

The Demotic Voice in Contemporary British Fiction

Jeremy Scott

Contemporary British fiction often features demotic narrative voices taken from 'everyday' contexts, using regional or national dialects. This writing aims in part to narrow the gap between the agencies of author and character so that both speak on the same plane, and engages with significant issues of regional, national and cultural identity in modern Britain. This book focuses on the works of James Kelman, Alan Warner, Graham Swift, Will Self, Martin Amis, Niall Griffiths and Anne Donovan (amongst others) and tries to assess the extent to which their narrative techniques succeed or fail – for example, modes of notation for regional and national dialects, and ways of representing 'internal' voices as opposed to spoken ones. An essential underlying question is whether a character's voice can ever be represented 'uncontaminated' by the author. Can the character be set free from its creator? The book draws upon the disciplines of stylistics and narratology for its theoretical apparatus, but the topic is also approached from a practical angle; in other words, from the point of view of issues which inform and affect the 'hands on' work of crafting narrative fiction. Another ambition is to bridge the wide (and unnecessary?) gap between the theory and practice of writing fiction.

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JEREMY SCOTT lectures at the University of Kent, UK. He has published articles on stylistics and narratology, fictional technique and contemporary fiction. He has also published several short stories.

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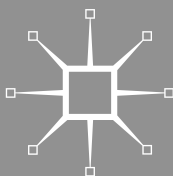
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