

David Martin-Jones:
Scotland: Global Cinema. Genres, Modes and Identities.
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“Contrary to what you might expect from its title, this is not a book about Sean Connery.” With these words of caution or simple information, David Martin-Jones introduces *Scotland: Global Cinema*. But if the book is not about Sean Connery, it is not about Scottish national cinema either, at least not exclusively. Readers eager to learn more about the currently most successful Scottish director, Danny Boyle, and his films *Shallow Grave* (1994) and *Trainspotting* (1996)—not to mention *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), which may have premiered after the book went into print, though—or, e.g., Andrea Arnold’s Cannes winner *Red Road* (2006), are, therefore, advised to look elsewhere. For although David Martin-Jones does mention them, *Scotland: Global Cinema* has a different focus. In Martin-Jones’ own words, “It is, rather, a book about the range of filmmaking in Scotland in the 1990s and 2000s. It examines this extremely productive period in a global context, exploring the different identities on offer in the various fantasy Scotlands created by filmmakers from around the world” (p. 1).

Through analyses of assorted genre films—ranging from comedy and horror to romantic comedy and the gangster film to Bollywood and road movies, as well as the art film—which are either “set in Scotland or use Scotland as a film set” (p. 15), David Martin-Jones aims to discuss “the different imagined, or [...] fantasy Scotlands that are constructed by different genres and modes of filmmaking and the various types of identities they explore” (pp.18-19), stressing that “the diverse genres and modes collectively illustrate the lack of one singular, ‘authentic’ Scottish identity in favour of many cinematic Scotlands” (p. 19).

Scotland: Global Cinema acknowledges its debt to previous works on Scottish film and identity, such as the anthology *Scotch Reels* (1982, ed. Colin McArthur) and, not least, Duncan Petrie's two major books on the subject, *Screening Scotland* (2000) and *Contemporary Scottish Fictions* (2005). But at the same time, David Martin-Jones takes his cue from Mette Hjort's investigation of Danish cinema in *Small Nation, Global Cinema* (2005) and examines "Scotland as a 'global cinema'", i.e., "both a youthful film industry with a global impact and a small nation in which the global film industry makes films [...] As a global cinema, Scotland is understood as a country that exists in the midst of, and interjects in various ways with, the increasingly decentralised flows of film production and distribution that circulate the globe" (p. 11).

Where previous accounts of film and Scottish identity were primarily concerned with the archetypal, pre-industrial emblems of mythical Scottishness, which pervaded especially earlier cinematic representations of Scotland, from Highland Tartanry, as displayed in, e.g., Vincente Minnelli's musical *Brigadoon* (1954), to small, isolated Kailyard communities as seen in, e.g., the classic Ealing comedy *Whisky Galore* (Alexander Mackendrick, 1949), David Martin-Jones draws attention to more recent films, Scottish as well as foreign, most of which either rework the old myths or address contemporary Scottish identities (in the plural).

The book's transnational take on filmmaking in and on a specific nation is both fascinating and timely in an age when most films do indeed transcend the national boundaries within which film studies have become accustomed to exploring them. This is true not least for European films which, on the one hand, now tend to assemble financing from a number of different countries, and, on the other, are both addressing "national imagined communities" which are increasingly transnational, diasporic, etc., and aiming at a global audience through the international festival circuit or DVD/VOD market.

Some of the book's many analyses do indeed address these transnational aspects in a most illuminating way. Especially where contemporary Scottish identities are concerned, David Martin-Jones offers very enlightening analyses of the Scottish based Indian diaspora in *Nina's Heavenly Delights* (Pratibha Parmar, 2006), of Glasgow's transnational gangster milieu in *American Cousins* (Don Coutts, 2003) and of Scottish youth between a dying national culture and not only global corporate culture but also transnational commitment in the Bill Forsyth comedy *Gregory's Two Girls* (1999). And although the transnational element may be less evident in what the book terms the "social realist melodrama" *On a Clear Day* (Gaby Dellal, 1999), its analysis of the film's representation of post-industrial male identity is equally fascinating.

Scotland: Global Cinema also contains chapters on horror movies set in Scotland, primarily *Dog Soldiers* (Neil Marshall, 2002) and Loch Ness monster movies such as *Loch Ness* (John Henderson, 1996) and *The Water Horse* (Jay Russell, 2007). Contrary to the films exploring contemporary life in Scotland, David Martin-Jones points out that the horror films tend to present Scotland as a primal wilderness inhabited by werewolves and monsters, albeit, in the case of *Dog Soldiers* with a subversive turn—viz. the return of those excluded from history.

Most of the horror films, however, are not Scottish productions, which the book does mention, but in general it does not draw a clear line between indigenous films and non-Scottish representations of Scotland. Granted, the very transnationalism which the book explores makes it increasingly hard to draw such a line, but especially where identities are concerned, it does seem important to distinguish between films with some affiliation to, in this case, Scotland and those without such a connection, i.e., between Scots taking a look at their nation and themselves, and outsiders taking a look at Scotland. The trouble that arises when you do not make this distinction is brought out by the book's use of the concept of "auto-ethnography", which David Martin-Jones has borrowed from Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992). While auto-ethnography is indeed both an exciting and productive approach to national cinema, it simply does not apply to, in this case, non-Scottish representations of Scotland—and it does not help to put the "auto" in brackets, as David Martin-Jones does (p. 18) with regard to, e.g., *Brigadoon* and *Rob Roy* (Michael Caton-Jones, UK/USA, 1995).

Also, as fascinating as each of the individual analyses are, *Scotland: Global Cinema* does not to any significant degree compare the individual analyses or draw conclusions across the different genres, just as it does not distinguish clearly between different aspects of transnationality. Chapter 3 entitled "Bollywood: Non Resident Indian-Scotland" is a case in point. Here, the transnational element is related both to the endeavours on the part of the Scottish Executive to promote Scotland as an attractive location for filmmaking and to films addressing identity issues related to the Indian diaspora in Scotland. So, on the one hand we have a Bollywood movie like *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (Karan Johar, 1998), which contains a dream sequence in which the protagonists sing and dance around an old Scottish castle—and on the other hand, we have *Nina's Heavenly Delights*. Other than the dream sequence, which is not even identified as taking place in Scotland, *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* is set in Mumbai among Indians living in India. It may target Indians residing outside India, including those living in Scotland, and the dream sequence does of course present a certain image of Scotland, albeit only to those spectators who are able to identify the castle as Scottish. But the relationship between the transnational identities addressed by a film like *Nina's Heavenly Delights* and Bollywood's transnational operations seems very weak indeed.

And while the adopted genre approach does in some cases—like the horror genre—allow David Martin-Jones to draw some interesting, if isolated conclusions, in other cases it entails generic discussions which seem unnecessary to an investigation of cinematic representations of Scotland and Scottish identities. In order to be able to include the films of Ken Loach, for instance, the book argues that *Carla's Song* (1996) and the director's contribution to *Tickets* (2005) should be considered road movies, whereas *Ae Fond Kiss* (2004) is classified as a social realist melodrama. That may or may not be, but do the Loach films' generic affiliations really matter in a discussion of national and transnational identities?

Nevertheless, *Scotland: Global Cinema* is an engaging book that should appeal to students and scholars interested in national and transnational cinemas. To those with a specific

interest in Scottish cinema, however, I would recommend the book only as a supplement to, e.g., those of Duncan Petrie.

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