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Poetic Politics: Writers and the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum

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Abstract

This thesis considers the works of six major literary figures in the context of their engagement with the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum. These writers are, in order of analysis, Edwin Morgan, J.K. Rowling, Liz Lochhead, Alasdair Gray, Kathleen Jamie, and John Burnside. Each has produced a significant literary oeuvre which is examined here in relation to their involvement in the Referendum debate in relation to each other's work. The multifaceted relationship between literature and politics is investigated through the lens of the Referendum, utilising these six figures as interrelated case studies. Chapter One explores Edwin Morgan and J.K. Rowling in relation to each other and to the concept of nationalism as manifested in the Referendum period. Chapter Two focuses on postcolonialism and the work of Alasdair Gray and Liz Lochhead in that same context. The third and final chapter is concerned with Kathleen Jamie and John Burnside's preoccupation with ecopoetics, and how that concern overlapped with Referendum debates. This thesis provides new readings of these six writers in the context of the Referendum. It sets out to establish that, while their published literary works are often connected to the spectrum of stances these writers took regarding the Referendum, these works need to be considered with respect to the nuanced attention all six had previously given to key themes of the Referendum debate in the decades leading up to that political moment.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature:

Sarah Hamlin

Introduction

i. General Introduction

On 18 September 2014, the Scottish electorate was asked 'Should Scotland be an independent country?' 84.6% of the electorate turned out to vote, 'the highest recorded at any Scotland-wide poll since the advent of universal suffrage.'[1] In response to the question, 44.7% of voters answered 'Yes' to independence, and a majority of 55.3% answered 'No'.[2] As a result, Scotland remained in the United Kingdom. During the two year-campaign, Scotland's writers were a vocal presence in the debate. This thesis is concerned with the complicated relationship between writers, their literary work, and the Referendum,[3] with particular focus on the theoretical concepts of nationalism, postcolonialism, and ecopoetics. Work on this thesis commenced nine months before the Referendum took place, and concluded in December 2016. By this time, three further significant electoral moments had taken place in Scotland: the 2015 United Kingdom General Election, the 2016 Scottish Parliamentary Election, and a referendum on the membership of the United Kingdom within the European Union (EU), each of which felt the influence of the Referendum debate. In light of this timing, my desire is that this thesis will serve as a useful portrait of key elements in the relationships between the literary world, the political sphere, and the question of Scottish independence, captured during this critical moment in British history (2014-2016).

The thesis is organised into three chapters which are further divided into subsections. Each chapter focuses on one of the three key theoretical concepts mentioned above, and brings together two individual writers through these concepts. Chapter One, 'Nationalism and the Million Pound Writers', concerns Edwin Morgan, J.K. Rowling, and the theme of nationalism. Nationalism as a term is notoriously challenging to define, as I outline in the opening section of Chapter One. In relation to this particular project, I will argue that the broadest

[1] The Electoral Commission, 'Scottish Independence Referendum: Report on the Referendum Held on 18 September 2014' (2014).
[2] Unless otherwise specified, a capitalised Yes or No in this thesis refers to the campaigns for either a Yes or No vote in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum.
[3] Where the word Referendum is capitalised, it refers to the Scottish independence Referendum of 2014.

and most apolitical definitions are of most use in discussing Scottish nationalism as it pertains to the writers in this thesis. The definitions of nationalism which can best accommodate both Scottish nationalism and British unionism are the most helpful, as in this Chapter, I argue that Edwin Morgan and J.K. Rowling represent opposing ideas of national identity within the United Kingdom nation-state. National identity is defined as 'a sense of the nation as a cohesive whole, as represented by (the maintenance of) distinctive traditions, culture, linguistic or political features, etc.'[4] It is therefore possible for each of these Scotland-based writers to hold seemingly mutually exclusive national identities despite belonging to the same nation-state, as I shall investigate in relation to the Referendum in this chapter. Their donations of approximately £1 million, by Edwin Morgan to the Scottish National Party (hereafter referred to as the SNP), and by J.K. Rowling to the campaign for the continuation of the British Union (Better Together), ensured that both of these writers and their works were prominent in the debate surrounding the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum. As writers, political commentators, and public figures, Morgan and Rowling are crucial individuals in the study of literature and politics in Scotland at the time of the Referendum.

Chapter Two, 'Postcolonialism and Scottish Independence in the works of Liz Lochhead and Alasdair Gray', discusses these two writers, who each embrace elements of postcolonial theory in their writing. Building on the work of Chapter One, I discuss the relationship between nationalism and postcolonialism in the United Kingdom as it relates to Scottish independence. This chapter examines the work of a growing number of critics who utilise postcolonial theory to discuss Scottish literature, including in the work of the two pro-independence writers, Lochhead and Gray. I argue that postcolonialism internationally is inexorably linked with Scottish nationalism in the twentieth century, but not, as some critics have claimed, because Scottish nationalism is itself a postcolonial movement. Taking into account Scotland's significant role as a colonising power, along with the valuable use of postcolonial theories in Scottish literature, I propose the use of a new term, 'co-colonial', to be applied in these circumstances. As Chapter Two argues, 'co-colonial' refers to the literature of

[4] Anon., 'National Identity N.', in *Oxford English Dictionary* ed. by John Simpson (Online: Oxford University Press, 2003).

nations such as Scotland, where justification is possible for certain postcolonial sentiments, such as disassociation from the metropole (London) or subjection to cultural hegemony, but where national identity is simultaneously influenced by that nation's role as a colonising power. I argue that the centrality of the British Empire to Scottish identity must be acknowledged whilst also preserving other useful applications of postcolonial theory in relation to Scottish literature and the Referendum debate. In the context of the rise in postcolonial studies worldwide, including within literary studies, it is important to address Scotland's position in this way in relation to questions of separation from the UK. Klaus Peter Müller argues:

> Scotland has evidently not only been subjected by England, it has often profited from the Union substantially in many respects, not least in connection with the British Empire. Which is why Kirsten Sandrock in her text points out the need for new perspectives on Scotland and postcolonialism.[5]

In this regard, I am hopeful that the term co-colonial can be usefully applied in future discussions regarding postcolonialism and Scottish literature.

My third and final chapter focuses on the role of ecopoetics in the work of Kathleen Jamie and John Burnside, and is entitled 'Ecology and the Referendum.' This chapter develops an understanding of Jamie and Burnside as commentators on the Referendum inspired by an ecological sensibility at the core of their published works. Ecopoetics or ecocriticism explores the relationship between the nonhuman (flora, fauna, the land, the environment) and the constructs of the human world, including nation:

> Initially focussed on the reappraisal of Romanticism… and its cultural progeny, it has since broadened to address the question, in all of its dimensions, how cultures construct and are in turn constructed by the non-human world.[6]

This chapter investigates the very different responses from these two writers to the question of Scottish independence in relation to their mutual association with ecopoetics. Jamie supported a Yes vote, whereas Burnside boycotted the

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[5] Klaus Peter Müller, *Scotland 2014 and Beyond* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), p. 21.
[6] Hannes Bergthaller, 'What Is Ecocriticim?', (Online: European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture and Environment, 2017).

Referendum altogether. Burnside is therefore a crucial figure with whom to end this thesis, which argues for an individualistic reading of the relationship between writers and their politics, and the possibilities for Scottish literature beyond 2014.

For the purposes of this thesis, 'Referendum period' will refer to the period of time from the signing of the Edinburgh Agreement on 15 October 2012, to 19 September 2014. The Edinburgh Agreement declared the following:

> The United Kingdom Government and the Scottish Government have agreed to work together to ensure that a referendum on Scottish independence can take place.[7]

That Referendum took place on 18 September 2014, the results of which were declared the following day. Unless otherwise specified, throughout this thesis the capitalised word 'Referendum' will refer to the 18 September 2014 event.

A new reading of the work of these influential Scottish writers is necessary following the Referendum, in which all six were given prominence. Their public roles during the Referendum enhance our understanding of their literary contributions, just as their creative work informs their public political statements. Henceforth, these writers will be associated with the stands they took during the Referendum period. It is therefore essential to be conscious of the nuances in their explorations of cultural nationalism and cultural unionism, and attend to each as an individual, rather than as 'Yes writers' or 'No writers'. In investigating pertinent literary works with reference to their public activities during the Referendum period, this thesis provides new readings of some of the texts that have shaped ideas of Scotland and Britain in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

ii. Methodology

My research for this thesis draws on a wide range of secondary sources, including academic publications, social media, government records, private correspondence, interviews, and both print and online journalism. Journalistic sources are particularly significant for this thesis. The relationship between literature and public discourse is often expressed through journalism, either by

[7] Crown Copyright, 'Agreement between the United Kingdom Government and the Scottish Government on a Referendum on Independence for Scotland' (Online: The Scottish Government, 2012).

the writer themselves creating content for news media, or by their art and/or politics being discussed by other writers and journalists. Literary academics contribute to public discourse on the subject of the artistic relationship with Referendum politics through news media as well as through more traditional academic platforms, and this is reflected in the sources utilised for this thesis. As my aim is to explore the role of literature in public political discourse within the specific context of the Referendum, journalistic sources have been of particular significance. This is the space where the writers studied have most directly and publicly engaged with the politics of the Referendum. This is a literary research project, and accordingly prioritises this form of analysis in its investigation of the relationship between literature and politics.

This thesis is structured by investigating six individuals as case studies of the relationship between creative writers and the 2014 Scottish independence Referendum. The question of Scottish independence is characterised by both emotive and intellectual factors, and is therefore most usefully approached as an individual experience. Among these six writers, one was an emphatic supporter of the British Union (J.K. Rowling), three were vocal Yes voters (Liz Lochhead, Alasdair Gray, and Kathleen Jamie), one boycotted the Referendum altogether (John Burnside), and one had passed away before the Referendum was certain to take place (Edwin Morgan). The writers selected for study represent a range of responses to the question of Scottish independence, and the pre-eminent of those literary responses. While a perfect balance between Yes- and No-supportive writers would have been ideal in some respects, it would not have been representative of the landscape. Selecting writers based purely on achieving equilibrium would further come at the cost of including those whose work and public engagement were at the forefront of the Referendum debate.

It is certainly noteworthy that Scotland's writers have, as Colin Kidd points out, 'come out *en masse* for a yes vote'.[8] We must also acknowledge that many writers chose to keep their views on the subject private. However, this thesis demonstrates that the separating of writers into a Yes/No binary is problematic.

[8] Colin Kidd, 'Scottish Independence: Literature and Nationalism', *The Guardian*, 19 July 2014. For example, the more than 1300 artists who signed a pro-independence letter organised by the National Collective. (http://nationalcollective.com/2014/09/07/over-1300-artists-sign-letter-in-support-of-yes-vote/)

Each writer came to the question of Scottish independence in 2014 from different backgrounds, having spent lifetimes exploring different themes and pursuing different political interests through different artistic methods. More broadly, each individual voter also came to the question from their own unique combination of experiences and perspectives. Margaret Elphinstone points out that 'Scotland is an imagined community, which exists in five million forms inside our heads.' (see 1.1)[9] As their literary works make clear, this comment can absolutely be applied to each of the writers under investigation. Therefore, it has been important to structure this thesis by looking at individual rather than political, thematic, or generic groupings.

The writers selected are six of the most engaged and publicly visible of Scotland's creative community in terms of the debate surrounding Scottish independence, as well as six of Scotland's pre-eminent twenty-first century literary figures. Crucially, all six have contributed substantially to that debate through their literary work in the decades before the Referendum itself. In order to isolate which Scottish writers would be of the most significance to this study, I selected those who featured consistently and prominently in the public Referendum debate, who had produced a significant body of critically appraised and publicly acknowledged work, whose literary reputations extended beyond Scotland, and whose work had consistently dealt with the key questions of national identity and civic structure posed by the Referendum. There are certainly other writers who were active voices during the Referendum, or who made important contributions to these questions. Neal Ascherson, Alan Bissett, Allan Massie, William McIlvanney, or James Robertson could all have been appropriate case studies for this thesis. However, those selected most convincingly fulfil *all* the criteria outlined above, and represent a broad spectrum of approaches to the Referendum question. In addition, these writers represent success in a range of literary genres: poetry, novel, novella, short fiction, children's fiction, essay, and drama.

Edwin Morgan (1920 – 2010)

[9] Margaret Elphinstone in, Scott Hames, *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence* (Edinburgh: Word Power Books, 2012), p. 74.

Edwin Morgan was the inaugural Scots Makar (National Poet). The Scottish Poetry Library describes him as being 'widely recognised as the most influential poet of his gifted generation.'[10]

Over the course of a sixty-year career, Morgan explores what it meant to be Scottish and to simultaneously be a global citizen. His studies of nation influenced a generation of writers and brought questions of Scottish nationality and statehood to an international audience. Morgan 'didn't wear his politics on his sleeve,' to quote former First Minister Alex Salmond, however his work on many occasions gives context to his bequest of nearly £1 million to the SNP.[11] Morgan did not often publicly align himself with party politics during his lifetime, although much of his poetry is certainly political. In his will, however, he left the substantial sum to the SNP shortly before their landmark victory in the 2011 Holyrood elections, which precipitated the Referendum. The post-Referendum publication of Morgan's selected correspondence also includes private letters where Morgan states his ambivalent support for the SNP, sentiments he also expressed publicly in *Nothing Not Giving Messages*.[12] Morgan's funds were ring-fenced for the Yes campaign, making it 'all the more important to attend to the ambivalence of what Morgan actually wrote,' in the words of Scott Hames.[13]

Even without taking his bequest into consideration, Edwin Morgan is an essential figure for study when analysing the relationship between literature and Scottish constitutional debate in recent decades. His financial legacy highlights his career-long contribution to the discussions of nationhood and identity taking place during the Referendum period, even though he could not be there himself to contribute to such discussions. In recognition of his pre-eminence and his influence on both this debate and on the majority of the writers who were engaged with it, Morgan is the logical starting point for this thesis.

J.K. Rowling (b. 1965)

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[10] Scottish Poetry Library, 'Edwin Morgan: Biography', (2016) <http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poets/edwin-morgan> [accessed 21 June 2016].
[11] Mark Aitken, 'To Freedom: Morgan's Million Will Fund Indy Bid', *Sunday Mail*, 23 October 2011.
[12] Edwin Morgan, *The Midnight Letterbox: Selected Correspondence (1950-2010)* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2015).
[13] *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*, p. 8.

Like Morgan, J.K. Rowling was mostly discussed during the Referendum in relation to the significant financial contribution she made towards it. Rowling's donation of £1 million was given to Better Together, the principal organisation campaigning for a No vote. For the same reasons as Morgan therefore, it is important to investigate the actual relationship between her work and the rhetoric of the campaign to which she donated.

In this thesis, I shall focus only on her most significant literary contribution: her series of seven children's/young adult novels which follow the life of a young wizard called Harry Potter. Rowling has been named the most influential woman in Britain[14], and the *Harry Potter* series the world's most influential books.[15] Rowling's unionist vision of the UK within these novels is therefore highly relevant. Pairing Rowling and Morgan together in this opening chapter provides the opportunity to contrast the two major forms of national identity at work in the Referendum, their relationship to significant contemporary literature, and the role of prominent writers in such a debate both as independent artists and as public figures.

Liz Lochhead (b. 1947)

Liz Lochhead was Scots Makar throughout the Referendum period, as well as an open supporter of a Yes vote. Like Morgan before her, she had also been Glasgow Makar before taking on the national role. Her decision to join the SNP in the wake of the No vote outcome called attention to the role of the national poet, and whether they must show the same impartiality as a civil servant or national broadcaster, acting as a voice for the entire nation. Like Morgan, Lochhead has a long history of political writing, but had not previously been connected with party politics, and stated her lack of party political history proudly at the launch of the Yes campaign.[16] In a later interview however, Lochhead did admit to having been a member of the Labour Party, 'very briefly… in, I think, the late 70s.'[17] Alongside Morgan, Lochhead's 'assertive Scottishness' characterised Scottish literature of the Thatcher years, following the 1979

[14] 'Author J. K. Rowling Voted U.K.'S Most Influential Woman', *BBC News,* 22 June 2016.
[15] 'Harry Potter Tops List of Facebook Users' Favourite Books', *The Telegraph,* 10 September 2014.
[16] STV, 'Yes Scotland Campaign Launch', (Online, 2012).
[17] Liz Lochhead, 'The Referendum Q&A', ed. by Herald Scotland (Herald and Times Group, 2013).

referendum which failed to deliver Scottish devolution.[18] Lochhead is therefore a key figure in the research area of Scottish poets as public figures. Her body of work in drama and poetry has consistently commented on and interacted with Scotland's nationhood debate since the early 1970s.

Alasdair Gray (b. 1934)

Alasdair Gray and Liz Lochhead are brought together in this chapter which looks at postcolonial literary techniques in pro-independence Scottish writing. Gray has explored Scotland's relationship to the metropole of London in several genres, and his controversial essay written in relation to the Referendum entitled 'Settlers and Colonists' brought this element of his work further into public consciousness.[19] Gray has written extensively on Scottish constitutional politics over several decades in both fiction and non-fiction prose, as well as drama and poetry. Gray has consistently made his preference for an independent Scotland clear in his non-fiction writing. As a result, however, his work in fiction has suffered the same lack of nuanced discussion regarding its relationship to Scottish politics that Rowling's and Morgan's experienced as a result of their donations. My reading of Gray's works in this chapter and comparison with Lochhead aims to address this issue, locating Gray as a significant figure in devolutionary and co-colonial Scottish writing.

Kathleen Jamie (b. 1962)

Kathleen Jamie is one of Scotland's most prominent poets, and perhaps the best known of her generation. Her work since the beginning of the twenty-first century can largely be characterised as ecopoetic, and she has consistently been an influential figure in Scottish ecopoetry. Her poem was chosen to adorn the Bannockburn Rotunda in 2013, and declares that the land belongs 'to none but itself'.[20] This declaration is highly relevant to the bulk of her public contributions to the Referendum debate.[21] Jamie is conscious of her role as a commentator on contemporary events in Scotland. Her 2015 volume, *The Bonniest Companie,* is a testament to this impulse in relation to the

[18] Gerard Carruthers and Liam McIlvanney, *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 10.
[19] Alasdair Gray in, *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*, pp. 100-10.
[20] Kathleen Jamie, 'The Battle of Bannockburn', (The National Trust for Scotland, 2013).
[21] Ibid.

Referendum. Jamie, like Gray and Lochhead, was an outspoken supporter of the Yes vote in the Referendum period, but was more anxious to distance herself from party political elements of the debate, perhaps in part because of this awareness of her role as an observer.

John Burnside (b. 1955)

John Burnside is a prolific writer of several genres, including short fiction, novels, non-fiction essays, and poetry, a talent he shares with all of the other writers under consideration in this thesis. Unlike the others, however, Burnside is unique in his decision to support neither Yes nor No campaigns but to boycott the Referendum altogether. As an avowed anarchist, his position is congruent with his past writings over several decades, as were the positions of the previous five writers.

Burnside is the ideal writer with whom to conclude this thesis, which seeks to avoid defining writers engaged with the Referendum as either Yes or No voters in order to achieve a nuanced understanding of their individual contributions. In his justifications for not casting a vote in September 2014, Burnside also outlines how other writers working in Scotland and beyond might move forward in a post-Referendum Scotland. In closing with a study of Burnside, I aim to reflect on the post-Referendum value of the important contributions of all six of the writers studied.

iii. Background to the Referendum

The immediate temporal concern of this thesis is the Referendum period as defined above. However, this is naturally not an isolated political incident, and each of the writers studied have examined questions of Scottish and British identity as they have developed over the decades. They are also part of a long history of literary engagement with the political in Scotland. By the decade of Edwin Morgan's birth, one of the antecedents of the SNP, the National Party for Scotland, had been founded, and the Scottish Literary Renaissance was underway. According to Alan Riach:

> the Scottish Renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s had been a major force of revitalisation, led by Hugh MacDiarmid (C.M. Grieve, 1892-1978), aligning

> poetry, literature and all the arts in Scotland with renewed political ambition for an independent nation.[22]

Grieve was himself a founding member of the National Party of Scotland in 1928, though he was famously expelled both from that party and the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1930s. As his poetry career developed, Edwin Morgan and MacDiarmid's paths would cross, and not always harmoniously. Morgan could not help but feel the influence of MacDiarmid and his Renaissance, and described him as 'always in the background' of his writing career.[23] Writing in Scots had a rich tradition before the opening decades of the twentieth century, however it was MacDiarmid who 'politicised the Scots tongue through his association with Scottish nationalism'.[24] It is not the remit of this thesis to discuss MacDiarmid in depth, however, his is an unavoidable landmark on the 'continuum of voices', as Carla Sassi describes Scottish poetry.[25] Eleanor Bell argues that by the 1960s, Morgan and his generation of writers were 'becoming attuned to creative experiment beyond Scotland'.[26] Morgan's fascination with the American Beat poets for instance, or William Carlos Williams' deep and lasting impact on Tom Leonard. Accordingly, as Bell describes, Morgan and Trocchi's 1962 dispute with MacDiarmid at the Edinburgh International Writers' Conference revealed 'just how jaded and irritated many of the younger writers at the time were with what they perceived as the backwards-looking direction of Scottish literary culture.'[27]

MacDiarmid did not quite live to see the first referendum on Scottish devolution in 1979. In the letter his wife, Valda Grieve, sent to his friends following his death she says:

> I hope with all my heart, that what he stood for will not only be remembered, recognised and built-on in terms of the Scottish Renaissance, but also fought for on the political front until his long-held aim is achieved and Scotland is once again independent and capable of deciding its own destiny.[28]

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[22] Alan Riach, 'Scottish Poetry 1945-2010', in *British Literature since 1945,* ed. by Edward Larrissey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 148-62 (p. 148).
[23] James Campbell, 'Northern Lights', *The Guardian,* 28 February 2004.
[24] Catriona M.M. MacDonald, *Whaur Extremes Meet: Scotland's Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009), p. 294.
[25] Carla Sassi, *The International Companion to Scottish Poetry* (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015), p. 4.
[26] Eleanor Bell, 'Introduction', *Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature* (Editions Rodopi B. V.), (2013), 15.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Valda Grieve, 'Letter', ed. by Alexander Scott (Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland, 1978).

The 1979 referendum was ‘a study in chaos and confusion’ according to historian Catriona Macdonald.[29] Labour, the Conservatives, and the SNP were all divided amongst themselves regarding whether to create Scottish Parliament subsidiary to Westminster, and neither Yes nor No campaigns were particularly well-organised or subscribed to.[30] However, it was the ‘Cunningham amendment’ that was to prove the most infamous element of that event:

> The famous Cunningham amendment, named after George Cunningham, the Scots-born MP for Islington who had proposed it, demanded that over 40 per cent of the Scottish electorate endorse constitutional changes of such magnitude and effectively sealed the Act’s ignominious fate.[31]

The consequence of the amendment was that those who did not vote, the undecided or apathetic, effectively voted against devolution, and as the MP for Inverness Russell Johnston described, 1979 was ‘a fairly apathetic referendum.’[32] The 51.6% simple majority for the Yes campaign was not, therefore, enough to create a devolved parliament, due to the 36.3% who did not vote at all.[33] This was in contrast to the 2014 Referendum, which saw the highest ever voter-turnout in Scotland, with only 15.4% of the electorate not voting for either outcome.

One by-product of the 1979 referendum was a flourishing of identifiably Scottish creative work from an array of artists, including the older writers in this thesis: Morgan, Lochhead, and Gray (see iv). The older writers discussed in this thesis who were active during this period are a tangible influence on the younger writers who follow in the post-devolutionary period, as this thesis explores.

Describing the poets of Jamie and Burnside’s generation, Donny O’Rourke credits MacDiarmid and Morgan’s legacy:

> Just as Edwin Morgan (born in 1920) followed MacDiarmid’s lead in dreaming up Scotlands — some of them even science fictional — so poets born in the 1950s and 1960s have joined Morgan in envisioning their own, other, better, Scotlands.[34]

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[29] *Whaur Extremes Meet: Scotland's Twentieth Century*, p. 253.
[30] Iain Macwhirter, *Road to Referendum* (Glasgow: Cargo Publishing, 2014).
[31] *Whaur Extremes Meet: Scotland's Twentieth Century*, pp. 251-52.
[32] Russell Johnston, 'Commons Sitting: Scotland Act 1978 (Repeal)', in *HC Deb 20 June 1979* (Hansard: House of Commons, 1979).
[33] James McGonigal, *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan* (Sandstone Press Limited, 2012), p. 258.
[34] Donny O'Rourke, 'Dream State: The New Scottish Poets', (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2002), (p. 282).

In 1997, only three years after O'Rourke made the above statement, a second referendum on a devolved Scottish parliament was held. This referendum consisted of two questions: 'Do you agree there should be a Scottish Parliament?' and 'Do you agree that a Scottish Parliament should have tax varying powers?' The outcome was more decisive than in 1979, with 74.3% voting in support of a Scottish Parliament with a turnout of 60.43%.[35]

In 1999, the Scottish Parliament was opened by Queen Elizabeth II. Donald Dewar was its inaugural First Minister leading a Labour and Liberal Democrat coalition of what was then termed the Scottish Executive. In 2007, the Scottish National Party were elected to lead the Executive for the first time, at which point they re-branded it the Scottish Government.

The Edinburgh Agreement came about as a direct consequence of the SNP's landslide victory in the Scottish parliamentary elections in 2011, a statistical unlikelihood in the proportional representation system established in 1999. As Ian Macwhirter points out in his contemporary account of the Referendum, it was an abrupt trajectory from a failed referendum on devolution in 1979, to a referendum on independence in 2014:

> Scots surprised themselves by the strength of their support for the SNP in 2011. The Nationalist landslide raised the question of independence in a form with which the Scottish voters are unfamiliar: as a practical possibility. By lending their support so massively to a party of independence, the Scottish people began to realise that they may have crossed a kind of Rubicon.
>
> It certainly sent a message to Westminster that it could no longer ignore – a demand for a referendum on separation. The Independence Referendum of 18th September 2014 will be the first real threat to the continuation of the Union since 1746.[36]

From the signing of the agreement until the Referendum, an energetic debate on Scottish and British nationhood took place. As part of this debate, Scotland's writers, particularly those who had addressed this very issue in their work, were frequently called upon to contribute to public discourse on the subject. The result of the Referendum was a continuation of the status quo, voted for by a convincing majority. However, the fallout from the Referendum extends far

[35] David Denver, 'Voting in the 1997 Scottish and Welsh Devolution Referendums: Information, Interests and Opinions', *European Journal of Political Research,* 41 (2002).
[36] *Road to Referendum*, p. 21.

beyond September 2014. In May 2015, for example, the UK General Election saw the number of SNP MPs go from six to fifty-six – all but three of the total number of Scottish seats. The demand on the same writers as public figures remained in the build-up to the 2015 election, hence my decision to delineate the short but crucial time between the Referendum and the 2015 General Election as a continuation of the Referendum period.

iv. Poetry and politics in the Referendum

This thesis aims to articulate the role of writers in the political sphere through case studies of six of the most prominent literary figures involved in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum. In discussions of the relationship between writers and politics, two quotations from literary figures are utilised to the point of cliché. The first is Percy Bysshe Shelley's characterisation of poets as the 'unacknowledged legislators of the world.'[37] The second is W.H. Auden's assertion that 'poetry makes nothing happen'.[38] Inevitably, both of these phrases are frequently taken out of context, however it is not the place of this thesis to discuss Shelley, Auden, or their particular views on the role of poets in political discourse. For instance, Auden at times both described and participated in the 'extra-literary' role of the poet, placing him on the Shelley end of the spectrum.[39] Nonetheless, regardless of context or intention, these two phrases have become commonplace, even ubiquitous, in discussions of political literary writing, and are therefore helpful shorthand for describing either end of a spectrum of opinion on the position of writers and their writing during events such as the Referendum.

In this thesis, I employ the phrase 'Shelley-Auden spectrum' to describe this oft-discussed scale between those who believe that writers have a significant role in shaping political landscape (the Shelley extreme of the spectrum) and those who argue that writers have no impact on events such as the Referendum, whether through their creative works or in their roles as public figures (the Auden extreme of the spectrum). The six case studies presented in this thesis argue that writing and writers themselves are a significant presence in political

[37] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Essays: Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments* (Edward Moxon, 1840), p. 57.
[38] W. H. Auden, *Another Time* (London: Faber and Faber, 1940).
[39] Loris Mirella, 'Realigning Modernism: Eliot, Auden, and the Spanish Civil War', *Modern Language Studies*, 24 (1994).

debate. However, their impact is not that of the legislator. I shall argue that it is the very fact that writers *are not* legislators, unacknowledged or otherwise, which defines their influence. In keeping with the importance of individuality to this study, outlined in section ii, I propose that the primary value of writers in political events is to stand outside of government, party politics, and mainstream rhetoric. Ian Brown explains that: 'writers are surely versions of politicians as they seek to express and explore how folk feel and experience their politics.[40] This ability to 'feel and experience', and take a longer view of a political moment such as the Referendum, is likewise the writer's privilege. This 'version' of being a politician allows the luxury of deep exploration over decades of work, as each writer studied demonstrates.

As part of my research for this thesis, I co-organised a conference entitled 'Poetic Politics: Culture and the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum, One Year On' at the National Library of Scotland, along with Katie Ailes of the University of Strathclyde. The purpose of this conference was to gather academic, political, and cultural figures associated with the themes of this thesis, and to promote knowledge exchange in this area. The conference was opened by the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Fiona Hyslop, who stated:

> Artists and performers were active in shaping discussion about what the future of Scotland might look like, using their creativity to explore the big questions thrown up by the Referendum.[41]

Her address was followed by a keynote speech by Robert Crawford of the University of St Andrews. This second opening address has had a significant impact on my framing of this research. Following on from the Poetic Politics conference, Ailes and I put together the publication *Aiblins: New Scottish Political Poetry,* for which Crawford's opening address became the Afterword. In order to address the question of the relationship between poetry and politics in the Referendum, Robert Crawford re-defines the term 'bardic' for a twenty-first century context. Crawford describes the 'bardic voice' as the poet's impulse to 'speak on behalf of a community, a tribe, a gender, a nation.'[42] Whilst asserting that 'no poet should feel obliged to engage with politics', Crawford points out

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[40] Ian Brown in, Kirsty Gunn, 'Controlling Agenda Threatens Scotland's Culture', *The Scotsman,* 9 April 2016.
[41] Fiona Hyslop, 'Opening Address to Poetic Politics', (YouTube, 2015).
[42] Robert Crawford, 'Bardic Voice', in *Aiblins: New Scottish Political Poetry,* ed. by Katie Ailes and Sarah Paterson (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2016), pp. 101-16.

that poets are in a unique position to do so, provided they avoid polemic or propaganda, and remain passionate about their art form above all else:

> The term 'bardic voice' is worth using because it signals not only poetry's access to the power of public address; but also since it reminds us how important such access has been in Scotland, Ireland, and elsewhere.[43]

This comment references the Celtic origin of the word 'bard', originally referring to poets whose task it was to celebrate the achievements of their chiefs.[44] This is the first of four definitions of the word bard as it pertains to poets that are defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). The second is a Lowland Scottish term for a wandering minstrel, the third relates to 'early versifying minstrels or poets of other nations', and the final and most recently sourced definition is 'a poet generally'. The multiplicity of these four definitions of the term bardic reflects the cultural-critical baggage that the term carries with it. It is therefore important to note that my use of the term in this thesis is most significantly related to Crawford's use of it. Crawford is here updating from the word's origins in propaganda, but expanding on another of its modern definitions as 'a poet generally', to reflect that origin of community representation.[45] Therefore it is the first of the OED's four definitions that the term bardic as it is used here most closely relates to.

The term bardic also recalls the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century resurgence of what Katie Trumpener calls 'Bardic Nationalism':

> Responding in particular to Enlightenment dismissals of Gaelic oral traditions, Irish and Scottish antiquaries reconceive national history and literary history under the sign of the bard. According to their theories, bardic performance binds the nation together across time and across social divides; it reanimates a national landscape made desolate first by conquest.[46]

This bardic nationalism, as Trumpener establishes, was useful both for those resisting the British Union and the British Empire, and those espousing it, for example Walter Scott. According to Scott, a novelist might do 'more towards completing the Union than perhaps all the legislative enactments by which it has

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[43] Ibid.
[44] Anon., 'Bard, N.1', in *Oxford English Dictionary* ed. by John Simpson and Edmund Weiner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[45] Ibid.
[46] Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

been followed up'.[47] Walter Scott's bardic unionist nationalism has parallels in J.K. Rowling's brand of unionism. The Scottish nationalist element of the bardic is essential to writers such as Morgan, Gray, Jamie, and Lochhead, particularly in their pre-devolution writing, as it lends political significance to their poetry of Scotland. All of these writers make reference to Scottish writers of the past in works which examine contemporary realities. This is what Crawford refers to as literature's ability to keep open and 'sustain long lines of communication'.[48] It is also what Trumpener refers to above when she describes bardic performance as binding 'the nation together across time and space'. The bardic in this sense is the understanding that literary culture informs ideas of the nation, an understanding of which all six writers are conscious.

The national narrative element of the bardic is reflected in the confluence of the content of these writers' literary work and their respective public political interactions during the Referendum. These parallels, established clearly for each writer in this thesis, support the theory that a rhetorical purpose lies behind a component of each writer's output, whether nationalist, unionist, or in defiance of both, hence why it is helpful to view certain texts in relation to their author's Referendum contributions.

The relationship between art and politics – particularly constitutional politics – in Scotland has been a mainstay of Scottish literary criticism across the lives of all six of the writers studied. There is a substantial body of work which attests that the Thatcher years of 1979-1990, prefaced by the 1979 devolution referendum, were what Alex Thomson terms a 'second renaissance' in Scottish literature, fuelled by discontent with the British state model.[49] Some, however, including Cairns Craig, D.J. Petrie, and Eleanor Bell, argue that 'the energetic culture of the 1960s and 1970s' meant that 'the seeds of possibility were planted' in Scottish literature in the decades leading up to the first devolution referendum, and not only as a result of it.[50] The work of Edwin Morgan, Liz Lochhead, and Alasdair Gray discussed in this thesis is a testament to the veracity of their

[47] Paul Henderson Scott, *Walter Scott and Scotland* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2013), p. 301.
[48] Crawford, p. 110.
[49] Alex Thomson, 'From 'Renaissance' to Referendum?: Literature and Critique in Scotland, 1918-2014', *Journal of Scottish Thought,* 8 (2016).
[50] Cairns Craig in Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull, *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989), p. i. D.J. Petrie in Eleanor Bell and Linda Gunn, *The Scottish Sixties: Reading, Rebellion, Revolution?* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013), p. 244.

claim. Carruthers and McIlvanney agree with Thomson's assessment of a second renaissance:

> In the past three decades, Scotland has witnessed a remarkable literary resurgence… Much of the energy of this new mood has been political. POLITICS WILL NOT LEAVE ME ALONE' complains the protagonist of Alasdair Gray's novel, *1982, Janine* (1984). It would be truer to say of contemporary Scottish writers that they will not leave politics alone, and the renaissance of Scottish writing has been bound up, in complex ways, with the country's successful progress towards constitutional change.[51]

Cairns Craig suggests:

> the 1980s proved to be one of the most productive and creative decades in Scotland this century — as though the energy that had failed to be harnessed by the politicians flowed into other channels.[52]

This thesis argues that intergenerational influence is a key factor in the work of the writers studied. Therefore, while Craig, Thomson, McIlvanney, and Carruthers are correct in their assertions, the work of the post-1979 era must also be considered in relation to its literary antecedents, as Eleanor Bell's critical work has definitively proved. Indeed, this communication between generations bolsters the impact of that period of writing.

Further to this argument, is the case that this creativity was not only inspired by the lack of a Scottish government, but was one of the key factors in returning some level of constitutional power to Edinburgh. Immediately following the 1997 referendum which created the Scottish Parliament, John Sutherland commented: 'Just how much Scotland's current hyper-vitality owes to the fertilizing effects of its twentieth-century versifiers is a question worth looking into.'[53]

Speaking of this creative generation, Marie-Odile Pittin-Hedon explains that 'the assumption that writers have created or in any event underwritten devolution… has now become a critical commonplace.'[54] Pittin-Hedon goes on to quote Tom Leonard and Duncan McLean's categorical assertions that the Scottish Parliament was a direct result of this period of creative work from 1979-1999. Pittin-Hedon

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[51] *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, p. 10.
[52] *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture*, p. i.
[53] John Sutherland, 'Some Mair!', *Times Literary Supplement,* (1998).
[54] Marie-Odile Pittin-Hedon, *The Space of Fiction: Voices from Scotland in a Post-Devolution Age* (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015), p. viii.

ultimately concludes that this is virtually impossible to either prove or disprove, but that creative writing such as that which exploded in Scotland between the two devolution referenda can:

> provide the theoretical projection, the possible alternative trajectories that cannot be mapped by historical or sociological records which, by definition, register only one itinerary… the power to suggest, not the future, but possible futures.[55]

Carruthers and McIlvanney argue likewise for Colm Tóibín's assertion that in the 1980s and 1990s, Scottish literature was being written 'as in Ireland in the old days, to replace a nation', and cite Morgan and Jamie as examples.[56] The title and contents of the anthology *Dream State* (1994) contain other well-known examples of Sutherland's sentiment. *Dream State* sought to embody the idea that Scotland's literary world might usher in an independent parliament to represent it. It focuses on the work of the generation of poets born between 1955 and 1972, including John Burnside and Kathleen Jamie. In his introduction to the 2002 reprint following the creation of the Scottish Parliament, the volume's editor asserts that 'Scotland's artists did more than its politicians to dream up a new Scotland.'[57] In another example of this attitude, Christopher Whyte argued in 1998 that 'in the absence of an elected political authority, the task of representing the nation has been repeatedly devolved to its writers.'[58] This statement is cited frequently, including in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature* (2007), *Contemporary Scottish Literature* (2008), and *Subaltern Ethics in Contemporary Scottish and Irish Literature* (2011).

The exact nature of Scottish literature's impact on recent constitutional referenda is, of course, impossible to measure definitively. What is undoubtedly significant, however, is the prevalence of the kind of sentiment described above within the Scottish literary community. Pro-independence and pro-Union Scottish literature take to heart Benedict Anderson's description of the nation as an *Imagined Community,* and imagine the nation they aspire towards accordingly

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[55] Ibid. p. 186.
[56] *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, p. 10.
[57] O'Rourke, p. 2.
[58] Christopher Whyte, 'Masculinities in Contemporary Scottish Fiction', *Forum for Modern Language Studies,* 34 (1998), 284.

(see 1.1).[59] As Pheng Cheah and Jonathan Culler have argued, this is in common with postcolonial cultural movements around the globe, over which Anderson's text has 'exerted an enormous influence', as I shall discuss further in Chapter Two.[60]

Initially, the creative works in question may form something closer to Brian Stock's definition of a *textual* community, rather than Anderson's imagined community. Stock's definition relates to an entirely different time period but is nonetheless relevant elsewhere. He defines the textual community as the way in which religious communities in eleventh- and twelfth-century France 'came to understand their identities through the mediation of written texts'.[61] While the Scottish literary community may represent a textual community in one sense, however, the writers I investigate in this thesis are public figures whose presence is felt more widely than only the group of writers and readers that engage directly with their texts. I aim to reflect this in this thesis by incorporating extra-literary sources such as mainstream journalism, Twitter, and television documentary (see ii). In light of this, it is essential to recognise the awareness of this concept of the imagined community in both pro-independence and pro-Union writers. It is evident that Scottish writers are aware of the potential significance in the way they imagine their nation(s). Therefore, certain texts can be usefully read as political acts in and of themselves. In other words, to depict Scotland as a nation separate from the UK, or at odds with its metropole for example, takes on a persuasive purpose in the context of Scottish constitutional debate. Likewise, to depict the UK as effectively borderless with Scotland as a critical part of its makeup, promotes the Union in these same contexts. Many of the works by the writers studied in this thesis demonstrate this sense of the bardic in relation to either Scotland or the United Kingdom. This bardic element in turn contributes towards these writers' impact as public figures in the Referendum debate.

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[59] Anderson foregrounds the importance of print media and literature in our understanding of what our nation entails. He argues the nation is imagined because 'the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.' Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006).

[60] Pheng Cheah, 'Grounds of Comparison', *Diacritics,* 29 (1999).

[61] C Annette Grisé, 'The Textual Community of Syon Abbey', *Florilegium,* 19 (2002), 149.

In relation to this argument, recent literary criticism largely finds common ground in the assertion that the flashpoints of Scotland's recent referenda: 1979, 1997, and 2014, have been stimulating experiences for artistic expression. This case is made by critics who agree with those such as Whyte or Carruthers and McIlvanney, as well as those who are more reserved regarding the impact of literature on Scottish constitutional politics. Cairns Craig, for instance, argues that the 1979 and 1997 referenda each brought about a 'cultural ferment', highlighting the frustration of the first as being instrumental in works such as Gray's *1982, Janine* (see section 2.8), and the impetus of the second leading to 'radical change' in Scottish literature, particularly in relation to Scots and Gaelic language.[62] In response to Auden's line described above, Marie-Odile Pittin-Hedon argues that:

> if… 'Poetry makes nothing happen', in other words if poetry, or fiction, does not *make* historical or social change directly, it certainly does more than record history. Fiction reflects, projects, anticipates, or configures the space of our lives.[63]

Auden's words were originally part of the poem 'In Memory of W.B. Yeats', Crawford asserts his opposition to the sentiment that 'poetry makes nothing happen', but insists that neither must poetry always make something happen in order to be significant:

> Yeats – some of whose finest poems clearly and confidently say 'I Am Irish' – gives the lie to any assertion that poetry cannot or should not be political and cannot take on a bardic, national voice with aplomb. Yet Yeats also vigorously asserts the poet's impulse to cut away from the political, and follow the (sometimes lustful) lyrical impulse.[64]

The writers discussed in this thesis are renowned in Scotland, Britain, and internationally for their work, not least because they have not allowed the bardic impulse to overwhelm the lyric. It is the artistic merit of the writing explored which allows it to sustain and keep open 'long lines of communication' across literary generations.[65]

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[62] Cairns Craig, 'Otherworlds: Devolution and the Scottish Novel', in *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature,* ed. by Gerard Carruthers and Liam McIlvanney (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 261-74.
[63] *The Space of Fiction: Voices from Scotland in a Post-Devolution Age*, p. 187.
[64] Crawford.
[65] Ibid.

It is a testament to the relevance of the writers chosen for this study that Crawford mentions all but one of them in his short address. Several of Morgan's letters are quoted, including his statement regarding the Shelley-Auden spectrum: 'I do not believe 'poetry makes nothing happen''[66]. Crawford also refers to Morgan's poem 'For the Opening of the Scottish Parliament,' describing it as 'a signally successful piece of bardic oratory, a public poem of which Scotland remains proud.'[67] In relation to Lochhead, who read that poem at the opening of the Scottish Parliament buildings at Holyrood, Crawford states:

> at times such as the 2014 independence referendum, I think that (though I do understand why some of the poets I've mentioned resisted doing so in their work) bardic voice – whether it was Liz Lochhead channelling Burns in the Portrait Gallery or young poets reading in village halls — was often the appropriate thing to risk.[68]

Kathleen Jamie is described by Crawford as having used bardic voice in order to 'unshackle herself from it' in poems such as 'Mr and Mrs Scotland Are Dead'. Jamie's poem for the Bannockburn Rotunda implies that by the time of the Referendum she was more comfortable with speaking on behalf of a nation than earlier in her career. Alasdair Gray's fiction in particular, demonstrates his inclination towards the bardic, and was developed by other pro-independence artists during the time of the Referendum:

> David Greig's striking theatrical adaptation of *Lanark* now presents a stage version (made by an important dramatist vehement in his support for the Yes campaign in 2014) of the most famous novel by a Scottish novelist celebrated for his commitment to the cause of Scottish independence… Gray's perennial theme of the individual who seeks independence from a situation of entrapment can be seen as having a political dimension, and one that persists in the context of today's Scotland.[69]

Burnside's refusal to 'bring bardic voice to issues of national identity' is noted as a counterpoint to the above examples, as it is in Chapter Three of this thesis.

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[66] *The Midnight Letterbox: Selected Correspondence (1950-2010)*, p. 432.
[67] Crawford, p. 115.
[68] Ibid. p. 107.
[69] Ibid. p. 114.

The only writer from this thesis not mentioned in Crawford's address on bardic voice, is J.K. Rowling. However, Crawford does call for an examination of the *British* bardic voice, within both Scottish and English literatures:

> If we take a longer, larger view of the politics of poetry, then what is more striking is the absence of support for British unionism in modern poetry from these islands.[70]

Although Crawford is talking about poetry, his point stands in relation to creative writing in general, hence the importance of including Rowling in this study, whose work is perhaps the most significant contemporary example of British unionist writing.

The association of the term 'bardic' with official state poetry may seem removed from the idea of the poet as a dissenting voice. However, Crawford's interpretation of the bardic voice is complemented by John Burnside's description of the poet as dissident. Burnside's concept of the poet dissident also directly addresses the Shelley-Auden spectrum:

> It is not so much that poetry makes nothing happen, as that a poem attempts to reveal *what already is,* in all its richness and complexity… the poet is exactly what the legislator is not, i.e. a celebrant of the unsayable, a soul committed to that which is beyond legislation… This role, the role of the dissident in the widest sense, has always been the privilege of the poet.[71]

Crawford and Burnside's interpretations of the relationship between art and politics combine to form a position on the Shelley-Auden spectrum which foregrounds the individuality of the artist. Because the artist is typically removed from party politics and from other political labels in their work, their role is essential as commentator and critic of events from an individual standpoint. Not an impartial or apolitical standpoint, but one which can be what no news media, politician, or political movement can be: unaccountable to a group politic. Klaus Peter Müller identifies this trend in Scottish literature as it relates to the referenda of 1979, 1997, and 2014:

> They [artists] are the outsiders in society, often stigmatised, but actually the ones who are strong and intelligent enough to think for themselves and create an independent opinion.[72]

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[70] Ibid. p. 112.
[71] John Burnside, *A Poet's Polemic* (Edinburgh: Scottish Book Trust, 2003).
[72] *Scotland 2014 and Beyond,* p. 35.

This reflects Trumpener's interpretation of the bardic in the Scottish nationalist sense, as literature which 'not only bears witness to but resists English cultural violence.'[73]

While the majority of the writers in this thesis may align themselves with either the Yes or the No movement in relation to the Referendum, they are free to simultaneously critique the leaders, actions, or aspirations of those movements, an opportunity of which most availed themselves. As writers such as those studied are particularly conscious of, their work acts as an important contemporary commentary on events which are viewed differently in retrospect, as even the immediate aftermath view of the Referendum demonstrates. The work of those from previous generations utilised by each of these writers demonstrates that this historic record influences contemporary attitudes to certain political questions, as well as the work of their successors, bringing 'the voices of the past into the sites of the present.'[74]

This thesis sets out to explore the deeply entrenched, interdependent relationship between literature and politics against the backdrop of the 2014 Scottish independence Referendum. Utilising these six particularly significant examples of politically engaged writers and their work as case studies, I will investigate ideas of national identity and nationalism, postcolonialism, and ecopoetics, and how each of these major areas made an impact during the Referendum period. Throughout this text, I will return to the ideas laid out in this introduction, and consider what unique contributions writers and their writing can bring to political events such as the Referendum. In future, this work will provide a contemporary analysis that attends to the details of these writers' oeuvres. Each of these writers will be connected in future with their stances during the Referendum, and one of the critical tasks of this thesis is to ensure that these stances are considered holistically with conscientious attention paid to their literary works. In doing so, I aim to provide new and helpful readings of the works of six of Scotland's most significant contemporary writers.

[73] *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire*, p. 5.
[74] Ibid. p. 35.

Chapter One: Nationalism and the Million Pound Writers

1.1 Concepts of nationalism in the Referendum period

In order to understand the relationship between literature and the Referendum, it is crucial to understand the concept of nationalism. Nationalism is a term which has been much discussed and for which an uncontroversial definition still proves elusive. However, the importance of cultural and literary elements in the formation of national identity and nationalism are consistent in the majority of academic descriptions. Often the term is used pejoratively as a synonym for jingoism or racism, aligning best with the first half of the OED's 1a definition: 'Advocacy or support for the interests of one's own nation, esp. to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations'.[75] This is a definition which would no doubt horrify each of the six writers under investigation in this thesis if it were applied to them, as my analysis of each of their literary careers will establish. The second part of the OED's definition is perhaps more appropriate: 'advocacy of or support for national independence or self-determination'.[76] The challenge of definition is understandable, as it involves trying to apply one word to a global phenomenon. Even within the single nation-state of the United Kingdom, nationalism is understood very differently in relation to each of the four constituent nations. Every one of the six writers focussed on in this thesis understands nationalism differently. Given the difficulties in defining what constitutes a nation, and the fact that the nations of the world are in part defined by their differences from each other, coming to a homogenous, all-encompassing definition of nationalism is inevitably unrealistic. There are as many interpretations of nationalism as there are nations, and as many interpretations of nations are there are individuals and historical contexts. Nationalism is therefore a term which resonates differently for each individual within each nation and nation-state. However, there are certain essential elements which recur in the majority of characterisations of nationalism which are of relevance to this thesis, as I shall discuss in this section.

Before exploring interpretations of nationalism, it is important to identify what is meant by 'nation' and 'nation-state'. For the purpose of clarity, I shall use the

[75] Anon., 'Nationalism N.', in *Oxford English Dictionary* ed. by John Simpson (Online: Oxford University Press, 2003).
[76] Ibid.

term nation-state only to refer to internationally recognised nations, i.e. full member states of the United Nations. This is in line with the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of the nation-state as 'an independent political state formed from a people who share a common national identity.'[77] In context, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) was a nation-state during the Referendum period, whereas Scotland was not.[78] The definition of nation being more fluid, Scotland can accurately be described as a nation within the 'family of nations' that make up the UK, alongside England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.[79]

In terms of nationalism, there are several major academic definitions which inform the way in which the term is used in this thesis. Aira Kemiläinen's definition works well in the context of the Referendum: 'a strong devotion to one's own nation and a striving for political independence.'[80] Gellner and Hobsbawm define nationalism as 'primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent': a particularly relevant definition in relation to Scottish nationalism during the Referendum period.[81] Andrew Heywood states:

> Nationalism is, at heart, the doctrine that each nation is entitled to self-determination, reflected in the belief that, as far as possible, the boundaries of the nation and those of the state should coincide.[82]

This is an essential definition for this thesis, as all of the writers studied both lived through and wrote in relation to the process of devolution in Scotland. The older writers: Morgan, Lochhead, and Gray, engaged directly with the first devolution referendum in 1979, which failed to deliver a Scottish parliament partially separate from Westminster. All of the writers were active at the time of the second devolution referendum in 1997, which resulted in the opening of the new Scottish parliament in 1999. Gellner's and Hobsbawm's definitions, but

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[77] Anon., 'Nation-State, N.', in *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[78] Throughout this thesis I will be using the term 'British' as the adjectival form of the United Kingdom. This is consistent with dictionary definitions, and is used in the absence of an existing adjectival form of the United Kingdom separate from that of Great Britain.
[79] David Cameron, 'Our Union Is Precious. Don't Tear It Apart.', *The Daily Mail*, 9 September 2014.
[80] Aira Kemiläinen, 'The Idea of Nationalism', *Scandanavian Journal of History*, 9 (1984), 35.
[81] Gellner in, E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 8.
[82] Andrew Heywood, *Political Theory: An Introduction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 97.

Heywood's phrasing in particular, can refer both to the aspiration for Scottish devolution and for full Scottish independence.

Benedict Anderson gives much credit to print media, including literature, in his attempts to define nationalism at the outset of *Imagined Communities,* arguing that the nation largely takes place in our minds through contact with media including newspapers, novels, and television:

> It [the nation] is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. [83]

In the twenty-first century, Anderson's theories have also proved applicable to more recent media such as social networks, as Gruzd et al. establish.[84] The imagined community theory is also helpful for critics such as those discussed in the introduction who argue for a causal relationship between Scottish literature and Scottish devolutionary politics:

> For Anderson the "causal" or "formative" power that the novel possesses in relation to the nation largely rests on its structure of address, its ability to interpolate the reader as a national and to create a symbolic mapping of external social space.[85]

This supports one of the proposals of this thesis, namely that certain of the texts studied are political and examples of either nationalist or unionist rhetoric out of an awareness of the above.

Anthony D. Smith also insists on the significance of cultural capital in nationalism:

> we cannot understand nations and nationalism simply as an ideology or form of politics but must treat them as cultural phenomena as well.[86]

Smith points to 'common historical memories and myths' perpetuated in literature. As Chapter One will establish, this applies to unionism as well as to Scottish nationalism in recent writings. Erika Harris argues that 'ideas of

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[83] *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, p. 6.
[84] Anatoliy Gruzd, Barry Wellman, and Yuri Takhteyev, 'Imagining Twitter as an Imagined Community', *American Behavioral Scientist,* 55 (2011).
[85] Cheah, p. 8.
[86] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), p. vii.

nationalism reveal strong interdependence between politics and culture'.[87] This 'interdependence' is at the heart of the relationship between literature and the Referendum under investigation here.

In the context of this thesis, Scottish nationalism is best defined as the desire for Scotland to separate from the United Kingdom and become an independent nation-state. The counter-part to this is unionism, which is defined in this context as support for, or advocacy of, the maintenance of the parliamentary status-quo in the UK, and its continuation as a nation-state, unaltered.

During the first nine months of 2014, Scottish residents were never far away from material bearing either the 'Yes' of the campaign for Scottish independence, or the 'Better Together' of their opponents. These leaflets, newsletters, online links, infographics, and pamphlets utilised nationalist or unionist rhetoric to cushion data from various sources. The combination of rhetoric and data resulted in the formation of two very different pictures of the consequences of dissolving the Union between Scotland and the rest of the UK. Issues such as the economy were foregrounded during the campaign (see Figures 1 and 2). However, as Robert Crawford has said, 'Scottish independence is an issue involving long-term arguments about culture and imagination, not just immediate arguments about cash.'[88] In order to campaign effectively, both sides had to rely on nationalist or unionist sentiment, in addition to bald facts and numbers.

One of the key texts for this thesis is the 2012 collection, *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*. This book, edited by Scott Hames of the University of Stirling, documents the reactions of twenty-seven writers based in Scotland to the Referendum question at the outset of the Referendum period. Of those researched for this thesis, Alasdair Gray and Kathleen Jamie each give their responses. In his introduction to *Unstated,* Hames complains of the apparent background role of writers at the beginning of the Referendum period:

> The one writer who is making an impact on the current debate is doing so via his estate, rather than his art. On his death in 2010 Edwin Morgan bequeathed nearly a million pounds to the SNP, which the party ring-

[87] Erika Harris, *Nationalism: Theories and Cases* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 38.
[88] Robert Crawford, *Bannockburns: Scottish Independence and the Literary Imagination, 1314-2014* (Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 42.

> fenced for a referendum campaign following its victory in the 2011 Holyrood elections. This direct alignment between literature and nationalism makes it all the more important to attend to the ambivalence of what Morgan actually wrote.[89]

As Hames points out, Morgan died before the Referendum was announced, and his bequest was to the SNP and not to the Yes campaign which did not exist at the time. It is important to acknowledge this in attending to the ambivalence of Morgan's oeuvre. As this chapter will demonstrate, Morgan was not an unequivocal Scottish nationalist. However, I shall also set out to establish that writers such as Morgan and Rowling, who have imagined and represented Scotland or the UK, make their most significant contributions to the Referendum debate through their art, which can be better understood — but not superseded — by their financial input.

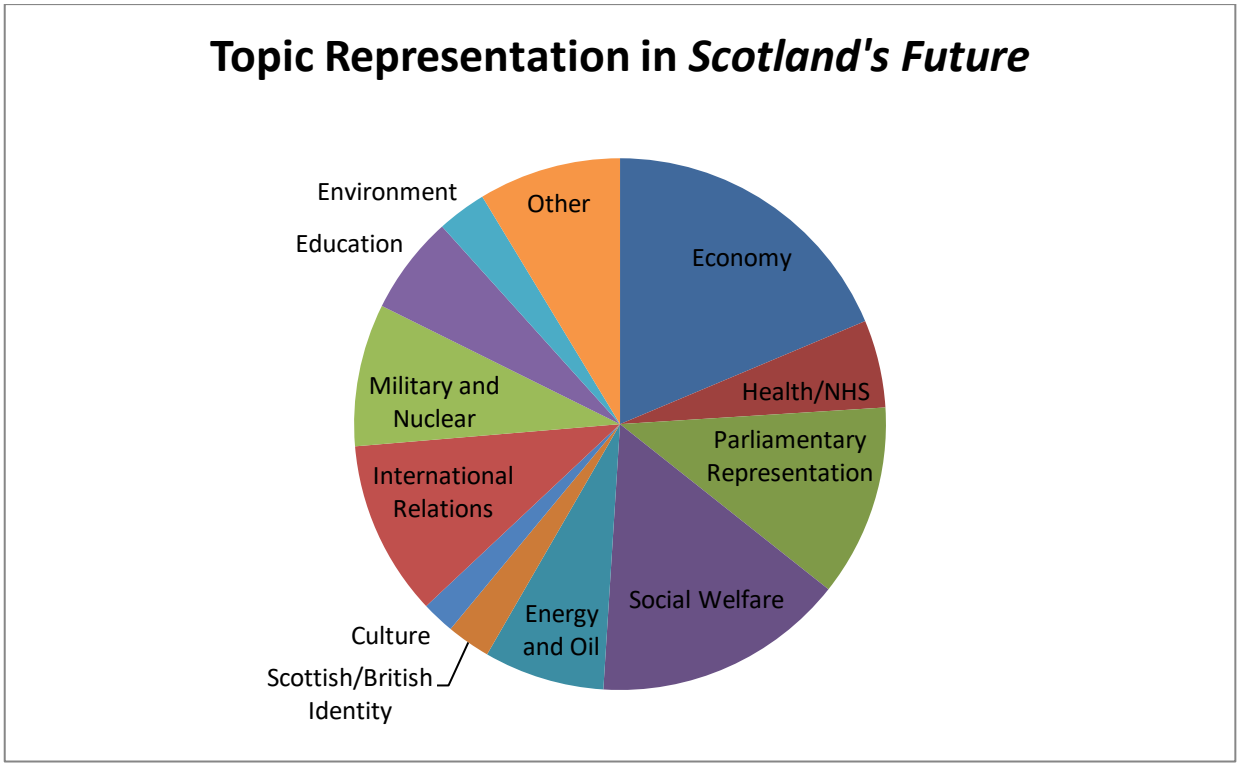


Figure 1. Graph representing the percentage of space given to each major topic covered by the SNP Government's white paper on independence: *Scotland's Future*. Total excludes the Q & A section.[90]

Data from the 2014 Referendum in Figures 3-5 establish that identification with being either Scottish or British is directly relevant to how the electorate ultimately decided to vote. On 12 September 2014, less than a week before the

[89] *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*, p. 8.
[90] Scottish Government, *Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland* (Createspace Independent Pub, 2013).

Referendum, ICM data placed 'feelings about the UK' as the number one reason behind the decision to vote No, and 'feelings about Scotland' as the second commonest reason behind the decision to vote Yes. The foremost reason to vote Yes being 'Westminster's style of politics.'[91]

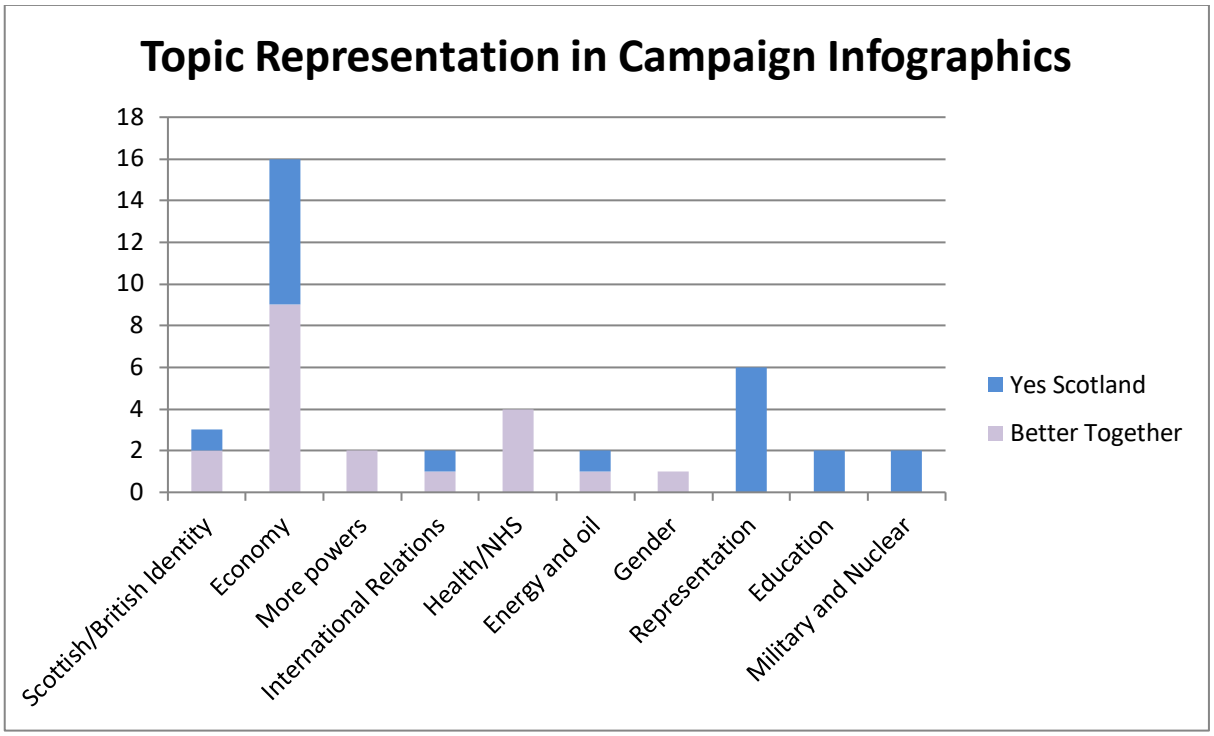


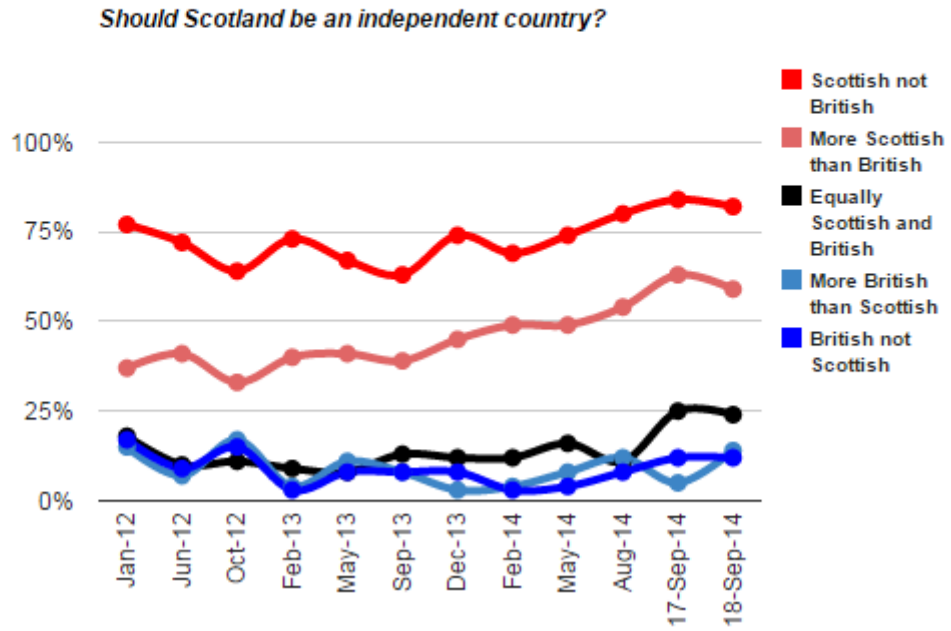
Figure 2. Graph representing the topics covered by the twenty most viewed infographics from each campaign by the end of August 2014. Sources: Yes Scotland and Better Together official campaign websites.[92]

Figure 3 represents data from Ipsos Mori taken throughout the Referendum period. This data supports a direct correlation between how British or Scottish a voter feels and their voting intentions. Both the Yes and Better Together campaigns were conscious of this correlation, and also that a substantial proportion of the electorate were likely to feel that their identities were neither wholly Scottish nor wholly British, but comprised elements of both. Hence the importance of Scottish nationalist or British unionist rhetoric in campaign material and speeches. In the 2011 census, 83% of Scotland's residents identified as feeling Scottish. The Referendum showed just as clearly, however, that identifying as British is still an important part of being Scottish. Figure 4 shows that across the UK, the constituent national identity (rather than the collective British identity) is of the most significance, and nowhere more so than in Scotland. British identity in Scotland is significant, however, and is

[91] Tom Clark, 'Scottish Referendum Too Close to Call', *The Guardian*, 12 September 2014.
[92] Yes Scotland, 'Yesscotland.Net', (2014); Better Together, 'Bettertogether.Scot', (2014).

acknowledged by 26% of the Scottish population in the 2011 census. The data in Figure 5 demonstrates that an identification with Britishness has also increased since the 2011 Census. The Better Together campaign rhetoric of having ‘the best of both worlds’ and being ‘Scottish and British’ was a testament to this.

Yes



No

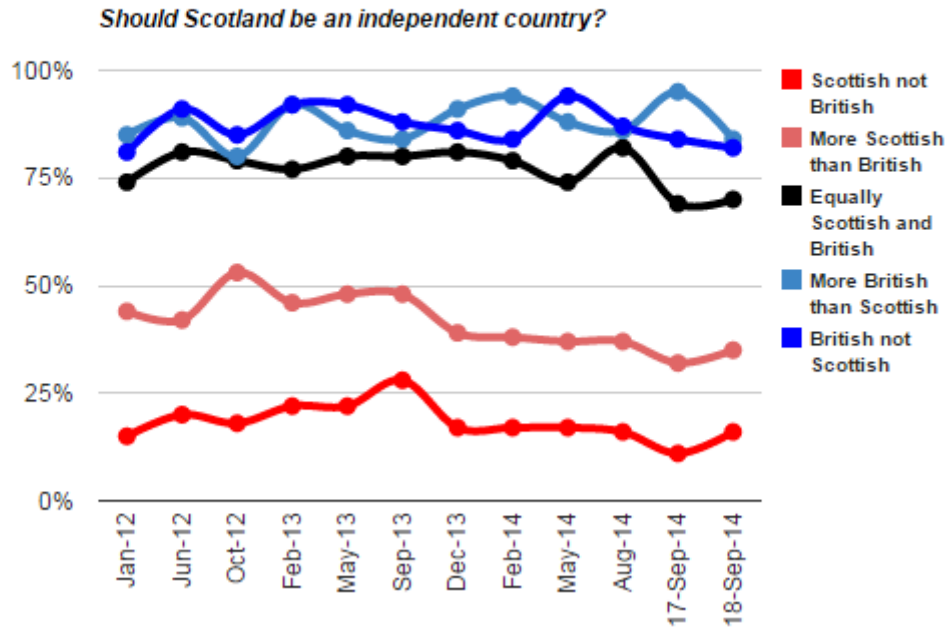


Figure 3. Ipsos Mori analysis, September 2014[93]

[93] Mark Diffley, 'Voting Intention: National Identity', (Ipsos MORI, 2014).

	Scotland	Wales	England	Northern Ireland
Country identity only*	62%	58%	60%	47%
British identity only	8%	17%	19%	40%
Country and British only	18%	7%	9%	8%
Other identities	11%	18%	11%	5%

* Eg. Scottish only in Scotland; for Northern Ireland, 'Country only' refers to N Irish only (21%) or Irish only (25%).

Figure 4. University of Manchester analysis, data from UK Census 2011. [94]

Table 5 Trends in 'Forced Choice' National Identity, 1974-2014

	1974	1979	1992	1997	1999	2000	2001
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Scottish	65	56	72	72	77	80	77
British	31	38	25	20	17	13	16
Sample size	*588*	*658*	*957*	*882*	*1,482*	*1,663*	*1,605*
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Scottish	75	72	75	79	78	72	73
British	18	20	19	14	14	19	15
Sample size	*1,665*	*1,508*	*1,637*	*1,549*	*1,594*	*1,508*	*1,482*
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		
Scottish	73	75	69	66	65		
British	19	15	20	24	23		
Sample size	*1,495*	*1,196*	*1,229*	*1,497*	*1,339*		
Source: 1974-97: Scottish Election Studies							

Figure 5. Scottish Social Attitudes Survey Report, 2014. [95]

In this chapter, I shall look at the work of Edwin Morgan and J.K. Rowling, and demonstrate that their imagined versions of Scotland and the UK fulfil a rhetorical purpose related to the plural identities discussed above.

1.2 The Million Pound Writers

Before the Referendum on Scottish independence had been confirmed, Edwin Morgan, the inaugural Scots Makar, bequeathed a sum of £975,000 to the SNP.

[94] Ludi Simpson and Andrew Smith, 'Who Feels Scottish? National Identities and Ethnicity in Scotland', *The Dynamics of Diversity: evidence from the 2011 Census,* (2014).
[95] ScotCen Social Research, 'Scottish Social Attitudes Survey Report 2014', (Edinburgh: ScotCen, 2014).

The poet died in August 2010, but it was June 2011 before the bequest was settled and made public. Four months later, as he launched the official campaign for Scottish independence, then First Minister Alex Salmond announced that Morgan's donation would be set aside for use in that campaign. At the launch, Salmond announced:

> I also wanted to say a word about Scotland's late national poet Eddie Morgan - a man whose modesty as an individual was matched by his brilliance as a poet. He didn't wear his politics on his sleeve but he left this party a financial legacy which is transformational in its scope. However, his real legacy is to the world in his body of work. Eddie Morgan once told our parliament: 'We give you our deepest dearest wish to govern well, don't say we have no mandate to be so bold'.[96]

It's certainly true that Morgan was not party-political during his lifetime, his poetry at times openly criticising both the SNP and party politics. For example, in poem about the famous Glaswegian socialist 'On John Maclean' he considers:

> …Party
>
> is where he failed, for he believed in people,
>
> not in *partiinost* that as everyone knows
>
> delivers the goods. Does it? Of course.
>
> And if they're damaged in transit you make do?[97]

Morgan's use of rhetorical questions in the above express his ambivalence towards party politics. His use of them further invites his reader to consider the dominance of the 'partiinost' framework. Morgan again uses rhetorical questions in another of his most direct challenges to party politics. In his uncharacteristically pessimistic 'Flowers of Scotland' published in 1969, eight years prior to 'On John Maclean', Morgan actually singles out the SNP for chastisement. He includes in his litany of bleak and cruel 'flowers' that the Scottish nation possesses:

> a Scottish National Party that refuses to discuss Vietnam and
>
> is even applauded for doing so, do they think no lesson is to be
>
> learned from what is going on there?[98]

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[96] Alex Salmond, 'Address to Conference by First Minister and Snp Leader Alex Salmond', (Newsnet.scot, 2011).
[97] Edwin Morgan, *The New Divan* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1977), p. 82.
[98] Edwin Morgan, *Collected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1990), p. 203.

This is the only direct reference to the SNP in Morgan's poetry, perhaps making it surprising that he would eventually give that party such a large legacy. Of course, the SNP of 1969 was undoubtedly very different to that of 2010, but to return to Scott Hames' statement, Morgan's donation must encourage us to investigate his nuanced and critical response to the SNP and to the idea of an independent Scotland across a body of poetry that spanned six decades of constitutional debate. It is tempting to pit our million pound writers against each other in a straightforward case of unionist vs. Scottish nationalist, but it is also important to establish that both have engaged in considered and, at times, conflicting interpretations regarding identity and self-determination in the British Isles.

There was a marked difference in reporting between Morgan and Rowling's financial contributions. A significant reason for this was that Morgan's million was a bequest, and was left to the SNP, not to the Yes campaign which did not exist at the time of the poet's death. Rowling's funding, however, was a donation, unequivocally made to Better Together. She released a statement to accompany her funds and even engaged in a live twitter debate in early September with fans and critics to discuss why she had decided to weigh in on the Referendum. In this debate, as she does in her statement, Rowling established her legitimacy as a public figure by utilising quotations from her own most well-known fictional characters from the *Harry Potter* series. For example, the following tweet:

> I want to thank all the people tweeting me lovely messages. To paraphrase Albus Dumbledore… If you're waiting for universal popularity, you'll be on Twitter a VERY long time xxx[99]

Albus Dumbledore is one of Rowling's most popular characters. He is the headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry throughout the first six *Harry Potter* novels, and represents wisdom and peaceful leadership. In her statement regarding her Better Together donation, she also refers to the Death Eaters, characters from the *Harry Potter* series reminiscent of Nazi supporters:

[99] J. K. Rowling, in *Twitter* (@jk_rowling, 2014).

> when people try to make this debate about the purity of your lineage, things start getting a little Death Eaterish for my taste.'[100]

As a result, Rowling ensured her creative work gave context for her political contribution.

Morgan, however, was still being mourned when news of his bequest became public, and provided no direct public comment on the reasons for leaving such a large sum to the SNP in his will. Consequently, much of the media coverage of Rowling's donation differed dramatically from that covering Morgan's. Rowling's was primarily centred on the online abuse she received at the hands of so-called 'cybernats': a pejorative term used to describe supporters of Scottish independence who engage in aggressive or offensive online debate. For example, the following headlines from the week Rowling's donation was made public: ''Cybernat' attacks on J.K. Rowling won't sway Scottish voters'[101], 'J.K. Rowling subjected to Cybernat abuse after £1m pro-UK donation'[102], ''Cybernats' abuse J.K. Rowling over £1million donation to No campaign'[103], 'Scottish nationalists abuse J.K. Rowling over Voldemort comparison and £1 million donation to 'no' campaign'[104] and 'Charity regulator to look at J.K. Rowling Twitter abuse'.[105] Highlighting the invalidity of such mistreatment of public figures, a possibility made more accessible in this case through social media, is certainly an important topic of conversation for the public sphere. In this case, however, it came at the cost of other helpful debates. Writers using their huge fortunes to back opposing sides of a constitutional discussion is a fascinating circumstance we may reasonably expect never to witness again. However, it appears that to date no literary academic discussion has directly compared the two. Only one contemporaneous mainstream news article did so with the aim of publicly discussing the role of literature and literary figures in the debate. That article, by Colin Kidd for *The Guardian*, openly asks the question that Rowling's donation

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[100] J. K. Rowling, 'J.K. Rowling's Anti Scottish Independence Statement in Full', *The Telegraph,* 11 June 2014.
[101] Ruth Wishart, "Cybernat' Attacks on J.K. Rowling Won't Sway Scottish Voters', *The Guardian,* 12 June 2014.
[102] Ben Riley-Smith and Simon Johnson, 'J.K. Rowling Subjected to Cybernat Abuse after £1m Pro-Uk Donation', *The Daily Telegraph,* 11 June 2014.
[103] Paul Gilbride and Dean Herbert, "Cybernats' Abuse J.K. Rowling over £1million Donation to No Campaign', *The Daily Express,* 12 June 2014.
[104] James Lyons, 'Scottish Nationalists Abuse J.K. Rowling over Voldemort Comparison and £1m Donation to 'No' Campaign', *Daily Mirror,* 11 June 2014.
[105] 'Charity Regulator to Look at J.K. Rowling Twitter Abuse', *BBC News,* 16 September 2016.

prompts: why was she such an exception to the trend of Scotland's writers who, 'have come out en masse for a yes vote'?[106] In 2014, the book *Why Not? Scotland, Labour and Independence,* contained a chapter by Owen Dudley Edwards concerning the two donations, but this largely focuses on Rowling as a Labour party supporter and friend of Gordon and Sarah Brown.[107]

Kidd proposes that the SNP have had a 'long and successful courtship of Scotland's poets and novelists. Not that Scotland's writers need to be wooed.' He makes sound points regarding Alex Salmond's frequent and skilful use of Burns in his nationalist rhetoric, points backed up by a later feature penned by the University of Glasgow's Gerard Carruthers, also in *The Guardian.*[108] Kidd fails to explain, however, exactly how the SNP have 'wooed' the writers of Scotland, particularly in recent years. In reality, the SNP faced a storm of controversy from the literary community surrounding their government's most significant arts policy to date — the establishment of Creative Scotland. In 2012, over 100 prominent Scottish artists signed a letter condemning the practises of Creative Scotland which had been created by the SNP-lead Scottish Government two years earlier. Two of the signatories were Liz Lochhead and Alasdair Gray, both writers who made their support of Scottish independence very clear, as I explore in Chapter Two, but who were evidently far from won over by the SNP immediately preceding the Referendum period. More convincing is Kidd's argument that literary figureheads have a tradition of also being figureheads of political drives for Scottish independence. He cites Hugh MacDiarmid (the pen name of Christopher Murray Grieve) who stood for the SNP in 1945 for Glasgow Kelvinside, Lewis Spence, the Celtic mythologist who led the Scots National Movement, novelists Neil Gunn, Compton MacKenzie, and Eric Linklater, all of whom were significant figures in the National Party of Scotland, and Douglas Young, the poet and leader of the SNP during the Second World War. Morgan's bequest therefore, while extraordinary for its size, is part of an aspect of Scottish literary history that predates the SNP as a political party.

It is true that Edwin Morgan, as Alex Salmond stated, 'did not wear his politics on his sleeve', or campaign publicly for the SNP during his lifetime. However,

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[106] Kidd.
[107] Owen Dudley Edwards, 'Thank You, Edwin Morgan, Thank You, J. K. Rowling', in *Why Not? Scotland, Labour and Independence,* ed. by Jamie Maxwell (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2014).
[108] Gerard Carruthers, 'Robert Burns and the Yes Campaign', *The Guardian,* 19 July 2014.

neither did he hide his support for the party at various times. In James McGonigal's biography of Morgan, *Beyond the Last Dragon,* he asserts Morgan's preference for the SNP either side of the 1979 referendum: 'EM had always tended to vote for them, despite some reservations.'[109] To support this claim, McGonigal cites the following section from Morgan's semi-autobiographical *Nothing Not Giving Messages:*

> But it seems to me to be the only party committed to Scotland as an entity, so I tend to give it my support. I feel Scottish – I suppose it comes down to something as simple as that on a basic level.[110]

Morgan's reasoning highlights the differences between himself and Rowling on a party-political level (Rowling donated to and endorsed the Labour Party in 2008) but also to an essential differentiation between their two bodies of work. As I shall demonstrate, the major space in Rowling's *Harry Potter* series is a parallel Britain — wizarding Britain — which encompasses England, Scotland, Wales, and a unified Ireland. In wizarding Britain, British identity is unquestionably dominant, and identities such as English or Scottish appear briefly, but are subsumed by an all-encompassing Britishness. In Morgan's poetic oeuvre, the reverse is the case. Where Rowling refers almost exclusively to 'Britain', only citing the constituent nations in the final novel, Morgan refers to Scotland frequently, other UK constituent nations occasionally, and Britain is barely referred to as an entity at all. The major space his poetry occupies is Scotland — real and imagined; past, present, and future. These writers' imagined spaces reflect their actual spaces of identity, and consequently have a bearing on their positions regarding the Referendum, as well as those of their readers.

1.3 Edwin Morgan's poetic vision of Scotland

Morgan's work is so varied in subject matter that it is perhaps erroneous to suggest that any one part of space and time is dominant. However, if any location can be said to hold sway over Morgan's imagination, that location must surely be Scotland, and particularly the city of Glasgow. Morgan was made Glasgow Poet Laureate in 1999, the uncontroversial choice for the inaugural incumbent, as he was again in 2004 as the first Scots Makar. One reason for the virtually universal approval of Morgan for these roles was the passion he so

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[109] *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan*, p. 258.
[110] Edwin Morgan, *Nothing Not Giving Messages* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990). Cited in *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan*, p. 258.

clearly felt for his city and for Scotland. That is not to say that his depictions were always full of praise for city or country — far from it. It was precisely this ability to diagnose problems whilst also finding beauty others overlooked that recommended him so highly for the role of literary ambassador. In the words of Ian Bell:

> He was the right man to be made laureate of the city of Glasgow because he had read things in her stones and heard things in her voices as capacious as the place itself.[111]

Morgan also believed in the significance of a national literary identity, as he expresses in his poem for the Association of Scottish Literary Studies, 'Retrieving and Renewing':

> Forget your literature? – forget your soul.
>
> If you want to see your country hale and whole
>
> Turn back the pages of fourteen hundred years.[112]

Morgan's poetry consistently demonstrates the fascination he had for Glasgow and Scotland, and the way in which he was able to explore them poetically with anything from love and hope to despair and disgust. For example, some of his best-known work is found in his 'Glasgow Sonnets', released in *From Glasgow to Saturn* (1973). The second of these sonnets is uncompromising in its critique of squalor in Scotland's largest city:

> …No deliverer ever rose
>
> from these stone tombs to get the hell they made
>
> unmade.[113]

The tenth and final of the sonnets concludes with these chilling lines:

> …But stalled lives never budge.
>
> They linger in the single ends that use
>
> their spirit to the bone, and when they trudge
>
> from closemouth to laundrette their steady shoes

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[111] Ian Bell, 'Why Is Our Nation So Poorly Versed in the Art of Poetry?', *The Herald,* 21 August 2010.
[112] Edwin Morgan, 'Retrieving and Renewing: A Poem for Asls', (online: Association of Scottish Literary Studies, 2004).
[113] Edwin Morgan, *From Glasgow to Saturn* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1973), p. 92.

> carry a world that weighs us like a judge.[114]

Not all of Morgan's sonnets utilise rhyme schemes, but in the example above Morgan uses rhyme to powerful effect, emphasising the weary, cyclical nature of the poverty he is describing in the 'never budge/trudge/judge' pattern.

By contrast, in his collection *Sonnets from Scotland* (1984) Morgan frequently depicts Glasgow and other parts of Scotland as nurses to the imagination. Edgar Allan Poe haunts the Broomielaw, 'the smell of tar, the slap of water, draw | his heart out from the wharf in awe and joy.'[115] The Greek poet Seferis finds Greece on the Isle of Eigg: 'stiffly cupped warm blue May air | and slowly sifted it from hand to hand.'. Gerard Manley Hopkins explores religion in Glasgow: 'poor ex-Ulstermen | crouched round a brazier like a burning bush'. One of Scotland's earliest poets, Saint Columba, and the patron saint of Glasgow, Saint Kentigern (Mungo) discuss imagery in Latin, French, and English. In 1998, reflecting on his earlier work, Morgan wrote:

> My imagined Glasgows were not vague, and I think the real-izing, the making real of even an 'unreal' place has always been important to me, with the corollary that place itself must be important.[116]

Over the course of the fifty-one sonnets, Morgan takes us through countless facets of Scotland's past, present and future, exploring the potential for both disaster and hope.

In his portrayals of Scotland, Morgan exhibits an aspirational attitude towards the nation's future, revisiting the motif of potential frequently. McGonigal describes this as his 'characteristic sense of poetic optimism in the midst of political frustration'.[117] Over the course of his career, Scotland was experiencing a period of dramatic change. Slum housing was being destroyed on a large scale to be replaced with modernist high rises. According to Catriona MacDonald, in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, 'demolition was the first tangible sign of change.'[118] The shipbuilding and other heavy industries that had defined the city and nation

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[114] Ibid. p. 95.
[115] Edwin Morgan, *Sonnets from Scotland* (Glasgow: Mariscat Press, 1984), p. 21.
[116] *The Midnight Letterbox: Selected Correspondence (1950-2010)*, p. 431.
[117] *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan*, p. 281.
[118] *Whaur Extremes Meet: Scotland's Twentieth Century*, p. 125.

for so long were experiencing a terminal decline. During the twentieth century, according to one historical account:

> [t]he lives of Scottish people changed more quickly, in more profound ways, and with greater cultural significance than in any previous century'[119]

In response to this, Morgan balances memory of Scotland's past with unbridled enthusiasm for change and regeneration. For instance, in 'Northern Nocturnal' (1954) he writes of Glasgow:

> I whisper, and the frosty steeples prickle.
>
> One great word might speak this city awake.
>
> How many hopes buried in its cradling stone,
>
> Atom by atom with girder, glass and gable
>
> Retain their cries, and when the heart recalls them,
>
> Cry out again, from their vision buried in vain![120]

For Morgan, even though huge sections of Glasgow were changing forever, this did not mean that either these lost landscapes or those who had called them home could ever be completely eradicated. His poetry, among other endeavours, has the power to 'retain their cries'.

Morgan explores the idea of potential in his nation through his exploration of art's role during this process of change. In his own poetry, he aspired to commemorate the Scotland of the past whilst exploring its future with optimism. He is conscious, too, of this impulse in other artists. 'To Joan Eardley' from *The Second Life* (1968) responds to Joan Eardley's painting of children in the Gorbals:

> Such rags and streaks
>
> that master us! –
>
> that fix what the pick
>
> and bulldozer have crumbled
>
> to a dingier dust,

[119] Lynn Abrams and Callum G. Brown, 'A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth-Century Scotland', (Edinburgh University Press, 2010), (p. 2).
[120] *Collected Poems*, p. 564.

the living blur

fiercely guarding

energy that has vanished[121]

Despite the elegiac tone of this poem there is pleasure in the salvaging of the Gorbals' children via the painting as a medium, and by extension, through the poem itself. The short lines and internal rhyme ('fix what the pick'), also contradict the subject matter by speeding up the poem's pace and energising it. The buildings may have crumbled, for better or worse, but the painter's brush has 'fixed' that damage. Ekphrasis in Morgan's poetry such as this speaks to a self-awareness in his own work of the writer's role in imagining a community. As the poet himself remarked in interview:

> I like to give a voice to others, especially things neglected… Poetry is partly sympathy, don't you think? If it's any good, it gets people to think about others' points of view.[122]

Morgan is clearly aware of the writer's ability to affect a reader's conceptions of places and people, and his preoccupation with potential in his poetry of Scotland and Glasgow speak to his aspirations for the nation. This testifies to his belief that poetry can and should make something happen; the Shelley end of the Shelley-Auden spectrum Morgan identified so clearly with by the 1990s (see Introduction). Likewise, his lack of engagement with Britain or the UK as an imagined space reflects his disassociation from that identity. His self-awareness demonstrates a clear rhetorical purpose in Morgan's poetry of nation.

In 1978, a decade on from *The Second Life*, 'The Demolishers' looks at Glasgow's changing face from the angle of those completing the actual demolition work, and considers that same conflict between positive change and capturing in art what will be lost:

We're entitled to change it, it's due a change.

Due and overdue, so long due

that change is painful when it comes

…

[121] Edwin Morgan, *The Second Life* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968), p. 29.
[122] Judith Palmer, 'Interview: The Many Realities of Edwin Morgan', *Independent,* 25 November 1997.

They clear a space for the future.
The city breathes and sighs, settles, is restless, is furious,
is knee-deep in rubble, is renewed.[123]

As with the previous examples, Morgan is inspired by the changing cityscape, even as he acknowledges his own sadness at that change. Using the Roman god Janus as a metaphor, he explores this duality later in the poem:

Change is eternal division, a Janus coin
that spins a jaundiced and a jaunty side,
and who would bet on any one man's view?[124]

Morgan's word play here signals his sense that both jaundiced and jaunty can co-exist for him. This poem looks forward with what Rodney Edgecombe calls Morgan's 'Futuristic excitement'.[125] The city, though 'knee-deep in rubble', is 'renewed', and the poet invites us to share in his optimism for Glasgow's future.

Morgan's earlier poem, 'The Vision of Cathkin Braes', further demonstrates his awareness of the writer's role in shaping how the reader understands their own time and place. The poem depicts lovers in summer attempting to go about their business only to be constantly interrupted by a flow of cultural icons. The majority of these icons are Scottish, but American actress Lauren Bacall, biblical Salome, and English Wordsworth also join the haunting tribe. The writer's cultural inheritance is portrayed here as predominantly Scottish, but with the Bible, Hollywood, and the English literary canon also playing important roles. W.B. Yeats wrote in 1888, 'one can only reach out to the universe with a gloved hand – that glove is one's nation.'[126] 'The Vision of Cathkin Braes' is one of many examples in which Edwin Morgan reaches out to the world from Scotland – defying parochialism and simultaneously asserting Scotland's legitimacy in the modern world (Hollywood), and as part of an ancient narrative (the Bible). Of all the Scottish ghosts in the poem, William Topaz McGonagall is the only one remembered purely as a writer. However, the others; Mary, Queen of Scots, John Knox, Jenny Geddes, and 'St Mungo Park', a morph of St Mungo and the

[123] *Collected Poems*, p. 579.
[124] Ibid. p. 580.
[125] Rodney Edgecombe, *Aspects of Form and Genre in the Poetry of Edwin Morgan* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), p. 16.
[126] W.B. Yeats, G. Bornstein, and H. Witemeyer, *Letters to the New Island* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), p. 174.

explorer Mungo Park, are all important figures in the Scottish literary canon, even if they are better known for their other occupations. Mary, Queen of Scots was a poet for example, and Mungo Park published accounts of his adventures. Though this poem is humorous, the underlying tone is one of frustration at how inescapable these cultural definers are.

In 'Memories of Earth', published in *The New Divan* in 1977, Morgan reiterates this struggle through the voice of aliens. The poem is narrated by documenting extra-terrestrials, who are looking upon earth and its inheritance of torture and suffering, alongside the hope, love, and exploration. Towards the beginning of this poem, Morgan describes the barbaric torture of sixteenth-century Translyvanian rebel, György Dózsa. As the poem draws to a close, the alien narrator is distressed and changed by their memories of Earth. They question: 'How do I know whether Dózsa's dead? | Why don't the dead just disappear then?' For Morgan, the dead do not disappear as long as we remember them and are affected by their actions, hence the importance of recalling certain names and events in his poetry. Dózsa has lived on in this poem, 'remembered' by a poet who was born four centuries after his physical death. Morgan repeatedly explores this theme, right from some of his earliest published poetry in his breakthrough volume, *The Second Life* (1968). For example, 'The Domes of Saint Sophia' concludes:

> The dead will die
> if the living are asleep.
> Waken them![127]

The poet's call to 'Waken them!' speaks to Morgan's consciousness of a writer's ability to preserve and continue certain myths and representations, and demonstrates deliberate motivations behind Morgan's Scottish poetry. It is also further evidence that largely excluding Britain as an imagined space is a deliberate choice with a rhetorical impetus.

In a more directly literary context, Morgan's poems about his fellow writers, both past and present, can give us an idea of the living presence that Scottish literature in particular has in his work. From these poems, we get a strong sense

[127] *Collected Poems*, p. 148.

that the poetry of Scotland and the idea of Scotland as a whole are inextricably linked for Edwin Morgan. 'To Ian Hamilton Finlay' is one example:

> …Scotland is
> the little bonfires
> in cold mist,
> with stubbornness
> the woman knits
> late by a window,
> a man repairing
> nets, a man carry-
> ing steady glass,
> hears the world,
> bends to his work.
> You give the pleasure
> of made things…[128]

Morgan's vision of Scotland has been shaped by his literary antecedents, as he acknowledges here. 'Scotland is' what Ian Hamilton Finlay has given Morgan and his other readers. The snapshots in the poem are not Morgan's own lived experience but experiences given to him by his fellow poets, contributing to Morgan's own version of Scotland. This experience is the archetypal example of Anderson's imagined community; the nation and literary depictions of the nation are inseparable for Morgan. The poem 'To Hugh MacDiarmid' further identifies that MacDiarmid's articulation of Scotland has an essential impact on how Morgan understands Scotland as a nation:

> …'to a poet nothing can be useless'
> you concurred, and out of scraps of art and life and knowledge
> you assembled that crackling auroral panorama
> that sits on your Scotland like a curly comb
> or a grinning watergaw thrown to meteorology,

[128] *The Second Life*, p. 17.

> your bone to the dogs of the ages.
>
> …
>
> Midges in cigarette smoke! That's what you know,
>
> where it comes from, turning a page or writing one
>
> in your clear hand still, sitting by a cottage
>
> in a small country.[129]

The 'small country' of this poem refers to Scotland, but more specifically to MacDiarmid's poetic representations of it. In his poem, anthologised as 'Scotland small?' but originally part of the longer work, 'Direadh', MacDiarmid mocks characterisations of Scotland as small, and as 'nothing but heather'. The poem opens with the well-known line, now immortalised on the Canongate Wall, 'Scotland small? Our multiform, our infinite Scotland *small*?'[130] Morgan is clearly referencing this in the final line of his poem. The 'small country' is as much Hugh MacDiarmid's idea of Scotland as any objective measure of that nation, and in this poem Morgan is acknowledging MacDiarmid's role in shaping his own vision of Scotland. Although Morgan did not always agree with MacDiarmid's poetic strategies, 'To Hugh MacDiarmid' expresses a deeply held debt of gratitude for his legacy to Scottish literature. Morgan compares the impact on his own imagination to the 'watergaw': the word for an indistinct rainbow and the title of another of MacDiarmid's poems. Morgan writes that MacDiarmid gifted the word watergaw to meteorology as 'your bone to the dogs of the ages', acknowledging the older poet's lasting impact beyond Morgan himself. Margaret Elphinstone says of her reading of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*:

> Nationhood, I discovered, is necessarily indefinable, because every attempt at definition is a regressive reduction of all the people who regard themselves as rightfully dwelling in this place… Scotland is an imagined community which exists in 5 million forms inside our heads.[131]

Morgan, as the writer of 'To Hugh MacDiarmid', would certainly agree with Elphinstone's statement. Just as nothing is dead that can be visited, so too is the Scotland of Hugh MacDiarmid, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Joan Eardley, and a kaleidoscope of others, living because we can visit it through their art. To quote from the tenth of Morgan's 'New Year Sonnets', 'the rhyme | is like a lock but

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[129] Ibid. p. 16.
[130] Hugh MacDiarmid, *Complete Poems Volume Two* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1994).
[131] *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*, p. 72.

the treasure moves free'. In other words, though Morgan's vision of Scotland is influenced by other contributors to the imagined community, it is ultimately his own, individual interpretation of Scotland that we see in his written work.

Morgan's visions of Scotland similarly have a lasting impact on those who follow him, as figures such as MacDiarmid or Finlay have clearly had on Morgan. Morgan's poetry has become a permanent feature of Scottish literary study, ensuring his Scotland becomes part of a wider consciousness. For example, in 2012 the Scottish Qualifications Authority, after consultation with various stakeholder groups, compiled their set list of Scottish texts for National 5 and Higher English study, which included a selection of Morgan's poetry.[132] A consistent argument for a distinct nation of Scotland that sees and is seen by the world beyond weaves its way through Morgan's poetry across the decades. Thanks to Morgan's poetic excellence, this argument finds its way into school classrooms and university lecture theatres throughout Scotland and beyond. Additionally, there is the self-reflective argument of the power that literary representations have. These crucial elements of Morgan's work contribute to how Scotland is imagined by other citizens and those beyond, just as Morgan's imagined Scotland was also influenced in its turn by writers such as MacDiarmid or Hamilton Finlay. In this regard, Morgan's literary legacy carries a more lasting significance than his financial one. Robert Crawford in *Bannockburns* (2014) says of the legacy:

> connections between poetry, politics, and money are seldom tidy. Nor should they be. More nuanced and complex than political rhetoric, poetry often runs counter to valuations based on cash… What Edwin Morgan's poetry did for Scottish life was to provide a vibrant articulation of chance… more lasting and more energising than a mere million pound coins.[133]

Morgan's 'Futuristic optimism' and sense of 'the value of change and uncertainty', have clearly had an impact on Crawford as just one example of a younger writer. [134] These sentiments are an essential aspect of the way in which Morgan imagined Scotland over a decades-long career. Furthermore, they are an example of the 'long lines of communication' which poetry provides, and the

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[132] Scottish Qualifications Authority, 'National Qualifications: English', (Online, 2016).
[133] *Bannockburns: Scottish Independence and the Literary Imagination, 1314-2014*, p. 188.
[134] Colin Nicholson, 'Remembering the Future: Edwin Morgan's Science Fiction Poetry', *Yearbook of English Studies,* 30 (2000).

luxury of exploring and developing a much longer-term view of ideas relating to the nation than party politics allows for.

1.4. *Sonnets from Scotland* (1984)

In order to examine Morgan's multi-dimensional interpretations of Scotland, what Hames describes as 'the ambivalence of what he actually wrote', *Sonnets from Scotland* provides a fascinating and helpful context.[135] These are often described as having been 'written in response to the failed devolution referendum in 1979.'[136] Morgan himself attests that his inspiration for the volume:

> began as a sort of defiant non-acceptance of the failed referendum [it] fits into an evolving pattern of Scottish culture as wide-ranging, risk-taking, internationally aware.[137]

One poem from *Sonnets from Scotland* in particular, 'The Coin', is an example of Morgan's support for an independent Scotland, which was not ignited but was certainly nurtured by the confusion of 1979. The poem describes the discovery, far into the future, of a coin from an independent Scotland that Morgan imagines will one day exist and then cease to do so. Although the imagined nation has passed into history, the concluding lines are uplifting: 'Yet nothing seemed ill-starred. | And least of all the realm the coin contained.'[138] The novelist James Robertson explains that for him:

> [Sonnets from Scotland] was a hugely uplifting read during a politically frustrating time. Morgan seemed to reinvent Scotland's past, present and future. In 'The Coin' space travellers find a coin, a relic from a country that once existed – Scotland, but not a Scotland that has ever yet been. The poem asks if this is a Scotland we can attain/How long will it last? But there is a great optimism in the last lines which still fills me with hope and pleasure whenever I read them.[139]

In the aftermath of the 1979 referendum, a poem which reveals, with 'the shock of Latin, like a gloss | Respublica Scotorum' is a bold statement of optimism for a future independent Scotland. In the poem, the republic has clearly had a long lifespan, as the coin has been used so often that the date has faded:

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[135] *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*, p. 8.
[136] Colin Nicholson, 'Vernacular Poetry', in *The Edinburgh Introduction to Studying English Literature*, ed. by Dermot Cavanagh (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), (p. 94).
[137] Edwin Morgan, 'Scottish Fiction', *Scottish Left Review*, 60 (2010).
[138] *Collected Poems*, p. 454.
[139] James Robertson, 'The Coin', in *From Saturn to Glasgow*, ed. by Robyn Marsack and Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Scottish Poetry Library, 2008), (p. 21).

> …sent across
> such ages as we guessed but never found
> the worn edge where once the date had been
> and where as many fingers had gripped hard
> as hopes their silent race had lost or gained.[140]

One of the poem's great imaginative strengths is that the Scottish republic the poet aspires for is imagined not from within that republic, or looking forward to it from the present, but from the perspective of discoverers after it has already had its long and seemingly prosperous time. We are so far into a science-fiction future that the 'Respublica Scotorum' has been created, enjoyed a long history and is now concluded. That image encapsulates the optimism Robertson identifies regarding an independent Scotland's future. However, Morgan is nuanced enough in his visions of that future that he anticipates its end. A Scottish republic, while desirable for the poet, is not the ultimate climax of civilisation, and he acknowledges that even his desired nation will inevitably fade or change into something else in time. This does not diminish the aspiration for the republic Morgan imagines, however, and conversely, it is a poem looking back on a vanished nation that has come to stand for a potential future.

This kind of contrast is something at which Morgan excels, and the poem's form and subject also complement each other by their opposition. Gavin Wallace argues:

> The juxtaposition of the antiquity of the sonnet form as a corner-stone of the Western poetic canon with the postmodern imaginative transport (literally) of science-fiction, time-travelling, and meta-narrative is the quintessential embodiment of Morgan's poetics. The Coin is its DNA.[141]

Morgan uses an adaptation of the oldest of the sonnet forms in English, the Petrarchan or Italian sonnet. The traditional Petrarchan rhyme scheme is ABBAABBA CDECDE. Morgan's sonnet follows the slightly altered scheme ABBACDDC EDFEDF. As Wallace points out adhering to an ancient and challenging form in order to express such an imaginative leap as described above, is a contrast which serves to highlight the skill involved in both the form and content, and to add to the confusion the poem's subject matter also suggests

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[140] *Collected Poems*, p. 454.
[141] Gavin Wallace, 'New Currency or Old?', *The Bottle Imp*, 2 (2007).

between past, present, and future. In keeping with the Petrarchan form, Morgan utilises its greatest rhetorical device by setting the first eight lines, the octave, against the final six, the sestet, and incorporating a volta in his final sentence. According to Eavan Boland's description of this device,

> The octave sets out the problems, the perceptions, the wishes of the poet. The sestet does something different: it makes a swift, wonderfully compact turn on the hidden meanings of *but* and *yet* and *wait for a moment*. The sestet answers the octave, but neither politely nor smoothly. And this simple engine of proposition and rebuttal has allowed the sonnet over centuries, in the hands of very different poets, to replicate over and over again the magic of inner argument.[142]

In the case of 'The Coin', the octave gives us 'the wishes of the poet' in the form of the 'Respublica Scotorum'. The sestet rebuts this with questions of 'what hopes their silent race have lost or gained', and what the 'marshy scurf' that sucks at the voyagers' boots could be, and how it might relate to the passing of the republic. The volta of the two final sentences however, as Robertson passionately expresses, go some way towards resolving Morgan's 'inner argument', and leave us with an aspirational image of a future independent Scotland, despite the knowledge that it must eventually end.

In the wider context of *Sonnets from Scotland*, 'The Coin' is part of an epic history of Scotland, which 'can, and should, be regarded as much as a long poem as a sequence' in the words of Gavin Wallace.[143] The sonnets follow a vast chronological time scale beginning with the very foundations of the Scottish landscape in the poems 'Slate', 'Carboniferous', and 'Post-Glacial'. These sonnets serve to remind us that the man-made idea of 'Scotland' is only a recent application to a land which stretches back millions of years. Morgan begins with 'Slate', exploring a time when 'Memory of men! That was to come', and before 'tens | of thousands of rains, blizzards, sea-poundings' might create the Scottish landscape recognisable today. The sonnets then travel through the ages of human history in Scotland, and then literary history, till 'Post-Referendum' faces the contemporary reality. Of course, Morgan does not stop there but continues into a futuristic imagination of Scotland, where eventually explorers discover the coin that 'showed us Scotland'. Before they do however, we are given a chilling

[142] Eavan Boland, 'Discovering the Sonnet', in *The Making of a Sonnet*, ed. by Eavan Boland and Edward Hirsch (New York: Norton, 2009), pp. 43-49 (p. 17).
[143] Wallace.

explanation as to why the republic is a thing of the past. 'The Target' describes the death of Glasgow from a nuclear attack or disaster, reflecting the Cold War context of the sonnets:

> Lucky seemed those at the heart of the blast
> who left no flesh or ash or blood or bone,
> only a shadow on dead Glasgow's stone,
> when the black angel had gestured and passed.
> Rhu was a demons' pit, Faslane a grave[144]

The five poems which follow 'The Target' document the gradual transition from fallout zone to wasteland. It becomes gradually clear that the whole of Scotland has been destroyed by the nuclear blasts. In 'The Age of Heracleum', Edinburgh is imagined as the legendary submerged city of Egypt, Heracleum, which is also the scientific name for the hogweed mentioned in the poem.

> west winds blew, past shattered bricks and tiles,
> millions of seeds through ruined Holyrood.[145]

The lines above are frightening but not pessimistic. Morgan depicts these 'millions of seeds' beginning to take root as the collection progresses. 'The Coin' appears after poems describing the destruction of Scotland, and in the context of its position in *Sonnets from Scotland,* provides an even more resounding message of hope for the future.

1.5 The Makar and the public voice

With a body of work that celebrates so many aspects of Scotland yet epitomises 'an internationalist outlook', Edwin Morgan was a natural and uncontroversial choice for modern Scotland's first Makar, or national poet. [146] As discussed above, Morgan was already Glasgow Poet Laureate, a role described by Rosemary Goring as:

> never regarded as an honour restricted by postal code but as the closest Scotland could come, at that point, to its own official laureate.[147]

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[144] *Collected Poems*, p. 452.
[145] Ibid. p. 453.
[146] Kasia Boddy, 'Edwin Morgan's Adventures in Calamerica', *The Yale Journal of Criticism,* 13 (2000).
[147] Rosemary Goring, 'We Can Thank Scots Poets for Your Honest Veggie Face', *The Herald,* 21 February 2004.

This was followed by the creation of the Edinburgh Makar in 2002[148], where the trend of reinvigorating the historical term of 'Makar' for such a position began. Glasgow and Edinburgh were later joined by Stirling (2008), Aberdeen (2009), and Dundee (2013). With the newly devolved Parliament now established, and a brand new set of buildings appearing on Edinburgh's Royal Mile, a Scots Makar was now an imaginable addition to these poetic representatives. On 16 February 2004, then First Minister Jack McConnell announced that such a position would be created, and that its first incumbent would be Edwin Morgan.

The Scottish Poetry Library's closing lines in their biography of Morgan sum up his suitability for the role as the ambassador for Scottish poetic excellence:

> Morgan was widely recognised as the most influential poet of his gifted generation. His linguistic resources, formal invention, intellectual curiosity, sense of humour and humane vision combined to produce a poetry of extraordinary range and emotional reach. [149]

Morgan was not enthusiastic about the term 'Scots Makar' itself, suggesting alternatives such as National Poet of Scotland or Scottish Laureate. According to his biographer, James McGonigal, Morgan believed the word Makar had 'backward-looking connotations and a medieval air, whereas he wanted always to look forward.'[150] His concerns were evidently waived aside by the Scottish Executive as it was then called, because by 16 February, they had confirmed that Scots Makar would be the official name for Morgan's new role. The decision to go with the name may have been less about recalling Scotland's past, however, than acknowledging its present as part of the UK. By recognising a centuries-old term for a Scottish poet, the Scottish Executive was able to distinguish the role as a new and uniquely Scottish position, separate from but not superseding the extant Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom.

The Laureate tradition began in Britain in 1668 - before the Union of Parliaments but after the Union of the Crowns. As the Poet Laureate is the poet to the monarch and their family, it is the Union of the Crowns in 1603 that is the most relevant to the Laureateship, making its foundation as Scottish as it is English. The word 'Laureate' itself predates the term Makar, originating with the laurel

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[148] This was the same year the Edinburgh began planning for their successful bid to become the world's first UNESCO City of Literature in 2004.
[149] Scottish Poetry Library, 'Scottish Poetry Library: Edwin Morgan', (2014).
[150] *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan*, p. 410.

wreaths of ancient Rome, recognising Italy also as the origin of 'modern' Laureates in the fourteenth century. It is true that the word Makar was associated with poets in Scotland from as early as the fifteenth century[151], and therefore before the origins of the laureateship in Britain under James VI of Scotland and I of England. However, the title of Laureate is historically no less backward-looking. Naming Morgan as the Makar as opposed to the Laureate, therefore, fitted well with the remit of the devolved Scottish Executive: separate but not disconnected from the UK Government. The names suggested by Morgan imply a replacement in Scotland of the UK laureate, and a cultural separation from the UK which Morgan may have been willing to espouse, but that the 2004 Executive were not.

The decision of the Executive to go with the title of Scots Makar was not made public until the day of the ceremony. The Scottish Executive's press briefing stated: 'The Cabinet has agreed to create a position of national poet for Scotland. Professor Morgan will be known as 'The Scots Makar''.[152] In much of the newspaper coverage of the event, the idea is credited to the Scottish Executive, primarily the First Minister Jack McConnell and the Minister for Culture, Tourism, and Sport, Frank McAveety. Their decision was not made in isolation, however, and followed lobbying from the Association of Scottish Literary Studies (ASLS) and from the Scottish Literature Department at the University of Glasgow. Throughout January 2004, Alan Riach, then Head of Department for Scottish Literature at Glasgow, was in correspondence with McAveety, following a letter sent from Professor Riach in December of 2003. This letter commends the value of Morgan's life achievements as 'a genuinely popular poet', and suggests that McAveety and the First Minister make a visit to Morgan's nursing home on the back of Morgan's recent lifetime achievement award from the Saltire Book Awards. Riach mentions the Glasgow Poet Laureate role which leads him to suggest that the kind of 'public/creative contract' that role provided could be extended to Scotland as a nation.[153] As their correspondence continues, this suggestion of a possible Poet Laureate for Scotland becomes

[151] Anon., 'Makar N.', in *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (Edinburgh: Scottish Language Dictionaries Ltd., 2016).
[152] The Scottish Executive, 'Media Briefings - Feb 16 2004: National Poet for Scotland', (2004).
[153] Alan Riach, 'Letter', ed. by Frank MacAveety (Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland, 2003).

explicit, and by mid-February became reality. At the same time, ASLS and Scottish Arts Council had been making similar applications to McAveety.[154]

The creation of the post was linked to the fledgling Scottish Executive's 'Key Performance Targets' in the Tourism, Culture, and Sport Budget. Target 9 reads: 'To develop by 2003-04 the means of identifying the number of Scottish world class artists, companies, and institutions, and to set targets for 2006 in light of this'.[155] The position had nonetheless been created in only a matter of weeks, and suffered from a lack of planning. There were early difficulties regarding the lack of clarity surrounding what was actually expected of a Scots Makar, and what the position-holder themselves could expect in turn. Only a few weeks after the post was created, McConnell and his executive faced public scrutiny from the literary community for 'using [the] Scots Makar as publicity gimmick.'[156] Prominent poets such as Don Paterson, John Burnside, and Ron Butlin (the future Edinburgh Makar) made public their disapproval of the new role's execution. Butlin's anger focused on the unfavourable comparison with the United Kingdom Poet Laureate, as reported by *The Sunday Herald*.[157]

Butlin criticised the Executive for not matching the more generous treatment of Motion and argues that it is indicative of how undervalued and underfunded the arts are in Scotland in comparison with Britain and, indeed, Europe. The article goes on to state that Morgan:

> has not heard from the Executive since Jack McConnell visited his home in February… he remains uncertain of what the terms of his position are. [158]

This was possibly an inevitable result of the short time-frame in which the post was created. Morgan was given the title as a means of honouring the elderly genius as much as to create the position itself. Having created the position to fit the poet, as opposed to creating a position and then selecting someone to fill it, a formal structure of appointment was delayed until Morgan's term ran out.

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[154] 'Scots Makar', *The Herald,* 18 February 2004.
[155] Scottish Government, 'Annual Evaluation Report 1005-6' (Edinburgh: Scottish Government, 2006).
[156] Elizabeth McMeekin, 'Mcconnell under Fire for 'Using Scots Makar as Publicity Gimmick", *The Sunday Herald,* 2004, p. 3.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.

Originally this was reported as being three years, but Morgan remained Makar until his death, six years later.[159]

The choice to use the term Makar struck an interesting balance between acknowledging an ancient Scottish poetic tradition and avoiding a challenge to British cultural authority, which the term laureate would certainly have done. Varying views on how much of a challenge the post might be to the British state emerged following the public announcement of Morgan's appointment as Makar. According to one assessment from England:

> In February 2004, Edwin Morgan was appointed first poet Laureate for Scotland, another telling symptom of the widening rift between the two nations.[160]

The 'two nations' in this comment refer to Scotland and England, reflecting that in 2004 only English men had ever been Poets Laureate. Andrew Motion, the incumbent Poet Laureate at the time, was dismissive of any significance regarding the Scots Makar:

> Mr Motion said that he welcomed the appointment but pointed out that there was only one laureate who had been appointed by the Queen. 'I can't stop it happening,' he said. 'But I feel totally relaxed about it because there's only one Poet Laureate appointed by the Queen, and there only ever will be.' He added that there were now innumerable poet laureates springing up all over the country.[161]

Morgan's view of this new Anglo-Scottish affiliation was that it could be a positive move for the relationship between the two nations, potentially even bringing about the kind of cultural recognition of Scotland, as well as other marginalised British communities, that Morgan felt was long overdue:

> It will have to be sorted out because it's a kind of rival post in a sense… His post is for the United Kingdom but essentially it's an English post. It's never been held by any Welsh, Irish, or Scottish poet so this is a good thing – it will possibly make the English think about their own poet laureate in relation to Scotland and other parts of the United Kingdom.[162]

Although it is true that at the time the post had always been held by an English writer, Morgan neglects to mention that it had been offered to at least one

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[159] Matthew Taylor, 'Scots Appoint First Laureate', *The Guardian,* 17 February 2004.
[160] Willy Maley and Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, *This England, That Shakespeare: New Angles on Englishness and the Bard* (Ashgate Publishing, Limited, 2013), p. 18.
[161] Erica Wagner, 'Poetic Justice for the Free-Thinking Scots', *The Times,* 2004.
[162] Phil Miller, 'Scots Makar? No I'm a Modern Man', *The Herald,* 17 February 2004, p. 3.

Scottish writer, Sir Walter Scott, in 1813. Scott turned down the post, giving the reason that he was unable to 'write to order'.[163] As I shall discuss further in 2.5, Motion's successor as Laureate was much more favourable in her response to the Scots Maker role.

Andrew Motion was the first Poet Laureate to break from the tradition of holding the role for life, and was appointed for a period of ten years. Following his retirement, Scottish-born Carol Ann Duffy was named Poet Laureate in May 2009; the first Poet Laureate not to be English, male, or heterosexual. Her appointment was a signal that Morgan and other's comments had not gone unnoticed. In the past, the process for selecting the Laureate has been not only secret but 'even the reason why it is a secret is a secret' according to one of Tony Blair's advisors, Phillip Collins.[164] The 2009 selection process invited public input for the first time in its history.[165] The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) was careful to very publicly consult with Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish literary bodies, as well as Commonwealth organisations.[166] They also announced that the DCMS had 'been monitoring correspondence about the laureateship from other interested parties and the public' in making their

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[163] Stuart Kelly, 'Sir Walter Scott: Biography', (2016) <http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poets/sir-walter-scott> [accessed 18 September 2016].

[164] Andy McSmith, 'The Big Question: What's the History of Poet Laureates, and Does the Job Still Mean Anything?', *The Independent,* 30 April 2009.

[165] Ewa Panecka, *Literature and the Monarchy: The Traditional and the Modern Concept of the Office of Poet Laureate of England* (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), p. 16.

[166] From the DCMS press release: 'DCMS carried out the consultation process on behalf of the Royal Household and sought advice from academics, key poetry and literary organisations and others in the sector, including: Apples & Snakes, Arts Council England, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies, Association of Scottish Literature Studies, Australian Poetry Centre, British Council, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru, League of Canadian Poets, National Poetry Day, New Zealand Poetry Society, Poetry Archive, Poetry Book Society, Poetry School, Poetry Society, Poetry Trust, QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), Royal Society of Literature, Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Poetry Library, Society of Authors (including the Society of Authors in Scotland), Southbank Centre, The Welsh Academy and academics from the Centre for Research into the English Literature and Language of Wales (Swansea University), National Centre for Writing (University of Glamorgan), University College London, University of Cambridge, University of Leeds, University of Oxford, and University of Warwick.
Following the consultation process, DCMS discussed the most nominated poets with Arts Council England, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, British Council, Scottish Arts Council and The Welsh Academy.
The Culture Secretary made the recommendation following the consultation and with consideration for the views of the Arts Councils and British Council. The Prime Minister put the recommendation to HM The Queen for approval.
DCMS has been monitoring correspondence about the laureateship from other interested parties and the public. There was not, however, a public vote to determine the holder of the post.

decision (see footnote 166). Scotland and Wales appointing their own Poets Laureate during Motion's tenure, and the public discussions surrounding these appointments, were clearly acknowledged by the DCMS in 2009 as developments worth addressing, and the result was a reformed Laureate selection process.

The new role of Makar is described as 'an ambassador for Scottish poetry' by Robyn Marscak, former director of the Scottish Poetry Library. When Edwin Morgan became Makar, Scotland (not being a nation-state and therefore without diplomatic representation independent of the UK) became the only nation without a political ambassador to instate a poetic one. This is perhaps the most concrete example of the theory discussed in the introduction to this thesis, that 'Scotland's artists did more than its politicians to dream up a new Scotland.' In the case of Poets Laureate, the Scottish literary community was rewarded for their boldness in appointing a Makar. This reward came in the form of a new, more open, and inclusive UK Poet Laureate selection process, which ultimately resulted in the first Scottish or female Poet Laureate in the three centuries of its existence.

The inaugural Scots Makar did not have to wait long before his skills were required. *Scotland on Sunday* immediately commissioned a poem from Morgan which was published on 23 February 2004, the first Sunday following the appointment. The poem was entitled 'New Times', perhaps a response to the poet's outspoken view that the term Makar was too backward-looking for his liking. The work made it clear that Morgan had a distinct idea as to what the role could mean for Scotland and what he himself could achieve within it. 'New Times' is a poem of independence; a bold and unambiguous demand for change in Scotland. In the accompanying article Morgan states:

> You have to congratulate the Executive for creating this post. It is something of a risk because we poets are free spirits and we distrust the establishment. A writer can do what he wants and not what the politicians want him to do.[167]

This statement is reminiscent of John Burnside's characterisation of the poet's privilege of being the 'dissident', discussed in the Introduction. 'A writer can do

[167] Eddie Barnes, 'Poetic Justice as Devolution's First Laureate Hankers for a Republic', *Scotland on Sunday,* 23 February 2004.

what he wants' regardless of party politics, even a role as attached to a Parliament as the Scots Makar.

In his first act as the poet appointed by the Labour-led Scottish Executive, Morgan openly demonstrated that he was not going to align himself politically with the pro-Union stance of the Labour Party, whose Scottish leadership had created his new position. According to 'New Times', nothing but Scotland's complete separation from the UK and the monarchy will do:

> Wave back, but they miss the mark.
>
> Bended knee and corgi's bark
>
> Peering north through the churning dark
>
> Will never cut it, now or finally.[168]

In this statement of republicanism, Morgan sets himself at a distance from his counterpart, the Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom, a role still administered as part of the royal household.[169] The poem's structure of rhyming iambic tetrameter interrupted by occasional lines such as 'Will never cut it now or finally', is close to that of the Habbie stanza, a distinctly Scottish poetry form, also referred to as the Burns stanza, or even the Scottish stanza. According to Robert Crawford:

> [New Times] established something about the nature of this Laureateship which will make it different to the post down south which has always been associated with the Monarchy.[170]

In setting the two roles apart, Morgan establishes Scotland as a separate poetic nation, and, in his poem at least, as a separate political nation as well:

> So give us leave to build our highway
>
> Which you may think is but a byway
>
> But it is not. The general will
>
> Is patient but asks us to fulfil
>
> A fate that like a rugged hill

[168] Edwin Morgan, 'New Times', *Scotland on Sunday,* 23 February 2004.
[169] Crown Copyright, 'Poet Laureate', (The Royal Household, 2014).
[170] Crawford in, Barnes.

Is there for all to see; is seen;
Is acted on; we're raw, we're green,
But what's to come, not what has been,

Drives us charged and tingling-new,
To score our story on the blue,
Or if it's dark – still speak true.[171]

The rhyming tercets are full of an excited energy for the future, recalling other works of Morgan's such as 'To Joan Eardley'. Each line follows an iambic tetrameter structure, which is disrupted forcefully in the sentence 'But it is not.' This rhetorical flourish makes Morgan's view clear that Scotland is a nation waiting to happen, but not fantastical or far away as it is in 'The Coin'. This version of Scotland's future 'is there for all to see'- not distant and hypothetical, but a very real prospect. Perhaps this is wishful thinking on Morgan's part. His confidence in that prospect comes through clearly in this poem, however, with a clear rhetorical purpose of inspiring the same optimism in others. Three years after that poem was published, the SNP became the leaders of a minority government, making the prospect of a referendum on independence and thus independence itself a visible possibility. 'What's to come, not what has been' drives Morgan's countrymen in this poem, aligning them with the poet's own statements in the press that week. For Morgan, the notion of Scotland's past does not evoke a golden age of Makars and independent parliaments, but a long history of cultural suppression, where Scotland has been denied the chance to 'score our story on the blue'. Even 'if it's dark', the poet argues, still better to be able to 'speak true' than to look always south and 'miss the mark.'

Before long, the Scottish Executive itself called upon their new appointee. Morgan's 'For the Opening of the Scottish Parliament, 9 October 2004', as the title makes clear, was written for the opening of the new Scottish Parliament buildings, and addresses the parliamentarians directly and confidently. Fittingly for the first poem by a modern Scots Makar, Morgan wrote what George Reid

[171] Morgan.

described in his eulogy at Morgan's funeral as, 'that very model of public poetry'.[172] The poem, like the parliament buildings themselves, was a means of showcasing what Scotland might take and what it might leave behind from the time of full parliamentary Union. This first 'use' of the Makar by the Scottish Executive provided an ideal appropriation of literature for the purposes of legitimising and celebrating their own roles. It also helped to counter the fallout from the controversial buildings they had overseen, which were three years late and more than ten times over the original budget.[173] Morgan, however, honoured the statement he made at the outset of the role, quoted above, that 'a writer can do what he wants and not what the politicians want him to do'. While performing his role admirably in a poem which deservedly takes pride of place in the Scottish Parliament Buildings at Holyrood today, the Makar also made his presence felt at a concurrent protest event which was certainly not part of the official ceremony of the day. Although unable to attend either event due to ill health, Morgan was signatory to a document called 'The Declaration of Calton Hill'. At the same moment that the Queen was opening the new buildings at the official ceremony, and Edwin Morgan's new poem for the Parliament was being read by Liz Lochhead, a gathering on nearby Calton Hill was taking place, organised by the Scottish Socialist Party, at which the Declaration was signed. The Declaration's first clause reads: 'We the undersigned call for an independent Scottish republic built on the principles of liberty, equality, diversity, and solidarity.'[174] It goes on to state its opposition to nuclear weapons, 'unjust wars in foreign lands', chauvinism, imperialism, and racism. It further expresses support for immigration, environmentalism, and a written Constitution, among other things. The undersigned included Edwin Morgan, along with fellow writers Irvine Welsh, A. L. Kennedy, and Alasdair Gray.

In his poem for the Parliament, sometimes referred to by its opening lines, 'Open the doors', Morgan triumphantly proclaims of the new buildings, 'imperial marble it is not!' The word imperial deliberately evokes empire, colonisation, and the kind of damaging cultural hegemony associated with imperial Britain.

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[172] George Reid, 'Edwin Morgan 1920-2010: A Eulogy', (Online: The Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2010).
[173] Isabel White and Iqwinder Sidhu, 'Building the Scottish Parliament: The Holyrood Project', *House of Commons Library*, (2005).
[174] Scottish Socialist Party, 'The Declaration of Calton Hill', (Online: SenScot, 2004).

Scotland, as Chapter Two explores, has been an enthusiastic partner in the British Empire, as well as having experienced a degree of cultural imperialism at home from the London metropole. This phrase of Morgan's, like the Declaration of Calton Hill, proclaims an end to Scotland's role as both coloniser and colonised, opening the doors to an imperial-free future under the devolved Parliament. This line also implies a separation from the seat of the UK Parliament at the formidably elegant Palace of Westminster and other parliamentary buildings around the world. Such buildings, particularly those in Western Europe such as in France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Malta, and elsewhere, are characterised by what the poem describes as 'classic columns and predictable pediments'. The Scottish Parliament's design, by contrast, is drawn from the Scottish landscape, using elements such as petals and upturned boats for inspiration, envisaged by the architect, Enric Miralles, as 'growing out of the land'.[175] Morgan was given the opportunity to view architect images of the new building in order to write his poem, and refers directly to the 'petals of a flower' design, and also draws attention to some of the buildings' other unique design features:

> curves and caverns, nooks
> and niches, huddles and heavens, syncopations and surprises. Leave
> symmetry to the cemetery.

Like Miralles, Morgan has been careful to evade symmetry and regularity in the poem itself, as the above lines demonstrate. The 'nooks and niches' refer to the distinctive 'contemplation spaces' found in the MSP building: projecting bay windows with shelving and seating.[176] The poet's enthusiasm for its innovations and non-traditional features comes through strongly in these alliterative pairings, a rhetorical device utilised by writers since at least the time of Cicero[177], and one which articulately communicates the poet's views on both the architecture of the new buildings, and what that represents for the government they now house. Morgan is not wholly dismissive of what has come before,

[175] The Scottish Parliament, 'About the Parliament Building', (Online, 2014).
[176] The Scottish Parliament, 'M.S.P. Building', (Online: The Scottish Parliament, 2016).
[177] William Dominik and John Hall, *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2007), p. 152.

however, and also uses the poem to unite the concerns of Scotland's past with his lofty hopes for the future under devolution:

> What do the people want of the place? They want it to be filled with thinking persons as open and adventurous as its architecture
>
> …
>
> Dear friends, dear lawgivers, dear parliamentarians, you are picking up a thread of pride and self-esteem that has been almost but not quite, oh no not quite, not ever broken or forgotten.[178]

These lines ostensibly refer to a Scottish Parliament sitting once more after a three-century hiatus. However, they are written in such a way that they could equally apply to Scottish culture, and the Makar himself who is also 'picking up a thread' that has been neglected. In a position which unites poetry and politics under one banner, Morgan's poem does precisely the same.

Where Morgan gives us an 'articulation of chance' as Crawford describes it, with Scotland more often than not as the setting and context for that chance, Rowling gives us an articulation of long tradition with Britain as the distinct setting for that tradition. The two writers predict, in some ways, the framework of the 2014 debate that contrasted Yes arguments which presented hope and the chance for positive change with No arguments of honouring the long tradition of the Union, the familial links within Britain, and an ambivalence towards borders and separation. Morgan's engagement with Scotland and the idea of Scotland in history, the present, and the future forms his most significant legacy for Scotland, financial or literary.

1.6. Locating J.K. Rowling in Scottish literary studies

During the Referendum period, Scottish artists who were outspoken in their support of maintaining the Union were conspicuous by their absence. As I explain

[178] These lines of the poem (probably unconsciously) echo Broadus, an early 20th century scholar who spoke of the gap between early court poets and the eventual creation of an official Poet Laureate in 1668: 'In the interval of these two centuries however, the thread of tradition was not wholly broken.' (E.K. Broadus, *The Laureateship; a Study of the Office of Poet Laureate in England with Some Account of the Poets* (HardPress, 1921).)

in the Introduction, ideally this study would have been made up of Yes- and No-supporting writers in equal measure. The landscape of contemporary literary engagement with the Referendum rendered that aspiration untenable. Kevin McKenna noted in July 2014 that 'writers, actors, and musicians are coming forward in their droves to give their backing to independence.'[179] David Torrance wrote the following in the same month:

> [There is] a gap between how Scotland's 'creatives' see political events and the perspective of the wider electorate, although it's clearly one that frustrates some independence-supporting artists.[180]

Ultimately, the Scottish electorate voted No by a margin of roughly 10%, adding weight to Torrance's words. No unionist equivalent emerged, for example, to the National Collective. This organisation gathered together Yes-supporting artists and organised various cultural events from 2011 until the Referendum. With such giants of Scottish literature lending their support to independence, including four of the writers examined in this thesis, the imbalance will continue to colour Scottish literary studies of this period into the future. J.K. Rowling is therefore a crucial case study for this thesis as a Scottish-based writer who made her support for the Union undoubtable when she donated £1 million to Better Together.

Rowling, like Morgan, supports her donation with her written oeuvre. The rest of this chapter explores the unionism inherent to Rowling's best known work. This is the *Harry Potter* series: a series of seven novels following the life of Harry Potter, a young wizard, from the ages of eleven to seventeen. Rowling is internationally celebrated for the *Harry Potter* literary series for children and young adults, however her contribution to interpretations of Scottishness or Britishness is presently overlooked in the field of Scottish literature. This can be attributed to a number of factors. Rowling herself highlighted one reason at the time of her donation, namely her position as an immigrant to Scotland, having been born in Gloucestershire and lived in various parts of England as well as Portugal before moving to Scotland in 1993 where she has been based ever since.[181] Another significant reason is that *Harry Potter* belongs to the world of

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[179] Kevin McKenna, 'Yes or No? Scotland's Stars Take Sides in Independence Debate', *The Guardian,* 12 July 2014.
[180]David Torrance, 'Curious Case of Creatives Who Support Independence', *The Herald Scotland,* 28 July 2014.
[181] Sean Smith, *J. K. Rowling: A Biography* (Michael O'Mara Books, Limited, 2003).

children's literature. In her introduction to the collection *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter,* Lana A. Whited explains how the series is part of:

> a long-standing prejudice, the notion that even a highly regarded and phenomenally successful children's book could not be measured against critically acclaimed books for adults.[182]

Whited does not mention an additional complicating factor, which is that the seven novels 'grow' as the hero himself does, a process Gifford describes as 'the complex moral growth to maturity'.[183] The first novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997, henceforth referred to as *Philosopher's Stone*), follows Harry's first year at wizarding school, aged eleven. The next novel follows his second at age twelve, and so forth until the seventh and final instalment which details Harry's year as a seventeen-year-old. At this point, Harry and his two best friends, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, sacrifice their final year of school to bring down Harry's nemesis, Lord Voldemort. As the novels progress, the language becomes more complex, the texts become longer, and their content becomes darker. This provides additional barriers to studying the texts for literature critics, as the series as a whole cannot easily be characterised as children's literature.

The final *Harry Potter* novel, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (henceforth referred to as *Deathly Hallows*), was released in 2007, and up until that point there was a forgivable reticence to speak on the subject of these texts until the series was complete. Nonetheless, in Scottish literary studies there has been virtually no in-depth attention paid to the series since its completion — seven years before the Referendum. Rowling may further face obscurity in Scottish literary criticism due to the impression that her texts do not stand out as being distinctively Scottish. However, this is to assume that if a text is distinctively British, it cannot be distinctively Scottish, or at least Scottish enough to receive critical attention as such. But Scotland-based unionist literary works such as the *Harry Potter* series are as significant to Scottish identity during the Referendum period as Scottish nationalist texts (see Figures 1-5). Professor John Curtice of Strathclyde University looked at the 2012 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey to

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[182] Laura. A. Whited, *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon* (University of Missouri Press, 2004), p. 6.
[183] Douglas Gifford, 'Breaking Boundaries: From Modern to Contemporary in Scottish Fiction', in *Modern Transformations: New Identities (from 1918),* ed. by Ian Brown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 237-52 (p. 251).

investigate how important British identity was for people in Scotland when it came to considering the independence question. His findings were described by the BBC in May 2013:

> [A]mong those who feel very little sense of British identity, 53% support Scottish independence. Thereafter, the more strongly British someone feels, the less likely they are to support independence - with just 9% of those with the strongest sense of British identity backing the idea. Professor Curtice wrote: 'In so far as the independence debate is about identity, it is the intensity of people's British identity that matters, not that of their Scottish identity'.[184]

British identity in literature is evidently an idea worth exploring when it comes to authors who actively engaged in discussions of culture and identity politics during the Referendum period. If a text (or series of texts) is self-consciously British, and achieves this by setting much of its action in Scotland and featuring frequent references to markers of Scottish identity alongside those relating to English, Welsh, and Irish identities, then it is just as important an element of the Scottish literary landscape as Edwin Morgan's interpretations of Glasgow, or Mackay Brown's version of Orkney.[185] The seven novels of Rowling's *Harry Potter* series take place in a truly pan-British setting, dominated by a castle in the Scottish wilderness and a parallel London capital. They are distinctively British novels, written in Edinburgh with a heavy emphasis on Scotland within an unambiguously united Britain (though never United Kingdom as I shall demonstrate). Therefore, these texts are an important example of the cultural unionism that accompanies, intersects, and clashes with Scottish cultural nationalism in the twenty-first century. They are significant regardless of Rowling's substantial financial contribution to Better Together, although her donation and subsequent media presence shed new light on them, and render them essential to this study. Just as Morgan's bequest can lead to helpful new analysis of his work, so too can Rowling's contribution to the Referendum debate lend new meaning to her bestselling series of novels.

In his 2009 publication, *Scottish Literature,* Gerard Carruthers briefly addresses Rowling's awkward position in that field:

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[184] John Curtice quoted in 'Scottish Independence: British Identity 'Key to Referendum", *BBC News,* 16 May 2013.

> Another problem for Scottish Literature is that of the 'incomer', the writer who takes up residence in the country. As well as Bernard MacLaverty, two other examples spring immediately to the fore: Margaret Elphinstone (b. 1948), English but settled in Scotland and whose fiction is deeply engaged with Scottish history; and likewise Scottish resident, J.K. Rowling (b. 1965), sometimes now claimed as a Scottish writer. Rowling is a writer whose phenomenal global success might well be seen as testimony to what an imaginatively amenable place modern Scotland is, as well as, quite properly, being a massive economic product of which the nation can be proud.[186]

According to Carruthers, those in Rowling's position (resident but not native to Scotland) are a 'problem' for Scottish Literature. Rowling is 'claimed' as a Scottish writer for mostly economic reasons. While Carruthers' other example of Elphinstone is described as engaging with Scottish history, Rowling is not similarly described. The following study of Rowling's most successful texts, however, demonstrates that in reality she does consistently and clearly engage with Scotland. Scottish myth, history, literature, and landscape are all essential features of the *Harry Potter* world. Her 2014 donation highlights the Britishness of these texts, and their vision of an unproblematic union, but this does not counter their relevance to Scottish literature, particularly in relation to the Referendum. As the information above establishes, British identity within Scotland was a vital element in the Referendum, and texts which reflect this are therefore important to acknowledge within the field of Scottish literature. Carruthers argues here that only writers who live in Scotland and also engage with Scottish contexts are worthy of study in this field. One such Scottish context is a sense of Britishness in which Scottishness plays a significant role, and therefore Rowling's *Harry Potter* series undoubtedly deserves a place alongside Elphinstone and other 'incomers'.

On the rare occasions when Rowling is discussed in Scottish literary criticism, academics struggle to do so without caveats and hesitations. The *Harry Potter* series enjoys a respectable five pages of attention in Robert Crawford's 728-page *Scotland's Books,* introduced by a cautious recognition of her place in studies of Scottish literature:

> J.K. Rowling's is the most remarkable success story in literary history. For that reason alone she and her work would deserve attention. In the present context though, she is also the most prominent example of a

[186] Gerard Carruthers, *Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 178.

> striking phenomenon in contemporary Scotland: a writer from elsewhere who may write little about the country, but has chosen to settle in it.[187]

Crawford goes on to quote Rowling herself confirming that the primary setting of the *Harry Potter* books is in Scotland:

> Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry was the first thing I concentrated on… Logically, it had to be set in a secluded place and pretty soon I settled on Scotland, in my mind. I think it was a subconscious tribute to where my parents had married.[188]

However, Crawford then makes the erroneous claim that there is no concrete textual evidence for the location of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry being in Scotland. It is true that in the first of the novels, *Philosopher's Stone,* the school's whereabouts is suggested by descriptions which would clearly imply the location to those familiar with the landscape of the British Isles, but might elude other readers. By the second instalment in the series, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998, henceforth referred to as *Chamber of Secrets*), we are given confirmation that Hogwarts and therefore the bulk of the books' action is set in Scotland. Harry and his best friend Ron illegally fly Ron's father's car from London to Hogwarts. They are spotted by various unsuspecting members of the 'Muggle' (non-magical) public in increasingly northern, existing locations, supporting the previous book's implications that the school is in the northernmost countryside of the British mainland. When caught and chastised by one of the school's teachers, Professor Snape, the boys are told the car was spotted first in London, then at noon at Norfolk, then finally by 'Mr Angus Fleet of Peebles'.[189] The car has evidently made a journey north to follow the school train, the Hogwarts Express. This is reinforced by evidence found in the detailed descriptions of the train journey from London to Hogwarts in the first, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth novels. For example:

> The Hogwarts Express moved steadily north and the scenery outside the window became wilder and darker while the clouds overhead thickened.[190]

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[187] Robert Crawford, *Scotland's Books : A History of Scottish Literature* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2008), p. 680.
[188] J. K. Rowling, 'Harry and Me' *The Scotsman*, 9 December 2002, Weekend p. 1 Lindsey Fraser, *An Interview with J. K. Rowling* (London: Mammoth, 2000).
[189] J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998), p. 62.
[190] J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), p. 62.

Each one depicts the train travelling 'further and further north'[191], 'farther north'[192] or 'yet further north'.[193] Every journey begins at 11am on 1 September, departing from a secret platform at London's Kings Cross Station and arriving at its northern destination after sunset. Sunset in the UK on 1 September ranges from 7.47pm to 8.12pm. As the train never stops unless forced to, this implies a journey which lasts a minimum of nine hours travelling north from London. Therefore, from the outset of the series, readers familiar with Britain can be assured of the school's Scottish location, even without Rowling's direct assertions that this is the case.

Scotland's Books makes the point that the eight-film franchise, adopted loyally from the seven-book series, does film significant portions of the action, particularly the outdoor settings of the school, in recognisably Scottish locations. If readers familiar with Britain did not surmise from the texts themselves that Hogwarts and thus the majority of the *Harry Potter* series is located in Scotland, then the subsequent films have solidified that association. These began to be released before the full series had been written, and two of them credit J. K. Rowling as a producer. Additionally, the Scottish tourism industry has capitalised on this association. For instance, the Jacobite Steam Train which points out the Glenfinnan Viaduct and Dumbledore's final resting place, among other film locations[194], or specialised tours of Scotland such as 'The Potter Trail'[195] or 'Harry Potter Magic Tours.'[196] Crawford, like Carruthers, seems to find the most legitimate way of associating Rowling with Scottish literature to be economic. He credits Scotland's involvement in the form of the Scottish Arts Council Grant which funded Rowling's initial work on the series. He also draws a connection between Rowling's writing and her experiences with the chasm between the poverty-stricken area of Leith where Rowling first lived in Scotland and the genteel sections of the town nearby. 'Her fiction is alert to dramatic social divisions', according to Crawford, and that sensitivity reflects her time living in poverty in Edinburgh.[197] Rowling, like R.L. Stevenson, Muriel Spark, and Irvine

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[191] J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), p. 176.
[192] J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), p. 148.
[193] *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, p. 64.
[194] West Coast Railways, 'The Jacobite: Famous Steam Train', (Online, 2015).
[195] The Potter Trail, 'The Potter Trail: A Magical Walking Tour of Edinburgh's Old Town', (2012).
[196] Touring Scotland, 'Harry Potter "Magic" Tours'.
[197] *Scotland's Books : A History of Scottish Literature*, p. 683.

Welsh before her, encapsulates those divisions in her writing. In Rowling's case, Edinburgh's duality is exposed in her vivid depiction of an entire secret, magical universe accessible easily from various real life locations in Britain for those who know how. Diagon Ally, for instance, is the extensively detailed major shopping centre for magical folk, and is accessed via tapping part of a dingy London pub's brickwork. Crawford's is the most thorough attempt thus far in literary academia to connect *Harry Potter* with Scotland and its literary landscape, and it still falls short of detailed analysis of the texts themselves, prioritising biographical details.

In the earlier days of Rowling's success, Trevor Royle confidently links *Harry Potter* to the Scottish literary tradition through the dominant themes of magic and landscape: 'She created him in Scotland, and although his world of magic and mystery is universal, Harry Potter belongs to an identifiable strand in the country's literature.'[198] Royle does not deal with any of the books' specificities, but connects the stories to Scottish literature thematically. He recognises R. L. Stevenson, J. M Barrie, and Walter Scott in Rowling's fascination with fantasy and mythology, and similarly Norman MacCaig, Neil Gunn, George Bruce, and Hugh MacDiarmid in her reverent depictions of the Scottish landscape where she sets her texts.

The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature (2007) gives *Harry Potter* some brief attention in the context of an investigation of boarding-school settings in Scottish children's literature. The author of this chapter, Maureen A. Farrell, also emphasises the Scottish Arts Council grant, and only goes as far as to say that Hogwarts is 'most probably' in Scotland.[199] She also avoids asserting that the series is particularly Scottish in any other way, but argues that Rowling 'offers a link to another area of strength in Scottish children's fiction, fantasy writing, one of its greatest post-war publishing strengths.'[200] In a later chapter of *The Edinburgh History,* Douglas Gifford also argues that the *Harry Potter* novels 'have grown very clearly out of the Scottish Arts Council's literary support system.' Gifford, however, is happier than Farrell to accept Rowling as a

[198] Trevor Royle, 'Scotland: A Rich Literary Legacy', *Reading Today,* 19 (2002), 44.
[199] Maureen A. Farrell, 'The Lost Boys and Girls of Scottish Children's Fiction', in *Modern Transformations: New Identities (from 1918),* ed. by Ian Brown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 198-206 (p. 201).
[200] Ibid. p. 202.

Scottish writer, characterising her as an example of a writer who has lived on both sides of the border. She can be 'treated as a natural part of the country's [Scotland's] production', despite others' doubts regarding their authenticity within the Scottish canon. Conversely, Andrew Crumey in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature,* also published in 2007, denigrates the idea that Rowling's work can be considered as a feature of the Scottish literary landscape at all:

> If residence in Scotland makes a writer Scottish, we could count Pierre Ronsard, Poe, and Orwell alongside Atkinson and Rowling.[201]

In common with Royle and Carruthers, Crumey does not engage directly with the texts themselves to support his argument regarding their position in Scottish literary studies. Although these are designed to be general companions and introductions to Scottish literature, their complete lack of textual reference to the *Harry Potter* series does undermine their statements that Rowling is not a natural addition to the Scottish literary legacy.

Rowling's own sense of identity as a Scottish writer is unequivocal, and she has made it clear that she considers herself to be Scottish. For example, a 1999 article states:

> Now she feels 'an increasing allegiance to Scotland'. She recalls a timely Scottish Arts Council grant of £8,000: 'I'm never going to forget that as long as I live,' and her daughter Jessica is now at school in Edinburgh. 'I feel we've really put down roots here. This is now my home. Full stop.'[202]

This sentiment was echoed in the public statement which accompanied her donation to Better Together: 'By residence, marriage, and out of gratitude for what this country has given me, my allegiance is wholly to Scotland.'[203] Regardless of any other consideration, as Rowling implies here, it is undeniable that the *Harry Potter* series would not exist were it not for the Scottish Arts Council grant Rowling received.

These few academics who place Rowling within the Scottish literary context are divided on whether or not they are willing to engage with Rowling's texts themselves. Those who do are positive regarding their merit, particularly on a

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[201] Berthold Schoene-Harwood, *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 51.
[202] Rosemary Goring, 'Harry's Fame', *Scotland on Sunday,* 17 January 1999.
[203] Rowling.

thematic level. Farrell describes the *Harry Potter* series as 'witty, ironic, and self-referential' and praises their ability to reflect 'a wider world of ideological, even post-9/11, conflict.'[204] Crawford also praises the books' 'imaginative humour' and echoes Farrell's sentiment stating that it is:

> these books' ability to deal… with deep universal fears and, ultimately, even death, which is the strength of the series.[205]

Gifford praises the novels' complexity, and their acceptance of diversity and compassion' as the novels' protagonist:

> faces self-doubt and his own temptations to impetuousness and arrogance in a world struggling for positive values against demons of snobbery, intolerance, authoritarianism, fascism and racism.[206]

However, all of those who discuss Rowling as a component of Scottish literature are united by their hesitance in doing so on account of Rowling's biography. As Rowling was not born or raised in Scotland, the Scottish Arts Council grant which became the catalyst for her career provides the leading criterion that allows *Harry Potter* to enter into the field. This reflects a self-consciousness or fear, perhaps, of being said to 'claim' a literary superstar without just cause, to use Carruthers' term.

After the Referendum, Rowling and her work can no longer be relegated to the margins of Scottish literary study. Her donation thrust her into the limelight of the 2014 debate as a spokesperson for unionism, but it also highlighted the multi-layered engagement with Scotland in her novels. Her writing must also be seen as part of a Scottish literary landscape that informs interpretations and representations of Scotland and Britain, neither because of her donation nor without taking it into account. The *Harry Potter* series was completed seven years before the Referendum, and this thesis does not argue for a deliberately unionist agenda in her writing. What this chapter does argue, is that Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels describe, celebrate, and help to create and sustain a pan-British identity in which Scotland is a significant and comfortably interconnected element. Rowling has ensured a rhetorical aspect to the text by presenting her idealised version of a unified Britain. This is Rowling's imagined community, co-

[204] Farrell, p. 202.
[205] *Scotland's Books : A History of Scottish Literature*, p. 684.
[206] Gifford, p. 251.

existing but in conflict with Morgan's. This previously unstudied aspect of her work is of greater relevance post-2014, and in light of Rowling's high visibility as a public figure. Where writers such as Morgan, Gray, Lochhead, or Jamie imagine and create Scotland as the key space in their work, Rowling imagines and creates Britain. This is not to say that her support of the pro-Union campaign was inevitable, but it does inspire examination of her work in a British unionist context. Rowling is the world's most commercially successful living writer, and the significance of *Harry Potter* is such that an entire global generation is frequently termed 'the Harry Potter generation'.[207] It is essential to note therefore, that Rowling's version of a united Britain, and Scotland's place within it, is of dramatic cultural significance.

1.7. *Harry Potter* as a unionist text

Rowling's view of Britishness and Britain as an identity and cultural entity to be celebrated and perpetuated is at the heart of her influence in the Referendum. In the following section I will explore ways in which this identity manifests itself in the *Harry Potter* literary series.

As Section 1.6 establishes, the bulk of the series takes place at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, located in the north of Scotland. The novels' wider imaginative space is a magical equivalent of Britain, co-existing in secret alongside our own. This equivalent Britain has its commercial and political centres in London, its education centre in Scotland, and residential centres scattered throughout the rest of Britain and Ireland. In the opening chapter of the sixth novel, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005, henceforth referred to as *Half-Blood Prince*), we see an elaborate example of the equivalence between Rowling's imagined Britain and Britain in reality. In this scene, the 'Muggle Prime Minister' encounters the former holder of the magical equivalent of his position, the 'Minister for Magic', Cornelius Fudge, and his newly instated replacement, Rufus Scrimgeour. The relationship between the two British leaders is briefly referred to in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (henceforth referred to as *Prisoner of Azkaban*). A wizarding newspaper reports their interaction as a result of the escape of the eponymous prisoner:

[207] See for example, Kerr Housten, 'Teaching the Harry Potter Generation', *Networks,* 13 (2011); Marc Burrows, 'For the Potter Generation, Alan Rickman's Death Marks the End of Childhood', *The Guardian,* 15 January 2016.

> Fudge has been criticised by some members of the International Federation of Warlocks for informing the Muggle Prime Minister of the crisis.
>
> 'Well, really, I had to, don't you know,' said an irritable Fudge. 'He's a danger to anyone who crosses him, magic or Muggle. I have the Prime Minister's assurance that he will not breathe a word of Black's true identity to anyone.[208]

In the more detailed encounter in *Half-Blood Prince,* the Prime Minister recalls his previous meetings with Fudge. Fudge's coming is generally announced by a portrait in the Muggle Prime Minister's office at Number 10 Downing Street which refuses to be removed from the wall. The Muggle Prime Minister is one of only a handful of Muggles permitted knowledge of the wizarding world. His general preference is to ignore its existence unless absolutely necessary, and refers to the Minister for Magic with dislike as 'The Other Minister'. In keeping with the trajectory of the novels, it demonstrates the impact of events in Harry Potter's life and the climate of impending war that pervades *Half-Blood Prince* by explaining that Lord Voldemort's return to power is causing frightening and deadly effects beyond the wizarding community. In the tactic of dystopian fiction, these awful events, including a deadly bridge collapse and a hurricane in the West Country, are at once extraordinary and plausible. Most significantly, it also clearly represents wizarding Britain as the major space in the novels, and its position as interrelated with our own Muggle Britain.[209]

Throughout all seven novels, the term used to describe this space is always 'Britain' and 'British'. Rowling never once uses the phrase The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 'United Kingdom', or 'UK'. The terms England/English, Scotland/Scottish, Wales/Welsh and (Northern) Ireland/Irish are also avoided. The word England is almost exclusively used to refer to Quidditch (sporting) teams in which England is mentioned as a separate competitor, aligning Quidditch to real-world equivalents such as football or cricket where the constituent parts of the United Kingdom play separately. One of only two other occasions where England is referred to and not Britain, is in relation to Muggle as opposed to wizarding Britain, and appears within a lure used to distract Harry's Muggle relatives, the Dursleys, while he escapes their neglectful home. They are told they are 'shortlisted for the All-England Best

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[208] *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, p. 33.
[209] J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005), pp. 7-24.

Kept Suburban Lawn Competition'[210]. The title of this competition is part of the parody that the Dursley family represents: a caricature of appearance-obsessed, suburban, middle-class, conservative-voting Surrey. The epithet 'All-England' forms a part of the Dursleys well-established role as a parody of xenophobic attitudes. Rowling states that the Durselys are written as a mockery of Thatcherite Britain, and that Mr Dursley is her most hated character: 'You will meet Dursleys, in Britain. You will. I've barely exaggerated them.'[211]

Deathly Hallows is the most geographically diverse of the novels, set largely away from Hogwarts, following Harry, Ron, and Hermione's time together in exile. One of the very few passages in which specific localities are mentioned is in this novel, and it is the only other time in seven novels and 4,224 pages of text when the word England appears:

> They did not dare remain in any one area too long, so rather than staying in the south of England, where a hard ground frost was the worst of their worries, they continued to meander up and down the country, braving a mountainside, where sleet pounded the tent, a wide flat marsh, where the tent was flooded with chill water, and a tiny island in the middle of a Scottish loch, where snow half buried the tent in the night.[212]

This passage is also the only occasion throughout the series where the adjective 'Scottish' is employed, despite the bulk of the action being set in that country. In the same description of Harry's exodus, he finds himself on 'a riverbank in Wales', completing the role-call of constituent nations of the British mainland. In this extremely rare example of utilising specific place names, Rowling has provided a geographic spread across the British mainland and constituent nations, evidence that the *Harry Potter* experience is a truly pan-British one. This trend is established in the opening chapter of the series, when celebrations of the infant Harry's miraculous survival are reported in 'Kent, Yorkshire, and Dundee'. In *Deathly Hallows,* the most significant magical communities are stated as being situated in Cornwall, Yorkshire, 'the south coast of England', and the West Country.[213] Hogsmeade is 'the only entirely non-Muggle settlement in Britain', and sitting within walking distance of Hogwarts, is therefore also in

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[210] *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, p. 49.
[211] CBS, 'J.K. Rowling Interview', in *CBS News World: Hot Type* ed. by Evan Solomon (CBS Corporation, 2000).
[212] J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), p. 258.
[213] Ibid. p. 261.

Scotland.[214] At the furthest reaches of Rowling's fantasy Britain, the wizarding prison, Azkaban, is located in the North Sea.[215]

In addition to the use of genuine place names, various characters are associated with regionalised traits which denote that the *Harry Potter* experience is one which incorporates elements from all across Britain. One of the most significant and clearly established of these is Professor Minerva McGonagall. She is one of the surprisingly small number of characters who consistently appears in all seven texts, and is often described in terms of clearly identifiable, clichéd markers of Scottishness. She is referred to variously as wearing dress robes, pyjamas, and a dressing gown of tartan, and she also owns a carpet bag, biscuit tin, and handkerchief of tartan. During the Yule Ball in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000, henceforth referred to as *Goblet of Fire*) she wears a 'rather ugly wreath of thistles around the brim of her hat' and she appears in one of Harry's dreams playing the bagpipes.[216] Rowling has clarified that the professor's name is inspired by the famously awful Scottish poet, William Topaz McGonagall — 'the pre-eminent bad poet of the English language' but that no other element of this most respected character is drawn from that person.[217] She explains:

> William McGonagall is celebrated as the worst poet in British history. There was something irresistible to me about the name, and the idea that such a brilliant woman might be a distant relative of the buffoonish McGonagall.[218]

The contrast Rowling describes above is heightened by her choice of first name for the character: Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom. She has also constructed an elaborate backstory for Professor Minerva McGonagall through the website *Pottermore*, in which she is a daughter of the manse in Caithness and nearly marries a Highland farmer called Robert McGregor.[219]

Within the novels themselves, McGonagall's character establishes clear evidence of intertextuality with a well-known Scottish novel, Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961). Spark, like Rowling, has had her position as a Scottish

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[214] *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, p. 61.
[215] *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, p. 13.
[216] *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, p. 509.
[217] Thomas M. Disch, 'Inverse Genius: On the Greatness of William Mcgonagall', *Parnassus,* 24 (1999).
[218] J. K. Rowling, 'Professor Mcgonagall', (Pottermore, 2012).
[219] J. K. Rowling, 'J.K.R. Writing', (Pottermore, 2012).

writer contested, as her novels often do not engage with recognisably Scottish settings or contexts, and the writer herself left Scotland after her marriage, living all over the world before her death in Italy in 2006. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, however, is a stable feature of the Scottish literary canon, featuring consistently in Scottish literature courses at universities around the world, and in Scottish literary histories and companions including later twentieth century publications.[220] Part of the continued reputation of Spark's novel is the successful 1969 film adaptation, which won two Academy Awards among other recognitions. It is widely acknowledged that Dame Maggie Smith, the actress who portrays the character of Professor McGonagall in the eight-film *Harry Potter* franchise, was essentially reprising her role as Miss Jean Brodie in the 1969 film. Smith utilises the same middle-class accent from the Morningside area of Edinburgh for both roles, and herself describes McGonagall as 'just like Miss Jean Brodie with a witch's hat on.'[221] Both McGonagall and Brodie are strict but witty school mistresses who are independently minded and will never consent to the authority of those they do not accept.

Like Miss Brodie, Professor McGonagall, though generally a more sympathetic and fair-minded character, is guilty of possessing a 'set'. Miss Brodie's selection and preferential treatment of her set are at the centre of Spark's novel:

> Miss Brodie's special girls were taken home to tea and bidden not to tell the others, they were taken into her confidence, they understood her private life and her feud with the headmistress and the allies of the headmistress.[222]

For each of the girls, their inclusion in the set bears a lasting impact on their lives, particularly for the novel's protagonist, Sandy Stranger. The closing lines of the novel express this impact on Sandy, who is now a nun:

> 'What were the main influences of your school days, Sister Helena? Were they literary or political or personal? Was it Calvinism?'
>
> Sandy said: 'There was a Miss Jean Brodie in her prime.'[223]

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[220] For example, in courses at the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Otago (2015), and in the texts *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Literature* (2007), *Scottish Literature* (2009), *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature* (2012), *Scottish Literature in English and Scots* (2002) and *Scotland's Books* (2009).
[221] Chloe Fox, 'Dame Maggie Smith in Harry Potter: Spell Binding', *The Telegraph,* 10 November 2001.
[222] Muriel Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (London: Penguin, 1961), p. 26.
[223] Ibid. p. 128.

The list of possible influences the 'inquiring young man' puts to Sandy above are a sum of the various forms of influence Jean Brodie is depicted as having over her girls, throughout their school careers and beyond. For McGonagall, her set are the students in Gryffindor, the Hogwarts school house of which she is the head. In particular, she favours those who represent the school house on the Quidditch pitch, to whom she shows more lenience than her otherwise disciplined character allows (Quidditch is the major wizarding sport, played in the air on broomsticks). For example, when Harry breaks the rules in his first year at Hogwarts by flying a broomstick unsupervised, his prowess and its possible usefulness for the Gryffindor squad prompt McGonagall to appoint him to the team instead of punishing him. The reader is left in no doubt that she would have punished a student from another house:

> 'I shall speak to Professor Dumbledore and see if we can't bend the first-year rule. Heaven knows, we need a better team than last year.'
>
> …
>
> Professor McGonagall peered sternly over her glasses at Harry.
>
> 'I want to hear you're training hard, Potter, or I may change my mind about punishing you.'[224]

During the course of the seven novels, Professor McGonagall is defined as much by her preference for her chosen students as Miss Brodie is for hers.

Professor Umbridge, who appears primarily in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2003, henceforth referred to as *Order of the Phoenix*), is McGonagall's version of Brodie's headmistress Miss Mackay. Umbridge and Mackay are both authoritarian and inflexible devotees of the rules, and the foil to McGonagall's/Brodie's willingness to break the rules for those she deems worthy. Professor Umbridge and Miss Mackay, both teachers as well as headmistresses, embody the educational philosophy of rote-learning aimed at the sole purpose of passing exams, in contrast to Miss Brodie and Professor McGonagall's more engaging and holistic methods. Miss Brodie explains her view of the Mackay/Umbridge teaching style to her class:

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[224] J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997), p. 113.

> Miss Mackay's method is to thrust a lot of information into the pupil's head; mine is a leading out of knowledge, and that is true education as is proved by the root meaning.[225]

Miss Brodie instructs her girls to 'Hold up your books' for Miss Mackay's benefit, in a pretence of utilising them as a principal learning method.[226] Likewise, Professor McGonagall's lessons involving vanishing snails and transforming mice, are contrasted with Professor Umbridge's, in which students are forced to exclusively read from the textbook in silence in order to pass their exam. When Hermione attempts to engage critically with the study material, she is silenced and punished by Umbridge, who tells her, 'I am here to teach you a ministry approved method that does not include inviting students to give their opinions'.[227] Both Mackay and Umbridge probe students who share Brodie's/McGonagall's beliefs on the pretext of inviting them to her office individually for tea. Additionally, where Miss Mackay in unsuccessful in recruiting Mary MacGregor, 'give the girl tea as she might', Umbridge does succeed in recruiting a group of students to act as her informants against figures such as Harry and McGonagall, giving them privilege by naming them 'The Inquisitorial Squad'. [228] Where Miss Mackay is only able to use tea to try and tempt information out of Mary MacGregor, Umbridge has the advantage of being able magical potion called Veritaserum to her tea, which forces the students she interrogates to tell her the truth.

This conflict between two of their teachers is the root of crucial character development for Harry Potter and his friends, as well as for the Brodie set in these texts. Harry's experience of the animosity between McGonagall and Umbridge introduces him for the first time to the idea of disagreement and potential fallibility in the world of magical adult authority. After angrily countering Professor Umbridge in her class, Harry is sent with a note to Professor McGonagall in her capacity as his Head of House. Given McGonagall's track record as a strict disciplinarian, both Harry and the reader expect him to be at the receiving end of her anger. In contrast, however, she offers him a biscuit, and makes it clear that she is on Harry's side of this particular conflict:

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[225] *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, p. 36.
[226] Ibid. p. 10.
[227] *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, p. 284.
[228] *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, p. 77; *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, p. 551.

> Her tone of voice was not at all what he was used to; it was not brisk, crisp and stern; it was low and anxious and somehow much more human than usual.[229]

This episode begins the unravelling of Harry's reliance upon authority structures at Hogwarts and in the wizarding British government, both of which Umbridge represents. Umbridge is initially depicted in her role as Senior Undersecretary to the Minister for Magic, a role she maintains when she becomes first a teacher, then High Inquisitor, and finally Headmistress of Hogwarts. Until this point in the series, the benevolence of these structures is assumed and unchallenged. For the Brodie set, and Sandy Stranger in particular, the discord between Brodie and Mackay provides that same lesson:

> 'This is Stanley Baldwin who got in as Prime Minister and got out again ere long,' said Miss Brodie. 'Miss Mackay retains him on the wall because she believes in the slogan "Safety First". But Safety does not come first. Goodness, Truth and Beauty come first. Follow me.'
>
> This was the first intimation, to the girls, of an odds between Miss Brodie and the rest of the teaching staff. Indeed, to some of them, it was the first time they had realized it was possible for people glued together in grown-up authority to differ at all.[230]

For both Harry and Sandy, this realisation precipitates their most significant subsequent actions in the novels: Harry's open defiance of Umbridge's authority, and Sandy's betrayal of Jean Brodie. Each protagonist's revelation is also at the heart of essential character development as they are shown negotiating the transition between childhood and adulthood. By the conclusion of each book, both Brodie and Umbridge are ultimately dismissed from their teaching positions as a result of these developments.

From the outset of the *Harry Potter* novels, several clear intertextual references to Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* are established. The association between McGonagall and Brodie is evident purely from the literary series, as established above. However, having the role of McGonagall played in the *Harry Potter* film series by the same actress who brought Miss Brodie to the screen, further solidifies this link between two examples of Scottish literature.

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[229] *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, p. 223.
[230] *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, p. 10.

Other cultural identifiers from across Britain are scattered throughout the *Harry Potter* novels. Rowling consistently blends references to signifiers of each of the constituent parts of the UK in order to reinforce the all-encompassing British identity that forms the backdrop to her texts. Firewhisky, a magical version of Scotland's famous export of whisky, is a common drink for toasting and solace. For example, Harry is given some to recover from a violent encounter:

> The Firewhisky seared Harry's throat: it seemed to burn feeling back into him, dispelling the numbness and sense of unreality, firing him with something that was like courage.[231]

Rowling utilises the Scots language in one of her Dickensian-style names which communicate the essence of the character. Willy Widdershins is a double-crossing informant, who cannot make up his mind as to where his loyalties lie. This identity is reflected by his Scots surname, which the Scottish National Dictionary defines as 'in a direction opposite to the usual, the wrong way round, contrariwise'.[232] Wales and Welsh characters are also consistent throughout the series, though not as frequent or as prominent as Scottish ones. Perhaps because of Rowling's own position as a Scottish resident of English origin, or perhaps because the frequency of characters who are depicted as Welsh and Scottish as compared to those described as English is a reasonably accurate translation of the British population. The Welsh people referred to in the novels are predominantly sports people such as 'dangerous Dai Llewelyn', or Gwenog Jones. There is also the native 'Welsh Green Dragon' which first appears in *Goblet of Fire*, and Madam Marsh of Wales who passes through the action three times over the course of the novels. As with place names, however, the vast majority of Rowling's characters are 'British', and not specified beyond this, but when they are it is over an even spread of UK geography and constituent nations.

Wizarding Britain's relationship to Ireland is particularly noteworthy. As the novels progress, a clearer picture emerges of Ireland's incorporation within Britain in Rowling's fiction. From the outset of the Harry Potter story, administrative unity between Ireland and Britain is implied with the presence of both British and Irish students at Hogwarts, the sole wizarding school of Britain. This is evidenced in all seven novels by one of Harry's roommates, Seamus

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[231] *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, p. 70.
[232] Scottish Language Dictionaries Ltd., 'Withershins *Adv., Adj., N.*', in *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (2004).

Finnegan, an Irish student from Kenmare in County Kerry, and who is one of very few characters whose speech is rendered in dialect. For example, his many references to his mother as 'me mam'.[233] The extent of this relationship becomes clearer in *Goblet of Fire,* during which the Quidditch World Cup is being held in Britain, and Harry and his friends attend the final between Ireland and Bulgaria. Revealingly, it is the British Minister for Magic, the aforementioned Cornelius Fudge, who represents Ireland in the top box. Fudge performs the role of ambassador, communicating with his Bulgarian counterpart as a representative of the competing nation of Ireland. Ireland does not have their own Minister for Magic, which would be consistent with the attendance of Irish pupils at Hogwarts.

When Harry visits the London-based Ministry for Magic at fifteen, further evidence confirms that the British Ministry for Magic is also the governing body for Ireland. For example, the 'Department of Magical Games and Sports, Incorporating the British and Irish Quidditch League Headquarters.'[234] Wizarding Ireland is evidently administered from a London-based British government. At no point is Northern Ireland made reference to in the entire seven-book series, neither is the term United Kingdom or any variant thereof. We can assume that with no independent nation of Ireland, there is no separation between the North and the Republic, and therefore no entity named 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland'. It is clear that Rowling has re-incorporated Ireland within the British state in her elaborately crafted and structured magical universe. The 2001 documentary *Harry Potter and Me* established that no detail of this universe is unintentional, and in fact a plethora of other information Rowling created never appears in the books themselves, serving only to provide the author herself with context.[235]

The re-incorporation of Ireland is a crucial element of Rowling's Britain which has not been acknowledged to date in readings of her work. Rowling has 're-colonised' Ireland into Britain in her books, making it clear that wizarding Britain subsumes Ireland. Her decision to incorporate Ireland within wizarding Britain reflects her view of Britishness as an uncomplicated, comfortable identity,

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[233] *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, p. 196.
[234] Ibid. p. 117.
[235] J. K. Rowling, 'Harry Potter and Me', (Youtube: BBC, 2001).

which effortlessly incorporates characteristics from England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales within a solid collective identity that is never questioned in the novels, and is easily termed 'British.' Rowling's literary landscape is not only pan-British, it expands today's Britain itself, navigating away from the complications of political separation and independence in Ireland. This pan-Britishness is evidenced by the even spread of place-names and dramatis personae throughout all seven novels. The Britain that Rowling creates for Harry is a demonstration of her desire for a united, inclusive British identity in which Scottishness is happily accommodated, even prioritised.

Andrew Blake argues that this distinctive pan-Britishness is a key part of *Harry Potter*'s commercial success, precisely because at the time of its publication a London-centric united Britain was undergoing key changes. The first novel was published in 1997, the year of devolution referenda in Scotland and Wales that created the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly, and the year before the Good Friday Agreement established the Northern Irish Assembly. Blake states that 'Harry Potter has indeed rebranded Britain' and that its subsequent popularity came partially because Rowling taps into a nostalgia that was particularly appealing at that moment of British political history.[236] Blake attributes the changes in British politics associated with New Labour in addition to devolution to Rowling's timeliness:

> the spring of 1997, at the very moment of Harry Potter's literary birth, British politics was also moving in a revolutionary direction.[237]

The associated uncertainties regarding what constitutes Britain or Britishness fuels the immense popularity of the nostalgic British unionism that characterises Harry Potter's world, and thus Rowling's ability to 'rebrand Britain'.

Rowling's wizarding Britain, although fictional, is an imagined community clearly designed to reflect Britain in reality - the nation-state of the UK. An identity, national or otherwise, cannot be constructed in isolation; it must be contrasted with other identities to establish its points of difference. In Rowling's Britain, Ireland is definitively part of the 'us' that is wizarding Britain, in contrast to the

[236] Andrew Blake, *The Irresistable Rise of Harry Potter* (London: Verso Books, 2002), p. 7.
[237] Ibid. p. 23.

'them' which she explores as the books continue. This is particularly fascinating when considered in the context of Cairns Craig's discussion below:

> In *Strangers, Gods and Monsters* (2003), Richard Kearney set out on an ambitious exploration and critique of the role of the 'Other' in Western thought, and especially as it has developed in modern 'Continental' theory. Though it is hardly crucial to the overall scope of his argument, England and Ireland are offered as antitheses which represent a defining instance of the process of 'othering':
>
> Most Western discourses of identity… are predicated upon some unconscious projection of an Other who is not 'us'. At the collective level of politics, this assumes the guise of an elect 'nation' or 'people' defining itself over against an alien adversary. Witness the old enmities between Greek and Barbarian, Gentile and Jew, Crusader and Infidel, Aryan and non-Aryan. Even modern 'civilized' nations have not always been immune to such stigmatizing practices. For example, the English defined themselves for colonial purposes as an elect people (*gens)* over against the Irish considered as a 'non-people' (*de-gens)*…
>
> England as 'self' and Ireland as 'other' is, in this interpretation, the foundation of all later forms of the colonial construction of the 'other' that stemmed from the impact of British imperialism.[238]

Rowling's decision to incorporate Ireland within the 'us' of wizarding Britain speaks to her desire for a nation without borders, as acknowledging the divide between Northern Ireland and the Republic would enforce a border on one of the British Isles. Having so firmly established that her version of the British mainland recognises no borders between Scotland, England, and Wales, continuing to depict Ireland as a united entity ensconced within the wizarding British administration is a logical escalation. As the quotation from Cairns Craig above demonstrates, it is also a further example of Rowling's successfully nostalgic depiction of Britain.

Homi K. Bhabha describes this process of othering as an unavoidable aspect of 'narratives and discourses that signify a sense of 'nationness': the *Heimlich* pleasures of the hearth, the *unheimlich* terror of the space or race of the Other.'[239] Kemiläinen explains that in the contemporary era:

> A nation has a national mission to develop its national individuality; this happens when folk-lore is collected and promoted, national fine arts are improved, and the national language is cherished. A nation's duty is to

[238] Cairns Craig, *Intending Scotland: Explorations in Scottish Culture since the Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 37.
[239] Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (Oxford: Routledge, 1990), p. 2.

> develop administration and government, justice, and education from their own national starting-point and they must avoid imitation of foreigners.[240]

Kemiläinen's view is that defining one's identity against that of other is not only essential to the creation of successful nationalism (or unionism) but the 'national mission' of any imagined community or nation-state. This is a mission that Rowling takes up for her version of Britain. As Mya Fisher points out: '[u]ntil the age of 14, Harry Potter's view and understanding of the magical world is limited to the context of Great Britain.'[241] Rowling firmly establishes cultural, geographical, governmental, and educational parameters for this wizarding Britain in her first three *Harry Potter* novels, published in 1997, 1998, and 1999. In her fourth instalment however, Rowling begins to define wizarding British identity against that of the wizarding other, thus strengthening her representation of unified British identity. All seven books are told from the third person limited narrative viewpoint, with the narrator only able to convey Harry's own experiences, thoughts, feelings, dreams, or periods of time when Harry shares Lord Voldemort's mind. The only exceptions to this are in the first chapters of the first, fourth, and sixth books, where Rowling prologues events with the perspectives of Vernon Dursley, Frank Bryce, and the Muggle Prime Minister respectively. Fisher's comments refer to Harry's experiences at the Quidditch World Cup and the Triwizard Tournament which open his eyes, and therefore the reader's, to the international wizarding community for the first time.

Goblet of Fire opens with Harry's first encounters with an international magical community during the final of the Quidditch World Cup:

> [Harry] didn't voice the amazement he felt at hearing about other wizarding schools. He supposed, now that he saw representatives of so many nationalities at the campsite, that he had been stupid never to realise that Hogwarts couldn't be the only one.[242]

This episode is the precursor to the main action of the novel, The Triwizard Tournament. The Tournament brings Harry into much closer contact with non-

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[240] Kemiläinen, p. 48.
[241] Mya Fisher, "The Whole Point of the Tournament Is International Magical Cooperation': Resisting a Unified Wizarding Collective Identity', in *The Sociology of Harry Potter: 22 Enchanting Essays on the Wizarding World,* ed. by Jenn Simms (Allentown: Zossima Press, 2012), pp. 47-57 (p. 37).
[242] *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, p. 85.

British wizards, and forms the principal backdrop of the fourth novel. The Triwizard Tournament is a millennium-old event held between three wizarding schools; Hogwarts, Beauxbatons Academy, and Durmstrang Institute, designed for the promotion of 'international magical co-operation'.[243] The exact location of these schools, and thus the Muggle nations which correspond to their constituencies, are implied rather than named. According to Hermione:

> There's traditionally been a lot of rivalry between all the magic schools. Durmstrang and Beauxbatons like to conceal their whereabouts so nobody can steal their secrets.[244]

Hermione goes on to explain that Hogwarts is also protected by magic, in order to keep both Muggles and 'foreign wizards' from discovering its location. The depictions of the students from each of these schools, however, strongly implies their geographical location, just as Rowling makes it clear that Hogwarts is in the north of Scotland. The witches of Beauxbatons converse in French, and are provided the Provençal dish of bouillabaisse to make them feel at home. This provides fairly conclusive evidence that the school is situated somewhere in Muggle France, probably in the south given their disdain for the cold British weather. When they initially arrive at Hogwarts, their uniforms immediately betray a warmer climate:

> They were shivering, which was unsurprising, given that their robes seemed to be made of fine silk, and none of them were wearing cloaks.[245]

Possibilities of the school being situated in a different Francophone territory are dismissed in the fifth book, when Dijon is revealed as being en route to the 'South of France' where the school is hidden.[246] Similarly, when it comes to Durmstrang, Rowling gives us fairly strong hints as to its location. The most specific of these is that the famous Bulgarian Quidditch player, Viktor Krum, is the school's star student. The school's name plays on the Germanic literary and operatic style known as 'Sturm und Drang', making Durmstrang's most likely location north-eastern Europe.[247] The principal of the school, Igor Karkaroff, is a former follower of Lord Voldemort's, and is gradually revealed as a totalitarian leader of his school, implementing the wizarding equivalent of racist policies.

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[243] Ibid. p. 369.
[244] Ibid. pp. 147-8.
[245] Ibid. p. 215.
[246] *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, p. 377.
[247] David Colbert, *The Magical Worlds of Harry Potter* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2001), p. 83.

His name concludes with the common Russian suffix, 'off', meaning 'belonging to'. Taking all of these factors into account, the Durmstrang identity is depicted as an equivalent to cold-war era USSR.

With the introduction of international wizarding relationships, the setting of the action in various parts of Britain, either named or unnamed, becomes increasingly apparent. Wizarding Britain's identity, in tandem with non-fictional British identity, emerges more clearly in this novel as a result of contrast with other European stereotypes in the Triwizard Tournament, alongside African and North American examples during the Quidditch World Cup. Through adolescent interactions such as the hormonally-charged Yule Ball, the young witches and wizards identify each other's cultural differences and use them to define their own and each other's identities. Hermione, for example, develops a profound dislike of Fleur Delacour and the other Beauxbatons students as a result of their dismissal of everything British. Fleur's remark, 'It is too 'eavy, all zis 'Ogwarts food', angers Hermione in one example, provoking her to criticise the visiting students' arrogance in return.[248] In contrast, Viktor Krum's pleasure at the British environs and his comparisons against the Durmstrang campus which favour Hogwarts, make him popular amongst the British students and staff.

In the international arena beyond sport and education, the wizarding world includes an equivalent to the United Nations (UN) in the International Confederation of Wizards (ICW). This body, much like the real UN, passes resolutions, for instance the 'International Ban on Duelling'.[249] The wizarding equivalent to governmental ministers for foreign affairs are Heads of Department for International Magical Cooperation, Bartemius Crouch being one British incumbent, with the same positions being described for other wizarding nations.[250] Within this department are the British Seats of the ICW. For a significant period of time, Albus Dumbledore was the Supreme Mugwump of the ICW (equivalent to a President or Secretary-General). This implies that in the wizards' UN, Britain plays as important a role as it does in the genuine version. In the UN, the UK is one of the Permanent Five members of the Security Council, and thus most powerful member nations.

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[248] *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, p. 352.
[249] Ibid. p. 370.
[250] Ibid.

As the novels progress and develop a clearer sense of the wizarding world, both Harry and the reader become aware of a complex structure of national and international politics that roughly mirrors that of the Muggle world. Rowling's Britain is not wholly fantasy, however, and as demonstrated by the British Prime Minister acting as direct counterpart to the British Minister for Magic, the two worlds inevitably affect one another. This most commonly occurs during particularly dangerous periods for the wizarding world, and accordingly with increased frequency in the fifth, sixth, and seventh novels following Lord Voldemort's return to power. In the opening action of the fifth novel, Harry and the reader begin to realise how these two versions of Britain can never be fully divided from one another, when the Dementors, ghostly spectres which guard the wizarding prison, appear in suburban Surrey, inflicting despair and depression upon unsuspecting Muggle residents who cannot see them as wizards can:

> [t]he arrival of Dementors in Little Whinging seemed to have breached the great, invisible wall that divided the relentlessly non-magical world of Privet Drive and the world beyond.[251]

Threat, like encounters with the other, provides fertile ground for national and community identity. As Voldemort regains his power over wizarding Britain, train crashes, bridge collapses, unexplained deaths, and awful weather appear in the Muggle world as consequences of the Second Wizarding War (although Muggles themselves are unaware of these causes). Rowling backdates this cross-over to World War Two, and the parallel rise and fall of Grindelwald in the world of *Harry Potter* to Hitler's in the Muggle world. This period in history is referred to consistently from the first novel onwards, and particularly in the final book. Grindelwald, whose name derives from a town in the Swiss Alps, is a dark wizard whose reign of terror is prevented from reaching Britain by the triumph of Dumbledore over this enemy in 1945.[252] The year alone hints at parallels with Allied victory in World War Two, and aligns Grindelwald with Adolf Hitler. This connection is strengthened by most other details of Grindelwald's story, for example his defeat by a British leader (Dumbledore) before he was able to invade from his seat of power in continental Europe. Grindelwald's stated ethic of death and terror is 'for the greater good' of the race he believed superior

[251] *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, p. 39.
[252] *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, p. 77.

(i.e. wizards).[253] Grindelwald builds a prison to house his enemies, but following his defeat is ultimately incarcerated there himself. This prison is named 'Nurmengard' — a clear allusion to the German city, Nuremburg where the Nazi Party held annual rallies from 1923 to 1938, and subsequently where, like Grindelwald the narrative was reversed, and prominent Nazi Party members stood trial as war criminals in the same location between 1945 and 1949. Rowling herself confirms that Grindelwald is a deliberate equivalent to Adolf Hitler: 'my feeling would be that while there's a global Muggle war going on, there's also a global wizarding war going on.'[254]

According to Anthony D. Smith's definition of nationalism, common historical memories are of the utmost importance to national identity, and warfare is perhaps the most powerful of these collective memories, in part because it relies on fear of the Other:

> there is no denying the central role of warfare [in nationalism/national identity]… as a mobilizer of ethnic sentiments and national consciousness, a centralizing force in the life of the community and a provider of myths and memories for future generations. [255]

It would be hard to find a common historical memory of greater significance in the cultural representation of Britishness than World War Two. Rosa Barker describes such representations as 'ubiquitous' and an 'obsession' of British culture.[256] This assessment is shared by numerous other commentators, including Neil McGregor of the British Museum, who describes World War Two as 'constantly reinforced' in Britain, unlike in the rest of Europe,[257] or Simon Jenkins who describes Hitler as 'the ruling obsession of the national curriculum'.[258] Second World War nostalgia also serves to strengthen a united British identity. Wendy Webster argues that British World War Two nostalgia reinforced 'Britain's island identity and a sense of detachment from the continent', and therefore discouraged a devolutionary identity within that

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[253] *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, p. 293.
[254] J. K. Rowling, 'Bloomsbury Live Chat', (Online: Bloomsbury, 2014).
[255] *National Identity*, p. 27.
[256] Rosa E. Barker, 'Fictions of a New Imperial Order: Wwii Nostalgia in Contemporary British Literature' (Queen's University 2009).
[257] Tom Loxley and Ian MacGregor, 'It's Time to Love the Germans Again', *Radio Times,* (2014).
[258] Simon Jenkins, 'Britian's Nazi Obsession Betrays Our Insecurity - It's Time We Moved On', *The Guardian,* 22 September 2011.

island.[259] This separation is again expressed by Rowling in her introduction of Beauxbatons and Durmstrang as discussed above. Therefore, Rowling's chosen parallels between the wizarding world and the Muggle world are not only amusing but pertinent to the nostalgic British nationalism that informs the texts and contributes to their popularity at a time when that identity was under threat.

These parallels are among the more widely discussed in critical work on *Harry Potter*. For example, Ulrike Kristina Köhler, John Granger, or in Valerie Frankel's essay, 'Harry Potter and the Rise of Nazism'. Frankel in particular has extensively plotted recent wizarding history against recent Muggle history in order to establish links between Nazism and Rowling's darkest characters: Grindelwald and Voldemort. She discovers that while Grindelwald's dates best align with Hitler's, Voldemort is equally bound to Nazi parallels. At the time of Grindelwald and Hitler's most powerful years:

> as young Voldemort was a developing student, he was mimicking Nazi ideologies from the great war being fought on his very doorstep.[260]

There is little doubt that both of Rowling's most evil figures draw inspiration from Adolf Hitler, and are portrayed using deliberate references to Nazi Germany. Köhler argues this is evidence that Harry is deliberately designed as a quintessentially English folk hero:

> the seven-volume series can be read as a national heroic epic, and accordingly constructs and transmits a certain idea of Englishness… The protagonist of the Harry Potter series could be seen as the embodiment of the idea of the English gentleman.[261]

Where I disagree with Köhler is in the assertion that using World War Two references makes Harry an *English* hero. Through various means, Rowling invokes British 'obsessive nostalgia for World War Two', encouraging a reading of Harry as a definitively *British* hero.[262] This is further supported by the almost complete lack of 'England' or 'English' as terms anywhere in the texts, as evidenced

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[259] Wendy Webster, 'From Nazi Legacy to Cold War: British Perceptions of European Identity, 1945-54', in *European Identity and the Second World War,* ed. by Menno Spiering and Michael Wintle (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 92-110 (p. 100).
[260] Valerie Frankel, 'Harry Potter and the Rise of Nazism', *Alcatraz 2009,* (2009).
[261] Ulrike Kristina Kohler, 'Harry Potter-National Hero and National Heroic Epic', *International Research in Children's Literature,* 4 (2011), 15.
[262] Barker.

above. In addition to the links between the eugenics of the Death Eaters and those of the Nazi party, the British establishment's behaviour evokes their wartime Muggle counterpart. In their different ways, the two Ministers for Magic we encounter, Cornelius Fudge and Rufus Srimgeour, essentially tell the British population to 'keep calm and carry on'. Fudge does so because he denies the threat, Scrimgeour because he exaggerates the strength of his own government in order to boost morale. The Ministry publishes 'guides to elementary home and personal defence', such as those issued to British homes during World War Two (Figures 6 and 7 for example). The population is encouraged to ask personal questions as evidence against impersonators, another tactic advised by the Muggle British government's wartime Ministry of Information. Köhler herself admits that the half of her argument which relies on World War Two narratives does not allow for an easy separation between Englishness and Britishness:

> The term Britain is used only in this essay when the historical events of Nazi Germany are referred to, since it was not only England which fought against it but the entire United Kingdom.[263]

Köhler only refers to two historical periods, separated by nearly a millennium – the Norman invasion and World War Two. This weakens her argument that English is the most appropriate adjective, alongside the pan-British setting discussed above, including the almost total absence of the words England, English, Scotland, Scottish, and so forth, in favour of frequent reference to Britain or British. The Death Eaters, the Muggle-born Registration Committee, Muggle-baiting, and Voldemort himself, are effective because we recognise their manifestations in the real world, past or present. The consequence of using these particular frames of reference is that the *Harry Potter* series becomes a British national epic.

[263] Kohler, p. 16.

Figure 6. UK WWII propaganda poster

Figure 7. British WWII propaganda poster

John Granger argues further that Rowling does not use these kinds of historical allusions purely to recollect times to which Britain looks with pride, but also those aspects of British history judged less favourably by the modern era. He highlights the links between wizarding and European colonialism as well as Nazism:

> [Magical creatures] are perhaps Ms. Rowling's caricature of traditional people hounded onto reservations and into ghettos who have become only the monstrous shadow of their former greatness.[264]

In Rowling's series, various anthropomorphic magical creatures live and work alongside wizards, but are judged by the established ideology to be inferior. The 'Fountain of Magical Brethren' takes pride of place in the Ministry of Magic until it is destroyed at the conclusion of the fifth instalment. It depicts three of these races: centaurs, goblins, and house-elves, as willing servants to wizards and witches. Dumbledore, as the voice of intelligent reason, sees the colonising narrative behind these ornaments:

> Indifference and neglect often do much more damage than outright dislike… The fountain we destroyed tonight told a lie. We wizards have mistreated and abused our fellows for far too long, and we are now reaping our reward.[265]

This suggests that Rowling does not consider British identity to always be something to aspire to and emulate. This adoption of a more holistic and realistic version of Britain, however, only strengthens her novels' role as a describer and active part of that identity.

Through her discussions of other magical creatures, Rowling also acknowledges the importance of narrative in maintaining a distinct cultural identity even following the suppression of revolts, in this case from the goblin community:

> 'Wizarding history often skates over what the wizards have done to other magical races…'
>
> 'It'll be one of those goblin stories,' said Ron, 'about how the wizards are always trying to get one over on them…'
>
> 'Goblins have got good reason to dislike wizards, Ron,' said Hermione. 'They've been treated brutally in the past.'
>
> 'Goblins aren't exactly fluffy little bunnies though, are they?' said Ron, 'They've killed plenty of us. They've fought dirty too.'[266]

In the above quotation from the final novel, Rowling is at her most self-conscious when it comes to her own role as a definer of identity; perhaps because by the time *Deathly Hallows* was published she was firmly entrenched

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[264] John Granger, *Looking for God in Harry Potter* (Wheaton: Saltriver House Publishers, 2004), p. 5.
[265] *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, p. 735.
[266] *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, p. 409.

as a figure of global influence. As the story draws to a close, Dumbledore speaks to Harry in a kind of meeting place between life and death, giving one final delivery of sagacious explanation as to why Harry was ultimately able to overthrow Lord Voldemort's empire:

> And his knowledge remained woefully incomplete Harry! That which Voldemort does not value, he takes no trouble to comprehend. Of house-elves and children's tales, of love, loyalty, and innocence, Voldemort understands nothing. Nothing. That they all have a power beyond the reach of any magic, is a truth he has never grasped.[267]

Stories, from goblin propaganda to myths about House Elves, to fairy tales, have the power to oppress, to liberate and to determine the balance of power in Rowling's magical world.

If stories hold power over how we interpret our own reality, Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels, as some of the most widely-read and translated texts in the history of the book, have an extraordinary influence over how people all over the world understand Britain, and even more so how people within the British Isles see their own culture. To quote another example from contemporary pop culture, 'we [the UK] may be a small country but we're a great one, too. The country of Shakespeare, Churchill, the Beatles, Sean Connery, Harry Potter.'[268] If we believe Andrew Blake, Rowling has 'rebranded' Britain as a unified entity, at a point in British history when political devolution was threatening the idea of an imagined British community. Rowling has responded through her novels to the fragmentation of Britain with her own more unified imagined British community, just as her response to the Referendum was to recall that community with references to *Harry Potter* in her public statement of support for Better Together.

Regardless of any conscious political intentions, Rowling has certainly created an imaginary world that is truly pan-British, centred on London and Scotland as the main settings for action, with characters drawn from all over the British Isles, focused on communities in the cardinal points of England and Scotland, even reincorporating Ireland within the wizarding British state. It is a Britain which shares sites of key historical and cultural memory, and positions its identity

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[267] Ibid. p. 568.
[268] Richard Curtis, 'Love Actually', (Universal, 2003).

against those of continental Europe and occasionally beyond. With a record-breaking audience in both print and film media, and a major niche within UK tourism including a dedicated theme park, Harry Potter and his version of Britain cannot be swept aside as irrelevant to contemporary definitions of Britain and Scotland's importance to those definitions. It is no surprise therefore, that Rowling would choose to throw her significant financial and cultural weight behind the campaign for the continuation of the British state. The *Harry Potter* series clearly imagines a united Britain, of which Scotland is an essential part; a representation of vital significance to the 2014 Referendum.

Chapter Two: Postcolonialism and Scottish Independence in the work of Liz Lochhead and Alasdair Gray

2.1 Postcolonialism and Scottish Literature: defining co-colonialism

The previous chapter discussed the conflict between Scottish and British identities during the Referendum period in the context of the works of Edwin Morgan and J.K. Rowling. It must also be acknowledged that Scottish and British identity are not easily separated from one another. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, as I established in Chapter One, is a successful advocate of British identity precisely because it presents Scottish culture and landscape as essential to Britishness: 'an ideal of a United Britain which included "Caledonia stern and wild"'[269]. However, in Morgan's poetry and in the writing of Alasdair Gray and Liz Lochhead, Scottishness can be defined both in relation and in opposition to an imperial Britishness.

The Referendum was a reminder of what Michael Gardiner calls the 'wearied and misleading' question of whether or not Scotland can be considered in a postcolonial framework.[270] The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (SEP) defines colonialism as 'a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another.'[271] The article acknowledges the breadth of this definition, and establishes that colonialism most commonly refers to the impact of the major European empires of the last four centuries, the expansiveness of which was made possible by advances in technology and navigation. Postcolonial theory developed principally from the 1970s onwards, influenced by Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978).[272] Said's text investigates European interactions with Asia and the Middle East, developing ideas which came to be applied to postcolonial study internationally. For example:

> the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures.[273]

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[269] Crawford, p. 111.
[270] Michael Gardiner and Graeme Macdonald, *Scottish Literature and Post-Colonial Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p. 1.
[271] Margaret Kohn, 'Colonialism', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (2014).
[272] Ibid.
[273] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), p. 7.

Following Said's publication, theorists have developed postcolonial theory to engage with the literatures and cultures of colonised and subaltern peoples all over the world. In literary theory, one of the most significant of these academics is Homi K. Bhabha, particularly in the texts *Nation and Narration* (1990) cited in 1.6, and *The Location of Culture* (1994). Among Bhabha's influences are Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, discussed in Chapter One, and the Scottish theorist Tom Nairn. In his introduction to *Nation and Narration,* Bhabha cites Nairn's description of the nation as 'the modern Janus' to develop his own postcolonial theory of 'hybridity':

> The 'locality' of national culture is neither unified nor unitary in relation to itself, nor must it be seen simply as 'other' in relation to what is outside or beyond it. The boundary is Janus-faced and the problem of outside/inside must always itself be a process of hybridity… What emerges as an effect of such 'incomplete signification' is a turning of boundaries and limits into the *in-between* spaces through which the meanings of cultural and political authority are negotiated.[274]

Bhabha's notion of hybridity or in-between, also expressed as the liminal, has been of particular influence in postcolonial studies, and has helpful applications for Scottish literary studies.

Postcolonialism can be a problematic term on many levels, and not only where Scotland is concerned. The prefix 'post' has been taken by some critics to mean 'past', and to imply erroneously that British or other colonialisms are past, and former colonies have now fully come to realise the effects of cultural imperialism. For example, in 2011 Michael Gardiner refers to English literature 'well after decolonisation'. Such an assertion indicates a simplistic assessment of the British Empire as 'done' simply because Britain no longer seeks to expand, and the majority of former colonies have gained some form of independent government. The Chambers 21st Century Dictionary's definition of decolonisation is 'to release (a state) from being a colony; to grant independence'.[275] This definition is problematic, as it rests on the assumption that it is even possible to 'release' a state from being a colony. Many of the nations considered postcolonial in the context of the British Empire retain the British monarch as their head of state, for example. Sixteen such nations with independent

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[274] *Nation and Narration*, p. 4.
[275] Anon., 'Decolonize or Decolonise V.', in *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary* (Online: Hodder & Stoughton, 2016).

parliaments exist outside of the UK, in addition to the fourteen British Overseas Territories. These were known as Crown Colonies until the British Nationalities Act (1981), after which they were termed British Dependent Territories before their current name was established by the British Overseas Territories Act (2002). Of the many nations now completely independent of UK government and monarchy, none can be returned to an identity separate from their colonisation. Critics such as Anita Heiss and Sandra Phillips have argued that postcolonialism is a term which 'makes those in the literary and publishing community feel better'.[276] They contend that postcolonialism, rather than necessarily advancing the cause of subaltern cultures, can and has been used to assuage colonial guilt, and encourage inaction towards indigenous people.

In the field of Scottish literature, Scotland's position in relation to postcolonialism is a complicated one, provoking debate and controversy. The vast majority of postcolonial theory, including the examples cited above, discuss colonial relationships in a European/non-European binary form, with expatriate colonial administrators resting uncomfortably in-between as the archetypal example of Bhabha's hybridity concept. Scotland, as 'an active and enthusiastic partner in the British Empire building,' is undeniably a colonising nation, whether viewed independently or as part of Great Britain. [277] However, there are also many who contest that Scotland was itself colonised by its more powerful southern neighbour. The publication of Michael Hechter's *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (1975) was a landmark text in this regard. For contemporary literary critics, postcolonial concepts can offer what Silke Stroh calls a 'theoretical toolbox' which can be extremely helpful in analyses of certain Scottish texts, such as those by Alasdair Gray and Liz Lochhead.[278] Despite the difficulties in classifying Scotland as a straight-forward case of the postcolonial, the majority of those who have approached the issue have ultimately found a place for Scotland within a postcolonial framework. Cairns Craig, Carla Sassi, Michael Gardiner, Michael

[276] Anita Heiss, *Dhuuluu-Yala: To Talk Straight* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2003), p. 43.
[277] C. Hart, *Heroines and Heroes: Symbolism, Embodiment, Narratives & Identity* (Lulu.com), p. 199.
[278] Silke Stroh in, Kirsten Sandrock, 'Postcolonial Perspectives on the Scottish Independence Debate', in *Scotland 2014 and Beyond: Coming of Age and Loss of Innocence?,* ed. by Klaus Peter Müller (Bern: Peter Lang, 2015), pp. 337-54 (p. 339).

Hechter, Silke Stroh, and Theo van Heijnsbergen have all done so, taking care to simultaneously acknowledge Scotland's role within the British Empire.

Robert Crawford in *Devolving English Literature,* establishes Scotland as unquestionably subaltern in the literary context. He praises the work of pioneers of postcolonialism such as Said or Spivak, but criticises the tendency:

> to concentrate on groups most obviously typified as 'other' than the white English male… This is peculiarly ironic, because, as the present book argues, the Scots in particular were crucially instrumental in constructing the university subject of English literature itself.[279]

Crawford, like the above critics, struggles in this text with the conflation of 'English' and 'British'. He describes the word 'English' as 'slippery' for its ability to subsume other literatures. For example, on Philip Larkin:

> His 'English' tradition is appropriating and incorporating extra-English elements at exactly the same time as it asserts its English purity.[280]

These difficulties with the terms 'English' and 'English Literature', have the effect of both dominating Scottish culture and exonerating it from imperial guilt: a challenge for the majority of writers who tackle the issue of Scotland's relationship to postcolonialism.

Liam Connell is one notable exception to this trend in contemporary Scottish literary study. Connell argues that 'the belief that England colonised Scotland is unhelpful for a proper conception of either colonisation or Scottish history.'[281] Scotland's depiction as a colonised nation originates with the development of political and literary nationalism in the 1920s, according to Connell, and is a nationalist rhetorical strategy as opposed to an historical reality. He points out Scotland's retention of powerful civic structures following the Treaty of Union in 1707 such as the church and the law, Scottish participation in the elite of British society (including colonial administration overseas), and a 'similar standardizing process within England itself' with regard to Anglicising linguistic hegemony in Scotland.[282] Despite these objections to classifying Scotland as a colony of England, Connell does accept that 'postcolonial theory does not require that

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[279] Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 3.
[280] Ibid. pp. 274-5.
[281] Liam Connell, 'Scottish Nationalism and the Colonial Vision of Scotland', *Interventions,* 6 (2004), 253.
[282] Ibid. p. 255.

Scotland was a colony for its application.'[283] Connell's work raises important objections to placing Scottish literature in postcolonial studies, including the reality of Scotland's role in the British Empire. Describing Scotland in colonial terms in relation to England, for example, is indeed a nationalist rhetorical strategy for both Lochhead and Gray, as I shall explore. These objections however, when noted and understood, can also form an application of postcolonial theory to Scottish literature with the potential for great benefits to the field. As Sandrock states:

> postcolonial criticism and Scottish studies… may enter into a fruitful relationship if, and only if, the relationship is critically theorized and self-consciously evaluated.[284]

These objections will therefore form an essential background to the definition of that relationship developed in this chapter.

The Treaty of Union itself can provide an interesting starting point for examining the colonised face of Scotland's Janus-like relationship to postcolonial studies. The Treaty is a sticking point for both Craig and Graeme Morton when it comes to assessing Scottish culture alongside nations colonised by the British Empire. They argue that Scotland's eighteenth-century lawmakers and nineteenth-century nationalists:

> believed their nation had entered the Union of 1707 as an equal, and that was how they demanded to be treated.[285]

Craig argues that the Act of Union represents a relationship between Scotland and England that belies Kidd's and Nairn's interpretations of Scottish constitutional identity as subaltern within the British state. However, Craig's description of the Union's legacy in Scotland is perhaps the experience which most closely mirrors elements of other colonial relationships. In New Zealand, for example, the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 between representatives of the British government and Māori leaders from across the country, and was established on the understanding of an equal partnership. Craig argues:

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[283] Ibid. p. 262.
[284] Sandrock, p. 338.
[285] Graeme Morton in, Cairns Craig, 'Constituting Scotland', *The Irish Review,* 28 (2001), 5.

> the movement for Scottish Home Rule developed not so much out of resistance to the Union but out of insistence upon it, and upon the fact that the treaty was being breached by the Westminster parliament.[286]

In the same way, elements of New Zealand's postcolonialism have been framed in reference to the Crown's failure to uphold the Treaty of Waitangi. For example, the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975 was concurrent and closely related to the Māori literary and cultural renaissance.[287] The phrase Māori renaissance is applied to the explosion of cultural works by Māori artists, or works that included Māori language or culture as a central element, over the period from the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal to the end of the twentieth century. Key examples include *Te Karere* - the Māori language news broadcast, the nationwide Te Māori exhibition (1984-87), the 1983 film *Utu,* Keri Hulme's Man Booker Prize winning novel *The Bone People* (1984), the writings of Witi Ihimaera, Patricia Grace, Rawiri Paratene, and others, and the foundation of the theatre company Taki Rua in 1990. This movement accompanied significant political changes such as those land claims instigated by the Tribunal, including the large Taranaki and Kai Tahu claims, the Māori Language Act 1987, and the establishment of the first kōhanga reo (Māori language immersion pre-school) in 1982.

Increasing public acknowledgement of the unequal partnership represented by the Treaty has had a tangible effect on postcolonial literature in New Zealand, with which we can draw a direct parallel to Scottish constitutional debate and the work of writers such as Lochhead and Gray. In the case of these Scottish writers, it is public discourse regarding the unequal partnership of the British Union which has influenced much of their writing. In another example, Robert J. C. Young refers to the relationship between the British Empire and Iraq, and the treaty signed between the two in 1930, to introduce theories of postcolonialism. He quotes the words of an Iraqi scholar, referred to as 'Khaled':

> Some independence! We were made to sign a treaty in which we agreed to let Britain control our foreign policy, keep its two air bases at Habbaniyya near Baghdad and Shu'aiba near Basra, use Iraq freely for its

[286] Ibid.
[287] Mark Derby, 'Māori–Pākehā Relations - Māori Renaissance', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand,* (2011).

> troops in time of war, and maintain its complete monopoly of the Iraq Petroleum Company.[288]

Although the above is an extreme case, it is telling that Young uses the example of the treaty mechanism to introduce the idea of colonialism to a lay audience. The mechanism of the Treaty of Union alone, therefore, is not enough to challenge Scotland's position in a postcolonial framework, and may even support it. A treaty between two sides in which each side has a different perception of whether each partner is an equal one can clearly be the beginning or continuation of a colonising relationship.

The Union of 1707, however, also informs the colonising face of Scotland's relationship to postcolonialism. One of the great benefits of the Treaty of Union to Scotland was the colonial opportunities that it brought. It was Scotland's disastrous attempt to become a separate colonising power via the Darien Company which reduced political opposition to the Union in the first instance.[289] The fifteenth article of the Treaty dissolves the African and Indian Company of Scotland, and it could be argued that the *British* Empire was born when the Treaty of Union became law. Colin Kidd describes the significance of Empire to Scotland's relationship to the Union:

> In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Scotland's Union with England established Scotland at the core both of the British Empire, and, as part of the world's first industrial nation, of the world economy. During the era of romantic European nationalisms, most Scots, seduced by a cornucopia of commercial opportunities and imperial offices, remained firmly wedded to Union.[290]

The Treaty of Union does not preclude Scotland from consideration as a subaltern nation within a postcolonial context. But what the Treaty does highlight is the centrality of empire to the Anglo-Scottish relationship. The interdependence of British history with that of its empire is increasingly acknowledged by writers and academics. John M. MacKenzie and T.M. Devine for example, point out that until recently, 'British historians had a tendency to

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[288] Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 40.
[289] Douglas Watt, *The Price of Scotland: Darien, Union and the Wealth of Nations* (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2014).
[290] Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity 1689-1830* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 2.

separate domestic from imperial history. This is no longer sustainable.'[291] The twentieth-century decline of the British Empire and the associated rise of postcolonial studies has allowed for publications such as MacKenzie and Devine's, or Jeremy Paxman's *Empire*, which asks the following:

> Can we seriously pretend that a project which dominated the way that Britain regarded the world for so many hundreds of years has had no lasting influence on the colonisers, too?[292]

These texts unite postcolonial research with internal British studies in order to better comprehend either or both areas. The acknowledgement of this relationship is essential for understanding Scotland's relationship to British identity at the time of the Referendum.

There are several Scottish literary commentators who advocate the incorporation of postcolonial studies within Scottish literature in order to better understand particular writers and their work as part of colonialism's 'subaltern classes', as they are termed by Douglas Mack.[293] Silke Stroh argues that postcolonial studies have provided a helpful background for the study of independence attempts such as the Referendum, outwith a specifically postcolonial context:

> postcolonial concepts can, and should, be used as a theoretical toolbox that enables critics to explore processes of empire-building, of power relations and cultural oppression but also the practices of decolonisation and freedom campaigns worldwide.[294]

Sassi and van Heijnsbergen agree with Stroh on the need for interaction between Scottish and postcolonial research, particularly in regard to writers such as Morgan and Gray:

> who have articulated their dissatisfaction with the state of the Union [and] have often pursued agendas which bear evident similarities with postcolonial ones.[295]

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[291] John M. MacKenzie and T. M. Devine, *Scotland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[292] Jeremy Paxman, *Empire: What Ruling the World Did to the British* (London: Penguin, 2011), p. 3.
[293] Douglas S. Mack, *Scottish Fiction and the British Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).
[294] Stroh in, Sandrock, p. 339.
[295] Carla Sassi and Theo van Heijnsbergen, *Within and without Empire* (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 3.

They contend that Scotland's imperial complicity cannot and should not be ignored in applying postcolonial theory to writers such as Gray, and that the difficulty of Scotland's position in this regard can also be beneficial for such work:

> a representation of Scotland's predicament vis-à-vis the postcolonial one that identifies its complexities and specificities is not only ethically necessary, but also essential to honing methodological tools in what are two closely related fields.[296]

This position is increasingly popular amongst those who discuss Scottish literature with reference to postcolonial studies, such as Murray Pittock in his chapter within *Scotland 2014 and Beyond – Coming of Age and Loss of Innocence?* Michael Gardiner in *The Cultural Roots of British Devolution,* and Graeme McDonald in *Scottish Literature and Postcolonial Literature*, and is an important part of my own definition.[297] However, as Sassi and van Heijnsbergen also point out by citing Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin:

> [Scotland's] complicity in the British imperial enterprise makes it difficult for colonised peoples outside Britain to accept their identity as postcolonial.[298]

In light of the many differing views presented above, how can Scottish writers fit within the postcolonial framework when Scottish identity and history is inseparable from a colonising role in British Empire? Sassi, van Heijnsbergen, Gardiner, Macdonald, and others are correct in their assertions that studies of Scottish literature and postcolonial literature are 'less separate trends, than intricately related and often conjoined critical positionings', and this is a connection which provides exciting opportunities for Scottish literary studies.[299] However, this relationship is as significant when it comes to Scotland's history as a colonising power as it is when considered as part of an opposition to a hegemonic Anglocentrism, and there are legitimate concerns regarding the classification of a nation such as Scotland as 'postcolonial'. In order to acknowledge these concerns, and to embrace the possibilities of considering

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[296] Ibid. p. 5.
[297] *Scottish Literature and Post-Colonial Literature*.
[298] *Within and without Empire*, p. 6.
[299] *Scottish Literature and Post-Colonial Literature*, p. 3.

Scotland's multifaceted relationship to colonialism, I propose the use of a new term — 'co-colonial' — to replace postcolonial in the Scottish context.

It is important to note that without acknowledgement of Scotland's position as co-colonial, writers like Lochhead and Gray — and those who discuss them — run the risk of creating a counter-hegemony, one that has been termed 'Scottish exceptionalism' by Devine and Mackenzie, among others.[300] That is, a myth of Scottish non-compliance in Empire, and a rejection of culpability based on a colonial experience at home. Paraphrasing Suhayl Saadi, Ian Brown emphasises:

> we could all do well to remain sensitised to the colonial and postcolonial tricks of cultural control in which we all participate as perpetrators or perpetrated on, but mostly in some complex interaction of the two.[301]

Colonising narratives, once established, do not fade easily, but as Brown points out, neither can we cease to be wary of creating new hegemonies. In Scottish literature as elsewhere therefore, it is crucial to remain conscious of colonial discourse, the better to prevent future instances of it.

Using the term co-colonial allows us to embrace Scotland's complex relationship to the British Empire, rather than fearing that complexity. James Robertson expresses this aspiration in his epigraph to *Joseph Knight* (2003), a novel based on the real historical figure of Joseph Knight, a slave brought from Jamaica to Scotland who subsequently won a freedom suit against his master. Robertson's epigraph is a quotation from the Nigerian writer Ben Okri:

> If they tell themselves stories that face their own truths, they will free their histories for future flowerings.[302]

Scottish literature is co-colonial because it is influenced by Scotland's role in the British Empire, but simultaneously experiences a sense of marginalisation in literature in an Anglicised Britain administered from a London metropole. This marginalisation finds helpful expression via the mechanisms of postcolonial theory. The term metropole is a particularly important one for this study. Metropole, derived from metropolis, is a term used in postcolonial studies to describe the centre of an empire. The metropole in relation to the British

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[300] *Scotland and the British Empire*.
[301] Ian Brown, 'Motivation and Politico-Cultural Context in the Creation of Scots Language Versions of Greek Tragedies', *Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature,* 22 (2013), 269.
[302] Ben Okri, *Birds of Heaven* (London: Phoenix Publishing, 1996).

Empire is variously described as either London or the entire UK, a conflation which in itself speaks of Scotland's divided, co-colonial relationship with that metropole. Anthony Chennells explains the significance of the metropole to postcolonial studies in the following terms:

> The one paradigm to which the postcolonial critic is always alert is the paradigm on which any concept of empire is based: centre and periphery. Whether the centre is Rome, St Petersburg and Moscow, London, Lisbon, Vienna or Paris, empires constitute the imperial metropole as both normative and authoritative. Whatever meaning the periphery has, imperialism implies, derives from its relationship with the metropolitan centre.[303]

This London metropole is Lochhead's 'glistening city that sucked all wealth to its centre'.[304] Anthony Webster's definition of metropole, however, describes Britain as a whole as the metropole of the British Empire, rather than London specifically.[305] For Scottish co-colonial writers such as Gray and Lochhead, both definitions of the metropole in relation to the British Empire are significant, and both require negotiation from the Scottish perspective. The essential nature of Scotland's co-colonialism is that it is at once centre and periphery.

The term co-colonial has uses beyond the specificities of this chapter, and potentially beyond Scottish literary studies also. Gray and Lochhead are certainly not the only Scottish writers who embrace a co-colonial approach in their work. For example, James Robertson's *Joseph Knight,* as discussed above, or other of Robertson's novels including his most significant contribution to the Referendum's literary landscape, *And the Land Lay Still* (2010). Other contemporary Scottish writers such as Jackie Kay, Tom Leonard, Aonghas MacNeacail, or Irvine Welsh could helpfully be discussed in such terms. Outwith Scottish literary studies, creative works in other media such as visual art, film, or music may also be usefully approached from this critical standpoint. Utilising co-colonial as a concept may enable critics to examine the work of such artists as it relates to Scotland's position in the British Empire without necessitating lengthy and often apologetic prefaces regarding these complexities. The term

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[303] Anthony Chennells, 'Essential Diversity: Post-Colonial Theory and African Literature', *BRNO Studies in English,* 25 (1999), 111.
[304] Liz Lochhead, *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1987), pp. 11-12.
[305] Anthony Webster, *The Debate on the Rise of the British Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

co-colonial acknowledges such difficulties and can hopefully enable writers and critics to appreciate and engage more comprehensively with these ideas.

The term also has the potential to ameliorate discussions reaching further back to those whose lives and works coincided with the height of the British Empire, many of whom are already being reassessed with the benefit of postcolonial theories. Walter Scott for instance, as alluded to in Chapter One, would make a fascinating study in the co-colonial. R.L. Stevenson is increasingly discussed in a postcolonial context, particularly in relation to his time in the South Seas and the associated output. He himself compared the experiences of Scotland's Highlanders to that of the Samoans: 'In both cases… an alien authority enforced, the clans deposed, new customs introduced…'[306] However, a more co-colonial approach to his work and biography would be particularly fascinating. A co-colonial interpretation would likewise be beneficial to studies of the writers who, at the British Empire's peak, found identities and careers amongst London's elite, such as Arthur Conan Doyle or J.M. Barrie.

Regarding the significance of both London and Britain as metropole, the term co-colonial may also be used to describe other cultures which are subaltern within the British state but which, like Scotland, are complicit in and beneficiaries of imperial expansion. Welsh and Northern Irish literatures can perhaps be most easily discussed in this framework.[307] Furthermore, within England itself the term co-colonial can be applied at a regional level. For example, in relation to Merseyside literature, such as the Liverpool Poets, who were contemporaries of the Habsbaum group at the outset of the modern postcolonial movement in the 1960s and 1970s, or the legacy of black poetry in Manchester during the same period.[308] Conversely, the term need not be limited to the study of art or literature where the colonial metropole is British. The national centres of Europe's major colonising powers each also contain subaltern cultures that may be usefully explored utilising this terminology. Furthermore, certain examples of

[306] Robert Louis Stevenson cited in Angela Smith, 'Scottish Literature and the British Empire', in *Scotland and the British Empire,* ed. by John M. MacKenzie and T. M. Devine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 255-79.
[307] See for example Stefanie Lehner, 'Towards a Subaltern Aesthetics: Reassessing Postcolonial Criticism for Contemporary Northern Irish and Scottish Literatures.', *eSharp,* 1 (2005); Esther Whitfield, 'Empire, Nation and the Fate of a Language: Patagonia in Argentine and Welsh Literature', *Postcolonial Studies,* 14 (2011).
[308] See for example L. Pearce, C. Fowler, and R. Crawshaw, *Postcolonial Manchester: Diaspora Space and the Devolution of Literary Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

the art and literature of colonised nations where colonising narratives are still exploited by a ruling local elite, or such nations which have themselves held overseas territories or protectorates, may also be more helpfully discussed in a co-colonial rather than postcolonial framework. The works of Albert Wendt, Albert Kiki, or Vincent Eri for instance.

Two of the most outspoken literary advocates for an independence vote in the Referendum, Alasdair Gray and Liz Lochhead, are motivated by a co-colonial perspective which both explore in their writing. Edwin Morgan and J.K. Rowling's roles in the Referendum period were intimately connected with their creative expressions of nationhood, and it is in a similar way that Lochhead and Gray's involvement in the Referendum period is connected to the co-colonialism of their work. The postcolonial perspective is dominant in Lochhead and Gray's literary oeuvres, but each is also clearly conscious of Scotland's colonial complicity, as is instanced in the discussion of their works which follows, and are therefore better described as co-colonial writers, rather than postcolonial. These authors are dedicated to disrupting hegemonic discourses, and consequently their co-colonial agenda shifts easily into a literary support of Scottish independence.

Cairns Craig in *Constituting Scotland* argues that 'Britishness' during the time of Empire was more significant for Scotland than for England, resulting in an arrested nationalist development that Benedict Anderson and Anthony D. Smith have both remarked upon in their references to Scotland:

> Scotland, along with Ireland and Wales, participated in the forging of a new national identity for the United Kingdom, a British identity, which, in the end, England failed to subscribe to and from which Ireland seceded. 'Real' Scottish identity by the end of the eighteenth century was constituted by Britishness, but a Britishness which was never actually realized in the working constitution of the supposedly United Kingdom.[309]

British identity cannot be divorced from the British Empire, therefore any definition of Scottish literature as postcolonial must also acknowledge the entrenched relationship between Scotland and Empire, Scotland and Britain, and Scotland and imperialism. The challenge for writers such as Gray and Lochhead,

[309] Craig, p. 3.

is to develop the postcolonial Scottish identity they espouse in their work, whilst remaining sensitive to these connections; in other words, to be co-colonial.

Between the 1970s and the Referendum period, Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish devolution and independence were increasingly important topics in British national discourse. The eventual devolution away from a London government in the 1990s inevitably impacted upon the solidity of the UK imagined community. It is no coincidence that postcolonial theory was developing at the same moment. This is an argument captured in relation to the post-war period in Britain leading up to the Referendum by Bryan Glass, in his 2014 publication *The Scottish Nation at Empire's End*. Glass contends that the British Empire 'made separatist nationalism unthinkable'.[310] He describes the second half of the twentieth century as 'the end of Empire' and of the British Empire having 'concluded' throughout his text, which is clearly a problematic assertion. However, he makes a valid and crucial point in reference to the relationship between the decline of the British Empire and the attendant rise of Scottish nationalism:

> The power of the SNP in the twenty-first century can be interpreted as a legacy of the failed empire. Whatever the outcome of the SNP's rise, the political bond between the Scots and the British state has experienced a level of strain unknown since the last Jacobite Rebellion ended on Culloden Moor in 1746.
>
> Empire and Britain went hand in hand, and the loss of the one may spell the eventual disintegration of the other.[311]

Catriona MacDonald makes a similar point in *Whaur Extremes Meet*:

> The nationalism which animated the smaller nations of Europe in the early decades of the century found only faint echoes in Scotland. By the end of the century, however, the Empire had all but gone, and between 1979 and 1997, Westminster was dominated by a party that repeatedly failed to secure a Scottish mandate. The welfare state and nationalised industries that had sustained Scottish unionism, as imperial promises receded, also suffered in these years. Is it any wonder that Scotland began to reassess her constitutional marriage?[312]

Taking a co-colonial approach, I would argue that the flurry of colonised nations declaring their independence from the British Empire in the second half of the

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[310] Bryan S. Glass, *The Scottish Nation at Empire's End* (Online: Palgrave McMillan, 2014), p. 142.
[311] Ibid. pp. 164-65.
[312] *Whaur Extremes Meet: Scotland's Twentieth Century*, pp. 6-7.

twentieth century is closely interconnected with devolution within Britain, and the potential for Scottish independence.

Over the course of the 1960s, nineteen sovereign nations were created by gaining independence from Britain.[313] In 1979, the year of the devolution referendum in Scotland, Kiribati, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and St Lucia all followed suit, as did nine others during the 1970s.[314] Between this time and the 1997 referendum, three others had likewise permanently departed the once-vast Empire. The Trusteeship Council had also been disbanded, further reducing Britain's administrative 'duties' over other nations. Accepting that the imagined community of Britain is tied to the idea of the British Empire, the rise of postcolonialism and the departure of former colonies from British control has an inevitable effect on how British people conceive their nation. As Lord Rosebery explained at the City of London Liberal Club in 1899, 'Imperialism, is but this – a larger patriotism.'[315] Tom Nairn argues that the nationalism of Britain is 'unusually and structurally dependent' on its relation to the rest of the world and its Empire in particular, and that as a result 'the loss of its critical overseas wealth and connections was bound to promote internal readjustments'.[316] This damage to the concept of what Britain is and represents therefore enables different versions of Britain to be imagined, including ones in which Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland are devolved or even independent. In this sense, Scottish literature is aligned with the postcolonial not *in spite* of being a significant part of the colonising Empire but *because* of it. The combined growth of postcolonial literature and decline of the British Empire as an imagined community made way for an anti-hegemonic Scottish literature embodied by the texts in this chapter: a co-colonial literature.

2.2 Liz Lochhead and anti-hegemonic rhetoric

Liz Lochhead was Scotland's second Makar at the time of the 2014 Referendum, and an enthusiastic supporter of a Yes vote. She was born in Motherwell in 1947 and published her first poetry collection, *Memo for Spring*, in 1972. Since that

[313] Botswana, Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Maldives, Singapore, and Malta.
[314] Seychelles, Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Qatar, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu.
[315] Quoted in Robert Rhodes James, *Rosebery: A Biography of Archibald Philip, Fifth Earl of Rosebery* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd, 1963), p. 158.
[316] Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 13.

time, she has remained a consistent presence in Scottish poetry and theatre as a prolific writer and performer of her work. Some of her best-known works include the poetry collections *The Grimm Sisters* (1981), *Dreaming Frankenstein* (1984), and *Bagpipe Muzak* (1991), and the plays *Blood and Ice* (1982), *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (1989, henceforth referred to as *Mary Queen of Scots*), and *Misery Guts* (2002) which updates Molière's *Le Misanthrope* to contemporary Scotland. She is praised for creating 'a prestigious space of her own within a markedly masculine canon', and one of the strengths of her work is her challenging of assumed hierarchies and her experimentation with cultural tropes.[317]

Lochhead was not always a wholehearted supporter of Scottish independence, and did not support devolution in the 1979 referendum. The outcome of that referendum however, altered her stance on the subject:

> I was, I remember, very anti any form of 'nationalism', equating it automatically with jingoism… After the [1979] referendum I was ashamed and thought, 'What kind of country doesn't want to have more of a say in its own affairs?' And, gradually, I've realised it would be perfectly possible to pursue the same concerns as I've always had as an equal European and a citizen of a small, independent country. One that didn't think of itself as 'better' than any other, but one perfectly capable of taking responsibility for itself.[318]

Despite her changing view on Scottish separation, Lochhead's creative work has been consistent in its challenge to hegemonic discourse, and the aversion to jingoism she describes in the above quotation. The identification and opposition of cultural hegemony is a core element of postcolonial writing, and one which Lochhead has increasingly come to utilise in relation to her depictions of Scotland. Lochhead builds on her use of anti-hegemonic strategies to challenge class and gender hegemony in Scotland and the UK.

The understanding of cultural hegemony in contemporary postcolonial studies originates with the Marxist theorist, Antonio Gramsci, who developed the concept whilst imprisoned by Mussolini's government during the 1920s and 30s. Gramsci's theories, primarily directed at class struggle, are usefully appropriated in examinations of imperialism and its effects, for example by

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[317] Carla Rodriguez Gonzalez, 'An Interview with Liz Lochhead', *Atlantis, revista de la Asociación Española de Estudios Anglo-Norteamericanos,* 26 (2004).
[318] Lochhead.

Louis Althusser in his identification of the Ideological State Apparatus.[319] The Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) refers to those institutions, usually established or administered by the colonising power, which enforce hegemony. The school, the church, the media, and literature are all examples of ISA locations. These are not the same as what Althusser terms the Repressive State Apparatus, which may relate to police, military, prisons, or the government itself. In postcolonial theory, hegemony refers to the cultural dominance of the coloniser:

> the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership'… The 'normal' exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent.[320]

The essential element in the postcolonial use of hegemony is *consent*: 'the most sustained and potent operation of imperial power'.[321] The culture of the coloniser is not only presented as superior, but 'normal', rendering the colonised culture 'other'. This is part of what Michael Billig terms 'banal nationalism'. The term covers:

> the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced. It is argued that these habits are not removed from everyday life, as some observers have supposed. Daily, the nation is indicated, or 'flagged', in the lives of its citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition.[322]

For a Scottish co-colonial writer such as Lochhead, Scotland is the periphery in this model in relation to the British Isles, but part of the centre in relation to the British Empire. However, this exploration of hegemony crosses over into other central aspects of Lochhead's work she developed earlier on in her career, in which the female and the working-class are rendered other by cultural hegemony. In her poem 'The Choosing', for example, from her debut collection, *Memo for Spring*, Lochhead explores the idea of power by consent in the illusion of choice for young working-class women. The poet and her friend Mary share a

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[319] Louis Althusser, *'Lenin and Philosophy' and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).
[320] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 78.
[321] B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, and H. Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (Oxford: Routledge, 2000).
[322] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: SAGE, 1995), p. 6.

school and a housing scheme, and are brought together by ‘a common bond in being cleverest’. Mary’s father denies her a high-school education because of her gender, and the poet sees her a decade after their parting, married and pregnant:

> I think of the prizes that were ours for the taking
> and wonder when the choices got made
> we don’t remember taking.[323]

These final lines imply that a woman’s life choices, and particularly those of the working-class woman, are not true choices at all. The poem explores the idea that belief in such choices is part of the consensual nature of hegemonic power in a patriarchal system.

Lochhead’s critiques of male or class hegemony in her earlier work shift naturally into her Scottish co-colonial writing post-1979. For example, the poem ‘My Mother’s Suitors’ deftly blends satire of male-female power relationships with Anglo-Scottish power relationships:

> they’re English aren’t they
> at very least they’re
> educated-Scots[324]

These lines parody the implied superiority of the men who have conformed to the hegemony of Received Pronunciation English. This is a theme Lochhead returns to in *Mary Queen of Scots* (see 2.5). ‘My Mother’s Suitors’ is told from her mother’s perspective and set during World War Two. Although she is only one generation removed from the events in the poem, the use of irony in her narration demonstrates that the poet finds her mother’s views on courtship antiquated. For example, she exaggerates the suitors’ attention to detail:

> they know the language of flowers
> & oh they’d die
> rather than send a dozen yellow

[323] Liz Lochhead, *Dreaming Frankenstein & Collected Poems* (Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1984), p. 153.
[324] Ibid. p. 99.

> they always get them right & red.[325]

Mocking both the patriarchal structures of courtship and the Anglocentric hegemony of speech in the previous generation, Lochhead demonstrates that both are power dynamics she seeks to escape.

In a later example from her time as Makar, Lochhead satirises the same hegemony of the English language and literary canon. This time however, unlike the previous example, her speaker does not appear to be consenting but objecting loudly to that hegemony. The title of the poem explains the speaker's position: 'Nick Dowp, Feeling Miscast in a Very English Production, Rehearses Bottom's Dream'. Although objecting in the poem, the speaker is also part of the consensual structures of hegemony, because he participates in the play itself. Sections of the poem are Scots translations of Bottom's speech from Act Four of *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* but most of it is expressed through Nick Dowp's voice. He attacks the canonical English writer's attitude to Scottish culture, referring, as J.K. Rowling does, to William Topaz McGonagall:

> Shakespeare's, (excuse me for being cynical)
> Attitude to Scotch verse is that it's kina like McGonagall's
> And only guid enough for thae Rude Mechanicals
> An Loss-the Plots
> To tumpty-tum their numpty lyricals
> In accents Scots[326]

Lochhead disrupts accepted hegemonies of canonical and authoritative literature by translating an English high-culture icon such as Shakespeare into Scots, and treating that text with the irreverence displayed in the poem. In doing so, Lochhead is demonstrating her argument via the medium itself. Ian Brown argues that:

> the use of Scots in literary writing is to a varying extent a consciously politically inspired cultural act… Common ground is that the use of Scots is not value-neutral, as the choice of an established standard language might, at least apparently seem.[327]

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[325] Ibid.
[326] Liz Lochhead, *Fugitive Colours* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2016), p. 100.
[327] Brown, p. 261.

There is undoubtedly a nationalist motivation behind much of Lochhead's work in Scots, and certainly in 'Nick Dowp', language and the nation being closely associated with one another. Aira Kemiläinen defines 'nationality' as:

> identical with the German word *'Volkstum'*, which means a nation formed by a common language and other common characteristics like common origin, manners, and institutions, without any political connotation.[328]

Benedict Anderson's definitions of nationalism and the nation, which have been significant to postcolonial studies, substantially rely on language. In his preface to the 1992 edition of *Imagined Communities* he blames 'nationalist explosions' for destroying European polyglot realms. In the text itself, Anderson credits linguistic dominance and standardisation with the invention of the imagined national community, citing examples from all over the world, including this one from Scandinavia:

> In the case of Norway, which had long shared a written language with the Danes, though with a completely different pronunciation, nationalism emerged with Ivar Ansen's new Norwegian grammar (1848) and dictionary (1850), texts which responded to and stimulated demands for a specifically Norwegian print-language.[329]

Using Scots expresses the existence of a separate community within Scotland, which can be an assertion of a desire for an independent nation to accompany that language, but as Kemiläinen points out, this may not necessarily be the case. In her 'Nick Dowp' poem, as in her Scots translation of *Tartuffe,* Lochhead confounds expectations of Scots as a low-culture dialect, subordinate to English, actively proving it to be a literary language. Works such as this exemplify John Burnside's point that 'every published poem is a political act'.[330] Poetry or drama such as this, simply by being published, subverts the 'spread and exaltation of the English language outside England', which the postcolonial critics Charamba and Mutasa describe as a defining feature of the British Empire.[331]

By 1990, Lochhead was certainly no longer in doubt regarding her stance on Scottish devolution. 'Bagpipe Muzak, Glasgow 1990' satirises clichéd images of

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[328] Kemiläinen, p. 31.
[329] *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, p. 75.
[330] *A Poet's Polemic*, p. 10.
[331] Tyanai Charamba and Davie Mutasa, E., 'Challenging the Hegemony of English in African Education and Literature: The Case of Zimbabwe', *South African Journal of African Languages,* 34 (2014).

Scotland, but is nonetheless a strikingly energetic work in support of devolution. Lochhead denounces her 1979 vote and erstwhile support of Labour, celebrating instead Jim Sillar's win as an SNP candidate in the 1988 Glasgow Govan by-election. This was the same seat his wife, Margo McDonald, had won in the historic 1973 Glasgow Govan by-election, also for the SNP:

> Margo McDonald spruced up her spouse for thon Govan By-Election
> The voters they selectit him in a sideways *left* defection,
> The Labour man was awfy hurt, he'd dependit on the X-fillers
> And the so-and-sos had betrayed him for thirty pieces of Sillars![332]

Lochhead expresses her own change of heart regarding the SNP, Labour, and Scottish separation as part of a wider national shift in Scotland:

> Once it was no go the SNP, they were sneered at as 'Tory' and tartan
> And thought to be very little to do with the price of Spam in Dumbarton.
> Now it's all go the Nationalists, the toast of the folk and famous[333]

The final verse of the poem leaves us in no doubt of the poet's position, even though she expresses it with a degree of self-satire, maintaining her use of Scottish cliché:

> It's all go L.A. lager, it's all go the Campaign for an Assembly,
> It's all go Suas Alba and winning ten-nil at Wembley.
> Are there separatist dreams in the glens and the schemes?
> Well… It doesny take Taggart to detect it!
> Or to jalouse we hate the Government
> And we patently didnae elect it.
> So – watch out Margaret Thatcher, and tak' tent Neil Kinnock
> Or we'll tak' the United Kingdom and brekk it like a bannock.

The irregular rhyme scheme, internal rhyme, and frequent use of spondee, for instance 'tak' tent', 'watch out', and 'all go', create a fast-paced and rhythmic poem, 'borrowing its iconoclastic rhythms from Louis MacNeice's 'Bagpipe Music'

[332] Liz Lochhead, *Bagpipe Muzak* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 25.
[333] Ibid. p. 26.

from which the poem takes its inspiration.[334] The concluding heroic couplet lands powerfully, supported by the alliteration in the final line. It brings together the humour and energy of the poem with the poet's more serious rhetorical purpose, so that the poem 'ends not with exhaustion and collapse but with potency and threat'.[335] This is also the concluding poem of the volume's first section, 'Recitations', with many of the poems preceding it also containing Scottish nationalist rhetoric separating Scottish experiences from English ones, and satirising Anglocentric hegemony. For example, the poems 'Almost Miss Scotland', 'Con-densation', 'The Garden Festival, Glasgow 1988', and 'Festival City: Yon Time Again'.

Lochhead remains conscious, however, of the Scottish colonising position in her explorations of hegemony. As Makar, she was commissioned to write and perform a poem for the 2012 Commonwealth Day celebrations in Westminster Abbey along that year's theme of 'Connecting Cultures'. Lochhead took the opportunity to shed light on the legacy of colonial exploitation at the hands of hegemonic power structures. In her poem, 'Connecting Cultures', she takes apart the colonial euphemism of Commonwealth, pointing out that 'Wealth is what we do not have in Common'. Her poem alludes to cultural hegemony in the second stanza which unpacks the term 'communication'. She likens the transfer of culture to that of martial troops, echoing Gramsci's definition of hegemony as parallel to force. The poem also speaks of a 'wind of change', and concludes with an aspirational address to those who share her position of privilege in the context of the Commonwealth:

> Such words can sound like flagged-up slogans, true.
> What we merely say says nothing - -
> All that matters is what we do.[336]

Lochhead's use of the pronoun 'we' definitively locates the poet as part of the colonising power in this poem; a demonstration of Lochhead's sensitivity to co-colonialism. This is made clear by the poet's address throughout the piece as a British 'we' addressing a Commonwealth 'you'. She is evidently conscious that as

[334] Dorothy Porter McMillan, 'The Ungentle Art of Clyping', in *Liz Lochhead's Voices*, ed. by Robert Crawford and Anne Varty (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp. 17-37.
[335] Ibid.
[336] *Fugitive Colours*, p. 75.

a Scot she is the beneficiary of hegemonic power structures on a global scale, even though in other works she can also legitimately examine the Scottish position on the receiving end of similar hegemonic power structures within the UK.

Graeme MacDonald agrees that a co-colonial position adds validity to Scottish anti-hegemonic writing. In his 2006 essay, 'Postcolonialism and Scottish Studies', he points towards a 'recent boom in academic and popular interest in the significant role of Scots and Scotland in the British Empire'. He makes the case that this boom promotes rather than discourages Scottish cultural figures from examining Scotland also in a postcolonial light:

> In this context, a contemporary fervour for admonition and admission of Scottish colonial culpability can be perceived as part of an anti-imperialist argument made by several established and emergent writers and academics galvanised by the resonance of postcolonial studies in a Scottish/British context. It is not coincidental that this development has formed in the context of political devolution in the UK, recently described by Michael Gardiner as a 'postcolonial process' exerting renewed and sustained pressure on the present structure and validity of the Union – pressure that can only lead to the eventual end of the 'imperial anachronism' known as Great Britain.[337]

MacDonald intimates that Scottish independence is part of a decolonising process, as the break-up of Britain necessarily undermines the British hegemony which postcolonialism works against throughout the former Empire. In this way, contributing to Scottish literature through the toolkit of postcolonialism, can be seen as a deliberate pro-independence strategy, one espoused by Lochhead. 'Connecting Cultures' for example, as discussed above, challenges cultural hegemony from the UK but also within it.

Liz Lochhead frequently challenges hegemony through her explorations of accepted ideas of 'truth'. Hegemony and truth are inextricably woven together as cultural hegemony involves a dominant culture exerting authority over a subaltern culture by normalising the dominant culture as authoritative truth; the hegemonic is presented as objective rather than subjective. In Lochhead's co-colonial depictions of Scotland, cultural hegemony is represented predominantly by Standard English and the domination of the London metropole. The same can also be said of Alasdair Gray's work, as I shall discuss in the second half of this

[337] Michael Gardiner, 'Postcolonialism and Scottish Studies', *New Formations,* 59 (2006), 116.

chapter. Lochhead is committed to the idea of truth as a non-uniform concept. It is definable by any individual and must not be determined by official hegemonic discourse, whether Anglocentric, patriarchal, or otherwise. Carol Ann Duffy, in her foreword to Lochhead's *A Choosing: Selected Poems,* enthusiastically praises this overwhelming influence in Lochhead's work:

> Lochhead's *[Memo for] Spring* blossomed out into the very male landscape of Scottish poetry and somehow managed to make that landscape female… Liz Lochhead has continued to find new ways through language of claiming her country.[338]

For Lochhead the voice of the ISA is Received Pronunciation English, and the gender is male, hence the correlation between feminism and postcolonialism in her work (see 2.4). This is perhaps most famously iterated in her poem 'Kidspoem/Bairnsang'. The text remembers a first day at school, told initially in the speaker's mother tongue of Scots, before retelling the same story in Standard English and then reverting to Scots. The poem concludes:

> Oh saying it was one thing
> but when it came to writing it
> in black and white
> the way it had to be said
> was as if you were posh, grown-up, male, English and dead.[339]

'Kidspoem/Bairnsang', explores the sense of alienation between spoken language and the language deemed appropriate in terms of education and public life, in other words the ISA. The round structure of the poem reflects that this is being told from a child's perspective, but it also represents the cyclical nature of language standardisation; 'saying it was fine', but official and public language must conform to Standard English. In critiquing this divide by means of her poetry, Lochhead explores hegemony by challenging the notion that Standard English is the voice of authority in Scotland, and presents an alternative through the language of the poem itself.

The mantra of 'posh, grown-up, male, English and dead', is now a well-known expression of hegemony in Scotland, particularly relating to the position of Standard English in schools, and this poem is one of Lochhead's most discussed. Lochhead places the Scots version of the story either side of the English and

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[338] Carol Ann Duffy, 'Foreword', in *A Choosing: The Selected Poems of Liz Lochhead* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2011), (p. ix).
[339] Liz Lochhead, *The Colour of Black & White: Poems 1984-2003* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2003).

exaggerates the formalities of the English version, satirising the separation between the speaker and the language they 'learn to say' once they begin school. By setting the poem on the first day of school, a familiar example of traumatic separation, she lends poignancy to the satire, emphasising the loss when the child recalls that at school 'I'd learn to forget to say' in her original language, and that of her mother. The poem defiantly proves that the speaker's Scots has *not* been forgotten. J. Derrick McClure states in 1983 of work in Scots generally:

> In a work containing dialogue entirely in Scots, and in a Scots which is notably consistent, idiosyncratic, and lexically distinctive, the impression given is inherently unlikely to be one of simple realism.[340]

This poem is not entirely in Scots, but Lochhead includes elements of both Scots and Standard English in order to convey what McClure identifies as 'a deliberate gesture of support for a denigrated tongue'[341]. Dorothy McMillan describes this as a 'juxtaposition of felt Scots and learned English.'[342] Laura Severin goes further, and argues that in this poem and elsewhere in her work, Scotland 'as Lochhead represents it, is an occupied nation — occupied by Anglicised thought structures.'[343]

These thought structures and ISAs are often depicted in the school context. In a particularly overtly co-colonial example from Lochhead's monologue 'In the Dreamschool', another teacher, Miss Prentice, 'said the Empire had enlightened people/and been a two-way thing'.[344] The dramatic monologue 'Mrs Rintoul: Standard English', is told from the perspective of an English teacher in Scotland, who despairs of her students' use of Scots, mocking them openly for it:

> I goes 'Annemarie I hope and trust and pray you are not going to put that down on the paper. Could you not at least say "short-tempered"? Something Standard English anyway…'[345]

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[340] J. Derrick McClure, 'Scots in Dialogue: Some Uses and Implications', in *Scotland and the Lowland Tongue: Studies in the Language and Literature of Scotland in Honour of David D. Murison,* ed. by J. Derrick McClure (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1983), pp. 129-48 (p. 148).
[341] J. Derrick McClure, *Why Scots Matters* (Edinburgh: The Saltire Society, 1988), p. 37.
[342] Dorothy McMillan in A. Varty, *The Edinburgh Companion to Liz Lochhead* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 35.
[343] Laura Severin in, ibid. p. 40.
[344] *Dreaming Frankenstein & Collected Poems*, p. 58.
[345] Liz Lochhead, *True Confessions & New Cliches* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1985), p. 125.

Yet Mrs Rintoul introduces this quotation in non-Standard English, and the occasional Scots word such as ‘mibbe’ slips into her speech. This is one of several examples of Lochhead’s skill with dramatic irony which characterises many of her monologue poems. In ‘Mrs Rintoul’, the ‘Kidspoem/Bairnsang’ disconnect is expressed from the teacher’s perspective. Although she is clearly enthusiastic in her perpetuation of Standard English hegemony, the loss and conflict felt by the child is also clearly present in Mrs Rintoul, and is perhaps even more poignant as a result of the teacher’s unselfconscious participation in the mechanism of the ISA.

By writing and performing these poems, Lochhead is no bystander of the issue of Standard English hegemony, but an active part of undermining it, alongside contemporaries such as Tom Leonard. Tom Leonard utilises a particularly Glaswegian Scots in his poetry to both comment on and actively counter the idea that Standard English is the only language in which a writer or public figure could articulate ‘thi trooth’. Leonard’s third poem in the ‘Unrelated Incidents’ sequence satirises the idea that a ‘BBC accent’ appears to tell the truth, whereas a demotic Scots would appear disingenuous, even when discussing serious and/or authoritative information:

> …yi
> widny wahnt
> mi ti talk
> aboot thi
> trooth
> lik wanna yoo
> scruff yi
> widny thingk
> it wuz troo.[346]

Lochhead’s “Kidspoem/Bairnsang” brings this idea from one ISA to another, namely mass media into the context of education. Both poems imply however, that for Scots and for those in the rest of the United Kingdom, only information

[346] Tom Leonard, *Intimate Voices* (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Galloping Dog Press, 1984), p. 88.

presented in Standard English, whether written or oral, can be regarded as 'the truth'.

Robert Crawford emphasises Lochhead's importance for broadening the spectrum of literary languages in *Scotland's Books*, describing how at school Lochhead 'won an essay prize for writing about autumn and 'tea by the fire and toasted muffins''. Lochhead described the incident in the 1970s:

> I don't think I'd ever tasted toasted muffins and jam in my life but they sounded right, English enough, almost Enid Blytonish. It was not a lie, exactly. Just that it had never occurred to me, nothing in my Education had ever led me to believe that anything among my own real life ordinary things had the right to be written down. What you wrote could not be the truth. It did not have the authority of English things, the things in books.[347]

In her work and life, Lochhead has persevered in the aim of ensuring the next generation of Scots do not grow up with the same gap between lived experience and authoritative truth. As she explained in 2011 regarding the campaign for Scottish literature in schools:

> Who could be against giving all our children and young people the means to access, fully explore, and enjoy their own linguistic and literary heritage?[348]

Thanks partially to Lochhead's poetry, teachers are no longer devoid of texts to choose from which represent the many voices and accents of Scotland.[349]

Less than a month before the Referendum, the BBC's Allan Little wrote that poems like these had thrown off what he called 'the kilted straitjacket' in Scotland:

> Standard English was thumped into you. But by the 1980s, publishers wanted literature to reflect the demotic speech of ordinary folk.
>
> 'They realised there was a market for work in which we talked about ourselves in our own terms,' says Liz Lochhead, one of Scotland's most celebrated poets and playwrights.
>
> 'And then with the first failed referendum [on devolution in 1979] there really was, afterwards, a sort of sense of depression, which then

[347] Liz Lochhead, 'A Protestant Girlhood', in *Jock Tamson's Bairns,* ed. by Trevor Royle (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1977), pp. 116-7).
[348] Phil Miller, 'Makar Backs Mither Tongue Campaign', *The Herald (Glasgow),* 27 January 2011, p. 7.
[349] 'Scottish Texts for New National 5 and Higher English Courses', (Online, 2016).

> expressed itself in a sense of let's get on with it, and… a revival of Scottish identity.'[350]

The existence of such poetry as Lochhead's and Leonard's on the Scottish national curriculum goes some way towards Lochhead's ambition that future generations of Scots will not 'learn to forget to say' as she was encouraged to do.

Significantly, hegemony and perceptions of truth were essential concepts to which Lochhead turned in her political engagement with the Referendum, linking her writing and her politics explicitly. In 2012 at the launch of the Yes Scotland campaign in Edinburgh, Lochhead performed the opening scene of *Mary Queen of Scots*. The piece was a speech by the play's narrator, La Corbie, which asks the question: 'Country: Scotland. Whit like is it?'[351] Central to this monologue is the idea that nation is a product of each individual's interpretation. La Corbie opens with a series of contrasting images of what Scotland could be:

> It's a cauldron o lye, a saltpan or a coal mine.
>
> If you're gey lucky it's a bonny, bricht, bare meadow or a park o kye.[352]

After presenting Scotland in a series of binary oppositions relating to wealth and social position, opening up questions of diversity across the geographical range of Scotland, La Corbie then declares, 'Ah dinna ken whit like *your* Scotland is. Here's mines.' This establishes that the character of La Corbie, and by extension the playwright, is describing Scotland true to how they see it in the context of various locations, priorities of interpretation, and events, but that this is a subjective viewpoint, not claiming to be a hegemonic truth, and should therefore be questioned by the audience. Lochhead here links the personal and political through the aspiration for self-determination, a strategy both she and Gray make frequent use of.

Following the 2012 Yes campaign launch event, she explained her contribution:

> I'm Scotland's national poet, or Makar, and for that I've got to fly the flag of poetry in Scottish life. Well, that's not difficult, and to me, poetry is just truth in language… Independence and self-confidence can only help

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[350] Allan Little, 'How Scotland Shook Off the 'Kilted Straitjacket'', *BBC News*, 28 August 2014, pp. 5-7.
[351] *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, p. 5.
[352] Ibid.

> people, Scots, to realise themselves artistically, socially, culturally and politically.[353]

Truth in this context refers to the opportunity for individuals to determine their own truth. For this opportunity to arise, the voices of authority must not be absolute or uniform, and must be able to be challenged. In other words, they must not be hegemonic, and claim to be the only sites where truth is determined. If this is discouraged by the ISAs — mass education and mass media principle among them — the result becomes what Renato Rosaldo terms 'totalitarian tendencies.'[354]

The poet Jackie Kay wrote celebrating Lochhead's Makar appointment, describing the influence of the older poet on her own ability to articulate her poetic voice:

> When I was a teenager, I went to these things called 'poems and pints nights' in the Highland Institute in Sauchiehall Street in Glasgow (more pints than poetry). It was there I first heard poets such as Lochhead and Tom Leonard, who wrote in their own voice… And perhaps it is this that is the key to poetry's endless successful reinventions: a proliferation of authentic and original voices, chiming with the voices of the entire population.[355]

Kay's final sentence eloquently describes her own and Lochhead's negotiation of the bardic voice with the individual voice. It would be naïve to suggest that Lochhead's and her contemporaries' poetry has forever shifted the dominance in language away from Standard English, or even Standard English spoken 'wia BBC accent'. However, as Kay exemplifies, her work to identify and disrupt hegemony in language and authority that places Scottish language and culture in the position of the subaltern within the UK, has had a significant effect on the Scottish cultural landscape. This critique has allowed writers such as Kay to feel comfortable using their own voices to express their own truth, further undermining the kinds of hegemonic discourses which Lochhead identifies.

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[353] Phil MacHugh, 'Liz Lochhead Interview at the Yes Scotland Launch 2012', (YouTube: Nexus Digital Media Limited, 2012), p. 5:17.
[354] Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), pp. 220-21.
[355] Jackie Kay, 'Poetry... A Beautiful Renaissance', *The Guardian,* 29 January 2011.

2.3 Mirrors and the double marginalisation

Early in her career, Lochhead made the statement 'my country is woman'.[356] This statement has followed Lochhead's reputation, appearing in many discussions of her work, and later becoming something from which she distanced herself. In the context of the 2014 Referendum, she describes herself immediately prior to the 1979 referendum, at the time when she felt most aligned to this statement:

> at the time I swallowed the Labour Party line that 'we would be over governed and over administered, just have another whole extra bureaucracy in place' and was much more interested in gender politics and identity, class, socialism, and internationalism. (I used to say 'my country is womankind' which, of course, I now find quite embarrassing, but, hey, different days and I was young!).[357]

Following the 1979 referendum however, and as her writing career developed, Lochhead became increasingly interested in her Scottishness, but without sacrificing the feminism for which she is internationally renowned. In her writing, Lochhead develops an aesthetic that frequently blends the country of woman with the country of Scotland, writing back to both patriarchal and colonial narratives:

> Just as English is seen to exert its hegemonies over Scotland, so too does male often seem to influence female, issues which are explicitly linked by Lochhead in the contrast of 'dominant cultures and undominant cultures' in which 'the Scots is in some way in the position of being the feminine with regard to Britain' (*Verse* 90). Voice is salient to both, and in her articulation of areas of female experience, and her examination of gender stereotypes within and about language use, Lochhead foregrounds some of the dichotomies, the prejudices, and preconceptions which can attend women and their representation in language.'[358]

Monica Germanà describes this as the 'double marginalisation' – the position of 'being a Scot within the UK, and a woman within a patriarchal culture.'[359]

Mary Queen of Scots is one of Lochhead's more thorough explorations of this double marginalisation, as discussed further in 2.5. Elsewhere in her oeuvre,

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[356] Liz Lochhead, 'Cultural Centrality and Dominance: The Creative Writer's View ', ed. by Ian Brown (Queen Margaret University: International Journal of Scottish Theatre and Screen, 1984).
[357] Lochhead.
[358] Lynda Mugglestone, 'Styles, Status, Gender and Identity', in *Liz Lochhead's Voices,* ed. by Robert Crawford and Anne Varty (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp. 93-108.
[359] Benjamin Poore, 'Liz Lochhead and the Gothic', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Liz Lochhead,* ed. by Anne Varty (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 86-104 (p. 97).

Lochhead is intrigued by the idea of the mirror as a literal embodiment of 'looking back' at patriarchal and imperial discourses. For feminist poets in Scotland as well as around the world, the Lacanian/Kristevan concept of the male gaze has proved an invaluable tool for talking back to patriarchy. For instance, Kathleen Jamie, Carol Ann Duffy, and Liz Lochhead are all renowned for what Lochhead calls 'my business | of putting new twists | to old stories', i.e. rewriting classic tales, often myths or fairy tales, from the perspective of the women who are more typically talked about than given a voice of their own.[360] This is the archetypal experience of the subaltern, shared by colonised communities. Koren-Deutsch describes Lochhead's feminism as directly Scottish nationalist, citing Lochhead's comments in a 1986 interview:

> the longer I live in Scotland the more assertively feminist — in the sense of longing for 'womanly values' in both men and woman in this repressed, violent, colonised society — I get.[361]

In a context in which the subject who speaks is 'a Scot within the UK' and also a woman within a patriarchal culture', Lochhead is unafraid to describe Scotland explicitly as colonised, and to align her feminist responses to the patriarchal gaze with her post- or co-colonial responses to the imperial gaze. The mirror is one of the most evocative embodiments of the gaze, hence its presence throughout Lochhead's work and her poetry in particular.

The mirror can be a harsh critic in the form of a separate person, presumably a lover, which renders the female speaker self-conscious and destroys her confidence. For instance, in 'Six Disenchantments':

> The mirror you are
>
> tells me too often
>
> I am not beautiful.[362]

In other poems, the mirror can be a manifestation of a part of one's own self, or self-hatred:

> The Other Woman

[360] *Dreaming Frankenstein & Collected Poems*, p. 35.
[361] Ilona S. Koren-Deutsch, 'Feminist Nationalism in Scotland: *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*', *Modern Drama,* 35 (1992), 431.
[362] *Dreaming Frankenstein & Collected Poems*, p. 84.

lies

the other side of my very own mirror

…

She's sinister.

She does not mean you well.[363]

In 'Fat Girl's Confession', the eponymous narrator cannot separate her physical appearance in the mirror from her sense of self or from her romantic life. Upon being rejected by her lover she decides 'the Truly Fulfilled don't need a filled-full gut' and so embarks on a health kick, 'keeking in the mirror to see how much thinner you're getting'.[364] The poem ends with the stirring of resistance to hegemonic discourses of female beauty:

I'll mortify my surplus flesh,

remove it like a tumour…

and all to make of myself the kind of confection

who'll appeal to the Consumer?[365]

The use of 'mortify' and 'tumour' express the self-loathing that the self-styled Fat Girl feels when she looks at her body in the mirror, as does the pairing of 'tumour' with a capitalised 'Consumer' in the rhyme scheme. She's aware that 'Fat is a Feminist Issue', but cannot separate herself from the gaze which renders her unattractive and unlovable to her own mind. While she maintains a cynical bravado regarding the lengths she goes to in order to lose weight, the description of her own body as 'tumour' which needs to be 'mortified' reveals her true perception of herself as a diseased being both in body and mind because of her reflection in the mirror. Lochhead's frequent use of capitalisation in this poem represents reported speech from both private and public spheres, the prevalence of which signifies how much the views of others have framed the narrator's sense of self-worth: 'You Are What You Eat', 'Waging the Inch War', 'Stephanie Bowman Sweat-It-Off Slimmersuit', 'Office Fat Girl', and the example of 'Consumer' discussed above. The first two of these examples

[363] Liz Lochhead, *The Grimm Sisters* (London: Next Editions, 1981), p. 92.
[364] *True Confessions & New Cliches*, p. 11.
[365] Ibid. p. 13.

are reminiscent of women's magazine clichés, signalling the importance of the external gaze to the woman's internal monologue.

'Mirror's Song', dedicated to the feminist film director Sally Potter, celebrates the literal 'shattering' of the male gaze which holds women subordinate. In keeping with her anti-hegemonic stance which recognises the consensual aspect of power relationships, this poem, like 'Fat Girl's Confession', focuses not on the subordination of women by men, but the internalisation by women themselves of male narratives:

> Smash me looking-glass glass
>
> coffin, the one
>
> that keeps your best black self on ice.[366]

In Marianna Pugliese's words, this internalisation is 'exorcised' in 'Mirror's Song' through the liberating metaphor of smashing the glass of the mirror.[367] This metaphor naturally recalls that of the glass ceiling:

> the unseen yet unbreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements. [368]

The poem goes through a litany of items which have supported the glass ceiling in the poet's own generation as well as those of the past, from the hatpins and whalebone corsets of another era, to the lycra of the 1980s. The final stanza implores women to cease the perpetuation and internalisation of the male gaze and the associated patriarchal hegemony:

> Smash me for your daughters and dead
>
> mothers, for the widowed
>
> spinsters of the first and every war
>
> let her
>
> rip up the appointment cards for the
>
> terrible clinics,

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[366] *Dreaming Frankenstein & Collected Poems*, p. 67.
[367] Marianna Pugliese, *Rewriting Medea: Toni Morrison and Liz Lochhead's Post-Modern Perspectives* (Florida: Universal Publishers, 2013), p. 77.
[368] Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, *Solid Investments: Making Full Use of the Nation's Human Capital* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1995), p. 4.

…

She'll crumple all the tracts and adverts, shred

all the wedding dresses, snap

all the spike-heel icicles

in the cave she will claw out of –

a woman giving birth to herself.[369]

The two-word line 'let her' is an example of Lochhead's mastery of line breaks. Alone it reads as a kind of secular prayer or plea for female liberation: let her smash the mirror, let her become her independent self. It also functions as part of the poem's equally powerful appeal to rip up appointment cards for sexual health or abortion clinics, recalling other works of Lochhead's on this subject such as the monologue 'Phyllis Marlowe: Only Diamonds are Forever.'[370]

The postcolonial equivalent of the kinds of internalisation Lochhead depicts in the above examples, might be the concept of 'Colonial England hunger'. The New Zealand novelist, Robin Hyde, originated this term in a journal entry, which was then cited in the introduction to her most significant text, *The Godwits Fly*, bringing it to prominence in postcolonial studies.[371] The phrase describes the internalisation of the superiority of British culture in colonised nations such as New Zealand, and thus the acceptance that either indigenous or settler culture is inferior to anything British. The eponymous godwits and their annual migration, supposedly to England from New Zealand, act as a metaphor throughout the text of this internalisation, and its attending desire amongst colonised populations to 'return' to the metropole, in this case London:

> the godwit's flight is intended to be read as a metaphor for an emerging postcolonial state of mind… over-easy reliance for cultural sustenance on their stock of canned and preserved culture, imported from Europe – and past its 'use by' date – which had retarded their effort to cultivate more wholesome homegrown forms.[372]

Hyde's use of the term 'England' hunger as opposed to 'Britain' hunger is reflective of her own personal situation at the time of writing *the Godwit's Fly*,

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[369] *Dreaming Frankenstein & Collected Poems*, p. 68.
[370] *True Confessions & New Cliches*, p. 16.
[371] Robin Hyde, *The Godwits Fly* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1938).
[372] Patrick Sandbrook, 'Introdcution', in *The Godwits Fly* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2001), pp. i-ix (p. ix).

and can be read as Britain in this context. However, it does speak to Crawford's arguments in *Devolving English Literature*, as well as an uneven distribution of colonial blame which exonerates Scottish involvement in the British Empire to a certain extent. These considerations contribute to the importance of co-colonial writing such as Lochhead's, which acknowledges Scottish involvement in the British Empire overseas. Lochhead makes this clear in her poem 'In the Dreamschool' (see 2.2.), which depicts a distinctly Scottish schooling that also glorifies the British Empire:

> Miss Prentice wore her poppy the whole month
> of November.
> Miss Mathieson hit the loud pedal
> on the piano and made us sing
> The Flowers of the Forest.
> …
> Miss Prentice said the Empire had enlightened people
> and been a two way thing.[373]

In 'Poem on a Day Trip', Lochhead continues this theme, and describes how in Edinburgh she is made to feel 'conscious of history and the way it has | of imposing itself on people'.[374] This imposition bears a strong relationship to that of the male gaze Lochhead embodies in her extensive use of the mirror as a metaphor. Her poetry collections are brimming with both these images and co-colonial references, including those in relation to both sides of Scotland's colonial experience, signifying Lochhead's sensitivity to the dual marginalisation described by Germanà.

The poem 'Inner' reflects on Scotland's position as colonised, and the writer's desire to make changes in the world they see. The first section focuses on language and Anglicisation:

> need not-English –
> don't want to know the silly pretty names
> for wildflowers

[373] *Dreaming Frankenstein & Collected Poems*, p. 58.
[374] Ibid. p. 140.

when I look them up in Sarah's book.
starlike in wiry grass
Skye flowers are too wild to call
Seapink Kingcup Lady's Smock
another language.
last week on Lewis
Jim said he'd found that Gaelic words for colours
weren't colours as he thought he knew them.
chrome-yellow red-spectrum unsayable[375]

Lochhead laments the extent to which Gaelic language has been removed from the Scottish landscape. Although a lowlander, she expresses a sense of loss for a language which would have perhaps been her inheritance, were it not for Gaelic's near extinction at the hand of Anglicisation. The lines above reflect that it is not only words but an interpretation of the world which is lost when a language is lost. This poem is less forcefully written than 'Kidspoem/Bairnsang' which uses a similar argument but in relation to Scots, however it is the same protest being made. Not being able to speak Gaelic, Lochhead cannot enact her argument in the words themselves as she does in 'Kidspoem/Bairnsang', but instead renders her English words challenging. For instance, 'chrome-yellow red-spectrum unsayable' which is far removed from a comprehensible image in the English language, and so reflects the divorce between language and surroundings that the loss of Gaelic represents for that community. In contrast to the jumble of words in 'chrome-yellow red-spectrum unsayable', the English words for wildflowers are spaced far apart from each other and capitalised. This lends them the authority of 'Sarah's book', but removes them from the wordier, more complicated, but more evocative descriptions given later in the poem for the Gaelic equivalents, such as 'red or reddish-brown earthbound' and 'green or even calm-sea grey'. The second and third sections are more concerned with the landscape itself, but Lochhead signals her aspirations as a creative artist towards the end of the third section:

I'd like

[375] Ibid. pp. 112-13.

an art that could somehow marry
the washed-up manmade
and the wholly natural
make a change

The poem is designed to 'make a change' even as it expresses a desire to do so. Lochhead re-imagines both the landscape and the language used to describe it. 'Inner' is political in an ecopoetic sense in its marrying of the 'washed-up manmade | and the wholly natural' (see Chapter 3). However, it is also political in a co-colonial sense, as it brings to light the Gaelic words once predominantly used to describe that landscape.

On the other side of Scotland's co-colonialism, poems from all Lochhead's major collections refer to the British Empire, either satirically or with a harsher and more directly disparaging tone. The opening poem in *The Colour of Black and White* (2003), 'The Unknown Citizen', recapitulates the mirror motif from her earlier work in order to critique jingoism:

between the twinned sigrunes and the swastika
or the suavastika its mirror image, its opposite –
meaning darkness/light whichever –
with a blank page for a passport[376]

Lochhead connects the chauvinism represented by Nazism's swastika with that of the British Empire, concluding her poem with allusions to the Australian, New Zealand, Cook Island, and Tuvalu flags. These flags, along with those of many other Commonwealth nations, still bear the Union Jack symbol in their top left-hand corners, recalling the continuing presence of the British Empire's legacy[377]:

under some flag
some bloody flag with a
crucially five
(or a six or a seven)

[376] *The Colour of Black & White: Poems 1984-2003*, p. 3.
[377] New Zealand held a referendum in 2016 on whether or not to replace the flag containing the Union Jack symbol with a new design. The flag remained unchanged when 56.73% of voters opted to maintain the status quo.

pointed star?

There is a deliberate pun in the phrase 'some bloody flag', emphasised by repetition from the first line, which eloquently expresses the poet's views on British colonisation. 'The Garden Festival, Glasgow 1988' expresses a similar contempt, but this time explicitly places the poet's home city of Glasgow firmly at the heart of that empire, emphasising its complicity:

> Today's Garden Festival is the successor
> Of the 'Great Exhibition' of yesteryear – where as possessor
> Of an empire you could sell to, showing how great you're
> Industry-wise was what it's all about.[378]

This section is part of what Mugglestone refers to as a 'flow of rhetoric', intended by Lochhead to satirise a public rhetoric which 'sanitises' Glasgow and its co-colonial legacies.[379]

In the 1990s, Lochhead was increasingly confident in identifying the 'country' of her poetry as both Scotland and woman. In a 1992 interview with Colin Nicholson, she states:

> I still have more of that Scottishness to explore, perhaps because until recently I've felt that my country was woman. I feel that my country is Scotland as well. At the moment I know that I don't like this macho Scottish culture, but I also know that I want to stay here and negotiate it. This place of darkness I acknowledge mine; this small dark country. I can't whinge about it if I don't talk back to it, if I don't have a go.[380]

As this chapter has thus far demonstrated, Lochhead does indeed 'talk back' to both aspects of the double marginalisation problem. It is a mark of her sophistication as a writer that she does so with a co-colonial sensitivity to Scotland's part in the British Empire. The poem 'Almost Miss Scotland' is a particularly skilful example of this, originally printed in *Bagpipe Muzak* (1991), and reappearing in *The Colour of Black and White* (2003). This poem talks back to what McMillan describes as 'the dishonesty of the fictions of self that she [the poem's speaker] is expected to trot out'.[381] The speaker is 'immediately

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[378] *Bagpipe Muzak*, pp. 18-19.
[379] Mugglestone, p. 97.
[380] Colin Nicholson, *Poem, Purpose and Place: Shaping Identity in Contemporary Scottish Verse* (London: Verso, 1992), p. 223.
[381] McMillan.

parodic', and describes her feminist awakening during her participation in a beauty contest, which 'stands as a prime example of both sexism and exploitation'.[382] Once again, Lochhead employs parodic use of clichéd Scottishness to parallel the female experience as an item on display and for the entertainment of men:

> Well, I wiggled tapselteerie, my heels were that peerie
> While a kinna Jimmy Shandish band
> Played 'Flower of Scotland' –
> But it aw got droont oot wi wolf whistles –
> And that's no countin' 'For These Are My Mountains'
> - See I'd tits like nuclear missiles.

As in previous examples, Lochhead's use of internal rhyme and irregular end rhymes contribute to the comic tone of the poem. Her simile of 'tits like nuclear missiles' however, introduces the darker undertones that give the poem its resonance as both feminist and co-colonial. Once again, Lochhead places Scotland at the heart of colonial guilt, this time utilising rhyming trimeters within a six-line stave, reminiscent of the Habbie or Burns Stanza (albeit punctuated by longer pentameter or hexameter lines instead of dimeter):

> I was givin it that
> Aboot my ambition to chat
> To handicapped and starving children from other nations
> - How I was certain I'd find
> Travel wid broaden my mind
> As I fulfilled my Miss Scotland obligations[383]

The speaker is clearly being objectified throughout this poem, and her realisation of it is triumphant: 'In a blinding flash I saw the hale thing was trash'. The poem concludes with her walking out of the Miss Scotland competition, ending with a line McMillan argues is aimed as much at the reader as the leering men of the poem:

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[382] Mugglestone, p. 105.
[383] *The Colour of Black & White: Poems 1984-2003*, p. 108.

> once the laughter has died away we find ourselves rather uncomfortably included in the closing 'Away and get stuffed'.[384]

Although the speaker is being objectified, she too objectifies those beyond Britain, the 'handicapped and starving children from other nations' who are as two-dimensional to the speaker as she is herself to the judges of the beauty contest. This is a self-reflexivity that Lochhead captures again and again in her poetry, whether by utilising mirrors as metaphors, irony, or even very direct rhetorical language.

By the time of the Referendum, Lochhead had reached a place where she could state her identity confidently as 'Scottish, female, writer, senior citizen.'[385] Her country was no less womankind than it had been in the 1970s, but increasingly she had developed the ability to strengthen her feminist writing with writing that dealt directly with Scottishness and co-colonialism. In poetry which is often comic, but no less poignant for that, Lochhead recognises the complicity and consent of both women and the colonised in hegemonic discourse. She has found the mirror to be a powerful metaphor for the self-perpetuation of damaging inferiorisations, and uses it frequently to describe the dual marginalisation of being both Scottish and female. Increasingly, Lochhead finds creative ways to speak back to both dominating hegemonies of maleness and Englishness at once, strengthening rather than undermining her arguments.

2.4 *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (1987)

Mary Queen of Scots is one of Lochhead's most popular and influential works. It was first performed in 1987 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Mary, Queen of Scots execution on the order of her cousin, Queen Elizabeth I of England. Her retelling of the relationship between Mary and Elizabeth takes advantage of her audience's assumed knowledge of the historical context to deliver a nuanced interpretation of the two queens, 'Each the ither's nearest kinswoman on earth'.[386] Robert Crawford's *Devolving English Literature* points

[384] McMillan.
[385] Lochhead.
[386] *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, p. 15.

towards the significance of strategies such as this in relation to the anti-hegemonic position discussed above:

> Often what small or vulnerable cultural groups need is not simply a deconstruction of rhetorics of authority, but… an awareness of a cultural tradition which will allow them to preserve or develop a sense of their own distinctive identity, their constituting difference.[387]

All six of the writers in this thesis make a conscious engagement with cultural tradition, and in Liz Lochhead's case, this is most overt in *Mary Queen of Scots*. Koren-Deutsch points out that:

> folk memory surrounding Mary, Queen of Scots is so powerful in Scotland that probably everyone there knows the story in some form.'[388]

This memory is reflected in the children's rhyme which provides the title of the play, and which is enacted on stage by actors portraying contemporary Scottish children. The same is also true of the play's antagonist, Elizabeth I, across the British Isles and indeed in many other parts of the world, allowing Lochhead the freedom to focus more on detailed characterisation and less on plot and explanation than historical drama might otherwise demand. This powerful folk memory enables Lochhead to go beyond the 'Madonna/whore' interpretations that have plagued representations of each queen as individuals and in their relationship with each other: 'Mary is not promiscuous; neither is Elizabeth a virgin.'[389] The play exhibits Lochhead's eloquence in both Scots and English, with the interplay between the two languages essential to the play's themes and characterisations.

Lochhead's use of Scots in this play disrupts the linguistic hegemony discussed in section 2.4, but also the alternative dominance that was beginning to express itself within the world of Scots writing at the time. Carla Sassi describes the issue in 2009:

> …the risk of regionalism sanctioning the rooted evils of exclusive nationalism are real and well evident in the powerful literary strain that

[387] *Devolving English Literature*, p. 5.
[388] Koren-Deutsch, p. 424.
[389] Ibid. p. 431.

> rigidly connotes the Scottish nationhood as male, working-class and, ideologically, as socialist or republican. [390]

The Scots language may have been growing in cultural representation towards the end of the twentieth century, but this did not counter all of the hegemonic discourses highlighted by Lochhead's litany of 'posh, grown-up, male, English and dead'. In 1984, Lochhead stated in relation to her use of Glaswegian Scots in particular, 'I'm certainly interested in Scottishness, but I feel that the territory that gets delineated is a macho William McIlvanney and Tom Leonard world'.[391] If her contemporaries were developing a rigid association of Scots 'as male, working-class and, ideologically, as socialist or republican', then Lochhead provides the absolute antithesis of this with her Scots-speaking protagonist in *Mary Queen of Scots*: a female royal.

In this play, Lochhead gives literature in Scots a female voice that is not of the working class, but also the ultimately authoritative one: a queen who is of equal standing to her Standard English-speaking counterpart. Register and accent are explicitly important to *Mary Queen of Scots*. A note at the outset of the text makes this clear:

> **Note**
>
> *Mary, when she speaks, has a unique voice. She's a Frenchwoman speaking totally fluently, Braid Scots vocabulary and all, in Scots, not English – but with a French accent.*
>
> *Elizabeth has a robust, and almost parodic version of slightly antique (think forties black-and-white films), very patrician RP.*[392]

Thus, it is not only the dominance of Standard English language, but of the way in which it is spoken, the 'BBC accent' described by Leonard, that Lochhead disrupts in this play. The phonetician A.C. Gimson describes RP (Received Pronunciation) as:

> that type of accent, originally the local educated speech of London and the south-east of England, which is accepted by the BBC and most people of this country as an unofficial standard.[393]

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[390] Carla Sassi, 'The Border in Modern Scottish Literature', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature*, ed. by Ian Brown and Alan Riach (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 145-55 (p. 152).
[391] Brown.
[392] *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, p. 4.
[393] Jerry Blunt, *Stage Dialects* (Woodstock: Dramatic Publishing Company, 1994), p. 52.

Of the two queens, it is the Scots-speaking Mary who is the protagonist and who is depicted more sympathetically, with the RP-speaking Elizabeth generally appearing as immature, intolerant, and callous: 'His bloody wife. Why couldn't she let him decently divorce her? Oh no, she has to commit suicide.'[394] This reverses the narrative critiqued by Leonard and Lochhead, in which the RP voice is treated as trustworthy and predominant.

Mary speaking Scots in a French rather than a Scots accent serves to internationalise and thus legitimise Scots as a national language. As discussed in Chapter One, engagement with the foreign is crucial to the definition of cultural markers such as a language as 'national'. This also allies with the stated aims of the theatre company that commissioned the play, Communicado:

> The company specialises in producing new Scottish plays and Scottish adaptations of classic continental European drama. 'Our approach is to be Scottish by not being Scottish,' explains Mulgrew, 'tackling European subjects with Scottish voices and in so doing differentiating ourselves from English theatre.'[395]

This also serves to represent Mary's personal history, as well as that of the 'Auld Alliance' between France and Scotland. This alliance is a further legitimisation of Scotland as an independent nation in the past and potentially the future; a strategy other Scottish writers of this period were making use of, including Edwin Morgan in his *Sonnets from Scotland*. Beyond the protagonist herself, Mary's interaction with other Scots speaking characters; her maid Bessie, John Knox, and Bothwell, foregrounds the possibilities for different registers and characterisations of Scots. La Corbie, the Scots speaking narrator, provides another means of presenting Scots as an authoritative language.

In terms of the print version of the play, the stage directions are written in an eclectic combination of Scots and English. For instance, the very first instruction at the opening of Scene One:

> *Music. An eldritch tune on an auld fiddle, wild and sad.*
>
> *Alone, our chorus, LA CORBIE. An interesting, ragged, ambiguous creature in her cold spotlight.*

[394] *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, p. 22.
[395] Koren-Deutsch, p. 428.

Lochhead shifts effortlessly between Standard English and Scots in her stage directions, reflecting the duality central to the text. This also enacts the equality between the two queens, and by extension their kingdoms and languages, that Lochhead wishes to portray. That duality is also reflected by the actors who play the Queens, each of whom plays a double role. Mary becomes Elizabeth's servant Marian, and Elizabeth becomes Mary's servant Bessie for certain scenes. Koren-Deutsch argues that Bessie and Marian are 'personifications of aspects of their respective mistresses' personalities.'[396] However, if this were Lochhead's only intention then there would be limited gains in doubling the casting, given that it is not their mistresses that they play in other scenes. Bessie and Marian, although reflective of their mistresses, also provide a device by which the two historical characters are brought together on stage. Doing so demonstrates their kinship, both genealogical and in situation, whilst staying true to the historical reality that the cousins never actually met.

In contrast to Lochhead's staging, Elizabeth I as she is portrayed in the play does not see herself as Mary's counterpart or equal. Elizabeth's response to Mary — her fellow queen but also her fellow poet — is emblematic of Lochhead's view of the British ISAs she challenges here:

> MARIAN. She writes poems apparently…
>
> ELIZABETH. Poems? In English?
>
> MARIAN. In French. And… 'in Scots'.
>
> (A burst of scornful laughter from both at the very idea.)[397]

The stage directions parody Elizabeth's attitude, and by extension the generalised attitude of the Englishness she represents, both contemporary and historical. In reality, Mary wrote the majority of her poetry in French, although some of her works were translated at the time and circulated in Scots.[398] Lochhead takes care to explain the contemporary purpose she hoped to serve by portraying these monarchs of the sixteenth century in her introduction to the 2009 edition:

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[396] Ibid.
[397] *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, p. 14.
[398] Rosalind Smith, 'Mary, Queen of Scots Was a Poet - and You Should Know It', *The Conversation UK*, (2014).

> We got there in the end. With the play not yet *quite* in the shape that now goes into print, but definitely in the context of a debate about the then [1987] current state of affairs between Scotland and England that the play seemed to illuminate. Margaret Thatcher is not Queen Elizabeth the First, but questions of women and power – and how to hold on to it — are always there as we consider either icon. There was at that time a real sense of frustration in Scotland, a need for us to tell our own stories and find our own language to tell it in. Communicado [the play's producers] had a bit of a mission about that, which I was proud to share.[399]

Elizabeth's treatment of Mary's poetry 'in Scots' is a metaphor for Lochhead's perception of the Anglo-Scottish relationship in the 1980s. Norquay places this in the context of 'an increasingly complicated tension between home and away' in Scottish writing of that time.[400] There may also be an autobiographical aspect to that particular exchange deriving from Lochhead's own experience as a poet writing in Scots. Regarding that metaphor, Lochhead says, 'I tried to write about two queens. The nationalism went along with it… I can't not be Scottish.'[401] Lochhead found that in portraying two such icons of Scotland and England, it was impossible not to allow each queen to act as a representative of their contemporary nation to some extent. This reflects the growing commitment to Scottish nationalism Lochhead identifies in herself following the 1979 referendum.

Elizabeth's mention of Mary's poetry points to an interesting relationship between the play's two central characters and its writer; namely that all three are poets. Mary's poem 'Adamas Loquitur' ('The Diamond Speaks'), written in 1562, articulates a view of the queens' relationship that is very different from the one Elizabeth expresses in Lochhead's play:

> May it please, from these omens I shall gather strength
>
> And thus from Queen to equal Queen I'll pass at length.[402]

In her 'Sonnet to Queen Elizabeth I of England' (1568), Mary expresses the desire to meet with her 'dear sister', a sentiment which Lochhead also portrays:

> Therefore, dear sister, should this letter dwell

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[399] *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, p. x.
[400] Glenda Norquay, 'Introduction', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Women's Writing*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p. 10.
[401] Koren-Deutsch, p. 429.
[402] Queen of Scots Mary, *Bittersweet within My Heart: The Collected Poems of Mary, Queen of Scots* (London: Pavillion Books Ltd., 1992), p. 21.

> Upon my weighty need of seeing you,
>
> It is that grief and pain shall be my due
>
> Unless my wait should end both swift and well.[403]

The play is consistent with the poetry written by the two queens regarding their attitudes to each other. Elizabeth does not write directly about Mary poetically, yet Mary here expresses her belief in their equality.

The story of Mary and Elizabeth is central to Scotland's history as a nation-state, and therefore of the context in which the play was written and performed. Much of the dramatic tension for each queen centres around her marital status. Mary and Elizabeth react differently to the challenge of being a female head of state in the sixteenth century: Mary by marrying first the French dauphin before the action of the play is set, then Darnley, and finally Bothwell; Elizabeth by choosing to remain the 'Virgin Queen'. It is the combination of these decisions which ultimately led to the Union of the Crowns when Elizabeth died childless in 1603, and the throne of England was therefore passed to Mary's son, James, who was already King James VI of Scotland. Thus, the constitutional story which was causing Lochhead such frustration in the 1980s, began four hundred years earlier with the story she tells in *Mary Queen of Scots*.

La Corbie makes the future of Mary's son clear in Act Two, Scene Six:

> Wee Jamie, eh? Born tae be King James the Saxt o Scotland. Some day. If ye live sae lang… An awfy big name for sicc a wee rid-faced scrawny shilpit wee scrap o humanity, eh?
>
> …
>
> Aye, King James the Saxt. Some day. And mair, mair than that, shall be. Some day. Wheesht.[404]

Returning to the origins of Union between England and Scotland at a time when that constitutional relationship was increasingly under scrutiny had a positive impact on Lochhead's reputation in Scottish literature. Adrienne Scullion argues that the play's reception flourished in these circumstances:

> The context… was sustained public debate about political nationalism that impinged strongly on the critical and scholarly agenda of Scotland. The roots of this nationalism — and indeed the roots of the first phase of

[403] Ibid. p. 65.
[404] *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, pp. 63-65.

> Scottish theatre studies — lay in the 1960s and a generation of Scottish historians taking seriously the past of Scotland and the academic and popular recovery of Scottish folk traditions.[405]

Early in the play, Lochhead takes advantage of her audience's assumed ability to reflect upon the outcomes of four centuries of dynastic Union, in order to insert some comic relief into Mary and Elizabeth's difficulties:

> MARY. Indeed I wish that Elizabeth was a man and I would willingly marry her! And wouldn't that make an end of all debates![406]

The result of that eventual Union via King James VI of Scotland and I of England was, of course, the creation of debates still raging in Lochhead's lifetime. This includes the debate regarding linguistic authority discussed earlier in this section. Lynda Mugglestone points this out in relation to Lochhead's use of voice:

> The Union of the Crowns in 1603 led to the removal of James VI and his court to London; the Act of Union of 1707 led to the laws and administration of Scotland being determined there too. This loss of political autonomy was, in a number of ways, not unrelated to the loss of linguistic autonomy as well; Scots, functioning through the sixteenth century as an emergent standard in its own right, lost status through the relocation of the king and crown, as English gradually took over.[407]

Lochhead is fully aware of the significance of this historical moment for Scotland as a nation, and for the Scots language that she champions in this play and elsewhere in her work. Looking to Scotland's pre-Union past, exploring Scotland's history as a nation-state, Lochhead undermines the idea that a united Britain is eternal or natural. It has been constructed; brought about by specific historical circumstances, not least of which is Mary and Elizabeth's predicament that as women they are expected to be defined by their marriages, even though they were both hereditary monarchs. Scullion describes *Mary Queen of Scots* alongside John Byrne's *The Slab Boys* (1978), and Tony Roper's *The Steamie* (1987) as 'new work for and in Scotland [which] looked afresh to the past… reassessing the cultural influences that make Scotland', a circumstance she links directly to similar cultural and political nationalisms 'in a range of postcolonial environments'.[408] Retelling national histories from the subaltern perspective

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[405] Adrienne Scullion, 'A Woman's Voice', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Liz Lochhead,* ed. by Anne Varty (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 116-25 (p. 118).
[406] *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, p. 11.
[407] Mugglestone.
[408] Scullion, p. 119.

weakens accustomed hegemonic discourses, to which Lochhead adds the linguistic dimension, and the experience of the female Scot as subaltern and trapped within a double marginalisation, even at the level of royalty in *Mary Queen of Scots*.

2.5 Continuing the Makar Tradition

Between January 2011 and January 2016, Liz Lochhead occupied the role of Scots Makar. Her tenure spanned the entire Referendum period, and during that time she made no secret of her desire for Scottish independence. When she joined the SNP in the wake of the No vote, a brief period of public discussion ensued as to whether she should resign her post. Ultimately, however, she continued as Makar until the appointed five years had elapsed. Lochhead's 2016 collection, *Fugitive Colours*, includes many of the poems she composed as part of her role as Makar, alongside others written over the same time period.

Following Morgan's death on 17 August 2010, the Scottish Government were faced with critical decisions regarding the post of Scots Makar. Should the post continue? And if it continues, who holds it and under what conditions? Decisions that had been put off by the *ad hoc* nature of the original appointment and in light of Edwin Morgan's declining health now had to be addressed. Whether the Makar would be remunerated for instance, or how long their term would last. In the meantime, a Labour-led Scottish Parliament had been replaced in the 2007 elections by an SNP minority government. Consequently, those charged with the task of continuing the Makar position were a different group of decision-makers. After several months of silence from the Scottish Government followed by a hasty process that was nonetheless more formal than Morgan's selection, Liz Lochhead was appointed on 19 January 2011 as the new Scots Makar.

The length of time between Morgan's death and Lochhead's appointment was not remarkable in itself. When Ted Hughes died, it was seven months before Andrew Motion replaced him as Poet Laureate for the United Kingdom. When Motion introduced the fixed 10-year term it left no excuse for drawn-out delays, and when his term ended at the pre-ordained date, Carol Ann Duffy took office on the very same day, precisely ten years after Motion's appointment. In Scotland, however, matters were already confused by the fact that Morgan was appointed for three years but had held the post for six. As Morgan had been the

first to be named Makar, the absence of precedent further complicated the issue. By January 2011, five months after Morgan's passing, the SNP government appeared to be allowing the Makar position to vanish, and their reticence caused outspoken frustration in the literary community. Were it not for public intervention, the title could easily have been silently abandoned. *The Guardian* published details of the Scottish Poetry Library's appeal to the Scottish Government on 3 January 2011, which had apparently been ignored:

> But ministers have yet to explain when and how the next Makar will be chosen, leading to anxieties about the selection process, said Robyn Marsack, director of the Scottish Poetry Library and chair of the Literature Forum for Scotland.
>
> 'I feel quite strongly about the process. I think that in a way people shouldn't be suggesting names before they know what the government thinks a poet laureate is or what the poet laureate is expected to do hasn't been clearly defined,' she said.
>
> 'Nobody has given me any timetable, so I don't know how they're thinking of doing it or when they're thinking of releasing it.'
>
> The forum, which includes the National Library of Scotland and the writers' association Scottish PEN, wrote to ministers in March recommending changes to the role and a term limit of five years. Apart from an acknowledgment, their letter remains unanswered, Marsack said. [409]

A similar report was published in *The Daily Express* the following day. Only two weeks later, the day before Lochhead was due to open the Robert Burns Museum in Alloway, she was announced as the new Scots Makar. She would be awarded £10,000 a year and would hold the post for five years. With the appointment and installation of fixed parameters for the role for the first time, the Makardom was thus given a future.

As with Morgan's appointment, Liz Lochhead's selection was well received and uncontroversial. She was well-known, popular, taught across Scotland, confident in both English and Scots writing, and a frequent public performer. Lochhead was also known to be a friend of Morgan's, and she had read on his behalf at the opening of the Scottish Parliament. She also spoke at the small and very select ceremony which had instated him as the first Makar, and was the incumbent

[409] Severin Carrell and Sarah Crown, 'The Contenders: Poetry in Slow Motion as Scots Stall on Laureate', *The Guardian,* 3 January 2011.

Glasgow Makar, just as Morgan had been when he was appointed to the national post. All of this provided a tangible sense of continuity. There were also clear advantages to appointing a female poet to the role. The United Kingdom had finally broken three hundred and forty-one years of male Poets Laureate by appointing its first female Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, in 2009. Gillian Clarke, the National Poet of Wales at the time, was also a woman. The *Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Poetry* describes Lochhead's significant impact for female poetry in Scotland:

> If any single writer can be described as pioneering the public role of the Scottish woman poet, it is surely Liz Lochhead, who began writing in the 1970s, when literary culture in Scotland, as elsewhere, was very much male dominated.[410]

Fiona Stafford points out that Liz Lochhead herself would have struggled to find the kind of a role model that a female Makar could provide for a new generation:

> Scottish poetry in the twentieth century had been largely dominated by male poets, whose confrontations had a distinctly masculine tone, but with the rise of international feminism in the 1970s, new questions began to erupt in Scotland, which cut across the differences between Scots, English and Gaelic. If linguistic theory had helped to open up the language question for all Scottish writers, it gave special impetus to the women poets who began to create a self-affirming literature of their own. Liz Lochhead's work often mimicked colloquial speech, but her choice of Scots seemed as much an attempt to give a voice to modern women as to articulate her commitment to the nation.[411]

Lochhead had also proved that, like Morgan before her, she was in command of a wide range of literary genres. Morgan and Lochhead's talent for theatre and translation alongside poetry additionally recommended them:

> In creating the post of national poet, the communities of Scotland demonstrated the importance it places on the many aspects of culture which lie at the heart of our identity. As an author, translator, playwright, stage performer, broadcaster, and grande dame of Scottish theatre, Ms Lochhead embodies everything a nation would want from its national poet.[412]

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[410] Matt McGuire and Colin Nicholson, *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 23.
[411] Fiona Stafford, "What Is the Language Using Us For?': Modern Scottish Poetry', in *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature,* ed. by Gerard Carruthers and Lia McIlvanney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 233-47; ibid.
[412] Scottish Poetry Library, 'Our National Poet', (Online, 2014).

There was a marked difference between the response from Carol Ann Duffy, the UK Poet Laureate in 2011, and that of her predecessor in 2004. Where Andrew Motion was contemptuous of the idea of a Scots Makar (see section 1.4), Carol Ann Duffy sent Lochhead flowers and publicly expressed her satisfaction with both the role and its new representative:

> Carol Ann Duffy, the Poet Laureate, said she was filled with 'professional, poetic and personal joy' to hear that her friend had been appointed as the new Makar — an old Scots term for poet. She added: 'Since her early work in the 1970s, she has been an inspirational presence in British poetry, funny, feisty, female, full of feeling; a fantastic performer of her work and a writer who has tirelessly brought poetry to the drama and drama into poetry'[413]

Lochhead's appointment gave the Makardom a clearer sense of purpose and structure, removing the role from associations with only one individual. Although her selection had been opaque and seemingly rushed, the more formal nature of her appointment, along with a clearly defined term length and remuneration, brought the Makardom from an *ad hoc* process to an official public position.

Fugitive Colours, published in 2016 following the conclusion of her term, provides an insight into Lochhead's time as Makar, and a record of some of her public work during her tenure. Morgan had been too ill to travel and perform, but Lochhead was able to fully exploit the public engagement aspect of the role, and carried out more than 300 engagements in Scotland, the UK and internationally. Summing up her time as Makar, Lochhead celebrates the diverse and busy nature of the role as she interpreted it:

> I've been invited to wonderful places, met amazing people and had a fantastic time. In many ways, the job of Makar is exactly what you make of it — you can do what you want to do and try to promote poetry the way you want to promote it. One day you might be at a school, where it can be hard work getting the children to ask you questions, then you go to a prison and they want to know everything. Last year I did 102 poetry readings.[414]

The 'Makar Songs' section of *Fugitive Colours* contains commissioned poems for the Kelvingrove Art Museum, Commonwealth Day, the Scottish Poetry Library,

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[413] Auslan Cramb, 'Lochhead Follows in Friend's Footsteps as Makar', *Daily Telegraph,* 20 January 2011.
[414] Jenny Morrison, 'Liz Lochhead: My Five Years as Makar Have Been Full of Fine Lines and Fun', *Daily Record (Scotland),* 7 February 2016.

the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, Glasgow's Theatre Royal, and the Scottish Parliament, among others.

One of these commissions, 'Lines for the Centenary of the Scotch Whisky Association', opens with an epigraph from Burns: 'Freedom an whisky gang thegither', and celebrates the relationship between Scotland, its whisky, and its most famous poet. It is one of several poems in *Fugitive Colours* which bears homage to Burns, and Lochhead is clearly sensitive to the 'long lines of communication' that link her, as Scotland's laureate, with Burns, Scotland's 'national poet'. Regarding this connection, Lochhead states:

> poetry means a lot to Scottish people. Look at Burns Night – what other country has a poet at the centre of its winter festival and whose birth is celebrated all over the world?[415]

For Lochhead, poetry not only makes something happen, but can have a lasting impact, which carries an identity down the centuries, despite legislative realities. Of all the poets studied in this thesis, she is perhaps the closest to the Shelley end of the spectrum, and even more so when it comes to Scotland itself. Across the five sections of her Scotch Whisky Association poem, Lochhead maintains these lines of connection between herself and Burns. In the second section, for example, she links them through 250 years of whisky: 'How many thousand bottlings'? The third section connects them through poetry — 'Ask MacDiarmid, ask Ettrick Hogg… If poetry an whisky gang thegither?'[416] The final section of the poem, written on the eve of the Edinburgh Agreement, returns to the epigraph and its clearly discernible connection to contemporary Scottish nationalism:

> And – if freedom an whisky gang thegither –
>
> How do you like your freedom? Swallowed neat?
>
> Distillations of history, language, weather
>
> In an usqueba o barley, burn water, peat.[417]

Lochhead's tenure as Makar began with the opening of the Burns museum in Alloway, and it is clear he has been an influence throughout her career, but particularly so during her time as Makar. The way in which Burns is seen to

[415] Ibid.
[416] *Fugitive Colours*, pp. 88-89.
[417] Ibid. p. 90.

represent the nation of Scotland as its 'national Bard', as she points out above, took on additional poignancy for her once she herself was officially Scotland's national poet. In 2014, for instance, Lochhead was asked to write a monologue for the National Theatre of Scotland's *Dear Scotland* project. Writers were asked to 'pen short, sharp monologues inspired by the [Scottish National Portrait] Gallery's celebrated portraits'.[418] Writers were given free choice as to which portrait to bring to life, and Lochhead, naturally, chose Alexander Nasmyth's instantly recognisable portrait of Burns: 'a very, very familiar portrait, speaking out loud'.[419] In her ventriloquism of Burns, Lochhead refers to 2014 as 'a maist auspicious year', and insists that 'ony blether that tries tae sign me up as a better aff thigither? Get stuffed!'[420] Although this monologue did not make it into *Fugitive Colours,* 'Epistle to David' and 'From a Mouse' both do, and these poems make direct reference to Burns, forming a conversation between Scotland's national poets of past and present.

Figure 8. Liz Lochhead reading her 'Dear Scotland' poem at 'Poetic Politics: Culture and the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum, One Year On' (2015)

Lochhead turned again to Burns in making a public case for Scottish independence. As she does in 'Lines for the Centenary of the Scotch Whisky Association', she draws clear connections between herself, the Referendum

[418] National Theatre of Scotland, 'Dear Scotland', (Online: Creative Scotland, 2016).
[419] Liz Lochhead, 'Liz Lochhead Reads Her Poetry at 'Poetic Politics'', ed. by Sarah Paterson and Katie Ailes (Online: YouTube, 2015).
[420] Ibid.

question in the twenty-first century, and Robert Burns in the eighteenth. Once again, she does so by including some of the most influential Scottish poets who have appeared in the intervening years, maintaining a rhetoric that posits Scottish poets against the Union. In an article written for *The Guardian* in time for Burns Night 2014, Lochhead asserted that 'Of course Robert Burns would vote for independence.'[421] To support her position she utilises quotations from Edwin Muir and Hugh MacDiarmid. She further argues that Burns would be part of a movement in contemporary Scottish poetry:

> After all, just about every contemporary writer or artist, young and old, that I know has declared they'll be saying a big yes to 'Should Scotland be an independent country?'

By invoking Scotland's 'National Bard', Lochhead presents Scottish poetry as a united front for independence.

This is a theme and a rhetoric that recapitulates in Lochhead's work, particularly as Makar. The Burns-related poems mentioned above are one example, as is her poem for the opening of the fourth session of the Scottish parliament in 2011. This poem, entitled 'Open', is a direct homage to her predecessor, Edwin Morgan, and his poem for the very first session of the Scottish parliament (see 1.4):

> Open your hearts – and hope.
>
> Open your minds – to change.
>
> Open the future – because it's not yet written[422]

These lines reference Morgan's aspirational work of six years earlier and also anticipate the rhetoric of the Yes campaign, in which 'hope' and 'change' were key words. The repetition of 'open' at the beginning of each line recalls the first lines and unofficial title of Morgan's poem; 'Open the Doors'. There are also many repetitions in Morgan's poem, such as the phrase 'we give you' and the word 'begin'. The repeated use of the imperative also reflects the bardic impulse of both Makars. Both poems are framed as pleas from the people to

[421] Liz Lochhead, 'Of Course Robert Burns Would Vote for Scottish Independence', *The Guardian,* 24 January 2014.
[422] *Fugitive Colours*, p. 79.

their parliament; reminders that the parliament serves the people and not the other way around.

'Spring 2010, and at His Desk by the Window is Eddie in a Red Shirt' is a companion piece to 'Open', and remembers 'that day back in | the Autumn of 2004' when Lochhead visited Morgan to discuss the poem he had written for the Parliament that she was to perform at the opening ceremony. This second poem is more direct in its nationalism:

> 'Liz, *not wholly the power, not yet wholly the power, but…*
> you're not getting enough out of the
> *not yet…'*[423]

Once again, Lochhead utilises the legacies of Scottish poetry to champion independence. In the article regarding Robert Burns, after stating that the vast majority of her contemporaries were joining her in support of the Yes vote, Lochhead makes a clarification:

> By no means all of us are SNP members — I'm not — but there is a very powerful drive towards cultural and political autonomy. A desire to grow up and take responsibility for ourselves. You can feel it in the air. It's coming yet for aw that… If not this time, then, nevertheless, it feels like an inexorable process has begun.[424]

In this passage and in several of her poems, Lochhead uses her position of Makar to speak on behalf of Scottish poetry, which she portrays as virtually united behind a Yes vote. It is a rhetorical strategy that she used from her appearance at the Yes campaign launch onwards. This element of the bardic impulse characterised her time as Makar, in which Lochhead chose to speak on behalf of her nation as she saw it, hoping its people had the political will to let it become an independent one, and also on behalf of other poets who had voiced similar aspirations.

For the majority of her tenure, this position was unproblematic. It was not until after the Referendum that Lochhead provoked controversy by becoming a member of the SNP. This was something she had stated on several occasions that she had never done in the past and did not intend to do. The public discussion

[423] Ibid. p. 81.
[424] Lochhead.

which ensued as a result of her officially joining the party was limited but significant. Lochhead's joining the party in November 2014 was unremarkable in many ways. She had never made her support for independence a secret, and had been open about voting for the SNP in recent elections. Another significant factor was the more general meteoric rise of SNP membership. At the end of 2013, the party had just over 20,000 members. In the huge surge which followed the Referendum, by the end of 2015, party membership rose to 115,000, making it the largest party in Scotland and the third largest in the UK in terms of membership, behind the Conservatives' estimated 140,000 and Labour's 515,000.[425] It was a period when many latent SNP supporters were making the decision to sign up for official membership, and so Lochhead's decision was less conspicuous as a result. Lochhead announced her decision at the SNP Women's Conference in Ayr. The SNP also published a press release, in which Nicola Sturgeon, the party's new leader, stated:

> I am delighted that Scotland's Makar Liz Lochhead has joined the SNP. During the referendum campaign, Liz was an inspiration to many across the movement and I have no doubt she will have helped bring many undecided voters over to Yes.[426]

The calls for Lochhead to consider resigning were triggered by the award-winning Scottish composer James McMillan, who had been vocal in his support of a No-vote. McMillan voiced his concern, and raised interesting questions regarding the nature of the Makar's role, rather than demanding that she step down:

> The more I think of this, the more serious it appears. The ethical step would be for Liz Lochhead to relinquish the post. There may be a problem. Creative Scotland regard this post as non-political and she was appointed by a cross-party group of the first minister and former first minister. There is public money involved. On the other hand, artists should be free to express their views, even political ones.[427]

McMillan's musings on Twitter were picked up by the mainstream media with prominent articles appearing in the majority of Scottish print media publications. Lochhead was ultimately asked to discuss her decision on the

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[425] Richard Keen and Lukas Audickas, 'Membership of U.K. Political Parties' (London: House of Commons Library, 2016).
[426] Jane Bradley, 'Scots Makar Liz Lochhead Called to Resign over S.N.P.', *The Scotsman,* 29 November 2014.
[427] James McMillan, '@Quietmoneymusic', (Online: Twitter, 2014).

television programme, *Scotland 2014*. Interest in the story waned quickly, however, and questions over Lochhead's legitimacy as Makar did not persist into 2015.

The wider question of whether or to what extent poets, particularly public poets, are 'permitted' to engage in politics as Lochhead had, was reflected upon only briefly in the public sphere as a result of these events. Lochhead's history of open support for both independence and the SNP, and the general surge at the time in SNP membership were both significant factors in this. However, there was also a significant response in favour of the freedom of poets, artists, and citizens in general, to be able to comment upon and engage freely with politics. For example, Alex Massie states:

> we must now endure the spectacle of folk moaning that the Makar is supposed to represent *all* Scots and suggesting that her poetry risks being compromised by her becoming a member of the governing party. I must say this seems to insult Ms Lochhead's intelligence as well as her integrity and, indeed, her poetry. It's not as though it were previously a role from which the chosen poet was expected to launch a fusillade of heroic couplets decrying government policy.[428]

Creative Scotland also released a statement, apparently in rebuttal to McMillan's comments:

> Creative Scotland does not seek to influence the political views held by the individuals and organisations we fund in any way, nor do personal political views influence our funding decisions.[429]

As this chapter clearly demonstrates, neither Creative Scotland nor the cross-party panel which selected Lochhead for the post of Makar can have been under any illusions regarding her politics. If party politics — or a lack thereof — had been a part of the selection criteria, rather more serious ethical issues, not to mention legal ones, may have arisen as a result. To return to Robert Crawford's point discussed in the introduction, 'No poet should feel obliged to engage with politics. All poets should be free to do so.'[430] The idea of representation, however, is a legitimate area of exploration sparked by this debate. Spokespeople for the Labour and Conservative parties raised this line of enquiry

[428] Alex Massie, 'Who Cares That Liz Lochhead Has Joined the S.N.P?', *The Spectator,* 2 December 2014.
[429] Bradley.
[430] Crawford.

in their public responses on the issue – neither of them insisted that Lochhead resign:

> Liz Lochhead is an esteemed poet and playwright and she is absolutely entitled to join any political party she likes. But as Makar, and someone in receipt of Creative Scotland funding, she has a duty to reflect all of Scotland. (Conservatives)
>
> People are, of course, free to join any which political party they choose. The role of Makar, however, doesn't belong to any one person or any one political party. (Labour)[431]

These statements cast light on one of the more significant differences between the Makar and the UK Poet Laureate: the UK Poet Laureate is a royal appointment, whereas the Makar is a parliamentary one. This signifies little in relation to the twenty-first century occupiers of each position, beyond the occasions in aid of which they might be expected (but not required) to write or perform. However, what it may signify on another level, is the development of the role beyond the original laureateship. Because the Scottish position is the poet of a parliament, there is perhaps a greater pressure to avoid public support of one particular party within that parliament. A parliament being comprised of elected officials in contrast to a hereditary monarchy, it is perhaps understandable that Lochhead elicited such responses, asking that she represent the whole nation and not only 'the 45', as the novelist Catherine Moorehead feared her SNP membership might imply. An elected MSP is expected to represent their party, themselves as an individual, and all of their constituents, regardless of whether those constituents voted for them, somebody else, or no one at all. This debate begged the question: does the Makar face the same obligations? Or do they continue to represent only themselves and their art form?

One of the necessities of public funding for the arts remains their separation from party politics. An artist's stated political views cannot be entangled in any way with decisions over funding, as this necessarily risks the integrity of the art in question. This is closely related to the concept of the writer as dissident in the sense of being necessarily outside of the political realm, but still at liberty to comment upon it:

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[431] Bradley.

> a celebrant of the unsayable, a soul committed to that which is beyond legislation… the role of the dissident in the widest sense[432]

As Lochhead's career thus far establishes, an artist's views on political movements or parties may well change and develop according to the times, and they may enter into an artist's work or they may not. Furthermore, being a member of a political party is not equivalent to actually representing that party, and does not require that an individual subscribe to all of their policies or even vote for them in elections. As the Labour spokesperson pointed out, the role of Makar belongs to no party — it belongs to the individual who holds that post at the time, and as a creative role, it is difficult, if not impossible, to expect anything more or less of the incumbent. The Conservative party spokesperson suggests that the holder of an artistic post attached to a parliament has a 'duty' to reflect every party within that parliament. This is not only impossible, but would compromise the most skilful poet's art. If being apolitical — or appearing so in one's poetry — were to become a criterion of the Makar, then the role would lose one of its greatest potentials. This is a potential outlined so clearly in the first Makar's first poem to the parliament that had appointed him: the ability to critique that parliament and hold it to account in verse — if, and only if, that particular poet felt inspired to do so, and were able to do so without compromising their art form. Liz Lochhead has shown numerous times that this is something of which she is capable, and her political work is some of her finest. The Laureate does not quite have this equivalent luxury, being a royal and not a parliamentary role. The poet of the Royal Household — for this is what the Laureate still is — cannot critique the royal establishment which supports them because the monarchy is not elected, and therefore they cannot do so without being self-referential and introducing a conflict of interest. A parliament, as it did under Lochhead in 2016, may change its make up entirely while the Makar is still the Makar, without affecting her position at all. She can therefore make her opinions known regarding the constitutional body she is attached to, express them poetically, or neither, without the necessity of a conflict of interest.

Going forward, this controversy regarding Lochhead's joining of the SNP became a part of the discussion on the subject of her replacement. As outlined earlier in this thesis, the Makar position began with a process that was very much *ad hoc*.

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[432] *A Poet's Polemic*, p. 7.

Lochhead's appointment had been better defined, but still opaque, and this small crisis of conscience served as a reminder that the 2016 process would have to be both more transparent and outline the expectations of the role more definitively. By the time Lochhead's five years as Makar had elapsed, a process with increased formality had been established to select her replacement. In March 2016, Jackie Kay was announced as the new Makar by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon. She had been selected, again from a cross-party panel, which made its decisions based on 'a strong shortlist prepared by a panel of literary experts, convened by Dr Robyn Marsack'.[433]

Liz Lochhead, as Makar, demonstrated her ability to look at the political in Scotland, Britain, and the former British Empire with wit and eloquence. She also established that no official role should restrict a poet, either in terms of their subject matter or their personal actions as a private citizen. *Fugitive Colours* remains a testament to her highly energetic tenure, and to the unrestricted blend of personal and public matters that concerned her from 2011-2016.

2.6 Alasdair Gray's co-colonialism: *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (1981)

Alasdair Gray was born in Glasgow in 1934, and like Lochhead has remained based there throughout his long and prolific career as a writer and artist. Also like Lochhead, Gray is a graduate of the Glasgow School of Art, a member of the Hobsbaum writing group, and a vocal supporter of Scottish independence. Although older than Lochhead, Gray's literary career blossomed during the same period. His first public theatrical work, *Dialogue: A Duet,* was initially released as a radio play in 1969, and then as a theatre piece in 1971, the year before Lochhead's debut, *Memo for Spring*. His breakthrough literary work, however, was his first novel, *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (1981). *Lanark* won the inaugural Saltire Society Book of the Year Award and the Scottish Arts Council Book of the Year in 1982. It was adapted by David Grieg into a theatrical production which premiered in 2015. Alongside pieces for theatre and a significant career as a visual artist, Gray continued to publish novels and short story collections at a steady rate following *Lanark,* most notably *1982: Janine*

[433] Scottish Poetry Library., 'Jackie Kay, Makar 2016-2020', (Scottish Poetry Library, 2016).

(1984), *The Fall of Kelvin Walker* (1985), *Poor Things* (1992), *Ten Tales Tall and True* (1993), and *Old Men in Love* (2007).

Gray's engagement with Scottish autonomy has been consistent throughout his time as a public figure, and the bulk of his non-fiction publications have been on that subject. *Why Scots Should Rule Scotland* was initially published in 1992, and re-released in a revised edition in 1997 for the second devolution referendum. In 2005 he co-authored *How We Should Rule Ourselves* with Adam Tomkins, and in 2014 in time for the Referendum, he published *Independence: An Argument for Home Rule*. Gray describes his pre-2014 political non-fiction in the following terms:

> The pamphlets were part of a public discussion, and if our debates, agreements, and disagreements did not influence how North Britain is governed, then democracy here does not exist.[434]

Evidently, Gray has never had any trouble turning his talents as a writer and his position as a public figure to rhetorical purpose in relation to Scottish independence. Like Jamie, Burnside, and Lochhead prior to 2014, Alasdair Gray has never been party political. In 2005, he stated of himself and co-author Adam Tomkins in the third person: 'both are men of the left but neither belongs to, nor endorses, any political party.'[435] In 2014, *Independence: An Argument for Home Rule* cites incidents we can see appearing in his fictional works. For example, the MP who tells Jock in *1982, Janine* that 'We see the problems of Scotland in a totally different perspective when we get to Westminster.'[436] This statement is echoed almost verbatim in Gray's non-fiction work, which quotes Labour MP Norman Buchan as having told him, 'As soon as you get to London and enter the House of Commons you see Scotland from a completely different perspective.' The book was described by Alex Linklater as:

> a pamphlet confected of cod history, doggerel poetry, whimsical tangents, the bitter settling of personal feuds, and the repetition of the

[434] Alasdair Gray, *Independence: An Argument for Home Rule* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2014), p. 10.
[435] Alasdair Gray and Adam Tomkins, *How We Should Rule Ourselves* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2005), p. 2.
[436] Alasdair Gray, *1982, Janine* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1984), p. 82.

> Scottish Socialist party's defunct 'Calton Hill' manifesto for a 'Scottish Commonwealth'.[437]

Linklater's damning assessment is not without some justification, but fails to take Gray's frequently satirical tone into account. Gray demonstrates a sensitivity to the co-colonial in his works, and one which is often expressed through satire. He also displays a similar preoccupation to Lochhead with writing back to hegemonic discourse.

Gray's best-known work is undoubtedly *Lanark,* described by Iain Banks as 'The best in Scottish Literature in the twentieth century'.[438] Liam McIlvanney describes *Lanark* as a work which has been instrumental in forging Glasgow's contemporary reputation as a 'city of literature'.[439] *Lanark,* too, is an example of Gray's deep commitment to the anti-hegemonic. Gray customarily makes use of his skills as a visual artist to supplement his published literary works. In the case of *Lanark,* this includes a frontispiece which revises Glasgow's motto from 'Let Glasgow Flourish by the Preaching of the Word' to 'Let Glasgow Flourish by Telling the Truth'.[440] Of this revision, McIlvanney states:

> Gray's amendment holds the key to his art. Throughout his fiction, the truth at which Gray worries is the old one – of exploitation, class brutality, man's inhumanity to man. 'Man is the pie that bakes and eats himself and the recipe is separation,' as Monsignor Noakes puts it in *Lanark* (121). In *1982, Janine,* Jock McLeish is less enigmatic: 'The winners shaft the losers, the strong shaft the weak, the rich shaft the poor' (121). This is the truth which seeks out Gray's protagonists and shatters their complacency.[441]

Lanark demands truth in the course of depicting hegemonies and ISAs of various kinds which enforce misleading ideas of what the truth may be. This is reflected in the structure of the text itself, which defies linear expectations of a novel format, and breaks the literary fourth wall on numerous occasions. This 'life in four books' opens with Book Three, followed by the Prologue, Book One, Book Two, about half of Book Four, the Epilogue, and finally the rest of Book 4. In addition to a deliberately disruptive narrative structure, Gray includes a detailed

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[437] Alexander Linklater, 'Independence: An Argument for Home Rule by Alasdair Gray; My Scotland, Our Britain: A Future Worth Sharing by Gordon Brown - Review', *The Guardian,* 22 June 2014.
[438] Alasdair Gray, *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (Edinburgh: Canongate 1981), p. Cover.
[439] *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, p. 230.
[440] *Lanark: A Life in Four Books*, p. 119.
[441] *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, p. 229.

conversation between himself, the God-like author, and his protagonist, and an index written in the margins of the text itself. Gray encourages us not to trust the authority of the novel form itself, much like Lochhead and her untrustworthy narrator in *Mary Queen of Scots* for example. Robert Crawford, as discussed in the Introduction, picks up on the rhetorical purpose of such encounters:

> Gray's perennial theme of the individual who seeks independence from a situation of entrapment can be seen as having a political dimension, and one that persists in the context of today's Scotland.[442]

According to Markéta Gregorová:

> Gray succeeds in utilising the characteristically protean quality of the postmodern age for aesthetic purposes of his own making, challenging by the means of the mutually reinforcing form and content of his work our assumptions about the world as we know it.[443]

The novel is celebrated for these structural explorations of truth, and these are reflected by both the protagonist's anger at the author during their dialogue, and the biting satire of various institutions which characterises the text. The Glasgow City Council, Westminster Government, the UK welfare system, and the United Nations are all depicted in dystopian parody.

Lanark is in constant negotiation with the co-colonial, as his characters self-reflexively critique both British imperial structures and internal inequalities throughout the text. The twenty-ninth Lord Monboddo's epic speech at the 'Assembly' invokes each of these sides to colonialism throughout: 'In the past extra men were used to invade neighbours, plant colonies, and destroy competitors.'[444] His reference to 'extra men' implies internal colonialisms within Britain, although whether these are based on class or constituent nation is unclear. The role that these men played in supressing others in turn, however, is made abundantly clear. Earlier in his speech, Monboddo utilises the imperial rhetoric of empire's civilising mission, the 'two-way thing' Lochhead's Miss Prentice refers to:

> active men liquidated unprofitable states which *needed* a destroyer to release their assets. Wherever wealth has been used for mere self-maintenance it has always inspired vigorous people to grasp and fling it

[442] Crawford, p. 114.
[443] Markéta Gregorová, 'Alasdair Gray's Lanark as an Act of Literary Resistance', *Cultural Intertexts,* 2 (2015), 49.
[444] *Lanark: A Life in Four Books*, p. 545.

> into the service of that onrushing history which the modern state commands. Pale pink people like myself have least reason to point the scorning finger.[445]

Niall O'Gallagher argues that episodes such as this from *Lanark* suggest the novel is 'placed in an explicitly postcolonial context as both a response to imperialism and a gesture towards its obsolescence.'[446] In light of this argument, it is noteworthy that one of the more active listeners of Mondboddo's speech is Lord Multan of Zimbabwe. The vast majority of the delegates present at the assembly are from fictional locations, such as 'West Atlantis' or 'Thule'. The real nation of Zimbabwe had gained its independence and formally adopted that name the year before *Lanark* was published, supporting O'Gallagher's point. This connection further supports the argument that the rise of postcolonialism internationally, and the loss of what MacDonald terms 'imperial promises' contribute towards the growth of Scottish nationalism.[447]

Books One and Two are the middle two of the life in four books, and they form a Bildungsroman that is loosely autobiographical. The protagonist named Lanark is only named as such in Books Three and Four which predominantly take place in Gray's imaginative hellscape version of Glasgow, 'Unthank'. In the Bildungsroman section, this protagonist lives in the real version of Glasgow, and is named Duncan Thaw. Thaw, in his conversations with his more astute and self-aware friends, reveals himself to have internalised colonising narratives in relation to Scotland and Glasgow. He informs his friend Kenneth McAlpin, named after the first King of Scots, that 'it is ludicrous to think anyone in Glasgow will ever paint a good picture.'[448] In response to McAlpin's insistence that 'Glasgow is a magnificent city', Thaw can only view his home town pessimistically in relation to the colonial metropoles he believes are the cradles of civilisation:

> Then think of Florence, Paris, London, New York. Nobody visiting them for the first time is a stranger because he's already visited them in paintings, novels, history books, and films… What is Glasgow to most of us? A house, the place we work, a football park or golf course, some pubs and connecting streets. That's all.[449]

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[445] Ibid. p. 542.
[446] Niall O'Gallagher, 'Alasdair Gray's Lanark: Magic Realism and the Postcolonial Novel', *Textual Practice*, 21 (2007), 534.
[447] *Whaur Extremes Meet: Scotland's Twentieth Century*, p. 7.
[448] *Lanark: A Life in Four Books*, p. 293.
[449] Ibid. p. 243.

In disagreeing with McAlpin, Thaw sets forth a very thorough explanation of the colonial inequality in literature and the arts represented by the metropole, something Gray examines more thoroughly in *The Fall of Kelvin Walker* (see section 2.7).

Many aspects of the Duncan Thaw narrative are mirrored in the Lanark narrative. Elements of Gray's sensitivity to the co-colonial in Monboddo's speech, for instance, are predicted by Duncan Thaw's long articulations of his discontent with the world around him:

> in the villages of Strathaven and Bellshill some enthusiasts set out with red flags. Four of them actually hoisted one on Cathkin Braes and then went home to their teas, for clearly nothing was happening. So Baird, Hardie and Wilson were arrested, tried and hung, and the bloody tide of revolution receded. Then one day the government noticed it could give the vote to almost everyone without losing power. The unemployed got assisted passages to Canada, Australia, Asia, and Africa, where they prospered by grabbing land from the natives.[450]

Responding to the text in 1993, H. Gustav Klaus argues that the unusual structure of the text and the interplay between Gray's split protagonist of Thaw/Lanark signifies that this text is part of a contemporary trend in postcolonial literatures:

> by no means a Scottish peculiarity but widespread in what goes under the name of 'New Literatures in English', resulting as it does from the association of the native ruling elite with the colonisers.[451]

In sections of the novel such as the quotation above, Thaw/Lanark directly addresses the inequalities on both sides of the co-colonial relationship to the British Empire. This anti-establishment, anti-hegemony position is supported by the structure of the novel itself, which undermines authority in myriad ways, even the authority of the author himself. The co-colonial significance of the novel is, as O'Gallagher argues, 'a catalyst for its formal experimentation.'[452]

Gray, like Morgan, Lochhead, and Rowling, also utilises canonical literature and history. In *Lanark,* this is all part of Gray's experimental and anti-hegemonic

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[450] Ibid. p. 337.
[451] H. Gustav Klaus, '1984 Glasgow: Alasdair Gray, Tom Leonard, James Kelman', *Études Écossaises,* 2 (1993).
[452] O'Gallagher, p. 536.

structure. Gray is actively distancing himself from such canons, critiquing their assumed value and cultural weight. For example, from the Epilogue:

> Then there is the Roman book about Aeneas. He leads a group of refugees in search of a peaceful home and spreads agony and warfare along both coasts of the Mediterranean.[453]

This irreverent description of Virgil's *Aeneid* is comical, but also aimed at undermining texts such as this which are crucial to the Western canon. Gray's treatment of several other texts is similar, including Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

> There is the English book about Adam and Eve. This describes a heroic empire-building Satan, an amoral, ironical, boundlessly creative God, a lot of warfare (but no killing) and all centred on a married couple and the state of their house and garden.[454]

These descriptions are part of a litany of treatments of classic works, all of which are similarly dismissive. Throughout this Epilogue, there is an 'Index of Plagiarisms' beginning in the margin of a page and continuing in the margins until Book Four continues with Chapter 41 following the Epilogue. This index, both in structure and content, further undermines the reader's expectations. O'Gallagher contends that this index is used to 'disrupt the structures and hierarchies associated with the languages, genres, and forms they use', and further that as a postcolonial novel, this structural experimentation is 'not only facilitated but, in fact, necessitated by a political urgency and commitment central to his artistic project.'[455] This 'artistic project' is the rejection of hierarchies and hegemonies in a distinctly co-colonial fashion. Alison Lumsden's critique of the novel as straying too often into a moralising territory, which can make the text appear one-eyed, is a legitimate one, supported in part by the Epilogue extracts above.[456] However, *Lanark* is also remarkable for its ability to capture Scotland's co-colonialism from a variety of angles, both critical and sympathetic, which mitigates the moralising elements of the text.

Lanark was Gray's first novel, launching him as a major Scottish literary figure, and remaining his most significant contribution. It remains one of few works that

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[453] *Lanark: A Life in Four Books*, p. 486.
[454] Ibid. p. 487.
[455] O'Gallagher, p. 539.
[456] Alison Lumsden, 'Innovation and Reaction in the Fiction of Alasdair Gray', in *The Scottish Novel since the Seventies,* ed. by Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp. 15-26.

adequately articulates Scotland's co-colonialism, and is often credited with providing inspiration for other writers attempting to do so, such as James Kelman, A.L. Kennedy, or Irvine Welsh. Cairns Craig for example, states of the novel:

> *Lanark* showed how realism cannot explain the Scottish condition because the Scottish condition is part of a power structure whose sources are lodged beyond the reach of realism's 'fidelity to local truth'.[457]

Craig, like Robert Crawford, credits this radical work as being contributory to Scottish cultural confidence post-1979, as well as inspired by that event:

> First appearing from the young Edinburgh publisher Canongate in the wake of the 1979 Devolution referendum disappointment, *Lanark* made confident, masterful use of what Edwin Morgan had called a decade earlier 'The Resources of Scotland'[458]

Lanark established Gray as a co-colonial Scottish writer, committed to undermining conventional hegemonies emanating both from Scotland as part of the British imperial centre, and being enforced upon Scotland and its citizens from a wealthy, English elite. This was an artistic commitment Gray developed in his future prose, most notably in *The Fall of Kelvin Walker* and *1982, Janine,* as I shall explore in the following two sections.

2.7 Taking back the capital: *The Fall of Kelvin Walker* (1985)

In 1985, Gray produced a novella adapted from what was originally a theatrical piece, *The Fall of Kelvin Walker: A Fable of the Sixties* (hereafter referred to as *Kelvin Walker*). Gray, like Lochhead, is acutely aware of cultural imperialism, imposed both upon Scotland and from Scotland. *Kelvin Walker* is a particularly striking example from Gray's literary (as opposed to polemical) oeuvre of his determination to explore cultural imperialism from a co-colonial viewpoint in his work, and to write back to that discourse by reversing the colonising gaze. From the contents page of *Kelvin Walker* onwards, Gray explores co-colonialism in Scotland, satirising both cultural imperialist attitudes towards Scotland from the London metropole, and British (including Scottish) cultural imperialism globally. This contents page is an obviously satirical introduction to the text, aimed at the privileging of London as an international metropole, and the cultural hegemony Gray sees as being imposed upon Scotland from that metropole. The convention

[457] Craig, p. 267.
[458] *Scotland's Books : A History of Scottish Literature*, p. 647.

arises from an imperial power structure reaching its height in the Victorian era. Particular Victorian literary conventions are also prominent in Gray's later novels, *Poor Things* and *Old Men in Love*. There are aspects of Gray's playful, ludic imagination that also indicate serious points about the relevance of the nineteenth-century world to modernity.

In *the Fall of Kelvin* Walker, the list of chapter titles reads like an itinerary of a typical colonial travelogue in the style of imperial travel writers like Mary Kingsley or Captain Cook. In place of an 'othered' non-British location, however, it is London itself, the first city of Empire, that is being 'discovered' by Kelvin Walker of the small town of Glaik, Scotland:

> Chapter 1: The Discovery of London
>
> Chapter 2: A Meal with a Native
>
> Chapter 3: The Base Camp
>
> Chapter 4: The Climb Begins
>
> Chapter 5: Setback
>
> Chapter 6: Holiday
>
> Chapter 7: Taking the Summit
>
> Chapter 8: Securing the Base
>
> Chapter 9: The Conquest of London
>
> Chapter 10: The Spread of Kelvin Walker
>
> Chapter 11: The Fall
>
> Chapter 12: Exodus
>
> Chapter 13: Anticlimax[459]

Describing Kelvin's arrival in London as its 'discovery' might initially appear to refer simply to Kelvin's first experiences of a new and exciting city:

> Crossing Trafalgar Square for the third time that afternoon he sat suddenly on a bench near a fountain and tried to subdue his excitement by turning it into thoughts.[460]

However, in the context of the contents page, Gray's use of the word 'discovery' is evidently intended as a pointed satire. Clearly, it would be absurd to suggest

[459] Alasdair Gray, *The Fall of Kelvin Walker* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1985).
[460] Ibid. pp. 2-3.

that a young man from small-town Scotland was the first to discover London in the 1960s in the sense of being the first to find it. Gray's point is that this is no less absurd than describing Captain James Cook, for instance, as having 'discovered' or 'found' Australia, when human beings had been living there for at least 40,000 years beforehand. Indeed, at the time of writing, these are still the terms used by the Encyclopaedia Britannica regarding Cook and other European explorers' location of places such as Australia, New Zealand, or New Caledonia. Although previously unknown to Europeans, the Encyclopaedia still refers to Cook, for instance, as having 'discovered' them, without qualification or reference to indigenous populations.[461] The myth of European discovery is a prime example of a colonial discourse which effectively eradicates pre-colonial history, and is seen uniformly across the Empire of which London was the centre. The travelogues Gray parodies here are a further example of that discourse; the climbing and 'conquering' of various natural features such as mountains, rivers, and coastlines being an important part of the imperial claim over colonised lands. The dissemination of such texts was furthermore an essential bridge between these activities in overseas territories and the public in Britain (and other colonial centres). Gray plays with these colonial motifs in *Kelvin Walker*, flavouring Kelvin's personal discovery of London with myths of colonial discovery which are still sustained today. Commencing this satire on the contents page prepares the reader to interpret the entire novel as a parodic critique of colonising narratives.

Gray's choice of London as the colonised territory in this novel is ideal for his satirical purpose. London is the metropole and seat of power for the British Isles and for the British Empire, the furthest-reaching empire in world history. Inverting the narrative regarding this seat of enormous power therefore provides a contrast for comedic purposes. *British Book News* sums up this dual effect in their review of *The Fall of Kelvin Walker* in novel form:

> Wonderfully funny and superbly acute. Gray brilliantly raises questions about most of the bases of personal and political power on which a culture rests. The book is a complete success – hilarious, ferocious satire at its best.[462]

[461] Alan John Villiers, 'James Cook', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Online, 2016).
[462] 'Review: The Fall of Kelvin Walker', *British Book News,* 1986.

Kelvin's first impressions of London, for instance, echo the kinds of othering narratives we are acquainted with hearing in relation to areas and peoples 'discovered' during the colonial period. London, as the colonial metropole, is seldom described in these terms, as familiarity with the centre is taken for granted. By inverting this colonising gaze, Gray's satire is intensely co-colonial. For example, in his descriptions of Kelvin's arrival in London:

> the streets brought continually into the centre of his eye or carried past the corners of it sights which struck and intoxicated; new huge unfamiliar buildings, famous old ones recognised from films and newsphotos, girls and women dressed and decorated with a wealth and wildness and nonchalance he had never seen before in his life… the ornate fountains, ostentatiously squandering great cataracts of public water, symbolized it.[463]

In colonising narratives, we are used to seeing water described as a scarcity and treated in such a way that fascinates the describer, who, in English-language texts, most commonly hails from Britain where water scarcity does not form a challenge. Eyre's expeditions through Australia for instance[464], or to name a more recent example, Paul Bowles' travelogue from the 'Non-Christian World' of North Africa.[465] Kelvin, conversely, describes the 'ornate fountains' as though they were a completely foreign concept, inverting the trope of water scarcity with his surprise at the 'squandering' of public water resources simply for show.

This satire pervading the text exposes British imperial assumptions of superiority through Kelvin's own personal imperialism and sense of arrogant entitlement. Kelvin Walker is the ultimate colonist, both in the traditional sense and in Gray's terms discussed later in this section. He arrives with unceasing confidence in the place he determines will be his empire before he even catches sight of it or understands its customs. For example, Kelvin confidently asserts to his first acquaintance in London, Jill, that 'I have a great deal of money', and invites her to 'the most expensive eating place in London', where he is completely confident he can pay for them both with his ample funds.[466] However, Kelvin's first 'meal with a native' exposes just how little he understands this new city:

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[463] *The Fall of Kelvin Walker*, pp. 2-3.
[464] Edward John Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia and Overland* (London: T. and W. Boone, 1845).
[465] Paul Bowles, *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue: Scenes from the Non-Christian World* (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 2006).
[466] *The Fall of Kelvin Walker*, pp. 6-10.

> The waiter left. Kelvin read the bill carefully saying, 'I have no wish to doubt anyone's honesty, but I am going to be obliged to challenge this.'
>
> 'But you asked me to order the most expensive meal possible!'
>
> 'I asked you to do that and I meant you to do that, but 26 pounds 14 shillings and 6 pence is far beyond the bounds of possibility. They have charged us *seven pounds fifteen* for the oysters!'[467]

Despite this embarrassing set-back which is ultimately resolved by Jill's ingenuity, Kelvin is still entirely confident he will be successful and wealthy in a very short amount of time. He insists to her, 'Jill! I'm going to repay this money much sooner than you think', and although he is now entirely dependent upon her as a London native, maintains his belief that he is her and her boyfriend's superior. Within an astonishingly short period, Kelvin occupies and adapts the home of the first natives he meets to suit his own personal tastes, and he determines to marry Jill, even though she is in a relationship with his erstwhile host. He establishes control of the Ideological State Apparatus (the BBC) and therefore the dominating cultural hegemony via his role as a mainstream television presenter. All of this behaviour and development serves as a distinct metaphor for colonisation.

As the title of the text suggests, Kelvin's attempted imperialist colonisation is ultimately unsuccessful. Although his delusions of grandeur initially gain Kelvin money, fame, and power, his inability to 'go native' inevitably, Gray suggests, results in his downfall. Going native is a phrase initially utilised in colonial discourse and is a consistent reference point in postcolonial studies. The Oxford English Dictionary describes the term as derogatory, with the implication that for a white colonist to adopt the 'culture, customs, or way of life' would be degrading.[468] This is an idea Gray developed further during the Referendum period. In 2012, Gray's contribution to Scott Hames' *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence* outlined the difference between those Gray termed 'settlers' and those who were 'colonists'. Using characteristically abrupt and satirically generalising prose, Gray discusses colonisations and emigrations carried out all over the world with a particular focus on those involving Britain, and separates participants into 'settlers' and 'colonists:

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[467] Ibid. p. 16.
[468] Anon., 'To Go Native', in *Oxford English Dictionary* ed. by Michael Proffitt (Online: Oxford University Press, 2016).

> for roughly two centuries most subjects of the British empire were ruled by native Britons employed directly by the London government. They were colonists, not settlers. They regarded marriage between themselves and the local natives as almost unthinkable, calling it *going native*. Hardly any thought of uniting with those they ruled.[469]

The essay, when read in full, is an exploration of the co-colonial. It makes full acknowledgement of Scottish participation in the British empire, whilst simultaneously critiquing the colonisations within the British Isles which were on some occasions — but not all, Gray points out — the context for that participation. The settler, according to Gray, is an incomer to a country who is open to going native, and does not consider this to be a degradation. Gray uses the examples of the Welsh Edward Dwelly and the English David Knowles and Sharon Blackie as settlers who embraced their adopted Scottish homes:

> I do not know or care if the true settlers I have mentioned will vote for Scottish independence in the 2014 referendum, as I certainly will. Their work here is good for us.[470]

Gray defines a colonist, by contrast, as an aggressive invader convinced of the superiority of the culture they came from:

> Colonists and settlers may start with the same homeland and some loyalty to it, a loyalty dependent on the support the homeland gives them. The difference between these two sorts of invader becomes obvious when they have subdued the local natives[471]

Kelvin Walker is undoubtedly a colonist by Gray's definition. His fall represents the failure of imperialism which remains dismissive of the indigenous culture.

Gray's definitions of settler and colonist however, differ from a dictionary definition, and were seen as inflammatory by many. The publication of his essay was met with controversy and accusations of Anglophobia and anti-English rhetoric. A spokesperson for the SNP for instance, was quoted in response to the essay as saying, 'The party disagrees with these sentiments. We stand for a welcoming and inclusive Scotland.'[472] In another example, Andrew Wilson said of Gray's essay:

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[469] Scott Hames and Alasdair Gray, 'Settlers and Colonists', (Online: Word Power Books, 2012).
[470] *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*, p. 109.
[471] Ibid. p. 101.
[472] Gilliam Bowditch, 'Free-Dumb', *The Sunday Times*, 23 December 2012.

> It is frankly a crying shame that a genius and artist of the stature of Alasdair Gray has allowed his reputation to be diminished by a use of language that echoes from another time and doesn't fit with now.[473]

Tom Peterkin described the essay as 'a critique of English immigration north of the Border,'[474] and Deborah Orr accused Gray of contributing to a 'blame-the-English narrative'.[475] Alongside the media debate surrounding Gray's words, online discussion raged for several weeks. Scott Hames, the editor of the original publication in which the article appeared, compiled a Storify of these disputes. He did so in order to defend Gray from accusations of Anglophobia by pointing readers towards the actual words he wrote, and away from what Hames terms the 'hysteria' of public reaction to it, and 'a discrepancy between the rhetoric of Gray's essay and the 'toxic' media discourse around it.'[476] Even in his introduction to *Unstated,* however, Hames had warned of this very occurrence:

> Such readings risk the silent appropriation of more radical currents in the writing at issue, re-channelling them toward debates which exclude in advance any alternative to neoliberal capitalism and parliamentary democracy… This project emerges from a conviction that the relationship between contemporary Scottish literature and contemporary Scottish politics is much more ambivalent, charged, and complex than this critical narrative would suggest.[477]

This is also what Hames was cautious of with regards to Morgan's SNP donation, when he emphasises the necessity, in the same introduction, of attending to 'the ambivalence of what he actually wrote', as discussed in the Introduction and Chapter One.

In the slightly longer term, other public figures openly criticised Gray, such as former first minister Jack McConnell, while others came to Gray's defence, including James Kelman, Stewart Sanderson, Kevin McKenna, and David Greig.[478] Hames took the decision to publish the essay online through the Word Power Books website, accompanied by his own statement:

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[473] Andrew Wilson, 'Debate on Independence Being Muddies by Unkind and Unwise Words', *The Scotsman,* 23 December 2012.
[474] Tom Peterkin, 'Alasdair Gray Attacks English for 'Colonising' Arts', *The Scotsman,* 16 December 2012.
[475] Deborah Orr, 'Scotland Should Not Be Wasting Time on Blaming the English Anymore', *The Guardian,* 21 December 2012.
[476] Scott Hames, 'Responses to Alasdair Gray's 'Settlers and Colonists", (Online: Storify,com, 2014).
[477] *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*, p. 10.
[478] Hames.

> Many dismayed reactions to news reports about this essay will apply to the essay itself. So long as we are debating *what Gray actually wrote,* and not something else, so be it. I do not think the essay is inflammatory or irresponsible in its rhetoric.
>
> Second: the burden of proof does not rest with Alasdair Gray to demonstrate that he is not a racist, an Anglophobe, a bigot, or a disgrace. A lifetime's worth of art is there to be examined for anyone who cares to look. The burden of proof rests with those describing the man and his work in such terms.[479]

Here Hames reiterates his plea to attend to what literary figures have previously put out into the public sphere when considering their stances on independence. In the case of Gray and the controversy sparked in the closing weeks of 2012, the context of nuanced co-colonial works such as *Kelvin Walker* provides crucial context for Gray's essay.

In 2014, Gray published a rewritten version of his essay as part of *Independence: An Argument for Home Rule*. He also published a letter of complaint regarding the original essay from Pete Selman of the National Trust, followed by Gray's response and a further chapter discussing the issue in more depth. Gray utilised the public controversy to develop an argument he had been expressing in various ways throughout his career. This argument is that Scotland is a co-colonial nation, guilty of historical and contemporary imperialism beyond Britain, but also of maintaining Anglocentric colonial discourse at home. It is a discourse that depends more upon the 'consent of the governed' than any imperialist actions from England, as postcolonial writers acknowledge. According to Gray:

> Their homeland was left to folk with less and less confidence in fellow Scots with original ideas English elites might not appreciate.
>
> …
>
> it is important to remember that these incomers were appointed to high positions in Scottish cultural institutions by highly respected Scottish committees.[480]

As Hames and other defenders of Gray pointed out, when read in full neither version of the 'Settlers and Colonists' article is Anglophobic in sentiment, and takes care to point out positive examples of English 'settlers'. Gray's biggest issue is perhaps with nomenclature, as the terms 'settler' and 'colonist' can be

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[479] Hames and Gray.
[480] *Independence: An Argument for Home Rule*, pp. 86-90.

synonymous, and Gray is proposing his own version of how these two words may differ.[481] The essay makes it reasonably clear that where a person or their ancestors are born is of no concern to Gray. What he objects to is hegemony and its attendant marginalisation. As the quote above demonstrates, he sees this as originating as much from Scots themselves as from any outside influence.

The essay and its reception brings a heightened relevance to *Kelvin Walker* in the wake of the Referendum and Gray's engagement with it. As Stewart Sanderson points out in response to 'Settlers and Colonists':

> one of the functions of art would seem to be the broadening of meaning, or the multiplication of potential narratives.[482]

In *Kelvin Walker,* Gray is able to investigate the themes of his later essay with a depth and space for interpretation that a shorter prose format does not allow for. Kelvin is the embodiment of what Gray terms a colonist, but being a complicated and not wholly unsympathetic character in his own right, is more palatable to the reader than Gray's more recent, less nuanced depiction in prose. As a coloniser, Kelvin is permanently liminal because of his unwillingness to transition to what Gray would describe as a settler, and, no matter how much control Kelvin exerts over his new countrymen, he can never fully belong in London. As we learn from his father and from Kelvin himself, he also cannot be fully at home in Glaik, his place of origin. As a result, Kelvin's empire 'falls', as the title implies, and he must return to his homeland with as much humility as his particular character allows. In this regard, Gray's Kelvin and Lochhead's Mary, Queen of Scots are strikingly similar. As her maidservant reminds Mary: 'Naw, naw, ye've never seen your country!'.[483] She is a 'Frenchified' but Scots speaking Queen of a country that is her own, that she was born in, but that is new for her as an adult. She says of her own kingdom, 'I canny mak sense o it at aw', and she ultimately fails to do so, leading to her 'Exodus', as it does for Kelvin. Kelvin and Mary have attempted to rule places to which they feel they have a right, but failing to make sense of their surroundings and to go native, neither of them can succeed because, partially by choice, they can never fully

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[481] The *Oxford English Dictionary* even defines a settler *as* a colonist, and a colonist as 'one who colonises or settles in a new country'.
[482] Stewart Sanderson, 'On Its Own Terms: Political Sentiment in Scottish Writing', (Online: Open Democracy UK, 2013).
[483] *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off,* p. 12.

belong. Gray makes Kelvin's colonising attempts appear ridiculous, partially by reversing the narrative through ironic prose, and having him come from a tiny rural Scottish town to take over the metropole of London. Kelvin's summation of Jesus, for instance, is a comic reveal of his own God complex:

> He [Jesus] had the chance of importance when the Devil offered to make him king of all the nations of the world but he refused, I think unwisely.[484]

Jill also describes Kelvin as 'a wee Scotch laddie just arrived in London to take us all over', the irony of which is entirely lost on Kelvin.[485] Making Kelvin and his colonising ambitions ridiculous makes for an amusing novella, but it also exposes the same behaviour Gray critiques in his controversial essay in response to the Referendum.

In the context of 1980s Scotland, Lochhead's and Gray's political frustrations clearly find voice in these texts. In her introduction to the 2009 edition, Lochhead explains her motivation for writing *Mary Queen of Scots* in these terms:

> June 1987 and I'm up all night, unable to go to bed as the horror unfolds and the election results come in. For the third time Margaret Thatcher gets back in to power. We can't believe it. Nobody in Scotland can believe it. We voted resoundingly against the Tories in this country and yet we are being ruled by them. Again.[486]

The characters of Mary and Kelvin explore Lochhead and Gray's own frustrations with being ruled by a Government they perceive to be unrepresentative of themselves. Although we sympathise with Mary and, perhaps to a lesser extent, with Kelvin, we also understand that their downfall is inextricably linked with their failure to understand the places they are trying to rule over. These witty texts lead us to question power structures and how they affect the ability to articulate one's own truth in one's own voice. Alasdair Gray argues in *Why Scots Should Rule Scotland* that Scottish independence would lead to a more positive relationship between English and Scottish identities. He comments that, while Scotland remains governed from London, a colonial relationship persists, or at the least a perception of one, which results in the negative 'obsession' with England that Gray himself was accused of in 2012:

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[484] *The Fall of Kelvin Walker*, p. 12.
[485] Ibid. p. 22.
[486] *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, p. vii.

> That unhealthy state of mind will always occur while most Scottish opinion has no influence on how Scots are ruled. But it is not my state of mind.[487]

Kelvin's behaviour is a metaphor for this gap in understanding between the governing and the governed. Once he is employed, he does not waste time in enacting a small-scale colonisation of Jake and Jill's flat, using his new wealth to exert control over the pair. Jake points this out to him:

> I'm sorry about your television set and refrigerator and so on but hell, we didn't ask you to bring them here. In fact you didn't ask us if you *could* bring them here.[488]

As a result of this material takeover, 'Jake had the uncanny sensation of being part of a world he could not control.'[489] In other words, Jake's experience is that of the subaltern in a colonial framework.

Kelvin's ability to complete this takeover is facilitated by his new job with the BBC, working under fellow Glaik native, Hector McKellar. In terms of Gray's 2012 definitions, McKellar is a settler where Kelvin is a colonist. He has not arrived in London with the aim of taking charge and enforcing his own discourse, but has instead made the decision to integrate. Like Kelvin, however, he is an outsider, and his language, too, parodies colonial narratives by inverting them:

> As you perhaps know, the English upper classes have an educational system which prepares them for public life by depriving them, during several crucial years, of all privacy whatsoever. This forces them to develop an effective public manner and very clear accents, but it also produces a sameness of tone, and since nearly all heads of government and law and industry talk with these tones there is danger that the ordinary viewer will feel, somehow, excluded.[490]

Gray's parody of the BBC in this novel critiques Anglocentric ISAs in a similar way to Lochhead's 'Kidspoem/Bairnsang' or her characterisation of Elizabeth I in *Mary Queen of Scots*. As an insider, the character of Hector McKellar is well positioned to explain the BBC to Kelvin (and the reader) in simplistic, generalising language such as in the quotation above. This both continues the reversal of the colonial travelogue trope and serves a rhetorical purpose in highlighting issues with the contemporary BBC. It is evident from Gray's

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[487] Alasdair Gray, *Why Scots Should Rule Scotland* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1997), p. x.
[488] *The Fall of Kelvin Walker*, pp. 99-100.
[489] Ibid. p. 101.
[490] Ibid. p. 75.

depiction of the BBC that he views it as an ISA perpetuating an Anglocentric cultural hegemony:

> McKellar believed that a collision between a Scottish and a Welsh accent would greatly amuse the English viewers and make his newest employee a national celebrity.

On several occasions the BBC as well as the party-political structure of Westminster is depicted as showing an interest in British characters who are not English for purely tokenistic reasons. 'A Scotch golf-playing ex-grocery assistant' would be extremely valuable to a political party during an election for example. McKellar also points out that having a politician who speaks with Received Pronunciation being grilled by someone like Kelvin with a 'firm regional accent', can placate audiences and make them feel included in the political process, without having to actually change anything. Kelvin obtains his position with the BBC in the chapter entitled 'Taking the Summit', and his debut as a presenter of the political programme *Power Point* occurs in 'The Conquest of London', indicating the significance of the ISA in the colonising process.

Gray is fascinated by control and authority, and as such his texts probe into multiple power mechanisms, from the imperial to the patriarchal. Marshall Walker states simply, 'Alasdair Gray hates exploitation.'[491] As with Lochhead, these two dominating hegemonies are intertwined. To critique these power structures and how we internalise them ourselves, Gray makes use of the technique of ironic self-reveal in *Kelvin Walker*, *1982, Janine,* and elsewhere in his work. Kelvin Walker's drive for power and attempt to 'invade' London appears absurd and pathological to the reader, and all the more so for Kelvin's obvious blindness to it. In the following passage in which Kelvin is dictating to Mrs Hendon, Kelvin reveals that his aspirations for power have no ideological basis, nor are they rooted in sound knowledge:

> How unlike the politicians of Victorian times comma the Palmsburies and Shafstone (check these names Mrs Hendon) who made Britain Great because they Believed capital 'g' at Great capital 'b' at Believed exclamation mark and start new paragraph. There is obviously no hope at all for the country in Marxism and Maoism and Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation and all the other isms and tions which bedevil the age

[491] Marshall Walker, *Scottish Literature since 1707* (New York City: Addison Wesley Longman, 1996), p. 337.

> period. Belief there must be comma, but let us abandon mere limited earthly beliefs and believe comma once and for all comma, in…
>
> The light went out of his countenance. He bit his lip and strolled pondering round the table.[492]

Kelvin is here dictating an article for the press, because he has begun (fatefully) to expand his power into the print media. For all his rhetoric it becomes clear that he does not actually hold any beliefs behind it. When it comes to the moment when he has to select a position to throw his eloquence behind, he is rendered uncharacteristically silent and unsure. Eventually he comes up with the line 'Belief itself' to conclude his article. Within this text's wider metaphor of colonisation, Kelvin (as coloniser) is removed from the territory he is attempting to colonise because his pathological arrogance has prevented him from comprehending the world he has tried to dominate.

Kelvin is not simply a fictional individual, but a parody of empire and imperialism itself. In terms of the text's wider metaphor, the setting of the novel in the 1960s is as significant as its London setting. The subtitle of *Kelvin Walker* is 'A Fable of the Sixties'. In the text itself, the non-contemporary time setting is established when Kelvin articulates his shock at his expensive restaurant bill in 'Chapter Two: A Meal with a Native', which is in pre-decimal currency (the UK having switched to decimal currency in 1971). This decade was something of a watershed for the British Empire, with nineteen separate nations declaring their independence from Britain in the 1960s as discussed in 2.1, and this provides an important context for the novel. The novel may have been published looking back at the 1960s from the 1980s, but the original play version was first produced in 1967, contemporary to events.

It is impossible to pinpoint a closing date for the British Empire, as it is arguable whether it has concluded at all. However, the 1960s are clearly a time of great change to its solidity and therefore of public perception within Britain. This is significant for Gray's text as it strengthens the central metaphor and parody of Kelvin's empire being analogous to Britain's. John Darwin for instance terms the 1960s the Empire's 'reluctant retreat', citing the weakness of sterling and a waning patience within Britain for the cost of maintaining overseas territories, alongside the swift loss of territories from multiple continents in that decade,

[492] *The Fall of Kelvin Walker*, p. 118.

including Kuwait, Yemen, Jamaica, Barbados, Kenya, Nigeria, and Malta. Gray captures this significant shift for Britain as a nation in his characterisation. R.M. Douglas argues:

> even during the era of Britain's imperial expansion, the Empire contained the seeds of its own destruction.[493]

The same is clearly true of Kelvin's expansion, suggesting that Gray would agree with Douglas' assessment. *Kelvin Walker* demands both a critical examination of imperialism and of what the changes of the 1960s might mean internally for Britain.

As discussed at the outset of this chapter, dramatic shifts in the British Empire such as those which form the backdrop to *Kelvin Walker* inevitably have an impact on British identity and nationalisms. Bryan S. Glass argues that 'nationalism only appeared as a legitimate force in Scotland in the 1960s as the last vestiges of empire collapsed.'[494] However ambiguous the term 'legitimate force' might be, the perception of the 'ending' of the British Empire and the public recognition of Scottish nationalism in British political life was indeed characteristic of the decade. Gray demonstrates a remarkable prescience in his co-colonial thinking, particularly in the earlier play version. The text — in either form — depicts Scotland and other regions of the UK outside of London as victims of imperialism, even as it parodies their complicity in the same kinds of behaviours and attitudes across the Empire. At the same time, it hints at the emergent nationalism Glass describes:

> 'And it may be necessary, later on, to make elbow room for ourselves by detaching Scotland from the British Isles'
>
> 'Geographically?' said his father, looking worried. Kelvin laughed heartily.
>
> 'No! Politically. Don't worry, Dad. I haven't lost my grip on reality.'[495]

Kelvin's permanent liminality is the curse of the coloniser in the colonised nation — capable of neither indigenous familiarity, nor the authority of the metropole. In Glaik he is regarded as 'a kind of freak' but it is clear he cannot succeed in London either, and the novel concludes with his departure with his father to

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[493] R. M. Douglas, 'Review: The Decline and Fall of the British Empire', *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010).
[494] *The Scottish Nation at Empire's End*, p. 1.
[495] *The Fall of Kelvin Walker*, p. 142.

Glaik. Kelvin cites Moses, John Knox, and Saint Paul as his predecessors: 'All began by oppressing or scorning their own people'.[496] Because Kelvin fails to go native he is forced to abandon his imperial adventure, but crucially, having been enlightened as to his failure, it is to Scottish nationalism that he then turns. By taking his role in the ISAs of London, it is clear that Kelvin sees himself as having oppressed the people of Scotland, thus situating himself as both colonised and an agent of colonisation, a metaphor for Scotland in the Empire. His failure is reminiscent of Scotland's infamous colonial misadventure; William Paterson's Darien scheme, the disastrous seventeenth-century attempt to join in the European colonial project. When Kelvin arrives in London he has 'no money, no friends, and nowhere to stay', yet considers himself completely capable of taking the entire place over, much like the ill-prepared Darien colonists. The final words of the novel describe the children of the Londoners (Jake and Jill) and Kelvin respectively. Taking a darkly critical view of Scotland's co-colonialism, the conclusion suggests that it would be better to simply be saddled with colonial guilt than the duality Gray portrays: 'These children [of Jake and Jill] are often happy. It is easier for them. They are English.'[497] After exploring Scotland's co-colonial challenge through Kelvin as a satirical archetype, Gray leaves the reader with the implication that the natural result of this co-colonialism as the British Empire recedes, is an increasingly available space for Scottish nationalism.

2.8 Reversing the gaze; *1982, Janine* (1984)

Gray's later novel, *1982, Janine*, written in the wake of the 1979 referendum, conflates critique of the colonial gaze with that of the male gaze; the double marginalisation which preoccupies Lochhead. This novel was first published in 1984 and set, as the title would suggest, in 1982. It is written from the perspective of Jock McLeish, a Scottish Tory-voter who also voted for devolution in the 1979 referendum. Accordingly, Gray's novel is cited by several commentators as part of the 'nationalist upsurge', including Cairns Craig who argues this upsurge 'had been fuelled by and, in turn, fed into a cultural revivalism'.[498] The novel's unusual and captivating structure recreates the

[496] Ibid. p. 141.
[497] Ibid. p. 144.
[498] Craig, p. 263. See also Scott Hames, *The Edinburgh Companion to James Kelman* (2010), Michael Gardiner, *The Return of England in English Literature* (2012).

scattered mind of the frustrated, suicidal, and alcoholic Jock, as he tries to escape his depression and self-hatred in a world of disturbing rape fantasies. These fantasies, which at first appear as the principal narrative of the text, are constantly interrupted by Jock's unwanted recollections of his own history, and of contemporary Scottish political life. Craig asserts that the world of abusive and chauvinistic sexual fantasies he creates 'is explicitly driven by the failure of devolution'. This connection may not be immediately apparent to the reader, but becomes increasingly clear as devolutionary politics increase in importance to Jock's fantasies.

The 1979 failure to achieve devolution is a constant ghost at the feast of Jock's alternative world, infuriating and torturing him:

> Well, a majority of Scots voted as I did, even though politicians from both big parties appeared on television and told us that a separate assembly would lead to cuts in public spending, loss of business, and more unemployment. But the usual sporting rules for electing a new government had been changed. 'If you win the race by a short head you will have lost it' we were told, so we won by a short head and lost the race. Then came cuts in public spending, loss of business, and increased unemployment and now Westminster has decided to spend the North Sea oil revenues building a fucking tunnel under the English Channel. If we ran that race again we would win by a head and a neck so we won't be allowed to run it again, cool down, cool down you are goading yourself into a FRENZY my friend, think about fucking Superb, think about fucking Janine, don't think about fucking POLITICS.[499]

In this passage, as elsewhere in the novel, Gray utilises the multiple applications of the word 'fucking' as part of his broader message regarding exploitation. When Jock tells himself to think about 'fucking Superb, think about fucking Janine', the word can be interpreted as both an adjective and a verb. The harshness of the expletive recalls the rape and exploitation sense of the verbal use, which are such central metaphors for this text. Jock's subsequent use of 'fucking POLITICS', is an example of how Gray thus encourages the reader to apply these metaphors to the novel's contemporary Scottish political context.

One of the former lovers Jock unsuccessfully tries to forget is Sontag, who appears on several occasions as an interpreter of what Jock is presenting to the reader. Sontag makes the connection between Jock's fantasies and his political

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[499] *1982, Janine*, p. 56.

frustration, telling him 'your fantasy has such a convincing political structure'.[500] In doing so she signals to the reader that these imaginings do not function as mere escapism from an unhappy life, but as a replacement for both the personal and political impotence Jock feels. He has been unable to remain with his lover Denny, with his wife, or with Sontag, his job is unsatisfying, and he is fuelled by a viscous anger towards his fellow Scots, whom he calls 'a nation of arse-lickers', and the colonising narratives that keep them from independence or devolution.[501] He replaces this lack of control with sadistic domination over his fictitious victims.

Unlike *Kelvin Walker*, this novel focuses on Scotland as more exploited than co-colonial, but as complicit from fear and greed in that exploitation. Marshall Walker describes the novel as being driven by 'the theme of exploitation on the personal level', which enables Gray to further examine exploitation as a wider concept.[502] In the context of the early 1980s, Scottish devolution and not the collapse of the British Empire were the dominating concerns of Scotland's role within a co-colonial framework, as the conclusion of *Kelvin Walker* suggests. Although challenges to the imagined community of Britain in these years came from both within and without the British mainland, it is the internal divisions represented by the 1979 referendum that Gray focuses on in this text.[503] The title of the novel is an articulate demonstration of how important that specific time setting of 1982 is to the text as a whole. As the novel progresses and the interrelated worlds of fantasy, personal memory, and politics assert themselves, Gray begins to weave them together. Uniting co-colonialism with feminism, Jock equates Scotland with the rape victims of his mind, who are promised they will grow to love their torture in the way that hegemony teaches the colonised to regard the culture of the coloniser as superior:

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[500] Ibid. p. 57.
[501] Ibid. p. 55.
[502] *Scottish Literature since 1707*, p. 338.
[503] Only 3 nations declared their independence from the United Kingdom during the 1980s (in contrast to the 22 in the previous two decades). However, this period saw British dominance in the identities of remaining nations suffer irreversible damage as a result of the United Kingdom's joining the European Economic Community in 1973. This brought the UK closer to Europe in terms of both trade and identity, and necessarily further from its remaining Commonwealth, with whom trade relationships were consequently altered. This had dramatic and irreversible effects for the Commonwealth both economically and in terms of identity.

> But if a country is not just a tract of land but a whole people then clearly Scotland has been fucked. I mean that word in the vulgar sense of *misused to give satisfaction or advantage to another*.[504]

Jock is, at this point in the novel, in a state of denial. It is clear to the reader that he despises this constitutional status quo, but he defends his position as a Tory, arguing that it is simply an acceptance that this can never be 'a pleasant world for most folk', and he is therefore wise to join in in with the 'fucking' of Scotland despite his obvious post-devolution fury:

> Scotland has been fucked and I am one of the fuckers who fucked her and I REFUSE TO FEEL BITTER OR GUILTY ABOUT THIS. I am not a gigantic horrible fucker, I'm an ordinary fucker. And no hypocrite. I refuse to deplore a process which has helped me become the sort of man I want to be: a selfish shit, like everyone I meet nowadays.[505]

Jock is clearly *not* the sort of man he wants to be, however, and his self-loathing is articulated throughout the novel. An entire paragraph, for example, reads simply: 'I am shit.'[506] Jock's arguments in favour of his political positions are another example of Gray's use of ironic self-reveal. The use of capitals in the quotation above for example, alerts the reader that Jock does feel both bitter and guilty about his privilege. They also expose Jock's conflict at being a Tory-voting devolution supporter. The Conservative Party were officially in favour of some level of devolution at this time, although they were against the Scotland Act at the heart of the 1979 referendum, taking the part of the 'Scotland Says No' campaign. Amongst Scottish Conservative voters at the time, Jock's position would have been unusual but not unheard of. In the month preceding the vote, 71% of Scottish Conservative voters were polled as intending to vote No, with 19% Yes and 10% undecided. [507] Gray's decision to place Jock in this minority position highlights the character's internal conflicts. It also allows Gray to critique the Conservative Party's behaviour regarding Scotland, particularly in relation to the 1979 referendum, in passages such as those cited above. Because Jock is such an evidently self-loathing character, Gray is able to express with a degree of nuance what would otherwise appear as violently polemical views.

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[504] *1982, Janine*, p. 126.
[505] Ibid. pp. 126-7.
[506] Ibid. p. 119.
[507] Ray Perman, 'The Devolution Referendum Campaign of 1979', *The Financial Times,* 11 December 1980.

Jock is reminiscent of Liz Lochhead's figures in the poem 'Hillhead Election Song', also set in 1982, in this case during the eponymous by-election. The three characters in Lochhead's poem: The Graduate, Hyndland Lady, and Partick Woman, present brief monologues of their perspective on this particular political event. Each of them concludes with a variation of the phrase: 'I'm not interested in politics'. The poem concludes with a heroic couplet:

> But nothing will never get no better until it clicks
>
> That we're *not* not interested in politics.[508]

Post-1979, Gray and Lochhead are anxious to counter the self-preserving apathy they see as permeating the Scottish public at every level. Like Lochhead's Hillhead residents, Jock and his fellow Scots are complicit in their own subjugation. In one of Jock's genuine memories, he is part of a group taking an ill-fated production to the Edinburgh Festival. The writer of the play in question, as part of an extended expression of his hatred for Jock, mutters at him on their train journey back to Glasgow:

> The curse of Scotland is these wee hard men. I used to blame the English for our mediocrity. I thought they had colonised us by sheer cunning. They aren't very cunning – They've got more confidence and money than we have, so they can afford to lean back and smile while our own wee hard men hammer Scotland down to the same dull level as ourselves.[509]

Here Gray's character unapologetically refers to Scotland's position within the Union as one of a colonised ('fucked') nation. The sentiments expressed above have a very long vintage in Scottish literature, from Robert Burns' 'parcel of rogues' to Irvine Welsh's 'colonised by wankers' speech in *Trainspotting*. However, Gray ensures the idea of complicity is brought to the foreground in *1982, Janine*, as it is in *The Fall of Kelvin Walker*. As Kelvin's misadventures are a metaphor for empire, Jock's position in relation to women — real and imagined — both represents Jock's own sense of being colonised, and acts as his antidote to that colonisation. Scotland's post-1979 depression is intertwined with Jock's personal life, his marriage, and his alcoholism:

> When did my job start to sour? When did my marriage start to stale? When did capital leave Scotland in a big way?[510]

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[508] *True Confessions & New Cliches*, p. 78.
[509] *1982, Janine*, p. 288.
[510] Ibid. p. 309.

Jock equates a colonised Scotland with the oppression of women, and his doing so suggests that only by owning our own role in the political landscape can we be liberated by a partially consensual subjugation. Jock votes for devolution because 'it would be a luxury to blame ourselves for the mess we are in instead of the bloody old Westminster parliament'. This attitude is echoed by Lochhead's Partick Lady who claims 'Ach the Hale Bliddy Loat o' Thum make me sick' but still insists 'Naw Ah'm no interested in politicks'.[511] Janine, the abducted and raped female lead of Jock's fantasies, starts to evolve into an independent and un-violated figure when she is allowed to realise her own position for what it is:

> I had intended to have Janine reading a description of herself standing half-naked with her breasts, hair etcetera being fondled and lifted by various hands while various people discussed how, and how much, they were going to enjoy her – at which word the story must stop, because Janine has now been forced to see she is a character in it. She realises it is her inescapable fate to be a character in a story by someone who dictates every one of her movements and emotions, someone she will never meet and cannot appeal to. She is like most people, but not like me. I have been free for nearly ten whole minutes.[512]

Like Lanark, Janine has realised she is a character in a story someone else wants to tell about her, denying her agency. This metaphor (created in Jock's own mind) informs his decision to accept the politics which has become increasingly evident to the reader, changing from self-identifying as a Tory to instead calling himself a nihilist, a decision which eventually brings him relief from his existential suffering.

1982, Janine, despite its apparently bleak and despairing tone, is in fact a novel of hope. Jock is able to challenge colonial discourse by acknowledging its existence and its role in his life, and by admitting to himself that he is '*not* not interested in politics'. This is represented by Janine's reversal of the male gaze within the altered world of Jock's fiction. The novel concludes with what appears to be a re-run of the invention of Janine's story, recapitulating from the first chapter. Jock imagines verbatim the first part of this rape fantasy, which has been repeated several times throughout the novel:

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[511] *True Confessions & New Cliches*, pp. 78-9.
[512] *1982, Janine*, p. 322.

> Janine is worried but trying not to show it. She concentrates on the sound of two unfastened studs in her skirt clicking with each step she takes. 'That's a sexy noise,' a childish voice says, and giggles. 'Act calm' thinks Janine. Pretend this is just an ordinary audition.[513]

At this point however, following Jock's epiphany, Janine is not colonised by being raped, bought and sold, or otherwise claimed for ownership and control by another, as we have come to expect she will be. Instead, she claims ownership of her own body, confidently looking back at her erstwhile captors:

> And then she thinks, 'Hell no! Surprise them. Shock them. Show them more than they ever expected to see.'
>
> Standing easily astride she slips off her shirt… so she stands naked but for fishnet stockings, hands on hips and feeling an excited melting warmth between her thighs. She is ready for anything.[514]

Gray 'gestures to the possibility of escape from an apparently predetermining narrative, a gesture which is as valid for a nation as for an individual.'[515] In other words, Janine's emancipation is understood to stand for both Jock and the Scottish nation's potential to break away from the status quo they had come to accept. *1982, Janine* is a Scottish novel which is predicated upon postcolonial thought, but as with *The Fall of Kelvin Walker*, Gray is successful in creating a complex work of fiction which develops arguments relating to Scotland and Britain's place in the late twentieth-century world because of his understanding of the co-colonial. *1982, Janine* resists the temptation to promote overly simplistic ideas of Scotland as colonised, and deals with challenging ideas of complicity in direct relation to Scottish devolutionary politics as well as through the metaphor of the female body. The ending of the novel presents an aspirational scenario in which Scotland can, like Janine, take ownership of the situation and write back to the 'story' which entraps them.

2.9 Lochhead, Gray, and the co-colonial voice in 2014

In keeping with the anti-hegemonic thread present in decades of work from Liz Lochhead and Alasdair Gray, both were outspoken supporters of a vote for independence in the Referendum. Both have very clearly stated that the failure of devolution in 1979 has been a creative inspiration for them, and as this

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[513] Ibid. p. 341.
[514] Ibid.
[515] Cairns Craig, *The History of Scottish Literature: Volume 4* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), p. 268.

chapter demonstrates, both are anxious to write against hegemony in Scotland. Accordingly, for these writers the Referendum was an opportunity to change the narrative. On 19 September 2014, Alasdair Gray stated publicly that it was 'a great pity' the Scottish electorate had not voted Yes:

> Still it is a victory of sorts that so many voted for independence. Especially considering the extent of BBC prejudice in its reporting, which was astonishing… Apart from the *Sunday Herald*, all the major newspapers were against it, all the leaders of the parties in Westminster, and the BBC were all united against it. Looking at that, it is a surprise the Yes vote had 45% for it.[516]

Evidently Gray sees as much need post-2014 as earlier in his career to write against the hegemonic discourses he perceives as pervading Britain and emanating from it.

Post-1979, Lochhead described a sense of 'let's get on with it' and a desire from both writers and the public for 'work in which we talked about ourselves in our own terms' — work exemplified by *Mary Queen of Scots* or *1982, Janine*.[517] This is a recognisable strand in Scottish literature which continues beyond the Referendum period. For example, the theatrical version of *Lanark* in 2015, written by another artist who came out in support of independence, David Greig, or the re-staging in 2015 and 2016 across Scotland of an updated version of the distinctly co-colonial *The Cheviot, the Stag, and the Black, Black Oil*. By taking an active role in advocating independence, Lochhead and Gray were finding alternative ways to endorse what their writing had been doing for nearly four decades: challenging the status quo, and creating an alternative discourse in which Scottish culture is capable of taking ownership and countering Anglocentric hegemony.

[516] Phil Miller, 'Alasdair Gray: Referendum Result Was a Great Pity', *Herald (Glasgow),* 19 September 2014.
[517] Little.

3.1 *The Bonniest Companie* (2015): the poet as commentator

More than any other poet writing today, Jamie's simultaneous attunement to the political, social and natural realms demonstrates their interpenetration and interdependence.

— from the back cover of *The Bonniest Companie*, (London: Pan Macmillan, 2015).

Kathleen Jamie's oeuvre spans the period between Scotland's three constitutional referenda in 1979, 1997, and 2014. Her works provide a record of the poet's personal interaction with Scotland that never ceases to be political in nature. It is a body of work which expresses a deep loyalty to Scotland, but is also frequently critical of what it might mean to be Scottish in Jamie's generation; old enough to remember the 1979 vote but too young to have actually participated. Jamie increasingly dedicates her work to finding 'a place to stand', in the words of Faith Lawrence.[518] In one way, Kathleen Jamie finds her place to stand as a global citizen: borderless, and primarily identified as human against the nonhuman we affect. In other respects, her place to stand is more local, because the land Jamie finds herself standing on is almost always identifiably Scotland; from community-owned Eigg to abandoned St Kilda to the centre of Edinburgh city. Even when further afield in Pakistan or Canada, Jamie's perspective is necessarily that of a Scot, and this is openly explored in her work.

In this section I will discuss Jamie's interaction with Scottish constitutional politics, and how she finds her place on the Shelley-Auden spectrum as a commentary voice; as a witness to events. The voices of artists and poets are a major contributing factor in how we come to understand or interpret political realities of the past or present; 'the stories the Scots told themselves'.[519] Recent publications, such as Catriona MacDonald's *Whaur Extremes Meet: Scotland's Twentieth Century* (itself named after words in a Hugh MacDiarmid poem), or

[518] Faith Lawrence, 'A Poetics of Listening', in *Kathleen Jamie: Essays and Poems on Her Work*, ed. by Rachel Falconer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 10-20 (p. 11).
[519] *Road to Referendum*, p. 116.

Louis Scott's *Scottish History in Verse*, demonstrate the value of creative works to interpreting key events and their impact. [520] This is not to say that poems, songs, novels, and so forth are the equivalent of court transcripts or a parliamentary Hansard in their role as historical records. However, as contemporary witnesses to the attitudes, events, people, and places of history, they are also primary sources and valuable as such. Furthermore, the work of all of the writers in this thesis demonstrates that artistic work can provide perspectives the above examples cannot:

> art has an important role in the political world. It can commentate on contemporary issues whilst simultaneously reminding us of our past and its relevance… It can help put our own lived experience into new perspectives… It also serves as a record of thoughts and feelings which *Hansard* or history books struggle to recall.[521]

In her first volume of poetry after the Referendum, Jamie is noticeably aware of this relationship and the role of the artist as commentator to events and what they might signify to those living through them. With this in mind, she sets out to provide her own form of commentary.

At the 19th Edinburgh Independent Radical Book Fair in October 2015, Kathleen Jamie launched her new poetry collection, *The Bonniest Companie*. The book was the product of a self-imposed task to write one poem a week throughout the year of 2014. In Jamie's own words written on the book's back cover;

> 2014 was a year of tremendous energy, and, knowing I wanted to embrace that energy and participate in my own way, I resolved to write a poem a week, following the cycle of the year.[155]

The book is made up of forty-seven poems (just shy of one for each week of the year) divided into four sections. The poems track the rotation of the seasons specific to a temperate Northern Hemisphere climate. *The Bonniest Companie* openly acknowledges that one of the key interactions between literature and politics is the role of the writer as a commentator. In keeping with this and with Jamie's past literary preoccupations, *The Bonniest Companie* provides a record of this crucial year for Scotland primarily in relation to questions of the natural world, Scottish nationhood, and the places where the two intersect. It is

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[520] Louis Scott, *Scottish History in Verse* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company, 2013).
[521] Katie Ailes and Sarah Paterson, 'Introduction', in *Aiblins: New Scottish Political Poetry,* ed. by Katie Ailes and Sarah Paterson (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2016), pp. 11-17 (p. 16).

important to note the positioning of poems in analysing the text, as they are placed chronologically.

The first section, 'Merle' (Scots for blackbird), opens with a 'cauld blas', through to a 'blustery' March. Section Two, 'The Bonniest Companie', opens in April and moves through May and June to midsummer. It is in the third part of the book, 'Migratory', that we see the most intense engagement with the Referendum, including what Will Burns calls the 'fever pitch' of the collection, a poem entitled '23/9/2014'.[522] *The Bonniest Companie* concludes with a section named 'Homespun' which brings us into an autumn in which leaves are:

> scuttering down Easter Road,
>
> sycamore and rowan
>
> desperate as refugees

The penultimate poem, 'Solstice', describes 'Angus at midwinter', thus completing the cycle of the seasons by returning to winter where the volume began.

No section aligns perfectly with each season (i.e. one each for spring, summer, autumn, and winter), rather the year is divided into three-month periods that cross seasonal thresholds as demonstrated by Figure 9. Jamie's work expresses a consistent fascination in her prose works with pagan calendars that rely on the elements. Consequently, her seasons travel from Solstice to Equinox and not according to the Gregorian calendar. The significance of months of the year and their individual relation to each season, and the related significance of a Solstice or Equinox, is a preoccupation of Jamie's more recent work. In her prose this can be startlingly specific, for example:

> Every year, in the third week of February, there is a day, or, more usually, a run of days, when one can say for sure that the light is back.[523]

In her poetry, the months of the year accompany us as readers all through the text. These specific references shed light on many of the poems as the volume

[522] Will Burns, 'Weird Song - a Review of the Bonniest Companie by Kathleen Jamie', *Caught by the River*, October 2015 (2015).
[523] Kathleen Jamie, *Sightlines* (London: Sort Of Books, 2012), p. 91.

progresses, highlighting connections and disconnections between them. For example, 'It was August', 'Every mid-February', full March moon'.[524]

Section	Months	Season
Merle	January-March	Winter going into Spring
The Bonniest Companie	April-June	Spring going into Summer
Migratory	July-September	Summer going into Autumn
Homespun	October-December	Autumn going into Winter

Figure 9. Table of Seasonal Relationships in *The Bonniest Companie* by Kathleen Jamie

This constant reminder of fluid barriers between seasons and the man-made measurements by which we keep the year (month, solstice, equinox, season) is in keeping with the recurrence of liminal images during the course of the text. Throughout the volume, Jamie is depicting a Scotland 'on the cusp' (see Figure 10). This element of her poetics is a vital component of her self-awareness as a commentator on events. The section which takes us from midsummer to the Referendum is called 'Migratory', a clear indication of travelling both towards and away from something known that might be called home. Jamie has maintained an interest in the idea of migration throughout her career, particularly in relation to birds, and she builds on this background in this section that culminates with '23/9/2014'.[525]

The titular poem 'Migratory I' (Migratory II and Migratory III surface in 'Homespun') appears in this section only one poem in advance of '23/9/2014'. The poem recalls the finding of a dead swan, its 'head pointing north like a way-

[524] Kathleen Jamie, *The Overhaul* (London: Picador, 2012).
[525] Examples in poetry include 'Sky Burial', 'Sad Bird' from *The Queen of Sheba*, 'Before the Wind', 'Moult' and 'The Falcon' from *The Tree House*, 'The Dash', 'Five Tay Sonnets', 'Swifts', and 'Halfling' from *The Overhaul*. Examples in prose include 'Peregrines, ospreys, cranes' from *Findings*, and 'The Gannetry', 'Three Waysof Looking at St Kilda', 'On Rona' and 'The Storm Petrel' from *Sightlines*.

sign'. The wing of the swan is imagined by the poet as 'A radiant gate | one could open and slip through'. Eventually, the poet and her companion lay the bird to rest and continue in the gale, 'half-elated, half-scared'. From the title onwards this poem is replete with images of liminality and being on the cusp between the human and nonhuman worlds. Given her past preoccupation with migration in publications such as *The Tree House* (2004), *Findings* (2005), *The Overhaul* (2012), and *Sightlines* (2012), it is hardly surprising that Jamie sees the immediate build up to the Referendum as a kind of migration. Her depiction of it is of a journey that, like a bird migration, is made by impulse as much as logical survival. In her essay 'The Storm Petrel', Jamie considers the improbability of migration:

> It was the twentieth century before it was ascertained that birds actually do migrate; it seemed so improbable that swallows, for example, flew all the way to southern Africa. They obviously vanished in autumn and reappeared in late spring, but some folks thought they just hid, or hibernated in the bottom of ponds.[526]

In 'Ospreys' Jamie also considers the illogical side of migration, with a simultaneous gratitude for its place in Scottish life:

> You'll be wondering why you bothered: beating
>
> up from Senegal, just to hit a teuchit storm –
>
> late March blizzards and raw winds, before the tilt
>
> …
>
> Either way,
>
> there'll be a few glad whispers round town today:
>
> *that's them, baith o' them, they're in.*[527]

A 'teuchit' is a north-east Scotland term for a peewit, and a 'teuchit storm' refers to a period of bad weather that occurs around the time when these birds return to the area to nest — another example of Jamie's delight in the specificity of local seasons.

[526] *Sightlines*, p. 213.
[527] *The Overhaul*, p. 5.

Jamie's literary past demonstrates her fascination with migration, and the implications of using it as a key recurring image in the context of the 'Migratory' quarter of *The Bonniest Companie*. Migration is clearly a journey, but it also represents a liminal space, something between being at home and being away. Any journey is inherently liminal, but what a migration also embodies is the sense of constant liminality that Gray also explores; of never being fully at home in one place and being constantly engaged in the process of journey. This, for Jamie, is Scottish statehood. As David Wheatley explains:

> Where Scottish history for Edwin Muir was a 'painted field', for Kathleen Jamie it is as likely to be a storm-blown beach, endlessly written, unwritten and rewritten by the changing elements[528]

That identification with always moving toward something but never fully settling, is closely linked to the Referendum in this section of *The Bonniest Companie*.

Although the swan in 'Migratory I' is dead, it is still a 'proclamation' of potential. Building on the liminality of migration, Jamie's image of the north-pointing swan as 'a radiant gate | one could open and slip through' is a clear indication of the hope and potential the poet sees in continuing the migration towards Scottish independence; northwards, away from London. The poem immediately before 'Migratory I', 'Fianuis', named for a peninsula on the island of Rona, also presents liminality in Scotland's natural environment as representative of a sense of being on the cusp of potential:

> Well friend, we're here again,
>
> sauntering the last half-mile to the land's frayed end
>
> to find what's laid on for us, strewn across the turf –
>
> gull feathers, bleached shells,
>
> …
>
> Change, change – that's what the terns scream
>
> down at their seaward rocks[529]

[528] David Wheatley, 'Proceeding without a Map: Kathleen Jamie and the Lie of the Land', in *Kathleen Jamie: Essays and Poems on Her Work,* ed. by Rachel Falconer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 52-61 (p. 54).
[529] Kathleen Jamie, *The Bonniest Companie* (London: Picador, 2015), p. 38.

A beach is an archetypal location of liminality, neither on land nor sea, a threshold between the two major environments. The 'Migratory' section opens with another overt example of this idea of the in-between; the poem 'The Cliff':

> Let's take our chances here with the mortal,
>
> the common and the mortal,
>
> and stroll among the clifftop
>
> drifts of pink thrift,
>
> the throat-catching fulmar-shit updraft
>
> and let space open
>
> between word and world
>
> wind-strummed, trembling[530]

The Yes campaign consistently utilised the rhetoric of 'take our chances', and of seizing a 'once in a generation opportunity' during the Referendum process. Then deputy leader of the SNP, Nicola Sturgeon, gave the following statement fifty days before the Referendum for example: 'A Yes vote gives us a once in a lifetime chance'. This would have been approximately the time when Jamie was writing 'The Cliff', based on the chronology of *The Bonniest Companie*. It is evident from these and other poems in the collection that Jamie is anxious to record this aspect of Yes advocacy in the Referendum.[531]

The location of these poems in the text and their foregrounding of liminal spaces or moments indicate Jamie's desire to commentate on the sense of waiting that she observes regarding the Referendum. In her essay 'After the Referendum', Jamie describes the 18 September 2014 as a day 'which we'd waited for in a fervour'.[532] 'The Disunited Kingdom' expresses a similar sense of building anticipation:

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[530] Ibid. p. 31.
[531] Other examples from *The Bonniest Companie* which particularly powerfully deal with the idea of liminality but which I do not have the space to discuss here include 'The View' (p.9), 'Arbour' (p.22), 'A Turn in a Stair' (p.32), and 'World Tree' (p. 37).
[532] Kathleen Jamie, 'After the Referendum', *London Review of Books,* 36 (2014).

> Orkney, Scotland — With a referendum on Scottish independence from the United Kingdom only seven months away, political rhetoric is escalating, and so is fear-mongering.[533]

The feeling of being on the edge of something, between the status quo and whatever the day of 18 September might bring, is evidently something Jamie was keenly aware of in the run-up to the Referendum. It is from a desire to commentate upon and record this sense of being on the cusp, that Jamie has devoted so much of the 'Migratory' section of *The Bonniest Companie* to liminality.

The final poem of the 'Migratory' section is '23/9/2014'. The explanatory notes at the back of *The Bonniest Companie* state:

> *23/9/2014* — In 2014 I strove to write a poem a week. Those poems became this book. The Scottish independence referendum was held on 18/9/2014.[534]

This note is phrased opaquely and is Spartan in detail, but demonstrates the importance of the poem to the collection. It is significant that Jamie has chosen to use '23/9/2014' to explain the uniting element of the whole text (there are notes for only eight of the forty-seven poems in total). This confirms that one of the principal objects of this collection is to be a record of the 'tremendous energy', and for Jamie, tremendous hope and ultimately disappointment that defined her experience of the year of the Referendum. The end result is a prime example of the individuality at work in creative interactions with the Referendum, as discussed in ii: interactions with the Scotland that 'exists in five million forms inside our heads.'[535]

'23/9/2014' emphasises the idea that permeates *The Bonniest Companie* of a journey not yet completed. Due to the significance and brevity of the poem, I will reproduce it here in its entirety:

> So here we are,
>
> dingit doon and weary,

[533] Kathleen Jamie, 'The Disunited Kingdom', *The International New York Times,* February 2014 (2014).
[534] *The Bonniest Companie*, p. 61.
[535] Elphinstone in, *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*, p. 74.

happed in tattered hopes

(an honest poverty)

Wir flags are wede awa,

the withered leaves o shilpit trees

blaw across deserted squares,

and the wind

— harbinger of winter —

quests round the granite statues

— and so on and etcetera.

We ken a' that. It's Tuesday. On wir feet.

Today we begin again.[536]

Jamie's tribute to the Referendum result is an assertion that the journey she has been describing in this collection of poems is unfulfilled, but is still that thread of bardic voice that Edwin Morgan describes as 'not quite, oh no not quite, not ever broken or forgotten.'[537] As a testament to this, Jamie has saturated her poem with references to her poetic inheritance, quotation being a technique that rarely surfaces in her work. Line two contains the phrase 'dingit doon', which appears in Liz Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots,* as part of a speech made by Bothwell expressing his combined certainty in and fear for Scottish sovereignty.[538] Line four cites the well-known opening line of Burns' 'A Man's A Man For A' That' which was sung by Sheena Wellington at the opening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. Line five references Jean Eliot's lament for the dead Scots of Flodden, 'The Floo'ers o' the Forest (are a' wede awa)', which has recurred in Scottish Literature since the eighteenth century. One such occurrence is as an important feature of Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song,* which Louisa Gairn argues is an essential text for Scottish ecopoetics that 'evokes the closely-felt correspondences between human biological processes and the earth'.[539] The 'withered leaves o shilpit trees' recalls Edwin Morgan's

[536] *The Bonniest Companie*, p. 41.
[537] Edwin Morgan, 'For the Opening of the Scottish Parliament, 9 October 2004', (Online: Scottish Poetry Library, 2004).
[538] *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, p. 51.
[539] Louisa Gairn, *Ecology and Modern Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p. 101.

‘shilpit dog’ from the opening line of his ‘Glasgow Sonnet ii’. This work is a tribute to three centuries of Scottish poets who have lamented Scotland’s loss of sovereignty. This sovereignty had, five days earlier, been denied once again, this time by 55% of the electorate. However, it is also a rebuttal against this elegiac strain in Scottish Literature. The poem includes a volta after line 10 and changes tone from frustration and despair to a kind of affectionate mockery: ‘— and so on and etcetera. | We ken a’ that.’ Lines 11-13 are a direct representation of the poet’s response to the outcome of the Referendum. Namely, to not lament events that are past and beyond our control, as Jean Elliot does for a battle that took place two centuries before her lifetime, as Jamie’s contemporary Liz Lochhead does for the Union of the Crowns, or as Burns has done for the original Union of Parliaments which took place some five decades before he was born.

Figure 10. Poster from 'Scotland on the Cusp' event, July, 2014.[540]

3.2 Jamie and the Dream State

Before a referendum on Scottish independence was imaginable, before a devolved Scottish authority even seemed particularly likely, there was *Dream State*. This is a collection of poems with short statements either from or about their authors, edited by Daniel O'Rourke and first published in 1994. Three years after that, a devolved Parliament was realised and opened. With the prospect of a fully independent Scotland or even a referendum on the subject still apparently distant, a second edition with a new introduction was released. Both Kathleen Jamie and John Burnside were featured in this collection. Though it may seem surprising that no other poets foregrounded in this thesis appear in *Dream State*, the simple reason for this is that all of the poets selected were born after 1950, a deliberate strategy on the part of O'Rourke. The collection was designed to showcase the next generation after those immortalised by Sandy Moffat's 'Poets' Pub' painting of 1980; a generation for whom someone like Liz Lochhead was already well-known and 'a very glamorous and remote figure' for Jamie.[541] This section will examine the significance of Jamie's identification with a generation of poets who, according to O'Rourke's introduction to the first edition 'more confidently than the politicians, were dreaming a new state'.[542]

3.1 argues that Jamie is knowingly part of a poetic philosophy that writings like hers describe Scotland, and thus form part of its definition during the Referendum period and beyond. This philosophy was also a part of the *Dream State* collection:

> these writings serve as bulletins from, and memorials to, a transforming stretch of a small country's history… If Pound was right and poetry really is 'news that stays news', much of the verse gathered in the book has nothing to fear from the long run.[543]

From her apprenticeship as a young poet in *Dream State,* Jamie is conscious of how creative writing contributes to certain aspects of a political moment being remembered and retold. Catriona MacDonald's history of Scotland's twentieth century for example, cited above, is named for a line from Hugh MacDiarmid's

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[540] 'Scotland on the Cusp' was a reading organised by Chris Agee of *The Irish Pages* held at Oran Mor on 6th July 2014, in which Jamie, along with other prominent figures in Scottish literature including Liz Lochhead and Alasdair Gray (see Chapter 2).
[541] 'The Srb Interview: Kathleen Jamie', *Scottish Review of Books,* 8 (2012).
[542] O'Rourke, p. 281.
[543] Ibid. p. 280.

poetry, opens with a section of *Mary Queen of Scots* and an epigram from Iain Chrichton Smith, and makes substantial use of literature, particularly poetry, as primary historical texts. This is a common element of historical study, but the high frequency of particularly poetic sources MacDonald is able to utilise is impressive.

This section focuses primarily on the poems represented in *Dream State*. The poems by Jamie which appear in *Dream State* were not selected by her, and are only a limited selection from her output. However, they are a small but representative sample of the earlier phase of her work (the first four volumes of her poetry, published between 1981 and 1994). Their inclusion in the volume was a significant landmark in her career, and she makes reference to it multiple times in the decades that follow. Jamie clearly delineates between the pre-devolution phase in her poetry and the post, and the poems in this volume reflect that phase in her career. That delineation closely relates to O'Rourke's stated motivations in anthologising 'bulletins from, and memorials to, a transforming stretch of a small country's history'.[544] Finally, this thesis is concerned with the intersection between poets, their work, their politics, and the conversation they have through those works with the public. The *Dream State* volume is a significant example of public interaction with Jamie's poetry, and the original publication and its second edition arrived at key moments of Scotland's devolutionary period. This was not an accident, and O'Rourke's motivations are unselfconsciously political, as both introductions attest. The continued relevance of *Dream State* as a collection and as an idea for Jamie and other alumni in the context of the Referendum is reflected in Jamie's contribution to *Unstated* as well as several other sections of that text.

Jamie's poems in *Dream State* are well-chosen by O'Rourke, given that they cover a breadth of the variety to be found in her poetry of Scottish self-reflection from the 1980s and 1990s. Jamie's play on the still-extant name 'Kingdom of Fife' for her region of residence, 'The Republic of Fife', opens the section. Jamie imagines the 'Kingdom' as a Republic, whose citizens would comprise not only the living human population but declares 'All birds will be citizens', and includes figures of the past and of myth; 'old Scots kings and

[544] Ibid.

dancing fairies'.[545] This is a poem which anticipates Jamie's twenty-first-century preoccupation with exploring the interconnectivity between the human and the nonhuman, the past human, and the mythic — 'a shared and constantly becoming world'.[546] In language prescient of Referendum rhetoric, Jamie advocates a citizenry that is not tied to ethnic ideas of Scottishness; that rejects those who, 'with a tartan nameplate screwed to his door' would seek to make nationality exclusive, and to have a monopoly of speaking for that nationality. At the same time, she weaves together narratives of past, present, and the mythic to create a Republic that is at once a place of shared identity and openness to the new:

> Citizen also; the tall fellow I watched
> lash his yurt to the leafy earth,
> who lifted his chin
> to my greeting, roared AYE!
>
> as in YES! FOREVER! MYSELF!
> The very woods where my friend Isabel
> once saw a fairy, blue as a gas flame
> dancing on trees. All this
>
> close to the motorway
> where a citizen has dangled,
> maybe with a friend clutching
> his/her ankles to spray
>
> PAY NO POLL TAX on a flyover… [547]

[545] Ibid. p. 189.
[546] Lynn Davidson, 'Repetition, Return and the Negotiation of Place in 'the Tree House", in *Kathleen Jamie: Essays and Poems on Her Work,* ed. by Rachel Falconer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 93-99 (p. 98).
[547] Kathleen Jamie, *The Queen of Sheba* (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe Books Ltd., 1994), p. 50.

Jamie's version of an independent Republic of Fife critiques the potential for inwardness and xenophobia in Scottish nationalism. In place of these things, it creates an argument for self-determination that paradoxically relies upon a globalised worldview, an argument that the Yes campaign was to espouse during the Referendum period (see Figure 11 and Section 3.4). This further recalls the work of all of the writers discussed thus far. Morgan's Scottish nationalism is distinctly internationalist in outlook, turning to overseas examples to legitimise Scotland as an historic nation. Rowling contrasts her unified Britain/Ireland with European examples in order to solidify the identity she creates. Lochhead and Gray explore Scotland's role on a global scale in a co-colonial context. Jamie's distrust of a narrow, ethnic nationalism is consistent with her fellow writers who made their opinions known on every side of the Referendum debate.

Figure 11. Alex Salmond campaigning with Scottish residents of EU origin, Edinburgh, 2014.[548]

Louisa Gairn explains that 'The Republic of Fife' is:

[548] Quentin Letts, 'The Salmondistas Cried 'Yes' - in Nine Different Languages', *Daily Mail*, 10 September 2014.

> demarginalising the local or provincial, and instead asserting the relevance of rural communities as part of an interconnected, globalised world.[549]

Gairn's point is accurate, but the final stanzas of the poem also call out to those same provincial communities to assert their own relevance. Jamie asks these communities to cease focussing inward, and to engage instead with those beyond the borders of Fife or Scotland in order to achieve genuine independence:

> …we can balance,
> carefully stand and see
> clear to the far off mountains,
> cities, rigs and gardens,
>
> Europe, Africa, the Forth and Tay bridges,
> even dare let go, lift our hands
> and wave to the waving citizens
> of all those other countries.

The Republic achieves legitimacy by 'waving to' (i.e. interacting with) citizens of other countries. In this poem, Jamie dreams a state that will be internationalist in outlook; an aspiration for an independent Scotland she was to maintain during the Referendum debate.[550]

Also featured in Jamie's *Dream State* selection are poems which develop this internationalist view by imagining Scotland from the eyes of elsewhere. One of these poems, 'Xiahe', takes its name from the Tibetan village the poet writes in, even though she is writing in some of her broadest Scots to date. The poem finds a relationship between the two far-distant locations, and is part of Jamie's output from a time spent in the 'Autonomous Region' of Tibet that gave her 1993 collection its title.[551] This title that surely also makes reference to her own 'Autonomous Region'. Much of these poems are, like 'Xiahe', written in Scots,

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[549] Louisa Gairn, 'Connective Leaps: 'Sightlines' and 'the Overhaul' ', in *Kathleen Jamie: Essays and Poems on Her Work,* ed. by Rachel Falconer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 134-45 (p. 137).

[550] Kathleen Jamie in, *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*, p. 115.
[551] Kathleen Jamie and Sean Mayne Smith, *The Autonomous Region: Poems & Photographs from Tibet* (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1993).

and it is far from home that the poet develops her sense of self as Scottish, linking the two places together through landscape and language. In the words of Robert Crawford, 'she has had to travel very far to locate her Scots voice'[552]:

> Xiahe. Wave droonin wave
> on a pebbly shore,
> the *ahe* o machair, o slammach,
>
> o impatience; ahent the saft saltire
> I trashed, an sheep;
> wha's drift on the brae
>
> is a lang cloud's shadda.[553]

In the word 'Xiahe' (pronounced *Shi-ah-e* according to the gloss the poet provides) and in the foreign landscape, Jamie recalls Scotland; its language ('machair', 'slammach' etc.), and its land.

It is significant that this poem, written from and about Tibet, should make it to the *Dream State* collection. This speaks to the kind of Scottish (inter)nationalism that writers like Jamie have espoused in recent years, described by Iain Macwhirter:

> Scottish Nationalism [in 2014] is a postmodern Nationalism in which being Internationalist and multicultural are as important, indeed arguably more important, than the celebration of Scottish national identity. Which is just as well — the SNP is unique among European Nationalist parties in having more votes from non-Nationalists than Nationalists.[554]

Kathleen Jamie would place herself in the category of those temporarily supporting the idea of Scottish nationalism for the purposes of pursuing other political aspirations associated with Scottish independence, including a more open policy towards immigration.[555] As she states in 2012 in her first public pronouncement of support for a Yes vote in 2014:

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[552] Robert Crawford, 'Kathleen's Scots', in *Kathleen Jamie: Essays and Poems on Her Work,* ed. by Rachel Falconer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 33-41 (p. 35).
[553] Kathleen Jamie in, O'Rourke, p. 192.
[554] *Road to Referendum*, p. 30.
[555] *Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland*, pp. 267-74.

> I'll have to vote yes. That's because I can't now see any other way to clear the space we need if we are to become a mature and self-determining country… Like many Scots, I can clearly distinguish between independence and nationalism, and I wouldn't be voting for nationalism, certainly not for tartan-la-la.[556]

This is a statement supported by her *Dream State* contribution, in which she seeks connections with other nations, even as she imagines an autonomous Scotland. It is a philosophy which is all the more relevant following the UK's vote to leave the EU in June 2016, in which the majority of Scottish voters opted to remain in the EU. According to First Minister at that time, Nicola Sturgeon, this outcome 'was a sign of divergence between Scotland and large parts of the rest of the UK in how we see our place in the world.'[557] Sentiments such as Jamie's were also prevalent amongst the poets of the *Aiblins* collection, in which 'Scottish culture and identity as demonstrated in these poems was often not located within Scotland at all.'[558]

The second and better known of the two more internationally-focussed poems from Jamie's *Dream State* selection is 'The Queen of Sheba.' This poem is one of several examples of Jamie's earlier poetry which question what kind of cultural inheritance has been left for Jamie's generation of Scots to sift through. 'The Queen of Sheba' from the 1994 volume of the same name, and 'Arraheids' also from that volume, satirise the phrase 'whae do you think y'ur' and what Jamie sees as a particularly Scottish fear of becoming 'above yersel'. 'The Queen of Sheba' reimagines the ancient monarch in present-day Scotland. In this context, the Queen has arrived in parochial Scotland in order to challenge its use of her name. In Alan Riach's phrase, 'The Queen of Sheba comes to visit revenge upon the dead hand and oppressive spirit of 'Scotland'.'[559] The 'sexist, Scots-accented put-down'[560] of 'who do you think you are, the Queen of Sheba?' is on trial in this poem, which marks some of Jamie's most confident use of Scots up until that point in her career. The Queen of Sheba herself originates from the first book of Kings in the Old Testament of the Bible. According to the biblical account, the Queen of Sheba (a region located in modern day Yemen), visits King

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[556] Kathleen Jamie in, *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*, p. 117.
[557] Nicola Sturgeon, 'Brexit Vote Statement in Full', *BBC News,* 24 June 2016.
[558] Ailes and Paterson, p. 13.
[559] Alan Riach, 'Mr and Mrs Scotland Are Taking a Vacation in the Autonomous Region', in *Kathleen Jamie: Essays and Poems on Her Work,* ed. by Rachel Falconer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 21-31 (p. 25).
[560] Crawford, p. 35.

Solomon because of his fabled wisdom, seeking to challenge him with 'Difficult Questions'.[561] In Jamie's version the Queen has indeed come to 'Scour Scotland for a Solomon', but this time she wants Scotland's 'wisest man | to test *her* mettle'.[562] She actively invites the question 'whae do you think y'ur?' with her exotic behaviour, so that 'a thousand laughing girls and she' can complete the phrase by defiantly shouting 'THE QUEEN OF SHEBA' in reply.

The language used to describe the Queen is of a completely different nature to that used to describe the out-of-time Scottish public in Jamie's poem. Instead of 'little hooves, wee tails | of pink stuffed in the cleavage of her toes' like the generic 'Vi-next-door', or 'skinny girls' who 'accuse each other of verrucas', the Queen is not described in petty or parochial terms, but is bold and exotic. Her body is represented by 'hanging gardens | jewels, frankincense', so that the local girls sense her freedom when she arrives:

> 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[563]

The Queen epitomises everything that present-day Scotland and Scottish society is not in Jamie's eyes — matriarchal, autonomous, and adventurous. Scots is used effectively in this poem to create a duality of Scotland and the Queen's vision for Scotland, evoking the patriarchal oppression that the Queen is there to displace. Scottishness is not privileged as superior in any way, but rather the foreign outlook on Scottishness is a critique the poet implies Scotland needs to listen to. By the poem's conclusion, the reader is given the sense of a nation in

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[561] 1 Kings 10:1-5, 10, *King James Bible: 400th Anniversary Edition*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[562] *The Queen of Sheba*, p. 11. My emphasis.
[563] Ibid.

flux whose future generations are capable of something different. In Crawford's phrase, the poem also 'gains energy from skipping nimbly between English and Scots, and its final yell is hard not to hear as Scots-inflected'.[564] Thus, while critical of the present, the poem is also expressive of potential for the future: a dream state.

Donny O'Rourke's introduction to the original publication of *Dream State* in 1994 asserts that 'the poets, more confidently than the politicians, were dreaming a new state.'[565] Two decades later, as Scotland considered its second constitutional referendum since that introduction was written, Kathleen Jamie revisited the concept of the *Dream State* that was such a crucial part of her early career. 'Dreaming' is the dominant motif of Jamie's piece in *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence,* a deliberate nod to the echoes of *Dream State* in *Unstated*. The title of Hames' collection itself acknowledges O'Rourke's earlier work. However, Jamie does not relate the two in order to make a positive comparison:

> Time has passed and I'm middle aged now but I'm sure there was a natural energy and a civic and artistic energy 20 years ago which has dissipated.[566]

In Jamie's opinion, Scotland collectively, including but not limited to its creative community, has abandoned the *Dream State* energy:

> It seems to me that today's independence 'debate' is being handed down to us by career politicians so it immediately feels inauthentic… Because we, the people, sense its falsity, we are not thinking and dreaming. Instead of dreaming a nation, we're reduced to fretting about 'the economy'.[567]

There is a degree of nostalgic re-imagining and privileging of her own generation's abilities about this section of Jamie's contribution. In a similar vein, in her interview for the *Scottish Review of Books,* Jamie demonstrates her predilection for her own generation – the *Dream State* generation – in terms of ability and engagement:

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[564] Crawford, p. 36.
[565] O'Rourke, p. 281.
[566] Kathleen Jamie in, *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*, p. 116.
[567] Ibid.

> There's not many younger ones [female poets in Scotland]. By this age, the age of 50, you'd expect somebody to be biting your arse, and there doesn't seem to be, and I don't know why that is.[568]

What Jamie's piece for *Unstated* touches on, however, is the changed nature of poetic engagement with Scottish politics — particularly constitutional politics. Following the creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 after the 1997 referendum, the need to dream up an independent Scotland is no longer the primary motivator for poets who find themselves on the 'Yes' side of a Scottish independence debate. It already exists in some partial form, and there is, at the time Jamie wrote this piece, thirteen years of experience upon which to base new imaginings. Jamie continues:

> Starting now, we need to imagine yet again the kind of Scotland we want. It's no bad thing to keep imagining and testing one's ideas, and we have a younger generation now, mere babes in 1992, who have never known how energising that national dreaming can be.

Jamie is calling for the next *Dream State* generation. The original volume and its participants were clearly crucial for her as a poet, and as an individual and a voter in 2014. She makes this evident in her 2013 essay explaining some of the background to her inscription on the Bannockburn monument (see 3.5).

> the association between poetry, song, national identity, and historical and political moments is still acknowledged in Scotland. In fact, the writers and artists insist on it. It is a cherished half-truth that the success of the 1997 devolution bill was achieved partly by the work of writers and visual artists. In the years between the 1979 devolution, which failed, and the one in 1997, Scotland invigorated itself, not in flag-waving but in self-interrogation and self-examination. It was a vibrant time, culturally speaking. In 20 years a whole generation of Scottish novelists 'wrote themselves out of despair'. It is often stated that this refreshed cultural autonomy played a part in securing political autonomy. The Scottish Parliament, suspended in 1707, reconvened in 1999.[569]

It is clear from the above quotations that Jamie believes *Dream State* and the associated works from herself and fellow *Dream State* alumni were an essential part of the journey towards the Referendum. Despite her apparent dismissal of those who have come after that generation, Jamie is clearly hopeful for a new crop of politically-engaged Scottish poets to take on the mantle; to imagine and

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[568] The Srb Interview: Kathleen Jamie.
[569] Kathleen Jamie, 'The Spirit of Bannockburn', *New Statesman,* February 2013 (2013).

thus contribute to a fully autonomous Scotland of the kind she goes on to describe in that essay.

Kathleen Jamie's association with the *Dream State* generation of Scottish writers has had a significant influence on her involvement with questions of Scottish autonomy throughout her career. It was a watershed moment for her, politically, personally, and professionally, and one which she hopes to see repeated in the lives of her literary descendants. Her choice to describe the experience of her actual vote in the Referendum with her teenage daughter in an essay published just two weeks later, points to an aspiration for the next cohort of writers that may seem to contradict her apparent dismissal of those who came after the *Dream State* generation.

Jamie made the conscious decision to abandon the dreaming up of a Scottish state for a period after the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999:

> It 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. I'm just so glad that they had been dealt with when I'm only half-way through my career as a writer, and therefore I can get on with what I really want to do. I didn't want to write about being a woman writer or being a Scottish writer all my life. So it's done and we have got the parliament. Personally, I am not yet forty and I can start and do whatever it was that I wanted to do from the start.

However, by the Referendum period, in *The Bonniest Companie*, public statements, and essays, Jamie once again finds her role as a poet lies in setting down her version of the 2014 reality, and dreaming the possibilities for an independent Scotland. This is not to suggest that the question of Scottish independence disappeared entirely from her writing during the intervening years, but that 'whatever it was' that Jamie wanted to focus on turned out to predominantly be the ecological. The relationship between this ecopoetic element of Jamie's writing and ideas of imagining (or re-imagining) Scotland, is the focus of the following section.

3.3 Jamie's ecopoetics and a cohesive vision of Scotland

1999 was a watershed year, not only for Scottish politics but for Kathleen Jamie as an individual. This moment was the 'Janus-turn of the new century', as Fiona Stafford describes it in relation to Jamie, recapitulating the Janus motif

discussed in both of the previous chapters.[570] Until this point in her writing, Jamie, alongside others of the *Dream State* generation, had devoted much of their creative energy towards imagining Scotland's past, present, and future (see 3.2). As she states in her interview with Attila Dòsa, after the installation of the new Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, Jamie experienced a sense of freedom from writing about 'Scottishness', and dedicates her next three volumes of poetry and two of prose to an ecopoetic sensibility. However, to paraphrase Alasdair Gray, Scottish constitutional politics refuses to leave Jamie alone.

Jizzen (1999) is clearly a turning point for Jamie, poetically, personally, and politically. The defining theme of this collection is birth and rebirth, the title meaning 'childbirth', 'confinement', or 'child-bed' in Scots. She describes the process as 'physically organic' and 'the best thing I've ever done'.[571] Utilising its various depictions of pregnancy, birth, and parenthood, *Jizzen* represents a moment of deep connection between the poet and the natural world through the experience of 'jizzen'. Towards the end of the collection, Jamie includes a short poem which is both comic and deeply resonant. It is a poem which has the rare distinction of having a longer title than body, and is called 'On the Design Chosen for the New Scottish Parliament Building by Architect Enric Miralles' It reads simply:

> An upturned boat
>
> — a watershed.[572]

The creation of the new Scottish Parliament on the cusp of a new millennium, and its buildings completed in 2004, have certainly been a watershed moment; 'a transitional historical movement full of future potential'.[573] Additionally, they have coincided with a watershed in Jamie's own life that was to develop into an altered (but not completely separate) poetic persona into the twenty-first-century. Although, as Jamie's input into the Referendum indicates, this was not the permanent watershed she may have initially imagined it to be, the events of 1997-1999 led to the renaissance of Jamie's poetics, so that by the time the

[570] Fiona Stafford, 'A Scottish Renaissance', in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century English Poetry,* ed. by Neil Corcoran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 230-44 (p. 231).
[571] Unpublished interview with Sarah Hamlin, 2013.
[572] Kathleen Jamie, *Jizzen* (London: Picador, 1999), p. 48.
[573] Riach, p. 29.

independence debate came around fifteen years later, it was with an ecopoetic eye that Jamie was able to make her contribution. This contribution was made before, during, and after the principal moment of the Referendum, culminating in the distinctly ecopoetic *The Bonniest Companie* discussed in 3.1.

Jizzen points towards significant elements of Jamie's ecopoetic philosophy which were to inform her subsequent work. To quote Juliet Simpson:

> The collection's guiding theme of 'birth'… is charged with an abrupt luminosity of extraordinary connection that patterns the animal and earthy, 'the hare in jizzen' with the bodily and cultural ('woman's work') and other resonant 'deliveries' and discoveries of being and birthright.[574]

'Connection' is indeed the essential focus of this collection, and understanding this we are given a window into Jamie's wider career. As Jamie connects with her past, herself, and her sense of belonging, a commitment to the world of the nonhuman develops. A key example is the seven-poem sequence 'Ultrasound'. Despite a name that refers to human technology, 'Ultrasound' is replete with natural imagery as the poet finds herself connecting to nonhuman worlds through her pregnancy. The third poem in the sequence, 'Thaw', describes the poet's desire to connect her new-born child to the nonhuman world. As she does in 'The Barrel Annunciation', Jamie gives inflections of the supernatural to the earthy and realistic. The poem imagines that these small representatives of the natural world had 'been there' while she was in labour:

> ablaze with concern
> for that difficult giving
> before we were two, from my one.[575]

Birds, beasts, and other elements of the nonhuman had always been significant features of Jamie's poetry. It is not until *Jizzen,* however, that the poet expresses such a deeply felt connection between herself and the natural world. This connection is deepened beyond reversal once the poet acknowledges the instinct for regeneration that links human and nonhuman, allowing her to greet tree, moss, and bird roost in a 'complicit homage of equals.'

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[574] Juliet Simpson, "Sweet-Wild Weeks': Birth, Being and Belonging in 'Jizzen", in *Kathleen Jamie: Essays and Poems on Her Work,* ed. by Rachel Falconer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 71-82 (p. 71).
[575] *Jizzen*, p. 9.

The connection between the poet and her environment over her period of new motherhood is extended to the nation itself in the fifth poem of the 'Ultrasound' sequence: 'Bairnsang'. This poem, unusually for Jamie, is entirely in Scots. This returns the poet to the language of her childhood, which she uses with a new skill and confidence in this volume. Robert Crawford claims:

> Jamie's very use of the Scots word 'bairns' declares a deep continuing allegiance to Scots which is bound up with parental love — a mother's love for a mither tongue.[576]

It is not only parental love from the poet to her children, but a connection to her own parents and upbringing that fosters such dedicated use of Scots in this sequence. In Jamie's other work such as *Among Muslims* (1992) or 'Forget It' from *Jizzen*, both her mother and her grandmother speak 'a nice Scots'. Research from the field of sociology has established that when we become parents we look to our own parents' example to establish what kind of parents we wish (or do not wish) to become.[577] In the case of Jamie's poetry in Scots, Roderick Watson has a good case when he argues that Jamie's own position as a parent inspires a return to her ancestral language.[578] As the poet describes childbirth, it connects her to her female ancestors, and thus to their language. It is also the language of her poetic inheritance, and the title, 'Bairnsang', (a nursery rhyme or lullaby) evokes that traditional format, along with Liz Lochhead's popular 1995 poem, 'Kidspoem/Bairnsang'[579], or William Soutar's 1933 poem 'A Bairn's Sang'.[580]

The bairn sangs of Soutar, Lochhead, and Jamie make an interesting triad. The continuous thread for all is the acknowledgement of being part of a longer literary tradition. For Soutar, writing between the two world wars and contemporary to the Scots Literary Renaissance, bairns' sang was an invocation of an extant but threatened tradition. In addition to the poem he calls 'A Bairn's Sang', Soutar is perhaps best remembered for devising many other poems in

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[576] Crawford, p. 37.
[577] R. LaRossa and C.B. Sinha, 'Constructing the Transition to Parenthood', *Sociological Enquiry,* 76 (2006).
[578] Roderick Watson, 'Living with the Double Tongue: Contemporary Poetry in Scots', in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature, Volume Three: Modern Transformations: New Identities (from 1918),* ed. by Ian Brown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 163-75.
[579] *The Colour of Black & White: Poems 1984-2003.*
[580] William Soutar, *Seeds in the Wind: Poems in Scots for Children* (Edinburgh: Grant & Murray, 1933).

Scots for children, also coming under the name of bairns sangs or rhymes. In a letter to Hugh MacDiarmid in 1931 he states:

> If the Doric is to come back alive, it will come first on a cock-horse … I fancy the best beginning would be in bairn-rhymes of six or eight lines[581]

In comparison to the other two poems, Jamie's 'Bairnsang' evokes Scotland less through language (though the Scots of the poem is certainly significant) but more through the landscape and the physical space it occupies. It belongs to the lullaby genre of bairns sang, and is addressed to the poet's new-born child. Each of the four stanzas concludes with a place name at the cardinal points of Scotland:

> Stanza 1: 'an greetna, girna, Gretna Green'
> Stanza 2: 'and fashna, fashna, Macrahanish Sand'
> Stanza 3: 'an grieve nat at aa, Ainster an Crail'
> Stanza 4: 'and sleep, saftly sleep, Unst and Yell'[582]

These place names refer to the southern, western, eastern, and northern extremities of Scotland. Each of them is linked to the preceding words to her baby through either alliteration or assonance. In drawing her child (and by extension her reader) to the boundaries of the new Holyrood parliament's jurisdiction, she identifies the nation into which she introduces her new-born, and which she feels she has inherited. Using the compass points and these markers of the natural world, Jamie is not only introducing her son to the physical world as she does in the third sequence of 'Ultrasound' ('Thaw') but actively demonstrating that it is to Scotland, not the United Kingdom, nor the island of mainland Britain, nor to a specific town or region, that she and her child belong.

Jamie's subsequent two volumes of poetry — *The Tree House* (2004) and *The Overhaul* (2012) — and two of prose — *Findings* (2005) and *Sightlines* (2012) — build on the work *Jizzen* begins; the delineation and celebration of a Scottish landscape. As discussed in section 3.2, Jamie's writing of the Scottish landscape is characterised by a pervading sense of liminality. However, it is not the liminality of a state that can only be a dream state. Scotland is clearly an identifiable landscape and not on the cusp in these publications. The liminality

[581] National Library of Scotland, 'William Soutar (1898-1943)', (Online: Scottish Poetry Library, 2016).
[582] *Jizzen*, pp. 15-16.

is the space between the human and the nonhuman; the title of *The Tree House* for example. The tree house is a fitting space to describe Jamie's position in her ecopoetics. On the one hand, she is rooted to human settlement by default. But on the other, that settlement is not only in the midst of the nonhuman, but relies on it and cannot be separated from it, as much as the tree house is part of the tree. As she puts it in the title poem of that volume, it is 'a gall | we've asked the tree to carry | of its own dead', and Jamie does not shirk from the problems that this interconnection carries with it. In 2012, Jamie discussed this idea:

> [Kathleen Jamie's] family settled in Currie, a suburb on the west side of Edinburgh, 'a couple of miles from the city centre in one direction and the hills in the other – perfectly poised between the two. I think I've carried that sensibility with me all my days; a foot in both camps.' She lives now in a small town in Fife, but reading her work it's easy to forget it: she seems constantly to be looking through and past the bricks and mortar to the wildlife beyond. Has she no yearning, then, to light out permanently for the hills? 'Oh God, no!' she roars. 'No shopping? No nail bars? Why would I do that?[583]

The Tree House concludes with 'The Dipper', a poem made up of three four-line stanzas, the last of which reads:

> It isn't mine to give.
> I can't coax this bird to my hand
> that knows the depth of the river
> yet sings of it on land.[584]

This conclusion to the text is made more forceful by the use of rhyme, rarely employed by Jamie, and deepens the sense that this collection has a specific rhetorical purpose to fulfil. For John Lucas, these words are:

> muted but affirmative, and requiring our attention…a glimpse of that which tells us the earth is something more than a human estate.[585]

In her discussion of Jamie's fascination with 'listening' to the nonhuman, Faith Lawrence cites Jean-Luc Nancy who describes listening as 'the liminal sense par excellence':

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[583] Sarah Crown, 'Kathleen Jamie: A Life in Writing', *The Guardian,* 6 April 2012.
[584] Kathleen Jamie, *The Tree House* (London: Picador, 2004), p. 49.
[585] John Lucas, 'Souls, Ghosts, Angels, and Things Not Human': John Burnside, Alice Oswald and Kathleen Jamie', *PN Review,* 34 (2007).

> ‘To be listening is always to be on the edge of meaning, or in an edgy meaning of extremity.’ If this sense leads us, metaphorically, to the edge of meaning, what is heard will perforce not be intelligible at first.[586]

With these final words of *The Tree House*, Jamie acknowledges her limitations as a poet: she cannot coax the bird into her hand. In other words, there is a mutual lack of understanding between poet and bird, despite a shared relationship with the same land. She ‘acknowledges that the human cannot, and should not, attempt to subsume the natural, despite their on-going connective relationship’.[587]

What she can and does do, however, is observe, discuss, and raise awareness of some of the everyday ecological tragedies occurring in Scotland. She also celebrates the everyday creatures that are so ubiquitous that they seem unimportant. As her essay *Crex Crex* so poignantly demonstrates, the everyday may not remain that way forever:

> Perhaps he [the English painter, John Constable] thought nothing of it, the corncrake being such a commonplace. ‘Heard in every vale,’ as John Clare said in his poem… it was recorded in every county in the land from Cornwall to Shetland. In the last century, though, it has been utterly eliminated from the mainland, and if you’d like to hear or even see this skulking little bird of the meadow you must sail to the Hebrides.[588]

Crex Crex is a particularly impressive example of the way Jamie weaves the human story into that of the natural world, pointing out that ours are not the only dramas taking place on planet earth, and that our actions have often unseen consequences for those living things that share it with us:

> The grim reaper came for the corncrake in the form of the mechanised mower… The corncrake has long been in relationship with humans, its fortunes have waxed and waned as our own farm practices changed… The corncrake’s range has been reduced to a few boggy meadows on the islands. They are the same islands, ironically, whose human populations suffered such decline as ideas on farming changed.[589]

Crex Crex identifies a species now unique to Scotland amongst the British Isles, and as such affirms a differentiation between her nation and the rest of the UK. The essay also relates the decline of certain Scottish human populations

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[586] Lawrence, p. 13.
[587] Carrell and Crown.
[588] Kathleen Jamie, *Findings* (London: Sort Of Books, 2005), pp. 86-87.
[589] Ibid. p. 90.

alongside those of the corncrake, relating a history of the land to a history of human population. This defines Scotland as landscape with a natural and human history apart; even though defining that history involves laying blame for both human and natural decline at the feet of Scots themselves.

Jamie is not simply writing poetry about the natural environment, she is writing poetry that deeply observes *her* Scottish natural environment, from Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh to the harsh and rocky outcrops of St Kilda. Gary Snyder said of North America:

> we haven't discovered America yet. People live on it without knowing what it is or where they are. They live on it literally as invaders.[590]

Perhaps this is why Jamie travels Scotland so widely in these works. Between *The Tree House, The Overhaul, Findings,* and *Sightlines,* Jamie reaches across the spectrum of Scottish landscape as she does in 'Ultrasound', including places abandoned almost entirely by human populations. Mountain, valley, coast, river, island, mainland, loch, and lochan are all given due prominence, as are Scotland's flora and fauna; frog, stag, cetaceans, many individual species of flowers, and above all the birds who interact with the Scottish landscape. This variety is key to Jamie's dedication to Scotland as a land, with its own environment and nonhuman to celebrate and more importantly to protect.

In this writing, Scots is a crucial part of Kathleen Jamie's poetic landscape. 'The Wishing Tree' looks as the poet 'through a **smirr** of rain'; 'Water Day' describes water's '**blithe** career through sluice gates'; '**bletted** fruit' hangs 'just out of reach' in 'The Tree House'; and 'The Spider' is 'suspended like a **slub**, to list only a small selection of examples. According to John Elder, pioneering ecopoets, Gary Snyder, Wendell Berry, and Robert Pack:

> are trying in their different ways to advance the process of cultivation and connectedness through reverence for nature that is rooted in *one chosen place*.[591]

Jamie is committed to her specific landscape, and the Scots language that has grown with it over the centuries. Words like 'smirr' (a fine rain or drizzle which

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[590] Gary Snyder and Willian Scott McLean, *The Real Work: Interviews & Talks, 1964-1979* (New York City: New Directions Publishing, 1980), p. 69.
[591] John Elder, *Imagining the Earth: Poetry and the Vision of Nature* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996), p. 2.

falls in clouds), or ‘haar’ (a cold mist or fog which comes from the east-coast sea) that Jamie uses, are wedded to the Scottish landscape as a specific and defined environment.

W.B. Yeats wrote in 1888:

> You can no more have the greater poetry without a nation than religion without symbols. One can only reach out to the universe with a gloved hand — that glove is one’s nation, the only thing one knows even a little of. [592]

For Jamie, the glove on the hand that reaches out to the nonhuman world is Scotland, and that locus is evident throughout the five publications discussed in this section. Far from being limiting however, this sense of intense loyalty to the environment of one nation heightens Jamie’s rhetorical purpose in her recent ecopoetics. Jonathan Bate explains that for one of ecopoetry’s ancestors, Heidegger:

> poetry can, quite literally, save the earth… For Heidegger, language is the house of being; it is through language that unconcealment takes place for human beings. By disclosing the being of entities in language, the poet lets them be. That is the special, the sacred role of the poet.[593]

Bate’s description of ‘the sacred role of the poet’ bears important similarities to Burnside’s description of the poet’s privileged role as dissident, and speaker of the ‘unsayable’. As will be discussed in the following section, at the historical moment at which Jamie writes, any nation must consider the relationship between human and environment. When questions of who has authority or responsibility over certain parts of the British archipelago are at the forefront, this rhetorical purpose can unite a form of activism for self-determination with advocacy for greater ecological sensibility.

3.4 Ecopoetics and Referendum rhetoric

In the words of Roger Thomson, Jamie’s poetry is ‘deeply saturated with rhetorical purpose’.[594] In the context of this quotation, Thomson was referring to Jamie’s ecopoetry. Ecopoetry is rhetorical by definition, aimed at challenging

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[592] W.B. Yeats in, Horace Reynolds, 'Letters to the New Island', (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), (p. 174).
[593] Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 258.
[594] Roger Thompson, 'Emerson, Divinity, and Rhetoric in Transcendentalist Nature Writing and Twentieth-Century Ecopoetry', in *Ecopoetry: A Critical Introduction,* ed. by J. Scott Bryson (Salt Lake City: Utah University Press, 2002), pp. 29-39 (p. 37).

human relationships with the nonhuman. In relation to the Referendum however, the boundary between Jamie's established ecological rhetorical purpose and a burgeoning involvement with independence commentary became blurred, and Jamie employed the one to support the other.

The Referendum was, in many ways, a traditional dispute over land. In spite of nuanced arguments such as those regarding identity, mutual security, democratic deficit, or national industries, in some ways the 2014 question was no more sophisticated than that being asked at Bannockburn seven hundred years previously; who controls this land, the people who live on it, and all it can provide? But the idea of 'owning' land at all is not one that sits well with Kathleen Jamie. Ecopoetics and postcolonial studies are interrelated fields, and her philosophy on this topic is at times reminiscent of Alasdair Gray's sentiments in 'Settlers and Colonists':

> I don't think, when I'm writing, 'now I'm going to write a political tract,' but… I do think that part of the reason for *Findings*' success, for example, was that the land and landscapes were being described by an indigene. Not by someone arriving as a tourist — or, crucially, as an owner… in Scotland where 80% of the land is owned by 10% of the people, I feel I might be striking a tiny blow: by getting out into these places and developing a language and a way of seeing which is not theirs but ours.[595]

In a time when many societies around the world are increasingly aware that our human future is intimately linked with that of the land, and the flora and fauna with which we are interdependent, such disputes over ownership can seem more frivolous than some other rhetorical purposes of ecopoetry. However, for Jamie the debate over Scottish autonomy is of particular importance in the context of global climate change and the extinction or endangerment of British flora and fauna:

> The John Muir Trust, which has now bought eight estates in Scotland, has a remit to 'protect wild land'. By 'wild', I think is meant openness, expansiveness, that sense of land, as Willa Cather wrote, which is nothing but land: not a country at all, but the material out of which countries are made'. But does this 'material' exist any longer? Is there any 'wild land' in this congested country, if it's on the scale of landscape and requires protection or, worse, 'management'?
>
> …

[595] Crown.

> I think ‘nature’, ‘natural’, and ‘wild’ are almost synonymous here, though ‘wild’ ups the rhetorical ante. A dandelion poking up between paving slabs is natural and wild –and cheeky and subversive — but it doesn’t carry that special wide-eyed sense of ‘wild’. In the wild, size matters, or so it seems. [596]

When she first gave her support for the Yes vote, Jamie described her reasons for doing so as being in layers of ‘Individual. Community. Planet.’[597] In her politics as in her poetry, Jamie is keenly aware of this interconnection. Before publicly stating her support for independence, Jamie expressed her feelings on the subject in her poem ‘An Avowal’ published in *The Overhaul* in 2012:

> Bluebell at the wayside
>
> nodding your assent
>
> to summer, and summer’s end;
>
> nodding, on your slender stem
>
> your undemurring *yes*
>
> to the small role life
>
> offers you[598]

Referring to the poem in *Quartz,* Jamie explains that her attitude towards political concerns is to ‘keep in with the bluebells, not the spreadsheets’.[599] This she certainly does in her responses to the Referendum, however they are no less effective for that. Jamie builds on her experience and reputation as an observer and recorder of the Scottish landscape in her engagement outwith the strictly creative in relation to the 2014 independence referendum.

As discussed in 3.3, ‘Bairnsang’ of the ‘Ultrasound’ sequence uses the four cardinal points of the Scottish land to welcome her new-born son into the world. In another poem in the same sequence, the poet returns home with her firstborn and immediately makes a ‘journey | through darkening snow’ to connect her child and herself to the land she calls home:

> I had to walk to the top of the garden,

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[596] Kathleen Jamie, 'A Lone Enraptured Male', *London Review of Books,* 30 (2007).
[597] Kathleen Jamie in, *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*, p. 117.
[598] *The Overhaul*, p. 32.
[599] Cassie Werber, 'Seven Lessons for Writers', *Quartz,* February 2015 (2015).

> to touch, in a complicit
>
> homage of equals, the spiral
>
> trunks of our plum trees, the moss,
>
> the robin's roost in the holly.[600]

This notion of complicity is recurrent in Jamie's work. As Faith Lawrence explains, the complicity also extends to the reader:

> In Jamie's poems, we must exchange the word 'privileged' for 'complicit'. Her way of talking to the reader implies equality rather than flattery.[601]

This is not a one-off incident in Jamie's work. In another example from the prose essay 'Darkness and Light', the author visits a Neolithic burial site with a palimpsest of human remnants on its walls:

> …instinctively I lifted my hand to touch it [carvings in the Neolithic burial site of Maes Howe], to make a gesture of connection…Too many wandering, sweaty fingers would soon wear the carvings away.[602]

It is not only the nonhuman but the ancient human that fascinates Kathleen Jamie and draws her to seek connection. She also seeks connection between herself and those who lived in Scotland many generations before her and her children, leaving their inevitable mark on the landscape. As she attests in 2008:

> There's nothing wild in this country [Scotland]; every square inch of it is 'owned', much has seen centuries of bitter dispute; the whole landscape is man-made and deforested, drained, burned for grouse moor, long cleared of its peasants or abandoned by them.[603]

These cleared peasants had made their own drastic alterations to the land themselves, on top of a palimpsest of man's markings going back centuries, a phenomenon which fascinates Jamie. She acknowledges the responsibilities of the living human towards those who have lived before us, and become themselves part of the environment she explores, even though that may sometimes mean, as in the quotation above from *Findings* regarding Viking carvings, that concepts of connection and responsibility come into conflict with each other.

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[600] *Jizzen*, p. 13.
[601] Lawrence, p. 11.
[602] *Findings*, p. 18.
[603] Jamie.

Jamie invites the reader into her own sense of complicity with the nonhuman (including the past human) of Scotland, and in so doing she shares with us the burden of responsibility regarding the subjects of her writing. Thus Jamie places the onus on both herself and the reader to fulfil the duties of guardianship over one's nation; to accept responsibility for the nonhuman world, to protect it and to safeguard it for future generations. This sensibility, common in her poetry and prose of recent years, is identifiable in the rhetoric of the official Yes campaign in the Referendum period. Jamie associates herself with this rhetoric in her creative and journalistic writings contemporary to the independence debate. Jamie's language and that of the Yes campaign seek a departure from a situation where Jamie insists that in terms of the environment:

> Westminster imposes policies that many Scots consider irrelevant at best, and self-serving and cruel at worst.[604]

The official rhetoric of the SNP Government establishes their government of a potential independent Scotland as an alternative to a Westminster paradigm of conservatism regarding climate change legislation and alternative energies.

This argument maintains the apparent contradiction of using Scotland's oil wealth whilst simultaneously utilising the opportunities of Scottish independence to pursue policies reducing reliance on fossil fuels. In her 'Disunited Kingdom' essay, Jamie explains:

> I'm writing this from the Orkney islands in the far north of Scotland, a place of sea and hills, with a dynamic economy based on agriculture and oil, with as many links to Norway as London. Here the terms 'British' and 'United Kingdom' already feel remote.[605]

Scotland's Future, the SNP's white paper on independence, includes a chapter entitled 'Environment, Rural Scotland, Energy, and Resources' in which a 'clean, green' image of Scotland and plans for a more sustainable future under an independent Scottish government are laid out, led by the SNP:

> Using independence to build a clean, green, and nuclear-free nation, Scotland can be a beacon of environmentalism and sustainability. The world-leading climate change legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2009 demonstrates Scotland's progressive approach to the

[604] Jamie.
[605] Ibid.

> protection of the environment, and makes Scotland a respected and valued player on the international stage.
>
> …
>
> However, Scotland is held back from championing action on climate change internationally as we have no direct voice in either the UN or the EU
>
> …
>
> If we form the government of an independent Scotland we will seek to enshrine environmental protection in the constitution.[606]

The document blends the rhetoric of national pride with that of the environmental awareness espoused in Jamie's poetry. This is highly evocative of national identification in New Zealand of a 'clean, green' and 'nuclear free' nation, originating with foreign policy in the 1980s and utilised by government and non-government campaigns since that time.[607]

In the wider Yes campaign, the Green Party of Scotland were also heavily involved, and there was a distinct element of environmentalism in the mix of aspirations for the effects of a Yes vote. Patrick Harvie, the co-convener of the Scottish Greens, became a prominent figure during the 2014 debate, and stated two months before the Referendum:

> For me, it's got nothing to do with flags, or 300 years of history; it's about the future. And I think that the best way, not only of changing Scotland, but actually challenging the nature of UK politics and the way that it works at present, throughout these islands, is Scottish independence. It doesn't give a guarantee of a utopian future, but it offers up possibilities that are closed to us at the moment.[608]

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[606] *Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland*, p. 293.
[607] For examples of the extent to which this is a national 'brand' and constant form of public rhetoric, see New Zealand's Ministry of Environment publication https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/summary-leaflet-aug01.pdf or http://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/8023412/100-Pure-Fantasy-Living-up-to-our-brand
[608] Patrick Harvie in, Anoosh Chakelian, 'Leader of the Scottish Greens: You Don't Have to Like Alex Salmond to Vote Yes', *New Statesman,* August 2014 (2014).

Figure 12. Patrick Harvie speaking at a Scottish Greens event, 2014.[609]

Jamie frequently exhibits a distrust of separating the human and the nonhuman as though humanity were apart from nature (and therefore superior). Her work attests to the fact that humanity has an inordinate amount of control over the natural environment, but this requires us to recognise our responsibility as part of wider eco-systems, rather than to regard ourselves as disconnected or immune from the consequences of ecological change. Several times in interview Jamie has described the role of the poet to be 'shamanic' — to negotiate between our world (the world of language) and the nonhuman, or even, as Alan Riach points out, the human and that which lives in between, such as the unborn.[610] Over and over again, Jamie's writing reminds us of the interconnection between our world and the natural; the mutual dependence, the capability for mutual destruction, and a lack of comprehension on both sides. 'The peregrine flickers at the edge of one's senses, at the edge of the sky, at the edge of existence itself' for example. Sometimes these connections are historical fact, human destruction of the lives of other creatures which we must acknowledge, in her *Crex Crex* essay for example. On other occasions it celebrates the mutual fascination between human and animal, all the more sacred for its brevity. From 'White-sided Dolphins':

[609] Anon., 'Election Profile: The Scottsh Green Party', *BBC News*, 27 March 2015.
[610] Riach, p. 22.

When there was no doubt,
no mistaking for water-glint
their dorsal fins'
urgent cut and dive

we grabbed cameras, threw ourselves
flat on the fore-deck. Then,
just for a short time
we travelled as one[611]

Jamie is fascinated with the moments of connection, however fleeting and elusive, between these different worlds.

This fascination is not only for artistic delight, although that is an important aspect of Jamie's work. If we marry this fascination and sense of interrelation between human, nonhuman, ancient, and unborn, Jamie implies, there are powerful and urgent connections to be made that can create a new way of thinking about environmental policy. Jamie's writing from the artist's bothy on the island of Eigg, which has been community-owned since 1997, clearly establishes her belief that Scottish independence is a step in the right direction when it comes to this kind of reconciliation between human and nonhuman:

> Eigg's story is well known to any follower of Scottish politics; its name is synonymous with land reform. In 1997, it was the first island to achieve a community buy-out, putting an end to centuries of private landlordism. The trust [The Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust] bought the island for £1.6 m – raised from 10,000 donations – from the laird, Keith Schellenberg. A few years on, one of the first acts of the newly recreated Scottish Parliament was its Land Reform Act, which established the right of communities to buy, and made available funds to assist. But there was no Scottish Parliament when Eigg's situation reached crisis point… Seventeen years on, it's just the way things are, and no going back.[612]

The article goes on to detail the island's 'sense of self-determination allied to an environmental awareness' which includes a complete absence of streetlights and energy created purely by the natural resources of the island. Jamie uses Eigg in this essay as a microcosm of Scotland itself. She is also careful to point out that

[611] *The Tree House*, p. 22.
[612] Kathleen Jamie, 'Sunny Side Up', *The Economist*, September/October 2014 (2014).

virtually no one on the island was intending to vote No in the referendum which was only a few weeks away at the time.

As she does in her use of Scotland's cardinal points in 'Bairnsang', Jamie's writing traverses the far reaches of the Scottish landscape, including places difficult to get to and rarely visited. Like the island of Rona for instance, 'Inhabited once, but now the island is returned to birds and seals',[613] or the 'low but determined' Ochil Hills on the border between Highland and Lowland.[614] However, the high roofs of the capital, or the common wildlife of a suburban back garden are also not forgotten in Jamie's creative rendering of her country. In poetry, prose, and transactional writing, Jamie makes no secret of her emotional attachment to Scotland as a landscape but also as a political nation, and that she has 'no further interest in being part of a UK brand'.[615] During the Referendum campaign, Jamie built upon her formidable reputation as an observer and recorder of a changing natural nation, archipelago, and planet, to further her rhetorical purposes. These interrelated purposes of environmental consciousness and a desire for Scottish self-determination unite the Kathleen Jamie of the *Dream State* era and the post-devolution Jamie who champions a Scottish ecopoetry. Therefore, when Jamie became one of the most visible voices from the literary community commenting on questions of Scottish independence, it was with the apprenticeship of over three decades of published contemplations on these very subjects. A rhetoric of (re-)connection with the Scottish nonhuman and of the possibilities of Scottish independence was already Jamie's hallmark as a poet, placing her in a natural position to become a public voice in the period of the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence.

3.5 Bannockburn: Jamie as the public poet

The previous sections have discussed Kathleen Jamie's interaction with the Referendum as a poet with an established reputation for considered commentary on various aspects of the Scottish nation. In this final section exclusively focused on Kathleen Jamie, I will examine the relationship between politics and her most public work of poetry, the poem now inscribed on the Rotunda of the Bannockburn monument: 'the most affirmative modern addition to the battle

[613] *Sightlines*, p. 182.
[614] Ibid. p. 47.
[615] Jamie.

site'.[616] Unveiled in August 2013, the poem is inseparable from the context of the Referendum, and as such commemorates not only the battle of 1314, but the less violent contentions over Scotland's leadership that followed seven centuries later.

The poem itself is carved on the inside of a monument known as the Rotunda, which was erected for the 650th anniversary of the battle in 1964. An inscription had been planned but never came to fruition. Jamie describes it as:

> a circle defined by a wall ten feet high, which encloses the very ground where Robert the Bruce raised his flag. There are two wide gaps in the wall, oriented to frame vistas north and south.[617]

The design of the Rotunda makes it impossible to avoid taking in elements of Jamie's poem and the dramatic landscape that surrounds the site simultaneously. Appropriately for Jamie's piece, both the poem and the land where the battle site is thought to lie are both always visible from the Rotunda. A short path leads from the centre of the Rotunda to the statue of the man who led the Scots into battle, Robert the Bruce. The Bruce, however, is less emphasised than the land he surveys, in both the text of the poem and the design. The poem is reproduced here in its entirety:

> Here lies our land: every airt
> Beneath swift clouds, glad glints of sun,
> Belonging to none but itself.
>
> We are mere transients, who sing
> It's westlin' winds and fernie braes,
> Northern lights and siller tides,
>
> Small folk playing our part.
> *'Come all ye'* the country says,
> *You win me, who take me most to heart.*

[616] *Bannockburns: Scottish Independence and the Literary Imagination, 1314-2014*, p. 234.
[617] Jamie.

Figure 13. Rotunda, Bannockburn

When describing her aspirations for this poem, Jamie explains that she felt the site 'needed something forgiven and forgiving, modern, aspirational, welcoming, mature, gracious — and Scottish.' This statement espouses the rhetoric of a Scottishness that refuses to be mono-ethnic or bound to generational inheritance. It is a rhetoric embraced by the Yes campaign and the SNP, as well as writers who, until the Referendum period, separated themselves for the most part from party politics, such as Edwin Morgan, Liz Lochhead, or Alasdair Gray. Of her list of guiding requirements for the poem, Jamie has certainly achieved the 'welcoming' aspect of her designs. The official Yes campaign rhetoric espoused a kind of 'welcoming nationalism', advocating a pride in Scottish diversity and ability to incorporate those of non-Scottish backgrounds. This same element of Jamie's poetry is what Timothy L. Baker has termed 'identity founded on difference rather than unity'.[618] In power in Holyrood and as a principal body in the Yes campaign, the SNP have been wary of a reputation for what Jamie terms 'tartan-la-la' nationalism. With this in mind, the SNP:

> has shown that multicultural Nationalism is not an oxymoron. You can be Nationalist without being nasty, without being xenophobic or chauvinist, or having any concept of ethnic exclusivity. It defines as 'Scottish' anyone who happens to live in Scotland, and positively celebrates immigration.[619]

[618] Timothy L. Baker, "An Orderly Rabble': Plural Identities in 'Jizzen", in *Kathleen Jamie: Essays and Poems on Her Work*, ed. by Rachel Falconer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 62-70 (p. 62).
[619] *Road to Referendum*, p. 30.

This is perhaps not enough to avoid Jamie's ambivalence towards the SNP in her *Unstated* essay. However, this is where the rhetoric of the Bannockburn poem and that of the SNP and Yes campaign overlap most strongly. They do so in celebrating Scotland and its long history, with a simultaneous insistence that any are free to call Scotland home, regardless of whether their ancestors took part in that celebrated battle — or even if they did take part but for the other side.

Jamie reminds us that the land belongs to 'none but itself', a statement that recalls her poetry of recent years. Jamie has been consistent in her aversion to concepts of land ownership. The final words of *The Tree House* for example:

> I can't coax this bird to my hand
> that knows the depth of the river
> but sings of it on land.[620]

As discussed in section 3.4, Jamie is at odds with the idea that one can 'own' land, but rather supports the view that she expresses so concisely at Bannockburn: 'You win me who take me most to heart'. In other words, those who feel a responsibility to the land, and an attachment to it, whether through ancestry, residence, or any other kind of connection, are those to whom it 'belongs'.

'We are mere transients', however, and while 'small folk' may live off the land, defend it, cohabit with the nonhuman, or perhaps feel a deep attachment to 'fernie braes' or 'siller tides', our presence and our impact is always more temporary than the land itself, even though the land is subject to our impact. As Jamie explains in the opening sentence to 'The Spirit of Bannockburn', 'No one knows where exactly the Battle of Bannockburn was fought'. Even such a 'colossal, defining event' as Bannockburn which is still being commemorated 700 years on, has not left such an impact upon the land as to be evident today. David Wheatley points out that the battle location's vagueness:

> offers opportunities of its own, however, and informs the conditions of Jamie's response to the lie of the land in contemporary Scotland.[621]

[620] *The Tree House*, p. 49.
[621] Wheatley, p. 53.

Jamie's poem certainly speaks to a wider Scottish landscape than to this one specific part of it. Additionally, this transience of occupation is an important message in a poem treading some difficult ground concerning national pride and an awareness of a collective past. ('So how come | we remember the years | before we were born?'[622]). This is surely why Jamie has chosen to reference Henderson's famously anti-imperial 'Freedom Come All Ye' in her final stanza. Robert Crawford calls her poem, 'the best and most moving poetic solution to the dilemma' of making a celebratory point about Scotland in relation to the Battle of Bannockburn, without coming across as either Anglophobic or narrow-minded.[623]

The poem insists that any human connection to the Scottish landscape and wildlife is only ever going to be fleeting and individual. However, the poem celebrates these connections, even for their very brevity. ''*Come all ye'* the country says', welcoming such intimacy, and although 'we are mere transients', we are 'transients who sing', implying the song itself — this poem — has significance. This supports Jamie's awareness of the part Scotland's creative community has had to play since Bannockburn in maintaining a Scottish autonomy of some form. Robert Crawford in his 2014 text *Bannockburns* tracks the creative responses of Bannockburn across seven centuries, concluding that the resonance of the event itself and its creative legacy have an important role to play in the Referendum period:

> Scottish independence is an issue involving long-term arguments about culture and imagination, not just immediate arguments about cash.[624]

Crawford's book identifies that the invitation to ten writers to write a poem for the seven hundredth anniversary, of which Jamie's was chosen for the monument, was in itself an acknowledgement of 'the richness of literary inheritance' of Bannockburn.[625]

Jamie's poem at Bannockburn celebrates a loyalty to Scotland, even as it rejects any idea of exclusivity over that loyalty; any kind of ethnic nationalism, or landlordism. Alan Riach explains the apparent disconnect between Jamie's

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[622] *Jizzen*, p. 5.
[623] *Bannockburns: Scottish Independence and the Literary Imagination, 1314-2014*, p. 42.
[624] Ibid.
[625] Ibid. p. 234.

participation in the Bannockburn commemoration and a poem which, in many ways, is the antithesis of certain forms of nationalism:

> However explicit this alignment with nationality and the politics of national identity, Jamie's qualifications are a safeguard against the ossification of identity which nationalism sometimes inclines towards. Her poems continue to emphasise the liminal space that even something as seemingly secure as nationality is always in the process of moving *through*. Scotland may be 'our land' but we are 'mere transients', acknowledging Robert Burns and Hamish Henderson… but also the conundrum of love in the poem's last line: 'You win me who take me most to heart.'[626]

Figure 14. Rotunda, Bannockburn

The text is intimately concerned with the relationship between land and people, and the responsibilities that accompany that relationship. This will have come as no shock to those familiar with Jamie's work up until this point. More unusually for Jamie's poetry, however, it contains a quotation from another Scottish poem, something Jamie rarely engages in, with the exception, curiously, of '23/9/2014' (see 3.1). This is logical when we consider Jamie's essay, 'The spirit of Bannockburn', published as the poem was being carved onto the monument. In this essay, Jamie honours the *Dream State* discussed in 3.2, and highlights the importance of Scotland's artists several times in maintaining a sense of Scottish sovereignty through 'long lines of communication'. This is mirrored in Robert Crawford's *Bannockburns,* himself another *Dream State* alumnus. According to Jamie, 'we writers and artists' maintained 'cultural autonomy for 30 or 300 years, and achieved a devolved government'. Elsewhere in the essay, Scotland's

[626] Riach, p. 11.

artists and writers are likewise described as ‘those truculent upholders of cultural autonomy’. In choosing to reference Hamish Henderson’s ‘Freedom Come All Ye’ in the final lines of her Bannockburn poem, Jamie is actively honouring that legacy. Jamie was not to know at that point that the same piece would be selected as a highlight of the opening ceremony of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in July 2014. Alex Salmond had advocated his love for the song on several occasions, suggesting it as a national anthem for an independent Scotland, replacing ‘Flower of Scotland’ which is currently used in situations such as Commonwealth Games.[627] It is quite possible that Jamie would not be enthusiastic about this connection. However, the link adds to the case that Jamie’s Bannockburn poem must always be considered as part of the Referendum moment.

Figure 15. Rotunda, Bannockburn

[627] Simon Johnson, 'Alex Salmond Links Referendum with Father's Churchill Dislike', *The Telegraph*. Andrew Whitaker, 'Independence: Freedom Come All Ye 'a Good Anthem", *The Scotsman*.

The poem made Jamie an even more public voice on the myriad questions of Scottishness that characterised the time between the signing of the Edinburgh Agreement in October 2012 and the referendum of September 2014. According to Crawford:

> Jamie, through a subtly measured act of literary imagination [the Rotunda poem], turns both the battle of Bannockburn and modern arguments of Scottish independence from a contest into an expression of love.[628]

Jamie's position as a vocal Yes-supporter is reinforced by the frequency of her engagement as a public voice and public poet in backing independence over the same period. Beginning with *Unstated* in 2012, she promptly and consistently turned her prosaic talents to support of Yes. Jamie began the Referendum year itself with a widely-read piece entitled 'The Disunited Kingdom', cited at several points in this chapter. Jamie was also one of several authors asked to share their views on the topic for high-profile blog *Bella Caledonia* in July of 2014 in which she refers to the Bannockburn poem. In the same month *The Guardian* ran a similar piece, in which Jamie contributed a found poem based on responses from friends, which commences with a triumphant 'Aye!'[629] Her essay detailing her time in residence on Eigg in mid-2014 is also definitively written with the Referendum as backdrop.

As the Referendum approached, Jamie's rhetoric became stronger and less hesitant. When in 2012 she first asserts her support for independence, she is cautious and full of caveats. She clearly establishes her disinclination to support the SNP, as do several others in the *Unstated* volume, and concludes by saying 'Any triumphalism, and I'll pull my destiny bag over my head'. Her essay written about polling day itself, however, has a much less reticent tone. It is a piece that is more laden with emotion than is typical of Jamie's prose style. Jamie describes 'zinging with anxiety' at going to vote with her teenage daughter, having waited 'in a fervour' for 18 September 2014 to arrive. Her emotive description of her reaction after the vote was officially a No to independence, seems far removed from the writer of the quotation above from *Unstated:*

> Did we cry? Of course. I did anyway. I spent Friday afternoon happed in a blanket, cat asleep on my throat. We'd worked and hoped, and boy our

[628] *Bannockburns: Scottish Independence and the Literary Imagination, 1314-2014*, p. 237.
[629] Kathleen Jamie in, 'Scottish Writers on the Referendum - Independence Day?', *The Guardian*, 19 July 2014.

> hopes had run high… for a few weeks the bullying, elitist, rapacious United Kingdom establishment had stood exposed. Here. In my country. Scotland. It was absolutely bloody brilliant.[630]

In the essay Jamie even expresses her admiration for Alex Salmond, someone she'd only expressed ambivalence towards at best up until that point, and likewise his party, the SNP:

> I was still on the sofa when Phil came in to tell me Alex Salmond had resigned. He wasn't our 'leader', though he'd sure impressed us.
>
> …
>
> Within a week of the result, membership of the SNP more than doubled. Membership of the Green Party trebled… Let's just say I'm keeping my 'Yes' badge safe in the button tin.[631]

Jamie's passion in her support for Scottish independence demonstrably grows through her writing of this crucial two-year period in Scotland, culminating in *The Bonniest Companie*. Similar to her growing dedication to the ecological, it is partially through the act of writing itself that Jamie discovers what has inspired her towards the rhetorical nature of her very public contributions during the Referendum period in Scotland.

3.6 John Burnside and the role of the poet

In order to emphasise the non-binary nature of the relationship between literature and the Referendum, the final writer I investigate is neither a Yes nor a No voter. John Burnside did not remain silent on the issue but, with equivalent passion and eloquence to the previous five writers discussed, supported the rejection of the Referendum and the Yes/No dichotomy altogether. Like Jamie, Burnside is a poet who has consistently embraced an ecopoetic sensibility in his work. His ecopoetics, however, led him to a very different response to the Referendum question from Jamie's.

John Burnside is keenly aware of a writer's particular niche in the political ecosystem. In his pamphlet *A Poet's Polemic*, he discusses the oft-cited Shelley-Auden spectrum discussed at the outset of this thesis. Burnside, as he did in the Referendum, places himself outside this spectrum between two extremes and

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[630] Jamie.
[631] Ibid.

sets up a different perspective altogether: that poetry makes things happen precisely *because* poets are not legislators:

> …considered in ecological terms, the poet is exactly what the legislator is not, i.e. a celebrant of the unsayable, a soul committed to that which is beyond legislation.[632]

In keeping with his avowed position as an anarchist, Burnside insists that the poet's privilege and purpose is to be in the position a legislator never can be. In other words, to remain outside the narrative and in doing so to be imaginative, but also to be critical and find the flaws in any given narrative or policy without the accompanying onus to provide an alternative:

> It is not so much that poetry makes nothing happen, as that a poem attempts to reveal *what already is,* in all its richness and complexity.
>
> …
>
> This role, the role of the dissident in the widest sense, has always been the privilege of the poet[633]

This is not to say that a writer cannot or should not engage with more practical analysis if they so choose, and if they are able to do so creatively. However, it is the unique ability of the artist to consider the political without the *necessity* for political practicality or pragmatism that gives them their unique and essential role in the political ecosystem.

As part of this outlook, Burnside is also anxious that this privilege not be taken lightly. As a result, his writing philosophy carries with it a deep sense of responsibility to research and consider any published ideas. As he states in *A Poet's Polemic,* 'every published poem is a political act.' In March 2016, he elaborated on this responsibility:

> …for me there are too many people who write poetry and often write quite good poetry who are quite happy to take on a commission, do a bit of research and write a poem and move on.[634]

This deep sense of accountability explains why Burnside returns to the same ideas again and again, investigating them from different angles, from the perspectives of different characters and voices, in the different genres of

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[632] *A Poet's Polemic*, p. 7.
[633] Ibid. pp. 5-7.
[634] John Burnside, unpublished interview with Sarah Hamlin, St Andrews, 4 March 2016.

memoir, prose fiction, journalism, and poetry. For Burnside, something worth writing about is worth a lifetime's study.

In order to examine the relationship between Burnside's role in the Referendum debate and his oeuvre, I have isolated three of the most significant of these thematic preoccupations to which Burnside has dedicated his career. The following three sections of this thesis will cover these preoccupations: narrative, social class, and ecology.

3.7 Burnside as anti-narrative/anti-Referendum

In the *Guardian*'s feature on writers' views on the Referendum debate, Burnside was the only one not to definitively assert his intended vote, except to strongly imply that he would be one of the 15.41% of Scottish residents who did not cast a ballot on 18 September 2014.[635] His short statement opened and closed with the following:

> Naturally I favour independence, not just for Scots, but for all citizens, which is why I reject the SNP's phoney independence referendum in September.
>
> …
>
> this government's record speaks for itself. Yes, Scotland needs to become independent – but independent of the charlatans, liars and chancers who have run it for too long. The way forward, in Scotland, as elsewhere, is direct representation, genuine redistribution of land and wealth, and, first and foremost, environmental policies that foster the health and well-being of all living things.[636]

For Burnside, voting Yes is not a means by which such representation can be achieved. This statement indicates Burnside's frustration with the track record

[635] Tom Leonard also took the position of opposing the referendum itself, and like Burnside has made a career-long commitment to articulating suspicion of narrative. The title of his 2009 collection of poetry from 1965-2009, *Outside the Narrative*, reflects this theme in his collected works. Perhaps Leonard's most famous challenge to authoritarian narrative is his 'Six O'Clock News' poem, first published in *Unrelated Incidents* (1976). Leonard was a less prominent voice in the referendum period than Burnside however. The majority of his comments regarding the referendum came in the form of extremely short poems and cartoons on his personal blog (http://www.tomleonard.co.uk/journal.html), leaving much to the reader's interpretation. His most public statement came in Scott Hames' *Unstated* where he also contributed a poem, unlike the other contributors who all used the essay form. The poem, in a similar vein to much of his online contributions, states, 'The national is the parochial'. One example from his blog is an image with two handwritten notes on either side of a piece of paper. One reads, 'The awful thing is one of them is going to win', the other replies, 'Look on the bright side. One of them is going to lose.' Leonard's disgust with the attempt to establish narrative dominance from either side is presumably a factor in his comparative reticence during the 2014 era.

[636] John Burnside in, Scottish Writers on the Referendum - Independence Day?

of a Scottish Parliament he and many others had put their faith in fifteen years previously — a response shared with Kathleen Jamie. Unlike Jamie, however, Burnside has consistently been wary of the ability of the modern Holyrood Parliament to achieve the kind of independence from old class structures and move towards policy informed by deep ecological philosophy he desires. Along with Jamie, Gray, Lochhead, and Morgan, Burnside could be found 'gamely sporting my yes/yes badge, to pledge support for a Scottish Parliament' in 1997.[637] However, as early as 2011 Burnside was already vocal in his disappointment with the efforts of the new Scottish Parliament:

> I was disgusted [at the time of the 1997 referendum] by English politics, especially the appalling influence of the Thatcher and post-Thatcher Conservative junta. I felt Scotland was trying to be different, trying to preserve a more humane, enlightened, civic society. This was, as I say, too romantic a view. I did not feel like an 'exile' in England, so much as exiled within a capitalist and industrial society which undervalued (if at all) all that mattered to me: the land, the arts, rational thought, civic values, compassion, the imagination. I feel just as much an exile now as I ever did.[638]

The idea of being an exile within one's own nation is one that Burnside returns to again and again in his creative works, as well as in his public rhetoric. This form of alienation, as the quotation above implies, is related to a disenchantment with the UK's political parties, hinting at the concept of a democratic deficit. More than perhaps any other writer in this thesis, Burnside engages with the party political element of the Referendum. Jamie, Gray, and Lochhead all, at some point during the process, said that their support for the Yes vote was absolutely not an endorsement of the Scottish National Party.[639] Burnside however, as opposed to merely distancing himself from wholehearted support of the party, emphasised his opposition to the SNP as a major reason for not backing the Yes campaign:

> I was very upset by the SNP government [at the time of the Referendum], especially with regard to environment. They were responsible for the Trump fiasco, which was the first sign that things weren't quite what I thought they were going to be. But then they also were imposing, all across the country, wind farms, wind turbines, on land which was unsuitable for wind turbines, and they were making claims for wind

[637] John Burnside, 'The Rich Shouldn't Set Scots Agenda', *The Scotsman*, 29 June 2013.
[638] John Burnside in, Attila Dósa, *Beyond Identity: New Horizons in Modern Scottish Poetry* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), p. 116.
[639] Jamie; *Independence: An Argument for Home Rule*; STV.

> turbines which were quite simply wrong. And they were giving huge hand-outs of money to people who were the people who put us in the position we were in the first place, you know, big landowners etc. and energy companies. And the tactics they used were bullying.[640]

In the same interview, Burnside states on several occasions that he is an anarchist, and as a general rule does not vote at all, whether in Holyrood or Westminster elections, or in other referenda. Burnside's response to the Referendum is therefore consistent with an opposition to party politics in general and to an SNP government in particular.

As an anarchist, Burnside is also deeply suspicious of anything which would claim to be a kind of national master-narrative:

> My politics come out of Lao Tzu, the Taoist philosopher, some anarchist thinkers, and Emerson. Emerson's politics essay. And Emerson says, 'every actual state is corrupt'. Once you've got a government, or a state, or an apparatus of any kind, corruption is inevitable and will follow immediately. So Emerson says it's up to us, the citizens, to ensure that we keep an eye on what the politicians are doing and keep correcting.[641]

In keeping with his thesis that the role of the poet is to be dissident, Burnside naturally finds himself unable to support either side of a debate which pits government against government, national narrative against national narrative. To support Yes, for Burnside, would be to support a Parliament heavily centralised to Edinburgh, dominated by a bullying SNP that prevents true local self-determination, and a form of nationalism which he objects to in principle. However, to support No would be to align with the bullying nationalism of different political parties based around a different Parliament, but this time centralised in London. Just as J.K. Rowling's uncomplicated Great Britain speaks to a natural decision to embrace unionism, Burnside's writing too features a distinct lack of borders. For Burnside, however, this relates to a deep aversion to any over-dependence on national narrative, whether pro-Union or pro-separation, much as Lochhead and Gray express their distrust of ISAs. As with the previous five writers discussed, Burnside's response to the Referendum situation as he saw it can be more easily understood with close examination of his published works.

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[640] John Burnside, unpublished interview with Sarah Hamlin, St Andrews, 4 March 2016.
[641] John Burnside, unpublished interview with Sarah Hamlin, St Andrews, 4 March 2016.

For Burnside, there are many more 'countries', or sites of identity, within the British archipelago than simply Ireland, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. His sense of exile discussed above can be from any one of these different sites of identity. Working-class, masculinity, addiction, sanity, the nonhuman: all of these are countries for Burnside, and a citizen of the United Kingdom might be as strongly influenced by their sense of belonging to — or exile from — any one of them. In this section I argue that it is Burnside's adherence to this kind of multiplicity, and a complementary distrust of anything claiming to be an unproblematic narrative, that informs his vehement rejection of either Yes or No rhetoric. This sense of the anti-narrative is present throughout a lifetime of publications, particularly evident in his prose, and reflected in his own Referendum rhetoric of the anti-narrative.

It could be surprising that a writer who is averse to tidying genuine experience into easy narratives has produced three memoirs: *A Lie About My Father* (2006), *Waking Up in Toytown* (2010), and *I Put a Spell on You* (2014), given that this genre necessarily forces the complexities of a human life into a narrative structure.[642] However, it is in these memoirs that Burnside is at his most self-consciously anti-narrative. The title alone of his first memoir, *A Lie About My Father,* is a prime example of this, and Burnside's introductory note seeks to immediately encourage the reader to distrust the narrative they are reading:

> This book is best treated as a work of fiction. If he were here to discuss it, my father would agree, I'm sure, that it's as true to say that I never had a father as it is to say that he never had a son.[643]

This note typifies the conflict between the writer's need to frame both actual experience and more theoretical thought as narrative, and the dangers of taking these narratives at their word. The note, by claiming the book is fiction, is obviously claiming at the same time that it is not. Therefore, what Burnside establishes here is that the borders are necessarily blurred between fiction and memoir in particular, but perhaps all that claims to be non-fiction. As a writer of both fiction and memoir, this is inevitably a difficult conflict to negotiate in either genre. There is an element of the defensive in his statement early in his

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[642] John Burnside, *A Lie About My Father* (New York City: Random House, 2006); John Burnside, *Waking up in Toytown* (New York City: Random House, 2010); John Burnside, *I Put a Spell on You* (New York City: Random House, 2014).
[643] *A Lie About My Father*, p. i.

first memoir: 'I knew, *of course I knew* that life is always more complicated than our narratives'.[644] Janice Galloway, a Scottish writer born in the same year as Burnside, finds a similar conflict in her own works, and has also chosen to directly confront the inevitable interplay between memoir and fiction in her memoirs *This is Not About Me* (2008) and *All Made Up* (2012). The titles and content of these memoirs, like Burnside's *A Lie About My Father,* challenge the reader's preconceptions of the books as either memoir or fiction, and ensure that no safe assumptions can be made regarding their substance.

This conflict is something Burnside returns to consistently in his works, and he continues to self-referentially question the validity of his own memoir throughout the text:

> we are not so very different, he [Burnside's father] and I; that no matter how precious I get about it, a lie is a lie is a lie and I am just as much an invention, just as much a pretence, *just as much a lie* as he ever was.[645]

Burnside is conscious that not just an author of memoir but every individual is compelled to create a falsely simple narrative of their memories. His fascination with, and constant reflections on, this idea in all three memoirs act in part as a safeguard against creating a too-simple narrative: if he refers openly and consistently to this paradox, then he cannot be accused of narrative hypocrisy. In raising the issue of turning memory into a narrative, and attempting to liberate his own memoirs from reductive story-telling, Burnside is hoping to put his theory into practice, to find 'a secret history of moments' and something 'more expressive than the enduring narratives of years and decades'.[646] On several occasions in *A Lie About My Father,* Burnside insists that the narratives we make of our lives cannot be true precisely because they are narratives. These are ideas he returns to in *Waking Up in Toytown* and *I Put a Spell on You:*

> Every story is supposed to have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and it doesn't matter what order they come in, as long as they're there. One of the things that makes a memory different from a story is that it might well come with a beginning and an end, but the middle tends to blur, even vanish altogether.[647]

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[644] Ibid. p. 12.
[645] Ibid. p. 232.
[646] Ibid. p. 290.
[647] *Waking up in Toytown*, p. 120.

> It had been a piece of theatre and I just happened to be handy, that particular Saturday afternoon. I knew I wasn't really a character in the story that Annie was telling herself about the world.[648]

In all three memoirs, Burnside enacts his theory by avoiding structure. In keeping with this philosophy, none of the memoirs have a beginning, middle, or end, and do not take us through a chronological life-narrative as might be expected from this genre. For example, the subtitle of *I Put A Spell on You* is 'Several Digressions on Love and Glamour', and interspersing the more autobiographical sections, are self-proclaimed 'digressions' on a wide variety of topics, reminiscent of Gray's experimentations in *Lanark*. In each of the memoirs, the authorial voice moves with a noticeable disrespect for chronology between detailed descriptions of moments of varying significance to abstract asides on seemingly unrelated topics such as the gambling of elderly colleagues or Japanese philosophy.

Burnside's *A Lie About My Father* is in some ways an attempt to understand how the damaging effects of narrative influenced and continue to influence his own life and his father's. This narrative is the 'authorised lies', 'the textbook lies of citizenship and masculinity and employment we are all obliged to tell'.[649]The narrator of *A Lie About My Father* calls this narrative 'a delusion in conventional terms', and in *Waking Up in Toytown,* Burnside explores further the overlap between delusion, even psychotic delusion, and 'the authorised lies' that are accepted every day. Just as the eponymous father is trapped in a life-long battle with myths of his own working-class masculinity, the younger Burnside is also trapped within the same delusions born of accepted social narratives, even as he is consciously aware of them. This merges with an at times apophenic obsession with 'Surbiton', a perceived haven of 'normal suburban life', based on but not necessarily located in the London area he names it after.

This is a pattern Burnside carries into his prose fiction. The protagonists of *The Dumb House* (1997) and *The Devil's Footprints* (2007) for example, are both consumed by what they each see as 'an inevitability, one thread in the fabric of what might be called destiny'.[650] In both cases, the protagonists are also the narrators, and they exonerate themselves of murder by insisting that the deaths

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[648] *I Put a Spell on You*, p. 13.
[649] *A Lie About My Father*, p. 309.
[650] John Burnside, *The Dumb House* (New York City: Vintage, 1997), p. 3.

were inevitable, pre-ordained, and therefore beyond their control. What we are reading, we are led to understand, is a narrative these characters are telling *themselves* in order to avoid taking responsibility for their truly disturbing crimes, much like James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824). For example, the narrator of *The Dumb House* describes with chilling dispassion the moment he realises the cruel experiment he has been conducting on his own twin children their entire lives is not working out the way he envisaged. This results in what he tells himself is their 'inevitable' murder, to be replaced by the offspring of another abduction:

> Of course, I probably knew the outcome all along. By then, I could not escape the feeling that I had failed… but now I wanted to destroy the twins and begin again, with a single subject, as the experiment had demanded all along.[651]

Likewise, in *The Devil's Footprints,* the narrator shifts the blame of the murder he commits away from himself and his own agency, and onto his belief in an inevitable trajectory. Describing the moment that he realised he would take his classmate's life, the narrator explains to us:

> It's never really a decision, this seizing of power; it's more a sense of the inevitable, a sense of arrival. The moment arrives and it seems possible, even necessary to act and, without really choosing to do it, we act.[652]

These two novels take the dangers of narrative to the extreme, and particularly the narratives we tell ourselves in order to justify our potentially harmful actions. From this understanding of Burnside's troubled relationship with narrative in his own story-telling it is possible to glean further understanding of his distrust of national narratives, and the significant part this had to play in his Referendum engagement.

As Chapter One explores in depth, the Referendum involved a rhetorical conflict between two imagined nation-states alongside their political realities: that of Scotland and that of the UK. In marking either square on the ballot paper, voters were forced, on some level, to decide which of those imagined nation-states they wished to dominate, even if other more academic elements were more prominent in their decision-making process. Aware of this, both the campaign for Union and that for separation made ample use of nationalist/unionist

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[651] Ibid. pp. 178-9.
[652] John Burnside, *The Devil's Footprints* (New York City: Random House, 2008), p. 56.

rhetoric during the Referendum period. Outside of this dispute, John Burnside does not accept the idea of the nation-state in the first instance. This has been a consistent view over a decades-long career, present in his poetry, prose, and non-fiction writing. Faced with a decision between two would-be dominant narratives of statehood in 2014, it was therefore inevitable that Burnside would feel unable to vote in either direction.

Burnside agrees with many of the Scottish literary community who stated their support for independence in the sense that one of his governing principles was a distrust of 'nationalism with a capital N'.[653] Many of the writers happy to support the 'Yes' vote did so whilst voicing reservations about the SNP or their tendencies towards using emotive nationalist symbols in order to stir the electorate: 'tartan la-la' as Jamie calls it. Having spent as much of his life in England as in Scotland, Burnside was well-placed to discuss any emphasis on differences between Scottish and English culture in the lead-up to the Referendum. In May 2013, he states in an interview with J.P. O'Malley:

> more is made of the Scottish/English divide than is necessary. Obviously with the current situation of the nationalist agenda in Scotland we are stressing that more than we would normally otherwise do. There is no doubt that there are definitely distinctions between Scottish and English writers, but there is a danger of making too much of it.[654]

This is in keeping with statements made elsewhere, such as the following excerpt in relation to ecopoetics:

> As a poet, I want to suggest the importance of those elements of life that have hitherto been considered minor… A view of identity that sets terrain and habitat before tribal allegiances, the integrity of place before the idea of nation or state, the pagan calendar before the atomic clock.[655]

In September 2001, Burnside was even more direct in his eagerness to separate himself from any national narrative, whether Scottish, English, or British:

> I don't like nations. I'd like to see no countries but regions, and people who form allegiances together for certain purposes. The more monolithic are the nations the bigger you have the kind of capitalist power structures

[653] This phrase became something of an epithet used for a multitude of rhetorical purposes during the referendum period. See for example Alan Warner, 'Alan Warner: booze, books and why he's backing Scottish independence', *The Guardian*, 19 August, 2014.
[654] John Burnside in, J.P. O'Malley, 'An Interview with John Burnside', *The Bottle Imp,* 13 (2013).
[655] John Burnside, 'A Science of Belonging: Poetry as Ecology', in *Contemporary Poetry and Contemporary Science,* ed. by Robert Crawford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 91-106 (p. 93).

> which are then oppressive to people. I hate the idea of nations… I don't see myself as belonging to a nation at all.[656]

Fifteen years later on the other side of the Referendum, Burnside's stance on nationalism remained unchanged:

> [state narrative] is always wrong for one thing. Even when the state has a good idea it's a bad idea because it's the state… the only thing I object to is nationalism itself.[657]

In both of these interviews, and elsewhere, Burnside does express something like a desire to believe in the neatness of nations. In his interview for this thesis he states, 'for sentimental points of view I would have loved to [back Scottish independence]'. But his very acknowledgement of the temptation to believe in a reductive narrative of statehood is part of his consistent position against such narratives. For instance, in the concluding lines of his short story 'The Cold Outside', he illustrates this point with a distinctly postcolonial image:

> …the world felt familiar and more or less happy, like the future that seemed possible when you didn't think about dying, or the pastel-coloured maps in a childhood atlas that you couldn't help but go on trusting, even when you know that they no longer meant what they said.[658]

These are all examples from a wide body of evidence that for Burnside the belief in reductive narratives of nation-state is immature and damaging. An espousal of one form of nationalism or another is not an act of imagination but rather an indication of a *lack* of imagination: a complicit obedience to 'capitalist power structures' and their dominance.

For Kathleen Jamie, ecology is a preoccupation that emerged later in her career, and remains one of several political passions that appear in her writing, even though it has undeniably been the most prominent since the publication of *Jizzen* in 1999. In Burnside's case, ecology has consistently informed his poetics, from his first publication, *The Hoop* in 1988. Section 3.9 will comprehensively explore Burnside's ecopoetics, however, it is important to point out here the significance of Burnside's ecopoetic preoccupation in relation to his views on nationalism. As discussed above, the reductive nature of nationalist rhetoric is Burnside's principal objection. As his oeuvre clearly demonstrates, Burnside

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[656] John Burnside in, *Beyond Identity: New Horizons in Modern Scottish Poetry*, p. 125.
[657] John Burnside, unpublished interview with Sarah Hamlin, St Andrews, 4 March 2016.
[658] John Burnside, *Something Like Happy* (New York city: Random House, 2013), p. 183.

believes that a poet's political strength lies in their ability to commit to a particular issue, or genre of issues, and to think deeply about them from a variety of angles over decades. In my interview with him, Burnside passionately discussed this aspect of his writing philosophy:

> I would feel quite happy to spend my whole life trying to be well-informed about what's causing climate change and what the impacts of climate change might be and how we can contain the effects, or some of the effects, it's inevitable now of course, on poorer countries, but they will pay of course, first, maybe last, and all of those things. Those are urgent, urgent matters. But I'm not going to solve them by doing a bit of research on Wikipedia and then writing a wee poem about it. No matter how pretty the poem is.

What Burnside is saying here is not that 'poetry makes nothing happen' — quite the reverse. What he insists is that a poet cannot hope to achieve meaningful impact in a field about which they know little and are not passionate: when the extent of their engagement with the topic is 'a bit of research on Wikipedia'. Poetic politics is at its strongest, according to Burnside's philosophy, when the poet is wholly dedicated to a political movement, and willing to return to the same ideas repeatedly in different ways with a strong background knowledge.

In his seminal essay on ecopoetics, Burnside made his view on the importance of poetry clear:

> …it is my purpose, as a descendent of Shelley, to contribute in some way to changing [the] world.[659]

In calling himself a 'descendent of Shelley', Burnside clearly identifies himself as being, in some respects, at the Shelley extreme of the 'Shelley-Auden' spectrum outlined above. In other words, Burnside believes that poets *are* the unacknowledged legislators of the world, but that, unlike legislators who must typically sign up to a political party with stated views on a wide range of political issues, poets can dedicate themselves to a particular political passion. Indeed, according to Burnside's philosophy, poets *should* dedicate themselves to a select few issues. A more accurate summation of Burnside's take on poetic politics in relation to Shelley might be that poets are the unacknowledged special rapporteurs of the world: specialist thinkers who, unlike politicians, can

[659] Burnside, p. 105.

dedicate entire lifetimes to single issues and, without the need to be elected, can avoid the reductivism that Burnside finds so distasteful about nationalism.

In light of this discussion, there is substantial evidence to support the theory that John Burnside considers the debate surrounding whether or not Scotland should be an independent country as an unhelpful distraction. The next two sections investigate the primary political concerns that feature in Burnside's writing and that he believes should take priority over reductive narratives of national borders within the British Isles. The most significant of these concerns in Burnside's writing career is ecology. It is impossible to find a publication of his that does not deal substantially with this issue. This displays a consistency with his philosophy that poets must be wholly dedicated to their subject matter: 'don't write about climate change unless you've done the research.'[660] The secondary political preoccupation in Burnside's oeuvre is class injustice. Where ecology dominates his poetry, class division dominates the majority of his prose. The true divide in the UK, according to Burnside, is between the classes. The country of the working-class is more separate from Westminster than the country of Scotland in Burnside's writing. This is an argument that was also prominent in unionist rhetoric, and the notion of the working-class as a country with a greater need for independence than Scotland is the focus of the next section.

3.8 The country of the working-class

John Burnside's concern with the dominance of arguments based on either a Scottish/English or a Scottish/British divide (i.e. ethnic nationalism) was shared by many, and was a significant part of both Yes and No rhetoric. A key aspect to this aversion was the idea that the 'country' of class division should be of greater relevance to contemporary politics than redrawing 300-year-old borders. This section examines Burnside's relationship to class conflict, and the significance of this engagement to the Referendum and his opposition to both Yes and No campaigns.

Burnside's fiction, memoir, and to a lesser extent his poetry, deal significantly with the huge personal fallout of Burnside's relationship with a working-class masculinity. It is fair to say that the idea of exile in Burnside's work is

[660] John Burnside, unpublished interview with Sarah Hamlin, St Andrews, 4 March 2016.

predominantly related to class as opposed to nation. This is a negotiation that takes place again and again in Burnside's work, and is far more dominant than any conflict regarding national identity. Burnside has spent a lifetime investigating working-class masculinity, and so it is natural that in response to the 2014 debate Burnside would find this 'country' to be of more importance than the countries of Scotland, England, or Great Britain, to which he has paid relatively scant attention. Burnside resumes his argument against making too much of any Scottish/English divide in favour of class unity:

> I'm far more inclined to think that working-class people throughout Britain have more in common, than say an ordinary Scottish person, and a member of the landowning class in Scotland would, for example.[661]

This echoes the rhetoric of leftist pro-Union campaign factions, most publicly from the Labour Party (a UK-wide organisation) during the Referendum period, as well as less mainstream groups in the landscape of the debate, such as Socialist Unity,[662] Glasgow Left Unity,[663] Campaign for Socialism[664] or the Socialist Equality Party.[665] These groups, given their traditional opposition to the political elite, like Burnside, found it difficult to place themselves in the Referendum debate in which the principal actors on either side were Parliamentarians and national leaders.

As part of the Better Together coalition, Labour in Britain was faced with the challenge of enacting their role as the major opposition party, whilst at the same time presenting a united front with the governing Conservative party on the issue of independence. The major challenge for Labour No-campaigners (as it was with party political campaigns on either side) was that the independence question involved such a kaleidoscope of arguments, including those which traditionally separate the Labour and Conservative parties.[666] Many of these

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[661] O'Malley.
[662] SU Editorial Team, 'By the Day I Grow More Implacably Opposed to Scottish Independence', *Socialist Unity,* April 2014 (2014).
[663] Tina Becker, 'Don't March with Nationalists', *Weekly Worker,* 1011 (2014).
[664] Vince Mills, 'Should the Left Vote Yes in the Scottish Independence Referendum?', *Socialist Worker,* 2393 (2014).
[665] Socialist Equality Party, 'Vote 'No' in the Scottish Referendum - Fight for a Socialist Britain', (Online: World Socialist Website, 2014).
[666] The broad nature of the question of Scottish independence is an issue for many political groups and resulted in similar ideological contradictions in many instances, a pattern noticeable in literatures of national identity across Britain and beyond. Tom Nairn has notably commented on the nationalist/internationalist element of this within Scottish nationalism in Tom Nairn, *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited* (New York City: Verso, 1997). See also José María Gutiérrez Arranz, 'A Multicultural and Multifaceted Study of Ideologies and Conflcts Related to

involve the kind of class-related issues to which Burnside refers, such as concerns about the welfare state, National Health Service (NHS), and the regulation of big businesses. It makes sense that any pro-Union campaign, regardless of where it lies on the political spectrum, would make substantial use of the welfare state and its accoutrements in its referendum rhetoric when the welfare state and the British Empire have been the principal appeals of continued Scottish participation in the United Kingdom. According to Tom Nairn for example:

> Notoriously, Scots of all classes had for long a strong interest in British and imperial progress: hence their silence was compensated and half-bearable during the decades of Empire and a centrally administered welfare state.[667]

Christopher Harvie implies in *Scotland: A Short History,* that the welfare state was directly responsible for the SNP's poor electoral record in the 1950s, and adds the nationalisation of major industries:

> The unity created by war and Atlee's socialist reconstruction lasted until the late 1950s, reinforced by the nationalization of transport, power and steel, welfare reform, and in 1948 the creation of the National Health Service. All but 5 per cent of Scottish electors voted Labour or Conservative; the latter even got a majority of seats and votes in 1955.[668]

Nicola McEwan also argues compellingly that the welfare state has been a major component in fostering solidarity in the British national community following World War Two, and the weakening of British Empire identity discussed in Chapter Two:

> the development of the welfare state in the United Kingdom contributed to British nation-building. The welfare state established a new set of institutions which could serve a symbolic purpose in representing and reinforcing the national community.[669]

McEwan goes on, however, to argue for the place of the welfare state in Scottish nationalism as well as British unionism, hence the importance of welfare state rhetoric in the Referendum period to either side, and thus to Burnside.

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the Complex Realities and Fictions of Nation and Identity Represented in Contemporary Literature Written in English', (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008).

[667] *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited*, p. 216.

[668] Christopher Harvie, *Scotland: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 197.

[669] Nicola McEwan, *Nationalism and the State: Welfare and Identity in Scotland and Quebec* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 93.

In several interviews and in his prose fiction, John Burnside has made it clear that 'there usually ends up being something quite insidious about national identity'[670] and that class is the identity with the most significance in his politics. In this regard, Burnside's Referendum rhetoric mirrors one of the recognised milestones of the Referendum period. This was former Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown's eleventh-hour delivery of a 'patriotic and passionate Scotland speech', in the words of *New Statesman*.[671] In this speech, Brown drew together socialist rhetoric, that of Better Together, and that of nationalism to deliver a speech that 'may even have saved the Union at its darkest hour.'[672] For example, in the introduction to the address, Brown re-works the instantly recognisable leftist slogan, popularised by Karl Marx, 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'.[673]

> And proud too that we co-operate and share, indeed we Scots led the way in co-operating, sharing across the United Kingdom — common defence, common currency, common and shared rights from the UK pension to the UK minimum wage, from each according to his ability to contribute, to each according to his needs, and that is the best principle that can govern the life of our country today.[674]

This rhetoric of pride, of sharing, and of leftist solidarity dominates Brown's speech as a whole. It is also in keeping with a consistent thread of working-class identity's dominance over national identity in Gordon Brown's political career. This idea is covered by Brown perhaps most notably in his book, *Scotland: The Real Divide,* co-authored with Robin Cook in 1983. This book:

> argued that the 'real divide' in Scotland was social, and that class rather than national identity lay at the heart of the country's problems.[675]

John Burnside's published works, and in particular his prose, belong to the same rhetorical circle of independence debates as this speech of Brown's. His works travel, as he himself has done, throughout mainland Britain, from bleak Scottish

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[670] John Burnside, unpublished interview with Sarah Hamlin, St Andrews, 4 March 2016.
[671] Anoosh Chakelian, "Silent No More': Watch Gordon Brown's Patriotic and Passionate Scotland Speech', *New Statesman,* September 2014 (2014).
[672] See for examples, Daniel Boffey, 'Shambolic and Divided: How Better Together Nearly Fell Apart', *The Guardian*. Kate Devlin, 'Gordon Brown: Scottish Labour's Secret Weapon in General Election', *Herald (Glasgow),* 31 January 2015.
[673] Karl Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', *Die Neue Zeit,* 1 (1891).
[674] Gordon Brown, *My Scotland, Our Britain: A Future Worth Sharing* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2014), pp. 9-10.
[675] Bart Moore-Gilbert, *The Arts in the 1970s: Cultural Closure* (New York City: Routledge, 2013), p. 1946.

mining towns, to bleak English steel-works towns, but also to middle-class areas of Cambridge and the home-counties. Like Rowling or Gray, Burnside's prose itself enacts the arguments behind in his statements regarding the Referendum. This is not to say that Burnside is directly aligned with Marx, for whom 'class is the supreme, indeed the only relevant, collective identity and the sole motor of history.'[676] The distinctions between working-class and middle-class life in Britain are the distinctions which dominate his texts, as opposed to the cultural or linguistic differences between Scotland and England that preoccupy Lochhead and Gray, or between a united Britain/Ireland and the rest of Europe that concerns Rowling.

Living Nowhere (2003) and *A Lie About My Father* are particularly clear examples of this sensibility in Burnside's extensive oeuvre. Both are predominantly set in the Northamptonshire town of Corby, during its years as a major steel industry centre. Both texts are autobiographical in nature, particularly *A Lie About My Father,* although the title sets up an ambiguity regarding the 'truth' of this particular narrative of Burnside's early life, as we have seen. Although the families at the centre of these texts are identified as Scottish in origin, they are not portrayed as outsiders in England because of it. This is particularly evident in *Living Nowhere,* in which a Latvian family shares centre stage with the more autobiographical characters of Derek and Francis, brothers who were born in Scotland but raised largely in Corby. Burnside himself was born in Dunfermline in 1955, and was still in primary school when the family made the move south. This was not an uncommon trajectory, and Corby has been a centre for Scottish migration since the opening of the steel firm Stewarts and Lloyds in 1934. Corby has been dubbed 'little Scotland' and 'the most Scottish place in England', and according to one resident interviewed weeks before the Referendum, 'Everything in Corby revolves around the Scottish'.[677] Burnside only makes passing reference to the entrenched connections between Scotland and Corby in the texts mentioned, for instance by noting the presence of 'the Rangers club'[678] or the traditional Scottish celebration of Hogmanay.[679]

[676] *National Identity*, p. 5.
[677] Vanessa Barford, 'Is Corby the Most Scottish Place in England?', *BBC News,* 11 July 2014.
[678] John Burnside, *Living Nowhere* (New York City: Vintage, 2003), p. 174.
[679] Ibid. pp. 108-9.

However, this in itself is indicative of the scant attention Burnside typically pays to identity divisions between the constituent parts of the United Kingdom. [680]

The themes of home and dislocation are present in texts like *Living Nowhere* and *A Lie About My Father*, but as part of the more dominant concern with belonging, and largely lacking in any specific national dislocations. In fact, far from any nostalgia for a Scotland taken away from him, when Scotland is addressed as a place of origin, Burnside describes his hatred for the visits 'home' in the summers of his childhood:

> We would be cramped together, all of us in the one room, my father always wanting to be off to some new pub where nobody knew him, my mother worried about the holiday money, and what he might do with it if she let him out of her sight. We would stop first in Cowdenbeath and traipse around visiting everybody…[681]

There is no border to cross in these journeys between Burnside's England and Scotland, in the same way as Rowling's Britain is borderless. Far from nostalgia for a distinct Scotland, Burnside's stress is on the entrapment of both communities of his childhood, and the inability of his father to escape the world into which he was born, regardless of where in Britain he finds himself.

Burnside emphasises the connections between Corby and Dunfermline more so than their differences, and these connections are predominantly in the servitude of the population to a particular industry. The industries in question are distinguishable as sites of working-class identity and struggle in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s in which the texts are set, specifically the pits in Dunfermline and the steel-works in Corby. The young Burnside is proved correct in his assumption on leaving Scotland for Northamptonshire: 'I was sure we were going to somewhere as grey and wet as the pit town we were leaving.'[682] The inescapable reality of the pits are mirrored in the steel-works, and it is clear that the young male

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[680] The entrenched connections between Scotland and Corby were highlighted on several occasions in the 2014 period. Members of the Corby Borough council even campaigned for Corby residents to be given a vote in the Referendum in a move linked with calls to support a No vote, indicating the strength of a dual Scottish-British identity in what has been called England's most Scottish town. Having been denied this opportunity for a vote in the Referendum itself, at the annual Highland Gathering in Corby in 2014, 576 Corby locals took part in a mock referendum on Scottish independence. 28.12% of voters supported independence with a convincing 71.8% in favour of the Union. ('Scottish Independence: Corby 'Should Have Vote", *BBC News,* 29 October 2012.).

[681] *A Lie About My Father*, p. 144.

[682] Ibid. p. 125.

characters of *Living Nowhere* are deprived of the kinds of life choices enjoyed by the educated classes as a direct result of their birth environment. Whether in Scotland or England, Burnside's characters in these texts are slaves to the same class structure as each other, which dominates their identity to a far greater extent than the nation.

3.9 Burnside's ecopoetics

It is evident that for Burnside there are sites of identity that are of far greater significance than Scotland or the United Kingdom. John Burnside's extensive poetic oeuvre represents nearly three decades of commitment to ecopoetics, arguing that the country of the environment most demands our loyalty: 'the one single narrative that includes all others.'[683] By the time of the Referendum, Burnside had published thirteen volumes of poetry, not including collections and anthologies. From the earliest of these collections (*The Hoop,* 1988), Burnside explores the 'more than human.' His work demonstrates a fascination with those places where human and nonhuman meet, an essential element of ecopoetics. Much like Kathleen Jamie, John Burnside's response to the Referendum was driven by this career-long dedication to the ecological. As discussed, Jamie's studies in ecopoetics inform her support for Scottish independence. Burnside's commitment to deep ecology and ecopoetics however, inform his case for *not* voting Yes on 18 September 2014. In this Section I shall explore how Burnside's entrenched commitment to ecology led him towards a different conclusion from Jamie, despite their closely related poetic ethos and marked similarities in subject matter and style.

The International Companion to Scottish Poetry appropriately places Jamie and Burnside at the forefront of contemporary Scottish ecopoetry, and identifies the essential likeness in their philosophies:

> Kathleen Jamie (b. 1962) has suggested part of poetry's role is as a line of defence 'against the loss of our environmental and cultural heritage, asserting that the priority for contemporary Scottish writers is 'the world which is more-than-human, which is beyond the human'… John Burnside (b. 1955), too, takes an explicitly ecopoetic stance in his poetry… We need to learn to value nature for its own sake, Burnside suggests, but we also need to be aware of our failings in this regard… his poetry in collections such as *The Light Trap* (2002) often calls attention to the

[683] John Burnside and Maurice Riordan, 'Wild Reckoning: An Anthology Provoked by Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring", (London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2004), (p. 19).

> sense of the liminal, the encounter with the animal 'other' leading to an imaginative acceptance of our own status as part of nature[684]

The author of the above quotation, Louisa Gairn, has also argued at greater length in *Ecology and Modern Scottish Literature* (2008), that Jamie and Burnside have pioneered an ecopoetic aesthetic that is 'crucial in an age of growing ecological crisis.'[685] David James similarly attests that Burnside's writing fulfils 'an ecological mission':

> [h]ow to describe new means of dwelling in, through being awed by, the most seemingly ordinary environments is a task that Burnside's poetry has long-embraced, an ecological mission that he also theorises in critical forums where he takes pains to emphasize 'the importance of those elements of life that have hitherto been considered minor, commonplace, even trivial.'[686]

The best description of Burnside's consistent poetic philosophy however, must surely be by Burnside himself:

> I think poetry imagines, at the same time as it observes, a world. The world I imagine and observe begins with 'the natural', proceeds by exploring the lines we draw between ourselves and that world – why? where are they? why are they there and not somewhere else? – and each in asking questions about dwelling, that is, about ecology.[687]

Burnside's 2014 volume, *All One Breath,* articulates the contemporary urgency of ecopoetics particularly cogently in the first of two epigraphs:

> *For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other, yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast* – Ecclesiastes[688]

Jamie and Burnside are both dedicated to these 'questions about dwelling' in their writing. However, there is a notable difference in the way in which their poetry deals with these questions. For Jamie, her ecopoetics is largely rooted in the landscape of Scotland. This is reflected in an increasingly confident use of Scots, a reliance on local names and references, and a preoccupation with seasonal specificities. Jamie sees an inevitable relationship between the 'loss of

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[684] Louisa Gairn, 'Nature, Landscape and Rural Life', in *The International Companion to Scottish Poetry,* ed. by Carla Sassi (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015), pp. 132-43 (p. 142).
[685] *Ecology and Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 156.
[686] David James, 'John Burnside's Ecologies of Solace: Regional Environmentalism and the Consolations of Description', *Modern Fiction Studies,* 8 (2012), 605.
[687] John Burnside in, O'Rourke, p. 6.
[688] John Burnside, *All One Breath* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2014), p. epigraph.

our environmental *and cultural* heritage'.[689] Where she and Burnside depart most significantly in their ecopoetics, is that for Burnside, cultural specificities are further removed from the ecological in his poetics. Burnside is interested in the idea of 'landscape as home' and, unlike Jamie's work, the majority of his ecopoetry can be read with a degree of independence from a specific location.[690] Burnside's view of the landscape as a home nation in and of itself relates to the arguments in 3.6-3.8: for Burnside 'home' is more than man-made lines on a map, and his desire to identify 'landscape as home' speaks to his general distrust of national identity, as well as his commitment to the ecological above all else.

The vast majority of Burnside's publications, and a significant number of poems, chapters, and sections within those publications, open with epigraphs that summarise the major theses of his work. The lines from Ecclesiastes speak to the interdependence between human and nonhuman which dominates not only this collection but Burnside's entire body of poetry. For instance, from his debut collection, *The Hoop,* the poem 'Inside' draws together the animal, the environment, the man-made, and the human:

> Spiders wheel on wires; a night bird
> calls; like the pain in our hands
> the dripping never stops and only
> someone else would say it was the loose
> washer in a tap. We know this house:
> we know it locked to water and the snow[691]

Later poems in this volume move from the implied connections in the example above to a harsher rhetoric that demonstrates human negligence in that relationship. The eponymous poem of this collection is preceded by a quotation from Black Elk, the renowned Sioux holy man, and points towards an ecological neglect linked with imperialism:

> We say it cannot happen now. It does.

[689] Gairn, p. 142.
[690] John Burnside in, Hugh Macpherson, 'Scottish Writers', *Scottish Book Collector,* 11 (1989).
[691] John Burnside, *The Hoop* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1988), p. 28.

> Executives with chainsaw eyes dictate
>
> a blond security.
>
> …
>
> Where Destiny is Manifest, I kill
>
> by proxy, but I profit from the dead.[692]

The line break between 'I kill' and 'by proxy' is a dramatic flourish typical of Burnside's harshest ecopoetics. In this instance, it relates to his reader the shared complicity in our willingness to benefit from the exploitation of land and of the indigenous inhabitants of that land, or both, while at the same time condemning those we deem responsible.[693] This is a strand of Burnside's poetics which is very close to the co-colonial idea discussed in Chapter Two.

In 'The Hoop', Burnside utilises the first person in order to demonstrate complicity. In his poem 'Green', also from *The Hoop,* he switches to using second person imperative in order to reach out to his reader directly:

> Take it as a guide, this thread
>
> of river weed…
>
> …
>
> The shaping of the world
>
>
>
> is in your hands. You have to make it green.[694]

This technique of using inclusive language is an essential poetic manifestation of Burnside's philosophy of the human and nonhuman as being 'all one breath.' As Louisa Gairn points out, Burnside is the literary descendant of Lewis Grassic Gibbon, and employs the use of second person for similar reasons to Gibbon in *A Scots Quair,* namely to draw the reader into a shared sense of responsibility towards the landscape.[695] For Burnside, the point of view he uses in each poem is always deliberate, and this relates to his anti-narrative/nation/party politics

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[692] Ibid.
[693] This acknowledged contradiction is a common topic in environmentalist journalistic writing. See for example Elah Feder, 'Why We Environmentalists Are Hypocrites', *Huffington Post,* 21 September 2011.
[694] *The Hoop*, p. 74.
[695] *Ecology and Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 101.

standpoint discussed earlier in this chapter. As he states in interview with Attila Dòsa:

> The most urgent problem facing us is environmental degradation… Political left and right are irrelevant now for any thinking person. What matters now is the poetry of 'we': preserving the environment and studying how we, human beings, should dwell on the Earth without destroying it.[696]

Burnside enacts this 'poetry of we' in a literal as well as metaphorical sense in much of his work, and particularly that which raises environmental concerns. This 'poetry of we' and sense of being 'all one breath' is far more significant than any national borders. For example, in the poem 'Schadenfreude' in his second collection, *Common Knowledge*:

> As if you memorised
> the first cicadas
> and listened through eternity for change:
> the buttermilk coin
> melting beneath your tongue
> the same crows wheeling in a wide
> hoop; a distant voice
> calling your name, worn smooth by constant use,
> a word you should, but do not, recognise.[697]

Or in 'Conversations' from *The Myth of the Twin* (1994):

> You remember the sand and rain
> of church schools along the coast,
> and children pinned to their books
> by sudden doubt[698]

In each of the examples above, and in many others, Burnside draws together the human, the nonhuman, and the sites of dwelling where they interact.[699] In doing

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[696] John Burnside in, *Beyond Identity: New Horizons in Modern Scottish Poetry*, p. 117.
[697] John Burnside, *Common Knowledge* (London: Seeker and Warburg, 1991), p. 31.
[698] John Burnside, *The Myth of the Twin* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1994), p. 19.
[699] For further examples, see "Bird Nest Bound" and "The Soul as Thought Experiment" from *Black Cat Bone* (2011), "Fetch" and "Trappist" from *The Hunt in the Forest* (2009), "Ama Et Fac Quod Vis" from *Gift Songs* (2007), "After Lucretius" from *The Light Trap* (2002), "Archaeology" from *The Asylum Dance* (2000).

so using the second person to directly address the reader, even using the imperative in poems such as 'Green', Burnside persuades the reader of their joint role as guardians of the environment alongside him, regardless of the man-made borders which delineate those environments.

To return to the idea of Burnside's ecological rhetoric as being anti-nationalist, it may seem an unlikely strategy to separate ecopoetic literature from the physical environs in which it is set. Certainly in the case of Kathleen Jamie's writing, environmental specificities delineated by place names, migratory routes, and the location of weather patterns which correspond to certain months of the year is vital to her environmentalist poetic. But in Burnside's ecopoetry, as in so much of his writing in general, the man-made elements of setting (i.e. town, region, nation) are placed as far in the background as possible. Describing environmental writing and environmental science, Rebecca Wade describes the united function of both:

> Drawing people's attention to the earth and water that underpin their everyday world is perhaps the first step in developing a sense of responsibility to our natural resources, and a collaborative approach to managing them well.[700]

There is little doubt that both Jamie and Burnside would agree with Wade in her statement. If there is a key distinction to be drawn between the two writers' ecopoetics, it is that Jamie choses to focus on *her* everyday world, whereas Burnside focuses on the general everyday world of the quotation. By choosing to write about the ecology of which she has direct, local experience, Jamie is perhaps closer to Burnside's criteria for the best political poetry discussed in Section 3.6 than he himself is. Jamie virtually never writes about an animal or plant outside of the context of her own direct observation. In remaining undefined, Burnside's ecopoetry is wider-reaching and more universally applicable than Jamie's, but perhaps further from the robust, research-driven methodology Burnside himself insists upon.

This generalist approach to ecopoetics is consistent with Burnside's distrust of nation and man-made boundaries. Just as his prose fiction places far more significance on the similarity between working-class lives in towns across the

[700] Rebecca Wade, 'Making Space for Water: A Poetry of Place', in *Imagining Natural Scotland,* ed. by David Griffith (Edinburgh: Creative Scotland, 2014), pp. 94-105 (p. 100).

British mainland, his ecopoetics is primarily concerned with points of similarity and interconnection between the human and nonhuman; our state of being 'all one breath'. Whether a fulmar is threatened in St Andrew's in Fife, or St Andrew's in Nova Scotia, is irrelevant to Burnside. The significance lies in that fulmar's relationship to the humans of whatever coastal town it finds itself beside, and the locations where those vital interactions take place. The concept of 'dwelling' is an essential aspect of Burnside's ecopoetry, but this is not a form of dwelling which is wedded to a particular cultural or geo-political reality. For Burnside, dwelling is much more important than geographical identities like Scottishness or Britishness: 'The right dwelling in the world is the key to living'.[701] Dwelling in Burnside's poetry is 'an attempt to understand, in the fullest sense, what it is to dwell in the world as humans.' This attempt is an 'urgent need' according to Burnside, and ecopoetry must represent 'a *Logos* of dwelling'.[702] In other words, it should be a rhetorical poetry which argues for a new, ecologically-driven sense of dwelling that is devoid of nationalism, but is driven rather by any loyalty to the environment and its fellow inhabitants.

'Ports', which opens Burnside's 2000 collection, *The Asylum Dance,* is a poem in three parts which explores this idea of dwelling from several angles. It is a helpful example of the *Logos* of dwelling which Burnside hopes to contribute to as a poet himself. The title indicates the transience foregrounded in the poem, yet the word dwelling appears multiple times. This reflects Burnside's aspirations to separate concepts like dwelling and belonging from nationalism and an identity that is inflexibly limited to one particular locus. The first section of the poem, 'Haven', does acknowledge, however, the inevitable pull of the familiar:

> Our dwelling place:
>
> the light above the firth
>
> shipping forecasts
>
> gossip
>
> theorems
>
> …

[701] John Burnside in, *Beyond Identity: New Horizons in Modern Scottish Poetry*, p. 119.
[702] Burnside and Riordan, p. 19.

Whenever we think of home

we come to this:

the handful of birds and plants we know by name[703]

In these lines, Burnside acknowledges the strength and the relevance of an intimate local knowledge of a particular natural environment. As the poem continues, however, Burnside works on expanding our concept of dwelling to include the unfamiliar within our own local environments, and the familiar that continues beyond our own spheres of experience.

The 'Haven' section of the poem concludes with an indication of the unfamiliar even within our home environments:

We notice how dark it is

a dwelling place

for something in ourselves that understands

the beauty of wreckage

the beauty

of things submerged[704]

In the second section of the poem – 'Urlicht' – Burnside develops the idea begun in the lines above of our own ignorance of the natural world, alongside our interdependence as fellow earth-dwellers. The title of this section comes from the fourth movement of one of the composer Mahler's best-known works: Symphony No. 2 or 'The Resurrection Symphony'. Urlicht means 'Primeval Light', and the text of the movement addresses a red rose with man's desperate need for illumination. It comes after three movements which are primarily concerned with death and despair, and this fourth movement is the volta towards Resurrection in the symphony. 'Having levelled his sharp critique against society, Mahler's hero now begins the process of healing and constructing it anew,' in the words of Byron Almén.[705] The text of the piece calls out for reunification with the Christian God, but Burnside develops Mahler's concept into the secular: 'never the farmsteader's vision | of angels.' Burnside's version of Mahler's

[703] John Burnside, *The Asylum Dance* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), p. 1.
[704] Ibid. p. 2.
[705] Byron Almén, *Approaches to Meaning in Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), p. 160.

revelation in ‘Urlicht’ when the singer comes across an angel on a path, is an awareness of the interconnectedness of all natural things, including the human:

> and you sit
>
> quiet
>
> amazed by the light
>
> aware
>
> of everything
>
> aware of shoals and stars
>
> shifting around you
>
> endlessly
>
> entwined.

To reinforce the universality of his point, Burnside mentions three disparate locations in this section; the Falklands, Wales, and Germany. This breaks with his general trend of avoiding the naming of places in his ecopoetry, in much the same way that Rowling utilises place names only rarely and to imply a similar universality.

Having begun with the familiar then moved to the unknown, Burnside returns to a kind of home in the third and final section of the poem which begins part way through one of its critical sentences:

> he couldn’t betray
> that animal silence
> the threadwork of grass through the hide
> the dwelling place
> inherent in the spine
> that
> III MOORINGS
> kinship of flesh with flesh.

Here again we see the dwelling place, but this time it is not an external location but ‘inherent in the spine.’ In other words, the true dwelling place is the self, and the relationship of the self to the natural world. What Burnside calls ‘the kinship of flesh with flesh’ is reminiscent of Jamie’s ecopoetics, particularly in her reflections on pregnancy and childbirth in *Jizzen*. The self is portable, as the title of the poem suggests, indicating a break away from traditional ideas of fixed dwelling. The third section of ‘Ports’, does refer to a specific setting:

Anstruther, a town in Fife, Scotland. It is significant for the theme of transient dwelling however, that it is not only a port town, but also the port itself that is the focus of the final section of the poem. Similar to Jamie's image of the tree house, and in keeping with his fixation on the liminality of dwelling, Burnside ends with an unattended boat in port — belonging neither to sea nor land:

> no more or less correct than anything
> we use to make a dwelling in the world.

As in Mahler's Resurrection Symphony, Burnside has taken our ideas of a rooted dwelling, destroyed them, and then rebuilt them into something new and reimagined.

Part of the rhetorical strategy of ecopoetry is to celebrate what we as humans are being charged to protect. This is an essential aspect of the ecopoetic aesthetic, and separates ecopoetics from environmental polemic. In his own words, Burnside wishes to say to his reader, 'these things are still here, aren't they wonderful, please keep them.'[706] At first glance, some of Burnside's poems which may not seem to be particularly rhetorical are in reality a key part of this aspect of his work. The poem 'Nature Table' for example, simply lists the collected objects of the poet as a young boy. In doing so, however, he creates the child-like fascination with the nonhuman for his reader, reminding them of what small but vital things we stand to lose by neglecting the nonhuman:

> A litter of chestnuts and eggs;
> a linnet's nest; a bread mould in a jar;
> apples like magnets, wrapped in a film of rain.
>
> I collected the windfalls and secrets,
> beech-mast and old-man's beard[707]

Indeed, many of Burnside's poems celebrate the admiration of nature in and of itself. 'Pisces', which precedes the above, is a poignant example of this:

> She loved the wet whisper of silt

[706] John Burnside, unpublished interview with Sarah Hamlin, St Andrews, 4 March 2016.
[707] *The Myth of the Twin*, p. 11.

> when tidewater seeped away
>
> and the estuary rose to the town
>
> through copper light[708]

In the stanza above, Burnside simultaneously presents to us the beauty of the estuary itself, but also the nobility of the female figure who engages with and admires it. This regard for what is 'still here' is what Burnside wishes to inspire in his reader. He does so through a combination of poems like 'Nature Table', or '8 a.m. Near Chilworth'[709] which articulate specific wonders of the natural world. Poems like 'Pisces' or 'Geese' perform a similar role in praise of the veneration of the nonhuman in and of itself.[710] This meta-appreciation is a vein that runs through Burnside's entire poetic works, creating a dual effect to encourage his readers towards ecological awareness.

In 2004, Burnside co-edited *Wild Reckoning: an anthology provoked by Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring'*.[711] This anthology is a powerful example of Burnside's meta-appreciation, involving the selection and commissioning of ecopoetry in the spirit of Rachel Carson's ecological and lyrical legacy. The poems within the anthology are an eclectic mix of British, Irish, and American writers, stretching back to Chaucer and Milton, including those synonymous with Romantic nature poetry such as Wordsworth or Burns, and including more recent writers closely associated with the development of ecopoetics such as Gary Snyder. What each piece has in common, however, is some element of Burnside's ecological meta-appreciation. In the introduction by the two editors, we are given a clear sense of the aspirations behind the anthology:

> we sought out poets who, it seemed to us, had something vital to say about the human relationship with the natural world in the broadest sense: poets whose work dealt, in a clear-sighted and compassionate fashion, with animal and plant life; poets whose lyrical explorations had to do with connection, continuity and the interlaced quality of life.

Burnside could be speaking of himself here, and indeed he is, in the sense that his poem, 'Salvelinus alpinus', is one of the seventeen works commissioned for the anthology. This could be interpreted as self-aggrandisement, however, it is

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[708] Ibid.
[709] John Burnside, *Feast Days* (London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 1992).
[710] *The Asylum Dance*, pp. 9-11.
[711] Burnside and Riordan.

more of an indication of Burnside's consistency in his ecopoetic aspirations. The description Burnside lays out in this introduction for an urgently needed poetic is one which, at the time *Wild Reckoning* was published, he had been attempting to hold himself to for nearly twenty years.

Burnside's career has exemplified a passionate belief that environmental degradation is the most urgent topic among any up for political discussion, and a distrust of nationalism in any form. Therefore, there is ample evidence to suggest that a rejection of the Referendum as a whole is the only conclusion that he could have come to which would be in keeping with the rhetorical aims of his life's work. Not voting in the Referendum, however, is not the equivalent of not participating in the debate, and Burnside certainly made his voice heard on issues that have dominated his written works:

> Now, we're about to do the referendum ceilidh all over again, only this time the stakes are higher. The trouble is, none of the changes I want to see are even on the agenda. Well, they are, in the usual lip service, greenwashed fashion, but none of it is real.[712]

To back up his claim that 'none of it is real', Burnside points to the SNP's environmental record after two terms in government. In this article, as elsewhere, it is land reform, or lack thereof, which he finds the most disappointing aspect of this record:

> as we ask ourselves again, over the coming year, what Scotland ought to mean, and what we ought to be doing to protect the quality of life of all (human and otherwise) who live here, we must finally begin the work of making Scotland free for all, not just by redistributing a few acres here and there in 'community' buy-outs, but by revolutionising our ideas of how land could be used, not for the profit of a few, but for the delight of all.[713]

There is a clear weariness in Burnside's repetition of 'again' in both of these quotations. The implication is that the obsession with nationalism and statehood in Scotland represents a distraction from the urgent environmental matters with which Burnside's oeuvre has always been concerned. Looking back at the arguments after the Referendum had taken place Burnside called it 'a total distraction. Another political distraction.'[714] Where Jamie saw ecological

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[712] Burnside.
[713] Ibid.
[714] John Burnside, unpublished interview with Sarah Hamlin, St Andrews, 4 March 2016.

opportunity, Burnside saw the reverse, and made his disagreement with Jamie's view unambiguous:

> To read some of the things that were written by people like Kathleen Jamie and other people, at the time of the Referendum you'd think that a second age was coming.[715]

A look at the statistics of topic representation in Figures 1 and 2 in the introduction to this thesis will confirm Burnside's position that the environment, land reform, and energy use were barely visible issues in the referendum campaign period, at least coming from either Yes Scotland or Better Together. In another sense, however, Burnside is disproving his own argument in the making of it: the Referendum gave Burnside multiple high-profile channels in which he was able to share his ecological philosophies, and his belief in the necessity of placing the country of the environment before any and all man-made countries.

Ultimately, the Referendum did not yield the shift in environmental policy that either Jamie or Burnside hoped for. What it did result in, however, was an opportunity for both writers to publicly discuss the deep ecological position they each take in their ecopoetics. Their discussions bring to light at once the futility and the significance of the Referendum debate. Whether a land is called 'Scotland' or 'Britain' or 'Yorkshire' or 'Fife' is, as Burnside points out, irrelevant when that land is threatened in a very real and urgent sense by human negligence. Simultaneously, a decision which will deeply affect the governance of that land, is all the more important when all natural things are facing that very threat. Where the official campaigns so clearly failed to bring this essential element of the Referendum's legacy to the foreground, Scotland's writers took it upon themselves to use their position as public figures to ensure that these questions of our relationship to the environment was in the media and in people's minds in relation to the Scottish independence Referendum. Jamie and Burnside were principal among them, and were able to use their dedication to ecopoetics to inform their public responses to the question of Scotland's independence. Moving forwards from the Referendum moment itself, Burnside's engagement with ideas associated with it demonstrate the possibilities for engagement beyond identification with either a Yes or a No affiliation.

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[715] Ibid.

Conclusion

Literature and politics share a deeply entrenched, interdependent relationship, and no more so than during times of great public debate such as the 2014 Scottish independence Referendum. The politics of nationalism, unionism, postcolonialism, and environmentalism have deeply impacted upon each of the six major literary figures examined in this thesis and their oeuvres. As a result, their work has become part of the multifaceted perceptions of what constitutes Scotland or the United Kingdom at the time of the Referendum, and how the relationship between these two identities should progress following 2014. There are as many interpretations of the Scottish nation as there are individuals who consider it, and six of these interpretations are under investigation here. These interpretations, however, belong to public figures whose voices have a significant impact beyond their own private spheres, and were therefore part of a public landscape when the Scottish electorate was asked 'Should Scotland be an independent country?'

Each of these six writers committed their public reputations to the stances they took in relation to the Referendum, and this will inevitably feature in any future literary analysis of their work. It is essential, therefore, to attend to the nuances of their writing and to consider each as an individual artist and thinker. Not one of the six was unequivocal in their support of either Scottish independence or the UK nation-state, and this must likewise be acknowledged going forward. This thesis has explored each of these writers, and the relationship between their writing, their public positions, and the Referendum. Some of the texts considered are political acts in and of themselves while others are less intentionally political. However, I have established that there is a relationship between each writer's involvement and position regarding the Referendum and a rhetorical strand in their respective oeuvres, and that therefore neither should be considered in isolation. All of the writers featured in this analysis are major literary figures, both critically appraised and publicly acknowledged. It is not only the political relevance of the texts studied but crucially their artistic merit and consequent public dissemination which has allowed them to maintain the 'long lines of communication' between art and politics of the past, present, and future.[716] As each of these writers has clearly been influenced by their literary

[716] Crawford.

antecedents, so, too, will their work continue to have a lasting impact on subsequent generations.

The ways in which Scotland, the UK, and international territories are imagined and depicted in these literary works are various, and the texts researched in this thesis imagine the Scottish or British nations using methods that are both reflective and contributory to public perceptions of these entities. Edwin Morgan depicts Scotland in brutal contemporary reality, in dystopian futures, in periods of exciting development, and in deep historical pasts. Scotland is the dominant space in his work, and he expresses that space in a multitude of both aspirational and critical ways. Essentially, his depictions imagine a Scotland which is rarely in negotiation with the UK, and never dependent upon it. These depictions are part of the landscape that has inspired Liz Lochhead and Alasdair Gray to likewise make Scotland their primary site of imagination. These writers are also inspired by global postcolonial movements to explore a post-Empire Britain, which is expressed in their depictions of Scotland. Kathleen Jamie has been equally consistent in locating the vast majority of her work in Scotland. Where Lochhead, Gray, and Morgan are largely interested in city settings, Jamie is more interested in the Scottish landscape outwith human settlements. In contrast to these writers, J.K. Rowling's major site of imagination is a fantasy version of Britain which is entirely borderless. In Rowling's distinctly unionist wizarding Britain, Scotland, England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Ireland are all part of the same unified nation, in which northern Scotland and London are the most significant locations. John Burnside's work is located in both realistic and fictional versions of the UK, and on both sides of the Anglo-Scottish border. Although Burnside's Britain is markedly different to Rowling's, they both present an essentially borderless UK. Occasionally his work is interested in those sites of Britain where Englishness and Scottishness come into contact with each other, most significantly the 'little Scotland' town of Corby, England. However, in keeping with his stance on the Referendum, the 'country' of Burnside's imaginative works is primarily that of the working-class, and it is class divides alongside ecology which — far more than national divides — Burnside explores creatively.

The writers and works discussed in this thesis represent the full range of literary genre. Scotland's first two Makars, Edwin Morgan and Liz Lochhead, excel in

poetry and drama, including the translation of each into both Scots and English. John Burnside and Kathleen Jamie are both prolific poets, but are equally well-known and respected for their prose. In Jamie's case this is non-fiction prose with an ecopoetic aesthetic, and in Burnside's the more traditional forms of fiction, including both the novel and the short story, alongside memoir and some journalistic writing from recent years. Alasdair Gray is predominantly a prose writer, though he has also occasionally written poetry, for radio, and for the theatre, and his work includes both non-fiction and fiction. J.K. Rowling is the most widely-read children's author in the history of the English language, bringing into consideration the sometimes neglected field of children's literature. Each of these genres represent different aesthetic priorities, aimed at different audiences; to be read silently, to be witnessed in a theatre, for children, for adults, explicitly political and rhetorical, or implicitly so. These aesthetics are explored with reference to each genre in this thesis, and the political rhetorical purpose of each. What unites these writers is that they all engaged both in aesthetic terms and in terms of explicit public comment on the issues raised by the moment of the 2014 Referendum. Therefore, as the analysis in this thesis demonstrates, we may consider certain of their creative works to be deliberately pieces of rhetoric and likewise for their public politics to be supported, strengthened, and evidenced by their written work.

Journalistic or polemical work can often lend important context to creative output, and this is the case for each of the writers studied. Their poetry, drama, and fiction allows multifaceted explorations of questions relating to the Referendum. These include the theoretical areas that structure this thesis: national identity, identities in relation to the British Empire, and in relation to the natural environment and the nonhuman. This thesis also uncovers ideas which have been explored over decades of work from each writer, and which were central to public debate during the Referendum period. These writers have all taken advantage of their skill in multiple genres to investigate recurring ideas from different angles. As a result, I have been able to study their significant literary outputs with the benefit of their participations of various kinds during the Referendum. These multiple literary genres give writers opportunities which polemical or journalistic genres do not. In this thesis I have outlined some of these opportunities as they relate to the Referendum. For example, Alasdair

Gray's pro-independence transactional writings have proven to be alienating for many, as demonstrated by the response to his 2012 piece 'Settlers and Colonists'. In his introduction to *Independence: An Argument for Home Rule* he acknowledges this explicitly by paraphrasing his wife's comments:

> Though wanting an independent Scottish government as much as I do she calls this book a waste of time. Only a few of those who agree with the argument for Scots Home Rule announced on the cover may buy it (says she), none of those who disagree will, and folk without an opinion on the matter don't read books and don't vote.[717]

His novels such as *The Fall of Kelvin Walker* and *1982, Janine* are more accessible and less inflammatory, yet explore the same questions of nationhood, Anglo-Scottish relations and the shape of Britain in a post-imperial age that his non-fiction texts do. This is primarily a literary thesis, and as such I have endeavoured to focus on these kinds of explorations in a literary context. In relation to the Referendum, however, the public interactions each writer has engaged in have enabled me to explore certain of their texts in ways that have not previously been possible.

Over the course of this thesis I have examined six very different writers and their individual responses to the question 'Should Scotland be an independent country?'. This has enabled me to explore their creative oeuvres in new ways, attending to the nuances in their work regarding the nation of Scotland and the nation-state of the UK. Going forward from the Referendum, this work is valuable for the field of Scottish Literature, future members of which may otherwise run the risk of simplifying these and other contemporary writers' responses to the Referendum based on their vocal stances made publicly at the time. As each case study establishes, none of these writers came to the question of Scottish independence lightly or two-dimensionally, without having explored elements of that question creatively, if, at times, in implicit rather than explicit ways. This thesis proves that their public advocacy for Yes, No, or against the Referendum cannot be entirely separated from their novels, dramas, fiction, or poetry. In part by virtue of the multiplicity essential to successful literature, this study also demonstrates that, going forward, none of these writers can or should be pigeon-holed according to their Referendum stances.

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[717] *Independence: An Argument for Home Rule*, p. 10.

An astonishing number of Scottish writers and artists made their voices heard during the Referendum period. The vast majority — but not all — of these stated their support for a Yes vote. This is something that many commented on at the time, and some of these comments are cited in this thesis. It is also undoubtedly something that will be discussed and questioned in Scottish literature — as well as Scottish studies more broadly — in future. There is a risk, therefore, that not only these six writers, but potentially also Scottish writers in general, may be categorised in future as having straight-forward views on Scottish independence, or even the SNP, and that should the question be posed again, their answers would remain unchanged by circumstance. This is most certainly not the case, as I hope has been thoroughly established in the preceding chapters. The creative writer neither 'makes nothing happen' nor performs the role of a legislator. Their significance lies in their separation from legislative politics; in their ability to witness, to commentate, to explore in unexpected and extensively developed ways. The Referendum was necessarily but crudely split into Yes and No campaigns. Each political party in the Scottish and Westminster parliaments was compelled to select one of these to align with. The writing studied here looks at the Referendum question and related themes with a depth and longitudinal nature available to literary study but often inaccessible to the worlds of politics or political journalism. Beginning with the moment of the 2014 Referendum in Chapter One, this thesis then explores writers' engagements with long and deep pasts, both national and global in the second chapter, before looking to the future in Chapter Three. This too is the privilege of literature — to examine moments and single ideas over decades, developing depictions that engage with the impact of these present moments on both the past and future. Emerging from this thesis are literary perspectives on Scotland that take all of these long-ranging views into account.

Moving beyond the Referendum and the particular authors studied here, this thesis provides valuable insight into the relationship between literature and politics. Chapter One explores the writer as both a spokesperson and definer of identity. Chapter Two looks at the writer as an anti-establishment figure on the public stage. Chapter Three examines the role of the writer as a commentator, and one who may comment on present moments with long-term and extensively developed views unavailable to other forms of commentary. The thesis as a

whole examines the position of the writer as a public figure with a voice that can have significant range during events such as the Referendum. The writer's principal location of impact, however, is established as their creative output, and other public rhetorical interactions are achieved only through negotiation with this output. In democratic systems such as that of Scotland or the UK, writers are independent of mainstream party politics and do not need to adhere to any particular group politic in order to disseminate their views or considerations on political issues. This allows them a freedom that John Burnside describes as 'the privilege of the poet'. Conversely, the writer does not have the freedom to be simply polemical, and their rhetorical language must also be artistic in order to have impact. None of the works studied in this thesis would be featured, were they not celebrated examples of the imaginative in addition to serving a rhetorical purpose.

At the outset, I cited Robert Crawford's words: 'No poet should feel obliged to engage with politics. All poets should be free to do so.' During the 2014 Scottish independence Referendum, many writers took the opportunity to engage directly with a unique political moment. Those I have studied here in depth, did so in the context of decades' worth of writing which had already engaged with the many ideas being publicly discussed during the Referendum period. Those writers who do choose to engage with politics, do so neither ineffectually nor as legislators. From the 'Harry Potter generation' and their impressions of what constitutes the UK, to Kathleen Jamie's viewpoint of Scotland carved into the Bannockburn Rotunda, and the wealth of instances in between, the literature of our world forms an essential part of how we see that world. Writers are in a unique position to engage with the political world with a sensitivity and subtlety unobtainable for many others engaged with that world. Literature cannot alone determine the outcome of historic democratic moments such as the Referendum, but literary works and their authors offer an essential and complex way of thinking about and understanding these moments. In Scotland as elsewhere, the literary and the political are truly interdependent.

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