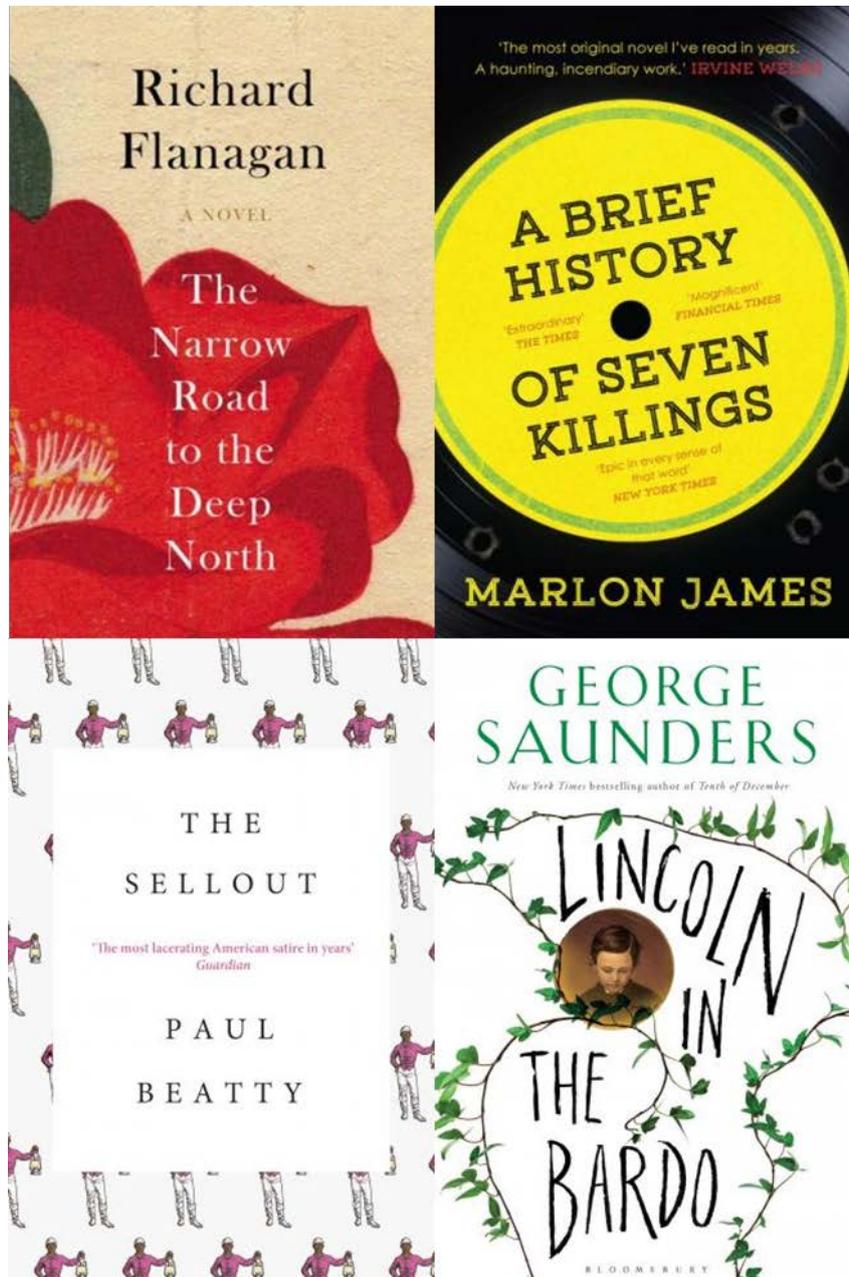


Branding the Literary Award: The Man Booker Prize for Fiction 2014-2017



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Abstract

This thesis examines the Man Booker Prize for Fiction's branding since the Booker Foundation's announcement to include all English fiction published in the United Kingdom in the award. Scholars have overlooked the opportunity to discuss the prize's branding ever since its establishment in 1969. Instead, they have focused on the award's identity, or identities, as it was the only prize that was exclusively open to British, Commonwealth, Irish and Zimbabwean authors. The Booker trustees' aim to transform the prize's brand from a British or Commonwealth award to a global one in 2014 backfired. They wanted to put the spotlight on the English language and the nominated novels and move away from the focus on the authors' nationalities. The trustees, however, continued to emphasize the nominees' ethnic backgrounds in the longlist, shortlist, and winner announcements throughout 2014-2017. This prohibited the company from conveying its new global brand to its audience.

Key words: Man Booker Prize for Fiction – British – Commonwealth – Global - Branding – Identity

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Branding the Literary Award: The Brand(s) of the Man Booker Prize 2014-2017

“The prize, which launched in 1969, aims to promote the finest in fiction by rewarding the best novel of the year written in English and published in the United Kingdom. To maintain the consistent excellence of The Man Booker Prize, judges are chosen from a wide range of disciplines, including critics, writers and academics, but also poets, politicians and actors, all with a passion for quality fiction.” (The Man Booker Prize Foundation).

These words under the ‘About’ section on the official website of the Man Booker Prize presents the Man Booker Prize for Fiction within the field of literary awards. Whether Man Group, the prize’s sponsor, intended to do so or not, the description of the content, aims and prospects of the award creates a brand narrative for the prize. A brand story reflects the essence of the prize to its consumers and competing literary awards (Lerman, Morais, and Luna 23). The sponsor has thus created a brand for the prize that carries a unique promise to the award’s consumers, and differs from other literary accolades (Lerman, Morais, and Luna 1-2).

Throughout the prize’s nearly fifty-year history, scholars have paid much attention to its identity. In the early years, they concentrated on the award’s colonial roots. The Booker company started out in 1834 as a typical British colonial corporation. The firm had most of its business in Guyana, formerly Demerara, where it provided distributional services on sugar estates (Huggan, 107). The prize was therefore considered to be sponsoring the slaver’s past (Caine 253). This aspect was prominently featured in the media. The Booker company undertook many efforts to compensate for its past by providing financial support for Guyanese artists and writers (Caine 253-254). The nominated and winning novels were also often works that were critical of British imperialism and colonialism (Allington 121). This behaviour in turn developed a postcolonial identity for the award (Anand and Jones 1040; Huggan 111; Strongman ix-x; Anand). This identity is affirmed when one considers that Commonwealth nations, of which most are former colonies of Great-Britain, are eligible to win the award as well. As Claire Squires has argued, the Booker’s role in promoting and celebrating writers from former British colonies was based on the aim to present itself as progressive in consecration of non-white and postcolonial authors (Squires 100).

In spite of the Booker’s attempt to atone for its past, its postcolonial identity was highly criticized. Daniel Allington has argued that, even while the nominated and winning novels were apparently critical of British imperialism and colonialism, the prize functioned as an instrument

in the furtherance of quasi-imperial and -colonial relations between Britain and its former colonies (121). The texts from the former colonies were only eligible to be nominated when they were written in English and published in the United Kingdom. The production and the value of the works from Commonwealth authors were therefore controlled by a British institution, which Allington has argued is not much different from colonial behaviour. This statement had already been suggested by other scholars, who, subsequently, construed a Eurocentric identity for the Man Booker Prize. For example, Hugh Eakin has argued that the Prize stimulated Eurocentrism as, besides making it mandatory for eligible novels to be written in English and published in the UK, it solely situated and compared itself with other European literary awards (qtd. In Huggan 106). This Eurocentric behaviour is strengthened when one takes a look at the assembly of the judges panel. Whereas some citizens from other Commonwealth nations have taken place in the judges' seats, most judges were British throughout the prize's existence (Caine 256; Huggan 111). As Eakin has suggested, the Man Booker Prize did not spark a development of non-Western or postcolonial literature, since it "encouraged the commerce of an 'exotic' commodity that catered to the Western literary market" (qtd. In Huggan 106).

So far, academics have neglected to reflect on the manner in which each identity created a brand for the Booker in the field of literary awards. While they might not have been aware of it, their discussion on the colonial, postcolonial, and Eurocentric identity shows four different perspectives on branding: corporate perspectives, consumer perspectives, cultural perspectives and critical perspectives (Schroeder 1522). These perspectives do not exist in isolation, but interact with each other continuously. The corporate perspective focuses on branding from a strategic point of view. The aim in this view is to analyse which marketing structure is most profitable. The consumer perspective aims to understand the roles of brands and branding in the everyday lives of consumers. The consumers construct the brand of the Booker as they establish a connection with their own identity within brands. The cultural perspective considers brands as part of culture rather than a management tool. The basic premise in this view is that culture and history can provide the necessary context for corporate perspectives of the interaction of branding with consumers and society. The critical perspective on branding elaborates on the cultural perspective as it reflects in which ways the brand functions ethically and ideologically (Schroeder 1523-1526). As a result, brands have become cultural artefacts as they are embedded in the cultures in which they exist.

The focus on physical consumer products in these branding theories may explain why scholars have not discussed branding in combination with the Man Booker Prize for Fiction.

Yet, literary awards have become cultural artefacts just like the brands of the physical consumer products (Bourdieu 262; Lerman, Morais, and Luna 6; Street 820). This thesis therefore aims to show how the current brand of the award has developed from its previous brands in the literary prize platform. As the brand of the Man Booker Prize has come under significant scrutiny since the change of rules in 2014 to include American authors, the starting point for this research is set in 2011, the moment the discussion whether the prize should include American novelists or not erupted among the Booker's trustees. This change in the award's rules mainly influenced the corporate branding perspective and the consumer perspective. Therefore, these two views will be analysed in this work. The corporate angle will be discussed via an analysis of the Booker's announcement of the change in 2013, as well as the company's longlist, shortlist and winner announcements in the years 2014-2017. The consumer perspective will be examined via their reaction on these announcements in the media, as this platform is accessible for all Man Booker Prize's consumers (readers, publishers, editors, agents, critics, etc.). These texts will be analysed via the semiotics in discourse method as introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure and Michel Foucault, in order to provide a complete picture of the Man Booker Prize's brand (Mills).

The development of the Prize's brand from 2011 onwards will be presented in three sections. The first part will provide a discussion on the Booker Foundation's decision to open the Man Booker Prize for Fiction to all English fiction published in the United Kingdom, and how this resulted in a shift from a 'British' or 'Commonwealth' brand to a 'global' brand. It will be shown how, even though the Booker's trustees were cautious to head into this new direction, consumers did not welcome this change in the prize's outline. The second section will therefore pay attention to the Booker's and consumers' reaction to this behaviour in the award seasons following the change. This will reflect how the company did not succeed to uphold its aim to become a global award, even though the prize's trustees continued to emphasise that it had become a global award throughout 2014-2017. This behaviour signalled conflicting messages to the prize's consumers. This was enforced by the Folio Academy's letter to the Booker's trustees that stimulated them to revoke the inclusion of American authors in the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. The last segment will analyse how the Booker Foundation's neglect to respond to the Academy's letter and the conflicting views the consumers were, as a result, challenged with might reflect an 'identity crisis' in the award's outline in the upcoming award season.

The New Rules

On 18 September 2013 The Man Booker Prize Foundation announced that from 2014 onwards all English written literature published in the United Kingdom would be eligible to receive a nomination for the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. Until 2013 only British, Irish, Commonwealth citizens and Zimbabweans were able to win the award. The change in the prize's regulations, however, did not come unexpectedly. For months, rumours had been circling around that the Booker Foundation would innovate the Man Booker Prize for Fiction's policy in the near future (Jones and Farrington). The Booker's trustees, on the other hand, were cautious in taking any significant decisions. They had consulted a group of forty to fifty writers, readers, booksellers, publishers and agents over the course of 18 months before taking the leap to include all English fiction that was published in the United Kingdom (Brown). Some were stunned by the news as Ion Trewin, the prize's director, had denied that any adjustments would be incorporated in the Prize's outline just a mere two weeks before the press release (Bookseller Staff). This did not signify that the expansion of the award had been a spur of the moment decision, as some have argued (Brown). Jonathan Taylor, chairman of the trustees, wanted to prevent that the attention that the adjustment would generate would overshadow the 2013 Man Booker Prize for Fiction winner. If a unanimous person had not leaked the modification of the prize's rules to the *Sunday Times* a couple of days after the presentation of the shortlist, Taylor would have been able to announce the change when he considered it was appropriate to do so (Brooks). Either way, the Booker Foundation created a new brand for the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in their statement on the expansion of the award.

Until Taylor's announcement, the Man Booker Prize for Fiction's road had been paved with Commonwealth sentiment. As mentioned, only Commonwealth nations (and Zimbabwe) qualified to compete for the award when it made its debut in 1969. Aside from this prerequisite, novels that aimed for the award were only eligible if they were published in the United Kingdom or Ireland. At the beginning of 2011 the Booker company was ready to shed this brand. Originally it had assembled the group of experts to brainstorm about a possible 'Man Booker Prize for American Literature'. The group was not enthusiastic about this plan as it argued that a separate award for American literature would jeopardise or dilute the Man Booker Prize for Fiction's (self-constructed) status as the most important literary award in the English-speaking world (Brown). This suggests that the consultants feared that American literature would denigrate the focus on English Commonwealth literature and diminish the Booker's original aim to support this marginalised group of authors. They therefore proposed that the Man Booker

Prize for Fiction's reputation and impact on the literary field could be improved by including American authors in their list of eligible nominees.

The heading of the press release, "The Man Booker Prize announces Global Expansion" shows that the Booker Foundation (in the end) agreed with the experts' view. It is, however, unknown if (one of) the consulted experts came up with the idea to open the prize to all nationalities, or if this possibility was already put on the table by the Booker Foundation at the onset of the discussion to incorporate American authors in the Booker phenomena. The Booker's trustees stated on the Booker Foundation's website that "The Man Booker Prize is widely regarded as the most important literary award in the English-speaking world. But, paradoxically, it has not allowed full international participation to all those writing literary fiction in English." They attempted to mend this situation by "embracing the freedom of English in its versatility, its vigour, its vitality and glory" by removing the nationality and one of the geographical constraints it had held on to since its establishment (Brown). The question nevertheless remains why the Booker Foundation decided to head into this direction and to step away from its 'Commonwealth brand' at this specific moment in the prize's existence.

The answer may be found in Melissa Davis' remark that if a company wants to survive in the present-day economic market, its brand has to be dynamic and adaptable (8). The Booker company had relied on the exact same players for 44 years. The Booker Foundation had been criticised for the limited scope of nationalities that was eligible to win the award before. The amount of critique on the restricted longlists, shortlists, and winners had however increased over the years. This could have stimulated the Booker's executives to take a look at what they were actually promoting. Moreover, since the establishment of the award in 1969, the number of literary awards in Europe has significantly increased. The growing competition could also have encouraged the Booker's trustees to reconsider the prize's direction, as they might have feared that the prize would become redundant in the future if it remained faithful to its British or Commonwealth brand.

Taylor attempted to renounce this notion in the announcement of extension of the Man Booker Prize. He commented that "By including writers from around the world to compete alongside Commonwealth and Irish writers, the Man Booker Prize is reinforcing its standing as the most important literary award in the English-speaking world." In this manner Taylor wanted to show that the Man Booker Prize for Fiction, and therefore the Booker Foundation as well, would acquire an even stronger position than it already enjoyed on the literary platform. Yet, his use of 'reinforce' may indicate that the prize had been in a difficult situation. The prize distinguished itself by being the only literary award that exclusively promoted English British,

Irish, Commonwealth literature. Taylor's words, on the other hand, seem to show that the Booker's trustees felt the need to take some sort of action in order to strengthen the award's position in order to ensure it would not become superfluous.

The consumers' reaction to the Foundation's decision to open the doors of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction to all English fiction published in the United Kingdom or Ireland varied. Some welcomed the change in the Booker's regulations, others remained neutral. Author Cathy Rentzenbrink said she thought this was great news for British readers and that it was a really reader-friendly move as British readers were already exploring the international field of English fiction (Bookseller Staff). John Banville, the 2005 Man Booker Prize winner, commented that the Booker's change in direction was an "excellent idea". Yet, he downplayed his constructive feedback by stating "God help the rest of us, because American fiction is very strong indeed." (Gompertz). Anne Meadows, assistant editor at Granta, did not see this as a probable outcome of the Foundation's manoeuvre. She suggested that American literature and publishing were equal to British literature and publishing companies. As Meadows had worked with American authors, and had published multiple works by American novelists in the United Kingdom, it is not difficult to understand her take on the matter. The Booker's decision would most likely increase Granta's (financial) prospects in the literary market. Meadows concluded her argument by stating that the Booker's new direction was to be expected, as she considered the 2013 shortlist to represent anything except Commonwealthness (Bookseller Staff).

This comment was somewhat surprising as the Man Booker Prize's 2013 shortlist had been showered with praise for its representation of the varying Commonwealth members. Whereas the previous shortlists had generated criticism for being too British, too simplistic, too populist, and too elitist, the 2013 shortlist had not been besieged by any of these comments (Churchwell). Some were almost mournful to announce that the judges had been too inclusive and finally displayed the Booker's aim to be a Commonwealth award rather than a British one. Gaby Wood, a Booker judge in 2011, named the 2013 shortlist one of the best in the Prize's history. She praised the 2013 judges panel for including exceptional and indisputably skilled novels across the Commonwealth. "The Man Booker Prize is open to novelists from Britain, the Commonwealth, Ireland and Zimbabwe, and that's exactly what this list looks like" (Wood).

This discussion opened the door for the 'neutral field' to disclose its opinion on the status of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction following the rule change. Jackie Kaiser, an agent at Westwood Creative, suggested that the inclusion of American literature in the Man Booker Prize could lead to an Americanization of the award. This was not necessarily a bad thing, she argued, as she was convinced that the inclusion of the American market would generate more

attention towards the longlist, shortlist and winner, which would still include Commonwealth authors and generate more attention towards them as well (Bookseller Staff). However, she also stated that the inclusion of American authors in the Man Booker Prize for Fiction could lead to an Americanization of the literary culture world-wide. Toby Mundy shared Kaiser's opinion as he argued that the inclusion of the American literary market would bring a larger audience to the Booker's future nominees and winners. Yet, he considered the possibility that American novels could dominate the Booker's future lists and winners as he argued that the American culture tends to dominate when it is introduced to a phenomenon. This would thus remove the focus on English Commonwealth literature. Ultimately, he proposed that the Man Booker Prize's judges panels are known for leaving big names off the list(s), which would create a "level playing field" (Bookseller Staff).

Mundy's comment enabled the Man Booker Prize's consumers who were against the inclusion of all English fiction published in the United Kingdom to speak out. Author, historian and journalist Melvyn Bragg criticised Mundy's opinion. Bragg stated that the Man Booker Prize would lose its identity when all English literature published in the United Kingdom would be included in the award. Still, he was not really surprised by the Booker's move, yet he was disappointed as the award had lost its distinctiveness (Bury). Others took it a step further and directly attacked the inclusion of American authors. Author Linda Grant, whose novel *The Clothes on Their Backs* was shortlisted in 2008, commented that the inclusion of American authors would result in a significant imbalance within the award in favour of the American writers. British authors were not eligible to be nominated for American awards, such as the Pulitzer, which made her wonder as to why the Foundation felt the need to include American authors in the Man Booker Prize. She continued to say that the inclusion also created an unfair distribution on the literary awards platform. Authors from the United Kingdom will endure more competition for a "career-changing" prize with the inclusion of American authors. American novelists, on the other hand, will have an extra opportunity for this event to occur as they have become eligible for the Man Booker Prize for Fiction (Bury).

This fear of competition was a reoccurring theme throughout the negative comments on the Booker's new rules. Author, academic and journalist Philip Hensher, who was also shortlisted for the award in 2008, commented "I don't think I've ever heard so many novelists say, as over the last two or three days, 'Well, we might as well just give up, then.'" (Brown). David Godwin, a literary agent who, at the time, had multiple Booker nominees under his wing, agreed with Hensher's view as he argued it would become more difficult for British authors to be acknowledged if the Americans would join in (Brooks). It seems like Grant, Hensher, and

Godwin did not take into consideration that the Booker did not just promote British literature, but was supposed to endorse and stimulate English Commonwealth, Irish, and Zimbabwean literature. Some critics did incorporate this feature, but still argued the Booker made the wrong call when opening up to non-Commonwealth authors. Jim Crace, who was shortlisted for his novel *Harvest* in 2013, suggested that all prizes need to have their own characteristics, which are sometimes defined by limitations. He argued that the Man Booker Prize's identity would be lost if American authors were allowed to participate (Clark).

Academic David Brauner, who specializes in American literature, mentioned that consumers who oppose the change in the prize's regulations should not be so frightened by the American literary market (Brown). His personal analysis and comparison of American novels between the years 2000-2012 and the Man Booker Prize's winners in those years made him draw the conclusion that an American author only could have beaten the Booker winners of 2001 (Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang*), 2005 (Richard Ford's *The Lay of the Land*), and 2009 (Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*). Trewin argued otherwise. He stated that the competition would increase by opening the prize to all English written fiction published in the United Kingdom and that this would only make winning the Man Booker Prize for Fiction an even greater accolade than it already was (Brown). In this comment, Trewin, and therefore the Booker Foundation, were the only ones who kept the idea alive that all new nationalities, and not just the Americans, would become competition for the British, Commonwealth, Irish, and Zimbabwean authors. The shortlists, longlists, and winners in the 2014-2017 award seasons, however, showed that only one new nationality had actually become competition for the original countries.

The 2014-2017 Award Seasons

The Booker Foundation was criticised for its decision to expand the rules of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction at the end of 2013. The discussion that followed among the prize's consumers died out at the onset of 2014. The announcement of the 2014 longlist in July, on the other hand, revived the debate. Throughout the award seasons of 2014-2017 some of the consumers' previous comments re-emerged when they came to realise that the announced change in the prize's regulations was there to stay. The company, however, stood its ground of its new global brand despite the criticism it received during these years. An analysis of the press releases of the longlists, shortlists, and winners will show how the Booker company managed its new global brand. The consumers' perspective on the Booker Foundation's presentation of its global brand will be visualized via their discussion on the shortlists, longlists, and winners in 2014-2017 in media outlets.

The 2014 Man Booker Prize longlist was presented on the Foundation's website on 23 July. The Booker Foundation's announcement focused on the "historic event" the new rules had created. "The first Man Booker prize to admit novels from across the globe as long as they are written in English has published its longlist. Following much discussion, the six judges chaired by philosopher Anthony Grayling chose 13 books by four Americans, six Britons, two Irish writers and one Australian.". Further on in their message, the Foundation's trustees specified the American nominees once more, yet did not mention the British or Irish nominees anew. The company also included once again its motivation for expanding their award. To convince its consumers that this had been a good call it included author and 2013 Man Booker Prize for Fiction winner Eleanor Catton's enthusiastic reaction on the expansion of the prize. The Booker's trustees did not include any criticism it had endured during the last few months of 2013 in their statement. The inclusion of Catton's positive remarks on the new rules and regulations strongly suggests that there had been negative comments on the expansion of the award and that the Booker's trustees had felt the need to rectify these. This need could be explained by the lack of a global perspective in the longlist, since it only included one nationality that would not have been eligible to receive a nomination before the rule change.

The consumers reaction to the longlist was mellow in comparison to the criticism they had uttered a few months earlier. Their reactions varied from "interesting mix of authors across the globe" to "it's surprising there aren't more Americans on there." (Clark; Turits). Some argued that the list fitted the company's new 'global award' brand instead of a 'Commonwealth' brand (Wagner). This comment is somewhat surprising as the longlist was not that global at all. The consumers do not seem to have been bothered by this, since no comment was made against

the limited scope of the longlist. Instead, they focused on the presence or, more often, the absence of (established) American authors on the 2014 longlist (Brown). Four American novelists had managed to secure themselves a spot on the longlist. The 2014 judges panel commented that there had not been any question of tokenism. Anthony Clifford Grayling, chair of the judges panel, added that any concerns about American novelists stealing the Man Booker Prize for Fiction from British or Commonwealth authors was ungrounded, since these nationalities were still included in the 2014 longlist (Clark). Yet, the company nor the consumers seemed to realize that the Booker did not succeed in its aim to shift the focus from the author's nationality to the English language.

The announcement of the 2014 shortlist did not stir this realization for the Booker Foundation or its consumers either. If anyone was somehow still unknown with the new outline of the award, the Booker Foundation was sure to incorporate the new rules in their shortlist announcement. The Foundation's trustees stated on their website "This is the first list to reflect the diversity of the novel in English regardless of the author's nationality, as the Man Booker Prize has opened up to any author writing originally in English and published in the UK." Whereas the company aimed to praise the novel based on the English language in the written form rather than the author's nationality, the comment on the diversity of the novel seems to suggest the company was defending itself for its choice of nominees. The judges' focus in their statement seems to support this as they emphasized the international perspective of the shortlist, "As the Man Booker Prize expands its borders, these six exceptional books take the reader on journeys around the world, between the UK, New York, Thailand, Italy, Calcutta and times past, present and future." It thus seems that the Bookers trustees tried to show the newly established global perspective of the award via the content of the novels as the authors' nationalities on the shortlist could not support this.

The consumers, on the other hand, continued to discuss the ratio between the amount of British nominees versus the Americans. The presence of the nominated Australian author was neglected in this debate. The consumers argued that the Americanization of the prize did not occur, for three of the nominated novelists were British, and only two were American (Flood; Wood). Some even criticised the previous commentators who feared the inclusion of American authors. Gaby Wood argued that their anxiety had been ungrounded from the beginning, since the prize was not exclusively opened up for the Americans. She even goes as far as to comment that "The fact that everyone was so fixated on America seemed to confirm the need for expansion – to suggest that we were blinkered in our search for good writing." (Wood). Though, Wood did not include that the only newcomers who received a nomination were the Americans,

while approximately 143 other nationalities also became eligible (Worldatlas). Whereas she ends her argument by stating that these could be nominated in the following years, Wood actually showed that she is conflicted in her own argumentation.

One consumer, however, did focus on the language of the novel. BBC analyst Rebecca Jones took the novels' genre and eras in which the storylines were set into consideration. Whereas she argued historical fiction had been a safe option to secure a nomination in previous years, the 2014 shortlist marked a change. A (historical) war was no longer the novels' key subject. The traditional themes of grief, ambition, desire, and a taste for the extraordinary remained popular. With this change the timeline was altered as well. The novels covered the recent past, the present, and the (unknown) future (Jones). In this argumentation Jones stayed away from using words and phrases concerning the novelists' nationality and the prize's global perspective. Jones thus succeeded to hold on to the Booker Foundation's aim to focus on the English work of fiction.

Her attempt, however, did not influence the reports on Richard Flanagan's win. His Australian nationality and being the fourth win for Australia were the main features in each report on the televised award ceremony. The American and British authors who had missed out on the prize were mentioned as well in the light of their nationality (Brown; Clark). The Booker's trustees and the consumers once again emphasised the new international perspective of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. The consumers furthermore stated that any fears of an Americanisation of the prize had been ungrounded as the (single nominated) Commonwealth novelist had won the award. This comment is interesting as they did not acknowledge Flanagan's presence on the longlist or shortlist. It is thus safe to say that the borders of the Man Booker Prize did not expand in 2014 as the Booker's trustees only included one more nationality, for which the group of literary experts had suggested it was improper to construct a segregated award. The consumers did not regard this to be problematic, even though most were furious when the Booker announced its new rules in September 2013.

In the award seasons of 2015, the Booker Foundation posted a similar message as in 2014 to announce their longlist in July. The company again focused on the wide spectrum of the nominees' nationalities. The trustees also emphasised the international aim of the award once more. One change, however, did occur. Perhaps inspired by Jones' comments on the 2014 shortlist, Michael Wood, chair of the judges panel, stated that "The range of different performances and forms of these novels is amazing," which was followed by "All of them do something exciting with the language they have chosen to use." The Booker's trustees thus seemed to understand that they should to focus on the English language to secure its global

brand. Yet, one could argue that this comment did not show that the company was confident that it had convinced its consumers that the Man Booker Prize for Fiction had become an international award.

The consumers may therefore have created a similar path like the one they had constructed in 2014 as they focused on the nationalities of the nominees again (Brown). The presence of American novelists remained the focal point as well. Journalist Katherine Schwab argued that “The U.S. is, in fact, the most well-represented country, with other entrants hailing from Great Britain, Jamaica, New Zealand, Nigeria, Ireland, and India.” (Schwab). Whereas the company seemed to have adopted the notion that they should actually focus on the language and the novel’s literary composition, the consumers did not seem to have registered this notion as well. They still viewed the Man Booker Prize for Fiction as a nationality competition of authors who happened to have written their novel in English and published it in the United Kingdom in order to be eligible for the award.

The content of the Booker Foundation’s 2015 shortlist announcement reflected a similar perspective as its longlist. The company focused on the variety of writing styles and the authors’ literary expertise, although it also accentuated the writers’ “very different” nationalities and specified which nationality was new to receive a nomination. They also stressed the “cultural heritage” within each novel’s storyline to convey that they had really become a global award. They could not control this urge as the authors’ nationalities failed to let the reader experience the multicultural world. As the consumers were exposed to the same perspective, their take on the shortlist did not differ much from their view longlist either. The majority of the consumers re-elaborated on the ratio between the number of British nominees and American nominees (Denham; Martin). Author, editor and journalist Robert McCrum even adapted the Booker Foundation’s justification of its six nominees. He argued that the shortlist was “a mirror to our times, here are six books that reflect a world struggling to sustain a shared humanity, through family and friendship, despite gangster violence, self-harming and sibling murder.” (McCrum). In this comment McCrum reflected on the cultural heritage of and multicultural perspective on the world, which argued in favour of the Man Booker Prize’s global brand.

The announcement of Marlon James’ win in 2015 did not deviate from the company’s previous outline. A recap of the old versus the new rules was given by the company as well as by the consumers, which resulted in a focus on the author’s nationalities once more. It seems like the Foundation did not know how to present “the first Jamaican win” in a different manner. The consumers also recreated their previous focus and comments (Brown). They discussed the ratio of American nominees compared to the other nominated nationalities like it had become

their daily routine and stated that there was no question of Americanisation within the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. They supported this comment by arguing that American novelists had been allowed to enter the competition for the past two years, but failed to win the award both times (Begley). In this sense, the Americanisation of the Man Booker Prize seemed to depend on who won, rather than who were nominated. The consumers, on the other hand, did not know this situation was the calm before the storm, since the award ceremonies of 2016 and 2017 called an American author as the prize's winner.

The road to these winnings was visualized by a change in the company's announcement of the 2016 longlist. The Booker Foundation had focused on the nominees' nationalities in the first two years after it had opened the award to all English fiction published in the United Kingdom, yet there was no emphasis on the authors' nationalities in their 2016 longlist announcement. Instead, the trustees elaborated on the English language and the quality of the novels that were featured on the list. "From the historical to the contemporary, the satirical to the polemical, the novels in this list come from both established writers and new voices. The writing is uniformly fresh, energetic and important." The Booker's trustees thus succeeded to present their global brand without any nationalistic references.

The consumers had also altered their perspective on the Man Booker Prize's longlist compared to the previous two years. American and British authors dominated the longlist, which still invited the consumers to comment on this division. Yet, they attempted to include the notion that the Man Booker Prize for Fiction should reflect a 'global' take on written English fiction in this discussion as "no other 'new' nation" had been included in the longlist (Gajanan). They specifically noted the contrast between the 'diversity' of the 2015 longlist and the lack of diversity in the 2016 longlist. The 2015 longlist included authors from Britain, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Nigeria, and the United States. The 2016 longlist only featured novelists from Australia, Britain, Canada, South Africa and the United States (Adhikari and Parker; Chowdhury). Yet, the global perspective still seemed to be missing in the consumers' mind. The 2016 longlist only featured one less nationality than the 2015 longlist, and both lists represented the same nationality, the American, which was not eligible for the award before the rules had been altered. The consumer's comments thus disparage what the content of a global brand should reflect, even though they seemed to realize that the Booker Foundation had failed in its aim to represent a global award.

The Booker Foundation did not adopt the consumer's notion and even returned to its old ways in its 2016 shortlist announcement. The judges panel seemed confident in their selection as they stated that "In re-reading our incredibly diverse and challenging longlist, it was both

agonizing and exhilarating to be confronted by the sheer power of the writing.” Jon Day, one of the 2016 judges, declared that “to my mind these books are connected by their interest in the world at large [...]” (Day). The Booker Foundation elaborated on the judges statement by commenting that the judges had remarked on the role of the novel in exploring the multicultural world as the shortlist featured a variety of voices in 19th century Scotland to Revolutionary China. The Booker’ trustees’ emphasis on the place of location in the storylines showed that the Booker felt a need to confirm its global status even three years after they published the extension of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction on their website. Whereas this was absent in the company’s longlist announcement, it may be possible that the trustees were affected by the consumers “no other ‘new’ nation” comment.

The consumers on the other hand headed into a new direction in their discussion on the 2016 shortlist. In the debate it seemed like the consumers wanted to confirm the Booker’s global brand, rather than criticizing it like they did in their comments on the 2016 longlist. John Dugdale, literary analyst for *The Guardian*, continued to focus on the authors’ nationalities on which the consumers had relied ever since the inclusion of all English written literature published in the United Kingdom (Day). He argued that the range of the nationalities may seem to be limited as the same nationalities except for one had been nominated for the award as pre-rule change, yet that this limited scope would be broadened when one takes the novelists’ cultural heritage in consideration. He mentioned how shortlisted authors Deborah Levy (*Hot Milk*) and David Szalay (*All That Man Is*) had moved from South Africa and Canada respectively to the United Kingdom, and how Ottessa Moshfegh represents the American, Iranian and Croatian nationality as her parents were Iranian and Croatian and she was born in the United States, whereas Madeleine Thien was born in Canada but had Chinese-Malaysian and Hong Kong Chinese blood running through her veins. Dugdale thus wanted to confirm the Man Booker Prize’s global brand by showing that it actually did incorporate worldwide cultures even though a first glance at the authors’ nationalities may not provide this insight.

Yet, not all consumers may have shared Dugdale’s train of thought. Jones’ 2016 analysis provides a view on when the consumers actually considered the Man Booker Prize for Fiction to be ‘global’ (enough). Even though she called the 2016 shortlist a “slightly underwhelming list” due to the lack of diversity, Jones commented that there did not seem to be any room for an Indian or African author on the shortlist in the Booker’s mind (Jones). This reflected the attitude that as long as there was one author from the African continent the Booker’s trustees had done their job and the audience would be happy. Interestingly, she compares the African continent to India. This creates the assumption that Jones, and the Booker’s consumers, seem

to regard India as the representative from the Asian continent. Whereas Wood opted to argue that other Asian nations could be included in the Booker's future award seasons, Jones seemed to have suggested that there would not be any criticism on the lack of a global perspective in the award when an African or Indian author was presented as one of the nominees in the longlist and shortlist. This corresponds with the denigration of the global perspective in the consumers' comments on the 2016 longlist. In this sense the consumers (unintentionally) reduced the aim of the award as they did not seem to care about all nations across the world. In this manner, the focus on the English language in which the novel is written is denigrated as well, as this does not seem to be the focus of the Man Booker Prize's consumers.

The message of the 2016 Man Booker Prize for Fiction winner was shared in a similar manner as the company's 2016 shortlist announcement. For the first time in the Booker's history an American author had won the prize over a British or Commonwealth novelist and the company was more than delighted to emphasize this. Paul Beatty was not only compared to 'brilliant' British authors, such as Jonathan Swift. The Booker's trustees also drew connections between Beatty's and Mark Twain's literary achievements. The judges panel on the other hand stayed away from using any terms related to Beatty's (cultural) background. Instead, the judges commented that they had picked Beatty's *The Sellout* as the winner due to its aesthetics, quality and depth of ideas (Brown). Other than in the previous years, the consumers seemed to have taken over the Booker's announcement and comment of the winner, as they do not establish any arguments of their own, but copied the judges words (Masters).

In the 2017 award season the company returned to its 'confirmation' behaviour. Chair of the 2017 judges, Baroness Lola Young, said "Only when we'd finally selected our 13 novels did we fully realise the huge energy, imagination and variety in them as a group. The longlist showcases a diverse spectrum – not only of voices and literary styles but of protagonists too, in their culture, age and gender." Like the 2016 longlist announcement, the Booker Foundation focused on the novels literary composition, yet could not stay away from reassuring the readers that the list of nominees incorporated a global perspective. The consumers on the other hand resurfaced their comments from 2014 and 2015 as they solely focused on the presence of American novelist. Beatty's win had re-established a discussion on the inclusion of American novelist in the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. The consumers agreed with each other that the inclusion of American authors was controversial as it damaged the chances for British authors to win the prize. Young responded to this via the BBC by saying that it would have been odd to only be considered for the prize if one carried the British or one of the Commonwealth participants' nationality in modern society. Furthermore, she argued that it was not necessary

to fear for an American dominance in the award, as only a third of the longlisted authors were American.

Young's confidence was not present in the Booker Foundation's shortlist announcement. The trustees stated that "The judges remarked that the novels, each in its own way, challenge and subtly shift our preconceptions — about the nature of love, about the experience of time, about questions of identity and even death." This comment created the hope that a focus on the author's nationality or multicultural background would no longer be necessary for the Foundation to demonstrate that it had become a global brand. Yet, the specific focus on the authors' (dual) citizenships at the end of their official announcement showed that the company still was not doing what it promised to do four years earlier. The everlasting emphasis on the author's nationality reduced the focus on the English language and the global perspective of the award. This notion was also voiced by the consumers as they confronted the 2017 judges panel about the 'Americanization' of the Man Booker Prize following the presentation of the 2017 shortlist. Young replied that "All we can say is that we judge the books submitted to us, and make our judgment not based on nationality or gender, but what is written on the pages." (Flood). Fellow judge Lila Azam Zanganeh added that less than thirty percent of the novels submitted were written by Americans and that the prize had become more transcultural over the past four years (Flood).

Consumers were nevertheless quick to point out that even though American novelists might 'only' represent around one third of the novels which were submitted, three had made their way into the final half dozen (Lichtig). In general, they have a point as a third of the 2014-2016 shortlists had been made up of Americans as well. Compared to the 143 other 'new' nationalities that had become eligible for the award following the 2013 change of rules, American authors had been the only ones to receive a shortlist nomination. When George Saunders' *Lincoln in the Bardo* was announced as the 2017 winner, marking the second American win in a row, consumers argued that the Americanisation of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction had been completed (Bradbury; Jones). Saunders was asked to comment on this after his win. While he responded that he was not really in the position to comment on the criticism, he did argue that "the beauty of literature is that differentials of your identity can fall away." (Bradbury). Rather than elaborating on his identity, he focused on his novel and English literature instead, something the Booker Foundation had been aiming for ever since their 'going global' announcement.

The Booker's trustees remained silent on the 'Americanization' comment after Saunders' win. This did not entail that they had learned from their mistakes or the consumers'

reactions. They continued to focus on Saunders' nationality in their announcement of the 2017 winner, which was followed by an overview on the nationalities Saunders had managed to defeat. This behaviour withdrew attention from the literary works that had been shortlisted. The novels, the English language and the aim of the award as the Booker Foundation described it on paper in 2013 were all denigrated in this take on the award. It could therefore be argued that the Man Booker Prize for Fiction is solely a universal award in its theory, yet not in its actions. This train of thought may have stimulated the members of the Folio Academy in February 2018 to suggest to the Booker Foundation that its 2014 rule change should be revoked.

Identity-Crisis?

On the second of February 2018 *The Guardian* published an article which declared that the Folio Academy was going to present a letter to the Booker Foundation. In this letter the Booker's trustees were urged to revoke the 2014 inclusion of American authors in the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. The newspaper had retrieved this information after one of the authors had allowed a journalist from the newspaper to study the letter (Cain). The Man Booker Prize Foundation reacted to the Folio Academy's critique on the same day.

“The Foundation welcomes any debate that would further the wellbeing of the prize, but would wish to point to inaccuracies in the letter. The Man Booker Prize expanded in 2014 to allow writers of any nationality, regardless of geography, to enter the prize providing that they are writing in English and published in the UK. The rule was not created specifically to include American writers.”

Following this message, the Guardian printed a rectification stating that the letter to the Booker Prize's trustees had not been sent in the name of the Rathbones Folio Prize. Instead, they emphasized that the authors and publishers who wrote or signed the letter happened to be members of the Folio Academy (Cain). Either way, the letter stimulated a new discussion on the ‘Americanization’ of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in newspapers across the globe. This chapter will explore the members’ motivation to send the letter and argue how the Booker Foundation’s (lack of) reaction to the media’s discussion created an ‘identity crisis’ for the Man Booker Prize for Fiction’s consumers.

The Rathbones Folio Prize (presented as The Literature Prize in 2011 and known as The Folio Prize in 2014-2015) was established by a group of esteemed authors and publishers in March 2013. The founders gathered in the Folio Academy, in which they created the award’s policies. The Academy’s members shaped the award to be a direct rival to the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. They argued that the Booker was headed in the wrong direction in its focus on popular fiction (Capon). Margaret Atwood, one of the founders of the Folio Prize, argued that the focus of The Folio Prize would not be on which novel could generate the largest amount of money, which she claimed the Booker’s trustees seemed to prioritize. The Folio Academy, she stated, would concentrate on the literary skills of the novel’s author (Lawless). Moreover, The Folio Prize was open to any work of fiction that was written in English and published in the United Kingdom. Whereas the Booker Foundation was in the midst of their decision to expand their rules and regulations to all English literature as well, the Folio Prize was six

months ahead of them. As the Booker's rule change was still unknown in March 2013, the Folio Academy took a shot at the Achilles heel in the Man Booker Prize's history (Caine 254).

When the Booker Foundation announced that from the 2014 award season onwards all English written fiction published in the United Kingdom could be nominated for the Man Booker Prize, The Folio Prize' initiator and co-founder Andrew Kidd was perplexed. In an interview with *The Guardian* Kidd mentioned that it was difficult to ignore that the Booker's new criteria were nearly identical to the Folio Prize's criteria (Brown). Whereas the Booker had already been working on the expansion of their award for months, rumours were floating around claiming that the company made a rash decision to include all English written literature published in the United Kingdom when the Folio Prize was launched in March 2013 (Brown). Yet, it turned out that the Booker Foundation did not have to worry about its esteem within the literary awards spectrum as a result of the establishment of the Folio Prize.

The Folio Prize had not been able to achieve widespread recognition since its launch in 2013. External and internal conflicts were at the core of this. From its first award season onwards, the Folio Prize had to compete against the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in the spectrum of literary prizes. At the foundation of The Folio Prize, the Academy had aimed for a different public than that of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. To make matters worse, the Prize's initial sponsor, The Folio Society, pulled back after a mere two years. Kidd, however, was not concerned by this event. He commented that he "was looking with excitement to the future." (Mayes) The departure of The Folio Society was not good for the prize's publicity, as critics suggested the prize was failing in its aspirations to promote English literary novels. This was confirmed when the Prize could not run in 2016, as it had not found a new sponsor. In December of 2016 the Rathbone Investment Management company was announced by the Folio Prize Foundation as the award's new sponsor. The award returned to the stage in 2017, but had changed its criteria following the sponsorship of the Rathbone Investment Group. Whereas only fictional works of literature could be nominated in the previous years, the prize had expanded its criteria to include nonfiction books. With this move the Folio Academy seemed to have confirmed the critics' argument that the prize was not doing very well and that it needed to find a new method to attract global appreciation.

Even though the Rathbones Folio Award has denied this train of thought by distancing itself from the letter, it is possible that the group of authors and publishers who signed the message only did so to increase interest in the Rathbones Folio Prize. After all, the undersigned included the co-founders of the Folio Academy (Cain). The authors of the letter, on the other hand, argued in their letter that the Booker Foundation had failed in its aim to turn the Man

Booker Prize for Fiction into a global award. They claimed that the Booker had actually restricted the diversity of the prize as American writers had been dominating the longlists and shortlists since they became eligible to be nominated. The members argued that they feared a “homogenised literary future” if the 2014 rule change would not be revoked (Cain). Yet, in this argumentation they also downgraded their own award, as American authors are also eligible to win The Rathbones Folio Prize and prominently featured their shortlist over the past five years (Anderson; Cain; Furness; Wade). Some of the authors of the letter defended this comment by claiming that the Booker was established in 1969 to give a platform to English literature written in the former colonies of the United Kingdom, whereas this had never been the Academy’s mission. The members argued that Booker’s initial support of the marginalised English written literature was diminished with the inclusion of American authors as this further marginalised English literature from the Commonwealth rather than making it available to the public (Wood).

The Booker Foundation denied putting such restrictions on English Commonwealth literature. The company, however, did not exclude that they would give in to the Academy members’ critique in the future by declaring that “The Foundation welcomes any debate that would further the wellbeing of the prize.” In this sentence, the company created a paradox for itself. The Booker Foundation stated that it would remain true to their global brand as constructed in September 2013, yet acknowledged that the Man Booker Prize for Fiction is currently not the best they could be as they welcome suggestions that could improve the award. Whereas this could be a method to avoid further criticism, media across the world seem to have agreed that the prize was not the best it could be, since the discussion whether the Booker Foundation should revoke its 2013 decision became a hot topic for journalists, authors, publishers, agents, readers and many more in the months following the Booker Foundation’s press release.

Like the Folio Academy, the reactions from the Booker’s consumers focused on the inclusion of American authors in the Man Booker Prize, rather than the inclusion of all English written fiction in published in the United Kingdom. Emma Worrall argued in “Are the Man Booker Prize’s Rules Fair?” that the letter reflects the members’ fear that talented American authors would overshadow British writers, rather than their advice that the Commonwealth sentiment of the prize should be maintained. Whereas the group of authors and publishers argues that they want to prevent a homogenised future for English literature, Worrall argues that it is not just the Man Booker Prize that makes American literature available to the British market. Several publishing houses, such as MacMillan, have locations or branches in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Some publishers can opt, if they see value in it, to

publish one and the same novel in both the American and British market if they see a financial opportunity in it. Worrall nevertheless wants to exclude American authors from the competition as she argued that the British literary market is already saturated. Considering the Booker's aim to be a global award, Worrall's suggestion to give in to the Folio Academy's suggestions would be an act of discrimination.

Andrew Durbin suggested in "What's Wrong with the Man Booker Prize?" that the Booker Prize has never been anything but a British award. Since the Man Booker Prize's establishment in 1969 up to 2013, as many as 46 out of the 53 Commonwealth nations remained unacknowledged. During the Prize's 45-year long history as a 'Commonwealth prize' Australian authors won four times, Canadian, Indian and Irish each three times, New Zealanders twice, Nigerian once, and South African writers three times. British authors on the other hand were crowned a stunning twenty-nine times during these years. Alan Bissett captured this ambiguity in his searing comment that the Man Booker Prize for Fiction was not an award for the best in Commonwealth literature, but a reward system for the English establishment masquerading as magnanimity (Worrall). Therefore, Sam Leith argued that the Booker should hold on to its constituency in the English language, rather than to return to a territorial demarcation (Wood). Yet, Leith overlooked Graham Huggan's argument from 2001, which stated that access to the Commonwealth English literature was channelled through foreign markets, as the novel had to be published in either the United Kingdom or Ireland if it wanted to run for prize (111). This claim is also applicable for the 'global' Man Booker Prize for Fiction, which indicates that there is still a territorial division in award.

Others also suggested that the inclusion of American authors in the Man Booker Prize for Fiction did not contribute to the celebration of global English literature. Rather than criticizing the Booker's mission to shift from its 'Commonwealth' brand, Ceylan Yeginsu proposed in "Bar Americans From Man Booker Prize, Fed-Up British Authors Urge" that the Booker had no business in opening its doors to American authors specifically as there are enough, if not too many, awards that promote American literature. She also wonders why the Booker considered it necessary to include American authors as American literary prizes, such as the Pulitzer Prize, are not open for British authors. Perhaps the Booker Foundation was not aware who its (main) consumers were, as the connection between the Americans and the company seems to have been absent until the extension of the Man Booker Prize's rules. (Lerman, Morais, and Luna 23). It could be suggested that the inclusion of American authors showed the Booker's need to sustain its place in the public eye, since Squires has argued this is necessary for the Booker in order to fulfil its mission to reward the best novel in contemporary

fiction (96). The Booker Foundation's (controversial) decision to include American authors seems to have backfired as it seems like barely anybody was waiting for this. This train of thought is not unique to the Booker Prize as Martin Heinberg, H. Ozkaya and Markus Taube showed that consumers view a 'local' brand more favourably, since an 'international' brand seems to be taking over the value of the local brand in their research on merger and acquisition companies (587).

The Booker Foundation on the other hand has, except from its reaction to the letter on the second of February, remained silent in the discussion. While many journalists reached out to the Booker's trustees in the hope to retrieve a statement from them, they declined each offer to comment on the consumers' input or accusations. It might be possible that the company is holding off to comment on any remark until their announcement of the 2018 longlist in July, as they do not want the debate to overshadow this year's award. Though, as the Booker Foundation has remained silent, the Prize's consumers have become disoriented in the Man Booker Prize for Fiction's function and message. Whereas it can be read in the Booker Foundation's statement that the prize is open to any writer who writes a contemporary fiction novel in English and publishes it in the United Kingdom, and that it did not expand their rules to exclusively attract American authors, the Foundation's lack of interference in the media's discussion encouraged its consumers to wonder what and whom the Booker actually supports. It may, however, be possible that the Booker Foundation feels secure in its identity as a global literary award and does not feel the need to provide its opinion on the media's criticism.

This confidence resulted in an identity-crisis for the Booker's consumers and, as a result, the Man Booker Prize for Fiction, since the award would not exist without the consumers. As can be deduced from the news articles, the consumers do not seem to be aware that the Booker Foundation promotes itself as a global award only. They cling on to the 'fact' that the Booker is or used to be a British or Commonwealth prize that wanted to include American authors in its profile in order to remain relevant in the platform of literary awards. The consumers have thus constructed two different brands for the Man Booker Prize for Fiction than the Booker Foundation composed for the award. Yet, the consumers' wish to hold on to the 'Commonwealth' brand puts the Booker Foundation in a complicated position. As Squires has argued, in order to be able to fulfil a mission of rewarding and promoting the "very best in contemporary fiction", the Man Booker Prize must "sustain its place in the public eye and retain its aura of the pre-eminent arbiter of literary value" (96). Melissa Davis contributes to this train of thought by stating that successful brands are only those which are dynamic and adaptable (8). The consumers' argumentation that the new 'global' brand of the Man Booker Prize diluted

the prize from its value suggests that the dynamic nature of the Booker Prize has not been met with ardour. Moreover, the Booker Foundation withholds from commenting on the consumers' criticism, which suggests that the brand is not adaptable. In the long run this might lead to a decline in the consumers' loyalty levels, because they may feel neglected by the presence of the Americans, their brand does not correspond with the corporate brand, and consumers might display a reluctance to identify themselves with the prize due to lack of reaction from the Booker Foundation on their critique and suggestions (Heinberg, Ozkaya, and Taube 591).

A rebrand of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction, however, will not instantly change the way the organization is perceived (Davis 8). Part of this problem is hidden in the moment when it became known that the Booker Foundation was originally deliberating to create a separate award for American Literature. As the assembly of literary experts whom the Booker Foundation consulted in this process reacted negatively to this idea, the Booker Foundation opted to expand its criteria for the Man Booker Prize for Fiction instead. This report might have created the consumers' doubt whether the Booker Foundation only considers American literature to be 'prestige', as it was never an option for the Booker Foundation to conserve the prize's 'Commonwealth' brand. Whether the Booker Foundation decides to rebrand the Man Booker Prize for Fiction again or not, it needs to clear the air between the company's behaviour and the customer experience if it has any plans to continue the existence of the award.

Conclusion

The Man Booker Prize for Fiction has been subject to extensive criticism since its establishment in 1969. In the debate on the Booker's trustees' behaviour throughout these years, scholars have assigned several identities to the award. The colonial background of the Booker company and its attempt to shed this image enabled academics to create a postcolonial, and later on an Eurocentric identity, for the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. In this discussion scholars did not recognize the prize's brand(s) throughout its nearly fifty-year existence and how the prize's brand developed throughout the years. This thesis has aimed to fill this gap. Specifically, the Man Booker Prize for Fiction's brand from 2014 onwards has been analysed, as the award came under scrutiny following its announcement in September 2013 that it would include all English fiction published in the United Kingdom from the 2014 award season onwards. Previously, only British, Commonwealth citizens or Zimbabweans who wrote English fiction and published it in the United Kingdom were eligible to receive a nomination.

To visualize the Man Booker Prize for Fiction's change from its Eurocentric brand to a its global brand two different perspectives on branding theory, the corporate and the consumer perspective have been applied. The corporate perspective focuses on brands from a strategic point of view. The aim in this angle is that the company shapes its brand according to the most profitable marketing structure. The consumer perspective aims to understand the roles of the company's brand(s) and branding methods in the everyday lives of consumers. An analysis of these two views on the Booker Foundation's announcements in the years 2014-2017 and the Man Booker Prize consumers' reactions on these announcements have established that the Foundation's trustees have failed to uphold its aim to become a global literary award. This deficiency may be the result of the trustees misinterpretation of whom their consumers were back in September 2013. The enquiry of the consumers' reaction to the Booker's decision to open its doors to all English written fiction showed that the majority was not welcoming the arrival of American authors in 'their' award.

This argument was recounted throughout the first 'all-inclusive' award season, and the three consecutive years as well. This might have been due to the Booker Foundation's lack of a global perspective in their longlists, shortlists and winners announcements. The company had aimed to shift the focus from the authors' nationalities, as was the situation before the change in regulations, to the English language in which the novels were written and the literary works of arts themselves in its 2013 announcement. Yet, its continuous emphasis on the authors' nationalities and international background prevented this transition. The trustees' focus and determination to prove that the award had changed its direction did not help to convince the

prize's consumers that the Man Booker Prize for Fiction had become a global prize for English literature either. The paradox which was, as a result, constructed between the Man Booker Prize for Fiction's outline, the Booker Foundation's behaviour, and the Folio Academy's suggestion that the Booker should return to its Commonwealth roots has created an identity-crisis for the award's consumers. The Booker's trustees namely refrained from commenting on the Academy's proposal after it had informed its consumers that they were aware of the letter in which the Academy's message was detailed. It has therefore become unclear for the consumers what the Man Booker Prize for Fiction will stimulate and promote in the upcoming award season.

The consumers' discussion on the Man Booker Prize, however, has been based on American, Australian, and British media platforms. This may thus not reflect the worldwide opinion of the prize's changes and the Booker Foundation's behaviour. Yet, the main arguments on the 'new' Man Booker Prize for Fiction have been played out in these newspapers. Considering 143 countries that became eligible following the alterations in the prize's rules, and the 51 nations that already qualified are keeping away from the debate is interesting to say the least. Further research could attempt to uncover why these nations have opted to avert on commenting on the Man Booker Prize for Fiction's new outline. This also invites the questions whether the impact of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction is not as worldwide as the Booker Foundation likes to assume, and what the Commonwealth's lack of response says about the award's brand before the change in the Man Booker Prize for Fiction's regulations.

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