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Abstract

Debates about the implications of transnational migration and multiculturalism for national identities, and about 9/11 and its aftermath, also have a bearing on the position of Asian Scottish Muslims. Responses not only include reiterations of traditional Western Orientalist and Islamophobic stereotypes, but also attempts to intensify dialogue and develop less rigid conceptions of cultural and national communities. This article explores manifestations of these contrasting trends in Torcuil Crichton's novel *Fo Bhruid* (2010), a modern Gaelic retelling of Robert Louis Stevenson's anglophone novel *Kidnapped*. Crichton repositions his source in the increasingly multicultural Scotland of today by reconfiguring the protagonist as an Asian Scottish Muslim. The essay discusses the implications of this rewriting in relation to the Stevensonian source text, and in relation to contemporary social experiences and debates pertaining to the Scottish Muslim experience.

Much public discourse on contemporary Scottish identity privileges civic over ethnic nationalism and, relatedly, embraces a multicultural vision for modern Scottishness which aims to accommodate the high degree of ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity that appears typical of many societies in today's era of globalisation, mass migration, and easily maintained transnational diasporic connections. Such celebrations of plurality also frequently extend to the growing community of Scottish Muslims. At the same time, Muslim belonging in Scottish society is continuously challenged by the lingering presence of less pluralist concepts of nationhood; by cultural othering, Orientalist stereotyping, and Islamophobia; and (since a large section of Scotland's Muslim community is of non-European origin) by racism. This essay explores the ways in which these wider contradictions and challenges are reflected in Torcuil Crichton's novel *Fo Bhruid* (2010),¹ a modern Gaelic retelling of Robert Louis Stevenson's

anglophone novel *Kidnapped* (1886).² Stevenson's protagonists were white eighteenth-century Scots from a Christian background whose story revolved around Lowland/Highland, Protestant/Catholic, and Hanoverian/Jacobite divisions, which are partly bridged by interpersonal friendship as the story unfolds. Crichton shifts his exploration of cultural and political divisions, and of possibilities for rapprochement, to another arena: the culturally even more diverse Scotland of the early twenty-first century. He transforms Stevenson's main character into a Pakistani Scottish Muslim who negotiates diasporic belonging against the backdrop of international terrorism and the Western 'war on terror'. In view of its topicality, it seems surprising that this text has received hardly any critical attention so far.³ This first sustained scholarly study of Crichton's novel will outline how *Fo Bhruid* enters into dialogue with its Stevensonian source text, and discuss the implications of his rewriting with regard to multicultural Scottishness, diasporicity, integration, and post-9/11 discourses on terrorism. It will be argued that the novel implies a plea for pluralism, mutual understanding, and transculturalism, but nonetheless remains indebted to certain Orientalist and Islamophobic stereotypes that reify binary notions of 'West v. East' rather than deconstruct them. Moreover, it retains some problematic assumptions of traditional discourses on minority integration that pose further limitations to the novel's ostensibly transcultural vision.

At first, however, it is helpful to recapitulate some wider social aspects of the Scottish Muslim experience, and certain debates surrounding them, to chart the background against which Crichton's novel needs to be read. It will also be useful to revisit Stevenson's own negotiation of cultural and political diversity. This essay then proceeds to a detailed analysis of *Fo Bhruid* in relation to this intertextual and social framework, beginning with features that project a pro-Muslim, pro-diversity stance, before considering contravening tendencies towards Orientalism, Islamophobia, and a hierarchising stance towards cultural diversity and integration.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS

The history of Muslims in Scotland goes back further than is generally known. Small-scale Muslim immigration can be traced to at least the eighteenth century, although the most significant increase was due to the more numerous immigrants

of the twentieth- and early twenty-first-century and their descendants. Most immigrants hailed from South Asia, but there were also significant numbers from the Middle East and elsewhere. Scottish converts to Islam are also documented since the eighteenth century; they are currently deemed to number at least a thousand. The total number of Muslims in Scotland is on the increase: The estimated figure for 2001 was *c.* 42,500, the 2011 census gave a number of 76,737, and later estimates go up as far as 90,000. This amounts to 1.4 to 1.6 per cent of the population and makes Islam Scotland's second largest religion. It has been suggested that numbers are likely to increase further in future. The largest segment (around two-thirds) of the Scottish Muslim population has Pakistani roots; conversely, around ninety per cent of Scottish Pakistanis are Muslims. The Muslim community is largely concentrated in major urban areas; the largest part lives in Glasgow (*c.* forty-two per cent), while Edinburgh takes second place at sixteen per cent.⁴

The growing number and importance of Muslims in Scottish society have also attracted increased scholarly interest in recent years, particularly in the fields of history and the social sciences.⁵ Outside academic discourse, Scottish Muslims also feature strongly in wider social and political debates about contemporary Scottish cultural diversity in general. For instance, in 2008, then First Minister Alex Salmond made a point of embracing Muslims as 'part of [...] the vibrant, colourful tartan of our society' and invoked the long-standing connections as proof that 'from very early in our history we were aspiring to be One Scotland; Many Cultures'.⁶ Elsewhere, the overall tenor is likewise positive, celebrating Scotland's experience of multiculturalism and integration as a success. Many accounts – both by Muslims and non-Muslims – portray Scottish Muslims as an integral part of the modern nation. A substantial proportion of the community self-identify as Scots, either by a downright espousal of the label 'Scottish', or through double designations such as 'Scottish Muslim', 'Scottish Pakistani', and 'Scottish Asian'.⁷ Both within and outside the community, it has been argued that such identifications are facilitated by high levels of pro-diversity sentiment in Scottish society at large, exemplified by positive attitudes to immigration and the political elite's emphasis on civic rather than ethnic nationalism. That the SNP and a large proportion of the Scottish public criticised the Iraq War of 2003 also strengthened Scottish Muslims' identification with Scotland. On the cultural level, various comments cite the importance of language and

accent in images of Scottishness – criteria of belonging that are also accessible to immigrants and their descendants and can overrule (or at least mitigate) ethnic, ‘racial’ or religious divisions. Thus, a Scottish accent can also facilitate the acceptance and Scottish self-identification of Asian Scottish Muslims, for instance.⁸

Obviously, these civic and pro-diversity aspects of Scottish identity discourse are not the only side of the coin: ethnic nationalism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and racism remain present and challenge minority communities’ claims to belonging. For Scottish Muslims, these problems have further intensified since 2001, as increased Western anxieties about Islamist terrorism often led to blanket suspicions against all Muslims and to a notable rise in Islamophobic and racist incidents – an international trend also palpable in Scotland.⁹ The same duality of integration and othering becomes manifest in Crichton’s novel.

Contemporary discourse on Scotland’s Muslims also draws comparisons to the experience of an older Scottish minority, namely the Catholic one. Other than a shared status as substantial religious minorities, the two communities are also linked by the fact that both owe a considerable number of their members to a history of immigration. Although Catholicism had been Scotland’s majority faith before the victory of the Reformation, and although the country has retained significant pockets of Catholicism ever since, the numbers of Scottish Catholics were noticeably increased through large-scale Irish immigration in the nineteenth century. Many of those migrants were Catholics, so that Scottish Catholicism became strongly associated with Irish diasporicity. Here as well, the Protestant majority of Scottish society often looked on this minority as an ‘alien’ element, not only from a sense of religious otherness but also on account of its perceived ‘foreignness’ and supposedly questionable national loyalties to the Scottish body politic. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, before Irish mass immigration, Scotland’s ‘indigenous’ Catholics had already suffered from different political suspicions, this time not due to diasporic ‘foreignness’ but due to a frequent association between Catholicism and the Jacobite rebellions. Thus, Scottish Catholics, and especially the diasporic Irish among them, have had to face considerable hostility, variously couched in ethno-nationalist, political, sectarian, and at times even racist terms. Although these have considerably abated in recent decades, they have not entirely disappeared, as is, for example, evidenced by the ongoing tradition of Orange marches and

sectarianism among football fans.¹⁰ Authors writing on Scottish Muslims and Scottish Asians who draw comparative references to the Catholic and/or Irish experience in Scotland include Asifa Hussein, William Miller,¹¹ Neil McGarvey, Gareth Mulvey,¹² Bashir Maan, and Suzanne Audrey. The latter two expressly frame such comparisons as an anti-racist strategy to highlight that migration and diversity are nothing new and that formerly 'alien-seeming' groups can, in time, become so integrated that they end up being seen as an inextricable part of local traditions. Earlier immigrant groups thus appear as a precedent for the integration of later ones.¹³ The same strategy resurfaces in the intertextual dialogue between Stevenson's and Crichton's novels.

STEVENSON'S OWN NEGOTIATION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND POLITICAL CONFLICT

Kidnapped itself already centres around several overlapping cultural and political divides. It is set in 1751, only six years after the defeat of the last Jacobite rebellion. At that time, the divisions between Jacobite and Hanoverian sympathisers, as well as the Catholic/Protestant and Highland/Lowland divisions which were often simplistically conflated with Jacobite/Hanoverian ones, were still major sources of antagonism and national disunity. The mainstream discourses that represented Hanoverian, Protestant, and Lowland perspectives often saw the 'other side' as a primitive and backward threat to a liberal, progressive status quo. In this, they arguably show some parallels to contemporary Western anti-Muslim stereotypes. As the memory of Jacobite insurrections paled and the Highland 'Other' became more thoroughly integrated into the British capitalist nation-state, the sense of antagonism softened and allowed more room for representing Gaels in positive terms, though even 'positive' images were often romanticised, patronising, and fatalistic.¹⁴ An important milestone was Walter Scott's novel *Waverley* from 1814.¹⁵ Set in the mid-1740s, it sends its young English protagonist, initially a Hanoverian soldier, on a Highland journey where he learns more about the cultural and political Other, befriends some of the locals, falls in love with a Gaelic beauty, and attracts the (at that time unwarranted) suspicions of Hanoverian authorities. All this temporarily sways him towards the Jacobite camp, but he eventually returns to the side of 'law and order', re-enters the anglophone world, and marries a less 'other' and

more domesticable Lowlander. The deaths and dispersals of his former Jacobite associates safely consign his Highland connections to the realm of memory, charity, and a few cultural souvenirs. Nonetheless, this romanticised story of partial rapprochement already constitutes a rewriting of more antagonistic accounts of Highland/Lowland and Hanoverian/Jacobite relations.¹⁶ To some extent, Stevenson continues Scott's rewriting of those antagonistic accounts, but, in also rewriting Scott himself, he projects a slightly more thorough and enduring form of rapprochement.

Like *Waverley*, Stevenson's *Kidnapped* sends a pro-Hanoverian young man on a journey where he temporarily falls foul of the law and makes closer acquaintance with Highland Jacobites. Again, cultural and political divides are bridged by an evolving personal friendship, in this case between the Lowland protagonist David Balfour, wrongly suspected of being a Jacobite assassin, and the fugitive Gaelic Jacobite Alan Breck Stuart. While fleeing from criminals and hostile authorities, the two men live through various adventures before David returns to Lowland respectability. Here, however, the principal Highland character survives, and the men's friendship endures. Moreover, in the sequel *Catriona*,¹⁷ David marries the eponymous Highland woman, who is descended from Jacobite traitors and criminals. Here again, personal bonds overcome social divides, at least on an individual level; and this can also be seen as a metonymical prefiguration of the wider historical process that, from the later 1750s onwards, gradually integrated the Highland Other into the national community – albeit at the cost of assimilation and linguistic decline. To some extent, such symbolic integration already happens in Scott's novel, but Stevenson arguably makes greater concessions to the Highland side, allowing for more survivals, greater hybridisation¹⁸ through a Highland/Lowland marriage and the resultant offspring, as well as a more sustained questioning of the 'benign' pretensions of the victorious Hanoverian establishment as exemplified by the questionable machinations of the legal system.¹⁹ This can either be read as an even more thorough image of national reconciliation (perhaps because Stevenson had greater historical distance to eighteenth-century conflicts), or as an acknowledgement that the supposed integration that started in the eighteenth century was less complete and more sinister than Scott suggested. Such scepticism could be related to a more complete understanding (again due to hindsight) of the Clearances and their consequences, as well as awareness of the mid-nineteenth-century famine,

of the ways in which earlier anti-Highland stereotypes had evolved into full-blown nineteenth-century racism, and of contemporary conflicts surrounding the Land Agitation movement that emerged in the 1880s.

Although Stevenson arguably projects a more strongly pro-Highland perspective, he as well displays problematic vestiges of anti-Highland stereotypes. For instance, his Highlands are still feminised, as exemplified by the protagonist's love interest, whereas the Lowlander occupies the male role in the relationship, which, according to the patriarchal norms prevalent at the time, implies a 'superior' position. Moreover, both Catriona and Alan are repeatedly portrayed in infantilising terms,²⁰ which echoes traditions of infantilising Highland society in general as an inferior, immature civilisation. A similarly ambivalent stance between embracing and denigrating the cultural Other²¹ emerges in *Fo Bhruid*.

CRICHTON'S REWRITING OF STEVENSON: AN UPDATED VISION OF MULTICULTURAL INCLUSION?

One possible way of rewriting Stevenson's text for modern Gaelic readers might have retained the original topic of Anglophone/Gaelic or Highland/Lowland divisions while retelling this history from the perspective of a Gaelic protagonist. This would arguably still be topical, in view of ongoing anti-Gaelicism in society, despite a limited degree of official goodwill. But Crichton chose a different path and shifted towards a topic which, in many people's eyes, might seem more pressing today, namely the position of South Asian diasporic and Muslim communities in Scottish society. He also relates the story to global developments, namely Islamist terrorism against perceived Western cultural, political, and economic imperialism; Western Islamophobia and the 'war on terror'; as well as the question of how Muslims living in the West stand on these issues. In an interview, Crichton identifies various parallels between these recent events and the eighteenth-century situation that underlies *Kidnapped*. These include religious conflict, non-state acts of politically motivated violence, and attempts to impose control by military force.²²

Crichton's sixteen-year-old protagonist is a Lowlander like David Balfour and hails from the village of Carfin near Glasgow. But he is a 'Lowlander with a difference': Khaleel Shakur is an Asian Scottish Muslim whose parents settled in Carfin in the 1980s. In 2006, newly orphaned Khaleel finds an uncle in

Liverpool whose miserly and evil response is to dispose of the boy by having him kidnapped by a criminal ship's crew bound for China. Warding off a pirate attack near the Horn of Africa, the crew takes another prisoner: an Arab aristocrat called Mamoon Abu Ridyeh – Crichton's modern version of Alan Breck. Alignments with Stevenson's Highland protagonist are reflected even in small details; for instance, the knife Mamoon wears on his calf is expressly compared to the *sgian dubh* in Highland dress (p. 42). Mamoon is a fierce critic of Western imperialism and internationally renowned as a top terrorist. Although Khaleel disapproves of Mamoon's terrorist activities,²³ they make common cause against their kidnappers and escape separately. After his rescue, Khaleel goes ashore in Karachi and accidentally turns up at the British consulate at the very moment of a terrorist attack, so that he is suspected of being an accomplice. Fleeing, Khaleel re-encounters Mamoon, and the two escape to a Taliban-controlled part of Afghanistan. One of their helpers, a radical mullah likewise hiding from Western forces, eventually takes the blame for the Karachi attack so that Khaleel's name can be cleared. Handed to British troops as an innocent 'freed kidnapping victim', Khaleel returns to the UK. While all this is a fairly exact remodelling of *Kidnapped*, there is also a brief reference to another novel by Stevenson, namely *Treasure Island*²⁴ – of which Khaleel's uncle owns a copy (p. 21).

With its diasporic Pakistani protagonist and its challenge to (neo)colonial Western stereotypes about Muslims, Crichton's rewriting of a Scottish classic can be seen as part of a postcolonial tradition of 'writing back', which is typically associated with authors from formerly colonised non-European countries or their diasporas responding critically to pro-colonial or racist tendencies in canonical European texts. However, *Fo Bhruid* is different: Crichton is a white non-Muslim Scottish writer who would usually be considered as belonging to the 'mainstream' of the Britain whose canon he is rewriting – despite his claim that he based his representation of the Muslim Other on careful research among the communities he depicts.²⁵ Neither is his rewriting predominantly critical: The source text is lovingly updated rather than radically subverted or attacked, and the national canon is apparently not fundamentally questioned.²⁶

Or is it? I would argue that this rewriting nonetheless has at least *some* transformative potential. Inserting a diasporic Pakistani Muslim protagonist and other Muslim characters into this Scottish classic in itself affirms the notion that

Muslims with transnational connections have a legitimate place in the Scottish nation and its cultural canons. Such assertions seem especially important at the time of the 'war on terror', which has often intensified Western Islamophobic suspicions not just against Muslims abroad, but also against Muslims at home in the West. *Fo Bhruid* is expressly situated against this background, since the 'war on terror' is a major plot element. Although Crichton frames the story primarily as a good yarn and likens it to a thriller (a genre commonly associated with 'light entertainment'), he also invokes a 'serious', *engagé* dimension by highlighting his yarn's contribution to a more balanced understanding of history and contemporary world events.²⁷

Fo Bhruid shows general suspicions against Muslims to be misguided and pleads for a differentiated picture of 'the Muslim world' (or worlds) that takes account of internal variety. Crichton's Muslims differ in their attitudes to terrorism, their national and cultural identities, and their degrees of piety. For instance, Khaleel notes that his father's connections to the local mosque or the local Asian community were not particularly strong (p. 8), although he brought his son up in the Muslim faith (p. 55). Khaleel was evidently not taught to read Arabic (p. 45) or speak Urdu (p. 51, p. 56, p. 83). As a result, Khaleel perceives much of what he encounters on his journey as politically and culturally Other to himself. However, he gradually gains greater understanding and respect for the people he meets, even where he continues to disagree with them. Crichton invites Western non-Muslim audiences to follow Khaleel in this learning process. For instance, despite the novel's disapproval of Mamoon's political methods, we also come to appreciate his personal virtues, such as courage, loyalty to his friends, and a mischievous sense of humour (p. 49, p. 57, p. 73). Moreover, he is not described as a stereotypical terrorist acting merely out of religious fanaticism; instead, his views are linked to wider political rationales (p. 57). He also asserts that he tries to avoid taking human lives in his terrorist activities (pp. 67–68). In addition, we learn that Mamoon, before becoming a terrorist, turned his back on his elite family to fight for the rights of impoverished tribal people in his country (p. 57) – a goal which might seem more easily acceptable to many readers, thus showing another 'humane' side of the character.

Binarisms are also deconstructed by highlighting connections between Muslims and non-Muslims. One way of doing so is to stress cultural hybridity. This not only pertains to diasporic characters like Khaleel and other Asian

Scottish Muslims, but also to Mamoon since he studied at an English university (p. 57). Even the otherness of the Talib mullah who shelters Khaleel and Mamoon in rural Afghanistan is mitigated by the fact that he has a very good command of English (p. 90) and loves watching *Dallas* on TV (p. 92). Another way of highlighting connections across national and religious boundaries is through intercultural comparisons – for instance, the Afghan mullah compares the fictional Americans in *Dallas* to his own people (p. 92). Further connections across cultures are constructed through personal bonds between characters, such as the close friendship between Khaleel and Dòmhnall Caimbeul (Donald Campbell), presumably a non-Muslim, non-Asian Scot, judging from the name and the absence of other cultural specifications that might identify him otherwise. Khaleel also seems to have a good rapport with Dòmhnall's family.

Such social relations, and the insertion of Muslims into a Scottish literary classic, are not the only devices through which Crichton claims a place for Asian diasporic Muslims within the Scottish national community. Crichton's Khaleel speaks with a distinctively Scottish accent that identifies him unmistakably as a local. Scotland is not only claimed as Khaleel's home, but already as his father's (p. 7). Khaleel asserts that, until he set out on his big journey, he had never been any further from Carfin than Glasgow (p. 10). Later, during his first encounter with Mamoon, the latter asks Khaleel whether he is a soldier for Allah (p. 41). This evokes a central trope of Western Islamophobic discourse: the assumption that diasporic Muslims in Western countries are likely to become jihadis. In Crichton's novel, however, this trope is only evoked in order to be immediately rejected in Khaleel's response: "'S ann à Carfin a tha mise," fhreagair mi, le blas Alba air mo chainnt' ("I'm from Carfin," I answered, with a Scottish accent in my speech,' p. 42).²⁸ This not only surprises Mamoon (p. 42), but may also surprise some readers, given the continuing controversies about the position of diasporic Muslims in Western national communities. Crichton and Khaleel address expectations of purism and culture clashes that inform these debates, and take a stance against them, instead asserting that diasporic Asian Muslims like Khaleel firmly belong in, and are loyal to, the Western nation(s) in which they live.

Moreover, when Khaleel's father Ikram hints at a previous home outside Scotland, he does not refer to South Asia, as some might expect, but to 'Liverpool,

an t-àite as an tàinig mis” (‘Liverpool, the place I came from,’ p. 8). That he grew up there is corroborated by the description of a photograph showing Ikram and his brother in front of a Liverpool building (p. 21). Only the Carfin imam expressly thinks of a prior home of this family ‘in the old country’ (‘*san t-seann dùthaich*’) in Asia (p. 9). On arriving in Karachi, Khaleel perceives Pakistan not as an ancestral home, but as ‘another world’ (‘*saoghal eile*,’ p. 49). He also reflects upon the ambivalences of appearance, perception, and actual belonging:

[Bha mi] a’ coimhead, nam bheachd fhìn co-dhiù, cho coltach ri muinntir an àite ’s gun canadh tu gur ann às an dùthaich sin fhèin a bha mi, ’s chan ann à àite air taobh eile an t-saoghail.
 (*[I] looked, or at least I thought I did, so much like the locals that you’d say that I was from that country itself, and not from a place at the other end of the world,* pp. 50–51)

On one level, this highlights Khaleel’s feeling of distance from Pakistani culture and his sense of belonging in Britain. At the same time, it acknowledges that belonging is still, in many people’s eyes, tied to notions of race, so that he thinks it likely that others might mistake his identity as Pakistani. Then again, this is undercut by the slightly older and wiser Khaleel narrating the story, who suggests that his earlier self overlooked the fact that other outward features – like the wonder on his face – still betrayed him as a stranger to the surrounding Pakistanis (p. 51; similarly, p. 77). He also records his sense of strangeness concerning local poverty (p. 51), and his naivety which almost gets him killed by muggers soon after arrival (pp. 51–53).

Later, watching the city get ready for morning prayer, he experiences both religious recognition and geographical/cultural alienation: “*S e an creideamh dhan do rugadh mi a bh’ ann, ach cha robh mi a’ faireachdainn gur e an dùthaich seo m’ àite*” (‘It was the faith in which I had been raised, but I wasn’t feeling that this country was my place,’ p. 55). His ambivalent position is also reflected when the guards at the British consulate in Karachi conclude from Khaleel’s looks that he is a Pakistani and address him in Urdu, whereas he tells them (presumably in English, since he does not speak the local language) that he is British (p. 62).

Elsewhere, there are indications that even his tie to Islam is weaker than that of the people around him. Khaleel does not seem to join in when he sees others thank God or pray (p. 88, p. 92). The Afghan mullah does not include Khaleel in his notion of a 'proper' Muslim community (imagined as non-Western), but sees him as a Westerner (p. 93). Mamoon says that Khaleel has been 'ro fhada anns an taobh an iar airson a bhith ri cogadh' ('too long in the West to go to war', meaning the jihad, p. 95). Khaleel again confirms this by exclaiming: "S ann à Alba a tha mise, chan ann às an Ear Mheadhanach. Chan e seo [Afghanistan] m' àite-sa. Chan e an cogadh agamsa a tha seo." ('I'm from Scotland, not from the Middle East. This [Afghanistan] is not *my* place. This is not *my* war.', p. 98).

Khaleel's journey has taught him more about his family's translocal history, brought him into contact with Arabs, Pakistanis, and Afghans, led him to develop some understanding for them (e.g. p. 49, p. 95, p. 97), and contributed greatly to his growing up. Thus, in the final chapter, when asked where he is from, he answers: 'às a h-uile cèrnaidh' ('from all over the place', p. 110). However, this scene is framed by the very first and last lines of this chapter which firmly reassert Khaleel's initial claim of being a British, and more specifically Scottish, subject. After re-entering the UK, Khaleel phones his friend in Glasgow and concludes, in the final line, that it is time for him to 'go home' ('Bha tìde agam a dhol dhachaidh,' p. 111). The chapter is entitled 'Air ais nam rìoghachd fhìn' ('Back in my own kingdom'). This echoes the penultimate chapter of *Kidnapped* which is entitled 'I come into my kingdom'.²⁹ Stevenson uses 'kingdom' as a metaphor for the landed estate which David claims as his inheritance. In Crichton's novel, we do not see Khaleel ascend to fortune; here, 'kingdom' means 'United Kingdom', the country of his birth and belonging. It does, however, parallel a slightly earlier passage in *Kidnapped* where David is likewise said to have returned to his 'own country',³⁰ in this case the Lowlands. The Highlands have been as foreign to David as Pakistan and the other lands he has travelled have been to Khaleel, despite the sympathy the two protagonists have developed for the 'foreign' on their journeys. Although Khaleel comes to disapprove of certain *methods* which Western powers employ in their 'war on terror', and although he withholds some information from them in order to protect his friend Mamoon, his self-identification as a British, or more precisely Scottish, citizen is never in doubt.

The assertion of a Muslim presence in a Scottish national culture which is traditionally associated with Protestant Christianity is also reflected in Khaleel's statement that the Carfin mosque is located in a former church (p. 8). Its denomination was Church of Scotland, the traditional state religion, an association which reinforces the implication that the growing Muslim presence necessitates a reconceptualisation of national identity. While this 'encroachment' might be interpreted as confirming the xenophobes' sense of a Muslim cultural threat, such a reading is not borne out by the rest of the novel, which shows several non-Muslim Scots being at ease with the Muslim presence.

At the same time, the hostility shown by other (presumably non-Asian, non-Muslim) members of Scottish society seriously complicates this sense of at-home-ness. This is clear even before political suspicion turns Khaleel into a fugitive. Outside his parents' shop in Carfin there is a graffito saying 'Pakkis go home' (p. 7). This abuse ironically contrasts with – and attempts to deny the legitimacy of – the family's sense of being at home in Scotland, which is affirmed on the same page: 'ged nach robh dachaidh eile aig m' athair airson faisg air fichead bliadhna mus do bhàsaich e' ('though my father did not have any other home for nearly twenty years before he died'). *Fo Bhruid* suggests that British foreign policy can also play a part in complicating Asian diasporic loyalties to the UK. In Glasgow, Khaleel passes a group of young Asian Muslims who are travelling to a Bradford demonstration against Britain's involvement in the Iraq War (p. 9). Whether these boys nonetheless share Khaleel's continuing self-identification as British, or whether they come to more antagonistic conclusions, is left untold.

Like some of the historians and social scientists cited above, Crichton reinforces his plea for greater acceptance of Muslim compatriots by appealing to the precedent of other much-maligned minorities whose integration is now deemed quite successful. Firstly, there is a reference to Scottish Catholics which, though oblique (p. 8), is probably sufficient to remind Scottish readers of the Catholics' history as a minority and invite comparisons with the Muslim minority to which Khaleel belongs. Moreover, *Fo Bhruid* invokes the history of Scotland's and England's Irish minority, often othered in national terms as 'foreigners', but also with an additional religious dimension due to an association with Catholicism. When Khaleel describes Liverpool English as 'letheach eadar Èirinn agus Sasainn' ('halfway between Ireland and England', p. 11), he hints

at the history of Irish immigration which has been considered responsible for certain Scouse linguistic features.³¹

By basing his novel on *Kidnapped*, Crichton also invokes the history of a 'successful' integration of Scottish Highlanders into the Scottish national community, despite the cultural, linguistic, and social costs this integration entailed. Crichton's Highland-Muslim alignment implies that the integration of Asian-diasporic Muslims is likewise possible and desirable. And he goes even further: As it is often claimed that Gaelic traditions, despite their long-standing marginalisation, lie at the very heart of Scottish cultural identity, Crichton's decision to let his Asian Scottish protagonist narrate his story in Gaelic implies that Khaleel and *his* minority community are likewise given a place at the centre of the Scottish nation. This seems to be at least implied, though Crichton does not make it explicit. In the aforementioned interview (p. 121), Gaelic as his natural medium, even for the voices of non-Gaelic-speaking characters, is merely taken for granted. Non-naturalistic use of languages for characters who would not actually speak these languages is presented as a widespread pragmatic choice in storytelling; political implications are not foregrounded. But in the Gaelic case, the language's traditional (albeit contested) role as a token of 'authentic, originary Scottishness' makes a political reading hard to avoid: Any use of Gaelic in a text on Scottish multiculturalism, and its association with recent non-European immigrant communities, automatically has implications concerning Scottish nationality and belonging. Thus, Crichton's decision to narrate this story about a Scottish Muslim in Gaelic, a linguistic icon of Scottishness, can be considered a powerful reinforcement of the book's inclusivist agenda.

Although racist obsessions with the visible 'otherness' of skin colour remain an additional obstacle for Asian Scots which white Catholic, Irish, and Highland minorities did not have to face, the novel projects a future where even this barrier can be transcended. Transperipheral comparisons show multi- and transculturality as a historical normality, facilitate solidarifications, and enable visions for a tolerant, transcultural future. This also ties in with Paul Gilroy's concept of conviviality, defined as an 'ability to live with alterity without becoming anxious, fearful, or violent'. This ability emerges from 'ordinary experiences of contact, cooperation, and conflict across the supposedly impermeable boundaries of race, culture, [...] and ethnicity'.³² So, to some extent, Crichton's rewriting

of Scottish literature and national identity indeed opens up a lot of positive potential. But there is also a more problematic side to *Fo Bhruid* which will be discussed in the next section.

VESTIGES OF OTHERING, ISLAMOPHOBIA, AND EUROCENTRISM

What of cultural Others outside the nation's borders? Do these also undergo a radical transformation from Other to Same? To some extent, *Fo Bhruid* deconstructs xenophobia in international contexts as well. For instance, there is again a development of individual empathy through personal interactions, which does not necessarily go in hand with political or cultural agreement. But there are also moments where Crichton's text perpetuates xenophobic and colonial discourse patterns instead of challenging them. The Muslim, Asian, and African world outside the UK appears predominantly as a source of pirates (pp. 36–37) and (presumably sex) slaves (p. 30, pp. 33–34, p. 110), and as a place of female seclusion (p. 58, p. 70, p. 79, pp. 83–84), family violence (p. 28), street crime (pp. 52–54), and suicide bombing (p. 39). While all these of course *exist*, the novel's *concentration* on these issues suggests a limited, neo-Orientalist viewpoint.

This ties in with Crichton's use of metaphor in the aforementioned interview where he labels Mamoon a 'soldier of *darkness*' ('saighdear an *dorchadais*', p. 122, italics mine). Whereas an ironic use of the concept is thinkable, there is nothing in the surrounding passage which suggests such distancing. Thus, it seems more likely that Crichton endorses this concept and implies more than just a negative judgement on terrorism: In view of the long tradition of Western Orientalism, such a statement echoes more general condemnations of Muslim civilisation(s). We might also think of the almost proverbial colonial image of *Africa* as a 'Heart of Darkness', for instance in Joseph Conrad's eponymous novella.³³ Even if Crichton did not play on these associations intentionally, the connection to colonial discourse traditions is unmistakable – and potentially harmful in a climate where Western audiences remain susceptible to such stereotypical notions. In Crichton's text, it almost seems as if the integration of *internal* Muslim Others into Scotland's national community is only possible at the price of reasserting the Otherness and 'inferiority' of *external* Muslims abroad.

It is also worth discussing whether the integration of Scotland's internal Muslims necessarily requires the high degree of assimilation that is shown by Khaleel and his family. His parents did not make much effort to give him a sense of connection with Pakistani or Muslim traditions. Neither does he seek such connections for himself, at least in the beginning: Although he hints that he would like closer ties with the Asian Scottish community (p. 8), he does not seem to take practical steps. This contrasts with the fact that many real Pakistani Scottish Muslims do make an effort to maintain such connections.³⁴ How would Crichton comment on these? Can they only be integrated at the price of westernisation? And if yes, how much of it? To some extent, *Fo Bhruid* advocates respectful coexistence even where characters choose not to relinquish all their differences. It also asserts that a certain amount of difference is compatible with national belonging. Nonetheless, it seems that Crichton ultimately tends towards assimilationism: Khaleel and his father apparently get the most sympathetic portrayal precisely *because* they are so lax in their religious observances, do not 'speak foreign', and are quite isolated from the rest of the Asian Scottish community.

This ties in with Hannah Arendt's discussion of the position of diasporics whose 'host societies' only allow them a limited choice between 'parvenu' and 'pariah' status.³⁵ The former is based on a high level of assimilation as a condition for acceptance, and parvenus are only accepted as '*exceptional*' representatives of the minority who have *shed* much of their difference. Less assimilated diasporics are still rejected as alien 'pariahs'. Though Arendt coined these terms with reference to the Jewish diaspora, they can arguably also apply to other minority groups, such as contemporary Scottish Pakistani Muslims. Relatedly, Nasar Meer rightly warns that, despite the frequent espousal of multiculturalism by nationalist political elites, nationalism and multiculturalism can easily come into conflict – for instance where people *hierarchise* the two and subordinate the needs of cultural minorities to the requirements of national(ist) unity. This can happen if the espousal of cultural diversity is limited in the name of national cohesion, or if minorities are expected to integrate in a way that reproduces existing cultural hierarchies.³⁶

Again, it is also worth recalling the integration of Gaels into the nation, which was likewise bought at the problematic price of cultural assimilation and language loss. Whether this particular kind of integration really is a complete

success depends on perspective. The assimilation of Gaeldom is something Crichton, by writing in Gaelic, chose to work against. This seems to contrast with his treatment of Scotland's Asian Muslims, where more complete linguistic and cultural assimilation is apparently envisaged as a precondition for acceptance. Just as Stevenson, despite advocating mutual understanding, still subscribed to certain Celticist stereotypes, Crichton continues to share some of the euro-centric and Orientalist notions that he seemingly set out to criticise. All this illustrates once more that there is ample space for further critical negotiations about what kind of inter- and multicultural relations are desirable, both on a national and on a global level.

Notes

- 1 Steòrnabagh: Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig. Page numbers for citations from this novel will be given in the main text wherever possible.
- 2 First published 1886. Here cited from the omnibus reprint with Stevenson's *Catriona*, ed. Emma Letley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. xxxvii–208, pp. 477–83.
- 3 The most substantial response to date is the – still rather cursory – anonymous review 'Seann nobhail air a h-ath-innse – mar dheagh stòiridh a bhuineas don latha an-diugh' in the Gaelic general-interest periodical *Cothrom*, issue 69 (2011), pp. 46–47.
- 4 Figures based on the 2001 and 2011 censuses (e.g. www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/census-results, accessed 28 October 2017); Peter Hopkins, 'Global Events, National Politics, Local Lives: Young Muslim Men in Scotland', *Environment and Planning A*, 39.5 (2007), pp. 1119–33 (p. 1120), and 'Introduction: Scotland's Muslims. Early Settlement, Current Context and Research Themes', *Scotland's Muslims: Society, Politics and Identity*, ed. Hopkins (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), pp. 1–24 (p. 2, pp. 7–9); Bashir Maan, *Muslims in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Argyll, 2014), p. 15; Khadijah Elshayyal, 'Scottish Muslims in Numbers: Understanding Scotland's Muslim Population through the 2011 Census' (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, Alwaleed Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World, 2016), www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/scottish_muslims_in_numbers_web.pdf, accessed 25 September 2017, p. 8; Imran Azam and Karin Goodwin, 'Finding Allah: Why More and More Scots Are Converting to Islam', *Herald Scotland*, 4 October 2015, www.heraldsotland.com/news/13802175.Finding_Allah__why_more_and_more_Scots_are_converting_to_Islam, accessed 23 September 2017; the National Records of Scotland website, www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/population-estimates/mid-15-cor-12-13-14/15mype-cahb-all-tab.xlsx, accessed 28 October 2017; and Stefano Bonino, 'The Migration and Settlement of Pakistanis and Indians', *New Scots: Scotland's Immigrant Communities since 1945*, ed. T. M. Devine and Angela McCarthy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), pp. 75–101 (p. 77). For

- historical surveys, see Bashir Maan, *The Thistle and the Crescent* (Glendaruel: Argyll, 2008) and *Muslims in Scotland*, and relevant sections of Bonino, 'Migration and Settlement'.
- 5 For examples, see note 4 above, as well as Suzanne Audrey, *Multiculturalism in Practice: Irish, Jewish, Italian, and Pakistani Migration to Scotland* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Asifa M. Hussain and William L. Miller, *Multicultural Nationalism: Islamophobia, Anglophobia, and Devolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); and Stefano Bonino, *Muslims in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017). An excellent summary of earlier research up to 2011 is given by Sara Kidd and Lynn Jamieson, *Experiences of Muslims Living in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Scottish Government Social Research, 2011), www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/files/12692773/Experiences_of_Muslims_living_in_Scotland.pdf, accessed 28 January 2020, pp. 7–41.
 - 6 Salmond, 'Foreword'; Maan, *Thistle*, pp. 5–6.
 - 7 For instance, see Audrey, p. 227, p. 229, p. 231; Hussain and Miller, pp. 149–53, p. 155, p. 168, p. 198; Elshayyal, p. 24; Bonino, *Muslims*, pp. 59–80, pp. 104–05, pp. 110–12; and the following contributions to *Scotland's Muslims*, ed. Hopkins: Hopkins, 'Introduction', pp. 1–2, p. 14; Katherine Botterill, Gurchathen Sanghera, and P. Hopkins, 'Young People: Muslim Youth in Scotland. Politics, Identity and Multicultural Citizenship', pp. 136–54 (p. 146, pp. 148–50); Nasar Meer, 'Multiculturalism: Multiculturalism and Scotland. "Bringing the Outside into the Middle"', pp. 198–217 (p. 207, p. 214); Omar Shaikh, 'Heritage: Feeling Scottish and Being Muslim. Findings from the Colourful Heritage Project', pp. 171–97 (pp. 175–80, p. 182, p. 190, p. 195).
 - 8 E.g., see Audrey, pp. 229–30, p. 237; Hussain and Miller, *passim*; Maan, *Thistle*, pp. 202–03, p. 206; Kidd and Jamieson, p. 43; Bonino, *Muslims*, *passim*; Botterill and others, pp. 146–48; Shaikh, pp. 190–91, p. 194; Robin Finlay, Peter Hopkins, and Gurchathen Sanghera, 'Political Participation: Young Muslims' Political Interests and Political Participation in Scotland', *Scotland's Muslims*, ed. Hopkins, pp. 78–97 (p. 85–87, p. 95); T. M. Devine and Angela McCarthy, 'Introduction: The Historical and Contemporary Context of Immigration to Scotland since 1945', *New Scots*, ed. Devine and McCarthy, pp. 1–20 (p. 17).
 - 9 E.g., see Audrey, *passim*; Hussain and Miller, *passim*; Peter Hopkins, 'Young Muslim Men's Experiences of Local Landscapes after 11 September 2001', *Geographies of Muslim Identities: Diaspora, Gender and Belonging*, ed. Cara Aitchison, P. Hopkins, and Mei-Po Kwan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 189–200 (p. 191, also see pp. 195–98), & 'Introduction', pp. 11–12, pp. 16–17, p. 21; Kidd and Jamieson, *passim*; Libby Brooks, 'Police Scotland Confirm Spike in Hate Crime after Paris Attacks', *The Guardian*, 20 November 2015, www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/20/police-scotland-hate-crime-paris-attacks-muslim-community; Judith Duffy, 'Tensions Rise in Scotland in Wake of Paris Attack', *Herald Scotland*, 22 November 2015, www.heraldscotland.com/news/14095367.tensions_rise_in_Scotland_in_wake_of_Paris_attack (both accessed 28 March 2021); Bonino, *Muslims*, pp. 115–43, & 'Migration and Settlement', pp. 88–89, p. 91; Botterill and others, pp. 143–45, p. 149, p. 151; Meer, p. 206, pp. 214–15; Devine and McCarthy, 'Introduction', p. 14, p. 17.
 - 10 For further information on Catholic and Irish diasporic experiences in Scotland, see *Irish Immigrants and Scottish Society in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Proceedings of the Scottish Historical Studies Seminar, University of Strathclyde 1989–90*, ed. T. M. Devine (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1991); *Out of the Ghetto? The Catholic Community in Modern Scotland*, ed. Raymond Boyle and Peter Lynch (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1998); *Scotland's*

Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland, ed. T. M. Devine (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2000); and (concerning Glasgow) John Burrowes, *Irish: The Remarkable Saga of a Nation and a City* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2003).

- 11 Hussain and Miller, e.g. pp. 66–67, p. 113.
- 12 McGarvey and Mulvey, 'Identities and Politics in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum: The Polish and Pakistani Experience', *Pro-independence Movements and Immigration: Discourse, Policy and Practice*, ed. Roberta Medda-Windischer and Patricia Popelier (Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2016), pp. 134–62 (pp. 147–48).
- 13 Maan, *The New Scots: The Story of Asians in Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald 1992), pp. 2, 9–20; Audrey, especially p. 236.
- 14 For details, see e.g. Silke Stroh, *Gaelic Scotland in the Colonial Imagination: Anglophone Writing from 1600 to 1900* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017), pp. 33–76, pp. 113–40.
- 15 Here cited from Andrew Hook's edition (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985).
- 16 Also see the more thorough analysis in Stroh, *Gaelic Scotland*, pp. 141–83.
- 17 First published under the title *David Balfour* in serialised form 1892–93, reprinted in book form under the same title in the USA and under the title *Catriona* in the UK (both 1893). Here cited from the omnibus repr. with *Kidnapped*, ed. Letley, pp. 209–475, pp. 483–89.
- 18 The centrality of this concept in postcolonial discussions of culture contact is largely associated with Homi K. Bhabha's work, e.g. *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994). Unfortunately, restrictions of space make it impossible to go into further detail here, but for a convenient summary of the most salient points, see Stroh, *Gaelic Scotland*, pp. 10–11, p. 256.
- 19 E.g., *Kidnapped*, pp. 113–15; *Catriona*, pp. 246–47, p. 346, pp. 355–58, pp. 382–83.
- 20 E.g., *Kidnapped*, p. 55, p. 62, p. 76; *Catriona*, p. 292, pp. 361–62, p. 408, pp. 422–23.
- 21 Further discussions of Stevenson's stance on Highland/Lowland relations and its link to colonial discourse, the connection to Scott, and Stevenson's scepticism about the status quo, can be found in Andrew Noble, 'Highland History and Narrative Form in Scott and Stevenson', *Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. Noble (London: Vision, 1983), pp. 134–87; Ralph Stewart, 'The Unity of *Kidnapped*', *Victorian Newsletter*, 64 (1983), pp. 30–32; Julia Reid, *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science and the Fin de Siècle* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 124–31, pp. 158–73; and Madeline B. Gangnes, 'Material Romance: *Kidnapped* in and out of *Young Folks Paper*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 53.2 (2020), pp. 183–213.
- 22 Crichton, interview by unnamed interlocutor, appendix to *Fo Bhruid*, pp. 120–22 (p. 120).
- 23 E.g. p. 49, pp. 66–67, pp. 91–93, pp. 98–99.
- 24 First published 1881–82 (serialised) / 1883 (book). Reprinted e.g. ed. Peter Hunt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- 25 See the aforementioned interview, p. 121.
- 26 To some extent, even critical postcolonial rewritings have been accused of perpetuating the centrality of the texts they criticise – e.g. see Mark Stein, *Black British Literature: Novels of Transformation* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004), p. 164. Nonetheless, there is a qualitative difference between the partial confirmation of canonicity in openly critical rewritings and Crichton's more wholehearted endorsement of a canonical text.
- 27 Interview, p. 122.
- 28 English translations from *Fo Bhruid* in this essay are my own.

- 29 *Kidnapped*, p. 198.
- 30 *Kidnapped*, p. 174.
- 31 E.g. by John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse: The History of the Liverpool-Irish, 1800–1939* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2007), p. 322; but also see the complications discussed in Patrick Honeybone, 'Issues and Influences in the Formation and Development of Liverpool English' and 'Influences in Liverpool English Koineisation' (both 2004), *Web Resources for Linguistics*, University of Aberdeen, www.abdn.ac.uk/langling/resources/honeybone.pdf, accessed 20 August 2012.
- 32 *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. xi and viii, also see pp. xi–x and 1–4.
- 33 First published in serialised form 1899, and in book form in Conrad, *Youth: A Narrative, and Two Other Stories* (1902). Repr. e.g. in Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (1963), 3rd ed. (New York: Norton, 1988).
- 34 E.g., see Hopkins, 'Young Muslim Men's Experiences', pp. 190–94; and Sadiq Mir, "The Other within the Same": Some Aspects of Scottish-Pakistani Identity in Suburban Glasgow', *Geographies of Muslim Identities*, ed. Aitchison and others, pp. 57–77 (pp. 71–74).
- 35 *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951; New York: Harcourt, n.d. [c. 2005]), pp. 56–58, p. 61, pp. 64–66.
- 36 'Multiculturalism', pp. 213–14.

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Wherever the terms 'race' and 'racial' are used in this article, they should of course be understood as social constructs, not as an endorsement of the racist belief in their biological reality. To reflect this constructedness, quotes have been used at first mention, but in the interest of legibility they have been omitted subsequently, where they should nonetheless be taken to be implied.