the Bretons and the Welsh now form *one* country, have *one* heart, and are brothers who share *one* language. The image

of the sea, usually representing their separation by the twists of history, is redeployed here when the plural 'hon c'halonou' (our hearts) morphs into the singular 'eur galon', which contains 'a sea of true love'. The watery imagery continues in 'An Diou vag' (The two boats), a bipartate poem of two plus five quatrains with alternate rhymes, which contrasts the boat of the original emigration with the new, metaphorical boat of reunification with Wales under pan-Celticism. It opens with the emigration story, in which the Bretons were driven out of Wales to Brittany by 'ar Zaozon fall' (the bad English). The pain of exile is conveyed by the description of their oars 'hurting' the water, and their journey creating a sea of tears. In the second part, centuries later, the water of salty tears is transformed into 'dourik-splam' (clear, bright water) when a new ship comes into view. At its helm is Augusta Hall, Lady Llanover, who is described as the Bretons' true Queen, and Wales as their true country, 'far away from France', whose status is relegated to that of mere stepmother.

An Delen Dir (La harpe d'acier) followed in 1900, a tricultural book dedicated to 'both Brythonic countries', that is both the continental and insular Britains.[27] The very fact that the preface is written in French suggests a desire to reach out beyond Taldir's usual readership in this piece where he discusses Brittany's treatment by and relationship with France, and asserts his own connection with a wider 'Celtic' community. Referring back to his debut collection he thanks other Celts for publicizing *An Hirvoudou*, thus demonstrating in French and to the French that his Breton collection had met with success beyond France's borders. In more political vein he claims that he wishes to inspire defenders of the 'petite patrie', pointing out that Brittany freely united itself with France, and therefore deserves respect. However, the term '*première* patrie' (p. vii, emphasis added) is also used here for Brittany, allowing for the suggestion that France, labelled 'la grande nation', must come in second place, echoing the 'step-mother' image used in *Gwerziou*. He also directly criticizes the French government's policy on language in education, and the damage that has been done

to the psychological well-being of the Bretons by a process of '"débretonisation" et par là même de démoralisation graduelle' (p. vii), citing Wales as a model for Brittany to follow in this respect. This critique of the French treatment of Brittany, written in the language of the centre, stands out as bold, as on the whole Taldir seeks to avoid direct criticism of the dominant cultural force.

His next poetry collection *Barzaz/Les Poèmes de Taldir ab Herninn* was a much more ambitious and multifaceted project, containing translations of selected poems into Welsh, Occitan, Scottish Gallic and English, as well as French verse (and French prose at the foot of the page), an essay on Breton prosody, and two prefaces by leading Breton *littérateurs* Anatole le Braz and Charles le Goffic.[28] Though this collection reaches out to many cultures beyond Brittany, Wales is by far the most frequent point of reference. Welsh dedicatees of individual poems include Alice Mallt Williams, 'Barberousse' (Cochfarf), Lady Herbert, Llanover, his artist friend John Edwards, Hwfa Môn (Archdruid), R. P. Hayde, Gladys Edwards, Merthyr, T. Gwynn Jones, harpist Maggie Jones, Pontnewydd. Welsh is also the most represented language among the translations: those into Welsh by T. Gwynn Jones, and a smaller number translated out of Welsh, including the unacknowledged (here) 'Bro Goz', an adaptation of the Welsh national anthem 'Hen Wlad fy Nhadau' (Land of my Fathers), which would become an unofficial Breton anthem following its adoption by the Union Régionaliste bretonne in 1903. In this collection Wales's sacred ground is positioned as origin, as in 'Kimiad da vro-Geumbre' (Farewell to Wales, p. 124), dedicated to Lady Herbert, Llanover, in which the wind's farewell sigh to the Breton delegation as it leaves Cardiff names Wales as 'cradle': 'murmurant un adieu au berceau de la race des Bretons de Basse-Bretagne'. Wales is characterized throughout by the presence of Bards, Druids and the *gorsedd*, sweetness, purity and hospitality, while the men are strong and proud (p. 124).

Taldir reaches out to other Celtic cultures, not least through retellings of the Breton foundation myth. 'Ar C'helt' (The Celt, pp. 385–401) is a long, narrative pan-Celtic poem in rhyming couplets that is anchored in the Breton revival of the mid-nineteenth century thanks to the incorporation of a long footnote from Luzel's *Bepred Breizad* (1865), while also reaching beyond Europe through its dedication to Ange Mosher and Mrs. Webb (two American pan-Celtic enthusiasts). In this version of the foundation myth, a Celt is sent West by God after Babel, travelling as far as is possible from a starting point in Asia. When he finally reaches the sea, God tells him to fashion a boat from a hollowed oak trunk, and he crosses the sea. In 'Grande Bretagne' the Celts lead a happy existence and enjoy a reputation as great warriors and wise scholars, until the Saxons, represented by the elements – 'vent sauvage', 'tempête', 'feu' – strike, culminating in the murder of the bards by Hengist. The Bretons then go their separate ways, thereby creating six branches of Celtic culture. Centuries of struggle follow, until one day a 'Korn-boud', a traditional instrument, sounds through all six lands to awaken the sleeping Celtic race. Though their swords are no longer in their belts, the Bretons still have their harps, and bards and peasants of all classes are ready for a new fight against the Saxons, Francs, Latins and Gallo-Romans. The narrative jumps to the present day with a reference to the Dublin Celtic congress of 1901,[29] where a menhir split into six is a symbol of Celtic reunion. The strength of these present-day inter-Celtic ties is stressed: 'Celtes [...] dont les cœurs sont attachés par des liens de fer' (p. 399). They are engaged in a fight for Truth, now channelling their warrior energy into their song, led by an Archdruid whose unforgettable voice is like an 'éclat de tempête' (equalling the imagery used of the historic enemy), a 'voix de fer' (p. 399). There are indeed many calls to arms in other poems, but the imagery of the poems locates the enemy very much in the past, allowing Taldir to voice rejection of France in a very guarded way.

'Ar pemp c'hoar' (The five sisters, pp. 11–14) is more than a metaphorical portrait, in rhyming couplets, of the different branches of the Celtic family, as it reproduces the choreography of the actual procession of representatives from the Celtic cultures in Cardiff in 1899.[30] Dedicated to one of the participants, Fournier d'Albe, it describes a situation where the 'Saozon' (English) have ruined the Celtic idyll in the west, forcing the Celtic sisters to flee to their respective lands. Following centuries of oppression Wales raises its head and Brittany heeds the call. The poem affirms that though the sisters are separated they have one heart and one language: 'iez ar Bretonn!' (the Breton language). The same story is told in 'Breudeur omp' (We are brothers, p. 72), a poem arranged into three quatrains with alternate rhymes, dedicated to the ceremonial sword bearer and mayor of Cardiff. This poem is a dialogue with Welsh brothers over the sea, explaining that the Welsh and Bretons were one people before oppression changed this. They vow to speak in unison in the future, their language spurring them on to conquer their enemies, creating poetry as they wait for better times. The attitude towards this Wales of mountains, *eisteddfodau*, songs, harps, scenery, mountains, slate mines and religion is unequivocal, with Taldir himself driving forward a real desire for closer links: 'Daw Llydaw i ni etto'n nês / Drwy hanes Taldir enwog!' (Brittany will come still closer to us / Through the story of the famous Taldir).[31] But the attitude towards France is rather more ambiguous.

France is never the stated enemy; it seems that Taldir is striking a very careful balance by avoiding criticism of the State that has just banned the use of Breton by the clergy.[32] Though he complains about language policy (for instance in a footnote to his appended essay on Breton prosody), in his poetry it is always other people, such as the 'Saozon' (English) we met above, who are guilty of oppressing the Celts. A closer look reveals that only in certain carefully orchestrated contexts will France come in for criticism by Taldir. One of these contexts is the rural exodus, a theme present in a few poems in *Barzaz/Les Poèmes de*

Taldir.[33] In ‘Mélia’ (p. 190) a parallel is set up between the rural exodus and death as the mother of a Breton girl who is lost to Paris is described as mourning her daughter. The poet asks Mélia: ‘Aimes-tu la France?’, imagining her in a big city filled with bad people and traffic noise, in a fifth-floor room. The fact that she is ‘perdue’ makes him cry and ruins the beauty of his own natural environment, as if the very land of Brittany had been violated by her loss to the metropolis. On a metaphorical level things are quite clear – Mélia is Brittany, and the threat against her is named as ‘France’ – but the theme is safely that of the rural exodus, a respectable regionalist theme, that can be presented as nostalgic anti-industrialization, and not unpatriotic at all. It is a particularly safe way of criticizing France if you bring in one of the intellectual leaders of French regionalism, Maurice Barrès, to whom Taldir dedicates ‘L’Homme des bruyères’ (p. 360), a similar poem in which the abandoned land cries in grief as a country boy’s parents mourn.

Similarly safe is setting a poem that is critical of France at the time of the Revolution. In a long and extremely violent poem about the Revolution dedicated to Hervé de Saisy (a *chouan*), Paris represents the Revolution, and ‘gens venus de Paris’ are the enemy. Because this scenario is deep in the past it becomes possible here for the poet to ask God to protect Brittany, ‘ma patrie’, from enemies who are trying to kill its traditions (p. 266). The further Taldir travels back through the centuries, the more willing he is to call out Brittany’s enemies. In ‘An drouiz hag e vab’ (The druid and his son, p. 229), dedicated to L’Estourbeillon, the Romans are condemned for cutting out the bards’ tongues. In ‘Ar pemp c’hoar’ (The five sisters, pp. 11–14) the Bretons are preparing to fight a whole raft of enemies: Saxons, Francs, Latins, Gallo-Romans, but never actually the French. Indeed, the enemy most frequently named is the Saxons, conveniently the neighbour of the Welsh rather than the Bretons.

However, the evidence of his writing in Welsh suggests that the restraint shown in his French and Breton writing was calculated, perhaps for fear of appearing anti-French and losing the support of the influential literary types connected to the politically conservative Union Régionaliste Bretonne (notably Le Goffic and Le Braz). In a series of articles that he wrote in Welsh for the children's magazine *Cymru'r Plant*, Taldir is much less guarded about criticizing France. Here he complains that teachers were banned from teaching Breton in schools, and that children caught speaking Breton in school were sent to clean the toilets.[34] An account of the nineteenth-century suppression of Breton culture is given in the September 1898 issue; after 1870 in particular, he explains to his Welsh readership, the Republic started campaigning against 'our' language, and punished Breton soldiers by forcing them to cut their hair, to forget their language and to learn French through punishment and prison.[35] In an article about *pardons* in Brittany, he suggests that the reason why the Celts of Arvor (Brittany) sacrifice cockerels was because of their hatred of 'yr estron' (the foreign) represented by that symbol,[36] and the following month he writes about Brittany's poets being punished by 'teyrn Gâl' (king of Gaul) who is accused of atrocities.[37] The angry energy directed towards France is only seen in the texts in Welsh.

The fact that Taldir's French and Breton writing works so hard to avoid alienating any French readers who wished to appear modern and patriotic betrays the fact that the druidic, Celtic space that he describes in so many of these poems is a place full of tensions, as he works both within the impulse to reconcile the Celtic and the French and against it. The *Gorsedd*, which Taldir was instrumental in transplanting to Brittany, is the most telling context for these tensions.[38] The Breton *Gorsedd* was a dangerous transnational space to occupy since on the one hand it needed Welsh approval in order to function, as the Mother-Gorsedd, 'Gorsedd Beirdd Ynys Prydain', was in Wales. On the other hand the Breton druids needed to avoid offending Catholic sensibilities, as well as the authorities who could

withhold permission for these gatherings. Such was the nervousness of Breton *Gorsedd* organizers about being ridiculed by more francophile Bretons who thought their Celtic enthusiasm retrograde, anti-Catholic and anti-French, that their meetings were held in secret for the first few years.[39] The tensions between Frenchness and Celticity led to a series of compromises and a century of disputes and splits, including a power-struggle with Wales, another periphery, that exposes the inadequacy of a centre-periphery model that assumes that power emanates from the centre to be dispersed equally to all of the periphery. Being provincially Other in France requires a careful balancing act, or a special way of being French. Any expression of Breton nationalism is percieved as a threat to France's unity, unless that expression works hard to demonstrate that any difference remains safely on the level of the picturesque and that love of the 'petite patrie' is a one-way street leading to love of the overarching or 'grande' one.

Taldir seems to have been more reluctant to do this than many of his contemporaries, perhaps as a result of being fluent in Welsh and understanding a different Celtic nationalism more thoroughly. Other Bretons' trajectories offer a contrast with Taldir's descent into oblivion: Charles le Goffic entered the Académie française (see Mannaig Thomas's contribution in this issue), and Anatole le Braz's work remains in print today. It is worth noting that these are the two prominent figures in Breton culture, members of the Union Régionaliste Bretonne, and part of the Breton delegation to Cardiff, whom Taldir enlisted to write prefaces to his most ambitious poetry collection, despite their being much more sceptical than he was about Wales and the Gorsedd.[40] They both present Wales as the perfect example of a 'petite patrie' that is loyal and subservient to its centre. For Le Braz in his preface the Welsh are happily integrated with the English and have a shared purpose: 'les Kymris ont pu s'associer, avec un entier loyalisme, aux destinées de la grande patrie britannique, sans rien abdiquer de leur tempérament propre' (p. xi). Astonishingly, Le Goffic

writes the Welsh out of his preface, but when musing on Wales in his Welsh travelogue states that the ideal model for the Bretons is to be 'Français d'abord et, s'il est possible, Celtes ensuite: formule rassurante et qui concilie tout.'[41]

As we have seen, Taldir mainly stresses the emigration theory, but there is one mention of the idea of Bretons being doubly Celtic in 'Les Sépulcres de Carnoët' (p. 319). The opening line of his essay appended to the collection refers to 'Nos ancêtres les Gaulois et les Bretons', suggesting that he would like to have it both ways. Or is keeping both a way of feigning Frenchness? or of keeping a balance? while carefully confining his criticisms of French policies to the footnotes. By Le Goffic and Le Braz's measure, Taldir failed at gaining French approval. But he also failed at being Breton because he was rejected by twentieth-century Breton revivalists emerging from the *Gwalarn* school as too French, and tainted by his liking for something as unmodern as druidism and the *Gorsedd*. Even his poetry is dismissed in an important survey of Breton literature by Per Denez that states: 'the verse-makers such as Taldir went on verse-making, only just a little weaker than before'. The activist generation looked back, instead, to figures such as La Villemarqué and Le Gonidec (lexicographer, grammarian and translator of the Bible).

Conclusion

The unity suggested in the description 'French literature' was always wishful thinking, and translingual writing is not a recent phenomenon. Modern postcolonial writing does not have a monopoly on the postmonolingual condition. As McDonald and Suleiman observe, French literature is a cross-cultural narrative that has always been heterogenous. This case-study is an attempt to dismantle the monolingualizing tendencies of our field, and responds to the growing call, recently articulated by Natalie Edwards and Christopher Hogarth in *L'Esprit créateur*, for a 're-examination of the multilingual past and present of literature in French'.[42]

There is more at stake than a demonstration that 'peripheral' cultures do more than 'talk back' to the centre. The nation-building exemplified by France in the nineteenth century is what produced the periphery, and its Paris-centric homogenizing logic is what produced the centre-periphery paradigm.

The work of forging links with other stateless Celtic cultures could be considered a comparatively mild rejection of the Hexagon. Indeed such inter-Celtic enthusiasm could even be passed off as a rather colourful version of French patriotism, given how mainstream Gaulomania and Celtomania became in nineteenth-century France.[43] But Taldir makes full use of the options available to the multilingual subject, and his canny choices of what to say in which langugage and to whom, illustrate the practice of decolonizing. While Le Goffic and Le Braz, both very conciliatory with the centre, were chosen by him to frame his most ambitious poetry collection, his angriest energy towards France and Frenchness is only articulated in a language that will not be understood by the centre: Welsh. The tensions inherent in a Breton identity, so carefully negotiated by Taldir, are only fully revealed by a multilingual reading, recalling the case of North African texts written in French, the language of the ex-colonizer, which have been shown to 'resist and ultimately exclude the monolingual (French colonizer)', by being 'hybrid', or 'radically bilingual'.[44]

Taldir was operating in a transnational space, located outside 'the binary of the local and the global', where a dialogue between minority cultures certainly succeeds without any mediation by the centre.[45] Analysis of his outputs across languages and over time has shown, however, that this work still bears the imprint of that centre. His attempt to write Paris out of the picture by writing to Wales, while always keeping an eye on Paris, reveals some of the complexities of both Breton identity and Frenchness. The complexity of his attempt to write beyond Paris, or to deliberately bypass Paris, only becomes visible as we move beyond the 'national language literary ecology', and denationalize the discipline of French Studies.[46]

Only then will we cease to read Brittany as a peripheral Other to the Parisian centre, but accept its cultural productions as a site of multiple transnational and interdisciplinary dialogues.

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[1] The evolution of his name can be seen in the way he signs a series of articles in *Cymru'r Plant* in 1898. February: Jaffrennou, March: Jaffrennou (Taldir), June: Taldir. This article will refer to him as Taldir.

[2] Anne-Marie Thiesse pioneered this field within French Studies, with notably: *Écrire la France: le mouvement littéraire régionaliste de langue française entre la belle époque et la libération* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991), and *Ils apprenaient la France* (Paris: Edns maison des sciences de l'homme, 1998). See also Pascale Casanova, *La République mondiale des lettres* (Paris: Seuil, 2008) and, on Brittany, *Des littératures péripheriques*, ed. by Nelly Blanchard and Mannaig Thomas (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2014).

[3] First by historians such as Jack E. Reece, 'Internal Colonialism: The Case of Brittany', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2:3 (1979), 275–92, then in literature: Heather Williams, *Postcolonial Brittany: Literature between Languages* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007) and Marc Gontard, *La Langue muette: littérature bretonne de langue française* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2008), who claims: 'La littérature bretonne de langue française, à travers la question récurrente de l'identité, pose les mêmes problèmes que l'ensemble des littératures francophones' (p. 10).

[4] Charles Forsdick, 'Beyond Francophone Postcolonial Studies: Exploring the Ends of Comparison', *Modern Languages Open* (2015), 1–24 (p. 2).

[5] Shu-mei Shih and Françoise Lionnet, 'Introduction: Thinking through the Minor; Transnationally', in *Minor Transnationalism*, ed. by Shu-mei Shih and Françoise Lionnet (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2005), pp. 1–23 (p. 1).

[6] Heather Williams, 'Writing to Paris: Poets, Nobles, and Savages in Nineteenth-Century Brittany', *French Studies*, 57:4 (2003), 475–90.

[7] Jacqueline Dutton, '*État présent*: World Literature in French, *Littérature-monde* and the Translingual Turn', *French Studies* 70:3 (2016), 404–18.

[8] 'Introduction: Thinking through the Minor; Transnationally', p. 11.

[9] Ibid, p. 11.

[10] Cécile Roudeau, 'Écritures régionalistes (1800–1914): nouvelles échelles, nouveaux enjeux critiques', *Romantisme* 18:3 (2018), 5–15 (p. 8).

[11] 'We shall adopt a similar method at the regional level – a *transregional* approach, comparing these poets' productions in their hybrid interconnections, without settling on a stable cultural centre, but focussing on intertextuality and possible networks', Valentina Gosetti and Paul Howard, 'Poetry and Literary Language Barriers in Nineteenth-Century Italy: The Case of Three "Dialect Poets"', in *Le Plurilinguisme dans les littératures européennes du XIXe siècle*, ed. by Olga Anokhina, Till Dembeck and Dirk Weissmann (Zurich: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co KG Vienna, 2019), pp. 75–98, original italics. A major new project on transregionalism in French literature, 'Provincial Poets and the Making of a Nation', is currently being led by Gosetti.

[12] Alison Phipps, *Decolonising Multilingualism: Struggles to Decreate* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2019).

[13] 'Poetry Anthologists as Translingual Mediators: The Example of Adolphe van Bever's *Les Poètes du terroir*', *L'Esprit créateur*, 59:4 (2019), 40–53 (p. 42).

[14] Ibid, p. 42.

[15] *La Genèse d'un mouvement* (Carhaix: Imprimerie-Librairie du Peuple, 1912), pp. 32, 33.

[16] The *Gorsedd* of the Bards of the Island of Britain, founded by Iolo Morgannwg in 1792, leads the ceremonial aspects of the *Eisteddfod*, a competitive festival of Welsh culture. *La Genèse d'un mouvement* is a collection of pieces in French previously published in periodicals in 1899. *Eur wech e oa* (Carhaix: Éditions Armorica, 1944) contains his Breton-language travelogue, and his Welsh versions are 'Tro yng Ngogledd Cymru', *Cymru*, 17 (1899), 221–4, and 'Llanberis a Beddgelert: Fel y gwelodd Llydawr Hwynt', *Cymru*, 18 (1899), 41.

[17]Jean-Yves Guiomar, 'Quand les bretonistes répudièrent la Gaule (1840–1850)', in *Nos ancêtres les Gaulois*, actes du colloque international de Clermont-Ferrand, ed. by Jean Ehrard and Paul Viallaneix (Clermont-Ferrand: Association des Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, 1982), pp. 195–201. Guoimar shows how Bretonism gradually sheds the Gaulish theory with increasing vehemence each decade, culminating in the 1850s. See also Joseph Rio, 'Celtisme et constructions historiographiques en Bretagne, du XVI^{e} au XIX^{e} siècles', in *Le Celtisme et l'interceltisme aujourd'hui*, ed. by Yann Bévant and Gwendal Denis (Rennes: Tir, 2012), pp. 39–63. Rio draws out ways in which Gaulish narrative and emigration narrative were in opposition, in so far as the former grew out of French nationalism (p. 44). According to Rio this story 'entendait marquer une différence identitaire entre la France et la Bretagne, en ôtant à celle-ci son caractère gaulois, tout en lui affirmant une celticité des plus antique' (p. 63). For an extreme version of the argument that this 'difference' was invented, see Yves Le Berre, 'La littérature du breton, mère abusive et fille indigne de la littérature française', in *Qu'est-ce que la littérature bretonne? essais de critique littéraire XV^{e}–XX^{e} siècles*, ed. by Nelly Blanchard and Ronan Calvez (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006), pp. 15–32.

[18] Renan defines Breton-speaking Bretons as 'habitants de la Bretagne française parlant bas-breton, qui sont une émigration des Kymris, du pays de Galles', in 'La Poésie des races celtiques', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, n.s. 5 (1854), 473–506, published later in *Essais de morale et de critique* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1928), pp. 375–456.

[19] The special relationship between Wales and Brittany has received some critical attention, particularly from historians: Bernard Tanguy, *Aux origines du nationalisme breton*, 2 vols (Union générale d'éditions, 1977), pp. 87, 212; Jean-Yves Guiomar, 'Quand les bretonistes répudièrent la Gaule (1840–1850)', in *Nos ancêtres les Gaulois*, ed. by Jean Ehrard and Paul Viallaneix (Clermond-Ferrand: Association des Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, 1982), pp. 195–201; Guiomar, *Le Bretonisme: les historiens bretons au XIX^e siècle* (Mayenne: Imprimerie de la Manutention, 1987), p. 163 ff; Joseph Rio, 'Bretagne, Pays de Galles et celtisme dans *Les Bretons* de Brizeux', *Regards étonnés: mélanges offerts au Professeur Gaël Milin* (Brest: Les Amis de Gaël Milin, 2003), 527–42; Erwan Chartier-Le Floch, 'La Bretagne dans les relations interceltiques modernes, du panceltisme à l'interceltisme (1898–2010)', in *Le Celtisme et l'interceltisme aujourd'hui*, ed. by Yann Bévant and Gwendal Denis (Rennes: Tir, 2012), pp. 65–83; Chartier-Le Floch, *L'Histoire de l'interceltisme en Bretagne* (Spézet: Coop Breizh, 2013); Mary-Ann Constantine and Fañch Postic, '"C'est mon journal de voyage": La Villemarqué's Letters from Wales, 1838–1839' (2019), < https://hal.univ-brest.fr/hal-02350747/document >; Kathryn N. Jones, Carol Tully and Heather Williams, *Hidden Text, Hidden Nation: (Re)Discoveries of Wales in French and German Travel writing (1750-2015)* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020).

[20] *An Hirvoudou: gwerziou ha soniou / dibabet gand an Aotrou Jaffrennou* (Sant-Briek: R. Prud'homme, 1899), available digitally here: < https://archive.org/details/anhirvoudougwer00jaffgoog/page/n140/mode/2up >

[21] *Gwerziou gant Abhervé ha Taldir (brezouneg ha kemraeg kenver-oua-kenver*, *Er coffadwriaeth am eu taith yn Nghymru* (Sant-Brieg: F. Guyou, 1899), available digitally here: < https://archive.org/details/gwerziougantabh00jaffgoog/page/n22/mode/2up >. Vallée was a linguist and teacher of Welsh and Breton.

[22] M. Wynn Thomas explains how speakers of minority languages see in it 'a strategy of colonial appropriation, a means of bankrupting the language of its assets prior to liquidating its entire culture', in *Corresponding Cultures: The Two Literatures of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999), p. 114.

[23] See Heather Williams, 'Between French and Breton: The Politics of Translation', *Romance Studies*, 27:3 (2009), 223–33.

[24] In La Villemarqué's case the space occupied by the Breton on the page changed and shrank as the *Barzaz-Breiz* went though its editions. In the first two editions (1839 and 1846) the Breton was printed as parallel text, but by the definitive 1867 edition, the French was given prominence on the main part of the page, in a larger font. On Auguste Brizeux's use of Breton as symbolic guarantor of authenticity see Heather Williams, 'Translating Bretonness – Colonizing Brittany', in *Translation and the Arts in Modern France*, ed. by Sonya Stephens (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 30–44.

[25] A traditional Breton form, the *gwerz* is a narrative poem similar to a ballad.

[26] See Constantine and Postic, '"C'est mon journal de voyage"'.

[27] *An Delen Dir (La harpe d'acier): avec portrait de l'auteur, dessins et illustrations de MM. John Edwards et Émile Hamonic* (Saint-Brieuc: René Prudhomme, 1900), available digitally here: < http://bibliotheque.idbe-bzh.org/data/cle_71/An_Delen_Dir_.pdf. >

[28] *Barzaz / Les poèmes de Taldir ab Herninn*, *préfaces d'Anatole Le Braz et Charles Le Goffic; traductions en vers français de H. de La Guichardière, Yves Berthou et Le Garrec; en vers gallois de Thomas Gwyn Jones; en languedocien de Cavalier; en écossais et en anglais*

de Miss Carmichael et Fournier d'Albe, second edition (Paris: Champion, 1903), available online here: < http://bibliotheque.idbe-bzh.org/document.php?id=les-poemes-de-taldir-17752&l=fr >

[29] Planned as a follow-on to the Cardiff Eisteddfod of 1899, it was delayed by a year because of the Boer war.

[30] Five are mentioned here rather than six because the Isle of Man has been omitted.

[31] In 'Bienvenue à Taldir' (p. 402), translated from the Welsh of Barlwydon (Robert John Davies, 1853–1930), a poet he had met in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

[32] On the effect of the 1903 Combes law on Brittany see Caroline Ford, *Creating the Nation in Provincial France: Religion and Political Identity in Brittany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[33] With reference to Brittany see Leslie Page Moch, *The Pariahs of Yesterday: Breton Migrants in Paris* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2012).

[34] 'Ymdrech y Lydaweg', *Cymru'r Plant*, 7 (November 1898), p. 328.

[35] 'Ar ôl rhyfel 1870 â'r Almaen, y Werin-lywodraeth a ddechreuodd ei hymgyrchioni yn erbyn ein hiaith. […] anfonwyd hwynt [milwyr] i gaerau a chestyll y Dwyrain, lle yr oedd bywyd y milwyr yn galetach; gorfodwyd hwy i dorri eu gwallt hir, eu gogoniant; i anghofio tafodiaith eu pennau tud; i ddysgu y Ffrancaeg drwy gospedigaethau a'r carchar', 'Adfywiad a llethu', *Cymru'r Plant* 7 (September 1898), p. 282.

[36] 'Ni fyddai, ynte, yn beth rhyfedd fod Celtiaid yr Arvor, fel prawf o'r casineb oeddent yn goleddu at yr estron, yn lladd ei arwyddlun yng ngwleddoedd eu duwiau', 'Hen arferion', *Cymru'r Plant*, 7 (March 1898), p. 90.

[37] 'Y beirdd', *Cymru'r Plant*, 7 (April 1898), p. 117.

[38] For accounts of the establishment of the Breton *Gorsedd* see Philippe Le Stum, *Le Néo-druidisme en Bretagne* (Rennes: Ouest-France, 1998), and Geraint and Zonia Bowen, *Hanes Gorsedd y Beirdd* (Swansea: Barddas, 1991).

[39] The Breton *Gorsedd* was formed in secret on 1 September 1900, and not announced until the Dublin Congress 1901, for fear of religious objections. See Bowen, *Hanes Gorsedd*, p. 383.

[40] Their respective treatment of Welsh culture in their Cardiff travelogues would warrant its own article. Briefly, both Le Braz and Le Goffic attempt to distance themselves from what they see as the pageantry of the ceremonies at the *eisteddfod*, through mockery that can be traced through textual variants. See Charles le Goffic, 'Chez Taffy: quinze jours dans la Galles du sud', *La Revue hebdomadaire* 5:6–7 (May 1901), 448–68 and (June 1901), 22–50, 229–50, 369–95, 520–47, and Anatole le Braz's private travel notes, *Voyage en Irlande, au pays de Galles et en Angleterre*, ed. by Alain Tanguy (Rennes: Terre de Brume, 1999), as well as Le Braz, 'Pèlerinage celtique', in *La Terre du passé* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1901), pp. 315–33. A discussion can be found in Jones, Tully and Williams, *Hidden Texts, Hidden Nation*, pp. 99–111.

[41] 'Le Mouvement panceltique' in *L'Âme bretonne* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1912), pp. 372–432 (pp. 429–30).

[42] *L'Esprit créateur*, special issue on translingual writing in French, ed. by Natalie Edwards and Christopher Hogarth, 59:4 (2019), p. 10.

[43] Consider the Académie celtique (1805), and the works of historians the Thierry brothers and Henri Martin.

[44] The term is from Moroccan writer Abdelkebir Khatibi. See discussion in Samia Mehrez, 'Translation and the Postcolonial Experience: The Francophone North African Text', in *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti (London:

Routledge, 1992), pp. 120–38, esp. p. 132. For an application of the concept to Celtic material (Irish), see Maria Tymoczko, 'Translations of Themselves: The Contours of Postcolonial Fiction', in *Changing the Terms: Translating in the Postcolonial Era*, ed. by Sherry Simon and Paul St-Pierre (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2000), pp. 147–63.

[45] Shih and Lionnet, 'Introduction: Thinking through the Minor; Transnationally', p. 6.

[46] Michael Cronin, 'Translation Studies and the Common Cause', *Modern Languages Open* 1:23 (2018) pp. 1–7 (p. 4). For a discussion of how the discipline is denationalizing see Charles Forsdick, 'The Francosphere and Beyond: Exploring the Boundaries of French Studies', *Francosphères* 1:1 (2012), 1–17.