AYŞEGÜL DEMİR

Nation, Nature, and Womanhood

in the Poetry of Kathleen Jamie

ÇİZGİ KİTABEVİ

e-Book

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Her ongoing research investigates the intersections of Scottish and English literature with cultural memory, tradition, and narrative form.

NATION, NATURE, AND WOMANHOOD IN THE POETRY OF KATHLEEN JAMIE

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To my mom, Zeliha Özger,
with gratitude…

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(J) : *Jizzen*

(TH) : *The Tree House*

(QS) : *The Queen of Sheba*

(O) : *The Overhaul*

(BC) : *The Bonniest Companie*

PREFACE

...if poetry is a method of approaching truths, and each of us with a human soul and 'a tongue in oor heids' can make an approach toward a truth, poetry is inherently democratic.
Kathleen Jamie

Kathleen Jamie (born 1962), one of the most prolific and highly-acclaimed contemporary Scottish poets, has described herself as "West Coast urban, Edinburgh middle class, English liberal – an outsider everywhere" (McGuire, *Kathleen Jamie* 142). Born in Renfrewshire and raised in Currie, Midlothian, Jamie[1] studied philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. She has served as Professor of Poetry at the University of Stirling and was appointed Scotland's Makar (National Poet of Scotland) for the term 2021–2024. Her life story and self-definition reveal a persistent sense of displacement, a hybrid identity that enables her to observe both Scottish and English cultures with critical distance.

Kathleen Jamie has published an extensive body of work spanning poetry, travel writing, and nature essays, which have received several awards including the Forward Poetry Prize for Best Poetry Collection of the Year for *The Tree House* in (2004)[2], the Saltire Book of the Year Award for *The Bonniest*

[1] Jamie has an ordinary 'non-literary' family who had only the Bible and a copy of Robert Burns' poems in the house.
[2] Other awards Jamie has received include 'The Best Single Poem' ("The Graduates" in 1996); the 'Scottish Arts Council' Book of the Year Award (*The Tree House* in 2005); the 'Somerset Maugham Award' (*The Queen of Sheba* in 1995); the 'Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize' (*The Queen of Sheba* in 1996; *Jizzen* in 2000). In

Companie (2016), the 2017 Royal Geographical Society's Ness Award for "outstanding creative writing at the confluence of travel, nature and culture," and, more recently, the Highland Book Prize (collective winner) for her essay collection *Surfacing* (2019) and her election as an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2021(Onwuemezi n.p.).

Over the course of her career, she has published numerous poetry collections, including *Black Spiders* (1982), *A Flame in Your Heart* (1986), *The Way We Live* (1987), *The Queen of Sheba* (1994), *Jizzen* (1999), *Mr and Mrs Scotland are Dead: Poems 1980–1994* (2002), *The Tree House* (2004), *Waterlight: Selected Poems* (2007), *The Overhaul* (2012), and *The Bonniest Companie* (2015), *Selected Poems* (2018), and *Skeins o Geese* (2023). In addition to her poetry, Jamie has authored the travel narrative *The Golden Peak* (1993), later revised and reissued as *Among Muslims: Meetings at the Frontiers of Pakistan* (2002), as well as three major collections of nature essays: *Findings* (2005), *Sightlines* (2012), and *Surfacing* (2019). She also edited the anthology *Antlers of Water: Writing on the Nature and Environment of Scotland* (2020), and most recently published *Cairn* (2024), a compact collection of personal notes, prose poems, and micro-essays on the natural world. Jamie has additionally contributed to two collaborative projects: the travelogue *The Autonomous Region: Poems and Photographs from Tibet* (1993) with Sean Mayne Smith, and *Frissure: Prose Poems and Artworks* (2013), produced in collaboration with artist Brigid Collins.

Kathleen Jamie's poetry collections, produced at different stages of her life and in a variety of forms (such as quatrains, tercets, couplets), bring to the fore important issues such as the political decisions impacting Scotland, the environment,

addition to the prizes she has received, Jamie has had many works shortlisted for such prizes as the 'Forward Poetry Prize' for Best Poetry Collection of the Year (*Jizzen* in 2000); the T.S. Eliot Prize (*The Queen of Sheba* in 1995; *Jizzen* in 1999; *The Tree House* in 2004; *The Overhaul* in 2012); and the 'Griffin Poetry Prize' (*Mr and Mrs Scotland are dead* in 2003).

and her status as a woman writer. For this reason, Jamie has been labelled variously as a 'Scottish Poet', 'Woman Poet', or 'Nature Poet', even though the poet herself finds such labelling restrictive. As indicated in the title, this study aims to examine the personal and the political in the work of contemporary Scottish poet Kathleen Jamie. In order to do this, the book focuses on five of her poetry collections, composed between 1994 and 2015[3]: *The Queen of Sheba* (1994), *Jizzen* (1999), *The Tree House* (2004), and to a lesser extent[4] her later collections *The Overhaul* (2012) and *The Bonniest Companie* (2015).

This examination contributes significantly to understanding the poetic representation of the personal and the political through her sense of the nation, woman and nature, the chief instruments in creating and recreating herself as a poet in contemporary Scottish literature. Despite many references and praise for her poetry collections, sufficient detailed attention has not been paid to the content of her work. This is also true for Turkey. Although a few postgraduate studies have appeared in recent years, academic engagement with Jamie's poetry in Turkey remains limited. As such this book stands among the first comprehensive works devoted to her oeuvre in the country. The scarcity of critical material also makes research on her poetry particularly demanding. One notable resource is the book-length study *Kathleen Jamie: Essays and Poems on Her Work* (2015), edited by Rachel Falconer. Additionally, Louisa Gairn discusses the poetics and philosophy of ecology in Jamie's work in "Clearing Space," a chapter in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary*

[3] Volumes written before (1994), during (1999) and after (2002) the devolution were especially focused on because the differences and alterations in topic and style took place around the devolution in 1997. Therefore, her first volume, *Black Spider* (1982), which is scarce, and her 'selected collections' such as *Mr & Mrs Scotland are Dead: Selected Poems* (2002), and *Waterlight: Selected Poems* (2007) as well as her prose writings were excluded from this study.

[4] The reason it begins with *The Queen of Sheba* (1994) is that this volume has been accepted as "the beginning of her mature work" (Bell 42).

Scottish Literature, edited by Berthold Schoene-Harwood (Gairn, *Clearing Space*). Christian Schmitt-Kilb also studies 'landscape' in her poetry in *English Topographies in Literature and Culture: Space, Place, and Identity* (2016).

Likewise, limited availability of reference material on the poems analysed in this book makes the task particularly challenging. Additional difficulties arise from cultural differences, the absence of certain lived experiences central to Jamie's work, and the language barrier posed by her use of Scots. This study examines not only her well-known poems but also a number of pieces that have received little or no critical attention. Since Jamie resists categorisation under labels such as "woman poet" or "Scottish poet," this book concentrates on her poetic career as a whole rather than attempting to impose any restrictive theoretical framework upon her work.

Chapter I, "Contemporary Scottish Poetry and Kathleen Jamie", provides a general introduction to contemporary Scottish poetry and illustrates Kathleen Jamie's position within this literary canon. This section also highlights Jamie's poetic style as well as introducing the different phases of her writing.

Chapter II, "'*Scotland, Nation-States and Beyond*': Issues of Nation and Culture", focuses on the national and cultural concerns for Scotland in two sections: the introductory section includes a brief national history of Scotland and its experiences with independence, and the second presents detailed analysis of ten poems in three subcategories, 'The Cultural Past and the Present', 'Alienation and Migration', and 'National and Political Issues'. The first group is composed of the poems "Lucky Bag" (J, 42), "Mr and Mrs Scotland are dead" (QS, 37), and "Arraheids" (QS, 40) and are examined in terms of 'Scotland's past heritage and its reflections to

present'. The second group of poems dealing with alienation and immigration includes the poems "Pioneers" (J, 34), "One of us" (QS, 43), "The Graduates" (J, 3), and "Skeins o geese" (QS, 64). The last group of poems, which address national and political issues such as the 1997 and 2014 referendums on devolution[5] and independence, includes "Interregnum" (J, 40), "23/09/14" (BC, 41), and "A sealed room" (QS, 60). Furthermore, two other poems are looked at briefly, "Where are we at?" published in *The Guardian* just before the 2014 referendum, and "On the Design Chosen for the New Scottish Parliament Building by Architect Enric Miralles" from *Jizzen* (1999).

Chapter III, "'*The Tilt from Womanhood to Motherhood'*: The Manifestation of the 'Personal' Female Identity", which is divided into two parts, encompasses various female roles and the multiple identities of women. The first part of the chapter discusses the concept of 'identity' as a term, and, in relation to gender and femininity, social roles and the position of women in society. The various manifestations of female identity are then analysed in twelve poems divided into three subcategories, 'Womanhood', 'Spousehood', and 'Motherhood'. The first group, composed of four poems, "The Queen of Sheba" (QS, 9), "Hand relief" (QS, 14), "The Overhaul" (O, 28), and "School reunion" (QS, 20) is examined in terms of 'female identity and 'womanhood'. The second group of poems "Perfect day" (QS, 34), "Wee Wifey" (QS, 30), "Mrs McKellar, her martyrdom" (J, 24), and "The Garden of Adam and Dot" (J, 8) is considered in terms of the creation of a different female 'self' as a wife or partner. The third section, narrating female identity as a mother, explores the poems "The Barrel Annunciation" (J, 9), "St Bride's" (J, 45), "The

[5] Devolution refers to "the transfer of power from the central British Parliament to the localized Scottish Parliament"- in Scotland in 1997 and the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 (Ailes 2).

Green Woman" (J, 46), and "Wee Baby" (QS, 29). There are also brief summaries of "Bairnsang" (J, 15) and "iv.February" (J, 14) as they pertain to this subject.

Chapter IV, *"'I stand neither in the wilderness nor fairyland'*: Nature and Environmental Issues", composed of two parts, analyses nature and the environmental concerns Jamie accentuates through her poems. The introductory section explores nature and environmental concepts with a discussion of the terms 'nature' and 'culture', and emphasis on how Jamie's writing has evolved throughout her literary career. In order to better understand and analyse her nature poems, it is important to define the concepts of 'culture' and 'nature' and their two-sided relationship. After clarifying these concepts and their connections, the chapter focuses on Jamie's sense of nature and the characteristics of her nature poems. The second part includes a detailed analysis of ten poems, one of which is written in the Scots language. These poems are examined in three main categories 'Destruction of Nature and Environmental Issues', 'Nature as a Healer and a Mentor', and 'Dwelling in and with Nature'. The first group composed of "The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3), "Frogs" (TH, 5), and "Flight of Birds" (TH, 39) is analysed in terms of humanity's destructive effect on nature; the second group, including "Alder" (TH, 7), "Rhododendrons" (TH, 33), and "Landfall" (TH, 15) focuses on nature as a guide; the third group of poems "The Tree House" (TH, 41), "The Bower" (TH, 17), "The Swallows' Nest" (TH, 16) and "Speirin" (TH, 14), address the human-nature relationship. Additionally, nine more poems "Crossing The Loch" (J, 1), "The Puddle" (TH, 47), "Water Lilies" (TH, 34), "Swallows" (TH, 18), "White-sided Dolphins" (TH, 22), "Basking Shark" (TH, 23), "The Buddleia" (TH, 27), "The Whale-watcher" (TH, 25) and "The Dipper" (TH, 49) are mentioned briefly to support and enrich the discussions in these categories.

Throughout this study, the term *speaker* is used to denote the poetic voice or enunciating presence within each poem. The notion of the implied reader is invoked only when necessary to describe the idealised audience projected by the text itself. Instances in which historical, cultural, or mythic parallels are mentioned should be understood as interpretative possibilities rather than definitive authorial intentions. While the poems do not explicitly articulate such connections, their imagery and tonal registers can productively invite these resonances.

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Assist. Prof. Ayşegül DEMİR

[6] This book is based on the revised version of the doctoral dissertation entitled "'A Tongue in Oor Heids': The Personal and the Political in Kathleen Jamie's *The Queen of Sheba, Jizzen, The Tree House, The Overhaul* and *The Bonniest Companie*," completed in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures (English Language and Literature), Graduate School of Social Sciences, Ankara University.

CHAPTER I

CONTEMPORARY SCOTTISH POETRY AND KATHLEEN JAMIE

On 15 March 2016, First Minister **Nicola Sturgeon**, on the occasion of announcing Jackie Kay's appointment as Scotland's Makar[7] – the National Poet of Scotland – stressed the importance of poetry's contribution to Scottish culture, stating that "Poetry is part of Scotland's culture and history, it celebrates our language and can evoke strong emotions and memories in all of us." ("Our National Poet").

Contemporary Scottish poetry has been loosely classified in three periods or 'waves', which broadly correspond to the early, mid, and the late twentieth century. The first period regarding early twentieth-century contemporary poetry contains the first and second waves of Scottish Renaissance inspired by Hugh MacDiarmid. This came "after an almost total collapse of the Scottish tradition in poetry during the nineteenth century" (Glen 91). The Scottish Renaissance was a movement to restore to Scottish poetry qualities that "it had mostly lacked since Robert Burns" (Glen 91). According to Glen, the claim of the poetry written in this period is "for an independent Scottish poetry", and "for the poetry of Scotland again to be one of the poetries of Europe - and the world"

[7] Makar is a Scottish word for an author of a literary work, especially a poet or a bard, the Scottish poet laureate.

(91). Other prominent figures are Edwin Muir (1887-1959), and the poets who followed McDiarmid and who formed the second wave of the Scottish Renaissance such as Robert Garioch (1909-1981), Sydney Goodsir Smith (1915-1975), Norman MacCaig (1910-1996), George Mackay Brown (1921-1996), Sorley Maclean (Somhairle MacGill-Eain, 1911-1996), and Edwin Morgan (1920-2010). The second period includes poets who came to prominence in the later twentieth century and were inspired by the work of McDiarmid, dealing with issues of class, identity, and gender rather than nationhood, such as Douglas Dunn (1942 -), Tom Leonard (1944 - 2018), and Liz Lochhead (1947 -). The third period consists of a new generation from the eighties and nineties that combined their predecessors' techniques and interests and added environmental awareness to issues of politics, gender, and cultural inheritance. This last group includes poets such as Carol Ann Duffy (1955 -), John Burnside (1955 - 2024), Alan Riach (1957 -), Jackie Kay (1961 -), Robert Crawford (1959 -), Don Paterson (1963 -), Raymond Friel (1963 -), and Kathleen Jamie (1962 -), among many others.

In the nineteenth century, according to Derrick J. McClure, nationalism across Europe led people to "search for a common ethnic and linguistic identity that resulted in the creation of the German and Italian states and the fall of the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian Empires." However, there was "little evidence in Scotland of the militant desire for national independence" (10). This coincided with a low point in Scottish poetry, since the "main literary drive" was being "revealed in the novel" (Glen xxx). Although Scottish poetry left the impression that it had ceased being produced at that point in time, it was just a temporary halt which ended in the 1920s.

The development of literary works in the languages of Scotland has been interrupted by a number of incidents in

Scottish history, such as the Norman Conquest, the Act of Union, the Highland Clearances, and extensive emigrations. After World War I, modernism and a renewed sense of national identity contributed to the emergence of the 'Scottish Renaissance,' a movement in all three of Scotland's languages - Gaelic, Scots, and English - which aspired to both restore and modernise Scottish literature.

The Scottish Renaissance was a movement in reviving the Scots language in every aspect of art in Scotland, especially in poetry. It was also called the 'Lallans revival' referring to the revival of the language of the Lowlands. The term "lallans" was first coined by Burns for the Scots language in the Lowlands (Watson 222). According to Glen, Scottish poetry "had been returned to a worthy—and quite provincial—place among the poetry of Europe" as had been the case with the poetry of Robert Burns (Glen xxxi). The defining characteristic of this movement was "a desire to recover and restore the place of Scottish culture" since Scottish literature endured "centuries of marginalisation within the Anglo-centric system of cultural value embedded within the British state" (McGuire, *Contemporary Scottish Literature* 8).

The leading figure for this era was Hugh MacDiarmid (the pseudonym of Christopher Murray Grieve, 1892–1978) who attempted to bring the Scots language into a leading role in the area of artistic expression in Scottish literature in the 1920s. Another contribution of MacDiarmid was to develop a model of 'synthetic Scots'[8] that combined different regional Scottish dialects and archaic terminology to express modern ideas. Contemporary Scottish poet Douglas Dunn has claimed that MacDiarmid intended the Scots language to perform a double function of "modernity" and "the reconstruction of a national

[8] Douglas Dunn explained 'synthetic Scot' as a "language devised to enrich its vernacular foundation through the culling of words and expressions from the dialects of the several districts of Lowland Scotland" (xxi).

identity" (xx). Actually, as Dunn explained, MacDiarmid "was trying to make a nation as well as poetry" (xxi). Apart from his remarkable poetry collections *Sangschaw* (1925), and *Penny Wheep* (1926), MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1926) dealing with "the human condition, Scottish identity and cultural politics" ("Hugh MacDiarmid") was regarded as "Scotland's masterpiece of Modernism" (Riach *Hugh MacDiarmid* n.p.). However, his anthologies of poetry *Northern Numbers: Being Representative Selections from Certain Living Scottish Poets* published in three volumes between 1920 and 1922, together with the periodicals *The Scottish Chapbook* (1922), and *The Scottish Nation* (1923), initiated the Renaissance movement and positioned him as its leading figure. As a poet of the paradox, MacDiarmid's poetic role is described as "to bring unity, to make possible a synthesis, and to bridge an otherwise unbridgeable abyss" (Boutelle 10).

The other prominent poet of this period was Edwin Muir (1887–1959) whose poetic works concern the sense of national identity as a political issue. As Dunn stated, MacDiarmid and Muir "were contemporaneous with modernism's early adventures" (xvii). Muir's collection of aphorism *We Moderns: Enigmas and Guesses* (1920) was accepted as the "first publication in modern Scottish literature" after proto-modernist John Davidson (xvii).

After World War II the poets such as Robert Garioch (1909–1981) and Sydney Goodsir Smith (1915–1975) retained MacDiarmid's tradition by writing in the Scots language, while others such as Norman MacCaig (1910–1996) and George Mackay Brown (1921–1996) gained fame by composing their poetry in English. Correspondingly, in Gaelic literature Sorley Maclean (Somhairle MacGill-Eain, 1911–1996) initiated the 'Scottish Gaelic Renaissance' with his works such as "Dàin do Eimhir" (Poems to Eimhir, 1943). The primary concerns for the Gaelic writers were the political and social expulsions from

the Highlands between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, culminating in exile from homeland and from the Gaelic language. Furthermore, poet, essayist, translator and playwright Edwin Morgan (1920–2010), who was Scotland's first Makar (National Poet of Scotland) "appointed by the Scottish Executive on 16 February 2004" (Riach, *What is Scottish Literature* 15), contributed greatly to Scottish Literature with his translations from various European Languages. In addition, through his works *The Second Life* (1968) and *From Glasgow to Saturn* (1973), Morgan marked the second era of 'Scottish Renaissance' as a "most innovative, influential, and popular poet for decades to come, writing concrete poetry", as well as, "sound poetry", and "science fiction poetry" (Thornton and Watson 1277). In addition, he had "a keen eye for incidents in the street and a keen ear for the characteristic speech form of passers-by, as well as for the natural life of animals and plants within the urban environment" (Dósa 22). In the same year he held Makar position, he was commissioned to compose a poem for the opening of the new Parliament building, entitled "For the Opening of the Scottish Parliament, 9 October 2004" (Thornton and Watson 1277). The poem epitomized "both the historical context of this fresh start and the hopes of the Scottish people invested in their representatives" ("Our National Poet").

The ideology of 1920s Scottish Renaissance recurred in the mid-twentieth century in "the revised and renewed forms of a new generation" (Riach *What is Scottish Literature* 15) who got involved with "class, identity, and gender" issues rather than the issue of nationhood (Thornton and Watson 1277). One of the poets of the period was Douglas Dunn (1942 -), who pursued "class and national identity […] in formally structured poems, offering reflective commentaries on the world around him" (1277). Among his works *Elegies* (1985) written after his first wife's death, achieved such success that

it "topped *the Times* best-seller list for several weeks" (Dósa 59). Other volumes such as *Love or Nothing* (1974), *Barbarians* (1979) and *St Kilda's Parliament* (1981), stressed his Scottish origins.

Another influential poet of the time was Tom Leonard (1944 -), who wrote in "the demotic Scots accent of the Glasgow" (Thornton and Watson 1277). His "Six Glasgow Poems" (1969) and "The Six O'Clock News" (from *Unrelated Incidents* written in 1976) were among prominent works reflecting his poetic style. Poet and playwright Liz Lochhead (1947 -) wrote about "the demotic energy of common lives and voices, in poems infused with subtle speech dynamics, coloured by an ironic ear for rhyme, clichés, and puns, and marked by a sharp eye for the female condition in the masculinist culture of her native Glasgow" (Thornton and Watson 1277). She was also appointed Makar between 2011 and 2016, following the death of Edwin Morgan in 2010. Apart from her highly acclaimed plays, such as *Blood and Ice* (1982), *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (1987), *Perfect Days* (2000) and her adaptations into Scots of Molière's *Tartuffe* (1985) and many others, her poetry collections are *Memo for Spring* (1972), *Dreaming Frankenstein* (1984), *True Confessions and New Clichés* (1985), *Bagpipe Muzak* (1991) and *The Colour of Black and White* (2003). The period in which Dunn, Leonard and Lochhead bore the political pressures of Thatcher government's policies, treating Scotland as "a testing ground for aggressive and unpopular policies" which were responded to with "articulated protests" by Scottish writers (Herbert n.p.).

In the late-twentieth century, specifically the 1980s and 1990s, a new generation of poets came to prominence "who have combined and developed many of their predecessors' techniques and interests" (Herbert n.p.). Carol Ann Duffy (1955 -), John Burnside (1955 - 2024), Alan Riach (1957 -),

Jackie Kay (1961 -), Robert Crawford (1959 -), Don Paterson (1963 -), Raymond Friel (1963 -) and Kathleen Jamie (1962 -) produced works blending such concerns as national and cultural identity, gender issues, and otherness, among others. This generation not only took over their predecessors' endeavours towards a national identity but developed it further and contributed to the independence movement in Scotland. These poets, realizing the importance of language in national identity, focused on writing in Scots, Gaelic, as well as English, to influence and broaden the concept, increasing the number of presses in a similar manner in Scotland during the 80s and 90s.

Carol Ann Duffy and John Burnside, who were both born in 1955 and left Scotland as children, wrote "poems of displacement centred on their country of birth" (O'Rourke xix). In her monologues, love lyrics and observational works, Carol Ann Duffy has been one of the "most supple and compelling voices in the poetry of the Dis-United Kingdom" (xx). In addition to her erotic and intimate poems, Duffy has also written 'condition of state' poems. With a focus on the mysterious states of the landscape and the mind, John Burnside is called "a poet of eternity, of dream" (xx). Though critics have labelled Burnside as a "green poet, nature poet, mystical poet, Scottish poet, religious poet" he rejects all of them (Dósa 113). However, Dósa claims that it would not be wrong to describe his works through the lens of environmental issues, since environmental awareness in his works "takes account of political and economic problems related to the industrial and agricultural exploitation of the ecosystem, transcendental beliefs and cultural issues, as well as a universal respect for the natural world" (Dósa 113). His work *The Asylum Dance* (2000) won the Whitbread Poetry Award and was shortlisted for both the Forward Poetry Prize and the T.S. Eliot Prize. Some of his poetic works are *The Hoop*

(1988), *Common Knowledge* (1991), *Feast Days* (1992), *The Myth of the Twin* (1995), *Swimming in the Flood* (1995), *A Normal Skin* (1997), *The Light Trap* (2001), *The Good Neighbour* (2005) and *Gift Songs* (2007). Having a "formal and tonal distance from each other", Duffy and Burnside as poets represent "a public poetry, a poetry of the state and its affairs that is often engaged and frequently enraged", as well as "a more private, ruminative and detached verse, a poetry of dream" compared to other poets in the same generation (O'Rourke xxii).

Jackie Kay (1961 -), who served as the third Makar of Scotland from 2016 to 2021, is one of the foremost of the contemporary Scottish poets and playwrights though she is of mixed origin, with a Scottish mother and a Nigerian father. Adopted as a baby by a "white middle-class Communist Glaswegian couple", Kay traces her biological parents and her heritage in her autobiographical anthology *The Adoption Papers* (1991), and won the 'Saltire Society Scottish First Book Award' (Zühlke 3). Formerly the partner of another contemporary poet, Carol Ann Duffy (1955 -), Kay has written "great lesbian love poetry" and has gone "further into the autobiographical experience, exploring themes of belonging, family, local, national and ancestral identity and questions of disposition and prejudice" (Riach *What Is Scottish Literature* 24). O'Rourke referred to Kay's status as an outsider as "Black. Lesbian. And a Scot" (xxxv).

Robert Crawford (1959 -), who belongs to a group named 'Scottish Informationists' together with W. N. Herbert, David Kinloch, Peter McCarey, Richard Price, and Alan Riach - has contributed to Scotland's literary world as a poet and a critic. He has dealt with "industry and childhood" in his poetry (O'Rourke xxiii). Crawford has also been interested in the "new patriotism", referring to "a clear-headed, historically sophisticated, sensitively internationalist and conditional affection for one's native place" (O'Rourke xxiv). Attila Dósa

stated that the "synthetic" writing style of his early poetry, "inherited from English and Scottish versions of Modernism, has given way to a more profoundly lyric tone which remains identifiable, however, by its remarkably wide verbal and conceptual scope" (79). He was accepted into the 1994 Poetry Society promotion of the "New Generation Poets" along with Don Paterson, Mick Imlah, Kathleen Jamie and others (Dósa 80). His issues of concern include "information technology, personal memories and spiritual considerations of living on the northern edge of Europe (Dósa 79). His poetical works include *Sharawaggi* (with W.N. Herbert, 1990), *A Scottish Assembly* (1990), *Talkies* (1992), *Masculinity* (1996), *Spirit Machines* (1999), *The Tip of My Tongue* (2003), *Selected Poems* (2005) and *Full Volume* (2008).

The Scottish Renaissance which marked a new epoch in literary works, has been criticized for its exclusion of women and femininity (Sterling 39). Women were either ignored in the official histories of Scottish writing or were omitted from general histories and anthologies of women's writing. Except for some writers such as Mrs Oliphant, Susan Ferrier, Joanna Baillie and some other contemporary writers, many could not find their place (Gifford and McMillan 1). Today, contemporary Scottish poetry has been redrawn by a new generation of Scottish women writers since the 1990s, as women poets have come to form the 'the bedrock' of the country. Apart from the poetic works of Valerie Gillies and Liz Lochhead in the 1970s and 1980s, there has been an accumulation of new female poets since the 1990s such as Jackie Kay, Angela McSeveney, Carol Ann Duffy, and Kathleen Jamie.

Kathleen Jamie was among those writers who took their motivation from national identity. Even though she later became interested in environmental concerns, Scotland and Scottish culture maintained its place in her heart. As a contemporary poet, Jamie has been the recipient of many

prestigious prizes, both national and international, and "has frequently been in the public eye or ear" - in newspapers such as "*The Guardian*, *The London Review of Books*, *Orion Magazine* in the USA", or on BBC Radio" (Falconer 1-2). Jamie has been labelled as a 'Scottish Poet', 'Woman Poet', or 'Nature Poet' even though the poet herself finds such labelling restrictive since she feels "constrained with this palaver of labelling" (McGuire, *Kathleen Jamie* 143). In view of Jamie's dislike of being labelled as a 'woman poet' or a 'Scottish poet', this book focuses instead on the progression of her poetic career and the changes in her life and in her mind as reflected in her poems. Thus, available input from other critics who have analysed her work is presented to show her diversity.

Though she lives a simple private life in Fife with her family, she is still defined as "one of Scotland's foremost woman poets" (Dósa 135). She is considered one of the most significant poets by her contemporaries such as John Burnside, who describes Jamie as one of the "actively important lyric poets" (Scott n.p.). Falconer (2015) states that "her writing is 'really important' even though it does not trumpet its presence; in fact, this is one reason why it is so important" (1). Kaye Kossick argues that as "an impassioned celebrant of political and subjective autonomy, a picaresque traveller and negotiator of exotic distance and intimate urban space", Kathleen Jamie is "of the new order, the post-Renaissance" (195).

In an interview with Attila Dósa, Jamie states that she has been inspired by writers such as Elizabeth Bishop, D.H. Lawrence, and Robert Burns, as well as German language poets Rainer Maria Rilke and Hölderlin (143). Jamie is influenced by Rilke and translated the poems of Hölderlin, especially in the third phase of her poetic writing. Jamie's translations of Romantic poet Hölderlin's poems from German to Scots is a significant "feature of twentieth-century Scottish poetry", the

equal of other poets' translations, such as Edwin Morgan's translation of Russian poet Mayakovsky or Liz Lochhead's translation of Moliere's *Tartuffe* (Stafford 235).

Attila Dósa asserts that the focus of Jamie's current work is "increasingly on ecological issues and the natural world along the East Coast of Scotland", whereas "locality and family" were observed "through the perspectives of her earlier travels in Asia" (136). Louisa Gairn describes Jamie's current poetic tendency as follows:

> Jamie has turned to a more ecological concept of poetry, not only as a source of 'the true and the good and the sacred', but also as a way of 'being in the world', coming to terms with our dependence on the natural environment and renegotiating ways of belonging there. In an age of environmental crisis, which suffers from attendant postmodern anxieties about globalisation, corporatisation and loss of cultural and natural heritage, Kathleen Jamie's 'line of defence' must be regarded as both timely and crucial. (Gairn, *Clearing Space* 244)

However, Dósa gives notice that "it would be wrong to brand her simply as a nature poet because landscape evokes serious moral, political or spiritual considerations in her poems, depending on the condition of the subject and the situation of the observing self" (136).

Kathleen Jamie's poetry, reflecting careful observation of life around her, is related with great detail and vivid descriptions, providing us with a mirror granting a particular view of the world. According to McGuire, Jamie's poems "reconnect us with the natural world in a way that both science and the mainstream coverage of the environmental crisis have so far failed to do" (*Kathleen Jamie* 142). In terms of her style, she generally prefers "untraditional forms in which she uses sonic alliteration that make them aurally dynamic" (Ailes 105). Although her poems in the 1990s were

remarkably long in length, in her recent poetry collections Jamie mostly writes poems which are "short, sober in tone, exact in diction, […] and rooted in the local" (Williams *New Scottish Poetry* 39). Moreover, one feature of Jamie's writing style, enjambment, renders it almost impossible to disregard a stanza while analysing her poems due to the references with which she fills each word. Sometimes a word becomes a key concept in each stanza requiring effort to understand her meaning behind that word; sometimes it is an enjambment, where she continues each sentence in the next stanza. In an interview with Lilias Fraser in 2001, Jamie explains what she generally does in her poems as follows:

> [I]n the poems I'm trying to work out puzzling little things to myself and what I was trying to work out there was the relationship of the past and the present and the future and how it is that we can carry ideas of the past in a world which is constantly changing, this phenomenologist idea, constantly coming into itself, thinking what are we, what is memory, what are we bringing out of the past and constantly casting into the future (19).

Many of the poems analysed here keep the readers constantly off-balance, with the text traveling back and forth in time. Jamie may return to her earlier years of childhood remembrance, then jump to her college years and reminisce about school reunions, museums, or parlours, with the present integrated with the future, offering glimpses of what is and what is to be.

Kathleen Jamie's writing addresses a wide spectrum of concerns, ranging from questions of nationhood and subjectivity to the relationship between art and medicine, the wellbeing of the planet, and the ethical implications of human life within the wider ecological community. In her later work, Jamie increasingly foregrounds ecological consciousness, exploring how humans inhabit and affect the

more-than-human world and what forms of attention, care, and responsibility this relationship demands. At the same time, she maintains a keen interest in Scotland's politics, religion, history, culture, and gender dynamics, examining social realities by recalling the past, observing the present, and portraying contemporary life through a distinctly personal lens as a poet, mother, wife, and citizen of Scotland.

Jamie is one of the leading figures in her generation of distinguished Scottish poets consisting of figures such as Don Paterson, Robert Crawford, John Burnside, Roddy Lumsden and Jackie Kay. Alan Riach characterizes Jamie's works as "more erratic, […] less certain, less emphatic, [and] more tentative" than her contemporaries such as Liz Lochhead, Jackie Kay, Meg Bateman, and Carol Ann Duffy (*Mr and Mrs Scotland* 22). Apart from lyric poetry, Jamie has utilized such different poetic forms as ballad and various stanzaic forms like the couplet, tercet, quatrain, and sonnet, in inventive ways and new forms such as "ballad quatrains, Dantean tercets, unrhymed couplets, experimental sonnets as well as many new forms of her own making" (Falconer 4). Paul Volsik describes her poetic style as a "gendered form of irony, a sharp-tongued, mocking, uninhibited and ironical humorous use of female voices" (349).

Jamie's writing explores important issues such as questions of nationhood, independence, the planet's future, and the human connection to other species.

One of the main characteristics of Jamie's work is her poetic style, which stems from her practice of 'listening to the natural world' and is reflected in her poems through different formations of stanzas. For instance, her use of couplets in poems about trees visually echoes the structure of branches. She avoids using traditional forms and patterns, opting for a diversity of topics in various forms such as quatrains, tercets,

couplets, and sonnets. Her later collections contain noticeably shorter poems.

Another distinctive feature of her writing is her use of Scots—and occasionally Gaelic in her poems since a language or dialect carries the cultural memory and worldview of a community. According to Jamie "if you lose a language, you lose the whole way of thinking that goes with it". Her insistence on using her native language, partially or completely, seems to contribute to a sense of belonging.

Jamie's poetic creativity has enabled her to construct new versions of 'self' at different stages of her career (Fraser 15). The poet herself has also clearly stated this in an interview in *The Guardian*: "For every book, we have to make a new self, or give one time to grow" ("Kathleen Jamie on writing a book."). Such a new self in each book is reminiscent of a role an actor plays in each performance, then moving on to another. It seems that the focus in her poetic works has shifted from national ideology (before devolution in the early 90s) to gender issues (during devolution, late 90s), and then to nature and the environment in her later career. For this reason, a chapter has been dedicated to each 'shift'. The first phase of her writing mostly comprises her nationalist concerns when her expectations, intentions and destinations, along with most Scots, were about a self-ruling Scottish Parliament; this concern was also displayed in the works of many other artists and writers in Scotland. In contrast, the second phase addresses various female roles and issues regarding female identity, femininity and gender in terms of the position of women in society. She confronts female identity as a woman, as a spouse and as a mother through her poems, especially in her 1999 collection, *Jizzen*. Although there is a clear shift from political concerns to an ecological orientation in her poetic works, Jamie has successfully managed to interweave her political and personal thoughts in her oeuvre. The third

phase of her writing relates to her contemplation of nature, which blossomed after the 2000s and is mostly compiled in *The Tree House* (2004).

Although her poetic career might be divided into three main phases, concerning issues such as 'nation', 'femininity', and 'environment', a significant change took place in her writing style after devolution. It is clear that Jamie, whose early work was strongly political, has increasingly shifted toward the personal and personal-political.

Her work of the 1990s foregrounds questions of national identity and cultural belonging. From the place she was raised to the places she has lived, as well as the foreign countries she has explored, all were fundamental to the formation of her Scottish national identity. Jamie's collection *The Queen of Sheba* (1994), dedicated to "the folks at home," is the "first collection entirely devoted to Scotland's politics, culture, and traditions" (Ailes 106).

The concept of a 'nation state' proved its significance with the French Revolution and has preserved its importance. Although the nation-state still retains its importance (consider recent nationalist and populist movements, or the impact of Brexit), globalism for a while challenged the idea of the nation-state. The world became smaller due to advanced transportation, communication and international business. Something that happens in one corner of the world could have devastating economic and environmental impacts in another. Likewise, business trading from multiple headquarters in multiple locations around the world brought tremendous gains and losses. By the time of the devolution referendum in 1997, the global prominence of nationalism had already begun to give way to broader transnational concerns. In an interview Kathleen Jamie gave to Attila Dósa in 2009, she clearly presents how she transitioned from the concept of the nation-state to that of the landscape:

> Does the world need another nation state? No. What it needs is a sensibility that overcomes nation-states and understands something other than political boundaries – a sensibility that understands cultural or ecological areas. It is time to realise that what is at stake is bigger than ourselves and our own states, and we've got to deal with that. […] It is ironic […] that we established a Scottish parliament as the nation-state was just going so firmly out of fashion. Because it didn't matter any more, that's why we got it then. A hundred years ago it would have been inconceivable, because nation-states were important. But now, as I say, they really don't figure for much. […] I think what we have to do as writers is to think beyond that (141).

The change in Kathleen Jamie's poetry from the political to the personal has taken place gradually as she matured both as a person and as a poet. Especially experiencing motherhood with the birth of her children, Duncan and Freya, during the 1990s, Jamie ties the fate of her country, about to be born with a devolved parliament, to her pregnancy. She not only relates these experiences to questions of female identity, challenging conventional gender roles, but also discloses her personal experiences as a mother, wife and woman. However, her poems about personal concerns are included in the same collections as poems related to political issues, *The Queen of Sheba* (1994) and *Jizzen* (1999). In various sources she has emphasized that she is disillusioned with political issues:

> For some years issues round 'identity' have been […] energetic, but really, I feel it's over now, for me at any rate - I mean those issues are resolved. There is no more poetic energy in them. Mined out. So, to carry on would be … They'd risk becoming an orthodoxy. There was a short term task to do, it had to do, it had to be done, a political task, but it's time now to move on. (Fraser 15)

As Jamie states that nothing remains to be said about politics, she diverts her attention to her personal life and her preparations to experience motherhood. Louisa Gairn

remarks "Jamie's experience of motherhood has provoked in her writing a heightened sense of the fragility and transience of the natural world, as well as a growing need to consider 'the curious business of being in the world'" (Gairn, *Clearing Space* 240). The poems in *Jizzen* (1999) bring to prominence the daily routine she has with her children and her relationship with her husband, while also incorporating their environment. Some of her fears, frustrations and the joys of being a parent are displayed in poems collected in *The Queen of Sheba* (1994) and *Jizzen* (1999), such as "Wee Baby" (QS, 29), and "St Bride's" (J, 43), as well as her own inner struggles with the role of wife: "Wee Wifey" (QS, 30). The subjects she is addressing are universal, and so through her own experiences she creates awareness among her implied readers that they are not alone as women and as human beings, that these issues are real and need to be attended to. Simply put, she is working toward demolishing the clichés imposed on women.

A further shift from national and personal concerns to environmental ones can be seen in her poetry written after the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. Following that event, she departs from her attachment to a nationalistic concern for her country and repositions her focus toward 'nature'. Coming into the 2000s, Jamie's poetic focus inclined toward "greener and less nation-bound issues" (McGuire, *Kathleen Jamie* 143). The first book written after the establishment of the Parliament, *The Tree House* (2004), was "fully devoted to natural themes" (Ailes 102). Nature became a favourite subject to examine while Jamie transitioned into her next new identity.

Following the establishment of the Parliament in 1999, she preferred to distance her writing from national ideology to living beings, cultural landscape and ecological concerns, but it was almost impossible for her to completely remove herself from the issues that created her in the beginning. In an

interview with Dósa Jamie expresses that her writing before the 2000s was "a job that had to be done and it was a great pain in the arse, you know. There were issues that had to be dealt with" (141). Although her interest evolved into concern for the natural environment and its inhabitants, Jamie could not refrain from expressing her love and devotion to Scotland and continued including the unique cultural and linguistic beauty of Scotland in her prose and poems. She still wants cultures to maintain their diversity without being ruled by a nation state. In her own words; "[i]f we want to preserve our differences and our diversity, be they language or custom, that calls for different political systems than the old and tired ideas of nation-states." (141). Thus, she minimises "the human 'voices'" and focuses more on "the landscape and its inhabitants" in her works written after the 2000s ("Kathleen Jamie", 2017). In an interview with Dósa, Jamie clearly expresses her transition from the nation-state to the natural world: "I'm only half-way through my career and I can get on with what is actually important. I am interested in the world which is more-than- human, which is beyond human. I believe that's where our problems actually lie. I don't really want to talk about this because I have just started to think about those things" (141-42).

CHAPTER II[9]

'SCOTLAND, NATION-STATES AND BEYOND': ISSUES OF NATION AND CULTURE

Anglo-Scottish Union, Devolution and The Independence Referendum

Kathleen Jamie's poems dealing with Scotland contain an abundance of cultural and historical references relating to Scotland. In order to better understand their context and references, it is necessary to look at significant events in Scottish history such as the Jacobite Uprisings, the Highland Clearances, the referendums for devolution and Independence, and to focus on how they have impacted upon and defined Scotland and the Scots today.

Scotland, one of the four constituent nations of the United Kingdom, as Archibald stated, shares a roughly "ninety-seven-mile land boundary with England" while the rest of the country is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, North Sea, North Channel and Irish Sea (n.p.). Although Scotland is loosely

[9] Parts of the discussion presented in this chapter have previously appeared in article form as "'Scotland, Nation-States and Beyond': National Identity and Culture in Kathleen Jamie's Poems ('Interregnum' and '23/09/14')," *Ankara University Journal of the Faculty of Languages and History-Geography*, vol. 59, no. 1 (2019), pp. 497–510. The article was developed from the corresponding chapter of the author's doctoral dissertation. In order to preserve the conceptual and structural coherence of the monograph, the chapter has not been removed; rather, it has been revised, contextualized, and integrated into the broader argument of the book.

divided into two main regions[10] – the Highlands in the north and the Lowlands in the south, its major cultural markers—such as tartan, the kilt, bagpipes, and Scotch whisky—drive largely from Highland tradition, where the clan system once shaped local social and kin-based governance. The significant clans include the MacDonalds, the Grants, and the Macintoshes. The Saltire is the national flag and the thistle the national flower. Scottish accents are another significant marker of identity (Frith 1). Today, there are three languages spoken in Scotland: Gaelic in the Highlands, Scots and English in the Lowlands.

Even though local conflicts go back much further, the main cause of disagreement between England and Scotland might follow the succession of James VI of Scotland to the throne of England as James I, when Elizabeth I passed away in 1603, thus assuming the thrones of both England and Scotland. With the Act of Union of 1707, both nations' governments united as the Parliament of Great Britain in Westminster "after the abolition of the Scottish Parliament, and the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain" (Güvenç, *Scottish Identity* 95). This union was not welcomed by a considerable number of people among Scots and after a while uprisings broke out, starting mainly in the Highlands, and later spreading across the entire land. In 1745, Bonnie Prince Charlie, the great-grandson of James VI, rebelled against England in an attempt to claim the throne for his family, which resulted in defeat at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. Following that defeat, heavy sanctions were imposed on Highland communities by the British government, severely weakening organised Jacobite resistance and reshaping Highland society.

Jacobite Uprisings of 1715 and 1745 were followed by a long process of forced evictions from the Highlands—later

[10] While some sources divide the country into two as the Highlands and the Lowlands, others separate it into three distinct regions, "the Southern Uplands, the Central Lowlands, and Highlands" (Archibald).

known as *The Highland Clearances*—which unfolded from the mid-eighteenth to the nineteenth century and resulted in mass internal migrations as well as overseas emigration. Some migrated to the Lowlands while many others went to America, Australia, and Canada. It has been said that the aftermath of this uprising brought a harsh cultural retribution, including the 1746 Dress Act, which banned Highland dress and curtailed several traditional cultural expressions; additional measures restricted the carrying of arms, leaving the Scots defenceless and open to assimilation. Additionally, the destruction of the clan system which had maintained the local autonomy resulted in an aggressive form of pastoralism by their clan chiefs that the enforcements the Highlanders were exposed to at those times were mythologised. John Prebble claimed in his *The Highland Clearances* "how sheep were preferred to them, and how bayonet, truncheon and fire were used to drive them from their homes" (n.p.).

Notwithstanding years of turmoil, the Scottish National Party (SNP) was established in 1934 to gain an equal voice in the British parliament. Despite the formation of the SNP, a void in political authority continued. Years later, in 1970, the discovery of oil in the North Sea within Scottish waters retriggered Scottish nationalism. At the time, the Prime Minister was Edward Heath and the "Iron Lady" Margaret Thatcher was serving as the Education Minister under his administration. Subsequently, when she became The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in 1979 until 1990, she undeniably caused Scotland to lose "one-fifth of its workforce within the first two years of the administration as state subsidies were pulled from loss-making mining, steel and textile industries. Scotland was handed the poll tax in 1989 - one year ahead of England. More than 1.5m refused to pay the tax and Scottish miners joined the 1984-85 strike" ("Scottish independence."). Consequently, campaigning on the claim

that "it's Scotland's oil," the Scottish National Party obtained 30 percent of the Scottish vote and 11 seats in Parliament" (Pruitt n.p.). After the failure of the 1979 referendum, in the 1997 referendum on the devolution of powers, the 'yes' vote triumphed and Scotland obtained a devolved parliament effective from 1999.

As Sıla Ş. Güvenç states "[m]odern debates about Scotland and independence, and questions of the 'nature and efficacy of national, regional and ethnic identities,' were already on the agenda in the 1980s and 1990s, due to the rise of nationalism in Europe, the flourishing of identity politics, and the establishment of the Scottish Parliament" in 1999 (Güvenç, *Scottish Identity* 95). Having established a parliament, the Scots tried to gain full independence through another referendum held on 18 September 2014 which resulted in a disappointing failure for the 'yes' voters. Following the 2014 referendum, the political landscape of Scotland shifted again with the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union in 2016. While the overall UK vote endorsed withdrawal, Scotland voted decisively to remain, with 62 percent supporting continued EU membership. The referendum revealed a widening divergence between Scottish and English political preferences, and it reinvigorated debates concerning Scotland's constitutional future. For many Scottish voters and policymakers, Brexit represented a democratic deficit—an instance in which Scotland was removed from the European Union despite its clearly expressed will to stay. Nicola Sturgeon repeatedly framed this situation as Scotland being 'taken out of Europe against its will,' arguing that the result fundamentally altered the conditions under which the 2014 independence referendum had been held.

Scotland was divided into two main camps during the 2014 independence referendum, 2014 as 'Yes Scotland' and 'Better Together'. 'Yes Scotland' voters supported Scotland's independence:

> Pro-independence supporters advocated that the referendum was not about nationalism, but democracy and the necessity of Scotland being run by the government it voted for instead of at Westminster. An independent Scotland would be able to make decisions that reflect Scottish priorities such as adopting its own welfare system and immigration policy, moving trident missiles to England, putting North Sea oil revenues to good use by establishing an Energy Fund, controlling its armed forces so as to spend less money on defence and avoiding being involved in 'illegal' wars or invasions of other countries such as Iraq. In short, independence would be a declaration of Scotland's self-confidence while retaining good relations with England, Wales and Northern Ireland on a more equal basis. (qtd. in Güvenç, *Dramatic Responses* 374)

Drawing a promising future for Scotland, 'Yes Scotland' voters elaborated on the notions of democracy and sovereignty in the welfare of Scottish society and they believed they would be able to rely upon their own resources.

On the contrary, 'Better Together' voters advocated union and Scotland's stay as a part of United Kingdom:

> The United Kingdom is a successful union of three hundred years that should continue for practical reasons such as economic security, defence and Scotland's international status. Pro-unionists claimed that independence might lead to different tax and regulatory regimes that would cause the movement of banks, job losses, freezing of major projects by investors, and increases in prices. It would destroy Scotland's currency union with the rest of the United Kingdoms, risk the loss of research funding from the United Kingdom, and decrease Scotland's influence in the world due to lack of clarity regarding Nato and European Union membership. (qtd. in Güvenç, *Dramatic Responses* 374-375)

Supporters of the union seemed convinced of a pessimistic future in the event of separation and stresses on

the detrimental economic outcomes for Scotland. The fear of economic and military dependency on the United Kingdom might turn the scale in the 2014 referendum staying as a part of the United Kingdom. However, instead of destroying the hope of independence, it further fuelled the desire for another referendum in the future.

In the years following Brexit, the Scottish Government pursued the possibility of a second independence referendum, widely referred to as "IndyRef2." Between 2016 and 2022, several formal requests were made for a Section 30 order that would authorize a legally binding vote similar to that of 2014. The UK Government consistently refused, asserting that constitutional matters were reserved to Westminster and that the 2014 referendum had settled the question 'for a generation.' This political deadlock deepened debates about the nature of the Union and Scotland's democratic autonomy.

The Telegraph published an indication of the tension between the Scottish and English by referencing Danny Boyle's 1996 film *Trainspotting*[11] through one of the characters - Rentboy - acted by Ewan McGregor:

> 'Its sh*te being Scottish, were the lowest of the low, the scum of the f*ckin earth. The most wretched miserable servile pathetic trash that was ever shat into civilisation! Some people hate the english. I don't - they're just w*nkers. We on the other hand are colonised by w*nkers. Can't even find a decent culture to be colonised by. Were ruled by effete ars*holes! Its a sh*te state of affairs. All the fresh air in the world won't make a f*cking difference!' (Pruitt n.p.)

While Gunn relays the situation as "between then and now, when Scots have tried to eradicate the 'Scottishness' of their speech, feeling (under heavy pressure from England) it [seems] inferior or somehow lower-class than Standard"

[11] The film was based on Irvine Welsh's 1993 self-titled novel.

(n.p.), Jamie adopts local language in her poetry to reclaim her cultural heritage, which has always been part of a Scottish clan culture that combined multiple dialects to vocally communicate:

> We've discovered in our poetry, how to use our everyday languages which are not standard English.... We have discovered and explored polyphony – the multifold voices and languages and attitudes which are "Scottish".... Recently the project of the whole UK, dammit, the whole ex-empire, has been toward diversity, pluralisms, citizenship – I like being one of the diverse, one of the plural, one of the citizens. (Jamie, 97-98)

Using both Scots and English in her poetry reflects Jamie's negotiation of a dual linguistic identity shaped by both systematic pressures of Anglicisation and her own cultural attachment to Scots, and this conflict between identities surfaces in some of her poems. She is so interconnected to both languages; she states that "If I work in one, I miss the other. One solution is to combine them" (Dósa 144).

Since the Act of Union (1707), Scotland has borne dual identities[12] of Scottish and British whereas England has been English and Kathleen Jamie embraces this duality, indicating that:

> "Difference" is what I have grown up with as a poet, and frankly, I like it. "British", but not English. Scottish in a British context. That sense of being a slight outsider is one I am now comfortable with and would be loathe to relinquish. I like juggling contexts, and watching things shift accordingly. (Jamie, 97-98)

According to Jamie, the reason so many Scots demand independence is "less about nationalism than about a crisis of

[12] In fact, every UK citizen is dual - they are English or Welsh or Scottish or Northern Irish and British -in fact, the English are often prevented from calling themselves "English" and must use "British" whereas Welsh, Scottish and Irish can use either.

democracy that has built up over the last 30 years. Scotland gets what the south of England wants, regardless of its own aspirations and its own votes." (Jamie *Disunited Kingdom*). Five months after the 2014 referendum, Jamie states her ideas about Scotland's independence in an article she has written for *The New York Times*:

> Those of us who want Scotland's independence want it because we have no further interest in being part of a U.K. "brand"; we no longer want to punch above our weight. We seek a fresh understanding of ourselves and our relationships with the rest of Europe and the wider world. If Scotland were independent, we would have control over our own welfare and immigration policies, look more to our Scandinavian neighbors and rid ourselves of nuclear weapons.
>
> We want independence because we seek good governance, and no longer think the Westminster government offers that, or social justice or decency. We find the prospect of being a small, independent nation on the fringe of Europe exciting, and look forward to making our own decisions, even if that means having to fix our own problems. We'll take the risk. (Jamie, *Disunited Kingdom*)

In her poems about national issues, Jamie displays the state of nation, its heritage and its present-day reflections because, like genders, nations are constructed. Jamie states that "There are more ways of being Scottish than writing in Scots about Scottish things (O heresy!) I mean, what is a 'real Scot' for God's sake, what is 'a sense of Scottishness'? Whether or not a sense of Scottishness pervades my work should be a matter of fact, not of worth." (Jamie qtd. in Boden 35). In fact, there is no need to use Scottish identity as a term since Jamie gives many references to Scots history and cultural heritage that in order to understand her poems thoroughly one needs research Scottish national history and culture. In addition, Scotland is mostly represented by "lower-middle class suburban" inhabitants in Jamie's poems (Volsik 351).

She displays the past heritage and present situation of her nation while evaluating whether to keep or discard the outdated customs that have become clichés in the current reality and cultural heritage. However, she is adamant about the importance of retaining the 'old language', Scots, a lost connection with the past, against the disturbing effects of systematic assimilation into the English language and forced emigration from their local environment. Scottish identity, conveyed through its past history, its vernacular and a female voice, is deconstructed in Jamie's poems through her adopted duality of language and identity as both British and Scottish. She also expresses her national and political ideas about devolution, independence and the destructive results of wars.

Poems related to 'National Issues' in this chapter are compiled mainly in *The Queen of Sheba* (1994) and *Jizzen* (1999), both of which were written before the devolution referendum of 1997, although her latest collection, *The Bonniest Companie* (2015), which also embodies national issues, was written during the independence referendum of 2014. For this reason, the poems analysed in this chapter are from *The Queen of Sheba* (1994) which is composed of forty poems, four of which are in Scots and *Jizzen* (1999), composed of thirty-six poems, two in Scots, and from *The Bonniest Companie* (2015) which is composed of forty-seven poems three of which are in Scots. Ten poems from these collections will be analysed in detail, one of which is from Jamie's collection *The Bonniest Companie* (2015). Finally, two additional poems —one from *Jizzen* (1999)—related to the referendum debates are addressed briefly.

The Cultural Past and the Present

As stated earlier, Kathleen Jamie's poems about the cultural past and the present include "Lucky Bag" (J, 42), "Mr and Mrs Scotland are dead" (QS, 37), and "Arraheids" (QS,

40). Kathleen Jamie writes not merely about subjects she is passionate about, but also about events taking place at different stages of her life, without causing any political upheaval. Instead, she often employs humour and occasionally uses culturally obscure references that allude to historical events, encouraging readers to seek further context. "Lucky Bag" (J, 42), from her 1999 collection *Jizzen,* foregrounds national, cultural, and historical themes. The poem's use of Scots dialect and its cultural references highlights Jamie's engagements with her Scottish heritage.

Structurally, "Lucky Bag" (J, 42) is a list-poem in three stanzas that employs Scots dialect to construct a multifaceted portrait of Scotland. The poem catalogues elements of food, religion, history, geography, and everyday life, alongside influences introduced through migration and cultural exchange. Although terms such as 'lucky dip,' 'grab bag,' and 'rag-bag' vary, they all refer to a container filled with unpredictable items revealed only when opened. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a "lucky bag" as "a container from which a person chooses a wrapped item at random, without knowing the contents" ("Lucky Bag."). This description aligns with the poem's structure: the speaker appears to answer an implicit question about what Scotland represents to her, offering a series of personal and cultural signifiers. The poem's representation of cultural diversity reflects elements that are often highlighted in contemporary Scottish public life, including festivals and regional identity markers. Some of the subjects mentioned in this poem reflect what was in the forefront of the news at the time Jamie was writing this poem.

The first stanza specifically focuses on and is a reflection of the culture, tradition, beliefs, and history of the Scottish people from past to present, where old and present-day are blended to form a new and adapted society:

Tattie scones, St Andra's banes,
a rod-and-crescent Pictish stane,
a field o whaups, organic neeps,
a poke o Brattisani's chips;
a clootie well, computer bits,
an elder o the wee free Kirk; (lines 1-6)

The poem opens with culturally familiar references rooted in Scotland's culinary and historical traditions, beginning with "tattie scones" (1), made from boiled potatoes, butter and salt as a part of a traditional Scottish breakfast along with "bacon, egg, sausage," and black pudding (Murphy 27). The reference to "St Andra's banes" (1), invokes St Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland, whose symbolism connects both historical and contemporary national identity. Tradition holds that Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped saltire, a form later associated with the Scottish national flag. This saltire shape forms the basis of the modern Scottish flag (Brownlee). Tradition claims that St Andrew's relics were transported through several regions including "Greece, Turkey, and Italy" before being associated with St Andrews in Scotland (Nickell 34). In contemporary usage, the expression "St Andrew's bones" can also function as a culturally specific Scots alternative to the exclamation "Jesus Christ!", revealing how religious language is adapted in colloquial speech. Additionally, "a rod-and-crescent Pictish stane" (2) or "the crescent and V-shaped rod symbol" is "one of nearly 50 symbols that appear on Pictish stones" and still keep their mystery (Hull 77). The Picts are the people "who lived in Scotland north of the Forth-Clyde line from about 300 AD to 900 AD, from the time of the Romans to the time of the Vikings" and "formed one of the five nations of Britain" together with the English, Britons, Scots and Latins ("The Picts").

The speaker then refers to curlews - "a field o whaups" (3) - and turnips or "organic neeps" (3) associated with

Scotland. Curlews or "whaups" (3) in Scots are large wading birds found "on moorland and hill farms"; Scotland holds approximately half of UK breeding curlews ("Saving the curlew in Scotland."). Neeps" (3) refers to swede, a staple root vegetable in Scottish cuisine, often served diced or mashed (Smillie n.p.). The inclusion of "Brattisani's chips" (4), a well-known Edinburgh fish-and-chip establishment particularly popular in the later twentieth century, further anchors the stanza in contemporary urban culture (Mclean n.p.). Jamie juxtaposes traditional practices—such as "a clootie well" (5)—with modern technologies like "computer bits" (5), highlighting the coexistence of ritual and digital culture. Common in Scotland, clootie wells, a Scots word for 'cloth', are believed to be traditional healing sites which function as "wishing wells" or "sacred wells" for people who need cures for ailments; they tie rags or a piece of cloth to a tree next to the well after drinking "three handfuls of water" from the well (Varner 70). This practice reflects pre-Christian ritual traditions that have persisted alongside later Christian customs in parts of Scotland. The mention of "an elder o the wee free Kirk" (6) alludes to the Free Church of Scotland—colloquially known as the "Wee Free"—and highlights the role of Presbyterianism in Scottish cultural identity. Within Presbyterian governance, an "elder" refers to a layperson elected to administrative authority within the church, often termed a "ruling elder" (Jamieson 298). The Free Church emerged from nineteenth-century Presbyterian disputes and remains a distinctive strand within Scottish Presbyterianism. Placed among these traditional markers, "computer bits" (5) introduce a distinctly modern element. Their inclusion underscores how digital technology has become embedded in everyday Scottish life, much like long-standing ritual and religious symbols.

Whereas the first stanza juxtaposes historical and contemporary symbols, the second shifts toward modern social issues and cultural influences that have entered Scotland through global interactions:

> a golach fi Knoydart,
> a shalwar-kemeez;
> Dr Simpson's anaesthetics, zzzzzzzzz,
> a gloup, a clachan, a Broxburn bing,
> a giro, a demo, Samye Ling; (lines 7-11)

The rapid succession of images creates a sense of urgency, reinforcing the impression of a culture marked by constant movement and change. The reference to a "golach" from Knoydart—a region often described as Britain's "last true wilderness"—invokes the remote, untamed landscapes that continue to shape Scottish cultural imagination (Li n.p.). By including "a shalwar-kemeez" (8)—a traditional outfit widely worn in South Asia—Jamie acknowledges the presence and cultural contributions of ethnic minority communities in Scotland. It consists of baggy trousers (shalwar) and a long top or tunic (kameez). The poem subtly integrates these communities into its cultural landscape, indicating that contemporary Scottish identity is shaped by multiple ethnic influences. The mention of "Dr Simpson's anaesthetics" (9) invokes Dr James Simpson (1811–1870), the Scottish obstetrician who introduced chloroform as an anaesthetic in 1847 (Eger et al., 2013, p. 28).

The speaker makes references to local places special to Scotland. In his *Orkney Norn* (1929) Hugh Marwick identifies that "gloup" (10) is a place specifically in Orkney "of a deep chasm or pit a little way back from the cliff-edge, but having an opening to, or connection with the sea down below. Looking down into the *gloop* one may see the sea dashing about in the bottom. A *gloop* is thus "a big cave, the top of which has fallen in at the inner end" that is common to the local culture

(cited in *Dictionary of Scots Language*). "Clachan" (10) is a Scots term for a small hamlet or village with a church and an "ale-house" found originally in the Highlands (Barlough, 62). "A Broxburn bing" (10) refers to the slag heaps of industrial waste in Broxburn that "represent interesting and potentially unique habitats which can, with time, develop into a valuable natural heritage resource" (Mackenzie n.p.). Then, the speaker continues further to describe the more recent phenomenon of "a giro"[13] (11), though the concept is ancient in origin, and is a type of paper money transfer between banking establishments done physically, now overtaken by electronic payment systems. "Giro" was also the benefit payment made by the U.K. government to the unemployed. Street demonstrations, "demo" (11), are also part of the daily scene. As distinct as could be imagined, the poem draws attention to another culture, religion and country through "Samye Ling" (11) which as Kagyu Samye Ling is the first Tibetan Buddhist Centre established in the West ("Kagyu Samye Ling"). Again, Jamie highlights the diversity in contemporary Scottish culture.

In the last stanza, it becomes clear that all the listed items are in the imaginary "lucky-bag" and represent the speaker's view of the nation to be bestowed to next generation:

> a ro-ro in the gloaming,
> a new-born Kirkcaldy
> baby-gro; a Free State, a midden,
> a chambered cairn -
> yer Scottish lucky-bag, one for each wean;
> please form an orderly rabble. (lines 12-17)

The final stanza begins with a specific type of ship, a "ro-ro"[14] (12), visible in the twilight. In addition, "a new-born

[13] The word also echoes a well-known street food 'gyro' , a kind of dish made from lamb or chicken and sometimes pork. Though its name comes from Greek and it is famous in many countries such as Greece, Germany, Italy and so on it originated from Turkey as 'doner kebab'.

[14] A roll-on-roll-off ship is built so that vehicles can drive on at one end and off at the other ("Ro Ro.").

Kirkcaldy / baby-gro" (13-14) refers to the characteristic of certain kinds of cloth made in Kirkcaldy. The brand 'Babygro' started production of the famous name brand in the early 1960s and at the height of its success, it employed hundreds of Fifers at its Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath factories" ("End of an era as Babygro closes Kirkcaldy factory"). "Free State" (14) might be a reference to the Irish Free State, established in 1922, which was discussed before the Scottish Independence Referendum of 2014 for its "possible implications for Scottish Independence" ("The Referendum on Separation for Scotland", 286). A "midden" (14) is a "dunghill, the place where a farmer piles his farmyard manure" ("Midden."), while "a chambered cairn" (15) refers to tombs in the Orkneys surviving from Neolithic times. When they are all put together, they form the "lucky-bag" (16) which contains the speaker's opinion and feelings for the place, to be presented to the next generation.

Jamie paints a picture of the state of the city she is in and Scotland with just a list of words, while it becomes clear what the imaginary lucky bag is. The title "Lucky Bag" (J, 42) has become a metaphor for the current state of Scotland. Everything Scotland was at the time and what is being experienced is in this bag. Though the poem is formed of keywords rather than whole meaningful sentences, it is all about Scotland and is suggestive of an answer to an imaginary question Jamie has been asked about her thoughts on Scotland. While responding to this question she reveals her knowledge of Scotland and Scots dialect. The poem displays how Scotland has become a melting pot that embodies national and international values. It is also a reminder that the next generation in Scotland will inherit such a lucky bag, "an orderly rabble" (17).

Another poem that relates cultural heritage through signifiers is "Mr and Mrs Scotland are dead" (QS, 37). The title initially suggests tragic news about a couple; in reality,

the death of Mr and Mrs Scotland represents disappearing cultural and social values as industrial progress becomes part of Scottish culture.

Through the discarded items found at a landfill, especially postcards addressed to Mr and Mrs Scotland, Jamie draws attention to disappearing and abandoned traditions and craftsmanship, once highly valued, as industrial progress becomes part of the culture. She makes references to cities in the Lowland Scotland, where the postcards were sent from, as well as handmade household items referencing manual hard labour. Later, she is debating whether to preserve them as part of Scottish identity or move on and let industrial and cultural progress devour them.

The poem is composed of three stanzas with a decreasing number of lines in each, the first stanza with thirteen lines while the second one has twelve, and the third stanza has eleven. This diminishing form augments the mournful mood of the title and conflicting emotions the poem leaves on the implied readers.

The first stanza describes a landfill site, which is called a "dump" (2) in informal English and "coup" (2) in the Scots language:

> On the civic amenity landfill site,
> the coup, the dump beyond the cemetery
> and the 30-mile-an-hour sign, her stiff
> old ladies' bags, open mouthed, spew
> postcards sent from small Scots towns
> in 1960: Peebles, Largs, the rock-gardens
> of Carnoustie, tinted in the dirt.
> Mr and Mrs Scotland, here is the hand you were dealt:
> *fair but cool, showery but nevertheless,*
> *Jean asks kindly; the lovely scenery;*
> in careful school-room script -
> *The Beltane Queen was crowned today.*
> But Mr and Mrs Scotland are dead. (lines 1-13)

The poem begins with the location, a "civic amenity landfill site" (1) that is located between a graveyard and a specific road sign indicating a residential area where the speed limit is kept low at "30-mile-an-hour" (3). The setting is used as a metaphor to represent contemporary Scotland and the Scotland of yesteryear through observation of the various items found at the landfill. This is significant as the items in the landfill can provide clues to the lives of everyday people during a particular era. In fact, the landfills of contemporary times provide us with proof of our recent past as does archaeologists' study of artefacts of people in ancient times, allowing an informative examination of people's lifestyles and their economic standards.

One of the items that draw the speaker's attention is postcards that are spilling out of an old-style purse, which she refers to as a "stiff / old ladies' bag" (3-4). The postcards are dated from 1960 and are sent from various small towns in Scotland that represent local legends, history and traditions. One of those towns is "Peebles" (Scottish Gaelic: *Na Pùballan*) (6) that hosted the *Beltane Festival,* where "a Cornet was chosen as a young man most deemed to be a worthy son of Peebles and on occasion act as an ambassador for the royal burgh" ("Peebles Beltane Festival"). Another town mentioned in the poem is "Largs" (6), which translates as "grassy slope" and derives from the Gaelic word "learg"; it is located in North Ayrshire, and is well-known for its history dating back to the Neolithic era ("The History of Largs"). The final town mentioned in the poem is Carnoustie, with references to its famous "rock-gardens" (a town in Angus) (6), which though historically very old, has become a favourite town for golfers. A common theme for these towns is that not only were they established long ago, but also had been annexed by England after years of bloody conflicts, a situation not welcomed by the Scots. Later, they became tourist attractions from where the

postcards in the old ladies bag that spilled out in the landfill were mailed. The speaker reminds the implied readers of the faith of the Scottish people and Scotland by mentioning the towns and stating that "here is the hand you were dealt" (8). However, she switches to what is written on one of the postcards by someone named Jean who describes the scene where "*The Beltane Queen was crowned today"* (12), "*fair but cool, showery but nevertheless"* (9). Though a lovely scene, the ceremony seems to be artificial because the "careful school-room script" (11) suggests a lack of authenticity, of a cultural and historical importance of the event. When stripped from her history, traditions and legends, Scotland may as well be dead, hence the statement "Mr and Mrs Scotland are dead" (13). "Beltane" (12), a Gaelic word for "May-Day", was once an old "Celtic fire-festival" celebrated on the first or third of May. After the reformation, it turned into "Christian Feast day" (Stevenson and Macleod 117). In time, its original meaning was lost and now "Beltane survives only as a relic of the past", thus, in Peebles it is celebrated by electing a "Beltane Queen" and singing a Beltane Festival song, though it is celebrated in June (Stevenson and Macleod 117).

The second stanza begins with a harsh question which is also the focus point of the stanza. Each object in the landfill is representative of a female, 'Mrs Scotland', and a male, 'Mr. Scotland', based upon the gender characteristics of the relics found there. The speaker angrily asks why he, Mr Scotland, did not burn all these relics of them and let them vanish/die with their body:

> Couldn't he have burned them? Released
> in a grey curl of smoke
> this pattern for a cable knit? Or this:
> tossed between a toppled fridge
> and sweet-stinking anorak: *Dictionary for Mothers*
> M :- Milk, *the woman who worries...*;

> And here, Mr Scotland's John Bull Puncture Repair Kit;
> those days when he knew intimately
> the thin roads of his country, hedgerows
> hanged with small black brambles' hearts;
> and here, for God's sake, his last few joiners' tools,
> SCOTLAND, SCOTLAND, stamped on their tired handles.(lines 14-25)

The speaker's rhetorical question shows her confusion and a moment of thinking aloud since she seems to have no concept of the things Mr and Mrs Scotland left behind. The speaker remarks on especially symbolic items such as: a knitting pattern, a dictionary, and a repair kit, hinting at cultural merchandise of the time period, and some other household items carelessly thrown such as a "toppled fridge" (17) and a "sweet-stinking anorak" (18). Among the relics, there is a "pattern for a cable knit" (16) which highlights an abandoned cultural tradition. Another relic that is dumped at the landfill is a "*Dictionary for Mothers*" which is open to the page for the letter 'M'; who but a concerned mother would be interested in a book like this? This book embodies the cultural traditions of baby care from the previous generation. Then there is a puncture repair kit which belongs to Mr Scotland, who was very familiar with the location and the thin roads. References to a puncture repair kit and thin roads indicate a time when bicycles were cheaper and more easily accessible as transportation. The bicycle repair kit from the 1960s – "John Bull Puncture Repair Kit" (20) – is named after a national symbol, John Bull, an imaginary character from the eighteenth century that symbolised England as Uncle Sam does for America (Hunt 121). It is also the name of a tyre company founded around the 1920s, exhibiting the fact that Mr Scotland could cycle everywhere in those days when he knew the "thin roads of his country, hedgerows / hanged with small black brambles' hearts" (22-23), another reflection of the past when everything was simple and easy to do, contrary to today's age

of technology. Another item found in the landfill is "joiners' tools" (24) of his which have "SCOTLAND, SCOTLAND" (25) written on the "tired handles" (25), indicating their well-used and worn-out state. The tools even had "Scotland" (25) imprinted on them, showing pride in building the country by hand through hard manual labour. The relics mentioned so far are almost forgotten items, once very functional and used regularly but now obsolete in modern-day Scotland. They are domestic gadgets and objects indicating traditional gender roles: knitting and infant care for women, building and repairing kits for men.

The final stanza poses more questions for debate, reflecting the struggle between preserving these relics associated with the long-forgotten cultural traditions or completely abandoning them. This confusion/dilemma is a reminder of Shakespeare's canonical expression 'to be or not to be':

> Do we take them? Before the bulldozer comes
> to make more room, to shove aside
> his shaving brush, her button tin.
> Do we save this toolbox, these old-fashioned views
> addressed, after all, to Mr and Mrs Scotland?
> Should we reach and take them? And then?
> Forget them, till that person enters
> our silent house, begins to open
> to the light our kitchen drawers,
> and performs for us this perfunctory rite:
> the sweeping up, the turning out. (lines 26-36)

In the last stanza the speaker is debating whether to preserve the items as part of Scottish identity or move on and let industrial and cultural progress consume them. Focusing on "his shaving brush", "her button tin" (28), the "toolbox" (28), and those "old-fashioned views" (29), the speaker is not completely sure if those items should be removed from the dumpster before they are mixed with other trash by a

"bulldozer" (26), an indicator of industrial revolution and technology that would destroy all of them to make room for new developments. Shaving brush and button tin are both attributed to an older generation since those items are not common today. As she searches for solutions to the dilemma, she concludes that these relics are outdated and only appeal to the current generation for their sentimental value.

In the last six lines, while still debating and trying to find a solution, she concedes because all of the items mentioned elicit nostalgic emotions, some evoke a sense of pride in the hard work that went into building the country and preparing the ground for later generations. They established additional foundations for today's progress. But, do we keep them and store them away in a type of drawer or box without ever being used simply because they have some sentimental value? This just delays the inevitable; eventually, these items are going to be thrown away/cleared out and forgotten for the sake of newer and advanced versions of themselves.

The speaker's portrayal of Scotland as a culture wanting and trying hard to cling to its historical heritage, while trying equally hard to adapt to progress, recalls images from another of Jamie's poems, "The Queen of Sheba," (QS, 9) from the same collection, where Scotland is described as a 'dump'. While the dump site is a metaphor used for Scotland, the relics represent the outdated customs and culture of Scotland. The speaker proffers a self-critical perspective of the local population's general tendency to retain the traditional whether useful or not. In an interview in 1992, Jamie had already stated that "we feel threatened and therefore hang on to anything and everything Scottish, even the bad old junk that should have been ditched years ago. The change would mean chaos and we're feart of chaos, we don't know it can be glorious" (Jamie qtd. in Boden 35). Jamie warns her Scottish people about the glory of change rather than preserving non-functional

traditions of the past, and the poem "Mr and Mrs Scotland are dead" (QS, 37) correlates to this message. Raymond Friel states that the poem itself is "a sobering antidote to a national tendency for nostalgia and inertia" (qtd. in Boden 35). The death of Mr and Mrs Scotland symbolizes the vanishing cultural and social Scottish traditions as industrial progress compels them into yesteryear's memories.

"Arraheids" (QS, 40), written completely in Scots dialect, is the plural form of 'arraheid,' a piece of "bone, metal or stone" forming the point of an 'arrow' (Kipfer 35), and refers to a primitive weapon used for hunting. However, in this poem, historical arrowheads displayed in a museum represent the unheard female voice from Scotland's past.

While pointing out some ancient yet still very sharp flint arrowheads that are exhibited in Scotland's museums, Jamie is drawing attention to a part of history that is not being presented there by bringing out the fact that her female heritage has been excluded. Because history cannot be complete without all participants, she is criticizing museums for not displaying the real history of Scotland and for not displaying relics from female contributors. Arrowheads become the voices of witty, blunt and long-forgotten female generations. The speaker reaches out to an implied reader in the form of a contemporary museum visitor who may have an interest in learning the national history of Scotland. According to Jamie, females are the essence of Scottish history, yet are not given the recognition they deserve.

This poem is a good example of the use of apostrophes where the main subject, who happens to be the women of past generations, is absent, but is represented to the implied reader through the speaker's words.

It begins with pointing to a kind of primitive weapon for hunting while trying to attract the attention of both those at the museum and the implied reader to masculinity and war:

See thon raws o flint arraheids
in oor gret museums o antiquities
awful grand in Embro – (lines 1-3)

Opening the poem with "See" (1) suggests unavoidable eye contact with someone who may not have considered the possibility of what the speaker is about to mention. The speaker is drawing attention to "raws o flint arraheids / in oor gret museums o antiquities" (1-2) in Edinburgh that are defined as "awful grand" (3) – an oxymoron indicating paradoxical contradictions, implying that they are exceedingly great in size and expensive to maintain. The museum referred to is the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.

National museums "hold great significance for nations and for Europe, and they have, since the end of the Second World War, been important players in cultural diplomacy between nations" (Peter, 1900:7). As trusted institutions they are "established to define and stabilise knowledge and national identities in a continent possessing a rich history of expansion, innovation, migration and territorial conflict" (Peter 7). In later stanzas, it becomes clear that the poet tries to discredit this institution as one created by man for man, bemoaning the absence of historically valuable relics of females in such grandiose establishments.

According to the information on the *National Museum of Scotland*'s internet site, there are five flint arrowheads that "were found at Springwood at Kelso in Roxburghshire [...] used for hunting, or in combat, or both, sometime between 2300 and 1800 BC ("Five flint arrowheads."). As "a massive hard dark quartz that produces a spark when struck by steel" (Brooks 60), "flint" (1) was mostly used by "prehistoric people" in order to make arrowheads, besides making "knife blades, spear points, [...] scrapers, axes, drills, and other sharp tools using a method known as flint knapping" ("What is Flint?").

Wanting the future generation to be fully informed of their heritage, the speaker is setting the scene for delivering information about the history that has been omitted:

> Dae'ye near'n daur wunner at wur histrie?
> Weel then, Bewaur! (lines 4-5)

The speaker seems to be questioning the implied reader and museum visitors, all assumed to be of Scottish heritage, whether they know of their history, or ever wondered about it, and then to be aware of what she is about to divulge; "Weel then" (5). Then, the speaker warns the addressees to be cautious; "Bewaur!" (5). Written with a capitalised initial letter with the exclamation mark at the end, the word 'beware' is foregrounded, yet echoes the very beginning of the poem, "see" (1). These words with similar meanings embody the cautionary attitude of the speaker. Then, the reason for these warnings becomes clear:

> The museums of Scotland are wrang.
> They urnae arraheids
> but a show o grannies' tongues,
> the hard tongues o grannies
> aa deid an gaun
> back to thur peat and burns,
> but for thur sherp
>
> chert tongues, that lee
> fur generations in the land
> like wicked cherms, that lee
> aa douce in the glessy cases in the gloom
> o oor museums, an
> they arenae lettin oan. [...] (lines 6-18)

The speaker claims that the museums of Scotland are not presenting the true history of the land but instead are filling the displays with male specific objects and dismissing the important role females have played throughout the years. She now declares that the arrowheads she has previously drawn

attention to are "the hard tongues o grannies" (9). Through figurative comparison, Jamie accentuates the priority given to the 'male dominated cultural heritage' while the arrowheads, used as weapons by men, become the sharp tongues "thur sherp / chert" (12-13) of generations of grannies, the best weapon for defence. Although these women have died and have been buried or cremated "aa deid an gaun / back to thur peat and burns" (10-11), their voices lie waiting like a magical microorganism "wicked cherms" (15) to be disinterred and memorialized just as artefacts, such as arrowheads, are recovered and displayed "in the glessy cases in the gloom / o oor museums" (16-17).

They may not be physically present, but their witty, sharp and frank words remain in the environs:

> But if you dare
> to go about scrounging and fancy
> the vanished hunter, the wise deer running on;
> shhh … and you'll hear them,
> for they cannot keep from muttering
> *you are not here to wander,*
> *what do you think you are?* (lines 16-24)

By the last part of the poem, Jamie is berating the people of her culture to embrace all aspects of their heritage, not just that showcased in museums, which happens to be dominated by masculine objects. The history of a culture can be manipulated to focus on popular aspects, familiar to the majority of the population, such as "the vanished hunter" (20) in pursuit of "the wise deer" (20) and the visual display of arrowheads in the museum reinforces these ideas. However, as Jamie challenges the reader and visitors to the museum to pause for a moment and listen, "*wheesht …an* you'll hear them" (21), she gives voice to women of the past. In order to recognize that there is more to history than what is exhibited, it is put to the visitors that they know very little about Scottish

history *"ye arenae here tae wonder, / whae dae ye think ye ur?"* (23-24). Although the expression comes across as sarcastic, in reality Jamie is imploring her fellow Scots to look deeper than what is on the surface when it comes to their national heritage.

Overall, the poem is about the misrepresentation of Scotland's historical heritage by a misguided male perception excluding the female heritage. With a sense of humour, Jamie illustrates how the male population clearly deserves a lashing from women who possess sharp tongues as their only weapon. "Arraheids" (QS, 40) exhibits Scotland's museums' slanted representation of the nation's cultural heritage.

Alienation and Migration

This section examines how Jamie's poetry represents alienation and migration not only as physical displacement but also as linguistic, cultural and ecological estrangement. "Pioneers" (J, 34) and "One of us" (QS, 43) foreground emigration and internal migration in Scottish history, whereas "The Graduates" (J, 3) and "Skeins o geese" (QS, 64) dramatise intellectual and affective forms of exile.

Jamie's interest in the artefacts in the museum brings us to "Pioneers" (J, 34). The term "pioneer" originally refers to the first settlers in a territory and has come to denote those who initiate new ventures or ideas. Jamie's poem plays on both senses of the word, evoking early emigrants while also suggesting innovation and adaptation.

As the second poem of the trilogy[15], "Pioneers" (J, 34) is associated with the migration of Scots to Canada. Early attempts at Scottish settlement in what is now Canada date back to 1621, when Sir William Alexander was granted a charter for Nova Scotia", (New Scotland); however, a large-

[15] The other poems in the trilogy are "Hackit" (J, 33) and "Suitcases" (J, 35).

scale migration from the western Highlands and islands took place mainly between 1770 and 1815 from ("Scottish Canadians"). "Pioneers" (J, 34) is about early Scottish settlers in Canada whose legacy is being presented in museums. However, the speaker has some reservations with regards to the forgotten heritage.

The speaker is one of the visitors to the museums in Ontario, who talks about the remains of the first Scottish settlers. They were not only the first Scottish settlers; they were also innovators making use of what was available on the land:

> It's not long ago. There were,
> after all, cameras
> to show us these wagons and blurred dogs, (lines 1-3)

The poem opens with early photographic images of wagons, blurred dogs and the 'pox of burnt stump-holes,' before shifting its focus to museum artefacts such as ploughs, axes and domestic remnants.

The beginning of the poem establishes the time of an incident that took place in the recent past with reference to the use of cameras that documented early Scottish settlers in their new environment in Canada. First, mentioning the time period as "not long ago" and then "cameras" are reminders to the implied readers that we still use cameras to record and immortalize moments, just as the early settlers in Canada did. The difference between images then and today is illustrated with the description of the past only, leaving the implied reader to come to the conclusion that the speaker herself did. The approximate time of the incident is obscure at first and later clarified when the speaker mentions that "there were / after all, cameras" (1-2). For the speaker, the displayed images are relatively recent, from the early 19th century, affirming her belief that they should not be forgotten. While photographic technology developed rapidly from early nineteenth-century

processes such as the daguerreotype to the mass-produced cameras of the twentieth century, the poem is less concerned with technical detail than with the way photography fixes the pioneers' lives in visual memory (Pritchard n.p.). Through the cameras, the photographs of "wagons and blurred vision of dogs, [...] pox of burnt stump-holes in a clearing" (3-4) were immortalized. The domestic rural lives recorded throughout the photos belong to Pioneers[16], the first Scottish settlers in Canada. The wagon is a horse-drawn vehicle for transporting necessities, while the blurred dog photos refer to the unclear or out of focus images which might be the result of the dogs' movements, as the earlier cameras were only able to create sharp images of still objects.

The reference to the 'remains' of these settlers is not literal; rather, it points to surviving artefacts such as "the axe and plough, the grindstone" (9), now dispersed across small-town museums in Ontario, a situation the speaker finds troubling. The images of the pioneers that were immortalized in the pictures deserve a place among their creations in the new land and not "strewn" (6) about in different museums. The image of a wife pronounced dead, with an announcement of a replacement on the way, is an indication that the value given to women was no different to that of farm equipment. At that time, when early settlers lost their wives due to childbirth, illness, overwork, and so on, they requested new wife

[16] The article "Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario" written by Mary Tivy (1993) gives detailed information about the pioneers in the museums of Ontario:
Travelling over the museum landscape in Ontario, one is immediately struck by the overwhelming presence of pioneers. They are everywhere. Whole villages are stocked with them — and named after them — Black Creek Pioneer Village, Muskoka Pioneer Village, Lang Pioneer Village and Fanshawe Pioneer Village. Pioneers are the past in residence in 24 of 42 historic houses examined, and dwell in the primary sections of local history museum galleries. Based on these presentations we learn that pioneers lived in log cabins, and were in order of frequency of appearance in museums, United Empire Loyalist or British (mainly Scottish), Pennsylvania-German Mennonites, Quakers, escaped Black slaves, Irish or French-Canadian.

"material" from their native town or country as "a mail order bride", especially in the early American colonies (Zug 85-87).

The sentence structure of the poem is the combination of enjambment and end-stop where occasional punctuation has been used to identify, describe and differentiate between expressions. This technique causes the implied reader to follow attentively as the speaker intentionally and rapidly leads him or her to subjects that matter to her and her cultural heritage. She is passionate about her heritage and wants the following generations to feel that, not just her implied readers. For instance, at first the remains of the pioneers are described as scattered, then scattered in the small town, and the next line then clarifies that they are held in the "small-town museums of Ontario" (7-8).

Jamie utilizes the images and remnants from the pioneers, and locates them in the museums, the only place they exist now. Placed, displayed and forgotten, they have lost their significance in Scottish culture, even though it is considered recent history. For the speaker, these scattered relics have a national value regardless of how much time has passed.

They transform from a meaningful and significant proof of national survival - since they managed to migrate and survive in a foreign environment - into meaningless items being exhibited and forgotten. The poem stimulates people's short-term memory by inferring the sufferings of both the emigrants, who experienced it, and the speaker as the visitor of the museums, who witnesses the trivialized and confined lives of the pioneers.

The Pioneers evoked in the poem represent Scottish ancestors who contributed to the formation of settler communities in nineteenth-century Canada. The remnants of these people are exhibited in local museums in Ontario allowing us to "visualize the past for the benefit of the whole

community, making the values of the past potent in the present and available to all citizens." (Parker n.p.). Keeping these community founders' relics in the museums not only preserves their history, but it also offers opportunities for successive generations to feel a national and / or a spiritual sense of belonging.

Migration turns into an ironic invasion in "One of us" (QS, 43). As the title implies, the focus is belonging to a group even though the poem does not clearly define that group, with the exception of a few references. Unlike "The Queen of Sheba", (QS, 9) where Scottish male authority is challenged by the arrival of a historically powerful queen from distant lands, "One of us" (QS, 43) focuses on visitors who are presumed to be part of the same culture but geographically separated. While the Queen's reason for travel is explained, these voyagers' purpose is obscured. In reality, they are as different as the queen from faraway lands. Jamie is highlighting this geographical division with some humour by pointing out the differences in culture and tradition.

Placed in *The Queen of Sheba* collection (1994), "One of us" (QS, 43) presents a voyage from the Highlands to the Lowlands, accentuating the Highlanders' cultural traditions and behaviours, and expressed in a similar fashion to a migration voyage of ancient Scots to a modern lifestyle and customs of the border towns in the south, without clarifying the time frame or the events. Though the poem is not about nature, Jamie's talent in describing the natural life during this voyage and drawing attention to it is noteworthy that, regardless of where humans live, natural life is always interconnected with their lives.

The speaker uses the second person plural point of view, identifying herself as a member of the voyager group that is travelling from the rural environment of the Highlands. The

poem begins with the speaker's announcement about their supernatural voyage experiences in a "stone boat" (1) using the personal pronoun "we" (1):

> We are come in a stone boat,
> a miracle ship that steers itself
> round skerries where guillemots
> and shags stand still as graves.
> Our sealskin cloaks are clasped…
> … a bungalow
> tied with fishing floats
> for want of flowers. (lines 1- 5, 14 - 16)

The poem begins with an imagined voyage in a "stone boat," (1) a vessel that moves magically through coastal waters where seabirds stand motionless on the rocks. The travellers' appearance—seal-skin cloaks fastened with large penannular brooches and soft footwear made from *gugas*—situates them in a mythic, archaic past. As they reach the shore, the scene shifts abruptly to rusted tractors, makeshift decorations and a neglected landscape, creating a stark contrast between their elevated, ancestral identity and the impoverished modern setting they encounter.

Though there are no indications regarding the reason for or the time of the trip, there are references to historical voyages that were predetermined based on ancient celestial convictions. There are no suggestions whether this was a reconnaissance voyage to evaluate and decide on a future invasion or migration.

Jamie's references to the cultural division between Highland and Lowland and England initially come in the form of "stone boat" (1), "seal skin cloaks" (5) and "penannular brooch" (6) which are mostly associated with Nordic and Celtic cultures. Because of a lifestyle that was highly dependent on sea travel in a very cold climate and their approximation to each other, Highlanders adopted and

observed customs and traditions similar to the Nordic and Celtic cultures. "We" (1) symbolizes the travellers on the boat as they are at that moment. The speaker establishes them as richer, stronger and with a sense of humour, superior because of their origins.

The ship they are sailing on is guided by the motion of the waves and described as "stone" (1), which in reality should not float but instead should sink because of its weight. However, this ship is magical as appears in folktales; thus, it can sail itself "round skerries" (3) where the seabirds "stands still as graves" (4). 'Skerries' (3) are small rocky islands in the Outer Hebrides[17] in the Highlands[18] where the travellers might come from. There are a few historical references to stone boats. One of them is Saint Conval, "patron of the church Inchinnan, in Renfrewshire" who travelled on a stone boat from Ireland to Scotland in the seventh century (Mackinlay 413). Another reference is a mythical Nordic "The Witch in the Stone Boat" where a witch casts a spell upon the queen, that the queen slackens not her course until she comes to the witch's brother in the Underworld (Lang, 274). The speaker likens the standing position of the seabirds of her hometown

[17] Hebrides refers to the islands of western Scotland in the Atlantic, divided by Little Minch Strait into the Inner Hebrides (near the mainland) and the Outer Hebrides (to the northwest 1544). They are included in the Highlands, and are known for their seals and sea birds.

[18] Scotland has been divided geographically, and thus culturally and linguistically, into two separate regions by the Highland Boundary Fault (a geological rock fracture): the Highlands to the North and West and the Lowlands to the South and East. The former forms the chiefly mountainous northern part of Scotland north of a line connecting the Firth of Clyde and the Firth of Tay while the latter is subdivided into the Central Belt (the Midland Valley) - the area with high population density especially between the Firth of Clyde and the Firth of Forth - and the Southern Uplands – a mainly agricultural area with moorland. Belonging to an older and more "warlike tradition of Highland boatmen, small crofters, herdsmen and hunters" Highlanders once spoke Gaelic especially in the Outer Hebrides (Watson 8). Today, it is a "minority language confined to the North West, the Western Isles and the Hebrides" (8). As an "agricultural, mercantile, urban, materialistic, literate and eventually industrial" area, the Lowlands have two "cognate languages": Scots and English (8). However, all things associated with Scotland, such as "kilts, bagpipes, mountains and clansmen" come from "this Gaelic minority" (8).

(Hebrides) such as "guillemots / and shags" (3-4) to "graves" (4), indicating that the birds stand motionless as though time is frozen or the birds are mourning the natives' departure.

She correlates the travellers' attire to wealth, power/ strength and sovereignty as she describes their sealskin coats as "clasped / by a fist-sized penannular brooch" (5-6), "slippers" (7) that are so soft and made from "feathery / gugas' necks" (7-8), guga being the Gaelic word for a young gannet ("Guga."). "Sealskin cloaks" (5) shows that they set off from the Outer Hebrides of Scotland, where the climate is cold and harsh and the seal population is dense. "Penannular brooch"[19], Celtic in origin, is a "common type of dress ornament in the early medieval period" used by Vikings to fasten their fur cloaks (Laing, 153). The brooch was generally made from silver in "enormous" sizes, and thus was the "status symbol and source of wealth" (Roesdahl n.p.). The size of the brooches that are holding the sealskin cloaks together is another indication of the privilege the travellers on the stone boat feel they are entitled to.

The transition from a serene, almost magical, environment to a rocky shore and rusted tractors is so abrupt and so different that it leaves not only the voyagers on the boat but also the implied reader confused at first about the time span and the sudden change in the environment. This leaves the impression that the travellers belong to a distant past. They are historical and traditional in every aspect and they are self-satisfied with their physical appearances, having established themselves in their homeland and now bearing the clothes and accessories of the wealthy. When they change their route from the sea to inland, their disappointment and displeasure become immediately clear with the speaker's description of

[19] It is "a hoop of metal with two confronted terminals and a pin which runs along the hoop" (Laing, 153). It descends from "Viking men, especially in Norway and in the British Isles" and was worn by "the colonies of the British isles" around the eighth century (Roesdahl n.p.).

this "poor" (11), "ragged" (12) and severely abused "worn to holes" (12) land with "rusted tractors" (10). There is "no one" and "nothing" but "a distant / Telecom van" (12-14) and instead of flowers, colourful fishing floats have been used to decorate the single living space. This place looks so desolate when compared to the tranquil atmosphere on the boat. These mysterious travellers are, as Heather O'Donoghue suggests in her book *English Poetry and Old Norse Myth: A History*, "clearly time travellers, arrived from an unknown past into a desolate present; like the Telecom van, they are involved with messages across big distances" (207). The sudden appearance of a 'Telecom van' provides a jarring contrast with the travellers' archaic world. Rather than functioning as a fixed symbolic code, the van may be read as a marker of modern, infrastructured Lowland life, underscoring the cultural and temporal distance the travellers experience upon arrival. The juxtaposition highlights how the contemporary Scottish landscape is shaped by technological connectivity, in sharp contrast to the voyagers' mythic origins.

The travellers travel inland on a specific August night under the "Perseid shower" (18) and their journey is depicted more humorously in the second stanza, although the reason for the voyage remains unclear:

> That August night
> the Perseid shower rained
> on moor and lily-loch, on a frightened world -
> on us, in a roofless shieling
> with all our tat: the
> golden horn of righteousness,
> the justice harp; what folks expect. (lines 17-23)

The second part of the poem situates the travellers under the August Perseid meteor shower, a moment rendered both celestial and unsettling. They find temporary shelter in a roofless *shieling*, carrying symbolic objects that represent

justice and clan identity, and even assume the shapes of swans to cross the Minch. Their otherworldly arrival draws curious attention—cameras flash, a forester warns them to avoid the A9, and they are advised to obtain proper clothes. Gradually abandoning their archaic appearance, they exchange their cloaks for modern clothing, move from house to house, and eventually reach Edinburgh, where they blend into contemporary life while quietly biding their time.

"That August night" (17) begins with a type of meteor shower called Perseid that "occurs every July and August as the Earth crashes through the debris from the Swift-Tuttle comet tail" (Howell, 2017). During the event, about 80 meteors per hour fall from the sky. Historically, meteor showers have always frightened people because of the possible destruction they may cause on earth and that fateful August night begins with the Perseid shower in the opening of this stanza. The Perseid shower the speaker described rained on the land ("moor and lily-loch"), on the frightened local people ("a frightened world") and on the travellers ("on us") who seem to have come from the Outer Hebrides on an exploratory mission to the Lowlands. The Perseid shower raining all over evokes a warlike atmosphere with a shower of bullet-like rain.

That August night is marked by the Perseid meteor shower, an annual astronomical event. Although Jamie does not link this explicitly to any historical episode, the imagery of sudden illumination and disturbance can be read as echoing broader histories of upheaval and displacement in the Highlands, including the evictions associated with the Highland Clearances. Such resonances arise from thematic parallels between forced movement, environmental disruption, and the travellers' uneasy passage from the Hebrides to the Lowlands, rather than from direct textual evidence ("Highland Clearance").

The setting is a poor rural area with a "roofless shieling" (20) in which they take refuge. The travellers, in fact the new invaders or settlers, identify themselves through the "golden horn of righteousness, / the justice harp" (22-23) as the symbols of their clan ("our tat"), the things "what folks expect" (23). Another feature of the invaders is shapeshifting which allows them to cross the Minch[20] in "swans' shape" (24). They define their ability as a "silly magic" (24), indicating that they are becoming increasingly displeased with themselves the closer they come to modern Scotland, the central belt. Their arrival attracts the local people's attention because of their appearance. They are treated like aliens, unknown and incongruous such that "cameras flashed" (28). The reactions of the people they came across were such that they "stayed high" (29), apart from the settlements.

The "forrester" (30) who makes "aeolian flutes" (30) from unnatural plastic waste warns them to avoid the "A9" (33), a major road and the longest in Scotland, reaching out from the lowlands to the highlands, and to acquire "some proper clothes" (34). The road represents the way to civilized and modern Scotland and the warning might simply be due to the invaders' uncivilized primitive conditions journeying on foot and their anachronistic outfit that does not belong in modern Scotland. Unwittingly, this local advice has provided the new inhabitants with recommendations on blending in and averting undue attention while they continue to make plans and "bide [...] time" (40) , seemingly willing to surrender their origins in order to fit in.

The invaders in the first stanza seem to be preparing for a war or invasion, with their fur cloaks fastened with "penannular brooch" (6) as a sign of their power and wealth

[20] The Minch, a channel of the Atlantic divided into North Minch between the mainland of Scotland and the Isle of Lewis, and the Little Minch between the Isle of Skye and Harris and North Uist.

in the Outer Hebrides, but they turn into uncivilized, weak immigrants when they approach the industrial civilized central belt. At the end when they arrive in Edinburgh, the centre of industry with a high population, they leave their traditional "delicate" (8) outfits and values and adopt modern Scotland's values through buying "yellow / Pringle sweaters" (35-36) and holding "minor government jobs" (40). From an eccentric to a more docile, settled life shows they have assimilated, yet they still "bide [their] time" (40); Jamie uses this open-ended expression to finish the poem, conveying the idea that the story of these travellers is unfinished.

The need to leave their lands in the Highlands and sail to new places in the Lowlands in groups echoes the mass migration of clans between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries primarily due to the historical evictions of the Highland Clearance following the Jacobite uprising of 1745 and the Industrial Revolution which resulted in large-scale population migration to urban areas such as the Lowlands. However, Jamie upends the notion of eviction when a group of people from the Outer Hebrides voluntarily choose to invade the Lowland area, to great comic effect. "One of us" (QS, 43) deals with "how the past is used to define present national identity" (Boden 32). In fact, modernity and prehistory, urban and rural, wild and domestic are all juxtaposed throughout the poem.

Jamie takes the reader on a journey with this poem, from mythical creatures and natural landscapes to the idea of undercover assignments. This approach can be difficult to understand or relate to unless the implied reader has some familiarity with the cultural, historical and political differences between the Highlands and the Lowlands and their interaction with the rest of the United Kingdom. She is challenging the implied readers to explore and learn about the history of Scotland and her people.

Disconnection turns into assimilation of cultural values and native language in "The Graduates[21]" (J, 3). As a title, it refers to the students who have successfully completed a degree or further education program. Here, for this poem, graduation from university has become a passport not to another land but to another lifestyle.

Written in tercet, the poem presents a change in Scottish culture and the loss of language through 'standardised' education. Though the poem is about Jamie reflecting on her experiences as an individual, that experience has become a common theme of her generation. There are mixed emotions about the past, present and even future. Sometimes her mood is melancholic and other times defiant and proud. As someone who values her hometown and the traditions of her nation, the speaker displays conflicting emotions about the change that comes with further education.

The poem is written from a first-person plural point of view, and opens with the speaker's self-confession that if she had children, she would teach them the story of their "old country" (2) from which they never departed:

> If I chose children they'd know
> stories of the old country, the place
> we never left. I swear (lines 1-3)

Children are the future of nations, and the carrier of cultural values to the next generations. Through the expression "If I chose children" (1) the speaker hints that she has the option to choose to have children or not, unlike women of previous generations. If she decided to have children, she would make sure that they knew their country's history in order to keep the traditional values alive or revive them. By "we" (3), Jamie is referring to the women of her generation and claims that they never physically left their country, except perhaps to pursue education, and even then they returned afterwards.

[21] The poem won the Forward Poetry Prize (Best Single Poem) in 1996.

To reinforce her claim, she states that she does not remember any farewell scene, "no ship / slipping from the dock, no cluster of hurt" (4-6).

I remember no ship
slipping from the dock,
no cluster of hurt, proud family

waving till they were wee
as china milkmaids
on a mantlepiece, (lines 4-9)

What she sees when she looks back and remembers fondly is the proud, hardworking family "waving till they were wee" (7) and objects lovingly displayed on a mantelpiece at a house of a loved relative "china milkmaids / on a mantelpiece" (8-9).

The speaker compares the size of a shrinking image of a "proud family" (6) on the shore as a ship departs and the family appears smaller until they are the size of "china milkmaids / on a mantlepiece" (8-9). The way this simile is displayed creates nostalgic emotions on the implied reader - ship voyage and china milkmaid as bibelot. They have become memories of yesteryears.

Even though the speaker underlines that they did not abandon their country physically, she admits that they "have surely gone" (10) because of the forgotten language and lost customs:

but we have surely gone,
and must knock
with brass kilted pipers

the doors to the old land; (lines 10-13)

Even though physically present, realization of mental emigration from cultural values comes as a wake-up call, and also a self-criticism. She not only criticises her generation but also offers a suggestion about the importance of remembering and rediscovering forgotten cultural values through knocking

the doors of the "old country" (2) with "kilted pipers" (12), the musicians who play the bagpipes[22] in traditional Scottish kilts[23]. Kilts and pipes are strong indications that the old country is in fact Scotland. Bagpipes[24] are regarded as Scotland's national musical instrument and are one of its cultural symbols, and being "gone" refers to Scotland's forgotten national and traditional values. In fact, the reference to the old country with "kilted pipers" (12) points to a specific region, the Highlands. "Bagpipes" have long served as "ceremonial instrument, at dances, fairs, and in battle" and are documented in the Highlands from at least the fifteenth century onwards (Hesse n.p.).

The speaker recognises her alienation from her own customs and culture, as well as her own language, without explaining the reason behind this alienation and change:

> we emigrants of no farewell
> who keep our bit language
>
> in jokes and quotes;
> our working knowledge
> of coal-pits, fevers, lost
> like the silver bangle I lost (lines 14-19)

Later in the poem, the speaker recognises that she and her generation have become "emigrants of no farewell," (14) having drifted away from their linguistic and cultural heritage without ever leaving their homeland. Scots survives only in jokes and borrowed phrases, while practical knowledge—once

[22] Pipe is a kind of "small fipple flute usually with three holes fingered by the left hand" (Jackson 310).
[23] Kilt is a "garment resembling a knee-length skirt of pleated tartan cloth, traditionally worn by men as part of Scottish Highland dress and now also worn by women and girls." ("Kilt.").
[24] In the eighteenth century during the Jacobite risings, bagpipes were treated as an "instrument of war" and were temporarily forbidden under the "Disarming Act" in Scotland since a "Highland regiment never marched without piper" (Hesse n.p.). However, they were adopted again in the British Empire after the Highlanders re-joined the British army between the late 18th and the early 19th centuries.

linked to coal-pits, local trades, and communal memory—has faded. The speaker likens this loss to misplacing a treasured silver bangle, a personal metaphor for cultural erosion.

The speaker regards herself as being part of a new generation that started the change that has led to the loss of language, local culture and traditions. They are "emigrants of no farewell" (14) indicating their cultural and mental exile from Scottish heritage. Apart from the mass migration from Scotland because of the clearances in the nineteenth century, people relocated to different lands without leaving Scotland, in still holding onto the country's language, traditions and customs. The change started with later generations, specifically Jamie's generation, who grew up with traditional values including language, but became the "emigrants of no farewell" (14) when they left their local towns to further their education. After graduation, even though they returned, they were intellectually changed forever, similar to countries where systematic assimilations take place. Education has changed what years of evictions could not. Their language becomes more refined, losing its cultural brogue - Scots - and reduced just to "jokes and quotes", limiting the use of Scots to humour or in the repetition of others' words instead of a meaningful or creative way. Kathleen Jamie expresses the circumstances as "if you're Scots (Welsh, Cockney, Yorkshire) you have to speak differently. 'Properly'. Like it or no, you have to lose the robust, homely dialect you began with. Else the academics are mildly amused, or simply don't understand you, or the posh kids sneer." ("The Graduates - The Analysis").

While explaining and comparing the loss of the historical "working knowledge / of coal-pits, fevers," (17-18) with a lost "silver bangle" (19) to her children, the speaker knows she has already failed. 'Coalpit' represents the disappearance

of the 'coal mining industry'[25] of Scotland, about which the upcoming generations know nothing.

The "bangle" (19), a type of bracelet or anklet mostly with no clasp, possibly an inheritance, may also represent a traditional accessory of Scottish women. When the speaker likens their lost knowledge of local jobs to her silver accessory lost at a theatre show performed on Saturdays, she stresses the value of "coal-pits" (18) and what it means to lose something special, something belonging to one's past history. The word "lost" (19) used twice in the poem forms a focal point to remark how easily, yet tragic, it is to lose something so irreplaceable. The poem finishes with a sense of embarrassment and guilt:

> And my bright, monoglot bairns
> will discover, misplaced
>
> among the bookshelves,
> proof, rolled in a red tube:
> my degrees, a furled sail, my visa (lines 23-27)

Though the speaker tries to hide or deny her exile from her culture, she knows that her "bright, monoglot" (23) children, speakers of just the one language, English, though born and bred in Scotland, will soon realize that she has assimilated, and her degrees "rolled in a red tube" (26) are the proof that she has graduated from University. The "degrees" (27) are described as "a furled sail" (27) which is a reference to a hidden ship for emigrants, transport for emigration, and a "visa" (27) which is a passport to a better life. For her, being a university student is the beginning of a long journey to another country, while being a graduate is akin to being an immigrant who emigrates with her degrees.

[25] The reasons behind the loss of the coal mining industry were "increasing competition from abroad - which meant it was often cheaper to import coal than dig it out of the ground locally - and falling domestic demand meant that pit closures were on the rise". However, the knockout blow came from Margaret Thatcher's Tory government, since many Scottish pits "were privatised" after the government "scrapped the National Coal Board in 1987" (Mccall n.p.).

Jamie may emphasize the intellectual emigration within her own culture with this poem, but there is also a universal message. People have always moved to different lands for a better life, and nostalgic feelings for the "old country" abide regardless of where they live. When the common history defining the personal and national identity is lost, the future generation is lost and changed forever.

The poem is about "change and overcoming, class movement, guilt, loss" ("The Graduates - The Analysis"). Through metaphor, the poem addresses the standardization of national traditions and customs, as well as personal transformation deriving from education. The old country is summoned with a sense of nostalgia through "china milkmaids / on a mantlepiece" (8-9), "brass kilted pipers" (12), and "working knowledge / of coal-pits, fevers" (17-18). The poem's argument hinges on a double pattern of repetition: "old" (2, 13) marks an imagined continuity with a place that was 'never left', while "lost" (18, 19) surfaces in connection with both industrial labour and personal inheritance. Together, they frame 'graduation' as an internalised form of migration

Another poem in Scots dialect is "Skeins o geese" (QS, 64). The title describes a flock[26] of waterfowl with a long neck and webbed feet in flight. Apart from the black geese native to Canada, the grey geese form the most common species in Europe, especially the "wild greylags" that breed in Scotland. As migratory birds, geese fly in V forms.

Jamie states that she initially wrote this poem in English, then admits that it did not sound right. At the time, with

[26] According to common knowledge, when the flock of geese is in flight it is called a 'skein', when on the ground it is called a "gaggle", when they fly in V formation it is called a "wedge". However, in *Wildfowling Past & Present - An Anthology*, Tony Read identified 'wedge' as a "single wedge, or V" ; a 'skein' as a "more complicated figure consisting of more than one wedge", 'gaggle' as a "disordered mob" and 'flock' as "when the birds are on the ground" (n.p.).

her limited Scottish vocabulary, she rewrote it in the Scots language where the sounds in the poem flow with the objects and the theme. The speaker uses the first-person point of view and seems to reflect the sounds and the scene at dusk, imbued with a sense of loneliness and bereavement.

Written in five stanzas in quintain form (a five-line stanza), the poem is about a word the flying geese wrote in the sky that can never be spoken nor read. The poem expands this mysterious word through shifting images of dusk, ploughed fields, stone-like stillness, barbed wire twisting like an archaic script, and the wind's attempts at communication. The speaker feels unable to grasp the meaning of the geese's airborne "word," recognising that human language cannot fully access the soundscape of the non-human world. The poem concludes with a sense of isolation and bereavement, as the speaker remains "bereft" of the ability to interpret the geese's message.

> Skeins o geese write a word
> across the sky. A word
> struck lik a gong (lines 1-3)

Skeins of geese observed in a V-shape in flight are noticed writing "a word / across the sky" (1-2). This mysterious word is so powerful that the speaker compares it to "a gong struck" (3) before she was born, like an ancient portent of something that is about to take place.

The image of geese in the sky moving like lowing cattle suggests that the sky is full of geese and their sounds are filling the space. An image, as the sky moves with the movement of flying geese, is likened to the movement of lowing (mooing) cattle. Some naturalist readings associate this "lowin" sound with pink-footed geese, although the poem itself does not specify a species (Armitage and Dee). Additionally, this simile creates a mirror image: the reflection of the earth in the sky, like the sky intermingles with the earth, a dazzling sense experienced when lying on earth and watching the sky.

Furthermore, there are two different onomatopoeic sounds referenced in the first stanza: the metallic sound of the "gong" (3) and the animal sound of "lowin" (in English "moo") (5). The visual images are enhanced by auditory perception, adding to the complexity and mystery of the "word" (1, 2).

The second stanza focuses on the speaker's personal attitude towards the world and the word:

> I'm as empty as stane, as fields
> ploo'd but not sown, naked
> an blin as a stane. Blin
> tae the word, blin
> tae a' soon but geese ca'ing. (lines 6-10)

Sounds coming from the geese have so captivated the speaker, that nothing around her, stones, condition of the fields, is noteworthy at that moment. Her feeling of emptiness is compared to an "empty stane" (6) and "fields / ploo'd but not sown" (6-7) describing the condition of the fields which are prepared for sowing by airing, lifting and turning over the soil but not yet been planted with seeds. She then portrays herself as blind and naked "as a stane" (8). The stone, an inanimate object that normally symbolizes strength, stability, patience or solidity, is endowed here with human qualities such as being blind or naked, indicating a state of complete indifference to and isolation from the outside. At that moment, even the mysterious "word" (9) is not important for the speaker because she is so engrossed in the sounds of the geese.

The third stanza focuses on the sounds the wind makes while blowing through the barbed wire placed around a gate:

> Wire twists lik archaic script
> roon a gate. The barbs
> sign tae the wind as though
> it was deef. The word whustles
> ower high for ma senses. Awa. (lines 11-15)

Images of wires "armed with barbs or sharp points" twisted around a gate, is likened to an ancient form of writing ("archaic script"), although the barbs are communicating with the wind through a sign language as if the wind is deaf "as though / it was deef" (13-14) and the only way the barbs can interact with the wind is through these signs. The way the natural world communes with each other is beyond the speaker's understanding because human communication is so completely unlike the way nature communicates. The speaker sees herself excluded from this realm; she neither understands "a word" the geese wrote on the sky nor "the word" (14) between the barbed wire and the wind.

The speaker compares the mystical world surrounding "the word" (1, 2, 14) with the human life cycle and the current state of her emotions:

> No like the past which lies
> strewn around. Nor sudden death.
> No like a lover we'll know
> and connect with forever.
> The hem of its going drags across the sky. (lines 16-20)

This stanza explains what the word is not, rather than what it is, through different stages of the human experience. By "No like the past which lies / strewn around" (16-17), "Nor sudden death" (17), and "No like a lover we'll know / and connect with forever" (18-19), the speaker implies the shared experiences/knowledge of history perceptible everywhere. Love, life and death are a common theme of human life. She can understand and communicate with these three facts of life but is not able to conceive the meaning of "the word" (1, 2, 14) as the geese continue to write in the sky while flying in unison: "The hem of its going drags across the sky" (20). The speaker struggles to decipher what the geese continue to write:

What do birds write on the dusk?
A word never spoken or read.
The flock turn home,
on the wind's dumb moan, a sound,
maybe human, bereft. (lines 21-25)

As if thinking out loud, the speaker wonders about the word geese write on the sky during dusk. It is like a mystical word/language "never spoken or read" (22). The flock is turning home as if taking the cue from the sound of the silent wind, the sound so similar to the wailing of a bereaved human.

Images of flying geese, ploughed but not sown fields, and barbed wire likened to archaic letters gain their own voices with the help of the wind at dusk, drawing Jamie's attention. There is an almost musical harmony between the sounds of nature and how Jamie reflects them with Scottish words in this poem. At the end, she sums up the whole poem with the last word, "bereft" (25). The speaker's feeling of bereavement, that sense of "deprived of or lacking (something)" is imparted to the readers ("Bereft."). Though the cause of that feeling is not clearly defined, the strong indication is of the inability of the speaker to verbalize that feeling while being part of nature. Being able to observe, feel the essence of everything taking place around her but not being able to define the word leaves the speaker bereft. It is the void between the language of human communication and the sounds of nature —a kind of disconnection of humankind from both its past history and its native language.

The imaginary and mystical word the geese write on the sky is unidentifiable since there is an invisible boundary between humans and the natural world. It provides a different form of communication that the speaker uses metaphorically. The unattainable word may be interpreted as a metaphor for a lost or inaccessible vernacular, though Jamie leaves this

deliberately ambiguous. The speaker's need to understand the word the flying geese are writing in the dusky sky, and the wind and barbed wire are whispering through sign language, becomes so intense, that when finally she cannot do so, she becomes bereft. Her understanding is limited to the written or spoken expressions in her own human language, where she can easily verbalize history, death and love. However, the sounds of the geese and the winds are beyond her reach so that she feels alienated from language.

Where historical, mythic, or linguistic parallels are suggested in this chapter, they are intended as interpretative possibilities rather than definitive authorial references. Jamie's poems offer imagery that invites such associations without committing to explicit historical anchoring; accordingly, the analysis foregrounds resonances that emerge from thematic and cultural contexts rather than from direct textual evidence.

National and Political Issues

Kathleen Jamie's poems about Scotland's national and political issues are "Interregnum" (J, 40), "23/09/14" (BC, 41), and "A sealed room" (QS, 60). The first poem, "Interregnum" (J, 40), whose title originates from the Latin, "*inter-* + *regnum*" (between reigns), denotes an interval or pause between two successive reigns, or periods of government (Beaven 105). 'Interregnum' in the United Kingdom refers to the period between the execution of Charles I in 1649 and the Restoration of his son Charles II in 1660, during which the country remained without a monarch for the first time and was ruled by Oliver Cromwell.

Consisting of ten stanzas in quatrains, the poem concerns a tray that is moved between rooms, holding different items signifying Scottish (McEwan's ale, haggis), British (Windsor Castle, *Prime Suspect*, *SS Balmoral*, *Spot on the Farm*), and

French identities (Vouvray, croissants, cafetiere). Apart from the china milkmaids on the mantelpiece, another "form of miniature to be found in abundance in Scottish sitting rooms of yore is the decorative tea-tray" (Falconer 53). With references to multiple cultures, this poem becomes not just about the national identity of Scotland as a (potentially) independent country, but also Jamie's own struggle with identity, as she has once described herself as Scottish "by latitude" ("Kathleen Jamie"). The poem also highlights that the speaker enjoys the comforts of different cultures. It begins with the speaker's tour with a tray between rooms:

> So I'm moving between rooms
> with a tray, advertising
> McEwan's, the kind we took sledging
> those distant snow-bright afternoons (lines 1-4)

Starting the poem 'in medias res' with a conjunction, "So" (1), indicates that the speaker begins the poem in the middle of a narrative. The speaker switches between rooms carrying a tray which has on it an advertisement for a beer brand, Scottish ale, McEwans's[27] which connects with her Scottish identity. Jamie launches into this poem with little introduction to her dilemma of identity, using the images of rooms and a tray as metaphors for the United Kingdom. The rooms represent England and Scotland, as Jamie relates strongest to these two countries of the UK. She was born approximately one hundred miles north of the English border and the tray becomes a reminder of such childhood memories as a sleigh[28] that was used for play on snowy afternoons in the past, possibly in her youth. A tray can hold many different items, just as the UK is composed of people and countries with varying histories. The rectangular shape of the tray emblazoned with the McEwan's

[27] It is a Scottish ale brand originating in Edinburgh.
[28] The British form being 'sledge', sleigh is "an open usually horse-drawn vehicle with runners for use on snow or ice" (Shewan 28). Actually here she means a small generally wooden device you sit on to slide down snowy hills for fun.

logo is a symbolic representation of the Scottish flag. The idea that the tray represents Scotland gives the impression that Scotland is the adhesive holding the United Kingdom together. Jamie again reflects on the snow in her younger years, just as she did in "School reunion" (QS, 20), by recalling the winters of sledding and enjoying McEwan's Scotch ale, a beverage representative of Edinburgh, Scotland's capital city:

> - or funereal lacquer, with peonies,
> or that classic of my mother's:
> a view of Windsor Castle
> inside a wicker pale. Whatever (lines 5-8)

This stanza imagines the speaker's movement into a room influenced by English culture. First, instead of a tray, she is now holding a vase (or urn) painted with peonies[29]. The peony was introduced to England in the 18th century, and first planted in Kew Gardens in London. Then, a memory of Jamie's mother inspires her to think she is carrying a wicker basket containing a photo from a trip to Windsor Castle, located in Berkshire, England. Jamie abruptly abandons the pleasant thoughts of England, by ending the stanza with 'Whatever" (8).

A memory of a rendezvous, a tray holding two glasses of a French white wine, "Vouvray"[30] (10) creates a romantic atmosphere for a couple:

> - a tray, and on it:
> two glasses of Vouvray. Or better:
> croissants and cafetiere, my lover
> outstretched on the duvet, (lines 9-12)

[29] By the eighth century, the Japanese had discovered ornamental peonies, but Western Europeans had to wait another thousand years. In 1789, legendary naturalist and botanist Sir Joseph Banks commissioned a tree peony to be brought to England by way of the British East India Company, and planted this first tree peony in Kew Gardens. The flowers remained difficult to obtain until the later 19th c., when English and American gardeners eagerly began developing varieties of their own ("The Pleasures of Peonies").

[30] It is a semi-dry to semi-sweet "white wine" from the Loire Valley of France that is often produced as a sparkling wine" ("Vouvray.")

This stanza becomes Jamie's pause or interregnum from having to identify with either Scottish or English culture. She is thinking about, maybe recalling, a holiday. Her references to "Vouvray" (10) as well as to "croissants" (11) and "cafetière"[31] (11) and "duvet" (12) clearly indicate she is in France.

Jamie returns to an English domestic scene through the visualization of being alone, "pizza for one", (13) and watching an English police drama *Prime Suspect* (14):

> or - dream on - pizza for one
> and *Prime Suspect.*
> No matter. I'm at the door now
> casting round wildly (lines 13-16)

A sense of identity confusion returns, as she again feels torn between the pull of one culture and the claims of another. As soon as she begins to feel comfortable in one culture, anxiety ensues and she almost feels obligated to return to the room of Scottish or English culture. The speaker is trying to resolve where she belongs, as she is:

> trying to find someplace
> to set the thing down,
> looking round madly,
> and I realize exactly (lines 17-20)

As she is holding a tray with many items upon it, a reference to the many identities to which she can relate, she is simply looking for a place to set it down. Placing the tray down while it contains items from both Scottish and English cultures emphasises the idea of searching for a place to settle down, whether it be in England or Scotland, and feeling comfortable.

Jamie seems to imagine a future in which the countries of the UK could be independent nations; each standing on

[31] It is a "coffee pot containing a plunger made of fine mesh with which the grounds are pushed to the bottom when the coffee is ready to be poured." ("Cafetière.")

their own, 'one legged' and on shaky ground, as they learn to become independently stable:

> how I'll end up:
> one legged, unbalanced,
> trying to hold steady
> this jigsaw, this haggis (lines 21-24)

In this stanza, unlike the ones above, Jamie overlaps an English reference and a Scottish reference. The jigsaw puzzle holds two meanings in this stanza. First, the idea that England will be just a piece, previously attached as part of the whole UK puzzle. Also, it is clear this reference is to England as the jigsaw puzzle has its roots in England since "it is generally agreed that the first jigsaw puzzle was produced around 1760 by John Spilsbury, a London engraver and mapmaker" (McAdam n.p.). Jamie offsets this reference to England with a strong Scottish association, "haggis" (24). Haggis is Scotland's national dish, even inspiring a poem "*Address to a Haggis"* written by Robert Burns in 1787. Jamie continues to reference both countries in the opening of the next stanza:

> this model-to-scale
> of the *SS Balmoral*,
> while howking toward me
> the so-called 'occasional' table, (lines 25-28)

Her mention of the SS Balmoral, a ship manufactured in Grangemouth, Scotland and powered by an engine supplied by an English company, lends itself to the idea of the two countries working together as one unit. However, ironically, the ship ran aground on 12 March 1967 due to bad weather and was broken into two parts, with one part (the bow) being salvaged and scrapped ("SS Balmoral"). The two parts of the ship can be seen as England and Scotland being broken apart. Jamie continues with another dual-country reference, the "'occasional' table"[32]

[32] The idea of a table specifically used for serving hot drinks or putting down one's cup between sips predates the coffee table in Europe by some time. In the United Kingdom, in 1750, tea drinking was the height of fashion and there was

(28), a furniture item used extensively throughout the UK for the placement of many items, including tea:

> and swiping it clear
> of *Spot on the Farm*
> for the sake of this precious
> whatever-I've-brought (lines 29-32)

This stanza shows Jamie leaning towards acceptance of her heritage as a Scot, as she is hastily removing a children's book written by an English author in favour of placing an unnamed Scottish article on the table. The item is not identified, but it does not matter how great or little the value is, as long as it is placed prominently on the table and is replacing the English book:

> from the place I've just left,
> - a clear space
> I can't very well
> turn round and reclaim, (lines 33-36)

"A clear space" (34) indicates her connection to England has been erased. Just as Scotland has voted on independence in the past, and will likely do so again, ultimately, once that independence is achieved, the decision will be irreversible (Bourgon). No amount of regret over the decision is likely to reunite the countries for many years, if ever:

> because it won't now exist.
> Besides, that's a trifle
> defeatist. Besides,
> what's the point of a tray? (lines 37-40)

The United Kingdom in its present form would cease to exist. The poem implicitly imagines the constitutional map of the UK being altered by Scottish independence, even if it does

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increasing demand for tea tables. There were pillar and claw tripod tea tables with a round top that were later hinged and were taller than present day coffee tables. There were also examples of tea or china tables that were rectangular. Other forms of tables in use at this time which could be placed near to a sofa were called occasional tables, end tables, and centre tables ("A Brief History of Coffee Tables").

not speculate in detail about the position of Wales or Northern Ireland. Scottish identity will also be altered by independence; a new way of governing will need to be installed, as well as the establishment of a separate financial system and currency. The poem can be read as suggesting that any future attempt to reverse a successful move towards independence would risk appearing "a trifle / defeatist" (II. 38-39). In this reading, Jamie imagines independence as a point of no easy return, even if the practical challenges for an independent Scotland would be considerable. Just as a tray gives stable support to many items, the UK as a single entity can bestow a universal heritage for its entire people.

A tray becomes a metaphor for the speaker as she tries to identify where she belongs. As she juggles between different cultures, she feels that she belongs to all and that is causing a conflict with her national identity which she has displayed in this poem.

In another poem Jamie refers to the last referendum held in 2014 for the independence of Scotland: "23/09/14" (BC, 41). The title of the poem points to a specific date, 23/09/2014, five days after the Scottish independence referendum, which resulted in a 'no' vote.

Having acquired a devolved parliament in Scotland after the 1997 referendum, people were hopeful and motivated for an independent Scotland but they did not accomplish the result they aspired to in 2014. In full Scots dialect, Jamie is voicing the disappointment and resignation of those Scottish people who voted 'yes', including herself, after the referendum ended with the frustrating 'no' vote, crushing the hopes of those who wanted an independent Scotland.

The opening lines hint at something that has started but not yet been completed or an unwelcome outcome:

So here we are,
    dingit doon and weary,
happed in tattered hopes
    (an honest poverty). (lines 1-4)

The poem starts with a kind of situational assessment after a defeat. The mood is sombre, reflecting the disappointment. Besides the title, the phrase "dingit doon" (2) is another reference to the independence referendum for Scotland in 2014, and was also the title of a briefing note for a "guide to the policy and legislative processes of demolition" published by Scottish Civic Trust[33] (*Scottish Civic Trust* n.p.).

As a Scots phrase meaning "to overthrow" and demolish, "ding doon" (2) is used as a metaphor representing those who wanted independence in the referendum. They are described as being destroyed like a building or any other structure (Brown 42). They feel tired, disillusioned and disappointed as "happed in tattered hopes" (3). The phrase in brackets "an honest poverty" (4) indicates that they have nothing but hope, since it is the hope of success that keeps a poor man going and is an allusion to a well-known Scots song '*Is There for Honest Poverty'* written by Robert Burns in 1795. It is also a reference to the Scots' previous success in establishing a parliament, as Scottish folksinger Sheena Wellington sang the song at the opening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. The poem continues with another allusion while maintaining its mournful mood:

Wir flags are wede awa,
    the withered leaves o shilpit trees
blaw across deserted squares,
            and the wind
    - harbinger of winter -

[33] The Scottish Civic Trust is "the national body for the civic movement in Scotland. It engages proactively with local civic groups across Scotland and regularly comments and campaigns for the improvement of Scotland's individual buildings and areas of distinction" ("The Scottish Civic Trust").

quests round the granite statues
- and so on and etcetera. (lines 5-11)

Jamie describes the scene as flags are removed, where dry leaves from weak trees blow across abandoned public squares. The presence of the wind heralds the arrival of winter. The wind is not only blowing the leaves everywhere, but also as if on a mission of discovery "quest round the granite statues" (10). Jamie alludes to a historical event, the 'Battle of Flodden' in 1513, and likens the loss of the independence referendum in 2014 to defeat at that Battle, where the Scottish Army of James IV suffered heavily against England. The phrase "wede awa" (5) is from the lyrics of a Scottish folk song *Flowers of the Forest*, written and sung to honour those who fought in the Battle of Flodden.

Beginning with a sense of defeat and disillusionment, Jamie finishes the poem with a sense of Scottish dignity and determination, that where there is life there is hope:

We ken a' that. It's Tuesday. On wir feet.
Today we begin again. (lines12-13)

The graphology of the poem - employing punctuation marks such as commas, full stops, and hyphens - indicates a pause between lines which gives the sense of weariness and discontinuance or hesitation. Nonetheless, the abbreviations and short sentences used towards the end of the poem also lend a sense of excitement and vigour.

By alluding to historical events such as the establishment of the Scottish Parliament (1999) and the Battle of Flodden (1513), Jamie touches on both good and bad episodes from Scottish history. By doing so, she is implying that the negative result of the independence referendum of 2014 is as worthy for remembrance as previous historical events. Thus, she invokes the national pride and endurance of the Scots and then shows their tenacity to master the outcome in the future.

Jamie publicly signalled her support for independence in the collective text 'Where are we at?', first published in the Guardian in July 2014, where she collated brief email responses from pro-independence friends into a quasi-poem. When the Guardian newspaper asked prominent Scottish writers and poets the question "*Should Scotland go it alone?*" prior to the independence referendum, each responded in their own way, all in prose. Jamie came up with a genius idea, posing that question to those of her friends that supported the idea of an independent Scotland and compiling the responses into a poem as a united voice of her nation. Naturally, the overwhelming response that is presented in this poem is "yes" for an independent Scotland. Responses showed unity from multiple perspectives: the willingness to do so, the economic concerns, frustration with England, Scottish pride and determination.

In another poem, "On the Design Chosen for the New Scottish Parliament Building by Architect Enric Miralles" (J, 48), Jamie describes the devolved Scottish Parliament after the 1997 referendum as:

> An upturned boat
> - A watershed (lines 1-2)

The poem is an interesting and brilliant way to approach and make a statement demonstrating the resilience of a nation. The title itself is redolent of a newspaper headline where the content will reveal the details. What is actually revealed is the shape of the building, later described as a brilliant design, equated to an upturned boat, but also to a watershed, meant as a turning point, a milestone in Scottish history. For Scottish people, having craved independence for such a long time, a physical structure for this yearning becomes a necessity after the 1997 vote.

There is also the poem "A sealed room" (QS, 60), referred to as a clean room, describes an airtight room for protection

against any form of chemical contaminants. Throughout human history, sealed rooms have been built for many reasons such as protection from gas attacks in wartime and passage from a chemically contaminated environment into an uncontaminated location. Written after the Gulf War in January of 1992, the poem focuses on spreading the awareness of petroleum[34] - in Latin *petra* meaning stone and *oleum* describing oil. Furthermore, the word "sealed" (11) echoes 'caprock', a "relatively impermeable rock, commonly shale, anhydrite or salt, that forms a barrier or seal above and around reservoir rock so that fluids cannot migrate beyond the reservoir" ("Seal.").

This is one of the poems compiled in *Queen of Sheba* (1994) where Jamie addresses predominantly national and personal issues. While "A sealed room" (QS, 60) at first glance leaves the impression that it is about the nature destroyed in the Gulf War, it also brings forward the consequences of that war for Scotland. Because of that, it becomes possible to analyse this poem from different perspectives: Jamie's reflections on the environment, her astute natural observation of the world's current events, how they impact on the environment and their relevancy to her own nation. She creates a correlation between the stages of petroleum production and its local as well as global impacts. The poem revolves around the natural resources that create oil and also the natural resources destroyed by oil. While implying that oil is the cause of great riches for some nations, it is the cause of devastation for others and for nature.

Written from a first-person perspective, the speaker directly reaches out to the implied reader to intrigue, create

[34] It is "an oily flammable bituminous liquid that may vary from almost colorless to black, occurs in many places in the upper strata of the earth, is a complex mixture of hydrocarbons with small amounts of other substances, and is prepared for use as gasoline, naphtha, or other products by various refining processes" (Inkpen and Moffet 363)

awareness and plant responsibility. The poem opens with relative reminder and an accusation that it is just a stone that "you" (4) get from your earth, then polish and prize:

> Prising a stone
> from your own earth your fingers
> wash it in a burn.
> You are stopped weeping
> hold it to the light: (lines 1-5)

Anything that has been discovered in the earth, cultivated and given a value has become a treasure, like diamonds, opals, rubies, and oil. Given Jamie's love of nature, this stanza can be read as evoking the cleaning of spilled oil[35] that has caused environmental contamination of the wider ecosystem. The task of cleaning all the damage caused by the crude oil that was poured into the gulf after Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait was not easy. The first stanza illustrates the comfort of locating and cleaning the remaining local wildlife in the gulf that had suffered in population density following that war.

The first part of the poem describes the joy of discovering one of those natural resources and refining a human-valued object, locating and rinsing it in a river, holding it to the light to see the reflection and then the sense of thrill and joy that follows the discovery. Contrarily, one discovery that has enriched current lifestyles for decades, to a point where it has become a necessity rather than a luxury, is oil.

The second stanza is formed of anaphora, repetition of the words "it is" (6, 8, 10, 12) at the beginning of each line, that appeals to the feelings of the implied readers:

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[35] The negative effects of oil spilled into the ocean are reported as follows:

During the last Gulf War, Saddam Hussein's troops released more than 400 million gallons of crude oil--forty times what was spilled by the Exxon Valdez--from Kuwaiti wells into the Arabian Gulf, coating the Saudi coast and creating the largest oil spill in history. Eleven years later, on the eve of another conflict with Iraq, a team of scientists from South Carolina conducted a massive ecological assessment as part of the international response to the Gulf War spill. From October 2002 to February 2003, I walked the oiled shores of Saudi Arabia as a field biologist on that assessment team. (Pollack n.p.)

it is a blue bead,
like a cormorant's eye
it is bright glass,
which is molten sand
It is your own self
huddled in a sealed room
it is a clot of oil
that you wash and wash but cannot rid from your hands.
(lines 6-13)

The speaker is implying two different outcomes as a result of the discovery and control of the world's oil. One of the reasons was that many nations united against an enemy that was not their immediate concern and the negative impact of that involvement on the Scottish people; the other reason was, a main concern for her, the consequence of continuous environmental damage the war caused.

Jamie's interest in and knowledge of nature is skilfully demonstrated with metaphors describing both the endangered species in the Arabian Gulf, and the impact that war had on Scotland. As a metaphor implying the declining population of the cormorant and other species, the speaker lists the objects coated with oil that inevitably includes those who are doing the cleaning. The petroleum, the "stone" (1) in the first stanza becomes "a blue bead[36]" (6), "bright glass" (8), "your own self" (10) and "clot of oil" (12). It is first likened to a "cormorant's[37] eye" (7), an aquatic fish-eating bird with blue eyes, (it is also a reminder of petroleum with its black colour); then, it is compared to a "bright glass" (8) indicating the transparent form of processed sand. In addition, petroleum is a threat for world ecology and seabirds such as the cormorant which has declined in population as a result of the purposely dumped oil (for instance, during the Gulf War) .

[36] Bead is a "small piece of glass, stone, or similar material that is threaded with others to make a necklace or rosary or sewn on to fabric" (Angus, 2010: 142).
[37] Cormorant also refers to the Cormorant East oil field in the North Sea in Scotland that has been a sore subject between Scotland and the U.K.

When these disasters occur, whether accidental or deliberate, the clean-up efforts are massive. In this particular case, the oil spill was so massive the oil stretched for miles and had to be cleaned slowly and deliberately. Every item covered in oil had to be touched, washed and examined for identification. As the oil was removed and items were identified, some semblance of the pre-spill environment began to reappear. However, the cleaning crews became covered in the oil residue and removed their attire and were cleansed in a sterile environment so they would not re-contaminate the clean areas.

While the first two descriptions refer to nature and innocence, the last two invoke the bloody outcome of the war: fear of war forcing people to "huddle" (11) into safer locations (which may evoke associations with chemical attacks such as that on Halabja, though the poem does not name this explicitly), and "a clot of oil" (12) resembling the blood of the lives lost for the sake of oil which is subconsciously transformed into 'a clot of blood' as an expression.

How is all of this relevant to Scotland? Scotland had no choice but to contribute military support to the Gulf War because of the UK government's decision to be involved, since the Scottish Parliament has no power to refuse these types of decisions. The last comparison, illustrating the impossibility of removing sticky oil from one's hands, is an allusion to Lady Macbeth who rubs her hands to wash away the hallucinated blood stains caused by her conscience after the murder of King Duncan in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The last line may also refer to the 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder' that veterans suffer from and bequeath to their children. As a matter of fact, after the Gulf war, many participants reported "fatigue, joint and muscle pain, headache, memory loss, depression, anxiety, respiratory problems, and diarrhoea," later discussed under the contested label 'Gulf War Syndrome' (Rosof 2). Various

studies have suggested possible long-term effects not only on veterans but, controversially, also on their children, although the extent and causality of such effects remain debated. While the first line of the poem is the shortest, it expresses the plainness and raw form of the stone, drawing attention to the value it has been given, the last sentence is the longest and emphasizes how the value given to that plain object becomes very dangerous in the hands of greedy people.

As with many other poems by Jamie, "A sealed room" (QS, 60) is filled with artfully created indirect implications and metaphors. The only reference to the Gulf War (1991) is the note purposefully placed beneath the title that creates the association of this poem with the war in Middle East and emotionally felt consequences within Scottish culture. The title becomes a metaphor for the subject "stone" (1) which actually represents oil. The Gulf War was in Kuwait which has one of the largest oil reserves in the world. The poem evokes the process of drilling for oil, the exhilaration of first discovery, and the labour of processing and refining it. Ultimately, however, the 'cost' is presented not in monetary terms but in the cultural and ecological scars that extraction leaves behind. In this particular poem, Jamie is trying to stress the impact it created on her own culture while trying to educate a society not necessarily ignorant, but self-indulgent.

This poem brings out Jamie's frustration and anger with how Scotland became involved with the Gulf War and places responsibility on those who initiated it and those who were involved. The poem addresses the oil-focused sides of the Gulf War, including Scotland, and she practically blames them. The "you" (4) she addresses are, in effect, the participants and apologists of this war. The poem, which evokes the steps of oil processing, raises awareness of the cause and the bloody outcome of the war. The mention of "cormorant" (I.7) may also invite an oblique association with the Cormorant East oil field

in the North Sea, a recurrent point of tension in debates over Scottish and UK control of offshore resources. The Scottish people, who have their own reserves of oil but cannot use it independently, participated in the war in the Middle East for another country's oil reserve on behalf of the UK, which can be read as a form of complicity in the exploitation of both its own resources and those of the Middle Eastern oil fields. It seems that this irony did not escape Jamie's attention.

The poems in this chapter have been analysed in terms of three broad sections: (i) 'The Cultural Past and the Present'; (ii) 'Alienation and Migration'; (iii) 'National and Political Issues' mostly inspired by her own personal experiences and observations, with references to her Scottish heritage, including Scots dialect.

Jamie approaches national issues from diverse perspectives, one of which is the 'national and cultural heritage from the past and its reflections in modern times'. For her, the past may at times define the present, especially her desire to retain the Scots language, and at other times, she questions the old values that have imprisoned minds and displays her desire to abolish them.

With "Lucky Bag" (J, 42), by incorporating current and historical trends into her poem, Jamie demonstrates her perception of the present state of Scotland's national identity, referencing food, religion, history, geography, business and fashion. "Lucky Bag" (J, 42) becomes a metaphor for the current state of the nation, depicted as a melting pot of national and international cultural values. By comparing the past and the present, Jamie poses rhetorical questions about whether to retain or forego some of the historical/cultural remnants set out in "Mr and Mrs Scotland are dead" (QS, 37). Discarded items at a landfill, especially the postcards addressed to Mr and Mrs Scotland, come to represent the

disappearing and abandoned traditions and craftsmanship because of industrial progress. With nostalgia for this lost and highly-valued workmanship, there is also a desire to let industrial and cultural progress take over. While "Mr and Mrs Scotland" is about the gradual transition from old to new over the whole country, "Arraheids" (QS, 40), written in Scots language, is a criticism of male-dominated Scottish culture memorialized in museum artefacts that ignore female contributions to the cultural heritage. 'Arraheids' become the sharp and witty tongue of long-gone female generations. Whether the choice is to hold on to past traditions or advance with industrial progression, Jamie is determined to draw attention to this cultural bias and educate the population to acknowledge a more accurate history.

This group of poems addresses disconnection, bereavement and assimilation caused either by physical immigration to another land or by a more metaphorical 'mental emigration' through education in search of a better life. She illustrates that while locating to another land, Scots carried their local traditions with them, whereas education has changed current and future generations forever.

Through the remains found in different museums in Canada, Jamie draws attention to early Scottish ancestors who were forced to relocate to North America with the first poem under this title "Pioneers" (J, 34). As she describes the items, she also paints a picture of the early settlers in their new environment, the hardships they endured while adjusting to their new realities. Jamie's message through this poem is to preserve pride in Scottish heritage and educate future generations as to their origin. While the reason for relocation in "Pioneers" (J, 34) is clear, "One of us" (QS, 43) prompts notions of mysterious circumstances that led to migration to a foreign land. Presented humorously, it is not clear if the visitors are migrating or invading. Regardless of the reason,

they must adjust to the local environment in order to be successful in their purpose. Jamie reimagines the historical eviction of Highlanders into an ironic invasion. Transitioning from physical to mental immigration, "The Graduates" (J, 3) focuses on the alienation caused by higher education, drawing attention to the systematic assimilation education causes, achieving what forceful evictions could not accomplish. This poem displays Jamie's bittersweet emotions as she is pleased that further education provides better opportunities, but concerned it also creates disconnection with her own culture and further divides the generations. "Skeins o geese" (QS, 64) presents a very different type of alienation compared to the previous poems. While immersed in nature, feeling all the sounds around her but being unable to understand the message leaves her feeling bereft. Re-written in Scots dialect, Jamie creates a correlation between the sounds of Scots and the sounds created by nature.

As a pioneering writer who supported Scotland's independence movement in the 1990s and afterwards, Jamie centres on the 1997 and 2014 referendums on devolution and independence. Therefore, 'national and political issues' bring to the fore current concerns that directly impact Scotland as a nation.

Having a dual identity, Jamie targets components of both English and Scottish heritage in "Interregnum" (J, 40) to highlight the struggle of Scotland to exist independently or continue as an element of the UK. She aims at the personal struggle of people to identify as Scottish or British in a society eager to be independent, but heavily influenced by the conglomerate UK. Just as there was a past period where the UK was without a ruler, Scotland is in a state of political anxiety as the decision to remain or secede from the UK is evenly balanced. She is inspired by the inherent tensions of society of her time. Thus, she shared her support for an independent

Scotland before the referendum through composing a poem from the emails people sent to her in support and in "23/09/14" (BC, 41) she encouraged people to continue hoping and not to yield after the negative result of the referendum. Written in Scots dialect, through "23/09/14" (BC, 41) Jamie is voicing the disappointment and deflated emotions of the Scottish people who supported independence, herself included, after the independence referendum ended with the disconcerting 'no' vote crushing the hopes of those who wanted an independent Scotland. These current events, while they have an immediate impact, will also shape the nation for future generations. They are also a reminder of the past significant events that have created the current atmosphere. Subsequent developments, especially the UK's withdrawal from the European Union (Brexit, 2016), have further altered the constitutional debate in Scotland, but these fall beyond the temporal scope of this study.

In "A sealed room" (QS, 60), with the words and date of the Gulf War written beneath the title, Jamie compels the reader to draw multiple conclusions. While her love of nature ties this poem to the clean-up efforts after the environmental damage caused by oil dumped into the Gulf was identified, this poem brings out the Scottish involvement in this war and its impact on the local population. What is not clearly expressed, but hinted at, is the lack of authority Scotland had on the deployment of their own troops, something imposed by the UK government.

The poems in this chapter involve Jamie's concerns about the political situation of Scotland during the devolution referendum (1997), her evaluation of the state of the nation, and her attachment to the nationalist concerns of her country. They show that Jamie's attitude to national issues in Scotland is broadly realistic: while she adopts a hybrid identity that brings together the culture and language of England and

Scotland as a Briton, she also passionately defends the independence of Scotland. In addition, she criticizes both the assimilation of Scots, which draws them away from their language, customs and tradition, and the outdated customs they still retain. Taken together, these poems seem to envisage the possibility of a sovereign Scotland and of a society that both retains its cultural values and articulates a renewed national identity, while seeking to establish itself as a modern and innovative state.

CHAPTER III

'THE TILT FROM WOMANHOOD TO MOTHERHOOD': THE MANIFESTATION OF THE 'PERSONAL' FEMALE IDENTITY

The Question of Identity and Femininity

Identity, in its most basic definition, refers to an individual's or group's explicit and/or implicit responses to the question "Who are you?" (Schwartz et al, 2). The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'identity' in terms of a 'single' entity as "a distinct impression of a single person or a thing presented to or perceived by others; a set of characteristics or a description that distinguishes a person or thing from others" ("identity."). Similarly, another definition describes identity as "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others" (Hogg and Abrams 2). The term "identity," which describes "the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture," highlights the reciprocal relationship between the self and the other (Deng 1).

'Identity' also has alternative descriptions in different fields such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, politics, and linguistics. Some divide the definition of 'identity' into two levels as "personal" and "social" identities (Fearon 2). In

the former, personal identity refers to the "set of attributes, beliefs, desires, or principle of action that a person thinks distinguishes her in socially relevant ways", while social identity denotes "a social category, a group of people designated by a label (or labels) [such as] American, French, Muslim, father, homosexual, worker, professor, or citizen" (Fearon 10-11).

Still others focus on more specific divisions such as "individual", "relational", and "collective" identities (Sedikides and Brewer 98). Existing theories of identity have centred upon one or all of these three types of identity. Individual identity concerns the personal level of self-definition, often tied to one's life narrative (Schwartz et al, 2). Theories related to 'individual identity' are inclined to concentrate on the individual as a producer and product in "creating or discovering his or her own identity" (2). Relational identity, on the other hand, revolves around "one's roles vis-à-vis other people" such as husband, mother, employee, colleague, neighbour, and so on (2). As to the relational identity process "identities cannot be established by individuals on their own", instead they need to be socially recognized (2). Collective identity focuses on "social groups and categories", and the sense of belonging to these groups. It refers to membership of various groups involving nationality, ethnicity, religion, and gender (2).

Even though there are multiple kinds of identities, an individual can embody more than one at the same time. These multiple identities define "[w]ho or what a person or thing is" ("identity."). It is "simultaneously a personal, relational, and collective phenomenon" which is "formed and revised" in the course of a lifetime through reciprocal processes of "self-discovery", personal and social construction, "some of which are relatively deliberate and explicit, whereas others are more automatic and implicit" (Schwartz et al, 8).

Though Kathleen Jamie's poems discussed in this chapter contain personal details, they belong to the category of social identities that include her roles as a mother, spouse and woman. However, the common point of these relationships is gender since it is clear "that multiple identities are shaped by one's gender, and that social identities can intersect and overlap with one another" (Deaux 2).

Unlike the term 'sex,' which describes biological and physiological characteristics and distinguishes individuals as male or female, 'gender' refers to socially and culturally constructed characteristics associated with femininity and masculininity.

Femininity is a manner or attitude that is "regarded as characteristic of a woman; feminine quality or characteristics; womanliness" ("femininity."). Femininity "embodies a constellation of meanings, it generally refers to the attributes, behaviours, interests, mannerisms, appearances, roles, and expectations that we have come to associate with being female during the socialization processes (Shea 275). On the other hand, "gender role socialization relies on modelling and reinforcement–girls and women learn and internalize socially expected and acceptable feminine traits and behaviors and are rewarded for gender-appropriate behavior." (275).

Virginia Woolf described the woman in the Victorian Age as an "angel in the house" who was "intensely sympathetic [...] immensely charming [...] utterly unselfish" and "excelled in the difficult arts of family life", "sacrificed herself daily". Moreover, Woolf tells of the role of a woman in a patriarchal society as follows: "She was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others". Above all [...] she was pure. Her purity was supposed to be her chief beauty--her blushes, her great grace. In those days - the last

of Queen Victoria - every house had its Angel." (Woolf 245). Yet the ideal of the 'angel in the house' persists into modern times, despite the efforts of feminist movements to challenge and dismantle it.

In many patriarchal societies and religious scriptures femininity has traditionally been associated primarily with wifehood and motherhood (for instance, the Virgin Mary is described as the mother of Jesus), and thus, an ideal woman "required the harmonious coexistence of wifehood and motherhood" (Manes 65). Though the social roles attributed to mothers vary from culture to culture, motherhood seems to be the most important role of a woman/wife. Motherhood is the status of power and respect for femininity, since childbearing is proof of femininity in most cultures.

Femininity seems significant for Jamie. Apart from places, myths, languages and Scottish landscapes, Jamie's poems feature female figures. Her poems speak through a distinct female lens—woman, wife and mother—and reveal the other side of conventional clichés surrounding these roles. The existence of male figures in her poems is minimised as if she deliberately ignores them.

Although male figures do not feature as prominently as female ones, Jamie's poems from the pre- and post-devolution years, especially *The Queen of Sheba* (1994) and *Jizzen* (1999), explore motherhood, spousehood, and womanhood in complex ways, she resists being categorised as a "female poet". She approaches femininity in all its facets through a markedly realistic and unsentimental perspective. In fact, Jamie "writes musical poems that attend to the intersection of landscape, history, gender, and language" (Young, n.d.).

Kathleen Jamie resist being labelled as a 'female poet' or a 'Scottish poet', regarding such classifications as limiting:

It seems to be part of the job to keep redefining and refres-

> hing what these categories mean. There is nothing more irritating to a writer than to be told you are not doing it properly. You know, my job is to keep pushing it and pushing it [...] I certainly don't think of myself as a woman poet. I don't even think of myself as a poet" (Scott n.p).

Her aversion to such labels is evident across multiple interviews. In another interview Jamie states that "Do you consider yourself a woman writer or a Scottish writer?' is a question I can no longer answer politely." (Smith n.p.).

Jamie explains the reason behind her writing about women's issues as: "I started writing at the time of the first Devolution Bill – which failed – and in the following decade or 15 years Scottish nationhood and cultural identity, and women's identity, were the issues. So I grew up in that atmosphere and it determined what I wrote. I've done all that, now. I'm very glad to have got it off my desk" (Connolly). Thus, she acknowledges that she wrote extensively about women's issues when they were particularly urgent, but now refuses to confine herself to any single identity category. When she deals with femininity, for instance, Jamie uses national or environmental issues and addresses her concerns through these settings which she believes will resonate with her readers.

Jamie deconstructs conventional female roles by portraying women, spouses, and mothers from unconventional and often subversive perspectives. She mostly approaches these themes with a realistic and subjective point of view. The specific details she references in her poems are the proof of her mostly personal experiences as a female.

Although Jamie rejects the label of "female poet," much of her work engages the personal dimensions of womanhood, constructing multiple female identities that reflect varied social roles. Jamie, however, deconstructs the idea of femininity by

creating female figures that break down outdated social roles of their time and offers alternative perspectives to female identities.

Poems related to personal experiences and femininity are mostly compiled in Jamie's two successive collections; *The Queen of Sheba* (1994) and *Jizzen* (1999). Moreover, her other volume, *The Overhaul* (2012), also embodies personal poems adorned with the natural environment. Thus, the poems analysed in this chapter are from *The Queen of Sheba* (1994) which is composed of forty poems, four of which are in Scots and *Jizzen* (1999), composed of thirty-six poems, two in Scots. Twelve poems from this volume will be analysed in detail, one of which is compiled in another of Jamie's collections *The Overhaul* (2012). Finally, two additional poems will be addressed briefly.

The Queen of Sheba (1994), dedicated to 'the folks at home,' differs from her nationally inflected poems by presenting female identity through figures who fall in love, age, resist, and reconcile with their multiple roles (Jamie, 1994).

In *Jizzen* (1999)—a book dedicated to her family and titled with the Scots word for 'childbed'— depicts womanhood through the stages of pregnancy, childbirth, and early motherhood. The collection also gives voice to married women who show their dissatisfactions by taking a stance, maintaining their silence or quarrelling. Jamie explains that *Jizzen* (1999) features her personal life, the period when she had two children - Duncan and Freya:

> I chose the word because at the time of writing I was having my own two children. So the very physical, organic business of giving birth was in the front of my mind. Also, it was the time of the Devolution Referendum when it seemed to be that Scotland was having a rebirth of its own. So the title functions both ways: personally and politically. (143)

Though the poems in *Jizzen* (1999) stem largely from Jamie's personal experience as a mother and wife, and are dedicated to her own family members (to her husband Phil Butler, her son Duncan, and daughter Freya), she associates her personal childbirth experience to the political rebirth of Scotland after the 1999 devolution referendum. Jamie often employs feminised metaphors when depicting Scotland, particularly in moments of political renewal.

Womanhood

As stated earlier, Kathleen Jamie's poems about womanhood are "The Queen of Sheba" (QS, 9), "Hand relief" (QS, 14), "The Overhaul" (O, 28), and "School reunion" (QS, 20). The first poem "The Queen of Sheba" (QS, 9), which is dedicated to 'the folks at home' is included in Jamie's 1994 poetry collection. The title of the poem refers to a mythical female figure in the religious scriptures of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims (Jamie, 1994). This exotic female figure is also seen in "Turkish and Persian painting, in Kabbalistic treatises, and in medieval Christian mystical works" as well as in the tales of Africa and Arabia (Wood n.p.). According to the legend, the Queen of Sheba (often associated with Bilqis in Islamic tradition) is portrayed as a powerful and beautiful monarch, sometimes located in Ethiopia or South Arabia, who visits King Solomon to test his wisdom with hard questions (Wood n.p.). Having heard the fame and wisdom of King Solomon and "his relationship to the LORD," she undertakes a journey at the head of a camel caravan laden with gold, spices and precious stones as gifts in order to test the King's wisdom "with hard questions" or riddles (1 Kings 10: 1). In Islamic tradition, King Solomon constructed a special palace for the Queen whose "walls and floor [...] were made of glass, and water flowed over the floor. She picked up her skirt to

walk over the flood and so revealed her legs, which were covered with hair, like a goat's." (Woods n.p.). In addition, the phrase "the Queen of Sheba" functions in colloquial English as a dismissive or sarcastic response to something implausible ('if that is true then I am the Queen of Sheba!'), or to mock someone perceived as self-important ("Who do you think you are, the Queen of Sheba?"). In the poem, the title depicts both the mythical and colloquial (abusive) meanings.

The poem narrates the phases of the arrival of a religious and mythological figure, The Queen (of Sheba), who has heard the voices of Scotland's despair all the way in Arabia and comes leading a caravan. The Queen explains that she comes for the young girls and desires the keys of the national library, and challenges the male authorities of Scotland.

The poem starts with heralding the people of Scotland directly and announcing the good news of the arrival of an exotic female from faraway lands, which adds a supernatural air to the poem:

> Scotland, you have invoked her name
> just once too often
> in your Presbyterian living rooms.
> She's heard, yea
> even unto heathenish Arabia
> your vixen's bark of poverty, come down
> the family like a lang neb, a thrawn streak,
> a wally dug you never liked
> but can't get shot of. (lines 1-9)

The speaker, a third-person omniscient narrator, seems to speak like a prophet, as if she were bringing news from the future. Scotland is personified through metonymy and represents everyone in Scotland. Jamie is criticizing the people of Scotland and their Presbyterian belief where they so many times recite her (Queen of Sheba's) name, and "she's heard" (4) it all the way in the lands of heathen Arabs. "Her name"

(1) the Presbyterian Scots call upon constantly is referring ironically to a mythical figure that belongs to another land. Her ability to hear the calls of the people from Scotland in distant Arabia gives her magical attributes. Her identity is not given directly until the end of the poem; instead, it is presented as a kind of puzzle that needs to be solved. However, the title indicates that "she" (4) is the Queen of Sheba herself and the opening indicates she comes because she has heard the "vixen's bark of poverty" (6) which represents the cries of young women and their despair of poverty in Scotland. Then, the speaker goes on to describe physical attributes such as a hereditary long nose "lang neb" (7), and "a thrawn streak" (7), suggesting a twisted, stubborn disposition rather than an idealised feminine beauty and habitual behaviour where an inherited china dog (a wally dog) cannot be discarded.

Unlike the original story, in which the Queen brings precious stones and goods with her, she brings a different culture and mentality with her this time since she seems to be disturbed by the current situation of Scotland:

> She's had enough. She's come.
> Whit, tae this dump? Yes!
> She rides the first camel
> of a swaying caravan
> from her desert sands
> to the peat and bracken
> of the Pentland hills
> across the fitba pitch
> to the thin mirage
> of the swings and chute; scattered with glass. (lines 10-19)

Being informed that the Queen succumbs to the constant recitation of her name and comes to Scotland, the addressee, on behalf of the people in Scotland, shows her astonishment not because the Queen has heard their invocation in Arabia but because she actually decided to come to such a dump.

The word "dump" (11) is used by the addressee to define and describe Scotland and suggests how the people in Scotland see themselves and their living environment. Through the question, expressed in a colloquial Scottish accent, "Whit, tae this dump??" (11), the poem turns into a dialogic narration in which the speaker and the addressee conduct a dialogue.

The Queen of Sheba comes from the desert of Arabia with a "swaying caravan" (13) of camels alluding to the volume of richness, to the watery Pentland hills, a range of hills that supply most of Edinburgh's water, full of peat and bracken, native to Scotland. The speaker juxtaposes two different cultural and geographical spaces through the images of "desert sands" (14) and "peat and bracken" (15), symbols of Ethiopia or Yemen on the one hand and Scotland on the other, though the emphasis ultimately falls on the Scottish setting. The "thin mirage / of the swings and chute" (18-19) may evoke, by association, the legendary glass floor that Solomon prepares for the Queen, although Jamie never makes this link explicit.

When the Queen is approaching the city, the differences between the two cultures increasingly grow:

> Breathe that steamy musk
> on the Curriehill Road, not mutton-shanks
> boiled for broth, nor the chlorine stink
> of the swimming pool where skinny girls
> accuse each other of verrucas.
> In her bathhouses women bear
> warm pot-bellied terracotta pitchers
> on their laughing hips. (lines 20-27)

Her unhurried arrival is signalled by the "steamy musk" (20) that drifts as far as Edinburgh's Curriehill Road, which normally smells of boiled mutton broth and the chlorine of swimming pools. The skinny girls in the swimming pool represent the modern-day obsession with the desire to be

thin to the point it is almost sickly compared to the plump women in the Queen of Sheba's bathhouses, where women look happy and content with their "laughing hips" (27).

In the original version, King Solomon gives the Queen whatever she asks for which recalls an allusion in the scriptures "*all that she desires, whatever she asks*" (28) However, the function of the allusion in the poem supports the power of the Queen instead of the King:

> *All that she desires, whatever she asks*
> She will make the bottled dreams
> of your wee lassies
> look like sweeties. (lines 28-31)

The speaker believes that the Queen will make "the bottled dreams" (29) of young girls "look like sweeties" (31), suggesting that she will fulfil the secret, repressed desires of Scottish girls so completely that their former ambitions will seem trivial by comparison.

Having compared the cultural and physical differences of the people and environment in two distant lands, the speaker moves on to paint a picture of local Scottish celebrities:

> Spangles scarcely cover
> her gorgeous breasts, hanging gardens
> jewels, frankincense; more voluptuous
> even than Vi-next-door, whose
> high-heeled slippers
> keeked from dressing gowns
> like little hooves, wee tails
> of pink fur stuffed in the cleavage of her toes; (lines 32-39)

The speaker continues describing and comparing the Queen with the local women who are the attention grabbers in town. The Queen is magnificently dressed in sequins barely covering her striking, gorgeous breasts that are likened to "hanging gardens / jewels" (33-34) which can also refer to a necklace made from flowers. Her exotic scent "frankincense"

(34) is almost intoxicating. Compared to a local "Vi-next-door" (35), the Queen's breasts and body are sexier and more voluptuous. Vi's outer appearance is described as someone who wears high-heeled slippers that are decorated with pink furs, which are likened to "little hooves" beneath Vi's dressing gowns. The speaker paints a picture of Vi as someone artificial who is trying to make herself look attractive synthetically.

Compared to another local celebrity "Currie Liz", the Queen is described as more adventurous and bold:

> more audacious even than Currie Liz
> who led the gala floats
> through the Wimpey scheme
> in a ruby-red Lotus Elan
> before the Boys' Brigade band
> and the Brownies' borrowed coal-truck;
> hair piled like candy-floss;
> who lifted her hands from the neat wheel
> to tinkle her fingers
> at her tricks
> among the Masons and the elders and the police. (lines 40-50)

This local figure, Currie Liz, is described as leading "the gala floats / through the Wimpey scheme" in a "ruby-red Lotus Elan," (43) a local pageant that echoes the ceremonial processions of larger urban festivals. The Queen leading the camel caravan is compared to Currie Liz leading the gala parade to show the glory and gorgeousness of the exotic queen. Currie Liz stands as a powerful and authoritative figure who directs the caravan by tinkling her fingers among "the Masons and the elders and the police" (50) of Scotland who symbolize the authoritative, male-dominated society, indicating a female figure challenging male-dominated society with limited success. Tinkling her fingers means giving a small hand wave using mostly her fingers, "tricks" (49) here carries the sexual slang sense of 'clients,' which

suggests that Currie Liz may be read as a sex worker who waves at her clients, who are important local men, as she drives a sports car in front of a local parade. Compared to Liz, the Queen is mysterious, and holds more strength and power and authority.

Her challenge is so decisive and powerful that nothing could prevent her from coming to Scotland:

> The cool black skin
> of the Bible couldn't hold her,
> nor the atlas green
> on the kitchen table,
> you stuck with thumbs
> and split to fruity hemispheres -
> yellow Yemen, Red Sea, Ethiopia. Stick in
> with the homework and you'll be
> cliver like yer faither,
> but no too cliver
> no above yersel. (lines 51-61)

Neither the "black skin / of the Bible" (51-52) nor "the atlas green / on the kitchen table" (53-54) can challenge her. Reference to the Bible and the map signifies religious authority and demonstrate geographical difference and distance. The references to the colours of black, green, yellow and red create the image of Africa, where Ethiopia is located, since they are referred to as pan-African. It is also significant that an average woman in Scotland can only point to exotic or distant lands on a map on a kitchen table. The speaker remarks that girls in Scotland are encouraged to be "clever like yer faither, / but no too cliver / no above yersel" (58–61), implying that female intelligence is permitted only up to, but never beyond, the level embodied by the father. They are expected, assumed, and conditioned to follow a role that is designed for them that is not their own choice. This expression reveals that the girls in Scotland are not enabled to explore and truly decide for themselves, but are conditioned and forced to depend on a male-centred curriculum in a patriarchal society.

She looks ironic and iconic as she speaks of improving the lives of the ignored girls and women of Scotland, even though she comes from a relatively underdeveloped land compared to today's so-called modern Scottish culture. The speaker prepares the ground for the queen's appearance as she gets ready to demand something more:

> See her lead those great soft camels
> widdershins round the kirk-yaird,
> smiling
> as she eats
> avocados with apostle spoons
> she'll teach us how. But first (lines 62-67)

Being at the head of the caravan, she leads the rest of her caravan on a stroll around the city, circles the "kirk yaird" (church yard) (63) counter clockwise, "widdershin" (63), which indicates that she is a leader challenging the religious authorities in Edinburgh / Scotland not to stand in her way. She is smiling, which is not only inviting but also promising more as she draws attention, eating avocados that are foreign and exotic fruits with apostle spoons. The image of eating avocados with "apostle spoons" (66) introduces a playful, faintly irreverent juxtaposition between exotic modern consumption and Christian iconography. Avocados are native to the American continent and were introduced to Africa through missionaries; thus, eating avocado with an apostle spoon refers to those missionary activities in underdeveloped countries where it was not always welcomed. But first she wants to perform a Scottish folk dance, "strip the willow" (68), at a social event, a ceilidh, a traditional Scottish social dance:

> she wants to strip the willow
> she desires the keys
> to the National Library
> she is beckoning
> the lasses
> in the awestruck crowd…(lines 68-73)

The queen is observing the crowd as if to identify the young girls while she is being watched thoroughly by the curious and awestruck crowd. Apart from her interest in the local and cultural traditions such as "strip the willow" (68), a local traditional dance, the Queen longs for the "keys / to the National Library" (69-70). By then she has already identified and is inviting the young girls to join her. That is when her reason for being in Scotland becomes clear, to enhance the cultural and intellectual well-being and advancement of the young female population.

Because of the thirst for knowledge, the girls, 'lasses', respond to the Queen with enthusiasm:

> Yes, we'd like to
> clap the camels,
> to smell the spice,
> admire her hairy legs and
> bonny wicked smile, we want to take
> PhDs in Persian, be vice
> to her president: we want
> to help her
> ask some Difficult Questions (lines 74-82)

They state that they are ready to accept her as a guide and teacher. They express their desire to be like her. Lasses would like to pat the camels like the queen does and smell the exotic scent and by admiring "her hairy legs and / bonny wicked simile" (77-78) they want to know her culture and her experiences in detail. The girls desire to be intelligent and educated like her with "PhDs in Persian" (79) and will further emulate the queen by being "vice / to her president" (79-80). Additionally, the reference to her "hairy legs" (77) deconstructs gender traits, as hair on a man's legs is considered natural. Through these depictions, the Queen is shown as independent and authentic, equal in wisdom and power to her male counterparts.

The girls would like to help her to "ask some Difficult Questions," (82) a reference to the original legend when the Queen of Sheba visited King Solomon to ask him some hard questions to test him. She dares the wisest man of Scotland, implying that she as the Queen of Sheba is as wise and powerful as a man such as King Solomon. In fact, these men are the ones responsible for these social roles that segregate gender as women and men, and impose docility on women expecting them to be meek, domestic, and uneducated, in need of protection and removed from politics.

The Queen, true to the original story, challenges the male authorities of Scotland and asks for a wise man like Solomon; "Scour Scotland for a Solomon!" (85). Her challenge is immediately answered in a light-hearted and scornful manner. Contrary to the Queen's desire, one impertinent man with typical male behaviour, mocks the Queen through the crowd by uttering a familiar colloquial expression "whae do you think y'ur?" (who do you think you are?) (88) implying that she is an inferior female who does not have any right to question the place of women in this culture. In reality, the concept of equality between genders is a threat to men afraid of losing their dominance over females.

The Queen, whose name is not mentioned throughout the poem, answers that she is the Queen of Sheba. Ironically, usually the expression "who do you think you are? The Queen of Sheba?" is meant to be an insult; here the Queen of Sheba is being embraced with pride by the young women of Scotland. The poem ends with a good answer to the male-dominated social order that sees girls as inferior while referring to them with many insulting expressions. However, the girls have an answer:

> and a thousand laughing girls and she
> draw our hot breath
> and shout
> THE QUEEN OF SHEBA! (lines 83-86)

The humour at the end displays the strength born from the unity of the females and their proud acceptance of who they are. The poem, which is intertwined with the mythical and biblical story of the Queen of Sheba is actually about the colloquial usage of the same expression. Jamie takes the mocking and insulting expression that is used for the girls who dare to go beyond themselves to recreate an irony; while the expression 'who do you think you are? The Queen of Sheba?' is usually meant as an insult, here being the Queen of Sheba is embraced with pride. Jamie clearly satirizes the clichés of Scotland through a common idiom used especially for girls.

Even though the title is "The Queen of Sheba" and there are a lot of references and comparisons to her and what she represents, the poem is about Scottish people. It describes modern-day Scotland with its landscape and people stuck in the past with old-fashioned religious values, trying to adjust to the ingress of current fashionable concepts and practices into their lives. Though they recite religious scriptures, which include "The Queen of Sheba", in almost every household, the value they have given to their female population remains absurdly inadequate, and cannot even be compared to the place of men in current culture. The Queen of Sheba is wise, smart, beautiful and powerful, and represents the hope and desire of young females to further educate themselves and not just be compelled to remain clueless and imprisoned by the male chauvinist values that religion and culture have forced on them for centuries. Modern-day Scotland, with its landscape and people, is thus contrasted with the exoticised land of Sheba and its queen, in order to expose the inadequacy of contemporary gender roles.

Another poem conveying social and cultural problems for females in a patriarchal society is "Hand relief" (QS, 14). The title "Hand relief" (QS, 14) is a British slang which

draws immediate attention, meaning "manual stimulation of the (male) genitals to orgasm, especially performed on one person by another as a paid sexual service" ("Hand Relief."). The poem recounts part of the story of a young woman named Liz, who confides one of her experiences in Edinburgh to the speaker, an old school friend.

The poem begins with the speaker thinking and wondering about a girl named Liz whom she had known at school and from the neighbourhood. The opening words carry an ironic charge, as the speaker begins with the striking question "whatever happened to friends like Liz" (1), implying that Liz is at once ordinary and forgotten, and that there are many other young women like her whom no one bothers to remember.

> Whatever happened to friends like Liz,
> who curled her legs on a leather settee,
> and touched your knee, girl/girl,
> as she whispered what the businessmen of Edinburgh
> wear beneath their suits – (lines 1-5)

Liz represents many other young women for Jamie when, on recalling her, she wonders about their fates. Because she knew Liz, she writes about her and makes the implied reader think and realize they too have known people like Liz. Liz is very friendly, natural and affectionate as demonstrated in such gestures of curling her legs, and touching another girl's knee, indicating that it is a girl to girl conversation. Liz also has a sense of humour as she gets ready to talk about her experience with "the businessmen of Edinburgh" (4).

As the poem progresses it leaves an impression of a young woman sharing an experience that might initially seem like normal and expected behaviour for a young woman. As Liz reveals more, the story becomes more shocking for the reader. Liz leans forward and whispers some private information she finds funny:

laughed and hooked her hair back
saying Tuesday, giving some bloke
hand relief, she'd looked up at the ceiling
for the hundredth time that lunch-hour,
and screaming, slammed the other hand down hard
on the panic button; had to stand there
topless in front of the bouncers
and the furious punter, saying
sorry, I'm sorry, it was just a spider…(lines 6-14)

If it was not for the title, a reader would not guess what was coming up. Up to this point every behaviour Liz displayed shows that she is just a young female behaving as she should and sharing a juicy story about a date. But instead she talks about a sexual encounter at work, the nature of which only gradually becomes clear as she divulges more details. Jamie remembers Liz sharing her experience about "giving some bloke" (7) "hand relief" (8) which sounds like such a common routine and incident in her line of work. The "bloke" (7) is a British slang word that refers to a "man, fellow" (Ayto and Simpson 27). Her working hours become much busier during lunchtime with these blokes. It also becomes clear what Liz is actually doing. The "lunch-hour" (9) is a reference to when the clients (the businessmen) come in for their pleasure "hand relief" (8). It is how they spend their lunchtime before returning to work. It definitely is not a reference to Liz's lunchtime. Looking at the ceiling for a hundredth time is an indication that lunchtime is busy at the business. It must have been a very busy lunch hour if she has had to look at the ceiling hundreds of times while performing sexual acts to please her customers. While with one customer, "some bloke" (7), and looking at the ceiling again, she becomes hysterical and activates the "panic button" (11) which causes a tragicomic mess leaving her "topless" (12) in front of the security, the bodyguards and the "punter" (13), meaning the customer. Her scream angers her customer and she tries to

apologize repeatedly and explains that the reason for her panic and screams was just a spider. Through this example, Jamie may be playing on the comic incongruity of the scene, where the panic button halts the transaction at its most intense moment under the pretext of a spider, exposing the fragility of the client's power.

Liz's story becomes the story of many other young exploited females as Jamie, in order to attract attention to a common social problem in Scotland, generalizes her argument by changing the tense into simple present tense:

> Whatever happens to girls like Liz
> fresh out of school, at noon on a Sunday
> waiting for her shift at Hotspots
> sauna, in a dressing gown
> with a pink printed bunny
> who follows you to the window
> as you look out at the city
> and calls you her pal. She says, you're a real pal. (lines 15-22)

Later, the speaker is wondering but in reality questioning what happens to girls like Liz who is forced to choose that path of life and finally revealing where Liz works, "Hotspots sauna" (17-18). This specific example gives the impression that it is not just this one occurrence but a problem that needs to be addressed. To Liz, everyone tends to be a friend or "pal" (22).

It is significant to address the different time frames and tenses Jamie uses in this poem. She starts with a thought in the present using past tense and wonders about the past behaviour of a young woman, drawing attention to something that bothered her in the past. Then she emphasizes the significance of the behaviour by re-telling her story with her exact words using both past and present tense together. Finally, she shifts fully into the present tense, signalling that

this problem has not been resolved and continues to haunt girls who share a similar fate to Liz.

Some people like Liz are so invisible to society that no matter what occurs to them, these girls are not cared about by others, according to the speaker. Liz is one of the girls who are unseen though, at the same time, they witness the secret dirty sides of male authority, the "businessmen of Edinburgh" (4), and those men who deal with business in high positions. However, in this poem they are the customers of a service that is abusive and humiliating for the girls. This controversial situation creates a paradox since the businessmen who are capable of creating a business sector for those who need it are the consumers of an inappropriate and illegal service that is under the cover of a massage at a sauna.

Liz's story is only sketched in outline, yet through her Jamie points to a wider pattern of young women being drawn into such exploitative forms of labour. This is not just her story, though, as through Liz, Jamie is drawing attention to how common this practice is while everyone is aware of what is going on but not doing anything to change it. Instead, they are either participating in the culturally and religiously unacceptable and illegal practice or displaying an indifferent attitude towards it. Jamie juxtaposes adult male figures such as "businessmen" (4) and "bouncers" (12), who embody institutional and physical power, with a young female masseuse who represents vulnerability and naivety. The poem is based on Jamie's personal experience: "When I was at school I was friendly with a girl who went on to become, what do they like to call them? A masseuse? in Edinburgh and we all knew this so-called massage parlour was nothing of the sort" ("Hand Relief").

The speaker argues about young girls who have been pushed into that kind of business that abuses young and lonely

girls, those that insult females and reduce them to sex objects. The parallelism in the first and third stanzas that consisted of repeating the same grammatical pattern in the sentence emphasizes the main argument of 'what or who causes ruin to the young girls of Scotland'. The speaker's inquiry about the girls reveals the responsibility of male authorities on the females' fate in the city.

Apart from dealing with cultural phenomena Jamie narrates more personal issues a woman experiences such as in the poem "The Overhaul" (O, 28). The title "The Overhaul" (O, 28) which refers to rebuilding, re-examining and improving is also the title of Jamie's 2012 poetry collection, *The Overhaul*. The poem centres on a small boat that has been hauled out of the sea and placed on a trailer for restoration. It recounts the process of inspecting the boat on land, without specifying exactly what needs repair, and does so entirely through the speaker's point of view.

The speaker seems to be an experienced and mature person who empathizes with the boat's current situation on land and treats the boat as a living being who needs consolation for being separated from the sea. The addressee seems to be the implied reader at the beginning but becomes the boat herself at the end. The speaker first talks about the boat to the implied reader from the point of an observer, creating a conversational tone, then addresses the boat directly. The speaker's tone is accepting, accommodating and empathising.

The poem opens with the imperative "Look," drawing attention to "Lively," the boat that has been transported from the water onto a trailer for refurbishment:

> Look - it's the *Lively*,
> hauled out above the tide line
> up on a trailer with two
> flat tires. What -

14 foot? Clinker-built
and chained by the stern
to a pile of granite blocks,
but with the bow
still pointed westward
down the long voe,
down toward the ocean
where the business is. (lines 1-12)

Beginning with a direct command through an imperative structure evokes a sense of personal affinity of the speaker with the implied reader. The caesura, a dramatic pause held through a dash in the middle of the line, used after "Look" (1) makes a break and prepares the reader for what is to follow, thus drawing attention back to the original intended object of the addressee, the "Lively" (1). The word is written in italic and starts with a capital letter which denotes an energetic and vigorous meaning, referencing that it is a proper name the speaker would like to emphasize. At first it is not clear what or who "Lively" (1) is. It is something that is being brought out of the "tide line" (2) which is an indication of being near the shore, on a trailer that has "two / flat tires" (3-4) - the flat tires of the trailer indicate this happened a while ago. What could cause the tires to go flat? Then, the surprise comes as the size of what is being hauled is mentioned as being "14 foot" (4.25 metres) (5).

Though the word boat is not mentioned at all in the poem, the description and terminology used are clear indications that what is being hauled is a boat. The diction of the speaker while exposing that "Lively" (1), unlike her name, is not a living being but a boat is colloquial. As if in casual conversation with the implied reader, she expresses her surprise at the length of the boat. A long pause created by the dash at the end of the line, and the sentence's continuation into the next stanza through enjambment, accompanies her surprise.

It is "clinker-built" (5) which is a specific method of boat building, where edges of the hull planks overlap, and to keep it steady it is "chained by the stern / to a pile of granite blocks" (6-7). However, the "bow" (8) is still facing the ocean where the skiff really belongs. It is built to be in the water.

The situation of the boat "still pointed westward / down the long voe, / down toward the ocean" (9-11) is described as if she is a captive in chains trying to reach the "voe" (10), a special word for an inlet in the Orkney or Shetland Islands, "where the business is" (12) referring to the place where Lively needs to be or belongs.

Previous sea-referenced expressions change to earth-bound landscapes in the following stanzas. As the readers find out what was hauled, they also slowly find out where it was taken to which is "inland" a distance from the 'shore':

> Inland from the shore
> a road runs, for the crofts
> scattered on the hill
> where washing flaps,
> and the school bus calls
> and once a week or so
> the mobile library;
> but see how this
> duck-egg-green keel's
> all salt-weathered,
> how the stem, taller
> —like a film star—
> than you'd imagine,
> is raked to hold steady
> if a swell picks up
> and everyone gets scared …(lines 13-28)

As a liminal space waiting on the shore, the loveless and abandoned state of the boat that is described in the first three stanzas through the expressions "up on a trailer" (3), "flat tyres" (4), "clinker-built" (5), "chained" (6), "pile of granite

blocks" (7) evolves into an energetic and alluring atmosphere through a description of the inlands with the expressions "a road runs" (14), "crofts / scattered on the hill" (14-15), "washing flaps" (15) "the school bus calls" (16). It is a small yet charming farming community where "crofts" (14) -small rented farms in Scotland- stand and laundry hangs to dry in the open air from the passing breeze. It is such a small town that it does not have a stationary, but only a mobile library.

Then, the speaker moves on to describe the condition of the boat; how its keel has changed colour to "duck-egg green" (17) because of the salt in the water, and how the stem, referring to another part of the boat, which seems to be taller than can be believed, is likened to a "film star" (20). Jamie personifies the boat as a living being like its name. She also wants the reader to imagine what she is describing. The boat tilted and secured towards one side at an angle to keep it from uncontrolled movement in case water rises, which would scare everyone.

The speaker empathises with *Lively* while verbalizing her feelings as if she is able to read *Lively*'s thoughts:

> No, it can't be easy,
> when the only spray to touch
> your boards all summer
> is flowers of scentless mayweed;
> when little wavelets leap
> less than a stone's throw
> with your good name
> written all over them - (lines 29-36)

The tone is upsetting. Though a boat belongs to the ocean, this one is docked here for restoration/refurbishing. And instead of water spray from the ocean waves, the only spray that touches its boards is formed by the "flowers of scentless mayweed" (32) referencing the type of moss growing on her planks and growing where the boat is hauled to. The "little

wavelets" that "leap / less than a stone's throw" (33–34) away hint at the larger body of water just beyond reach; the image reads almost as an invitation, as though the boat ought to be there instead.

The upsetting tone turns calm and peaceful in the last stanza. The speaker discussing things with a middle aged maturity is patient and hopeful at the end:

> but, hey, Lively,
> it's a time-of-life thing,
> it's a waiting game -
> patience, patience. (lines 37-40)

The speaker addresses the boat through apostrophe and makes her calm in the manner of a mother or a mature person who has experienced similar withdrawals. She explains that the situation of the boat that is away from the place where it belongs is a part of life, "a time-of-life thing" (38), it is like a "waiting game" (39) where patience wins, meaning time heals all.

Lively functions as a central metaphor for the speaker herself: a vessel temporarily hauled out, awaiting repair and renewal. By means of *Lively*, the speaker tells her story, her need for renovation. Both *Lively* and the speaker seem to be on standby, in seclusion, waiting and longing to regain their 'lively' days; yet they must first be restored and modernized before they can fully re-enter life. Although the poem never states this explicitly, reading *Lively* as a feminised figure allows the overhaul of the boat to mirror a mid-life female subject's sense of exhaustion, withdrawal and the slow work of rebuilding a self.

Having discussed female identity in general, Jamie turns to cultural and social problems as experienced by women at different ages in "School reunion" (QS, 20). The poem depicts a class reunion party where the attendees are women,

indicating that the school may have been for girls only. As the anxiety builds for the arrival of everyone, the speaker, after stating her past and desired location, goes back and forth in the lives of those individuals, all females, which drew her attention. She compares their past lives, when they were all students, with the experiences they have had since leaving school. Though the poem starts with reminiscing about the past, then it moves back and forth and starts comparing not just the lives of individuals but the decisions that led to their current situations. The poem is not just about the past and present but also about the future the attendees may face.

The title refers to a planned social gathering of members of a school or class graduates who periodically reunite. However, the unity in the meaning of the title is juxtaposed with the scattered layout of the poem (graphological deviation), with five different episodes presenting different scenes before, during and after the party, and with the gaps between the words and lines seeming to picture and support the time span between their high school days and now. It also shows the dynamic position of guests in the party; some groups dancing while others chatting, for example. The free-flowing manner Jamie writes this poem is thus noteworthy.

The setting is mostly in the Ladies' room of the Kestrel Hotel during the first snow of the year. There is a constant shift between different time spans—past, present, and imagined future. The poem starts with the speaker reminiscing about the place she once lived in the past:

> We were always the first to get snow
> up here in the hills, sagging on roofs
> like a shirt tail
> laying on the reels
> rich brown before they built more houses. (lines 1-5)

She looks at the view and remembers that in those days there were fewer houses and when it snowed her

neighbourhood would receive it first because it lay at a higher elevation. She likens the snow piled up on roof tops to a shirt tail laid on a furrow before more houses were built. The speaker is nostalgic when she is describing the town the way it was in her teens:

It's time. Taxis crunch the gravel
at the Kestrel Hotel, its fake
coach-lamps shine yellow (lines 6-8)

Then, she comes back to the present time and informs the addressee (implied reader) that it is time, hinting that she is waiting for something to happen or somewhere to go or somebody's arrival. She is almost apprehensive about what is about to take place. This ambiguity is clarified when the speaker describes the taxis' arriving at the Kestrel Hotel where some people are waiting to greet the attendees. The reader can imagine the whole scene because of the detailed presentation of the speaker.

The time shifts in the first stanza and reveals the old and the new form of the place the speaker is familiar with. The old form of the place with the snow "sagging on roof / like a shirt tail" (2-3) in the speaker's memory shows the pure natural environment with a few houses and untouched earth covered with snow while the new form symbolizes an artificial place with more houses, and the Kestrel Hotel's artificial, unnatural lamp light - the "coach-lamps" (8) of the hotel- are described as "fake" (7) implying that the hotel itself seems to be artificial and for the speaker does not fit in that environment. With the lines welcoming and inviting the guests in the last sentence of the first stanza, the speaker is entering into the hotel where most of the other guests have already arrived:

Come in, we're
almost
all here. (lines 9-11)

The structure of the sentence with words situated one under the other in the form of a staircase supports invitation to the people to enter the function downstairs.

Then, in the next stanza there is a shift from exterior space to interior since the speaker is downstairs in the hotel, most likely in the ballroom where women dance under the "disco lights" in a senseless way with their "handbags piled like ashes at their feet" signifying that they have been there for a long time and are drunk since they seem to be untidy:

> Downstairs, women
> who work in banks are dancing, handbags
> piled like ashes at their feet.
>
> They raise their arms
> in the disco lights, bra straps droop.
> those faces turn, eyes, the same
> lipstick mouths…
> In the Ladies/
> Girls (lines 12-20)

From the "handbags" (13) and "bra straps" (16) it is clear that the guests in the hotel are all females. In addition, the occupation of the women who "work in banks" (13) seems to be given consciously in order to create an opposition between their job and their current environment. This opposition also creates a shift from adulthood to adolescence. The handbags piled under their feet support their adolescent behaviour. The speaker's insistence on the artificiality of the hotel shows itself again with the description of the women dancing in the dance hall who have "the same lipstick mouth" indicating that they have a copy-paste appearance without authenticity.

The title refers to a reunion of the school as a whole, both men and women, however the poem mostly focuses on females and turns the event into a kind of woman's matinee instead of a class reunion. This focus on women alone

reflects assumptions about typical female behaviour at such gatherings and allows Jamie to explore those behaviours in detail. Jamie herself attended Currie High School which consists of both female and male students, indicating that some of the memories shared in this poem may not be Jamie's. The speaker is someone different from the poet herself or Jamie might foreground females only.

The space is changed again with the speaker's entrance to the Ladies' room (the toilet). The Ladies' room in the poem is a typical one including ladies who are applying make-up, arranging hair, smoking and gossiping/talking about men they like and women they dislike. The speaker starts to describe the place, referencing to its artificiality through the plastic flowers in a glass vase:

A glass vase & twist of plastic fuchsia.
Laughter Hairspray
holds the air
smiles stale
fag ash grey
cubicle doors clang; my shoes are wrong (lines 21-26)

The Ladies' room with its interiors and attendants echoes an ordinary public restroom in a ballroom. The ladies in the restroom however, display distinctly adolescent behaviours, as they were, contrary to what they are today as represented in the artificial plastic flowers in the vase. Moreover, stressing that her shoes are wrong reveals the speaker either prefers her comfort rather than aesthetic appearance or prefers to look elegant, but uncomfortable despite her age. However, she still feels uneasy about her shoes and feels the need to mention their unsuitability.

Using vulgarity such as "fuck off you" (29), "I want McKean / to shag me" (31-32), "a bitch whore slag tart" (33) describes teenage rivalry to capture and retain a young man's attention:

the tongue
shocks with blood
fuck off you
a pin scratches:
I want McKean
to shag me - Gemma
is a bitch whore slag tart
Our voices
rise and rise, breasts fall
toward pink-pastel basins,
as we take out lipsticks, lean
into mirrors look our mother's faces
rise to greet us
framed in paper rosebuds
from the opposite wall. (lines 27-41)

One of them, Gemma, shouts and her voice "scratches" (30) like "a pin" (30) and she utters some slang words in order to reveal her sexual desire for a man named McKean, evoking past days when they were young at high school. The significance of the Ladies' room scene is the mirror, which shows the women how they are aging and how closely they now resemble their mothers while they are refreshing their make-up.

In the second part, the speaker is talking about different times in a person's life. The setting is still the Ladies' room. The sentences become disconnected and are turning into keywords instead of complete sentences indicating a disconnection and loss. Initially, it sounds like she is talking about her own life; however, as she goes on, it becomes clear that it is about Linda since she summarizes her past and current state afterwards:

The child birls in the frosty playground,
her woolly hat, gloves flying on strings.
The text of a dream: wild earth
carpet

emulsion in peach blossom.
Decree Nisi, two years
South Australia;
we have
almost all come back
the D.J. who lived down the lane,
Linda willowy acrobat
divorce cartwheels, skirts
Expecting (again) cover her face (lines 42-54)

Entry into the stanza describes chaotic back and forth references in time to highlight the differences in someone's life and how decisions made while younger can impact the future. The carefree nature of the child is described when Linda's younger behaviour is displayed as a child twirling in the frosty playground where a child's world is picture-perfect like the "text of a dream" (44), bright and full of colour. Yet, as Linda's life evolved, the events have become more serious and familiar to many people, such as getting involved with what is implied to be the wrong man described as "the D.J. who lived down the lane" (51), divorce, and pregnancy. Additionally, the divided words indicate how far Linda's life has come since those days of care-free gymnastic tumbles.

Linda is divorced and expecting a baby again which represents Linda today, and the willowy acrobat doing cartwheels in a skirt which ends up covering her face is the Linda of teenage years. The division of the words into two sections points to two different time periods in Linda's life. The first grouping is Linda today, and the second is Linda during her school years.

The next stanza moves on to analyse a few other high school friends and starts with a mother's reaction to her child:

a mother's grip
can 't you be more
ladylike, women
beware
gravity.
Lorraine Paton (she's started
Gillian she's started
that Michelle She started and all
ganging up, the fruity weight of a gang
swaying slowly, ganging up.
You!
Snot-bag
Ya: Fat boy, Lezzie
ya spaz, gowk, snobby get, ya poofter
that Sandra
we knew each other utterly, the spinning bairn
ya lying cow she never
threw herself under a train
The grey clanging metal lavvy doors. (lines 55-73)

The opening here is a mother's reaction to a daughter that is behaving like a normal child to mind her manners and be more ladylike. Then, comes the warning, "women beware gravity" (58-59). Mothers are conditioned to behave a certain way which is the way they learned from their mothers, imposed by society, culture and religion. Gravity does not just mean the physical changes women go through as they age, but also the proper behaviour which the people at the reunion lack. Being aware of the gravity is not just about the change in their physical appearances as they have aged, but also about minding their manners. This advice becomes clear when the individuals that are well-known to the speaker regress to who they were when they were younger and behave with teenage mentality in their aging bodies. In their older/adult bodies they pretend to be as young as they were in their high school days and they call and label themselves with the same nicknames and crude words such as "snot-bag" (66), "Fat

boy" (67), "spaz", "gowk", "poofter" (68) that they gave to each other in the high school.

The third part introduces another cliché about class reunions, that they have difficulty recognizing each other. There are a few descriptions and references to the people and their behaviours in the past and present. However, there is one individual in particular she is not sure of because she sounds envious of her life:

Oh who
is that: gliding between darkened tables
turquoise and gold strap, tropical black hair
on a bare arm tiny
diamond in her slender nose o who
in the disco-lights...
Couldn't I have dared to be
Hazel Thompson, the weight of all hair
lists her head as though she hears
birdsong in Africa
through the stamping disco
tilts as the diamond
tugs toward its black mine
hair grown since we were
seven secret as marijuana
in her dad's shed
their council house maroon door.
I'd like to
gather up that black hair
Clarks shoes slapping
down the Street straight and grey
as a school skirt, rainwater stains
on harled gables, NO BALL GAMES
to see her in turquoise and gold
give it her in armfuls, Hazel
witchy
sweet as a *wait, let me*
chum you...
Oh who would have thought it? (lines 74-102)

The speaker remarks on a woman with "tropical" (75) dark black hair and she asks who the woman is though she has distinctive physical features different from the rest of them. The speaker comments on how her very dark black hair grew when they were seven, implying that they are childhood friends. When she looks through the woman with black hair, it is tempting to link that she likens herself to Hazel Thompson ("Couldn't I have dared to be / Hazel Thompson") indicating an award-winning British photojournalist, who has travelled the globe with her photojournalism career including Africa. The speaker is happily surprised to see the woman at the gathering because she remembers her childhood time and her game pal. The speaker remembers the past when she wore Clarks shoes, the brand that is known for its orthopaedics and comfort as well as being the preferred brand for school shoes, indicating that they are still her favoured shoes as she tries to bring those high school days back by wearing the same type of shoes as she did in her school days. Emphasizing the shoes might reveal that the speaker and her peers are not young but pretending to be young as in their school days.

In the fourth part, the speaker foreshadows their old age. She compares their old ages to a "mattress / on the dump" (103-104) through hyperbole in order to define and underline that they will live so long that they will shiver and will be cared for by their sixty-year-old daughters:

> When we're older than a mattress
> on the dump, and shudder
> in the living rooms of daughters
> who're 60, who put on lipstick and
> kindly lead us out
> to lunch in cold hotels
> that smell of paint, specimen
> vases with plastic fuchsia
> and our shoes are wrong, shuffling on the red carpet,
> again we'll enter The Kestrel Hotel's

dim loud dance hall;
as diners turn in the cool light,
mouth open, those appalled young eyes;
we know whose names we will mutter & shout
we are almost all here
as our daughters hush us. (lines 103-118)

The speaker dreams that in the companion of their daughters they will gather in their dotage in the same hotel for lunch with unsuitable shoes and then enter into the dance hall of the Kestrel Hotel, which will still have a vase of plastic fuchsias" (110). They will call themselves by the nicknames from their school days and as they get ready to be as rowdy, other diners -younger ones- in the hall look and wonder and their own daughters silence them.

They are in taxis on the road parallel to the Forth Bridge that is lit up by distant lights showing up the bridge to the planes:

The first snow. Taxis turn
onto the high road,
the Wimpey scheme's
familiar streets. Distant lights
flash calmly
on the Forth Bridge, warning aircraft. (lines 119-124)

She describes the scene as they get ready to go back to their homes. The stanza starts with reference to the first snow of the season, as was the case at the beginning of the poem. However, the locations described are different even though they are familiar; "Wimpey scheme's / familiar streets" (121-122), "Fort Bridge" (124).

Then, comes the reminiscence of previous reunions, a nostalgia faced with the reality of today, comparing the walk the morning after the reunion with the walk at an older age:

The morning after, waking
in your parents' too-small house,

the single bed, & wardrobe
brought from Granny's when she died
Today we'll take a walk
flat shoes, damp stains
on the harled gables;
to the fields; perhaps
a kestrel
    hovering still above the road. (lines 125-134)

The speaker, who has addressed an implied reader from the beginning, turns to another addressee in the last scene with whom she feels close and will spend the night with after the reunion party. Her friend has a single bed and wardrobe in her too-small house that is left over from "Granny" (128) after she passed away. She imagines that they will walk around and become united with the environment as in the old days.

Then the scene changes to the present and talks about taking a walk with a pair of flat shoes towards the fields, while referencing the "harled" (131) style of exterior finishing that Scots have used on their houses for generations but that is stained because of moisture caused by rain. Then, comes an almost hopeful wish that a kestrel, a common European falcon, would be flying above the road where they are walking.

Our laughter sealed in taxis, those faces
turn, eyes, same lipstick mouths;
goodbyes your corner
with the privet hedge whose leaves
like greasy silk you pulled
one by one, under the streetlamp.
    In yellow light, the bairn spins
a coloured twist
within us, like a marble.
        Close the taxi door and wave
know we are the space
the others ease into
at your old road-end.
The taxi lights recede through the scheme's

dour streets You watch
from the same door,
then let yourself in.
As if
it's never happened
all that's happened since. (lines 135-154)

She turns to the moment in the taxi. The speaker remembers her and her friend's "laughter" (135) which is fixed in the "taxis" (135) under the others' synthetic reactions by looking at them through the "same lipstick mouths" (136). They leave one by one and she depicts the goodbye scene, focusing on a specific person she addresses "you" (149). She reminds you that the imaginary "bairn" (141) appeared again under the street light indicating the 'inner child' they released. Then, she describes how her friend waves and goes into the house while the taxi moves with the speaker "As if / it's never happened / all that's happened since." (152-154). It seems that for only one night they are able to forget, especially their age, and turn back to the past, their teenage years and have a good time.

While depicting situations appropriate to the females in a party including make-up, bra straps, a pile of handbags, and common social gathering behaviours such as smoking in the toilet, gossiping, dancing, meeting or remembering people from the past, the poem in fact juxtaposes the natural and the artificial, young age and old age, the past and the future. The significance of the poem lies in its female characters, who revert to teenager behaviours and anxieties despite their adult lives and bodies. The speaker, who is one of the attendees of the reunion party, tells about the women in the party while dancing in the hall or wearing lipstick, smoking, and gossiping in the ladies' room. She mentions their appearance and behaviours which are like those in high school, suggesting their efforts to be seen as they were in their high school days.

The act of a school reunion in the poem is an evocation of youth for the attendees of the party.

The poem itself is like a time tunnel through which the speaker goes back and forth in time by remembering and dreaming about the past and the future. The reader can witness the speaker's thoughts flowing like a storyboard in her mind. It is the poem of mothers and daughters, old and new, artificial and natural. In fact, it is written for and by women.

Spousehood

Kathleen Jamie's poems about spousehood are "Perfect day" (QS, 34), "Wee Wifey" (QS, 30), "Mrs McKellar, her martyrdom" (J, 24), and "The Garden of Adam and Dot" (J, 8). The first poem "Perfect day" (QS, 34) is about a woman in love, describing a snowy day spent with her partner by the lake. This is one of the poems compiled in *The Queen of Sheba* collection (1994). Although short—one stanza consisting of a single sentence divided by colons and a semicolon that accumulates details of the day—the poem displays strong unity and harmony, and is framed by a title that evokes a flawless, pure and ideal day.

The speaker is a woman in love who is talking specifically to the man she loves while narrating what she sees, feels, and experiences. It is not only the place but the presence of her partner, and the fact of being able to share all this with him, that makes it a perfect day:

> I am just a woman of the shore
> wearing your coat against the snow
> that falls on the oyster-catchers' tracks
> and on our own; falls
> on the still grey waters
> of Loch Morar, and on our shoulders
> gentle as restraint: a perfect weight

of snow as tree-boughs
and fences bear against a loaded sky:
one flake more, they'd break. (lines 1-10)

In such a romantic mood and setting the speaker may only call herself "just a woman of the shore" (1) but she is not giving herself enough credit. Not everyone is as attuned to their environment as she is, just because she is also a woman of the shore. By being "a woman of the shore" (1) she is also indicating that she is drawn to coastal towns. She is very observant of the things that are happening around her as the snow falls in Loch Morar. By describing herself as "just a woman of the shore" (1) the speaker adopts a self-effacing stance, downplaying her role and presenting herself as an ordinary coastal woman rather than a heroic figure.

She overcomes the adverse effect of the snowy weather by wearing her partner's coat which protects her against the snow that falls on the tracks of the oyster-catchers[38] and on the footprints that the speaker and her partner leave in the snow while walking. The expression "loaded sky" (9) indicates that the snow will continue to come down and add more weight to tree branches and fences that are already weighed down by snow to a point that one more flake could break them. In naming and describing the various surfaces on which the snowflakes fall, Jamie confirms the setting as Loch Morar[39] where the snow falls on oyster-catchers' tracks as well as on the couple's own footprint.

His coat that she is wearing creates an intimate image while she is sharing her observations with him. This atmosphere seems to symbolize their mutual feelings, their

[38] Oystercatchers are large, stocky, black and white waders with a long, orange-red bill and reddish-pink legs that are common to all coasts of the UK (Burton and Burton, 1659).
[39] Known as Loch Mhòrair in Scottish Gaelic, it is a freshwater loch in Lochaber, Highland, Scotland and the deepest fresh water body within the British Isles. ("Scottish fact of the week: The Loch Morar Monster")

love for each other. In her own words, Jamie admits that this poem "is one of the handfuls of love poems" she has written ("Perfect Day."). The beauty of the natural world under the snow and the beauty of their affection are paralleled in her narration.

Through "Perfect Day" (QS, 34), Jamie's message is that any ordinary day and events not usually considered special can become perfect when shared with a loved one. While claiming to be an ordinary woman who lives by the shore, with her partner's coat wrapped around her, she is anything but ordinary. She is describing nature and the creatures around her. What makes this day perfect is the combination of it all, but mostly it is the fact she is sharing it with someone she loves.

The Scots-language title "Wee Wifey" (QS, 30) refers to a woman who generally does the cleaning and cooking, and is busy with domestic work. Unlike the title, the rest of the poem is written in English.

The poem stages a constant battle in the speaker's mind: a negotiation between her desire for a settled domestic life and her desire to travel and live adventurously. She likens her domestic self to a demon she names 'Wee Wifey' and with whom she is having the battle. She then goes on to illustrate this exchange between the two identities of herself in a humorous way. She describes how she trapped this demon and thinks that "wee wifey" is out to get her. The speaker sets out the conversational exchange she had with her adventurous identity in her mind and her efforts to suppress one of her selves on behalf of the other:

I have a demon and her name is
WEE WIFEY
I caught her in a demon trap - the household of my skull
I pinched her by the heel throughout her wily transformations
until

she confessed
her name indeed to be WEE WIFEY
and she was out to do me ill. (lines 1-8)

The poem begins with Jamie's confession that she has a "demon" (1) named "Wee Wifey" (2) whom she caught using a "demon trap" (3) in the "household" (3) of her mind. Her mind is very active and she has lots of thoughts going on there. She explains that she has caught "Wee Wifey" (7) in the 'household' of her skull while this figure undergoes metamorphosis, implying that the speaker is negotiating between different versions of herself.. This demon in the household of her skull finally confesses that her name indeed is "Wee Wifey" (7). While a part of her brain represents a domestic lifestyle she desires as a wife and mother, her other thoughts are of a life of an adventurous traveller. This conflicted division creates two different identities. Her statement that "she was out to do me ill" (8) indicates that the domestic persona 'WEE WIFEY' is felt as a threat: if the speaker fully yields to the constraining expectations of domesticity, she may feel harmed or diminished, perhaps emotionally as well as creatively. That is when she makes the decision to cut her ties with "Wee Wifey" (11):

So I made great gestures like Jehovah: dividing
land from sea, sea from sky,
my own self from WEE WIFEY
(*There*, she says, *that's tidy*!)
Now I watch her like a dolly
keep an eye,
and mourn her:
For she and I are angry/cry
because we love each other dearly.
It's sad to note
that without
WEE WIFEY
I shall live long and lonely as a tossing cork. (lines 9-21)

The speaker believes that 'Wee Wifey' intends to harm her and when the decision is made, she relates her decision-making process to the Old Testament. She behaves like Jehovah, one of the names for God in the Old Testament, who separates the Red Sea into two for Moses and his followers to allow them to escape harm and practice their faith freely. Just like Jehovah, instead of a body of water, the speaker decides to divide her own self from 'Wee Wifey' who responds with a well-knowing "that's tidy" (12) affirming the division and revealing her domestic self like a neat freak housewife. The bracketed comment "there, ... that's tidy" (12), gives "Wee Wifey" (12) a briefly audible voice, and the phrase 'that's tidy' reinforces her association with domestic neatness and order.

In the process of this separation, the speaker discovers that she is lonely without 'Wee Wifey' and describes herself as looking out for any sign that she might be back "watch her like a dolly keep an eye" (13). This expression has two separate ideas with similar meaning – 'watching like a doll' (whose eyes never move) and 'to keep an eye (on)' meaning to carefully observe realizing that without her other self, there won't be any adventurous travels over the land, sea or air. Her two selves are missing each other and each is mourning the absence of the other. Both are angry and crying at the end of this departure because they really love each other as a result of their symbiotic relationship that makes them whole. Even though she wanted to trap and get rid of 'Wee Wifey', she realizes that she may have trapped herself into a dull lifestyle without wild adventures and travels. That is when the speaker states that she may have a long life but without her adventurous self, she will be very lonely like a "tossing cork" (21).

Before concluding the close reading of this poem, it is imperative to address the use of a particular phrase. Even though it is not the focus, yet it is still important to highlight

the capitalization of "WEE WIFEY" (2, 7, 11, 20) throughout the poem, which is the only Scottish expression used, and being used as the title it captures the reader's attention. The use of both Scots and English in the poem may also invite a broader, more allegorical reading: the internal split between 'WEE WIFEY' and the travelling self can be seen as echoing tensions between Scottish and English identities, though the poem never makes this analogy explicit. She may be implying that, in both cases, the line between the two identities has become so thin that any attempt at separation would be painfully felt by all sides. In addition, writing in two languages in the poem reveals Jaime's fondness of using both English and Scots in the same text and the 'Wee Wifey' can also be read as a figure for the Scots language itself: intimate, familiar, and repeatedly subordinated, yet emotionally indispensable.

The constant battle taking place in a woman's mind about her two different selves in "Wee Wifey" (QS, 30) gives way to a battle in another woman's mind about gender roles in "Mrs McKellar, her martyrdom" (J, 24).

The poem narrates ordinary domestic problems between a married couple who have stopped communicating. This poem is written from the perspective of Mrs McKellar who complains about the indifferent attitude of her husband towards the household duties reflecting the gender roles in society.

The title conjures up an image of a married woman who clings tenaciously to her convictions, without yet indicating why. Martyrdom invokes religious belief but has nothing to do with any explicit religious conviction on Mrs McKellar's part, instead creating a sarcastic and ironic atmosphere by comparing a housewife to an indifferent husband. Throughout the poem she is identified only as Mrs McKellar, defined by the surname she shares with her husband.

The poem consists of thirty-three lines arranged in six stanzas, alternating between six and five lines. This formal alternation may subtly evoke two different presences, or the sense of an unequal, mismatched couple. The circumstances in the poem are narrated in the third person, from an omniscient perspective, which gives the speaker a god-like vantage point where she knows everything, especially the thoughts and the feelings of the characters.

From an apparently external, omniscient vantage point, the speaker describes a scene in the McKellars' house. The poem begins by pointing out behaviour that has become a nightly routine, each evening adding a new disappointment to a long accumulation of previous let-downs:

> Each night she fills, from the fabled
> well of disappointment, a kettle
> for her hottie. Lying
> in his apportioned bed:
> Mr McKellar - annulled
> beside his trouser press. (lines 1-6)

Every night Mrs McKellar returns to her unfulfilled expectations and her repeated dissatisfactions which the speaker likens to drawing water from a "fabled / well of disappointment" (1–2) to fill a kettle for her "hottie" (3), a hot-water bottle. The way her disappointments and unhappiness are expressed with domestic objects such as a kettle, "hottie" (3) and the suggestion of repetition indicates that this condition has continued for a long time.

She has been disappointed for so long that it has become almost unreal. At first glance "hottie" (3) sounds like a reference to Mr McKellar which is comical after other stanzas are revealed. The reason for her unhappiness becomes clear as the following lines reveal that Mr McKellar is already asleep and his next day's outfit is pressed and waiting at his side of the bed, ready for the next day. Based on the speaker's description

of Mr McKellar, it becomes clearer that he is present, but not available physically or emotionally when he is at their home. He is just there and prefers to sleep rather than addressing the neglected issues around home, which are obvious priorities for Mrs McKellar. The fact that his clothes are neatly pressed for the next day and that Mr McKellar wants to get a good night sleep suggests that he has a professional career.

In the poem, Mrs McKellar appears almost indistinguishable from his neatly pressed, ready-to-wear outfit, lying "annulled / beside his trouser press" (4–6). With the following lines the reasons for her 'martyrdom' become a little more defined:

> Who mentions, who defers to whom
> on matters concerning
> redecorating the living room,
> milk delivery, the damp
> stain spreading on the ceiling
>
> when a word is a kind of touch?
> Speaking of which, and they don't,
> the garden needs attention
> and the bedroom window frames,
> exquisitely, the darkening hills,
> a sky teased with mauve.
>
> But he won't notice, or smell her burning
> *fix it! fix it!*
> won't look up the number
> of Roofer and Son about that
> slightly bewildering stain
> and she'll keep schtum. (lines 7-23)

The silence between the couple is so deep that they do not break it even to ask for something concerning the household or to postpone it. She is combining and listing the things that need to be taken care of around the house without spelling out but hinting who is responsible for each

task; "redecorating the living room" (9), "milk delivery" (10), "the damp, / stain spreading on the ceiling" (10-11). The to-do items are presented in a way that makes the reader feel they are culturally gender-specific roles. Listed in this manner, they seem to rest entirely on Mrs McKellar's shoulders. According to the speaker's observation the husband is so oblivious that he will neither perceive nor acknowledge responsibilities within the marriage or the home. Faced with a continual accumulation of unaddressed problems around the home, Mrs McKellar, probably tired of voicing them, retains her silence partly out of pride. The expression "a word is a kind of touch" (12) is such a profound expression in that it highlights how lonely the McKellars are in their own worlds and how loveless yet repetitive their routines have become. This expression also indicates that she would take care of all that needs to be addressed if only she had a receptive and supportive human touch from her husband.

Wherever she looks, she seems to find something that needs repair. While looking at the garden through the window, first she notices that "the garden needs attention" (14), and then she realizes that "the bedroom window frames" (15) are equally in need of some work. While having that conversation in her mind, she is drawn to the scene in front of her "exquisitely, the darkening hills, / a sky teased with mauve" (16-17), a scene she admires. By then she is burning up with desire to shout at him to fix what needs to be fixed in and around the house.

She internalizes her frustration, refusing either to confront him directly or to give in completely to his indifference. Because her husband does not and will not "notice, or smell her burning / fix it! fix it!" (18-19), she will "keep schtum" (23), that is, remain silent. Their private life is also an unimpassioned dump:

Medieval in a dressing gown,
she'd rather display
toward an indifferent world
the means of her agony:
a broken toilet seat,

or die, lips sealed, regarding
the rotting window sills, that
wobbling shelf, which she could
as it happens, repair herself,
but won't, on principle. (lines 24-33)

Mrs McKellar remains quiet in her old-fashioned dressing gown, a detail that not only describes her physical demeanour but also creates a comparison with the behaviour of an older generation where women did not have much voice and occupied themselves with their immediate surroundings when their voices were silenced by the prevailing culture. The medieval look refers to the physical appearance as well as to the silence of women who were forced to accept their fates. She would rather express her frustrations against an "indifferent world" (26) because the objects around her have become her world.

Mrs McKellar is so conditioned to display her anguish against objects surrounding her, on this occasion it is "a broken toilet seat" (28), rather than voicing her grief and letting her husband hear her. She knows that she could repair these things herself, but prefers not to intervene in what she has clearly defined, in her own mind, as 'his' responsibility. Perhaps that is the real "agony" (27) she is suffering from and becomes the hyperbolic 'martyrdom' in the title. The woman is not supposed to do the work she believes is the responsibility of her husband although she has the ability to do some of the tasks. She is instead waiting for her husband to notice and take care of them without being asked. Sadly, this waiting in silence yet still expecting or hoping for him to

be responsive to the needs wears her out. She is bound by her own convictions and principles that she will neither fix what needs to be fixed nor tell her husband to take care of them.

The poem relates ordinary domestic problems between a married couple, and the loneliness of a married woman. A housewife, Mrs McKellar is a married woman who has no real communication with her husband, Mr McKellar. Each night she adds further to her disappointments. There is hyperbole, an overstatement in terms of Mrs McKellar's point of view since she sees herself as a sufferer, a victim which fits with the title. The poem underlines gender roles in a sarcastic and funny way. The title is used ironically in order to attract attention to the triviality of the situation Mrs McKellar worries about and draws herself and her husband into misery. In fact, the title reflects her so-called desperate situation as she constructs it in her own mind. With a sarcastic approach, Jamie criticizes both genders, even though the focus appears to be on the wife; her real target is the cultural and religious institutes, and the people who uphold traditional gender roles that confine both women and men. Beneath its ironic title and humorous tone, the poem really describes a woman's profound unhappiness with the role she has been allotted within a conventional marriage. Sometimes her unhappiness becomes the cause that further divides a relationship.

A different couple with similar domestic problems about gender roles is portrayed in "The Garden of Adam and Dot" (J, 8). The title alludes to Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden. Unlike McKellars in "Mrs McKellar, her martyrdom" (J, 24) who have no first names, Adam and Dot have no surnames which makes them seem more individual yet more general.

The poem with its male and female characters and the garden as a setting mimics the well-known biblical story of the

expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. In the original story, the serpent tempts Eve to feed the forbidden fruit to Adam causing the divide between good and evil. Experiencing the taste of the fruit, they realize that they are naked and try to cover their body with fig leaves. Looking upon them, God asks whether they have eaten the forbidden fruit or not, and Adam's reply shifts the blame to Eve: "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." (Genesis 3:6-12). Then, they are cast out from the Garden of Eden.

In Jamie's version of the biblical story, Adam and Eve are exaggerated and turned into caricatured figures in Adam and Dot. The focus is on the unfavourable results of the female character Dot's action on the male character Adam. Dot, repeatedly described as "terrible" (2), drives away all the animals from the garden. As a name, Dot evokes both a shortened form of 'Dorothy' and a petite person as tiny as a dot; paradoxically, she is the more powerful figure of the two.

The poem depicts a couple in a domestic setting, their garden. Dot is the dominant figure who controls the garden and expels the living creatures from it; the poem explicitly labels her "terrible" (2), a word that both echoes biblical language and invites ironic scrutiny. Adam, on the other hand, stays behind Dot without getting into any predicament. Though the poem seems to narrate a couple, the focal point is the male figure, Adam, and his dodging his responsibilities.

In parallel with Eve who is held responsible for them being cast out of heaven and thus accepted to be more guilty than Adam, Dot is described as "terrible" (2) as she "casts out all beasts" (3):

> The garden blooms under the eye
> of the terrible Dot.
> She casts out all beasts, while Adam
> snaps shut the wicket gate

and his black case,
awa tae the Masons
with just a daft pinny
to cover his shame. (lines 1-8)

Under the watchful eyes of Dot, the garden is blooming. Dot is described as terrible because not only is she the one who dirties her hands and accomplishes what needs to be done, but also removes the "beasts" (3) from their garden. The garden represents not only their yard, but also their home. Her act of protecting the domestic space from "beasts" (3) makes her appear 'terrible' and, in some respects, more conventionally 'masculine', but not necessarily morally worse than Adam.

Jamie's Adam behaves in a similar manner to the Biblical Adam. While Eve is depicted as evil, Adam is made to look like a victim. While Dot is acting responsibly to protect what they have, she is being labelled "terrible" (3). When Adam is acting meek and running away in his submissive manner, which is also the cause of his shame, no label is attached to him. Adam is not just running away from his responsibilities around the house, but also fleeing from the kind of person he really is by taking refuge with the Masons (6) in order to feel like a more masculine version of himself. As he closes the open gate and his black suitcase, he is hiding his embarrassment behind his pathetic apron. The "black case" (5) and the "daft pinny" (7) refer to a Masonic regalia: Adam belongs to a group of Freemasons, whose ritual dress includes an apron kept in a black case. Freemasonry has traditionally been a male-only institution (Hodapp n.p.). Adam is headed off to a Mason's meeting, carrying his Mason attire (the apron) in the "black case" (5). The apron is worn around the waist, covering his genital area, possibly recalling the fig leaves worn by biblical Adam and Eve to cover their 'shame'. With the word "pinny" (7) Jamie may be making fun of Adam indicating that he is acting like a baby by using an alternative meaning where the

"pinny" (7) also means a baby's bib. This is one of several short yet striking poems in which Jamie questions gender roles and exposes the asymmetry with which men and women are judged: while culture often finds excuses or justifications for male behaviour, women are more readily labelled with negative terms.

Motherhood

The poems that explore motherhood are "The Barrel Annunciation" (J, 9), "St Bride's" (J, 45), "The Green Woman" (J, 46), "Wee Baby" (QS, 29), "Bairnsang" (J, 15), and "iv. February" (J, 14). The first poem of this section is "The Barrel Annunciation" (J, 9) which is about a woman who learns that she has become pregnant after a spring storm. The woman blames domestic objects together with the natural environment for collaborating and causing her to become pregnant, hinting at a kind of magic.

The title "The Barrel Annunciation" (J, 9) leads the implied reader to envision a type of religious ceremony due to the use of the word 'Annunciation'. In fact, there is a Catholic practice in Central Europe where the farmers "put a picture representing the Annunciation in the barrel that holds the seed grain. While doing so they pronounce some ancient prayer rhyme" repeatedly ("Catholic Activity: Feast of the Annunciation: Origin and Traditions"). This practice blesses their crops for fertility and against disaster. The title can be confusing if the implied reader is not familiar with this religious practice. In that case, the two words suggest something absurd and even comic, giving few clues as to the poem's subject and instead juxtaposing two words relating to two completely different topics, a concrete domestic inanimate object and an abstract religious term: A pronouncement from a barrel? There is almost an element of surprise in what the

poet wants to announce. Jamie's intention in choosing this title becomes clear later in the poem. At first, the only indication that this is somehow tied to pregnancy or childbirth or an experience as a mother is that the poem is included in the book *Jizzen* (1999) where she compiled her experiences. The speaker is a pregnant woman who believes in superstition and magic.

The poem opens with the 'in medias res' technique that creates a commotion contributing to the bewildered mood of the poem, beginning with the absurdity of an accusation pointed at an inanimate object, a bucket. The reason for blaming it is initially unclear:

> I blame the pail
> set under our blocked kitchen rhone
> which I slopped across the yard
>
> and hoisted to the butt's
> oaken rim seven
> or nine times in that spring storm; (lines 1-6)

Finding a correlation between her actions and an ancient religious practice, the speaker blames a bucket-like container, a smaller version of a barrel, without at first revealing the reason for her education. The only reference to religious practice is the title. Then she moves on to describe how the events transpired during a specific natural phenomenon "spring storm" (6) and how "seven or nine times" (6) she had to repeat that action. She details the place and events of that day starting with the position of the "pail" (1), where it was set under the blocked kitchen guttering to collect the rainwater overflow. She had to empty the container that is set to collect water from the kitchen gutter. She lifted the bucket to the rim of the rain barrel seven or nine times like a ritual.

By repeatedly pouring the water from the pail into the rain barrel in the yard, the speaker believes that she has activated some "arcane craft" (11) which is placed like a booby trap:

so plunging rain upon the rain
held in its deep hooped belly
and triggering, unwittingly

without a counter-act of spillage,
some arcane craft laid
like a trip-wire or snare, (lines 7-12)

Though she never uses the word pregnant, the 'barrel' mentioned in the title functions as a metaphor for her growing belly. And while describing the rain barrel, there are implications to how a pregnant woman would feel. Maybe she conceived after that spring storm. So, she thinks by repeating the actions of emptying the pail water into the rain barrel, she unconsciously activated an ancient spell and caused her pregnancy. More generally, folk tales often suggest that actions repeated a specific number of times can trigger unknown consequences, so the speaker's ritualised movement echoes such narrative patterns:

lore, which, if I'd known,
would have dismissed as dupery
– a crone's trick

sold to the barren at a cottage door,
for a dull coin
or a skirt-length of homespun. (lines 13-18)

The speaker admits that she carried out the ritual (of emptying the rain water into the barrel) without knowing it would be the cause of her pregnancy. She makes references to "lore" (13) even stating that if she had known the tale, she would still "dismiss" (14) it as superstition. Then, she explains the lore which she refers to as "a crone's trick" (15). Barren women go to an old hag and pay a "dull coin" (17) or homemade fabric for a skirt with hopes that this crone will help them conceive.

Overall, by making reference to a religious practice in the title, the poem is Jamie's way of announcing that she is

pregnant. She is almost trying to pinpoint a time when she may have conceived by describing her actions during a spring rainstorm, blaming them as the cause which led to her pregnancy. Then she talks about another folktale where local barren women believe that they may conceive a child by going to a crone and paying her because of their desire and desperation to have a child.

The magic hinted at as the reason for pregnancy recurs in "St Bride's" (J, 45) as the result of giving birth. Saint Bride or Brigid, a fifteenth century Catholic Abbess of Ireland, is believed to be "the Patron Saint of poets, writers, healers, and of Ireland itself" (Mitchell 2). In modern times she is associated with spring and is celebrated on the first day of February, St Bride's, or St Brigid's Day and sometimes referred to as Imbolc/Imbolg which means "in belly" in old Irish and Gaelic languages ("Bougn."). The day is also associated with "the snowdrop flower and the milk of the ewes for the newborn lambs" (Mitchell 2).

Written in the three-line stanzas (tercet) form, the poem "St Bride's" (J, 45) describes the moment of childbearing in the spring by creating parallels with other creatures in nature, such as the large wild rabbit (hare) in her childbed whose leverets' (baby hares') ears are as flat as miniature rear masts of a boat, and adders[40] which are potential threats to the leverets that also uncoil, emerge from hibernation and start to slither.

Jamie dedicates this poem to her daughter Freya who was born just after the first of February which is the beginning of spring in Scotland. She explains the background of this poem in a recording on the *Poetry Archive* website, noting that "it is the first February, that day apparently snakes and adders are supposed to come out of hibernation. My own daughter

[40] Adder "the only venomous snake native to Britain" is seen especially "in early spring when they emerge from their hibernation dens". (Thompson, 134)

just missed being born on that day. This poem was born just after she was born. It's a mysterious poem to me. I don't know what it's about but I do like all the images in it" ("St Bride's"). Jamie wrote this poem in her childbed, which is called *jizzen*[41] in Scots.

She begins the poem by highlighting women's place in nature, drawing attention to everyday chores of folding and unfolding laundry or, with a touch of humour, a "selkie-skin[42]" (2-3):

> So this is women's work: folding
> and unfolding, be it linen or a selkie-
> skin tucked behind a rock. Consider (lines 1-3)

Starting the poem with the conjunction "so" (1) creates a sense of starting the narration somewhere in the middle which indicates this is an ongoing subject and it has been brought up many times before, suggesting a conversational tone. The expression "selkie-/skin tucked behind a rock" (2-3) ridicules all that is expected of a woman while giving the women's ability and hence the poem a magical touch. From the beginning it is clear that the poem is about women and their expected role in culture which in reality would be superhuman and almost magical. The first stanza ends with the word "consider" (3), beginning the transition to the next stanza where attention is drawn to females' role in nature:

> the hare in jizzen: her leverets' ears
> flat as the mizzen of a ship
> entering a bottle. A thread's trick; (lines 4-6)

[41] Deriving from old Scots *gesine, jesing, jizzen* means "child-bed" referring to women just before giving birth. *Jizzen* is also the word given to the collection in which this poem can be found. ("jizzen")

[42] Deriving from old Scots *seol* (means 'seal') 'selkie' is a mythological figure in Scots literature. According to the myth selkies are similar to humans but more beautiful. They are amphibious creatures who are seals in the sea and turn to a beautiful human form on land. When on land they take off their magical skin and turn into a beautiful human, but if they lose their skin they are doomed to stay where they are on land. Thus, according to the story when a human falls in love with a selkie he or she can hide the creature's magical skin and so force the selkie to stay with him or her (Westwood and Kingshill 404)

She paints a picture of a hare in her childbed, that has just also given birth in the spring and she likens the new-born hares' ears to a mast on a ship (mizzen), the mizzenmast being flattened before the ship is placed into a bottle. This image recalls a "ship in a bottle," where a model ship's masts are flattened to allow it to be inserted into the bottle and are then raised into position by means of a thread.

The expression "A thread's trick" used in the last line of the second stanza prepares the transition to next stanza, while also creating a correlation with the previous lines, and snakes give the appearance of threads as they coil and "uncoil" while they slither in nature:

> adders uncoil into Spring. Feathers
> of sunlight, glanced from a butterknife
> quiver on the ceiling,
> and a last sharp twist for the shoulders
> delivers my daughter, the placenta
> following, like a fist of purple kelp. (lines 7-12)

Snakes, as in "adders" (7), come out of hibernation and "uncoil into spring" (7) which Jamie expresses as tricks done with thread since when coiled they seem invisible. Jamie uses examples of living creatures belonging to the wild such as a "hare" (4), a kind of wild rabbit and 'adder', a kind of snake native to Britain, both of which have the ability to give birth instead of laying eggs. They are also prey and predators in the wild. This juxtaposition shows the balance of the natural world.

The hare is just one example of a female in nature giving birth just like human females do, which ties with the closing thoughts of the poem. While she is concentrating on the flickering sunlight on the ceiling caused by a reflection from a butter knife, a sharp pain and a final push brings her daughter into this world, followed by the placenta she likens to a fist of purple seaweed, an item generally used for

aquarium decoration. Kelp is generally brown in colour; thus, purple kelp suggests an artificial, ornamental seaweed. This simile might be a reference to the mothers' wombs since kelp and an unborn baby both float in liquid/water. Moreover, the reflection of the sunlight and the speaker giving birth are the other magical incidents echoing the "selkie-skin" (2-3) and "a thread's trick" (6).

Jamie, who draws attention to events in nature and women's lives and turns them into special occasions in each stanza of the poem, reveals the key magic at the end which is the birth of her first child, Freya. Before talking about her own experience of childbirth, she reveals how females are an essential part of the natural world full of ordinary and magical events and sometimes invisible dangers. She creates parallelism between her birthing experiences and the natural world waking up from winter sleep.

"iv.February" (J, 14) is another poem in *Jizzen* (1999) that mentions St Bride's Day regarding mother and baby relations. It is located in the "Ultrasound" sequence that is composed of seven poems written for her son Duncan, describing the *jizzen*, the childbed process from a mother's point of view, as the persona moves through an emotionally intense stage.

The poem narrates a domestic place, a home, with a one-week-old infant on the day of St. Bride. The place is described as a mess where the "heap of nappies" (1) being washed and "carried from the automatic / in a red plastic basket … with pegs" (2-5), and "notched prop / hoisting the wash" (6-7). Then comes the exterior, natural world with the "flight of swans" (8), "hills still courying snow" (9), "spring's hint" (10), "snowdrops" (11), and "rowans" (12). The nappies on the line are paralleled with "a rare flight of swans" (8), and the first week of the baby is described as "the first / sweet-wild weeks" (13-14). The persona accepts the hard work and does so voluntarily.

Jamie also addresses the process of pregnancy and childbirth in "The Green Woman" (J, 46). Included in *Jizzen* (1999), the poem takes its title from a Scottish expression describing a woman who has recently given birth and is confined to childbed, or 'jizzen'.

The poem describes and is about the physical and mental impact of giving birth and breastfeeding on a woman's body and psychology. The speaker as a new mother becomes the voice of all mothers who have delivered a child and imparts her experience as she has gone through physical and emotional changes during this endeavour. While comparing the experience of nursing and its effects on a woman's body and mind to a medieval 'trial by ordeal', she also suggests that a woman's position in society has, in important respects, changed less than might be assumed.

The speaker explains her breastfeeding experience as a process that has not only changed her physical appearance but has also worn down her physical integrity, which will not be restored until the baby is weaned. This process hints at the confusion and dilemma the green woman experiences as she negotiates between femininity and motherhood. It is also a liminal space for the mother:

> Until we're restored to ourselves
> by weaning, the skin jade
> only where it's hidden
> under jewelry, the areolae still tinged,
> - there's a word for women like us. (lines 1-5)

Although her baby is more valuable than any piece of jewellery, because of the value given to jewellery, she uses the concept as a metaphor and addresses the most maternal activity, nursing her baby. This activity changes the physical anatomy and hormonal balance of a woman's body since a baby is not the original part of the body, instead it is an additional part to the original whole, like an accessory which

hides her worn out, at times scarred skin during nursing. She explains that the areolae which circle the nipple still tingle. The speaker reminds us that there is a specific term, a common name for these women in their childbed, the 'green woman' referred to in the title.

The speaker conveys her thoughts in the first person plural ("we're," 1) and in simple present, which creates a sense of collectivity and invites the reader's empathy. Jamie distorts the grammatical structure of the first stanza by omitting auxiliary verbs in phrases such as "the skin jade" (2) and "the areolae still tinged" (4) which makes it difficult for the reader to understand her reference unless the reader is female who has given birth and breastfed. It might also refer to the distortion of mind and body as the 'green woman' has.

With specific examples that the body does not restore itself to its previous form until after weaning, the speaker compares this experience to a form of public punishment that was used on witches, scolds, and prostitutes. That is when the title "The Green Woman" (J, 46) comes into play, when she ties the two experiences together with "- there's a word for women like us" (5):

> It's suggestive of the lush
> ditch, or even an ordeal,
> - as though we'd risen,
> tied to a ducking-stool,
> gasping, weed-smeared, proven. (lines 6-10)

In the speaker's mind, there is little difference between the trials women undergo today and those they endured centuries ago. Giving birth and breastfeeding is just one of the examples she uses as comparison to an ancient practice used to punish and publicly humiliate a woman, perceived to be a witch, a scold or a prostitute, and comprising painful, physical torture to prove her innocence. The speaker likens

being a 'green woman' to being tied to a "ducking-stool[43]" (9) and submerged in water as a punishment, then convulsing while trying to take a breath and audibly and suddenly inhaling with the mouth open, out of pain, "gasping" (10), in a "weed-smeared" (10) ditch.

Through this poem, Jamie is addressing both experiences of childbirth today and a practice that happened centuries earlier, yet finding the connection between past and present, stressing that the role or place of women has not progressed forward dramatically. In the poem, Jamie conspicuously voices the feelings of mothers. However, these feelings are not stereotypical expressions; rather, they are generally left unspoken and are usually ignored.

The entire process related to being a mother is questioned through "Wee Baby" (QS, 29) which describes the possibility of having a child. The title is an affectionate way of addressing a tiny infant in Scots language and evokes expectations about reading a poem concerning a needy, precious small human; however, it goes on to convey an image of a baby that is not actually here but might be in the future, interfering with the current lifestyle of the speaker. Unlike these expectations, the poem paints a picture of what it means to have a baby girl for those who have not experienced it yet, referring to unspoken and usually unimagined aspects of being a mother.

The way a baby's behaviour is described in many different environments indicates that the speaker has some experience of raising a child; she addresses either an 'expectant mother' or an implied reader who plans or wishes to have a baby. The use of the simple present tense makes the situation feel immediate and ongoing. The speaker sketches an initially

[43] The "ducking stool" is a "symbol of humiliating public punishments" in medieval times "unique in that it was to be used almost exclusively on women" (Mays 366). This social humiliation is applied to married women, for "wives proved to be a bother to be their husbands by nagging them or not living up to what were believed to be their wifely duties" (Zwicker n.p.).

oblique "she" (2) who may in fact be the imagined baby girl, the wee baby the speaker is referring to by the pronoun "she" (2).

The poem opens with the description of a place which is "dark and private" (1) similar to a mother's womb, the place of the fetus; then this "dark and private" (1) place becomes the handbag of the addressee where the baby is creating herself:

> In a dark and private place -
> your handbag
> she knits herself existence.
> She sums and divides herself
> from half-forgotten phone numbers. (lines 1-5)

'She' seems to search through the handbag, as if trying to backtrack to the point of her own conception. Her "knitting herself [into] existence" (3) hints at a desired but chaotic set of circumstances: she "sums and divides" (4) the sheets by tearing probably from the phone book where all contacts are recorded whether they communicate or not, and still remains unless deleted /scratched out or ripped permanently ("sums and divides" also refers to mitosis/cell division; while phone numbers might refer to the thousands of genes in our genomes or trillions of cells in the body.). Though it may look like 'she' is creating this mess, in fact the mess is in the mind of women trying to judge the possibility of conceiving a baby. The speaker continues with self-investigation but uses the term "Wee Baby" (18) since she is still trying to deduce the parenthood by going through the diaries kept:

> She has slavered on the future
> pages of your diary
> to make
> a papier–mâché baby
> she rubs herself with lipstick,
> renders herself visible,
> because she only just exists, like a stamp hinge. (lines 6-12)

A baby's first reaction is to bring everything she/he touches to her/his mouth to chew. Again, a baby is still the pretext or imagined figure in this section that an unsuspecting female should be aware of. In these stanzas, the actions of a baby are described, but so too is the behaviour of a young woman who keeps a journal of the things she dreams of or the events of daily life. Thus, the baby salivates on the unused, clean pages of her diary and converts the pages into pulp, papier–mâché (9) by chewing them. It is interesting to note that the term "a papier–mâché[44]" (9) refers to something professional, not suitable for children. The speaker's use of unusual technical terminology to describe the baby's usual, expected and innocent behaviour invokes prominence and seriousness. An empty, untouched page of the diary represents a future that has not been experienced yet and the presence of a baby would make sure that the current lifestyle would completely disappear and future days would be consumed by the baby. The "diary" (7) also indicates a calendar and an appointment book to schedule business meetings. In either case, this juxtaposes a domestic versus business life implying that the presence of a baby has the power to interrupt or completely terminate a mother's professional career.

Then, comes another possible cliché of babies, especially baby girls, out of curiosity or imitating their mothers. They somehow manage to sneak and get a hold of one of their mother's lipsticks and paint themselves and everything around them with it. This is another indication that a mother will not be able to have any privacy for herself. The following stanza not only indicates that the baby has grown but also continues with the adorable behaviour of a young toddler that adults cannot resist falling in love with:

[44] The term means "a malleable mixture of paper and glue, or paper, flour, and water, that becomes hard when dry, used to make boxes, trays, or ornaments" ("Papier–mâché.").

She sticks. She dangles from her fathers.
She turns little fishy tricks
in your wine glass: you swallow,
now:
open your mouth and who cries out? (lines 13-17)

As adorable as the toddler's behaviour may be, the first line of the stanza is striking because it mentions not just one father but "fathers" (13). This brings back into focus the diary and the dates that may have been recorded in them and, based on the speaker's lifestyle, the possibility of the baby having different fathers. Aside from that point, the poem continues with the predictable behaviour of a baby girl who with her tricks of cuteness manages to attract attention. The speaker compares the baby's behaviour to "little fishy tricks / in your wine glass" (14-15) indicating a romantic date that may end up with the surprise element of pregnancy and may very well be foretelling of the arrival of a baby. All that aside, there is also a cultural element that is voiced here: the assumption that fathers drink. "Open your mouth and who cries out" (17) is another striking concept that the speaker highlights, that at the early stages of raising children, not only does baby talk becomes the parents' language but also because they are responsible for raising that baby, they change their lifestyle because the baby's needs take over their own.

The speaker imagines the "Wee Baby" (18) in her routines; at work, at home, on the road, or at night in a bar:

Wee Baby's come to work:
she is tucked up in the in-tray.
Wee Baby's in the kitchen:
she is cradled in the sieve of all potential. (lines 18-21)

With expressions "Wee Baby's come to work" (17), "tucked up in the in-tray" (18), "in the kitchen" (19) the speaker brings attention to the fact that there is no distinction between home or work for the baby and her needs. As long

as her needs are met the baby will be content anywhere. These lines also make the implied reader question whether their workplace is amenable to childcare or working parents, especially an environment for mothers at work. Moreover, having a baby limits the places one can travel to:

> She blows about the desert in a sand-pram,
> O traveller. And driver -
> who flashes so indignant
> on the outside lane? (lines 22-25)

Again a possible current lifestyle, this time as a traveller, and explorer of exotic places such as a desert, is imagined with a baby crying in her sand-coloured pram. With the question "who flashes so indignant / on the outside lane?" (23-24) the speaker highlights the resentful behaviour of a child that a parent can experience while hoping for an adventure. The speaker then focuses on a parent/mother driving cautiously with an infant in the car and is frustrated by an annoyed driver that flashes his headlights for her to move out of his way because she is in the "outside lane" (24), which in the UK is the part of a road where vehicles drive fastest or overtake (24).

But at the end the speaker brings attention to an emotionally overwhelmed mother because of her age, even though the focus is still on the baby's behaviour:

> She's on the town tonight,
> she's giving her first smile,
> she is playing with her toes
> on a high and lonely bar-stool.
> You know you're thirty, and she loves you.
> The kingdom of Wee Baby is within.
> She curls her fists and holds tight. (lines 26-33)

The last stanza continues with the irresistible attributes of a baby with her "first smile" (25), "playing with her toes" (26), and placing her on a "lonely bar-stool" (27) before remarking

on the age thirty. At this age, the speaker implies that a woman could still be sitting alone on a stool at the bar, but with the addition of a child that unconditionally loves her, so life has taken a wondrous turn. When given a scenario like this, it is almost certain that a female will prefer the love of a baby. The poem ends by declaring the obvious, that the baby is the queen or princess of her kingdom. By curling her own fist, the baby herself recognises she is the boss.

The speaker is thinking of all the different ways a baby would behave in each circumstance. Whether she is trying to convince herself or someone else against having a baby or rationalizing how to incorporate a baby into her current life is not clear because she is self-conscious about what is expected from her due to her age and is maybe longing for a baby at that stage of her life. There are clear indications that the speaker is familiar with a baby's behaviour, life and terminology in Scotland and travels a lot. Jamie depicts every aspect of the possibility of having a child, especially the difficult sides. It is, in fact, a dilemma, because the prospect of motherhood is shown to have both attractive and unsettling consequences.

Each stanza suggests a different space and situation with a baby, such as indoor and outdoor; dark and bright; small and wide spaces which are not suitable for a baby such as inside a handbag, in the in-tray at work, in a sieve in the kitchen, in a sand-pram in a desert, on a bar-stool in town at night. Situating the baby in such spaces might aim to show the difference of life with or without a baby. The speaker reimagines the life of a single woman before having a baby, by adding a baby to her usual routine without changing anything about that routine. The poem shows how a baby can manage to build its own sovereignty and how everything is linked to the baby. Though she is a "Wee Baby", she controls the adults.

In another poem "Bairnsang" (J, 15) written in Scots, Jamie shows a mother's affection for her child and her country through a child's song. The title "Bairnsang" is a Scots word meaning 'child's song' or 'lullaby'. Deriving from the combination of Middle English "lulla" and "by" used to quiet the child, "Lullaby[45]" refers to the song sung by mothers to soothe their children or lull them to sleep. In the songs, there is generally a promise of a gift or reward and sometimes a threat for children. The poem is in four stanzas and is itself a lullaby sung by a mother to a baby through the repetition of the same pattern in each stanza.

Each stanza starts with the persona directly addressing a baby boy with words of endearments such as "wee toshie man" (1), "peedie we lad" (9), "bonny wee boy" (17), "my ain tottie bairn" (25) and goes on to liken the baby to natural beings such as "gean tree and rowan" (2), "saumon, siller haddie" (10), "peeswheep an whaup" (18), and "sternie an lift" (26) referring to trees, fish, birds, and sky. Then, the persona lists acts of standing, running, singing and dancing successively to reference that the baby will eventually carry out each one by one, but until that time he should not cry or annoy but stay safe in his mother's arms.

The lullaby is an example of 'blandishment and endearment', in that the persona shows her affection to the infant together with her love of Scotland. She does this through likening her baby to a specific place located in Scotland

[45] Lullabies change according to the purpose of "blandishment and endearment", "a form of innocent bribery", or 'a lullaby of threat' (Daiken 21). The promise of innocent briberies or "gifts or rewards for going to sleep are themes common to many countries although the gift is different in each country" (Watt 27). A mother chooses one according to her purpose and sings it in "the same tones, the same sort of way of singing to their babies" as other mothers do in the world (Perry n.p.). The structure of the lullabies is quite basic "with just a few words repeated again and again" (Perry n.p.). Their soothing feature comes from their "characteristic swinging or rocking motion," achieved from their "triple metre or 6/8 time" which "mimics the movement a baby experiences in the womb as a mother moves" (Perry n.p.).

in the last line of each stanza such as "Gretna Green" (8), "Macrahanish Sand" (16), "Ainster (Anstruther) and Crail" (24), "Unst and Yell" (31) as a metaphor. These locations are specifically mentioned as they each represent a different direction in the endpoint of Scotland which draws the borders of Scotland. Therefore, on another level, the lullaby can be read as an ironic metaphor for Scotland's situation in the run-up to the 1997 Devolution Referendum, with the nurturing yet controlling mother-voice faintly echoing England and the vulnerable baby-figure hinting at Scotland. The poem itself, however, leaves this political analogy implicit.

Most of the poems related to personal issues and femininity used in this chapter belong to Jamie's two collections *The Queen of Sheba* (1994) and *Jizzen* (1999). However, there is also a poem from her 2012 collection *The Overhaul*. The poems considered are, in order, "The Queen of Sheba" (QS, 9), "Hand Relief" (QS, 14), "The Overhaul" (O, 28), "School reunion" (QS, 20), "Perfect day" (QS, 34), "Wee Wifey" (QS, 30), "Mrs McKellar, her martyrdom" (J, 24), "The Garden of Adam and Dot"(J, 8), "The Barrel Annunciation" (J, 9), "St Bride's" (J, 45), "The Green Woman" (J, 46), "Wee Baby" (QS, 29), "Bairnsang" (J, 15) and "iv.February" (J, 14).

The poems in this chapter have been analysed in terms of three broad sections: (i) 'Womanhood'; (ii) 'Spousehood'; (iii) 'Motherhood' mostly consist of her own personal experiences, with references to her Scottish identity at times.

Through a mythological/biblical figure, a young teenage girl, a middle-aged woman, and a group of old women, the poems in the first category reflect social and cultural problems in a patriarchal society and the diminishment of the power of women in that society by assigning them such roles as 'angel in the house'; inactive, domestic, and to look beautiful and young. Jamie approaches femininity from different

perspectives and a broad scale. Jamie's female characters are variously active, strong, resisting and challenging, depending on what needs to be confronted. They are the women who break boundaries and reverse clichés. A female figure, for instance, who comes from an exotic land to empower the girls and challenges the figures of patriarchal authority in Scotland as in "The Queen of Sheba". The Queen of Sheba who is wise, smart, beautiful and powerful represents the hopes and desire of young females to further educate themselves and not just be forced to remain clueless and imprisoned by the values that religion and culture have imposed on them for centuries and which favour only men. Moreover, through a vulnerable teenage girl who symbolizes exploited females in a male-dominated society, as in "Hand relief" (QS, 14), Jamie reveals the responsibility of not just male authorities but the whole male population for the fates of young females in the city.

Jamie also depicts a middle-aged woman in seclusion who needs to catch up with and rejuvenate herself as in "The Overhaul" (O, 28) and this renewal is displayed through a metaphor with a boat which is hauled out to be repaired. Lastly, a group of old women who reject getting old and resist time by behaving and dressing as they did in their high school days is described through "School reunion" (QS, 20); the poem implies that their effort to look younger is an imposition by a male-dominated society. All these women in their different settings represent a type of struggle they are facing although their motivations to overcome those struggles are different.

Through a happy woman in love, a woman divided into two different identities as a traveller and a housewife, an unhappy wife obsessed with clichéd gender roles, and a dominant woman as the main characters, the second part discusses personal issues and femininity in terms of 'spousehood', referring to female identity as a wife or

partner. Jamie depicts diverse couples and the roles/functions of female partners in that relationship. All the situations and relations are narrated through the eyes of women. In one particular example, sharing a special moment with someone she loves turns the event and the day into perfection when the feelings are mutual in the relationship, as in "Perfect day" (QS, 34). In another poem, the ambivalence of a woman towards domestic life is narrated in "Wee Wifey" (QS, 30) which reveals a constant battle taking place in the woman's mind between her desire to have a domestic life versus her desire to travel and have an adventurous life. Apart from the romantic feelings and affection for her partner, the poems describe ordinary domestic problems between a married couple. While focusing on the wives' perceptions, Jamie discloses an ironic and sarcastic depiction with "Mrs Mckellar, her martyrdom" (J, 24) which is presented from the wife's perspective. With a sarcastic approach, Jamie criticizes both genders; even though the focus seems to be on the female in reality it is on the weak husband who hides behind something that will make him feel manly. Her real criticism is directed at cultural and religious institutions, and at those who believe in the traditional gender roles that confine individuals. In another example, in "The Garden of Adam and Dot" (J, 8), Jamie questions the roles of gender in society and how unjustly women are treated.

Through a woman who learns by trial to be pregnant, who is giving birth, who is confined to her bed just after the birth, who is busy with an infant's needs, who sings a lullaby to her baby and a woman who dreams of having a baby, the third part discusses and presents every step and aspect of 'motherhood' as a social identity. Though motherhood is treated as the whole concept of being a female and then an elevated level of femininity, as well as the primary mission/function of a married woman in a male dominated society even in modern times, Jamie's poems reveal that there is

more to motherhood that is rarely addressed, that is, a real objection to the perceived role they are assigned as women. It is indicated that not every (married) woman welcomes the news of pregnancy with bliss, as in "The Barrel Annunciation" (J, 9) in which a woman learns that she became pregnant after a spring storm and blames the domestic objects along with the natural events for her pregnancy, hinting at a kind of magic. Another event that Jamie emphasizes as magical is when all mothers in nature experience the process of giving birth, as in "St Bride's" (J, 45). Through the poem, in which the moment of giving birth is described, it is stated how females are an essential part of the natural world, full of ordinary yet magical events, while being exposed to invisible dangers. The physical and mental impact of delivering and breastfeeding on a woman's body and psychology is addressed and compared to medieval torture in "The Green Woman" (J, 46). Moreover, a mother's hard work in taking care of a baby is clearly depicted from a realistic perspective where the mother is busy with the heap of nappies and other domestic work related to the baby, as in "iv. February" (J, 14). However, the most demanding and unsettling aspects of having a baby are discussed in detail in "Wee Baby" (QS, 29), where an initially negative vision is softened by the baby's first smile at the end. Mother's affection to her baby shows itself in "Bairnsang" (J, 15), a lullaby in Scots sung by mother to her baby. As a mother of two children, Jamie does not approach motherhood biased, instead drawing a realistic portrait of both the good and the bad sides of it.

In writing about personal issues, Jamie mostly writes her own private experiences and the poems about motherhood come out of this practice. However, she includes her nationalistic concerns as well and often features in her poems places, figures, and dialects of Scotland. Apart from the poems written completely in Scots dialect, Jamie uses vernacular in

the titles as well. Above all, Jamie breaks down traditional stereotypes of women and their social roles as women, partners and mothers. She stresses the outdated ideas of cultural and religious institutions regarding femininity and becomes the voice of modern females.

Taken together, Jamie's poems on womanhood, spousehood, and motherhood reveal a sustained poetic interrogation of the roles traditionally assigned to women within a patriarchal culture. Her work exposes the pressures that shape female identity—pressures derived from myth, religion, domestic expectations, and social convention—while simultaneously foregrounding the resilience, agency, and complexity of the women who inhabit these roles. Whether portraying the adolescent girl confronted by institutional authority, the divided self of a woman torn between domestic duty and personal freedom, the silenced wife navigating emotional neglect, or the ambivalent mother negotiating the physical and psychological demands of childbirth and childcare, Jamie consistently dismantles idealised narratives of femininity. Instead, she offers nuanced portraits in which women resist, question, or reconfigure the structures that seek to define them. By integrating personal experience with broader cultural concerns, and by drawing on Scottish landscapes, dialects, and mythic echoes, Jamie's poetry reclaims female subjectivity from reductive stereotypes and asserts a modern, self-aware vision of womanhood rooted in honesty, complexity, and lived experience.

CHAPTER IV

'I STAND NEITHER IN THE WILDERNESS NOR FAIRYLAND': NATURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Nature and Culture

The effects of global events, along with Kathleen Jamie's own life experiences, have led her writing in a new course. The focus in her poetic works has shifted from political ideology to an ecological sensibility, especially after the devolution referendum in Scotland (1997) and the establishment of the Scottish Parliament (1999). Although her earlier works - such as *The Queen of Sheba* (1994) and *Jizzen* (1999) - mainly focus on subjects relating to Scottish politics, she gradually distances herself from explicitly political themes. Her later work weaves questions of identity into a sustained engagement with the natural world. In these later poems, she minimises "the human 'voices'" and focuses more on "the landscape and its inhabitants" (McCabe, 2017). While still maintaining her Scottish identity, she inclines toward nature and landscape. Before analysing Jamie's environmental poetry, it is necessary to outline the concepts of 'culture' and 'nature' that she repeatedly addresses.

The term 'culture' is complex and historically layered, encompassing meanings that range from social practices and

shared values to artistic production and intellectual life. In general usage, it refers to the patterns of living, belief systems, and material and symbolic practices that characterise a particular community or group. It thus includes both tangible elements—such as architecture, artefacts, and geographical environment—and intangible elements, including language, custom, values, and collective memory.

Raymond Williams (1921-1988), whose work shaped cultural studies, offers a detailed definition and discussion of 'culture' and 'nature' in *Keywords* (1985). The word 'culture' was once closely associated with the cultivation of land, as in "agriculture" (ager+cultura; the field of cultivation). The Latin word *colore* (to tend, to cultivate) later became *cultura* and then evolved into *culture* in French. The word had a set of different meanings until the fifteenth century such as "husbandry", "the act of cultivating the land, [or] plants", a piece of "cultivated land", "formation", "training" and "worship or cult of someone or something" ("culture."). Having passed into English in the early fifteenth century to refer to "husbandry, the tending of natural growth", the meaning of the word "culture" shifted from 'cultivation of the earth' to 'cultivation of the mind' and, from the sixteenth century onwards, came to refer more broadly to the formation of character and beliefs (Williams *Keywords* 87).

In *Keywords*, Williams describes the usage of 'culture' in three broad categories: (1) a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development; (2) a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general; and (3) the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity (1985: 90). These categories collectively suggest individual development, the development of humanity, and artistic production.

The first category suggests the intellectual development of people, meaning "the historical self-development of humanity

in general" (89), while the second points to a particular country or to a group's lifestyle through anthropological lenses. The third, by contrast, refers to the fine arts and popular activities such as movies, theatres, music concerts, art galleries, books, and museums. While the first two usages date back to the eighteenth century, the third is relatively modern, emerging at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.

Although Williams treats these distinctions separately for analytical clarity, he also emphasises that all three are often required to grasp the full complexity of the term. Nevertheless, in specific contexts it may be necessary, as he notes, to "select one 'true' or 'proper' sense [category] and dismiss other senses".

At this point in the present study, therefore, it becomes essential to indicate which sense of culture will be employed. Accordingly, this book adopts Williams's second definition—culture as a "particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general" (90–91)—since it most accurately reflects the social, historical, and communal dimensions through which Jamie's poetry engages with Scottish identity.

The next concept in need of clarification for this book is 'nature'. 'Nature', which Williams places at the top of his list of complex words, derives from Latin *natura* and French *nature,* themselves originating in "a root in the past participle of nasci", a Latin verb meaning "to be born" (Williams *Keywords* 219). As a general term, the concept of 'nature' is conceived as a physical world with its animals, plants, landscape, and as a place that is untouched and undisturbed by the intrusion of civilization or humankind. It has three primary meanings: the essential quality or character of something; the inherent force that directs the world, human beings, or both; and the

material world itself, with or without including human beings (219). The first refers to the essence, character or disposition of something or someone, while the second is an essential universal force obeying natural laws that is beyond control, such as natural disasters. The last meaning concerns the Earth and creation (for instance the natural environment). It is the physical world itself. In English usage, the first reference to the word dates back to the thirteenth century, the second reference is around the fourteenth century and the third goes back to the seventeenth century. While 'nature' in the first description is "a specific singular", in the second and third descriptions it is "abstract singular" (220). The term 'a specific singular' suggests "the particular character of something" and is generally used with a lower-case 'n' (nature), while 'an abstract singular' refers to "the essential force of all things or the material world in its entirety" and is generally used with an upper-case 'N' (Nature) (LeMenager 219). Because all three meanings and their variations are still active and used in the contemporary world, Williams defined the word as "the most complex word in the language" (219).

The history of using nature as a singular, abstracted and personified term includes the figure of "*Natiu'e*" ("Nature the goddess", nature herself), "a literal goddess, a universal directing power, and [...] an amorphous but still all-power[ful], creative and shaping force" from which "Mother Nature" has been brought out (Williams *Keywords* 221). As a consequence, nature has been accepted as female in Medieval European belief to define God as "the primary" and 'nature' as "his minister or deputy". Yet, there was a common tendency to treat nature as an "absolute monarch" because of her arbitrary powerful force that destructs man (221). By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, nature was not an "inherent and shaping force" but an "accumulation and classification of cases" from which nature emerges as "the material world"

with an emphasis on Reason (222-223). During this period, 'nature' became a conflicting concept within society and played a significant role in discussions about an "obsolete" or corrupted society, demanding "redemption and renewal" referring to the Enlightenment Movement, and "an 'artificial' or 'mechanical' society", referring to the Romantic Movement (223). At the end of the eighteenth century, nature became the "countryside" and "the unspoiled places" including those locations and creatures that did not include mankind (223). Furthermore, Peter H. Kahn points out in his *The Human Relationship with Nature: Development and Culture* (1999) that the modern world has lost its "diverse and satisfying connections with nature" (20). However, Robert Macfarlane points out that "human and the wild cannot be partitioned" (125).

As a result, the concept of culture has come to represent people and their practices while nature has, in conventional usage, come to mean unspoiled places and their non-human dwellers. However, human beings as living creatures and as bearers of culture are an integral part of nature. The relationship between nature and culture is indeed very complex. While they form a harmonious unity sharing the 'biosphere', "the part of the Earth in which life can exist" (Atlas 8) with other living beings in nature, they differ completely because it is human beings with their desires that force nature to fit their needs, who cause pollution in the biosphere and risk the lives of every living being in it, as well. Human beings' interaction with nature follows a familiar pattern of observing and identifying, harmonising, enriching, mending and destroying. Man, for the most part, did not invent anything new at the beginning, but simply observed and imitated nature to better his living conditions. Nature has become a mentor to man as she has survived and recreated herself after natural or man-made disasters. At

times, man disregards the mentor and tries to control nature by domesticating animals, draining marshes, constructing highways and roads, building dams, straightening channels and changing the flora and fauna. Instead of adjusting, man has intervened in nature to compensate and fulfil his needs.

The interaction between man and nature became a central focus in Kathleen Jamie's work as she progressed not only in her career as a poet but also as she went through different stages of her life. She declares that she does not accept the idea of "the outdoors", or of "nature". According to her "we are 'nature', in our anatomy and mortality. Regarding nature as other, different, an 'outdoors', an 'environment', speaks volumes about our alienation from ourselves." (McGuire, *Kathleen Jamie* 146). Jamie explores the close relationship between the human and the non-human in her prose work *Findings* (2005):

> Between the laundry and fetching kids from school, that's how birds enter my life. I listen. During a lull in the traffic: oyster catchers; in the school playground, sparrows - what few sparrows are left - chirp from the eaves. […]The birds live at the edge of my life. That's okay. I like the sense that the margins of my life are semi-permeable. (Jamie 39)

Jamie emphasizes nature and our everyday domestic entanglements are interlaced. She successfully does this by simply pointing out the different types of birds and other natural dwellers of Mother Nature that might pass unnoticed in daily life.

Jamie becomes the voice of nature and its dwellers, who are sometimes cast as heroes and other times the victims. In her poems, 'nature' and 'culture'—understood as a way of life shared by a group or people—become an entangled whole forming a state of equilibrium. She has stated that her attention is focused on "the world which is more-than-human, which is beyond the human" (142). The poet sometimes juxtaposes

man and nature to show the human indifference that has resulted in environmental destruction. In some of her poems, she brings them together on purpose and confronts humans with their cruelty to nature and nature's resistance with hopes that they learn from nature.

In her poems, Jamie becomes the voice of the birds, trees, flowers, and places that dwell in nature and reveals their secrets like a shaman in a state of trance, acting as a communicator and healer between the material and the spiritual worlds and speaking for those that are otherwise unable to do so. Thus, she declares that "the role of the poet is not to be political but shamanic (it's the only word I can think of), mediating between various worlds and bringing messages back and forth between them" (142). Moreover, her nature poems are an inquiry, an attempt to find 'a way to live' by means of listening and observing the natural world, and being in harmony with nature. She voices this entanglement of human and non-human through rhetorical questions such as 'how should we live?' or 'what direction will we take?' Through a confrontation with such open-ended questions, she makes them the concerns of everyone.

Jamie explains her way of writing in an interview with Attila Dósa, noting that she takes notes "almost like a naturalist who observes something, whether it is a flower or a street scene" with a feeling of "respect" for what she is observing "accurately in its beauty and detail" (137). Jamie highlights the importance of listening in another interview:

> When we were young, we were told that poetry is about voice, about finding a voice and speaking with this voice, but the older I get I think it's not about voice, it's about listening and the art of listening, listening with attention. I don't just mean with the ear; bringing the quality of attention to the world. (Scott n.p.)

In the same interview, Jamie remarks on the word "about" in relation to her nature writing: "I couldn't even say what I write 'about', because I distrust the relationship expressed by the word 'about'. I'd rather say that I write 'toward'. Or perhaps 'within'. At the moment, I'm writing a lot 'toward' the natural world." (Scott n.p.).

Although Jamie's focus has been on environmental issues centred on Scotland, she also brings out her thoughts about the moral, political and spiritual aspects of human beings' relationship with nature in general. It is the landscape of Scotland that forms the background to her poetry. Though her love of nature seems to be local, Jamie approaches the subject in universal terms, using the landscape of Scotland as a backcloth to her primary concern and attempting to "re-centre and redefine concepts of nature and rural environments" (Gairn, *Ecology* 161).

Jamie creates her own version of nature by writing towards the natural world and blending ecological, social and historical topics, showing the complex ways humans are embedded in their environment. The prevailing tone of her nature poems is mostly ironic yet inclusive while the overall mood remains hopeful. Her abundant use of similes functions like "a form of repair, one that threads the human world back out through the natural one and then brings the world of the falcons, examining chewing gum on their feet, closer to the world of humans" (Taylor n.p.)

Most of Jamie's works on nature are compiled in her 2004 poetry collection *The Tree House*, and prose writings *Findings* (2005) and *Sightlines* (2012). Apart from these, her other poetry collections such as *Jizzen* (1999) and *The Overhaul* (2012) have poems dedicated to nature to a lesser extent. The poems analysed in this chapter are from *The Tree House* (2004) which is composed of thirty-nine poems, four of which are

in Scots. Ten poems from this volume, one written in Scots, will be analysed in detail. Moreover, nine more poems, one of which is compiled in another of Jamie's collections *Jizzen* (1999), will be addressed briefly.

The Tree House (2004) is "characterised by Jamie's own form of ecopoetics" in which Jamie "seeks to re-centre and redefine concepts of nature and rural environments" (Gairn, *Ecology* 158, 162). Thus, the collection is devoted to themes such as nature, the human perception of nature, the conflict between nature and man, environmental issues, nature's resistance, the sense of home and existentialist doubt through which she examines global issues rather than national ones of the environmental damage caused by humans.

The Tree House explores ways for human beings to live in harmony with the natural world. In this respect, the poems in this compilation refer to various kinds of living creatures such as animals and plants, and places, both wild and domestic—almost like a contemporary Noah's Ark, with titles that focus on trees such as "The Wishing Tree", "The Alder Tree", and "Rhododendrons", and those about birds name swallows, falcons, seabirds, and wild birds. The poems further include fish, whales, sharks, dolphins, and other animals such as frogs and pipistrelles, as well as flowers like daisies, water lilies, the buddleia. They also evoke a range of places—tree-house, lumber-room, cave, firth, bower, orchard, home, North Pole, fountains, hills, and boats—and domestic objects such as a cupboard, brooch, rocks, and a creel.

Referring to so many living creatures including birds, "The Tree House" (TH, 41) is like Jamie's "song of the earth" with movements and twitters (Falconer 4). Moreover, through her poems, Jamie deconstructs the concept of 'the wild" by depicting or personifying nature and its non-human dwellers as either heroes, victims or mentors for humans, portraying

them as beautiful, innocent and natural. Thus, she questions who or what truly counts as 'wild' by pointing out humans' self-serving and destructive tendencies, often disguised under the label of 'civilization'.

The Destruction of Nature and Environmental Issues

Beyond being a universal symbol of knowledge, life, death and rebirth, and a metaphor for anything that grows and flourishes—such as human beings, families, and nations—a tree has an even more significant place in Scottish culture. The central importance of trees is evident in the Celtic alphabet known as Ogham[46], in which each letter represents a tree (Houlbrook 4). Thus, the significance of trees is woven into the very structure of the language itself.

"The Wishing Tree"[47] (TH, 3), the opening poem of the collection, is written for a nearly-dead hawthorn[48] tree known as the 'Ardmaddy Wishing Tree' located in Argyll, Scotland. Jamie talks about her surprise at coming across a wishing tree, which is generally associated with Ireland: "One day walking in Argyll with my husband we encountered a wishing tree which surprised us a great deal because I didn't know there were any in Scotland. I mean a tree people have bashed coins

[46] Ogham, known as the 'Celtic Tree Alphabet', has twenty letters taking their names from trees and plants: A for Ailm (Elm), B for Beith (Birch), C for Coll (Hazel), D for Duir (Oak), E for Eadha (Aspen) F for Fearn (Alder), G for Gort (Ivy), H for Huath (Hawthorn), I for Idho (Yew), L for Luis (Rowan), M for Muin (Blackberry), N for Nion (Ash), Ng for Ngetal (Reed), O for Onn (Gorse), Q for Quert (Apple), R for Ruis (Elder), S for Saille (Willow), St for Straif (Blackthorn), T for Tinne (Holly), U for Ura (Heather) (Graves 359-60).

[47] "The Wishing Tree", first published in 2002, became the opening poem for Jamie's *The Tree House* poetry collection (2004) after certain alterations such as the phrase 'each secret visitation' in the seventh line changed to 'each secret assignation' and 'gently beaten into me' in the twenty-fourth line to 'daily / beaten into me'. 'Beyond, the land reaches' in the ninetieth line was replaced with 'Behind me, the land reaches', and 'because I bear / the common currency' in the sixth stanza was changed to 'because I hoard / the common currency'

[48] Hawthorn is "an early blossoming tree that is held sacred in Celtic tradition and has associations with fertility. It is thought that removal of a coin from the tree will bring bad luck" (cited in "Best place to make a wish").

into for a wish or a desire - I knew they existed in Ireland but had never seen one in Scotland" (cited in "Works of Kathleen Jamie"). This particular tree, with coins hammered into its bark, becomes the speaking 'I' of the poem. The wishing tree is given a voice through *prosopopoeia*, a figure of speech in which an inanimate or abstract entity is given the ability to speak. It narrates how people insert coins into her bark to make wishes and how their 'wish-making' is slowly poisoning her.

The poem consists of 24 lines arranged in short couplets, forming 13 stanzas and five sentences. The use of the couplet in stanzaic form is significant and not random, since the two-line stanzas in long and short length might help to visualise the branches of the tree. The persona is the wishing tree itself, recounting its story to an unknown addressee. In fact, the primary audience for the animated tree is an implied reader with whom the persona has an informal relationship, identified with the impersonal second person "your" (10) and the imperative "look" (25) in the closing couplet. Jamie reproduces the wishing tree in her mind as she gives it human-like qualities: the tree gains the ability to "stand", "hoard", "draw into", and also "choke," all of which are human attributes.

The poem begins with the wishing tree revealing its location first in negative terms – by specifying where it does *not* stand – thus implying its liminal position;

> I stand neither in the wilderness
> nor fairyland
>
> but in the fold
> of a green hill
>
> the tilt from one parish
> into another (lines 1-6)

The words, "wilderness" and "fairyland" insinuate wild, fantastic, mythical places which are not the domains

of, or controlled by, man. They have not been created or cultivated by man. The tree instead locates itself in the "fold of a green hill" (3-4) and on the threshold of two parishes—the place where it is in the 'realm' of humans. The liminal position of the tree establishes it as an 'in-betweener', situated between nature and culture. Through this reality, Jamie also deconstructs the common perception of the 'wishing tree' as a mythological and spiritual phenomenon and locates the tree on the verge of a hill tilting "from one parish into another" (5-6), characterizing the mood the tree is in while narrating its story. This duality, its liminal position, is echoed again at the end of the poem, where the tree is poisoned yet fertile.

After providing information about its location the tree draws attention to its miserable condition in the hands of human beings:

> To look at me
> through a smirr of rain
>
> is to taste the iron
> in your own blood
>
> because I hoard
> the common currency
>
> of longing: each wish
> each secret assignation. (lines 7-14)

The tree has witnessed and collected the hopes and desires of people who have come to make wishes by studding the tree with coins. There are times when well-intended acts are worse than harm itself. The only intended goodness in this poem is a service to humans, and the tree is forced to endure slow torture to the edge of complete destruction because of human hopes in the form of small coins. Since it is a wishing tree, a symbol of wish-fulfilment for humans, wishes are made with coins pressed into its barks and branches rather than tying a strip of cloth to those branches. Their method

of making their wish actually violates the tree's trunk or the persona's 'body'.

Furthermore, the verb "look" (7, 25) is the only verb that recurs in the poem and contributes to the idea that the persona demands attention by the humans and the addressee since it might draw attention to the infinite exploitation of its purity by subconscious human behaviour. Therefore, the parallelism in the lines "to look at me / through a smirr[49] of rain / is to taste the iron / in your own blood" (7-10) creates a comparison between nature and the human body which evokes a sense of affinity with the addressee. Moreover, the tree presents itself as a human body and says "smirr of rain" which is as vital for a tree as blood is for a human since both transfer iron. However, for the 'wishing tree', iron is artificially forced into it from outside through embedded coins. The tree which signifies natural qualities, purity/innocence, and virginity, hoards "the common currency of longing" (12), a metaphor referring to the wish-fulfilment by utilisation of coins, signifying man-made cultural qualities. Human ignorance does not realise or acknowledge the pain and destruction it forces on to the tree. This is reinforced by a second personification in "I hoard" (11), which underlines the fact that the tree is a living being like humans. It also highlights the human thinking that they are the most important creatures on earth and their needs precede everything and anything, however artificial it may be, without understanding the traumatic impact they create on and in nature.

Humans are expecting their hopes to be fulfilled by the tree that they consider sacred:

> My limbs lift, scabbed
> with greenish coins
>
> I draw into my slow wood
> fleur-de-lys, the enthroned Britannia. (lines 15-18)

[49] 'Smirr' is a Scottish word meaning "fine rain, drizzle," and a "summer shower" ("Smirr.").

They are paying for their wishes in the form of coins, blissfully unaware of the damage they are causing to the tree. Eventually, the branches of the tree are "scabbed / with greenish coins" (15-16) and the tree draws into its "slow wood / fleur-de-lys, the enthroned Britannia" (15-18). The persona narrates the slow process of the penetration of coins into the tree. Changes are forced on both the tree and the coins. Thus, "greenish coins" (16) evokes the sense of waiting for a long time because it takes time for coins to change their shiny state and become decayed. This state of the coins is the result of oxidation caused by chemical and physical reactions following years of exposure to rain, cold, humidity, and so on. This image also suggests a life that continues to grow despite this slow 'digestion' of metal by the tree's covering of the "fleur-de-lys" and "enthroned Britannia" (18) - metonymic references for British coins, both symbols being used on the face of the coins.

The 'wishing tree' that gives life to human wishes is ironically dying from their method of wish-making. Jamie illustrates the violent behaviour of humans against nature as she describes how the coins are daily beaten into the tree, creating a visual image of the relentless pain it causes.

> And though I'm poisoned
> choking on the small change
>
> of human hope,
> daily beaten into me
>
> look: I am still alive –
> in fact, in bud. (lines 21-26)

Once more, Jamie echoes and intensifies the earlier metaphor "the common currency / of longing" (12-13) in the eleventh and twelfth stanzas as "the small change / of human hope" (22-23) which refers to the coins embedded with the wishes of humans, turning the tree into a repository, a

receptacle, a piggy bank. This implied a deliberately uneasy comparison involving bitterness and sweetness, vulnerability and perseverance shows that while one particular side is cherished (humans), the other side (the tree, nature) is neglected. Through this metaphor, the tree explains that it is "poisoned / through choking on the small change" (21-22). The persona's choice of the adjective "small" with the word "change" (22) creates an image of how a human being causes destruction to the environment by trying to fulfil a significant thing ("human hope") using an insignificant vehicle ("small change"). Jamie creates tension through an ironic situation such as poisoning the tree with human hopes as she describes the state of the tree versus human greed. Something magical, a wish coming true is actually killing the tree. Jamie makes this ordeal feel as though the whole exchange between humans and the tree is a type of bargaining but with the rules for this bargain configured by simple-minded humans, who think they are rewarding the tree with those hammered coins they have worked hard to earn while satisfying their own needs. This is a sad but perfect example of how humans are destroying the environment to fulfil their dreams.

The poem concludes with a proclamation that the tree is still alive with new buds regardless of what it is exposed to or what is imposed on it. The condition of the tree being poisoned yet fertile creates a liminality referring back to the initial location of the tree. The tree "survives despite the physical intrusion of human longing, the coins wishfully pushed into its bark" and the poem ends with a hope as well as a warning since buds are both promising and fragile (Mackay 90). This subtle hint at a "bud" (26) is a promise and almost an indication of an uprising as new buds are indicators of new beginnings and nature replenishes and recreates herself regardless of what she has been exposed to by human beings. This may also denote a rebellion of trees and nature against the harmful effect of human beings by recreating itself.

"The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3) expresses human beings' relationships with the environment which are depicted through the conflict between man and nature. The tree is both a sacred 'wish tree' that helps people to obtain their desires and a tree that has a wish that to be heard. Thus, 'wish tree' has two functions: both object and subject. The 'wishing tree' which suffers from the continuous violation or penetration by human greed and indifference towards other living creatures stands as a metaphor representing the whole natural world which is being destroyed by a cultural act of wish-making. Besides the fact that the 'wishing tree' is a hawthorn tree which blooms in May, specific references such as "green hill" (4), "smirr of rain" (8), "in bud" (26), are indicators of spring time. Thus, it is a time when nature awakens and renews itself, represented through the new buds. This is a positive outlook, in the sense that it shows nature's inclination to survive despite humanity.

Money—standing for power and especially for financial power—is how humans 'pay' for their destructive wish-making, achieved by violence and force through hammering the coins into the tree. Human hope transfers into the economy. However, there is a conflict here since the poet deconstructs the notion of wishing, a romantic cultural phenomenon, by highlighting the underlying destructiveness of human beings' rituals of wishing. The destruction of the wish grantor, a tree, kills the romantic notion of wishing.

This particular poem is one example of how Jamie draws on different experiences she has encountered in nature, especially during her walks, to address the negative impact humans have on nature and nature's endurance. Though she addresses both human and nature, she relates it back solely to human nature. Thus, at the very beginning of the poem Jamie alludes to the wishes of man and nature, humans and the tree and later uses the same ambiguity to point out

the destructive nature of humans, nature's endurance and perhaps resistance to man. The opposition of, or conflict between man and nature is established with the title "The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3) in which the duality is created by the word "wish", an abstract noun related to humans, and the "tree", a concrete noun signifying nature. The nouns in the poem can be divided into two semantic classes: those related to nature (wilderness, fairyland, fold, hill, tilt, smirr, rain, limbs, wood, land, Atlantic, bud) and those related to humans (parish, iron, blood, common currency, wish, assignation, coins, fleur-de-lys, Britannia, change, human, hope). This half and half division stresses interconnection between human and nature. Moreover, the most important symbol used throughout the poem is money, mentioned in the form of "common currency" (12), "greenish coins" (16), "fleur-de-lys" (18), "the enthroned Britannia" (18) and "small change" (22). This lexical split between nature-related and culture-related nouns formally enacts the nature/culture divide that the poem simultaneously reproduces and critiques.

Humans, to satisfy their own desires, destroy the tree through scarring the tree's bark even though the intention is not to kill or destroy the tree, here representing nature. Human interference with nature's balance and its devastating effects are portrayed through the poem. However, nature is a merciful mother serving all living creatures devotedly, thus she recreates herself within the body of the 'wishing tree' by budding impertinently showing her sovereignty over human beings since she is stronger and better at replenishing herself, even when humans disappear.

While "The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3) underlines the adverse effects of human intervention in the natural environment, "Frogs" (TH, 5) sets up a paradox about the precarious cycle of life and death, highlighting both the similarities and the conflict between humans and nature.

The persona, who seems to be the witness to the event, first narrates the mating of two frogs. She gives a detailed description of their physical attributes, as well as painting a picture of two copulating frogs and their mating postures. As she is mesmerised by this event, a passing car runs over the frogs. The respective shapes of the mating frogs and the flattened frogs create such an image in the observer's mind that they are united in their untimely death just as they were united in one of life's most intense moments of life.

The setting of the poem is a meeting point, a crossroads between man and nature, between nature and a man-made road and vehicle (the car) which both humans and nature inhabit at the same time. The poem, a lyric of five stanzas of five lines each, is divided into two parts; the first part focuses on the copulation of two frogs and their distinctive physical features while the second part depicts the tragic event that has been realised, in which the two frogs have been run over by the car. There is a shift in time; while the whole event (copulation and death of the frogs) is narrated in the past tense relating a particular transient incident, the last stanza abruptly turns into simple present tense telling something universal and general.

As indicated earlier, the first half of the poem deals with the frogs:

> But for her green
> palpitating throat, they lay
> inert as a stone, the male
> fastened like a package
> to her back. They became,
>
> as you looked, almost
> beautiful, her back
> mottled to leafy brown,
> his marked with two stripes,
> pale as over-wintered grass. (lines 1-10)

A pair of frogs lie down "inert as a stone" (3), quite motionless. There is no sign of life apart from the female frog's "palpitating throat" (2-3). Their stiffness is portrayed through a simile, likened to a stone. The position of the male frog is illustrated through another simile, where he is fastened and wrapped like "a package" to the female frog's back (4-5). They have unified and become one entity through mating. A detailed description is given about their act of mating, and the physical attributes of each frog: the female has "leafy brown" (8) spots on her back while the male is marked with two stripes like "over-wintered grass" (10), reminiscent of its pale colour. This close presentation of their physical attributes contributes to the significance and beauty of the frogs, "the slow creatures of this earth" (22-23).

The poem focuses on a pair of ordinary frogs and depicts them in a detailed manner using similes and metaphors:

> When he bucked, once,
> neither so much as blinked;
> their oval, gold-lined eyes
> held to some bog-dull
> imperative. The car
>
> that would smear them
> into one – belly
> to belly, tongue thrust
> utterly into soft brain –
> approached and pressed on (lines 11-20)

This vivid depiction attempts to arouse a sense of sympathy or affinity in the reader, raising the awareness of the readers that these frogs should not be seen as small, unimportant creatures. In addition to their location and physical appearances, the poem signals that their mating behaviour is a "bog-dull / imperative" (14-15), a metaphor for copulation, an instinctive and unexciting process taking place in a dark wetland. Although routine, the metaphor

"oval, gold-line eyes" (13) contributes to the significance of their mating by comparing their yellow eyes to gold, hinting at the pleasure they still get from their routine action. Thus, the climax of their sexual pleasure is emphasised through the gold-lined eyes.

The harmonious and peaceful mood is then interrupted by an approaching car (with its passengers), the symbol of civilisation which runs over and murders the frogs. In doing so, the differentiated characteristic of the frogs is undone. The reader is forced to visualise how the frogs were run over by a car that 'smears' them into one: "belly / to belly, tongue thrust / utterly into soft brain" (17-20). The enchanted moment of the mating frogs, united, "fastened like a package" (4) in the beginning (in the first stanza) clashes with the smashed and destroyed image of the dead frogs at the end (in the fourth stanza). Their union in death echoes their stiffness in mating in the first stanza since a body becomes stiff after death and rigor mortis sets in.

This paradoxical state of becoming one in mating and in death forms a contrast in which the splendid unity of the frogs is trivialised through an unexpected understated death; their "almost beautiful" (6-7) moment of copulation that overflows from their "oval / gold-lined eyes" (13) turns devalued, inferior and disgusting, a terrifying position of being "tongue thrust / utterly into soft brain" (17-18) as the couple becomes squished like a paste.

With the shift in time, the last stanza elaborates on general, universal issues by use of the simple present tense:

> Oh how we press on –
> the car and the passengers, the slow
> creatures of this earth,
> the woman by the verge
> with her hands cupped. (lines 21-25)

Jamie, through a couple of frogs, demonstrates a universal issue about human reluctance to learn how they destroy the animal dwellers of the earth by their careless and ignorant behaviour, and how they "press on - / the car and passengers, the slow / creatures of this earth," (21-23) signifying the damage caused by human actions without any regard to other inhabitants of the same environment. Even though she uses the expression "press on" (20-21) twice, meanings are significantly different. The first instance of "pressed on" (20) relates to the frogs' being run over and flattened by the tires of the passing vehicle. The second "press on" (21) refers to how we move on despite the events that happen around us. This is depicted as the "car and the passengers" (22) that have continued to move on, whilst the frogs "the small creatures of the earth" (22-23) are dead. The poem then draws the readers' attention to a woman on the "verge" of the road witnessing the whole scene and who is left in shock "with her hands cupped" (25). The significance behind that gesture "hands cupped" is unclear. It might signify a situation of being helpless because she is not able to do anything to change the situation.

The poem is loosely circular: it begins with a female frog ('her') and ends with a human woman ('her') standing "by the verge" (24). The placing of the woman underlines her position of liminality. She is in the space between the road and the grass, between culture and nature, between civilisation and wilderness. Occupying this in-between space, the woman may be read as a figure for the poet herself, who is the connection of human to nature since she observes and realises human indifference to the environment.

In the poem, natural creatures and man-made roads are juxtaposed in order to underline the fact that man has destroyed the frogs' and other animals' habitat by building roads, which is further demonstrated by its destructive effect on nature through the frogs. The road man has built as a

sign of civilisation spoils nature and her inhabitants, and this destruction does not leave them a space for living and for reproduction. Since frogs are amphibious animals signifying fertility, creation and resurrection as well as metamorphosis (as in the 'Frog Prince') they have the ability to live both on land and in water. However, their living spaces are destroyed. Through "Frogs" Jamie describes man's interference with nature in terms of the clash between nature and man from two different perspectives of 'becoming one body': one while copulating and the other at the moment of death. Through detailed observation, the poem provides a striking image in reader's minds and blurs the clichéd border between the 'wild' and the 'unwild', the human and the non-human.

Another poem that emphasizes the human's 'wild' and abusive behaviour to non-humans is "Flight of Birds" (TH, 39). This particular poem might be one of Jamie's most concise poems, highlighting and criticising environmental damage for which humans are responsible.

In the poem, the speaker seems to be concerned with environmental issues and addresses the reader, who might sympathize with and be as sensitive as the speaker herself. The speaker informs the reader about a specific bird's vanishment, in it having taken flight from their garden and the subsequent reactions of other birds. The speaker then imagines that we as human beings would like these birds to come back and each of them be called by their names. However, these birds may not come back since we humiliate them and destroy their living spaces. The speaker concludes the poem with a warning that there is no paradise except this world.

The poem begins with the observation and information of one specific bird's (the mavis) disappearance, her flight and the reactions of other birds.

From our gardens the mavis is melted away,
she is gravel; waders veer overhead
crying*whither*? *whither*? and the poor duck
flusters at the roadside with her clipped wings. (lines 1-4)

It seems that the mavis (a colloquial Scots word for the 'song thrush') has left the man-made environments (our gardens) as well as the so-called owner of that place, human beings. The phrase 'melt away' is striking, not only because it suggests gradual disappearance, but also because it appears in the passive voice, implying an unnamed agent behind the bird's vanishing. Through this grammatical structure, it is understood that the act of leaving does not result from the "mavis" (1). It is not a choice for the bird. The bird is forced to do it, suggesting an intervention to her natural habitat. Moreover, the "mavis" (1) is reduced to "gravel" (2), a metaphor that objectifies the bird and suggests hardness and displacement. As a noun, it means small pebbles, which we add to our driveways in most cases, are brought from another place and are not part of this particular setting. Gravel is also used as an aid to animal nutrition for birds like canaries and finches since they are fed on seeds and they need to eat gravel in order to digest them. Still, not every gravel is suitable for birds' digestion, especially when brought from somewhere else.

Apart from the 'mavis', there are also "waders" (2), long-legged birds walking in the water for food, which raise their heads towards the sky while crying "*whither? whither?*" (3) to the 'mavis' overhead. This archaic word ("whither"), used interrogatively, is highlighted twice by being italicized and repeated. It means 'to whatever place' or 'to what end', hinting that there is no such place to go. The other dweller of "our gardens" (1), the "poor duck" (3), on the other hand, seems to be worried and upset about the same situation, as she "flusters at the roadside with her clipped wings" (5). The

expression "clipped wings" (4) relates to the cutting of the birds' main feathers in order to restrict their ability to fly. Human beings' such brutal intervention in birds' natural abilities is depicted through the female duck in the poem. The adjective "poor" (3) with the expression "clipped wings" (4) suggests that the duck is doomed to live in that place and forced to stay on the ground. Furthermore, along with the "mavis" (1) and "waders" (2) the "duck" (3) is also an aquatic bird residing close to a body of water, however, the setting of "gardens" (1) and "roadside" (5) in the first stanza seems to be completely the opposite of these birds' natural habitats.

From starting the poem as an observer or a witness, the speaker shifts in the second stanza and begins addressing the reader directly:

> - Suppose as a last ditch, we gathered
> empty-handed at the town's edge and called
> each bird by name, might we yet prevail
> upon wren, water rail, tiny anointed goldcrest (lines 5-8)

Beginning the stanza with a dash signals a shift in direction and adds emphasis to the apostrophe that follows. The speaker would like the reader to assume coming together at the outskirts of the town "empty-handed" (6) as a "last ditch" (5), to call "each bird by name" (7). The expression "last ditch" refers to an action undertaken as a last effort to accomplish something or to prevent something from happening after all else has failed. The adjective "empty-handed" is used as a metaphor for human helplessness, highlighting our failure to "prevail" (7) upon the birds. The speaker is likely to say that we gave each bird a name and addressed them by their names as an apology, but we did nothing for them except pollute the water that is essential for them to survive, clip their wings to prevent their freedom to fly away, and violate their habitat. Gathering at the "edge" (6) of town, instead of in the wilderness or forest, to call the birds

clarifies that their living spaces are occupied by civilized man and his artificial living space.

The reason why the speaker assumed to persuade the birds is clarified in the third stanza:

> to remain within our sentience in this,
> the only world? There is no Paradise,
> we've humiliated living creatures,
> bidding them lie down with one another (lines 9-12)

The speaker still doubts the objectivity of this last attempt, asking "might we yet prevail upon wren, water rail, tiny anointed goldcrest" (7-8) which are all different types of birds that are declining from the places humans inhabit. Jamie is trying to urge the reader to perceive and think of a solution based on our ability to feel "to remain within our sentience in this, the only world?" (9-10) suggesting that the reader not only feels but thinks and comes up with a solution to the damages done to the natural habitat of these birds. Being aware of the urgency to keep the birds "within our sentience" (9), where we can feel and perceive, the speaker stresses "the only world" (10). To draw our attention to the importance of the environment we live in, the speaker firstly describes it with a pronoun "this" (9) and a comma right after it, then she emphasizes "the only world" (10).

The following lines relate the focal point, the heart of the poem's idea;

> [...] There is no Paradise,
> we've humiliated living creatures,
> bidding them lie down with one another
> through our own unease" (lines 10-13)

These lines, which form a single sentence, are written more like prose than verse without any inverted structure and might result from the speaker's attempt to be understood easily and to relate her message directly. In addition, capitalizing the word "Paradise" (10) is another way to draw

attention to the seriousness of this situation. The reference to the Garden of Eden as "Paradise" (10) embodies a dual message: one directed at religious readers, and another at those who view paradise metaphorically as the natural world itself. In both cases, the speaker warns the reader that if we go on the path of destroying our one and the only earth, it will be impossible for us as human beings to reach and live in the paradise we believe in because we have "humiliated living creatures" (11). She uses the verb 'humiliate', usually reserved for interactions among humans, to describe how we treat animals and the wider natural world. Jamie treats the "living creatures" as equal to human beings, and she describes man's offensive behaviour to these creatures. By restricting their habitat, their living space we are "bidding them lie down with one another / through our own unease" (12-13) in order to make more space for us and our artificial properties.

Towards the end of the poem comes another challenging question: "if they greet dawn / by singing of a better place, can we complain?" (13-14) which means that these living creatures of nature might find a better place to salute the new day and depart from "our sentience" (9), our ignorance, and we have no right to complain about their choice. The poem ends with the lines: "Below a hill, a cave mouth is closing now / even as the yellow-taloned merlin tilts inside" (15-16) suggesting again her frustration with another natural dwelling for the "yellow-taloned merlin" is being destroyed.

The poem itself is a warning that highlights the man-made destruction of nature, birds that start disappearing from domestic places such as gardens we alter with materials that do not belong there and the changes we make to the environment to fulfil our own needs. The speaker reminds us once again of her atheistic and shamanic belief that there is no paradise except for the natural world with its living creatures

and we are not only destroying the natural inhabitants of the earth but also causing our own destruction by destroying the ecosystem. "Flight of Birds" is one of the few in *The Tree House* depicting directly the indifference and even brutal acts of civilized man towards the environment and the living creatures in it. The poem also brings human beings' alienated relationship with the natural environment and its inhabitants to the fore.

"Crossing the Loch" (J, 1), another example where Jamie portrays human beings' destructive impact on both nature and humans themselves, is included in her collection *Jizzen* (1999). The speaker, now a middle-aged person with children, remembers crossing the loch with a friend by boat "one night after the pub" (3) in her youth. That was an uncanny and dangerous crossing, both for man-made reasons—submarines ("the deadheads") carrying nuclear weapons in the area and water that seems radioactive because of the phosphorescence—and for natural ones: the loch is extremely wide, tidal, and it was night. However, the persona and her friend have survived to become adults and even have children now. The memory of persona implies a serious situation that humans may bring about the destruction of both humankind and nature through nuclear weapons.

Nature as a Healer and a Mentor

As mentioned earlier, Kathleen Jamie's poems that present nature as a teacher and mentor to human beings are "Alder" (TH, 7), "Rhododendrons" (TH, 33), "Landfall" (TH, 15); in addition, reference will be made to "The Puddle" (TH, 47) and "Water Lilies" (TH, 34). The first poem in this section is "Alder" (TH, 7), the second poem in *The Tree House* (2004), which focuses particularly on a tree. The title "Alder"[50] (TH, 7)

[50] "Alder" (TH, 7) also makes a reference to the Ogham (Celtic Tree Alphabets) as in Hawthorn tree in "The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3).

contains a double meaning, as in "The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3). It is both the name of a tree belonging to the birch family and a pun recalling the word 'older' with a similar pronunciation. In the poem, the persona, who is fed up with the rain that has been falling all week, talks to an alder tree and asks how it can live in such harsh conditions.

Whether rhetorical or not, asking questions seems to be an important aspect of Jamie's poetry, as observed in the several questions the persona directs to the tree. The poem "Alder" (TH, 7) starts with a question addressed to 'alder tree' by the persona:

> Are you weary, alder tree,
> in this, the age of rain? (lines 1-2).

This rhetorical question presents the tree as a being that has lived a long time under harsh conditions and establishes the mood that pervades the poem. The repeated emphasis on "rain" evokes a melancholic, depressing atmosphere and may even allude to a flood, or specifically to Noah's Flood. The effect of everlasting rain is realized through hyperbole since the word "age" before "rain" conveys an exaggerated situation dominant in the poem in which Jamie creates a gloomy atmosphere by depicting the rain as a damaging phenomenon; however, alder is a type of tree that primarily grows in damp, boggy areas and riversides. Once immersed in water, this tree hardens like a stone. Further, the alder's leaves easily decompose in the water providing rich nutrients for all manner of water creatures. Thus, by reversing the situation Jamie introduces an ironic tension.

The second and third stanzas, with the lines "From your branches / droop clots of lichen / like fairy lungs" (3-5), contain a simile comparing the "clots of the lichen" (4) to "fairy lungs" (5), points to the antiquity of the tree. This suggests that the lichen is the way the tree can breathe, and

its survival through them is like a miracle. It also describes the alder's capacity of endurance and its survival from the time of glaciers uninhibited by humans, including long before humans, and has also endured more recent "squalls" and "tattered mists" (6). The existence of the tree was not sudden, appearing through its unfolding. It took time, "first one leaf then another" (9). This slow process of emergence indicates experience, wisdom, and patience, as well as endurance. Jamie's shift from simple present to simple past tense invites the reader to imagine the past the poet creates as reinforcement for the long-lived tree. The second question is of central importance:

won't you teach me

a way to live
on this damp ambiguous earth? (lines 10-12).

Seeing that the tree endures the heavy rain, the "squalls" and the "tattered mists" that have persisted all week, the persona questions the tree about how to live "on this damp ambiguous earth" (12) The persona perceives the world as an ambiguous place and seeks the guidance and wisdom of the elderly 'alder' in order to survive. Thus, through the 'alder', the natural world is figured as a mentor for those who want to learn. However, in contrast to the 'wishing tree' in "The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3), which voices human beings' damage, the 'alder tree' is mute. It is not the one to speak but the one to be spoken to, and the source from which the secret of its resistance is to be learned.

Then, another tense shift occurs in the eighth stanza when the persona imagines the near future when the tree will sparkle as "the sun blinks" (15), echoing the imagined past in the fourth stanza when the tree unfolded. Thus, it is a shift from the gloomy, dark, damp, wet atmosphere to a cheerful, sunny, "sparkle" (16) natural world the persona longs for:

The rain showers
release from you a broken tune

but when the sun blinks, as it must,
how you'll sparkle –

like a fountain in a wood
of untold fountains. (lines 13-18)

The persona uses a simile to compare the 'alder' to a sparkling fountain, saying that "when the sun blinks …/ how you'll sparkle - / like a fountain in a wood / of untold fountains" (15-18). It is a picturesque description in which Jamie portrays a heavenly mystical place where in the reader's mind an old, majestic tree is like an amazing fountain that is again created by nature. However, "untold" (18) in the last line evokes a sense of a wild, untouched, pure, uninhabited place, suggesting a time before the existence of human beings, a time when the natural world had not yet been tarnished by human beings. The word "untold" (18) also echoes the 'alder tree', "unfolded" (7) before the "receding glaciers" (8).

A rainy week and a philosophical question in "Alder" (TH, 7) are echoed in "The Puddle" (TH, 47) which is a poem in *The Tree House* (2004) collection. However, this time the subject is not a wise tree that has survived in nature but a dwelling place, a puddle, where oystercatchers, curlews, and other inhabitants dwell to feed. Jamie turns a mundane natural event—a rain-formed puddle—into a kind of magical dwelling. As with many of her poems, she questions how much better our lives would be if we could bring ourselves to look at the world from the view of all living creatures, as she does in this poem with "What is it to lie so / level with the world, …?" (9-10). The poem repeats the poet's philosophical inquiry "how should we live?"

Apart from sharing the same couplet form, the 'wishing tree' and the 'alder tree' are both symbols of endurance to the

natural or artificial challenges imposed on them. The poem "Water Lilies" (TH, 34) draws attention to the endurance of water lilies and their ability to overcome pollution. This is a good example for humans, where water lilies use their survival instinct to regenerate, adapt and complete their cycle to blossom regardless of pollution. The persona compares the leaves of the water lilies to human organs such as the heart and hands. The leaves "persist in rising through the peat-stained lochan's shallow" (4-6) until they reach the "border where water becomes air" (8-9), then unfold there in the shape of an "almost heart" (11) and "almost upturned hands" (12) which reminds us of the woman on the verge "with her hands cupped" (25) in "Frogs" (TH, 5).

Furthermore, through rhetorical questions, the persona in "Alder" (TH, 7) seems to create a parallelism between herself and the 'alder tree', or the 'alder' might stand for a saviour (like Noah's Ark), enabling the persona to survive in "the age of rain" (2), which may also be a reference to problems in her life and she addresses them in the poem simply as weather. Unlike "The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3), which relates the personal feelings of the tree, "Alder" (TH, 7) reveals the feelings of a human being observing the 'alder tree', who has weathered the storms of life. She is seeking advice from the tree to resolve her own issues, based on the tree's experiences. The focus is not her personal problems, except frustrations with the weather; instead, the tree is addressed as if it is expected to provide answers with the goal of learning to survive and continuing her journey as a human being, as the 'alder tree' is surviving as a part of nature. This questioning paves the way for the existential doubt in the poem "Rhododendrons" (TH, 33).

In addition to "The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3) and "Alder" (TH, 7), the third poem about a tree is "Rhododendrons" (TH, 33). Unlike the other poems, this particular poem does

not deal with the destruction or the resistance of the natural world against natural or cultural challenges and is instead a mental journey or an existential inquiry.

Blooming in clusters of belle-shaped flowers with various colours such as white, pink, purple, red, yellow, and orange etc., rhododendrons are mostly used for ornamental landscaping. Taking its name from the Greek words *rhodon* (rose) and *dendron* (tree), 'rhododendron' has a double function as a flower and a tree as well as a life-giving shrub with its flamboyant blossoms, although all parts of the plant are toxic. Since it likes slightly acid soil, Scotland is one of the ideal places for this species to grow.

This poem focuses on rhododendrons the speaker sees while walking with her friends. The reflection of the vivid purple colour of rhododendrons on the surface of the water draws the persona's attention while walking. Though she notices the sand martins hunting insects and the scent of bog myrtle, neither capture her interest. Instead, the scene which seemed comfortable and motionless reminds her of a family in their living room watching television. As her mind starts wandering, she asks "what was it to exist so bright and fateless?" (10-12), she realises that her friends have moved on and wants to catch up.

The poem is set in an outdoor place close to water such as a sea, river, lochan or lake. Another defining feature of the setting is the "parapet" (5), a defensive wall along the edge of a bridge or balcony, for example. The parapet that the rhododendrons are leaning across functions as a liminal place, an artificial border that frames or separates nature and man, as well as human interference in the natural world. It is late in the evening in spring. Unlike the previous 'tree poems' written in couplet form, in "Rhododendrons" (TH, 33) Jamie has used tercet form.

The way the poem starts creates an increasing curiosity from the first stanza, in which the persona describes looking for something which she had already noticed:

> It wasn't sand martins
> hunting insects in the updraught,
> or the sudden scent of bog myrtle (lines 1-3)

Listing things the persona is not interested in, yet still, in the same environment with what draws her attention, creates a mysterious opening. There is a parallelism between "sand martins" (1) and "bog myrtle" (3), that they are noun phrases which contribute to the setting because the sand martin is a bird from the swallow family and is found along rivers and other water bodies such as creeks, rivers, and ponds, and it hunts insects. Bog myrtle is a herb native to Scotland and Northern Europe found at water margins and known as a natural insect repellent. These harmonious beings create in the reader's mind an image of a natural environment with water sources, birds and plants.

The persona's reason for talking about the birds and plants that do not interest her becomes clear in the second and third stanzas. It is neither the sand martins nor the scent of bog myrtle but "a handful of purple baubles / reflected below the water's surface" (6-7) draws the persona's attention and makes her pause. "Purple baubles" are small spherical coloured (here purple) ornaments mostly put on Christmas trees, here used as a metaphor to refer to the blossoms of rhododendrons. The comparison of the blossoms with the baubles invokes such an image that this small decorative tree with its purple blossoms is the accessories and even jewels of the natural landscape. Further, blossoms' "comfortable and motionless" (8) reflections on the "water's surface" (7) is likened to a family "in their living room / watching TV" (9-10). Like a family who is watching television, the persona watches the surface of the water like a screen and is lost in thought.

The words "comfortable and motionless" (8) make everything slow down in the poem. With a sense of tranquillity and inertia, the reader also shares the moment the persona is in.

Unlike the activities in the first stanza (hunting, smelling), the moment of deep thinking seems to be important for the persona, who abruptly disrupts the tranquil tone in the fourth and fifth stanzas with an observational question she mentally formulates —"what was it to exist so bright and fateless" (10–12):

> […]. What was it,
> I'd have asked, to exist
> so bright and fateless
>
> while time coursed
> through our every atom
> over its bed of stones - ? (lines 10-15)

It is suggested that the tree is both glamorously beautiful and dangerously toxic, having a poisonous effect on animals and thus 'fateless'. Another suggestion is that this tree is widely cultivated in gardens thanks to its decorative appearance with brilliant blooms that make the tree 'fateless' for the speaker. As a self-seeded shrub growing in the wilderness, the rhododendron is transformed into artificial gardens as an accessory for the pleasure of human beings, like purple baubles. They look bright and comfortable yet are motionless and captive, and thus, 'fateless'.

The persona reverts back to the moment and describes the state of the flowers and the birds as darkness is setting:

> But darkness was weighing
> the flowers and birds' backs,
> and already my friends had moved on. (lines 16-18)

She also evokes a feeling of urgency as she needs to catch up with her friends who "had moved on" (18). When the persona returns to the moment, Jamie leaves us with

a rhetorical question: 'What was it to exist so bright and fateless?' Then comes another poem "Landfall" (TH, 15) which serves as a model for endurance and inspiration as with "Alder" (TH, 7) and "Rhododendrons" (TH, 33).

The poem "Landfall" (TH, 15) is about a worn-out swallow suddenly changing its direction towards land below which happens to be a coast where Jamie and her companion take walks. Noticing this single, very tired-looking swallow and its rapid move towards land, Jamie concludes the poem with a rhetorical question whether we can allow ourselves to fail.

The title "Landfall" denotes an "arrival at land on a sea or air journey" and a "collapse of a mass of land; a landslide", both evoking a sense of vertigo and dizziness ("landfall."). Moreover, it suggests three different settings: sea, land and air. As the title of this poem, "Landfall" refers to a piece of land that is habitable and available.

The poem, composed as a six-line sestet, is itself as compact as the swallow it describes, relates neither an act of remembering nor a future expectation. Rather than a past memory, it is about global issues speaker addresses in simple present tense:

> When we walk the coast
> and notice, above the sea,
> a single ragged swallow
> veering towards the earth-
> and blossom-scented breeze,
> can we allow ourselves to fail? (lines 1-6)

The poem is not exactly about a worn-out swallow, but rather about questioning our attitude towards nature and its inhabitants. Jamie is not only questioning our desire to change the damages we've done to nature but also what our own challenges are and how we are handling them. The poem is just one example, concerning the swallow's sudden change of

direction towards a piece of land that it sensed in the flower-scented breeze.

The word "notice" (2), followed by a comma, is the key point in the poem, drawing the reader's attention to the "single ragged swallow / veering towards the earth" (3-4). The dash at the end of the "earth" followed by "and blossom-scented breeze" (5) brings out why the ragged swallow suddenly changes its direction. It is flower scents in the wind that the swallow sensed and that scent is an indication of a piece of land nearby. In other words, this doubleness of direction blurs the motivation of the worn-out bird. Whether the bird is simple trying to reach land or is veering toward the joy of spring remains ambiguous because the returning swallows are the forerunners of spring and warm weather. Moreover, preferring the word "earth" (4) instead of land for the direction the swallow veers signifies Jamie's intention to consider the planet as a whole instead of a restricted or limited property as a land, even though the two words seem alike in meaning.

Jamie's distinctive vocabulary choice (her diction), together with the setting, is functional in the poem. Through words like "fall", "above" (2), "veering" (4), "fail" (6) and places such as "sea" (2), air, and "earth" (4), she creates a sense of imbalance on the reader as though trying to induce in the reader the feeling of free-falling in the air and then diving towards a point with a purpose, like the ragged swallow. While reading the poem, feelings of dizziness and floating take the reader out of the poem into the void because of the open-ended finish, without any punctuation, as in "The Bower" which also finishes without punctuation. That is where she leaves the reader in a state of self-inquiry.

Swallows are known for their swift flights and regular migrations in flocks. Despite their collective movements, this

swallow is alone implying that only this swallow has managed to survive and return back from their dangerous migration, thus making it a symbol of endurance. Because of the adjective "ragged" (3) describing the swallow, this endurance has a double reference; the bird seems to have survived the environmental pollution it has been exposed to during its migration and it also refers to the bird's accomplishment and determination to complete its long and exhausting routine. Swallows migrate to Africa to spend the winter and make the difficult journey back in April. Man can learn a lesson of endurance and resistance from this small and fragile bird that travels continents twice a year.

The poem also invokes a sense of hope through the "ragged swallow" (3) that has succeeded in reaching the land that produces "blossom-scented breeze" (5), one of the indications of spring and warm weather. It finishes with a philosophical question "can we allow ourselves to fail" (6) implying that this small swallow might be seen as a mentor to teach us how to live and survive. It also hints at environmental (the air, water and land) pollution which affects the ecosystem and causes damage to its inhabitants.

Taken together, these poems construct a sustained vision of nature as healer, mentor, and silent examiner of human life. In "Alder" and "The Puddle", the speaker turns to modest, easily overlooked features of the landscape—a rain-hardened tree, a shallow pool—as interlocutors from whom she seeks "a way to live / on this damp ambiguous earth", reimagining survival and balance as lessons offered by the more-than-human world. "Water Lilies" similarly figures vegetal endurance as a form of quiet instruction: the lilies' slow insistence on rising through "peat-stained" water towards the "border where water becomes air" models resilience under conditions of pollution and damage. In "Rhododendrons", this pedagogical role shifts into an existential register, as

the reflection of ornamental yet toxic blossoms prompts the speaker's unresolved question about "exist[ing] so bright and fateless" while time "coursed / through our every atom", momentarily suspending her between contemplation and the need to "move on". Finally, "Landfall" condenses these concerns into the image of a "single ragged swallow" veering towards "earth – / and blossom-scented breeze", transforming a migrant bird into an emblem of tenacity and an implicit ethical challenge: "can we allow ourselves to fail?" Across these texts, Jamie's ecopoetics repeatedly directs the reader *towards* the natural world as a site where endurance, vulnerability, and responsibility are mirrored back to human beings, and where the recurrent question "how should we live?" is posed not in abstract terms but through close attention to the lives and trajectories of non-human others.

Dwelling in and with Nature

This section centres on the sense of home and on dwelling in and with nature. The first poem is "The Tree House" (TH, 41). A tree house is a house-like structure in a domestic place such as a garden built in the branches of a tree for children to play in. It also refers to the primitive dwelling place of ancient people. Thus, the title alludes to a sense of home both as a playhouse and a shelter.

The title poem of the collection "The Tree House" (TH, 41) written in a five-line stanza form (a loose cinquain pattern throughout the poem) is a dwelling place. It is a place where an adult starts reminiscing about her memories of climbing up into a tree house as a child and remembering the sounds and images from those memories. The treehouse is located in the vicinity of the sandbanks beside a river in Fife. The speaker finds similarities between the way the tree and treehouse

have bonded and likens that relationship to the way the lives of everyday people are interlaced with each other and nature. Jamie uses that concept as a transition to emphasize the nature of everyday people. Through rhetorical questions, she not only gives a description of where she dwells, but also brings the subject back to human versus nature interaction.

The poem where the speaker goes back to her childhood memories opens with a lively depiction of the physical act of climbing up to a tree house and entering while the sounds from the nearby town, such as the "town clock" (3) and a car rushing and screeching home from a club, are heard in the background:

> Hands on a low limb, I braced,
> swung my feet loose, hoisted higher,
> heard the town clock toll, a car
> breenge home from a club
> as I stooped inside. Here (lines 1-5)

It is noticeable from the very beginning of the poem the collaboration of the hands (of the speaker) and limbs (of the tree) that carry the speaker to the house. But in fact, this concept highlights how nature is always accommodating humans. Moreover, the word choice (diction) in the first stanza sets an atmosphere that is both active ("braced" (1), "swung" (2), "loose" (2), "hoisted higher" (2), "heard" (3), "toll" (3), "breenge" (4) and "stooped" (5)) and crowded ("town" (3) and "club" (4)) until the last word of the stanza - "here"- suggesting the speaker is inside the house now.

Then, the agility of a child climbing up to a tree house in the first stanza gives way to an inactive and solitary space in the second stanza as she remembers her awareness of the surroundings:

> I was unseeable. A bletted fruit
> hung through tangled branches
> just out of reach. Over house roofs:

sullen hills, the firth drained
down to sandbanks: the *Reckit Lady*, the *Shair as Daith*. (lines 6-10)

The negative tone used in the depiction of the surroundings with "bletted fruit" (6), "sullen hills" (9), and "firth drained down to sandbanks" (9-10) enhance the awareness of the fragility and mortality of the natural world and hints at climate change as well. She feels invisible in this location. Her invisibility is like a cloak. Because she is "unseeable" (6), no one can perceive her or be aware of her movements. However, she is very receptive to everything happening around her.

The next lines support this idea since she visualizes the environment surrounding the tree house and what can be seen from it. Identifying the things closest, she first describes the state of the tree branches as "tangled" (7), likely meaning they have become overgrown and intertwined. As her description moves further away from the tree house, she identifies a rotting fruit on one of the tree's branches; the "bletted fruit" (6) is close enough but still she cannot reach it, depicting it as "just out of reach". Because the tree house is built at a higher location on the tree, over the rooftops she can see the gloomy hills as a strait flows into the sandbanks: the "Reckit Lady" (10), and the "Shair as Daith" (10) which are references to the Scottish landscape.

With the third stanza, the shift in time from past to present refers to the same place at a different time and the speaker now seems to be a teenager or perhaps older. The tree house seems to be a place where she feels the security and the comfort of a home life. She is not afraid to lie down and fall asleep here.

I lay to sleep,
beside me neither man
nor child, but a lichened branch
wound through the wooden chamber,
pulling it close; a complicity (lines 11-15)

She makes correlations and comparisons between her experiences in that tree house and current struggles of daily life. A human form may be expected ("man" and "child") to lie beside humans, a "lichened branch" (13) winding through the wooden chamber is personified next to her. Before describing the "lichened branch", the speaker first remarks that next to her is neither a "man" (12) nor a "child" (13). She uses words that evoke a sense of family and then creates similarities between a branch and family members. She is creating an image as though to affirm that the lichen branch is like a family member for the speaker or might be highlighting the close relationship between man and nature. This part also highlights that nature has similar growing experiences a family does while maturing. The tree house has become part of the tree as the branches have breached the structure and pulled it closer together as though it is one entity now both dead and alive. Their closeness is also a reminder of the tight relations between family members. Being entwined complicates the situation of the wooden chamber and the winding lichened branch, described as "complicity", due to the fact that they as belonging to the same species destroy one another.

The word "complicity" (15) as the last word of the stanza is tied to the next stanzas with a simile since the speaker likens the state of the tree and its branches to our lives:

> like our own, when arm in arm
> on the city street, we bemoan
> our families, our difficult
> chthonic anchorage
> in the apple-sweetened earth, (lines 16-20)

She likens this state of being "involved with others in an activity that is unlawful or morally wrong" (Stevenson & Waite 357) to our own lives as she says "complicity / like our own" (15-16). The shift from first person singular "I" (11)

to plural "our" (16) and "we" (17) highlights the transition from her own childhood experience and brings her back to the reality of daily life as she starts listing our human behaviour as though complicit with an implied reader. Then, she goes on to describe the common behaviour and says that "we" roam the streets and lament, complaining about "our families" (18). She may only be referring to human conduct in general or to the psychology of teenagers who generally feel that their relationship with their families or their home lives are "difficult chthonic anchorage" (18-19) (the metaphor of family), a hellish existence where they are given limited or partial freedoms to do what they want when they want since the rest of the world is like an "apple-sweetened earth" (20); sweet and charming, mysterious and tempting as the forbidden fruit, an apple from the tree in the Garden of Eden. However, this behaviour is not unique to teenagers. We, as humans, always find something to complain about in our lives. And she whines that they would have lived their long receding years, the long experience of "our mid-decades" (22) in small dwellings such as "sheds and attic rooms" (23) alone without their families:

> without whom we might have lived
> the long ebb of our mid-decades
> alone in sheds and attic rooms,
> awake in the moonlit souterrains
> of our own minds; without whom (lines 21-25)

She metaphorically characterizes their "moonlit" (24) subconsciousness as "souterrains of our mind" (24-25) suggesting the dream of a life beyond the present one. Jamie goes on to describe this imagined behaviour and likens our minds to taxis people hail and enter that unexpectedly change their destinations.

The next stanza begins with a rhetorical suggestion "suppose" (31):

Suppose just for the hell of it
we flagged one - what direction would we give?
Would we still be driven here,
our small-town Ithacas, our settlements
hitched tight beside the river (lines 31-35)

The speaker suggests that we pretend that, just for the sake of it, we stopped one of those taxis to get somewhere. She is questioning 'where do we want life to take us?' By offering this in a question, Jamie is hinting that life can be guided by our choices and we can create an identity in the environment, in this case through the construction of a tree house. With the existential enquiry "what direction would we give?" (32) Jamie attracts attention to the sense of home and belonging. She is questioning if we always know where we want to go, or do we just wait for life to happen to us while staying where we are. She brings the subject back to the tree by presenting the first option as a return to the present place. In doing so, she creates a vivid image of the small town Ithaca,[51] with dockens and a lady's mantle in the gardens and children's bikes left on the grass. Ithaca as an allusion to Homeric legend refers to the family and home of Odysseus and the point of destination in his ten-year-long journey home.

The last three stanzas blend into one through the way Jamie constructs her sentences in the poem. She moves on with the dwellings where trees are cut and processed and turned into planks to build living spaces. The process of nailing the planks together to build a sort of dwelling place implies man's colonizing attitude (of nature). While the poem ends, she is appalled at the idea that we've expected and demanded, not really asked the tree to carry the load of a tree house as it is made of dead trees:

[51] Located in the Ionian Sea to the west of mainland Greece, Ithaca is the home of the legendary character Ulysses.

a dwelling of sorts; a gall
we've asked the tree to carry
of its own dead, and every spring
to drape in leaf and blossom, like a pall. (lines 42-45)

In essence, the tree house is like a casket and in the spring we expect the tree to drape it with leaves, flowers and so on. Although the expression "to carry off its own dead" (43-44) sounds over dramatic, it maintains a serious tone throughout the poem. The treehouse is suggestive of a sheltering place, a refuge in the beginning of the poem and turns to a metaphor for a coffin made of tree wood at the end.

This is another poem by Jamie where she reflects the dark nature of human beings against nature, this time choosing the title and words that are references to types of dwellings. She portrays human beings' indifference in such a way that her words make the reader empathize with her childhood and then everyday life. And then through her very carefully chosen words, as if dark humour, she brings it back to nature and points out human beings' indifferent attitude and destructive habits towards nature, as was emphasized in "The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3). However, the spring which brings hope of recreation with budding in the 'wishing tree' functions as a provider of covering with the leaf and blossoms producing a gloomy mortality.

"The Bower" (TH, 17) -a five-stanza lyric in quatrains- refers to a type of dwelling, a resting place in the shade of the trees Jamie envisions in her mind. As an entrance to the poem, a description of this place as what it is not, rather than what it is, draws the reader's attention as though to solve a puzzle that is the creation of Jamie's mind. A "bower' is an 'arbour' used as a dwelling or shelter in a domestic setting, and the term can also denote natural environments such as parks, gardens, or woods. Jamie turns her bower into a magical place to take refuge in with the strong metaphors she chooses. Each of

her metaphors is a type of dwelling as well. There are strong implications that this place will be different for each reader at different times and locations. It indicates that each time a different person interacts with nature a different image will be created in his/her mind because at different times of the day sunlight filters differently and the weather will change the look of the place.

As with "The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3), the poem begins with describing what this place is not rather than what it is:

> Neither born nor gifted
> crafted, nor bequeathed
> this forest dwelling's little
> but a warp or tease
> in the pliant light
> trees soften and confine. (lines 1-6)

The narrated place, a forest dwelling, is neither created nor designed. Instead, it is the result of completely natural effects created by adaptable light. Because of her vast experiences in various religions and cultures in different parts of the world, Jamie often alludes to concepts from religious scriptures in her poetry. The opening lines subtly echo scriptural descriptions of God—'neither begets nor is born', 'eternal', 'ever-existing'—transferred here to the forest dwelling. Because Jamie strongly believes in nature, she gives god-like attributes to nature with the lines "Neither born nor gifted / crafted, nor bequeathed" (1-2) which are related to the concept of God and God's purity, uniqueness and self-sufficiency. This is an example of allusion where she references other resources such as Holy books and scriptures without naming them in her poems. Referring to scriptures through allusion shows Jamie's Romantic convention where she sublimes to the natural dwellings that inspire awe in her.

It is not perfectly shaped, "warp" (4), however, it is a place playfully provoked and teased by compliant lights where the

bower will naturally and wilfully "soften and confine" (6). It is a place that exists at that moment due to the way the sun is beaming through the trees to "soften and confine" (6) the appearance. To find it comforting as a dwelling would be a "warp or tease" (4) of reality, that at night or in different weather this place would not feel like the way it is now. Then it would become a dwelling with different characteristics. The image Jamie creates has the reader think of a place where there are trees and shades created by natural sunlight. With the way sunlight filters through the branches, the place looks almost magical. It is tempting to go sit and take refuge in that natural setting. The image is powerful, almost like an invitation for the reader to just go and rest there.

It is also implied in the poem that the bower is an unsettled and uninhabited natural dwelling in the forest beyond reach and is recreated in the poet's imagination;

> Though it's nothing
> but an attitude of mind
> mere breath rising in staves,
> the winds assail
> its right to exist, this anchorage
> or musical-box, veiled
> and listing deep
> in the entailed estate,
> sure only of its need
> to annunciate. (lines 7-16)

Jamie makes an underestimation (shows modesty) about the place she created in the previous stanza by referring to the 'bower' as "it's nothing" (1) even though she gives a god-like attribution to it in the opening stanza. Her statement about the place that it is "an attitude of mind" (2) leaves the impression that this place only exists because she is there, and also helps the reader understand why it was "warp" (4), not perfect. The woodland will always be there, but the dwelling

she calls 'bower' is only created in her mind. When she leaves, the 'bower' she has created will not be there. Although Jamie first lets the reader know that this place is created just in her mind, the following lines evoke the sense of there being a whole body experience when her breathing changes "mere breath rising in staves" (9). She wants the reader to feel how her posture changes when she encounters the forest's edge, which she later highlights in the poem. Though the word "assail" is negative, Jamie wants the reader to know that nature is helping her create this magical place where "the winds assail its right to exist" (10-11). The winds are forcing her to create this place in her mind. As the winds blow, some branches break, some bend and re-arranged leaves filter the sunlight which re-shapes the 'bower', the dwelling.

Jamie is so awed that she does not seem to be exactly sure what this imaginary home she created in her mind is like. That is when she uses the metaphors "this anchorage or musical-box" (11-12), or maybe both. The word anchorage (which originates from the dwelling place of an anchorite, a religious recluse) is an area that is suitable for a ship to anchor. This god-like, magical place in Jamie's mind is the perfect place for her to take refuge in from her daily struggles, just like ships do. They take refuge in anchorages when there is a storm, or when they need maintenance. This "musical-box" (12) is an instrument that, on the surface, is beautifully shaped and provides soothing music. However, beneath the case, it is a box which consists of a bar with tuned steel teeth that are struck by pins or projections as they rotate around a cylinder or a disk. This mechanically designed, complicated device produces music and tunes from a beautifully designed cover which is not only familiar but also soothes human souls. With just one phrase Jamie creates nostalgia. There are not many music boxes produced nowadays. They are concealed, "veiled / and listing deep in the entailed estate" (12-14). With this

expression, Jamie references the difficulty of finding a house in the property listing in Scotland. The human mind is like a music box as well, very detailed, mechanical, yet processes a lot of thoughts at the same time in harmony. Those thoughts also have the need to be announced and to be talked about, "sure only of its need to annunciate" (15-16). Just like the music box and anchorage need to be found and identified to serve their purposes, the bower created in Jamie's mind should not remain hidden there, but instead should be experienced.

Moreover, these metaphors are supported by musical ("staves", "musical box", "song") and naval words ("warp", "anchorage", "listing (tilting) deep", "waves", "winds") regarding another space apart from the forest to enforce or reinstate her feelings. This hinted at a second space which is compared to a harbour or a music box are both confined dwelling places created through imagination and language. Thus, this recreated fictional setting spreads in a humble way that is just whispered from the "staves" (9). However, after being announced through singing by human beings it gets involved with nature:

> But when song, cast
> from such frail enclaves
> meets the forest's edge,
> it returns in waves (lines 17-20)

Jamie once again lets the reader know that this place she created is a product of her imagination and only exists when she is there. Woodland or forests or fields, any natural environment she encounters opens up the floodgates of her imagination. Because it was imagined in her mind, the bower is just like "song" (17) coming out of the music box that is a delicate yet unique territory. When songs flow from fragile and intricate "frail enclaves" and meet mental images they come back like "waves" (20).

Though the poem is about a bower, there are a lot of other words and phrases used in the poem that are types of different dwellings. She not only describes this magical place that is the product of her imagination, using powerful metaphors, she also creates strong images in the readers' minds while describing the intricate working details of human interaction with nature. The poem is an "evocation of dwelling in the language as much as in nature: language as the means by which we dwell in the world, as our being-in-the-world." (Mackay 87). Moreover, it can be interpreted as the evocation of mind as well.

The poem, "The Swallows' Nest" which Jamie has dedicated to her husband Phil Butler, is her reminiscing about a memory of her husband showing her a nest of two swallows, one male and one female. She first lists the materials thrown around, mostly remnants of household items that are roughly pieced in their storage room. Then she moves on to describe the positions of the birds in and around the nest, elaborating on the construction of their dwelling and describing how one swallow sleeps while the other guards its mate and the nest.

The poem, two stanzas in cinquain form, consists of one sentence. The inverted sentence structure in the first stanza gives the sense of a messy and disorderly environment which fits with the familiar storage perception:

> Shutters, broken,
> firewood, a rake, a wrought-
> iron bed, the torch-lit
> rafters of the lumber-room,
> you showing me (lines 1-5)

Originated from 'a person who shut' the word "shutters" (1), a cover for a window or door, is an onomatopoeic word where written form includes its sound. On the other hand, as an adjective, "broken" (1) describes the "shutters" but in a reversed word order.

The materials in the poem, the shutters, firewood, rake, and wrought iron bed, are domestic things related to a home or dwelling place but they are not in use nor thrown away, just kept in the "lumber-room" (4) in case of necessity. Lumber room is a British expression to define a room in the house used for storing old furniture and other household items that are not being used. The narrated environment is a dark and uninhabited place.

As she is listing the carelessly placed items of the lumber room, she is slowly drawing attention to the beams (rafters) that are illuminated by a torch (torch-lit rafters). That is when the speaker addresses her husband by saying "you showing me" (5), keeping the reader in suspense for a short time. Then she starts revealing what she is looking at piece by piece.

> one bird tucked in a home-
> made bracket of spittle
> and earth, while its mate slept
> perched on the rim, at an angle
> exact as a raised latch. (lines 6-10)

In the second stanza, the perspective shifts from a man-made domestic room to a natural, "home-made" (6-7) nest of "spittle and earth" (7-8) which has literally been built with the spit and mud by the swallows. One of the swallows, possibly the female, is "tucked" (6) inside that earthy, tiny dwelling which leaves the impression she is sitting on her eggs. Meanwhile, her mate is alert, "perched on the rim" (9), almost guarding her. Jamie brings out the stark contradiction between these swallows and their nests that are part of nature with the man-made structure filled with man-made items. She is in awe that such natural creatures of the earth have built their nest in such an unnatural place, in the lumber room full of unnatural materials.

In Scots language, the word "lumber" (4) refers to a sexual partner or a relationship with someone of the opposite sex.

Thus, with the word lumber Jamie refers to more than one but still related meanings; apart from the meanings 'useless items', and 'sexual partner', the word also means 'plank' and 'timber' referring to her carpenter husband, her partner.

The description of the human couple and their domestic dwelling place emphasised in the first stanza is transferred to a pair of swallows and their nest as a dwelling place in the second stanza. These two are depicted as one within the other. Compared to "The Tree House" (TH, 41) where the man's invasion of nature by building a treehouse as a dwelling place is emphasized, "The Swallows' Nest" focuses on nature's welcomed invasion, in the form of a bird nest, inside human beings' home environment. This intrusion suggests a little hope since it brings a sign of life to a cemetery of property with no sign of life. Moreover, the pair of swallows in their nest of spittle and earth symbolizes Jamie and her husband and their affectionate closeness.

Focusing on the theme of dwelling places and swallows created in her lumber room brings to the fore another of Jamie's poems, "Swallows" (TH, 18). Written in the form of a sonnet, the poem is about a desired dwelling place, a domestic place "with swallows in every room". Jamie once again shows her admiration for the swallows as she did in "The Swallows' Nest" and she likens the twittering and grooming swallows in "picture frames" (6) to the "audience" (7) in the auditorium waiting for an opera. She wishes that her "battened" (1) heart was like a dwelling that has swallows in each room, as she describes how comfortable and content the swallows are when they chirp and groom themselves like the audience waiting to see the opera who converse with each other in their formal and elegant attire. And in the morning those swallows fly over her bed in a circle as if ridiculing her misfortune before switching their flight towards the light through the stairwell. She wishes that her "battened" (1) heart

was a house with swallows in every room, believing to have found happiness and the joy of life in a room full of swallows. It suggests that the natural world with its living creatures is a source of joy which provides an evocation of home in human consciousness.

Another figurative dwelling place shows itself in "Speirin" (TH, 14), one of Jamie's poems in Scots. The title 'Speirin' means making a request and expecting an answer. The loose translation of the poem is: "Be not afraid, honey, one day we'll go together to the dusky bluebell woods, and lose ourselves- see, I'd rather whummel (turn upside down) a single hour in the blue of those small flowers than live for an eternity in some cold heaven. Hush now, til I ask of you will you haud (stay) with me?". If the poem were to be put in prose form, it would be; "Don't be afraid honey, one day we will go to the dusky bluebell woods together, and lose ourselves there. See, I'd rather roll/frolic in the blue of those small flowers than live in some cold heaven for an eternity. Hush now, Will you stay with me until I ask? (Will you wait till that moment comes that I am ready and ask to make the move?)".

The poem is about the speaker requesting from her partner to be patient with her until such a time comes that she is ready to go to a particular place where her partner would like to be. She is letting him know and trying to convince him that she would have preferred to be at that almost magical place rather than where they currently are but she is not ready to make the move. She is imploring him to stay with her until she is ready.

Written in Scots language, the poem has a pastoral setting describing Scotland's "stourie" (dusky) (3) landscape with bluebell flowers, which emphasizes its locality. She may have chosen to write this poem in Scots not only because she is

Scottish but also shares that common language with her partner, and they both long to be in Scotland. Jamie reflects her own personal relationship in this poem and the place is the focus and the key point of this exchange. Even though there is no mention of a dwelling, in the sense of a type of a building or a nest in this poem, Scotland as a country and as a home becomes the dwelling preferred compared to their current location.

The speaker addresses her "hinny" (1) and tries to assure him about their common disturbance and common goals. She starts with empathizing and points out the captivating scene that they may have shared together before:

> Binna feart, hinny,
> yin day we'll gang thegither
> tae thae stourie
> blaebellwids,
> and loss wirself - (lines 1-5)

It seems that the speaker and the addressee are both far away from their homeland and they are homesick. There is an implication that a lot is going on in her life and she is not ready to make the move yet, and her partner may want to get away from their daily lives at their current place which she likens to a cold heaven. Her partner may have brought up his desire to relocate back to their homeland before and with the stanza above she is trying to comfort and assure him. While the addressee, the "hinny" (1), seems to be pessimistic and has lost his hope, the speaker is optimistic and sure they will accomplish returning to their country "yin day" (2), which refers to an unspecified time in the future. Furthermore, bluebell flowers growing in meadows are native to Scotland and the place "thae storie blaebellwids" (3-4) is used figuratively and is the symbol of the speaker's homeland, Scotland:

see, I'd rather
whummel a single oor
intae the blae o thae wee flo'ers
than live fur a' eternity
in some cauld hivvin. (lines 6-10)

Even though the word "whummel" (7) means to turn something upside down, to empty something, to knock down, and more, Jamie uses it as rolling and frolicking "intae the blae o thae wee flo'ers" (8). It is used figuratively, suggesting moving unsteadily into the small flowers. The speaker compares spending one hour rolling and frolicking in the bluebells to an infinite, eternal time in "some cauld hivvin" (10) which is a reference to their current location. The speaker likens their current dwelling place to cold heaven which is also a biblical reference. By depicting their residence as cold heaven the speaker shows her dislike towards that place she lives in. It appears there is a lot going on in her life and her partner might want to go back to their homeland and leave their current state, which she likens to cold heaven and which might be used to describe the people (figuratively). However, she refers to the place they'd both rather be as huge and perfect like heaven with lots of flowers. She prefers darkish woods full of a small and single type of flower; the bluebells. The choice of the speaker demonstrates that she favours the love of nature rather than the love of religion.

In the last stanza the speaker's naivety, her imploring but eager attitude, turns into a dominant mood while the poem concludes with a consolation:

Wheest, nou, till I spier o ye will ye
haud wi me? (lines 11-12)

"Wheest" (11) is an onomatopoeic word providing a vivid atmosphere meant to 'hush'. It gives the sense that the speaker and the addressee are talking face to face. She is asking her partner to be patient with her, almost promising that they will

go to the "stourie blaebellwids" (3-4), just requesting that her partner stays with her until she is ready to make that move.

Using Scots language, the common language for her and her companion, and describing their yearnings for the Scottish landscape through dusky bluebell woods, the speaker is addressing a current relationship decision which happens to be an almost urgent desire to go back to their place in Scotland. As Jamie once stated "language is what we do as human beings, that's where we're at home, that's our means of negotiating with the world. So it doesn't get in the way, it enables. We do language like spiders do webs." (Mackay 87). She is trying to convince him to be patient until she is ready to make that move and imploring him to stay with her. Centred on the natural landscape, Jamie relates the sense of home, homesickness and personal relations in the poem.

Another issue Jamie deals with in her nature writing is the effect of observation and the natural world as the source of relief and joy such as in the poems "White-sided Dolphins" (TH, 22), "Basking Shark" (TH, 23), "The Whale-watcher" (TH, 25), "The Buddleia" (TH, 27), and "The Dipper" (TH, 49).

The poem "White-sided Dolphins" (TH, 22) details the memory of a group of people, dolphin-watchers, having observed a pod of dolphins. Humans are on a boat, the dolphins are in the ocean. She is comparing the dolphins in the ocean to the people on the boat by giving human-like attributes to the dolphins. The speaker characterizes the dolphins with human qualities such as the "muscular wingers" (9-10), "mothers-with- young" (10) and "old scarred outriders" (10) referring to rugby or football players, mothers with children and an escort of the group. For a while, the dolphins take turns accompanying the humans on the boat and enjoying the wake "pressure-wave" (14) the ship created before following their "inner oceanic maps" (19) and swimming away. Though the

people on the boat observe the dolphins, they are also being observed by the dolphins which "careen and appraise" (15) the human beings, the observers, "with a speculative eye" as if human beings (16). With the personification of dolphins Jamie might show that these animals are as perceptive and important as human beings. This poem illustrates and is one of Jamie's observations of nature and its inhabitants. It also shows interaction between humans and nature's dwellers while each remains in their own environment.

The ultimate distance between humans and nonhumans is revealed in the "Basking Shark" (TH, 23) which embodies a tension between curiosity and doubt, hesitation and determination, land and sea, boundaries and freedom, and the dizziness the experience caused as the persona talks about a day spent at a "cliff-edge" (1) to observe the 'basking shark'. As she lays down on the edge of the cliff, looking below, she is immersed and captivated by the images of the different levels of the sea she can see even though she is at a higher place and looking down. The persona is awed that each level is a living being of its own, referencing how different sea creatures live at different altitudes within the ocean, then, expresses her surprise, shock and fear as she snaps out of her observation of the sea levels and becomes aware of the presence of the basking shark. The persona makes references to the immense size of the shark, its movements, what could have drawn it to that particular place, and in the presence of such an amazing creature of nature she remarks on her inability to pay attention to anything else. She also points out that while everyone at that location is watching the basking shark, they are being watched by the shark as well. She makes the whole experience seem and feel like it was a planned yet still a surprise rendezvous.

In "The Buddleia" (TH, 27), the persona, a middle-aged woman with kids, shifts from metaphysical thoughts in

which she questions "a God" (2) to the real, physical world; her "elderly parents" (8), "their broken-down Hoover" (8-9), her "quarrelling kids" (9). Her thoughts about the existence of a creator are interrupted by the everyday chores of a mother who is also a daughter. She manages to find relief in evoking "the divine in the lupins, or foxgloves, or self-seeded buddleia" (14-16). The poem suggests an invocation to nature as the divine.

In "The Whale-watcher" (TH, 25), the speaker talks about her desire to live in seclusion within nature "when at last the road gives out" and choosing a "battered caravan" as a dwelling, The process of man's self-awareness is arduous and challenging like "stitches sewn in a rent / almost beyond repair" (15-16). It suggests that we can only find, know and repair ourselves through observing nature and by leaving everyday struggles behind to rejuvenate within this natural environment. Watching the whales is one example of being in and one with nature.

"The Dipper" (TH, 49) is about a bird, a dipper, Jamie encounters during one of her winter walks "through a forest of firs" (2). This surprise encounter seeing a bird bursting from a waterfall and starting chirping must have created a beautiful picture for Jamie to share with her readers. She would like the reader to experience this unexpected, strange yet beautiful scene and that is when she says "it isn't mine to give" (9). She feels maybe talking about her encounter may help the reader to picture it but doesn't believe anything she describes can make up for the real image she experienced. The choice of this as the final poem of the collection *The Tree House* (2004) is significant, not only because mother nature has a way of always surprising us even while enjoying a simple walk, when least expected, but also because Jamie wants the reader to go out and experience the surprises of nature they will encounter.

All the poems related to nature and environmental issues used in this chapter are successively; "The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3), "Frogs" (TH, 5), "Flight of Birds" (TH, 39), "Crossing The Loch" (J, 1), "Alder" (TH, 7), "The Puddle" (TH, 47), "Water Lilies" (TH, 34), "Rhododendrons" (TH, 33), "Landfall" (TH, 15), "The Tree House"(TH, 41), "The Bower" (TH, 17), "The Swallows' Nest" (TH, 16), "Swallows" (TH, 18), "Speirin" (TH, 14), "White-sided Dolphins" (TH, 22), "Basking Shark" (TH, 23), "The Buddleia" (TH, 27), "The Whale-watcher" (TH, 25), and "The Dipper" (TH, 49). These are some of the poems Jamie has written without restricting herself to one particular writing style; instead, she displays natural diversity in her poems and poetic form.

The poems in this chapter have been analysed in terms of three broad sections: (i) 'Destruction of nature and environmental issues'; (ii) 'Nature as a Healer and a Mentor'; (iii) 'Dwelling in and with Nature' which include her observation and appreciation of nature at its natural beauty.

Through a wish granting tree, a pair of frogs, and a group of birds, the poems in the first category emphasize human beings' destructive impact on the natural world and its dwellers for their own prosperity. To Jamie, characters in each of these poems represent nature as a whole which is being destroyed and which continues to suffer from human greed and an indifferent behaviour against other living creatures, as in the case of "The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3). These poems also depict the precarious cycle of life and death in a paradoxical way to accentuate the striking similarities and conflicting relationship between man and nature, and human beings' aloof attitude to non-humans. They also stress human intervention in natural habitats, such as in building roads, a sign of civilisation damaging nature and her inhabitants, leaving them with no place for reproduction as was addressed in "Frogs" (TH, 5). These poems are not only cautioning

but also warning about human impact and highlight the man-made eradication of nature which causes birds to start disappearing from domestic places such as the gardens we have altered with materials that do not belong there and the changes we made to the environment to fulfil our own compulsions as was presented in "Flight of Birds" (TH, 39).

The second category also has trees and birds as main characters and presents human beings' need to see nature as a 'mentor'. The need for advice in some poems comes in the form of questions or wishes compelling the reader to ask or hope for the same and find a resolution based on the way nature looks after herself. "Alder" (TH, 7), "Rhododendrons" (TH, 33) and "Landfall" (TH, 15); each represents countless experiences resulting in survival, regardless of what they faced. The questions 'Won't you teach me a way to live on this damp ambiguous earth?' and 'what was it to exist so bright and fateless?' are asked as a way of learning the secrets of life from natural beings. In order to survive through life's struggles, "Alder" (TH, 7) is questioned how it has done so for as long as it has, and asked rhetorically if it can teach its survival skills. This is not the only question that is asked throughout the poems. In another poem, the question 'what was it to exist so bright and fateless?' is posed as a way of learning the secrets of life from natural beings, as in "Rhododendrons" (TH, 33). The last poem in this section, "Landfall" (TH, 15), is written towards a worn-out swallow that has managed to survive and return from its dangerous migration, symbolizing the endurance of a swallow. The poem questions whether we, as human beings, are going to fail the earth and its inhabitants because of our role in reducing habitable spaces for other living beings. It also asks if we are going to fail ourselves by not showing the endurance the swallow has done in the poem.

The poems in the third category are about dwelling in and with nature, as well as the observation of nature and its

aesthetic appearance. They bring three types of dwellings to the forefronts that are completely different in their nature. One is constructed by the hands of humans, a tree house, another is a creation of the human mind influenced by natural beauty, and the last is completely natural and built by two birds in a lumber room. All of them have a common bond which is the human interaction with nature that Jamie focuses on. However, in this relationship nature is always the one accommodating humans. "The Tree House" (TH, 41) is a man-made dwelling place in nature which is not only a playhouse that entertains a young child but is also a shelter for an adult to take refuge from current struggles and then a burden for the tree itself, indicating the multiple life stages humans go through. The physical dwelling in 'The Tree House' is replaced with a magical one that is the product of imagination in "The Bower", where this dwelling is not just a creation of the imagination because it is voiced with the language spoken, it then becomes the product of mind and language which happens at the intersection when eyes see the place, mind designs it, and words not only describe it but also immortalize the scene as a dwelling place. In addition to the 'treehouse' and the 'bower', there is also a nest of a pair of swallows portrayed as a natural dwelling place. The poem describes a 'nest' in a room where Jamie and her partner reside. Compared to the "The Tree House" (TH, 41) where the human beings' invasion of nature by building a treehouse as a dwelling place is emphasized, "The Swallows' Nest" focuses on nature's welcomed invasion in the form of a bird nest, inside human beings' home environment. "The Swallows' Nest" is filled with warmth and domestic bliss.

In another poem, the dwelling place is not a structure but an idea of 'homeland' where a couple would rather be than where they are. The choice of language for "Speirin" (TH, 14) is Scots language, which happens to be common for her

and her companion and is the language of the land that they are both longing for. The speaker is describing the Scottish landscape through dusky bluebell woods, while addressing a current relationship decision which happens to be his almost urgent desire to go back to their place in Scotland ("Speirin"). In addition to poems with a dwelling theme, the idea of power and impact of the observation of natural world which becomes the source of relief and joy are touched briefly in the poems "White-sided Dolphins" (TH, 22), "Basking Shark" (TH, 23), "The Whale-watcher" (TH, 25), "The Buddleia" (TH, 27), and "The Dipper" (TH, 49).

While immersing herself in observation and reflecting that in her writing style, Jamie evokes creative images in the reader's mind by bringing to the forefront those environmental issues that are impacted by politics and religion. Through her daily interactions with nature, she displays universal phenomena and its impact such as global warming in "Alder" (TH, 7), local phenomena like the UK's nuclear weapon policy in "Crossing The Loch" (J, 1), and spiritual phenomena with nature as the source of religion in "The Buddleia" (TH, 27). By writing in English she knows she can reach out to a wider audience, by writing some of her poems in Gaelic/Scots she is going back to her roots and addressing the issues that impact Scotland directly. She is also using Scots as the common language between herself and her partner as she does in "Speirin" (TH, 14) where her writing in the Scots language is accompanied with the Scottish landscape as the setting of her poem.

As she goes through different phases of her life, not only do her subjects change but also the way she writes differs compared to her earlier work. Her later writing style becomes more focused on the point she wants to make. She mainly prefers the readers to come to their own conclusions rather than accept what she preaches.

By presenting humanity's relationship with non-humans, Jamie deliberately articulates both how nature has been humiliated and spoiled by human acts and human need of nature while still being an integral part of nature. She does this through asking philosophical/rhetorical questions which are indeed the common denominators of her poems when she is bringing environmental issues to the forefront, thus "won't you teach me / a way to live / on this damp ambiguous earth?" ("Alder"), "what is it to lie so / level with the world," and "how should we [as human and non-human] live' ("The Puddle"), "what was it...to exist / so bright and fateless / while time course / through our every atom / over its bed of stone -?" ("Rhododendrons"), "can we allow ourselves to fail?" ("Landfall"), "what direction would we give?" or 'where do we want life to take us?' ("The Tree House"), "what could one do but watch?" ("Basking Shark").

She rejects traditional norms in her poems and frees herself from bearing any label. Thus, the diversity in her poetic style makes her poems reach out to a broader spectrum. Furthermore, she breaks down common, clichéd concepts such as wish-making and shows human involvement in nature by diminishing the living space of non-humans that not only harms nature but in return will impact human lives negatively. Such detrimental behaviour raises the question 'who is the real wild?' highlighting that even though non-human nature is usually labelled 'wild,' they are not the ones damaging the earth and other living creatures as humans do. By doing so, she draws attention to the right of nature and all of its to survive, not just human beings which happens to be an integral element of this earth.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to examine the personal and the political in Kathleen Jamie's poetry collections composed in different stages of her life. In pursuit of this purpose, this study focused on three essential shifts in Kathleen Jamie's poetry, from national ideology (pre-devolution, early 1990s) to gender politics (during devolution, late 1990s), and finally to nature and the environment in her later career, resulting in her being labelled—sometimes reductively—as a 'Scottish Poet', a 'woman poet/writer', or a 'nature poet'. Ironically, the poet's own resistance to such categorizations has proved helpful in analysing her transformation as a poet. For this reason, a chapter has been dedicated to each shift.

Analysis of the poems from the first phase of her career, which focus on national and cultural concerns, shows that she was and remains an ardent supporter of an independent Scotland. Her thoughts about the present state and future of Scotland accord with the position of the Nationalists (a social-democratic political party supporting Scotland's independence). However, in her approach to cultural issues, she questions what should be retained, and what should be altered. This is seen in poems such as "Mr and Mrs Scotland are dead" (QS, 37) and "Lucky Bag" (J, 42).

She oscillates between retaining and foregoing those traditions that comprise an important part of national heritage

but have become obsolete over time. Seen from this perspective, it becomes clear that Jamie holds a realistic position in which much-valued craftsmanship has sadly disappeared, replaced by evolving forms of technology. However, she highlights the dynamic changes happening in a culture where people start to question whether to keep such worn-out traditions as in "Mr and Mrs Scotland are dead" (QS, 37).

In this first phase, in which she deals with national and cultural issues, Jamie focuses on the reasons for and results of migration from different perspectives by referring to historical facts such as the mass migration from the Highlands to the Lowlands. Through the poems "Pioneers" (J, 34) and "One of us" (QS, 43), she draws attention to internal and external migration. These two poems reflect the historical facts of the mass emigration to Canada after the Highland Clearances and describe the emigrants' lives, as displayed in museums, to remind the younger generation about their Scottish past.

On a personal level, she criticizes Scottish culture represented in museums where women's material heritage has been largely ignored and excluded. Her attitude to her cultural heritage and to the remains of her female ancestors is challenging; she criticizes the implied Scottish readers about their own historical heritage. In "Arraheids" (QS, 40), Jamie verbalizes her displeasure and disappointment with national museums that only display male-orientated objects and, in turn, ignore women's cultural presence. This is just one of the poems in which Jamie criticizes her Scottish culture, exposing male-dominated museums that display primarily male-oriented objects and, in turn, ignore women's cultural presence. In this respect, she warns her audience that a Scottish history that ignores or excludes its female heritage cannot adequately inform present or future generations.

Assimilation and alienation in Scottish culture—particularly through the politics of the Scots language—are

explored in "The Graduates" (J, 3) and "Skeins o geese" (QS, 64). While "The Graduates" draws attention to both assimilation and alienation caused by university education, "Skeins o geese" focuses on the grief that comes from her inability to express her sentiments on the sounds in nature, declaring that she can only do so through Scots.

In addition, Jamie voices her thoughts about Scotland's independence, and criticises the British Government for systematic cultural assimilation, its war policies, and their disastrous consequences, as well as the disappointment felt regarding the union as in the poems "Interregnum" (J, 40), "23/09/14" (BC, 41), and "A sealed room" (QS, 60). As Scotland started to reclaim its national identity following the referendum for an independent parliament, Jamie's writing became politically motivated. In this phase of her writing, she reflects on the past in order to evaluate the cultural and political atmosphere in Scotland in the present.

Her second phase of writing addresses the various roles and identities women were conditioned to adopt in Scottish culture. She focuses on the social roles women are expected to adopt—as mothers, partners, wives, or simply as women within a patriarchal culture. The analyses of the poems reveal that Jamie not only demonstrates the social and cultural difficulties women experience in a patriarchal society, but she also deconstructs clichés about women by reversing female stereotypes. She does so by writing about strong female figures such as "The Queen of Sheba" (QS, 9), not bound by culturally accepted roles and identities. She also portrays female figures as the victims of patriarchal societies, such as 'Liz' in "Hand relief" (QS, 14). With "School reunion" (QS, 20), focusing only on females, Jamie ranges back and forth in time, remembering faces as they were, where they are now, and predicting where they will be. With "The Overhaul" (O, 28), she compares a boat stranded on land for maintenance

to her own life, displaying the need to stay while longing to leave with the boat on new adventures.

Though the women are depicted at different ages and from different social backgrounds, Jamie's women are presented as confident and resistant, inspiring hope or serving as role models for women whose actions and education are controlled by a male-dominated society. While "Mrs McKellar, her martyrdom" (J, 24) and "The Garden of Adam and Dot" (J, 8) illustrate female frustration and male indifference to their needs, "Perfect day" (QS, 34) displays mutual bliss between husband and wife. Yet "Wee Wifey" (QS, 30) shows how conflicted she is between her needs and what is expected of her for a happy relationship, and how lonely she feels when she abandons her sense of adventure. Through her poems, Jamie elucidates that some females, just by virtue of being so, are confined to specific gender roles; only the bolder ones are able to confront the confinement, but in doing so are harshly scrutinized.

As an alternative female perspective, Jamie presents her reflections on motherhood, which she has experienced herself, in "The Barrel Annunciation" (J, 9). In this poem, she displays her frustration and discomfort, blaming a rain barrel on a stormy night for her pregnancy. She illustrates many aspects and stages of motherhood, such as a mother's inner world, her dilemma, joy, bliss, fear and confusion. In "St Bride's" (J, 45), she conveys the process of becoming a mother through a hare giving birth during spring, which coincides with her own experience, a week prior to the delivery of her own child. It is clear that she aims to break down the misconception of motherhood as a sacred role and 'heavenly' experience.

The most significant aspect in Jamie's poems about women is related to pregnancy and childbirth. She expresses her affection towards her baby in "Bairnsang" (J, 15), a local

lullaby, through which she displays her motherly concerns and hopes for her child's future in a domestic setting surrounded by nursery items. On the other hand, she aims to break down the misconception of motherhood as a sacred role, a magnificent and heavenly experience. Instead, she verbalises the fatigue, distaste, and painful reality through poems like "The Green Woman" (J, 46), "iv. February" (J, 14) and "Wee Baby" (QS, 29).

Although her poetic career can be divided into three main phases—nation, femininity and environment—a significant stylistic shift took place after devolution; there is a clear difference in her writing style pre-devolution and post-devolution. It is clear that Jamie, who wrote more on the political, has shifted further towards the personal-political or just personal in her later career. The third phase of her writing career reveals her absorption with nature, which has flourished in Jamie's mind during and after the 2000s and is most clearly represented in *The Tree House* (2004).

At this third phase of writing, the change in her poetic style from political to personal-political is noticeable, particularly her inclination 'towards nature'. After Scotland's Parliament was re-established, Jamie, as both a Scottish patriot and a mother, gradually shifted away from nationalist and gender-centred concerns and focused on the natural world, its dwellers and its connection with human beings. Her poems include the inhabitants of the land, the sky and the sea, such as trees, birds, fish, plants, as well as humans. However, her interest lies not in nature alone; she raises awareness about the relationship between natural and cultural interactions, drawing attention to the impact of human beings on nature and ensuing environmental issues. Jamie takes refuge in nature and concentrates more on observing, listening and feeling the natural world and all its inhabitants, distancing herself from her everyday life and focusing on how to co-exist

in this world together without destroying it. Through her questions in the poems, Jamie (or the speakers in her poems) becomes the voice of nature, attempting to build a bridge between nature and humans.

She displays her concerns on the destruction of the natural environment and its inhabitants by indifferent human behaviour through "The Wishing Tree" (TH, 3), "Frogs" (TH, 5), and "Flight of Birds" (TH, 39). These poems, while highlighting the power and cycle of nature as it renews itself, draw attention to how delicate a balance this can be, a balance that human beings ignorantly destroy. Sometimes through rhetorical questions, sometimes through messages in the poems, Jamie becomes the voice of humanity seeking advice from nature, as is the case in "Alder" (TH, 7), where the tree becomes an example and a mentor for endurance while the addressee is searching for answers. "Rhododendrons" (TH, 33) becomes the centre of attention at an evening with friends, while "Landfall" (TH, 15) highlights the endurance of a migrating bird. A tree, flowers and a bird exemplify the determination to survive against distance, adaptation and time, regardless of all obstacles, man-made or natural.

Interaction between humans and nature also becomes central to Jamie's exploration of dwelling in and with nature. The different dwelling places in her poems, such as a man-made tree house, a magical poetic place, or an organic nest in a lumber room, reveal the inevitability of their cohabitation in "The Tree House" (TH, 41), "The Bower" (TH, 17), and "The Swallows' Nest" (TH, 16). Through these poems, Jamie magnifies the bond between humans and nonhumans who, on the surface, appear to be from two different worlds yet are fundamentally dependent on each other for their survival. Additionally, the final section touches on wider political anxieties—such as global warming and the British

Government's nuclear-weapons policy—framing these poems as implicit environmental warnings.

Regardless of how often the background and setting change, Jamie's perspectives on politics, femininity, and the environment continue to evolve. Each poem carries an implicit message while maintaining the natural elements that shape her vision. Her awareness of political and gender issues persists throughout her later work, indicating that these concerns have remained integral to her poetry from the beginning.

Although each of her collections foregrounds one of the issues—nation, gender, or nature—Jamie consistently retains a keen sensibility to all three throughout her career.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that, at each stage of her writing, Kathleen Jamie articulates distinct yet interconnected personal and political concerns—championing Scottish independence and cultural identity, interrogating women's roles in a male-dominated society, and finally turning to the natural world and its entanglement with human life.

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