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0521021553 - The Grammar of Empire in Eighteenth-Century British Writing

Janet Sorensen

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## THE GRAMMAR OF EMPIRE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH WRITING

This study examines the complex role of language as an instrument of empire in eighteenth-century British writing. Focusing in particular on the relationship between England and Scotland and strategies of national and imperial consolidation, Janet Sorensen explores the tensions which arose during a period when the formation of a national standard English coincided with the need to negotiate ever widening imperial linguistic contacts. Close readings of poems, novels, dictionaries, grammars and records of colonial English instruction reveal the deeply conflicting relationship between British national and imperial ideologies. Moving from Scots Gaelic poet Alexander MacDonald to writers such as Adam Smith, Hugh Blair, and Tobias Smollett, Sorensen analyses British linguistic practices of imperial domination, including the enforcement of English language usage. The book also engages with the work of Samuel Johnson and Jane Austen to offer a wider understanding of the ambivalent nature of English linguistic identities.

JANET SORENSEN is Assistant Professor of English at Indiana University, Bloomington. She has written a number of articles on eighteenth-century topics.

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For my parents, Donald and Beverly Sorensen

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