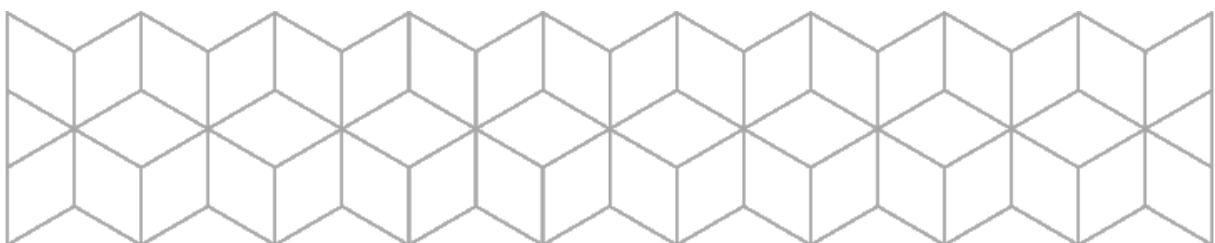


EXAMINATION

Course code: SFE21213	Course: Introduction to Colonial and Postcolonial Literature / Innføring i kolonial og postkolonial litteratur
Date: 2 December 2019	Duration: Five Hours
Permitted sources: English/English dictionary	Lecturer: Dr Melanie Duckworth
The examination: The examination papers consist of five pages inclusive this page. Please check that the examination papers are complete before you start answering the questions.	
Date of announcement of the examination results: The examination results are available on the Studentweb no later than two workdays after the announcement of the examination results www.hiof.no/studentweb	



The Exam consists of two sections. Answer both parts.

Section One: Short Answer Questions 50%

Answer five of the following questions. Mark them clearly with the question number. Answers should be 3-4 sentences long. (But can be slightly shorter or longer if you wish.)

Each answer is graded A-F and the final grade of this section is the average of questions answered. The answers I have provided are not exhaustive but give an idea of the kinds of things the student should be aware of. The best papers will display a broad and detailed understanding of a range of aspects of the course material. The notes I have provided on each question are indicative, not exhaustive.

1. In *The Secret River*, how are plants involved in the colonial endeavor?

Colonists clear scrub, take away the yellow daisies that the Aboriginals were cultivating as food, plant their own crops – partly to feed themselves, but also to stake a claim on the land and claim ownership, colonists cut down trees and use them to build fences, colonists import plants to remind them of home – eg the daisies Sal receives as a present, and the rose bushes and other plants that surround Will and Sal's house at the end of the narrative.

2. What were Chinua Achebe's main criticisms of *The Heart of Darkness*?

Racist as he does not depict the Africans as people with a history and a culture, but only as babbling representations of darkness, distant kin to the white man, aligned with their dark subconscious

3. Dipaka Nath writes: "Stories about feral children, as about animals, most often divulge more about the political and cultural contexts in which they are written and read, and little about the ostensible subjects of the stories themselves." What do Rudyard Kipling's "Mowgli" stories reveal about the colonial context in which they were written?

Nath argues that Kipling's character Mowgli doesn't actually tell us very much about the experiences of real 'wild children', of which there were several, both in Europe and in India. Instead, his status as both 'more human than the animals' and 'wiser than the indigenous people', enables Kipling to write about India in a way that ignores the indigenous Indian population, and establishes direct authorial control over the jungle itself.

4. Postcolonial criticism and ecocriticism have been described as ‘reading practices’.

What does this mean?

It means that they both entail ways of reading texts. Postcolonial Criticism focusses on representations of colonialism and imperialism, as well as texts that implicitly resist colonialism. Topics covered by postcolonial criticism traditionally entail: racism, colonial discourse, belonging, stereotypes... Ecocriticism focuses on literary engagements with the natural world – animals, plants, ecosystems, and the relationship between humans and nature. When you combine them, you can discuss things like: the role of nature in colonial discourse, the effects of colonialism on natural environments, and the different relationships with the natural world experienced by colonizers and indigenous people.

5. Patricia Grace has described *Potiki* as taking the structure of a traditional *whaikorero*, a formal speech. Explain what this means and (briefly) describe the effect it has on the novel as a whole.

Grace describes a *whaikorero* as a traditional speech beginning with an invocation, and ending with a song, and a passing on to the next speaker. The novel is written from several different perspectives – multiple characters tell their story, in a kind of spiral structure. It also begins with a sort of mythological, poetic story, which can represent an invocation. The novel ends with a poem and words which invite Maori readers of the text to tell their own story.

6. Kate Grenville’s *The Secret River* has been accused of taking part in the ‘history wars’. What do you think the role of historical novels (and films) should be in a postcolonial context, and how is their role different from more scholarly approaches to history?

The ‘history wars’ were a debate in Australia about whether historical accounts should emphasize the atrocities carried out by the settlers of Australia against the Aboriginals, or not. Both historians and politicians were involved. (I guess the question doesn’t specifically ask the student to explain this but it will be helpful). In terms of what the role of historical novels should be, this is asking for personal opinion, but informed opinions are most useful. Helpful approaches might include: for novels: empathy, public engagement, public mourning, broadening world views (more people read novels than historical texts). For scholarly history: ascertaining and recording historical facts, reinterpreting history in the light of new discoveries and approaches, informing educational curriculum.

7. Explain the concept of “colonial discourse”.

Ways of thinking and speaking that underscored and contributed to the colonial project. Eg.: the west has responsibility to bring light and civilization to the rest of the world; Black people are inherently less civilized than white people, etc.

8. In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the Magistrate adopts a small fox for a while: “They will say I keep two wild animals in my rooms, a fox and a girl.” She does not see the joke, or does not like it.’ Comment on this incident from postcolonial and ecocritical perspectives.

The Magistrate’s joke suggests he views the girl and the fox as in some way equivalent to each other: wild, natural and native. From a postcolonial perspective this suggests an aspect of colonial discourse, which views indigenous people as ‘animalistic’. From an ecocritical perspective, we could discuss how humans feel it is ok to confine animals for their own purposes. The Magistrate adopts the fox partly in order to appease the girl, and is dismayed when it goes wrong. The fox hides and snarls and urinates everywhere. The girl tells him that wild things belong in the wild, but does not let him return the fox cub directly to the wild as it will die if it does not mature first.

9. Comment on the language and meaning of the title: ‘The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the lower Niger’.

It is the title of the fictional memoirs of the District Commissioner at the end of *Things Fall Apart*. It is an example of colonial discourse, very scientific sounding. Students could comment on the use of the words ‘pacification’ and ‘primitive’. The title is particularly powerful in the context of the novel, as the Commissioner notes that Okonkwo’s tragic story (that we have just spent the entire novel reading) might make a diverting paragraph in his memoirs.

10. Comment on Kathleen Jamie’s approaches to imperialism and history in “Glacial” (provided in the appendix). If you also choose to write an essay on her poems, however, make sure you do not repeat yourself.

The students should comment on the role of the Romans and the Scots in the poem. More sophisticated answers will also take into account the multiple temporalities present in the poem: the present, the ancient past, and the distant future; and the role of the natural world: the plants, the lynx, the wolf.

Section Two: Essay 50%

Answer one of the following questions. As part of your answer, refer to at least one theory or theoretical text we have discussed this semester. The essay does not need to be a certain length, but must develop your points sufficiently to make your argument. It must be an essay, with an introduction containing a thesis statement, body paragraphs which progress your argument, and a conclusion.

The essays should be clearly written and structured with an introduction, body and conclusion. As stated above, they should refer to at least one theory or theoretical text studied during the semester, eg: Jamie's essay quoted in question 1, Said, Fanon, Achebe's essay on *Heart of Darkness*, Grenville's essay 'Unsettling the Settler', Huggan and Tiffin's introduction to *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, or John McCleod's introduction to *An Introduction to Postcolonialism*. References to theory and other texts should make sense, however, and not be gratuitous.

1. "Personally, I've given up even trying to write in Scots. But I want to. I long to. It's the most intimate, heart-felt speech I have. It's also wild and diverse and scunneratious and un-establishment. Some folk want to keep it that way, and not have it become established and government-sanctioned and spelled correctly. Some folk prefer it unfixed, unteachable, like a sparrowhawk, or a bunch of splashing starlings. But the problems defeat me. I mean the problems of legitimacy, as much as readability. Can you use words snipped out of the dictionary, or do you have to hear them alive and in flight before you can bring them into a poem? If your Scots is pulled together from hither and yon, from the living and the dead, from books and dictionaries, then it's "synthetic," which is wrong, apparently. (Remind me why again? Oh aye – because no one ever spoke like that. But no one ever spoke like King Lear.) If "synthetic" is illegitimate we're all reduced to the language we half-learned as a wean/bairn/child. (But at what age did I learn the word "nuance?")"

Kathleen Jamie

What is Jamie arguing in this paragraph? How does she make use of Scots in *The Bonniest Companie*, and how is the problem of authenticity and indigenous languages approached in other texts we have read this semester? (Remember to structure your answer into an essay with an argument and a thesis statement, not just a list of observations.)

Should answer the question about Jamie's argument – ie. she's actually arguing that writers should be able to experiment with Scots however they like, as false standards

of ‘authenticity’ just stifle them, and show some awareness of how she’s using Scots in her poems (despite saying she’s given up!). They should then also discuss language in some of the other texts, eg proverbs in *Things Fall Apart*, and Maori words and structures in *Potiki*.

Or

How are postcolonial and ecocritical themes entwined in Kathleen Jamie's *The Bonniest Companie*? Refer to at least four poems as part of your discussion.

Could touch on things like: the Romans in the Glacial Poem; Jamie’s use of Scots, all her migrating birds that raise thoughts about homes and belonging, how she juxtaposes working class environments with stars/the sky...

2. In his poem “Waiting for the Barbarians”, C. P. Cavafy writes that ‘they were, those people, a kind of solution’. Make an argument in which you discuss the poem itself (provided) and how its insights relate to any of the texts we have discussed this semester.

Discuss the concept of the barbarians in the poem. Could relate it to colonial discourse. Could relate it to the novel *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *Heart of Darkness*, *The Secret River*... The best answers will display a sophisticated understanding of the poem as well as relating its insights to a range of texts.

3. Rivers figure prominently in both *The Heart of Darkness* and *The Secret River*, which juxtapose, respectively, the Congo and the Hawksbury rivers with the Thames. Using the provided quotation from *The Heart of Darkness* as a starting point, discuss the significance of rivers in both texts.

Should discuss the pragmatic, geographic and symbolic function of the rivers. Should show an awareness of the dual way in which Conrad portrays the Thames, as both a beacon of civilization and imperialism, and as a former place of darkness, colonized by the Romans. Should contrast indigenous and colonial relationships with the rivers in *Heart of Darkness* and *The Secret River*.

Appendix

Kathleen Jamie – poems from *The Bonniest Companie*

(If you are writing an essay about Jamie, there is no need to refer to ALL of these poems, but I wanted to provide you with a selection. Feel free also to mention poems from the collection that I didn't manage to include here.)

Glacial

Eyrie I

I was feart we'd lost the falcons
and the falcons' eyrie
from the whinstone quarry back o the town
– their favoured plinth
 vacant so long
grasses had raised
 thin flags over it, and winter rain
washed away their mutes,
but here she is! Conjured out of the drizzle
and March mist, her yellow claws
a holdfast on the rock's edge –
 her eye all-seeing
as she planes away again
over our rooftops and the firth.

Eyrie II

That wind again, fit to flay you –
 like pages snatched
 clouds flit west,
with all that's written there, heartfelt, raw –
The street-lamps sift their small light down
 on a wakeful street,
a slate slips, wheelie-bins coup
 and three fields away, a branch
on a Scots pine snaps,
 and down falls cradle and all.

What will the osprey do then, poor things
when they make it home?

Build it up again, sticks and twigs –

big a new ane.

The Hinds

Walking in a waking dream
I watched nineteen deer
pour from ridge to glen-floor,
then each in turn leap,
leap the new-raised
peat-dark burn. This
was the distaff side;
hinds at their ease, alive
to lands held on long lease
in their animal minds,
and filing through a breached
never-mended dyke,
the herd flowed up over
heather-slopes to scree
where they stopped, and turned to stare,
the foremost with a queenly air
as though to say: *Aren't we
the bonniest companie?
Come to me,
You'll be happy, but never go home.*

Solstice I

A late boat draws a wake upstream.

A 90s anthem

– stadium rock – pulses from a neighbour's window,

while four or five gardens down

the reek of a bonfire rises

toward an overcast sky, dimming now

but for an amber swathe miles long,

west-north-west above the Sidlaws.

Daylight's at full reach, and still has business here,
or so it thinks –

 but the town's swifts are hid
 under their mysterious eaves
and it's gey near midnight. Then it's over –
midsummer: one fewer of our portion,
 one less left in the jar.

23/9/14

So here we are,
 dingit doon and weary,
happed in tattered hopes
 (an honest poverty).
Wir flags are wede awa,
 the withered leaves o shilpit trees
blaw across deserted squares,
 and the wind
 – harbinger of winter –
quests round the granite statues
 – and so on and etcetera.
We ken a' that. It's Tuesday. On wir feet.
Today we begin again.

Migratory II

eftir Hölderlin

As the burds gang faur
he lurks aye aheid
the prince o them, and caller

agin his breast

blaws aa he meets wi
i the heich,
the quate o the lift

but ablo, his braw lands
lie bienly shinin

– and flittin wi him: haufflins
ettlin for the furst time
tae win furrin

but wi cannie wind-straiks,
he lowns them.

Note to Migratory II: A fragment by Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) translated into English by Michael Hamburger:

As slowly birds migrate/ He looks ahead/ The prince, and coolly blows/ Against his breast all
he meets with when/ There's silence round about him, high/ up in the air, but richly shining
below him/ Lies his estate of regions, and with him, for/ The first time seeking victory, are the
young/ But with his windbeats/ He moderates.

Gale

Whit seek ye here?
There's noucht hid i' wir skelly lums
bar jaikies' nests.

Joseph Conrad, *The Heart of Darkness*

Forthwith a change came over the waters, and the serenity became less brilliant but more profound. The old river in its broad reach rested unruffled at the decline of day, after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks, spread out in the tranquil dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth. We looked at the venerable stream not in the vivid flush of a short day that comes and departs for ever, but in the august light of abiding memories. And indeed nothing is easier for a man who has, as the phrase goes, "followed the sea" with reverence and affection, than to evoke the great spirit of the past upon

the lower reaches of the Thames. The tidal current runs to and fro in its unceasing service, crowded with memories of men and ships it had borne to the rest of home or to the battles of the sea. It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled--the great knights-errant of the sea. It had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time, from the Golden Hind returning with her rotund flanks full of treasure, to be visited by the Queen's Highness and thus pass out of the gigantic tale, to the Erebus and Terror, bound on other conquests-- and that never returned. It had known the ships and the men. They had sailed from Deptford, from Greenwich, from Erith-- the adventurers and the settlers; kings' ships and the ships of men on 'Change; captains, admirals, the dark "interlopers" of the Eastern trade, and the commissioned "generals" of East India fleets. Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth! . . . The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires.

The sun set; the dusk fell on the stream, and lights began to appear along the shore. The Chapman light-house, a three-legged thing erect on a mud-flat, shone strongly. Lights of ships moved in the fairway--a great stir of lights going up and going down. And farther west on the upper reaches the place of the monstrous town was still marked ominously on the sky, a brooding gloom in sunshine, a lurid glare under the stars.

"And this also," said Marlow suddenly, "has been one of the dark places of the earth."

Waiting for the Barbarians

C. P. Cavafy

What are we waiting for, assembled in the forum?

The barbarians are due here today.

Why isn't anything happening in the senate?

Why do the senators sit there without legislating?

Because the barbarians are coming today.

What laws can the senators make now?

Once the barbarians are here, they'll do the legislating.

Why did our emperor get up so early,
and why is he sitting at the city's main gate
on his throne, in state, wearing the crown?

Because the barbarians are coming today
and the emperor is waiting to receive their leader.

He has even prepared a scroll to give him,

replete with titles, with imposing names.

Why have our two consuls and praetors come out today
wearing their embroidered, their scarlet togas?
Why have they put on bracelets with so many amethysts,
and rings sparkling with magnificent emeralds?
Why are they carrying elegant canes
beautifully worked in silver and gold?

Because the barbarians are coming today
and things like that dazzle the barbarians.

Why don't our distinguished orators come forward as usual
to make their speeches, say what they have to say?

Because the barbarians are coming today
and they're bored by rhetoric and public speaking.

Why this sudden restlessness, this confusion?
(How serious people's faces have become.)
Why are the streets and squares emptying so rapidly,
everyone going home so lost in thought?

Because night has fallen and the barbarians have not come.
And some who have just returned from the border say
there are no barbarians any longer.

And now, what's going to happen to us without barbarians?
They were, those people, a kind of solution.

Translated by Edmund Keeley/Philip Sherrard

(C.P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems*. Translated by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard. Edited by George Savidis. Revised Edition. Princeton University Press, 1992)