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BEATRICE GRIMSHAW'S PROVERB SPLICER AND HER  
ARTFUL USE OF PROVERBS

**Abstract:** The neglected Irish-born writer Beatrice Grimshaw (1870-1953) created a character in a novel who spliced English language proverbs. Putting such spliced proverbs into his mouth, Grimshaw both developed the character and inserted some bright spots of humor into the novel. Patrick O'Brian has created a proverb-splicing character that has attracted scholarly attention in his novels, but Grimshaw's use of this technique predated his by about 60 years. Grimshaw also used proverbs in other artful ways.

**Keywords:** Beatrice Grimshaw, Patrick O'Brian, proverbs, anti-proverb, proverb splicing.

The neglected Irish-born writer Beatrice Grimshaw (1870-1953) was a famous author 100 years ago. Though unknown by most today, her use of proverbs is noteworthy, particularly her splicing of proverbs in *The Sorcerer's Stone*. This article not merely lists her proverbs but shows her artistry in her use, and even creation, of proverbs.

Many authors have been noted for their skillful use of proverbs, with book-length studies written about the use of proverbs by some of them, e.g. Chaucer (Whiting 1934), Robert Browning (Smith 1989), Agatha Christie (Bryan 1993), Cervantes (Mieder 2016), to name only four. These writers have generally used standard proverbs, either intact or by quoting only a portion, counting on the reader to fill in the rest. Scholars have written hundreds of articles, books chapters, and dissertations about various authors' use of standard proverbs.

A small group of fiction authors have created original proverbs used in known cultures, including R. D. Blackmore in the United Kingdom (Kirwin 1973), Ignatius Mabasa in Zimbabwe (Veit-Wild 2009:696), Ernest Bramah for Chinese (Hawthorn 2016), E.M. Forster for English (Gish 1972), Waterhouse for

Persia (1990), and writing in French Prosper Mérimée created a proverb for Roma (Gypsy) culture (Northrup 1915:153). The Nigerian playwright Femi Osofisan also created English proverbs in a play set in Nigeria (Adeoti 2019:88).

Also, some authors have created original proverbs for imagined cultures, e.g. J.R.R. Tolkien (Boswell 1969, Stanton 1996, Trokhimenko 2003, Clinton 2014, Rowe 2016), Herman Melville (Unseth 2015), C.S. Lewis (Unseth 2011). Perhaps in the mind of the public the best known example of created proverbs in fiction is in the mouth of the movie character Forrest Gump, with more of his created proverbs being created by the screenplay writer Eric Roth and actor Tom Hanks than the novel's author, Winston Groom (Winick 1998:124). Instead of creating proverbs, some authors have taken existing proverbs and twisted them, creating anti-proverbs. For example, in the Harry Potter books, J.K. Rowling created such twisted anti-proverbs as "It's no good crying over spilt potion," derived from "It's no good crying over spilt milk" (Haas 2011: 38).

In contrast to these proverb creators, there has also been a smaller group of fiction authors who have creatively developed their characters by having them repeatedly splicing pieces of proverbs. This writing technique of splicing proverbs, and the users of this technique, has been studied by few scholars. The only notable scholarly work specifically on proverb splicing by fictional characters is Brunvand's study (2004) of the repeated humorous utterances of O'Brian's Jack Aubrey.

The most prolific and best-known author of fictional proverb splicing is Patrick O'Brian, creator of the proverb-splicing and proverb-mangling naval officer, Capt. Jack Aubrey. By the third of his twenty novels about Capt. Aubrey (*HMS Surprise*), his character is marked by splicing pieces of proverbs and generally mangling them, saying such things as, "There's a good deal to be said for making hay while the iron is hot" (Brunvand 2004: 155) and "I should never count the bear's skin before it is hatched" (Brunvand 2004: 155), "You cannot both have a stitch in time and eat it" (Brunvand 2004: 167). Some of his splicings are quite complex, "Only this morning I was thinking how right they were to say it was better to be a dead horse than a live lion.'... No, I mean better to flog a dead horse than a live lion... Yet even that's not

quite right, neither. I know there is a dead horse in it somewhere” (quoted in Brunvand 2004:163,164).

The splicing and mangling of proverbs is such a standard part of Aubrey's character that there has even been a parody volume written about Aubrey's adventures, complete with more spliced proverbs, such as “When in Rome eat the sauce of the gander” (Wenger 1999:115).

Certainly, other authors have spliced proverbs, such as John Austin, the philosopher of language, who has been noted for splicing proverbs in his non-fiction scholarly writing (Ricks 1992), e.g. “There are more ways of killing a cat than drowning it in butter” (Austin 1962:48) and “I am merely flogging the converted” (Austin 1970:56).

Wolfgang Mieder cites a splice from a magazine article title, “A proverb in the hand—is often worth a thousand words” (Mieder 1993:151, fn. 68). Proverb splicing has also been used by the poets, e.g. Paul Muldoon wrote “There's no smoke after the horse is gone” (Muldoon 2005:173), combining “There is no smoke without fire” and “Locking the stable after the horse is stolen.” Other poets who spliced proverbs include the Germans Fred Endrikat (1890-1942) and Hansgeorg Stengel (1922-2003) (Mieder 2019:186).

This present article focuses itself on the proverb splicings spoken by fictional characters, people who are characterized by the splicing of proverbs.

Spliced proverbs have been classified as a type of anti-proverb, such as “A penny saved gathers no moss” (Litovkina and Mieder 2006:40). Within the category of anti-proverbs, spliced proverbs share a prominent common feature with each other and form an internally cohesive sub-category of anti-proverbs. In the French Oulipo circle, they were known as “perverbes.” The pre-eminent writer using these perverbes was Harry Mathews (Mieder 2019). Mathews wrote a variety of very creative things using perverbes, but not in any novels.

As I finished this article, I found that a Nigerian scholar, Gbemisola Adeoti, had recently noticed the proverb splicing of Grimshaw's Marquis. He noted that a character in a play by Oladejo Okediji “reminds one of the eccentric Marquis in Beatrice Grimshaw's *The Sorcerer's Stone*” (2019:87). He noted that this Nigerian playwright once spliced four Yoruba proverbs together.

He translated the passage into English thus, with passages from the four proverbs set off in parentheses, and the proverbs numbered:

“(As we look at the partridge),<sup>1</sup> its feathers become brown more and more, but the woodcock (never changes its last year’s dress),<sup>2</sup> as (the robin wakes up, bubbling with energy).<sup>3</sup> Since yesterday morning, (the rain has crowded the pigeon together with)<sup>4</sup> corn.”

***Grimshaw’s proverb splicer***

There has not yet been scholarly notice of an earlier proverb splicing character in a novel by Beatrice Grimshaw, except the recent sentence by Gbemisola Adeoti, as just noted above (2019:87). Grimshaw was an Irish writer who left home in 1907 for the South Pacific, spending most of the rest of her life in Papua New Guinea and Australia. Grimshaw’s work was neglected and forgotten by the public for some decades. The scholarly world, however, has started to notice her: Laracy & Laracy (1977), Gardner (1977, 1985, 1987), Evans (1993a,b, 2006), Broderick (2004), Waldroup (2004), Fowler (2006), an explosion of work by Clare McCotter (2006a,b,c, 2007a,b,c,d, 2008a,b), Mahony and Patten (2016), and Reeve (2017).<sup>1</sup> Of all this scholarly attention, instead of addressing her writing technique and craft, much of it has followed today’s academic fascination with race, identity, other, and gender, topics related to Grimshaw as a European woman in New Guinea, writing about exotic cultures. There are no entries for Grimshaw in Mieder’s two-volume bibliography of proverb studies (2009).

When Grimshaw first went to the South Pacific in 1904, she wrote for the *Daily Graphic* of London, plus publicity pieces for ship companies and the government, such as articles and even a book promoting settlement on Pacific Islands. She soon began writing novels set in the region, beginning with *Vaiti of the Islands* (1907), then her most popular novel *When Red Gods Call* (1911b).

In 1913, what was probably her second most popular novel, *The Sorcerer’s Stone*<sup>2</sup> was published in the USA in serial form in *Everybody’s Magazine*. It was soon after published in book form in Philadelphia in 1914. In the novel, a French Marquis exploring the island of New Guinea frequently splices and mangles English proverbs. Her fictional French Marquis is in New Guinea to study

the occult and magic in New Guinea and hires a guide, a seasoned British explorer identified simply as Flint. The Marquis is the affable foil to the no nonsense seasoned British explorer who is always aware of his surroundings and very alert to dangers around them. By contrast, the Marquis is a romantic, and though a large man, ("six feet four, and weighs near eighteen stone"<sup>3</sup>), a very eager and adept solo dancer. The book contains two wonderful illustrations of the Marquis dancing, one between pages 18 and 19, the other between 120 and 121, depicting the romantic Marquis, dancing in a blissful rapture.

Grimshaw described him as "polyglot", and on one occasion "a perfect Tower of Babel" (p. 115). The Marquis' use of English is sometimes a bit short of standard, e.g. "What can I ever do to recompense you of my life that you have saved?" (p. 88). However, Flint always understands the Marquis' colorful English perfectly.

One of the ways Grimshaw develops the character of the eccentric Marquis is by his repeated splicing and mangling of English proverbs. His humorous splicing of proverbs is an endearing quirk of this likable, if laughable, character. His spliced proverbs are given in the table below, together with the page numbers where they appear, and my identification of the proverbs behind these splices.

<b>The Marquis' quotation</b>	<b>Proverb quoted at beginning</b>	<b>Proverb quoted at ending</b>
"A bird in the bush blows nobody good." (p. 62)	"A bird in the bush is worth two in the hand."	"It's an ill wind that blows nobody good."
"Our friend, Monsieur Mo, is not such a fool as he glitters." (p. 66)	"He is not such a fool as he appears to be."	"All that glitters is not gold."
"Faint heart gathers no moss." (p. 84, 85)	"Faint heart never won fair lady."	"A rolling stone gathers no moss."
"I am not the new broom that never rejoices." (p. 94)	"The new broom sweeps clean."	"It is a poor heart that never rejoices."

"A stitch in time is as good as a mile." (p. 97)	"A stitch in time saves nine."	"A miss is as good as a mile."
"The proof of the pudding sweeps clean." (p. 109)	"The proof of the pudding is in the eating."	"The new broom sweeps clean."
"Hope deferred makes a long turning." (p. 112)	"Hope deferred makes the heart sick."	"It is a long road that makes no turning."
"The shorn lamb must not halloo till it is out the wood." (p. 140)	"Heaven tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."	"Don't halloo till you are out of the wood."
"The pitcher that goes to the well is soonest mended." (p. 153)	"The pitcher will go to the well once too often."	"Least said is soonest mended."
"The rolling stone maketh the heart sick." (p. 181)	"The rolling stone gathers no moss."	"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick."
"Make hay while the iron is hot." (p. 184)	"Make hay while the sun shines."	"Strike while the iron is hot."
"They lock the stable door when the milk is spilt." (p.203)	"Lock the stable door after the steed is stolen."	"Don't cry over spilt milk."
"He said that there was no use crying over a bridge till you came to it." (p. 228)	"No use crying over spilt milk."	"Don't cross a bridge till you come to it."
"A cat may look at a king... but a king in gloves catches no mice." (p. 234)	"A cat may look at a king."	"The cat in gloves catches no mice."
"Procrastination is the steed that is stolen." (p. 263)	"Procrastination is the thief of time."	"Lock the stable door after the steed is stolen."
"It's a wise child that knows 'tis folly to be wise." (p. 267)	"It is a wise child that knows its own father."	"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

"Handsome is who tells no tales." (p. 273)	"Handsome is as handsome does."	"Dead men tell no tales."
"A dead man is out of the wood." (p. 273,274).	"Dead men tell no tales."	"Don't halloo till you are out of the wood."
"Fair and softly is always to be blessed." (p. 277)	"Fair and softly goes far."	"Man never is, but always to be blessed."
"Heaven tempers the wind to the lame dog." (p. 220)	"Heaven tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."	"Help a lame dog over a stile."

The Marquis' saying "Make hay while the iron is hot" is a good example of a spliced proverb. It is fascinating that this splices the same two proverbs as one of the examples from O'Brian's proverb-splicing Capt. Jack Aubrey, "There's a good deal to be said for making hay while the iron is hot" (Brunvand 2004: 155). Also, these same two proverbs were spliced previously by a university student in 1887 "Let us make hay while the iron is hot" (*L.F.U Stentor* 1897:100). The same two proverbs are also found spliced as "Make hay while the iron is hot" on a website devoted to such incongruent confluences of phrases, <http://www.confluences.com/pages/congruent.html>. It is clear that these two proverbs easily come to people's minds when splicing proverbs.

It is interesting to note that Grimshaw's Marquis uses pieces of some proverbs more than once. For example, he uses both halves of "The new broom sweeps clean," but each in a different context.

"I am not the new broom that never rejoices." (p. 94)	"The new broom sweeps clean."	"It is a poor heart that never rejoices."
"The proof of the pudding sweeps clean." (p. 109)	"The proof of the pudding is in the eating."	"The new broom sweeps clean."

Similarly, Grimshaw's Marquis uses both halves of "Lock the stable door after the steed is stolen," but in different utterances.

“They lock the stable door when the milk is spilt” (p.203)	“Lock the stable door after the steed is stolen”	“Don’t cry over spilt milk.”
“Procrastination is the steed that is stolen” (p. 263)	“Procrastination is the thief of time”	“Lock the stable door after the steed is stolen.”

In the following example, the Marquis uses the second half of the same proverb in two different contexts:

“A dead man is out of the wood.” (p. 273,274).	“A dead man tells no tales.”	“Don't halloo till you are out of the wood.”
“The shorn lamb must not halloo till it is out the window.” (p. 140)	“Heaven tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.”	“Don't halloo till you are out of the wood.”

### *Discussing proverbs overtly*

The Marquis’ splicing and mangling of proverbs is done so often and so spectacularly that Flint, the first-person narrator, is even described as consciously thinking about it. Sometimes he thinks about it inwardly and his thoughts about the proverb splicings are mentioned in his narrative, the most relevant portions underlined below. The first time, he thinks about the Marquis’ manner in his twisting of a proverb: “‘I am not the new broom that never rejoices,’ replied the Marquis, twisting the proverb in a superior tone” (p. 94). The second time, Flint described his feelings, “‘I wouldn’t have laughed at one of his upside-down proverbs for a case of iced champagne” (1914:122). In the third case, he refers to an earlier reply by the Marquis, “‘He answered with the mangled proverb I have already quoted” (1914:271). Later, he notices that the Marquis had quoted a proverb correctly: “‘Distant fields are always green,’ quoted the Marquis gravely; and I was so amazed to hear him quote a proverb right side up for once that I almost dropped the diamond” (1914:171,172).

Following one of the Marquis’ entertaining proverb splicings, Flint even talks to the Marquis about it overtly. The Marquis has just said, “The proof of the pudding sweeps clean as your excellent



British proverbs make it, and I decide to act,” and Flint replied echoing the splicing of proverbs, “Well your proverbs are original, Marky [Flint’s joking form of “Marquis”], but I don’t know that they haven’t a queer sort of sense of their own. And a pudding this size ought to sweep most things clean—if you will have it that way” (1914:109-110).

This represents another parallel with O’Brian’s technique with Capt. Aubrey, having the proverb splicer’s interlocutor join in with the splicing of proverbs, such as when the ship’s doctor replies to Aubrey, “it is your rolling stone that gets the worm” (Brunvand 2004: 166).

Twice, Grimshaw’s Marquis speaks of proverbs as a labeled set. One is in the section just quoted, “The proof of the pudding sweeps clean as your excellent British proverbs make it, and I decide to act” (100,101). The other example is even more entertaining, as the Marquis not only splices proverbs, he also humorously mislabels the genre:

“Even if the end shall be death, then my friend, a dead man is out of the wood. I love your English axes.”

“‘Saws, I suppose you mean,’ I said.”

“I knew it had to do with tools; it is altogether the same” (1914:273,274).

Having misquoted and spliced two proverbs, the colorful Marquis speaks of “your excellent British proverbs” (1914:109). The use of the plural form of “proverb” is intriguing. Did the Marquis mean that he was aware he was splicing pieces of two proverbs in the conversational moment, or did he refer to “your excellent British proverbs” as a general collective? Or was Grimshaw cleverly laying out a grammatical ambiguity for the alert reader?

Though not a proverb, Grimshaw also puts another subtle piece of almost-correct English in the mouth of the Marquis. Out in the New Guinea bush, far from luxuries and familiar supplies, the Marquis says he wants, “Some many tins of meat and a jeremiad of champagne” (1914:228). Actually, he is thinking of a “jeroboam of champagne”, a jeroboam consisting of 4.5 liters. The negative “jeremiad” clashes humorously when linked to “champagne” with the luxurious intention of a “jeroboam.” This makes Grimshaw’s little joke of the Marquis’ colorful errors in English extra sweet to those who catch it.

In contrast to the colorful Marquis, the no-nonsense guide, aptly named Flint, uses only one proverb. As would be expected, Flint uses it in its standard shape, “Every man to his taste” (1914:292).

***Grimshaw’s usage of proverbs in other writings***

Though Grimshaw entertained readers of *The Sorcerer’s Stone* with the use of spliced proverbs, she also knew how to use non-spliced proverbs effectively in her writing, in both fiction and nonfiction. Many times in her other writings, she used proverbs more or less intact.

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” (1923:172).

“A miss is as good as a mile; If you are dead, you cannot make a fuss, and if you are alive, where is the reason?” (Grimshaw 1912:5).

“Never cross a bridge till you come to it, is my motto” (1911b:12).

“Don’t cross bridges before we come to them.” (1915:189).

“‘God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.’ It was Sterne who said that, and he ought to know, for with all his genius, he was weak to stand against the winds of life. I think God does so temper the cruelest of all winds for us who are shorn of the strength and the splendours of other men” (1920:188).

“Sailors kept a good look out on the visitors, for it was clear that these latter meant to make hay while the sun shone, and were bent on carrying off anything that was not nailed down.” (1910:226).

“Young Britons will continue to do what they are advised not to, and ships will carry out many a man to the far wild countries... ‘Sink or swim’ is the motto of this kind of colonist, and if he often goes under, he very often floats on the top, and comes in on the flood-tide of good luck. ‘Fortune favours the brave’ — a proverb none the less true, because of its age.” (Grimshaw 1908:62).

“Why does the Papuan miner so strenuously endeavor to upset the old proverb about truth being stranger than fiction? He does not succeed, for nothing that we can imagine is half so strange as the things that have really happened to him.” (Grimshaw 1911a).

Autobiographically she wrote, “For two months I occupied the little house among the palms, and was happy. ‘Can a man be more than happy?’ runs the Irish proverb, and answer there is none.” (1908: 197).

“A miss is as good as a mile, for all me, ‘specially when it's nine hundred mile.” (1907:50).

“Least said, soonest mended.” (1922:95).

“Facts are cold-blooded things.” (1916:211), a variant of the more standard “Facts are stubborn things.”

### *Partial proverbs*

She realized that readers recognize an appropriate phrase from a proverb and associate it with the standard form of the proverb. She exploited this in *The Sorcerer's Stone*. Knowing that readers will recognize part of a proverb, in other writings she often used part of a proverb for effect, knowing that readers would link it to the whole proverb.

“There's a proverb about gift horses and mouths.” (1923:51).

“The ill wind has blown good to planters and settlers.” (1908:127).

“They would be set adrift in one of the boats, as soon as the schooner was clear of the land, so that they should tell no tales.” (1907:232).

“Not being quite such a fool in this matter as he looks.” (1908:93).

Grimshaw took the proverb “If youth but knew, if old age but could” and played with the first half in the beginning of a story about a young adventurer: “They hint a lie who say, ‘if youth but knew’” (1916:5). This was followed in the next paragraph by, “You feel the round gold coin of youth held tight within your

hand, and know that there is nothing in this world it may not buy. Youth knows! But Paul Corbett, aged twenty-two...knew, that day. But what is the use of knowing when you may not do?" (1916:6).

***Politics and a proverb?***

It is intriguing that Grimshaw used the proverb "A cat may look at a king" in at least three of her novels. She used it once in *The Sorcerer's Stone*, as seen above, spliced to another, "A cat may look at a king... but a king in gloves catches no mice." She also used this same proverb, without being spliced, in *Vaiti of the Islands* (1908:181). The same proverb is also found in her novel *When the Red Gods Call*, with a clever parallelism following, "A cat may look at a king, and an unlucky dog of a trader, at a queen, without asking permission, any day" (1911:172). Is it possible that Grimshaw, originally from Ireland, was nursing sympathies for Irish independence (not realized until 1920)? Did she repeatedly use this proverb thinking of the kings in London ruling over Ireland, Edward VII until 1910 and then George V? Maybe she was hinting that the British kings were not so high and mighty after all, even a cat could look at them.

***Created proverb***

As was mentioned earlier, a limited number of authors have been noted for creating proverbs in their fiction for writing about real cultures. Grimshaw can now be added to the list. In *My Lady of the Island*, the first-person narrator describes an original proverb in the speech of his friend Gore: "Things will dry straight if you only let 'em alone. That was one of Gore's pet proverbs" (Grimshaw 1916:212).

***Non-proverb phraseology***

In addition to her artistic uses of proverbs, Grimshaw also artfully played with another piece of phraseology, the familiar phrases of a 19<sup>th</sup> century "well-known nonsense rhyme."

*"I wish I was a cassowary  
On the plains of Timbuctoo,  
For then I'd eat a missionary,<sup>4</sup>  
Arms, legs and hymn book too."* (1914: 300)

This is in chapter VII, the final chapter of *The Sorcerer's Stone*, titled in a foreshadowing way as "Concerning a cassowary and a hymn book."

The narrator, Flint, and the Marquis had finally reached a port city, secretly carrying the large gem that was the sorcerer's stone. There in Port Moresby the Marquis became infatuated with a woman of uncertain origins and character. The woman has a pet cassowary (a very large bird of New Guinea, related to the ostrich), a first link to the rhyme. Smitten, the romantic Marquis refers to her as "beautiful missionary" (1914:301), creating a second parallel with the missionary of the "nonsense rhyme."

Dancing, the Marquis exclaimed, "'Beautiful missionary!' he said, pausing in his dance, 'do you think the savage animal [cassowary] would eat you?'... 'If it will not eat the lovely missionary, will it eat the lovely hymn book too?' (1914:301). The Marquis' conversation goes on to make more references to the poem.

With Flint and the Marquis watching, the cassowary then suddenly snatches and swallows a miniature hymn book, another link to the poem. Seeing the cassowary swallowing the unexpected large object, Flint realizes where the "beautiful missionary" is keeping their missing gem.

The last line of this poem has been found in varied form. Noteworthy sources long after her novel have a form that assumes the missionary to be male, "*Cassock, bands and hymn book too*" (Bartlett 1968:617, Browning 1951:313, Knowles and Partington 1999:817). However, there were other forms of the fourth line in circulation when Grimshaw was young, the *Literary World* having given five different versions in 1892 (Table Talk 1892:309). Grimshaw used her version of the poem that did not mention clerical vestments which would have been identified only with male missionaries. Rather, her version mentions only "arms" and "legs", perfectly applicable to the shapely arms and legs of the woman the Marquis addressed as "beautiful missionary."

Again, Grimshaw cleverly twists and artistically uses an established phraseologism in *The Sorcerer's Stone*.

### **Conclusion**

Grimshaw cleverly used the repeated proverb splicings by the Marquis to develop the character and also entertain the reader. In

addition, she created a proverb in *My Lady of the Island*. “Things will dry straight if you only let ‘em alone” (Grimshaw 1916:212).

It is likely that O’Brian’s proverb splicing Capt. Jack Aubrey will remain the best-known fictional proverb splicer. Aubrey’s proverb splicing carried on over 17 novels, O’Brian’s novels sold well, and the proverb splicing Capt. Aubrey received extra exposure when the movie *Master and Commander: Far Side of the World* was released in 2003. Brunvand’s article about Aubrey’s proverbial struggles (2004) has secured Aubrey a place in the academic study of fictional proverb (mis)users.

However, this article has shown that it is worth noting the earlier comedic proverb splicings of Beatrice Grimshaw’s Marquis, also from the far side of the world. She is known for her novels, but this article has also highlighted her skills as an author at the level of crafting phrases and sentences, with a focus on her handling of proverbs.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> It is odd to me that I am describing the proverb use of such an obscure author, while there are still no published studies devoted to the proverb use of such established female authors as Jane Austen or any of the Bronte sisters, according to Mieder’s two-volume proverb bibliography of proverb studies (2009).

<sup>2</sup> The Harry Potter novel that J.K. Rowling had originally titled *The Philosopher’s Stone* was marketed in North America as *The Sorcerer’s Stone* in 1998. Those at the American publisher may possibly have been aware of Grimshaw’s earlier use of the title, but there was no confusion for the public since Grimshaw’s novel was by then forgotten and unknown.

<sup>3</sup> Fourteen stone is 252 pounds or 114 kilos.

<sup>4</sup> Having been a missionary in Ethiopia, I find this less amusing than most readers.

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