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“Colonised by Wankers”
Postcolonialism and Contemporary Scottish Fiction
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English Summary

This study explores the postcolonial in Scottish fiction in order to investigate the underlying discursive power relations that shape the Scottish literary imagination. Even after devolution and the establishment of a Scottish Parliament the contemporary Scottish novel negotiates national identity between the poles of a Scottish and a British identity. This negotiation focuses on the conflict with England, which is considered to be a hegemon, dictating cultural norms.

In the 21st century, the term ‘postcolonial’ has been extended to describe unequal power relations stemming from imperial or neo-colonial dominance. Thus, postcolonial theory is used in this study as a reading strategy within the framework of discourse analysis. Frantz Fanon’s theories of abjection and inferiority are drawn upon in particular. In the case of Scotland, any self-image becomes inferiorised by mystification and exoticisation that become visible in a number of limiting stereotypes.

Employing postcolonial theory can be proven to be fruitful, because the analysis can reveal power relations which marginalise Scotland, either through England’s neo-colonial influence or through a new globalised imperialism. Adapting the concept of the subaltern, parallel to other postcolonial literatures, in Scottish literature the postcolonial serves as resistance and strategy of ‘writing back’.

Characterising Scotland as an English colony sparks much debate, since Scotland is often considered to be complicit in the British imperial endeavours. The historical perspective of England and Scotland’s relationship underlines the contested nature of Scotland’s status as caught between the desire to stabilise a joint British identity on the one hand and to strive for independence on the other. The analysis of the changing evaluation of the Act of Union in 1707—ranging from being seen as a contract between equals to a feeling that the Scots were blackmailed into accepting the Union—highlights the political potential in constructing a national identity based on one particular interpretation of history. The feeling that the Scots were not appropriately represented within the British state was reinforced after the failed devolution referendum in 1979 and the rise of the Thatcher government. The perception of a ‘democratic deficit’ resulting from the fact that voters in Scotland could not effectively influence the results of general elections led to an upsurge of Scottish nationalism, and

consequently a weakening of unionism. The fact that Scottish nationalism has remained an important force in Scottish society was highlighted by the independence referendum that took place in 2014 despite the successful devolution and the establishment of a Scottish Parliament in 1999. Furthermore, the split vote of the 2014 referendum reveals that Scotland is still caught between a British and a Scottish identity, a fact that is also reflected in its fiction.

The analysis presented here takes Irvine Welsh's novel *Trainspotting* (1993) as a starting point. The analysis will start by considering this novel as one example of texts which explicitly term Scotland an English colony in chapter three. The quote from the novel that Scotland is "colonised by wankers" underlines the feelings of inferiority and abjection which are sparked as a reaction. This is contrasted with Kevin MacNeil's novel *The Stornoway Way* (2005), which focuses on the Isle of Lewis as a marginalised region within Scotland: written after devolution, this novel fails to imagine Scotland as part of a global network, and in addition to English domination criticises a globalised imperial influence.

The following chapter deals with postcolonial language use and demonstrates how language in the Scottish novel can function as appropriation and abrogation. Scottish dialect is constructed to be inferior to an English standard. The analysis takes Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* and James Kelman's *How Late it Was, How Late* as case studies.

Class as a category is often linked to the usage of dialect. In Scotland, social class is closely linked with national identity: the communal identity is perceived to be predominantly working-class. After scrutinising narratives of Scottish working-class childhoods in James Kelman's *Kieron Smith, Boy* (2008) and Des Dillon's *Itchycooblue* (1999), the analysis turns to novels that deal with a newly emerging underclass of the unemployed working class, for instance Irvine Welsh's novel *Marabou Stork Nightmares* (1995).

In Scottish fiction, gender is a productive category to consider in a postcolonial analysis: women find themselves in a doubly marginalised position as women and as Scots. Men in turn are confronted with the stereotype of the Scottish 'hard man' and are limited by this stereotypical characterisation. By analysing Andrew O'Hagan's novel *Our Fathers* (1999), the study identifies three paradigmatic models of Scottish masculinity, represented by three generations in the novel, and demonstrates how these are influenced by the perception of Scotland as postcolonial. Jackie Kay's novel *Trumpet* (1998), in contrast, represents an innovative perspective on gender identity. Drawing from Bhabha's concept of a third space, the novel questions the validity of binary concepts of identity, which in turn also questions the construction of the Scottish as colonised and the English as coloniser.

Space and place are analysed in the following chapter. The Scottish Highlands are used as a paradigmatic landscape for Scotland. This image is even perpetuated by Scots themselves and thus supports a homogenised image that facilitates colonial domination since it offers itself to an oversimplified binary of civilised England and 'wild' Highlands. The first part of the chapter focuses on Alan Warner's *The Man Who Walks* (2002), which uses deviant characters to write back to these limiting stereotypes of the Highlander as a 'noble savage'. The second part of the chapter focuses on the Scottish city and Scottish crime writing, which prefers an urban setting. The study demonstrates that the genre of crime fiction in Scotland can as a whole be characterised as postcolonial because it is modelled on the American hard-boiled tradition rather than on the English 'Golden Age' tradition. Denise Mina's *Garnethill* (1998), set in Glasgow, and Ian Rankin's *Set in Darkness* (2000), set in Edinburgh, are used to illustrate the postcolonial aspects of urban writing that is closely interwoven with the image of Scotland as collectively working-class and as perpetually ambivalent. The third part of the chapter focuses on travelling and border crossing as a means to reflect on Scottish identity. From a postcolonial angle, this analysis can demonstrate that travelling is taken as an opportunity to question outside characterisations as well as self-images.

The final chapter of analysis focuses on race as a determining category of identity construction and questions in which ways writers with diverse ethnic backgrounds can be integrated into a Scottish canon that often defines national identity in contrast to its others. Both novels examined in this chapter demonstrate a transcendence of national identity constructions and thus can imagine a hybrid Scottish identity. Suhayl Saadi describes music and the technique of sampling as the foundation for the hybrid identity of his protagonist in *Psychoraag* (2004) and Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* (1999), in turn, focuses on religion as primary source of identification, advocating a globalised community of Muslims.