

PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY OLMOUC

FACULTY OF ARTS

Department of English and American Studies

Bc. Kristýna Drejslová

Contemporary Scottish Women's Experience and Search for
Identity in the Works of Janice Galloway, Kate Atkinson and
A. L. Kennedy

Master's Thesis

Supervisor: Mgr. Ema Jelínková, Ph.D.

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Podklad pro zadání DIPLOMOVÉ práce studenta

Jméno a příjmení: Bc. Kristýna DREJSLOVÁ
Osobní číslo: F180697
Adresa: Butovická 49, Studénka – Butovice, 74213 Studénka 3, Česká republika
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Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Ema Jelínková, Ph.D.
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Zásady pro vypracování:

Since the 1980s women in Scotland have established a firm place in modern Scottish literature. Their experiences are overall universally female, but they are firmly set in Scotland and its culture. This thesis is to take consideration of contemporary texts by Scottish women writers Janice Galloway, Kate Atkinson and A. L. Kennedy and to explore their common themes of searching for identity.

Seznam doporučené literatury:

Germana, Monica. „The Sick Body and the Fractured Self: (Contemporary) Scottish Gothic.“ *Gothic Studies* 13, no. 2 (November 2011): 1-8.
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Podpis studenta: Drejslová

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I declare that I have worked on the thesis "Contemporary Scottish Women's Experience and Search for Identity in the Works of Janice Galloway, Kate Atkinson and A. L. Kennedy" independently, using only the sources listed in the bibliography.

In Olomouc, 20 June 2021.

Bc. Kristýna Drejslová

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1 Introduction

Scottish literature has been gaining more and more popularity among readers and has become a flourishing field of research since the 1980s. But women writers in Scotland were often overlooked and not largely talked about in the course of the 20th century, with the exception of Muriel Spark, who became famous during the late 1950s. It was not up until the 1980s when women writers established their firm place among male writers in Scotland and eventually in the United Kingdom.

This thesis takes into consideration three contemporary Scottish women writers – Janice Galloway, Kate Atkinson and A. L. Kennedy. The writing of Scottish women authors is hard to generalize and put into particular slots regarding genre or style of writing. But there are some aspects to their works that share certain features – mostly those regarding identity and women’s experience. The characters in their books seem lost in their own lives; they search for their place in the world, for their own identity as women and also as women in Scotland.

The aim of this thesis is to discover the way the three chosen women authors portray female identity and its creation and changes in contemporary Scotland and what life experiences the female characters have to go through to reach at least some sense of closure.

There has been an enormous quantity of research published on Scottish literature, Scottish nationalism and even Scottish women writers since the 1980s, but they often take into consideration only one author or only one of their works and often research them from a different angle. Regarding my topic, most has been written about Janice Galloway and her works, especially her first novel *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* (1989). A great example would be *Exchanges: reading Janice Galloway’s Fiction* (2004) edited by Linda Jackson, which deals with Galloway’s writing from several standpoints. A very helpful book on A. L. Kennedy’s works was written by Kaye Mitchell, titled simply *A. L. Kennedy* (2008), which gives a great general insight into Kennedy’s complicated writing. Unfortunately, there are not many publications dealing with Kate Atkinson, at least not from the angle needed for this thesis. There are several more authors whose work is very important for my topic, among them Monica Gemanà’s *Scottish Women’s Gothic and Fantastic Writing: Fiction Since 1978* (2010) or Markéta Gregorová’s several articles dealing with women writers. This thesis’s aim is to

propose a comprehensive overview of the three authors' works connected to the theme of identity and female experience set in contemporary Scotland.

2 Historical context for Scottish literature since 1979

The political events of the year 1979 are definitely etched into most Scottish people's minds. In March of 1979, the first Scottish devolution referendum took place, and even though Scotland voted in favour of devolution by 51,6% to 48,4%, the act was repealed the next month because only 32,9% of the electorate (of the needed 40%) had joined those voting for the devolution.¹ Another impactful event happened in May, when Margaret Thatcher, the leader of the Conservative Party, became the Prime Minister of The United Kingdom. Even though she might be remembered as the first woman in such a position in the UK, she is also remembered much less amiably as the person whose policies caused millions of people's unemployment. The Tories pursued "a new form of monetarism that would focus on building the UK's service sector and financial industries. In the same period, a host of state-run enterprises were given over to private firms, deregulation was enforced and lower income tax rates introduced."² Because Scotland was reliant on heavy industries, the de-industrialization and privatization of the nationalised sector had a catastrophic impact on Scotland – about 20% of Scotland's workforce lost their jobs, and for example 13 of Scotland's 15 coal mines closed during Thatcher's time.³

According to Berthold Schoene, professor at the English department at the Manchester Metropolitan University, all of this, happening from 1979 throughout the 1980's, "only induced the Scottish people to pull more closely together and develop a more clearly defined and morally superior sense of national identity."⁴ In the same chapter, he quotes Richard Weight opinion: "The more the English revelled in the benefits of Conservative rule, the more the Scots and Welsh saw them as a nation of callous, selfish individuals. In contrast, they saw themselves as peoples with a unique

¹ Claire Phipps, "Scottish independence: a guide to the referendum to break away from the UK," *The Guardian*, September 10, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/sep/10/scottish-independence-guide-referendum-uk-yes-no>

² David McLean, "Scotland in the 1980s: A nation at work," *The Scotsman*, February 5, 2021, <https://www.scotsman.com/heritage-and-retro/heritage/scotland-1980s-nation-work-3124040>

³ Hamish MacPherson, "This is the truth about how Thatcher devastated Scotland," *The National*, June 26, 2018, <https://www.thenational.scot/politics/16313398.truth-thatcher-devastated-scotland/>

⁴ Berthold Schoene, "Going Cosmopolitan: Reconstituting 'Scottishness' in Post-devolution Criticism" in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature*, ed. Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2007), 7.

sense of community and compassion; a belief which the nationalist parties encouraged . . . Thatcherism and Conservatism in general came to be synonymous with English nationalism in north and west Britain.”⁵ This kind of separatism and distancing of Scotland from the “ruling” England has always been present, but major political events always deepened these feelings.

Another unfortunate problem that Scottish people had to deal with during the 1980s, which could be linked to the fallout of the massive unemployment, was the increasing drug usage among the population, especially in Glasgow and around the area of the capital city, Edinburgh, where the production of opiate drugs has a long history. Irvine Welsh, the author of *Trainspotting* (1993), puts it simply: “It tells its own story – you’ve got a lot of people with a lot of time on their hands. The government was basically creating demand.”⁶ This enormous intravenous heroin usage led to an explosive growth of AIDS cases, and by mid 1980s, Edinburgh became known as “the AIDS capital of Europe.”⁷ Due to these economical and socio-political problems during the 1980s, a new class of people emerged in Scotland, the so-called “underclass” – a marginalized group of people dependent on social security.⁸

During the 1990s it was clear that Scotland’s time as an industrial country was over. The year 1989 and 1990 was full of protests and riots against Margaret Thatcher’s policies, especially the “poll tax,” which would “see the abolition of rates based on the value of a property, replaced by a fixed charge per adult resident,”⁹ and that meant a household of, for example, five adults would have to pay five times the amount than a more “well-off” person living on their own in a mansion. Apparently, about one million Scots marched in the streets against the taxing.¹⁰ But the 1990s brought along also some

⁵ Richard Weight, *Patriots: National identity in Britain 1940 - 2000* (New York: Macmillan, 2002), 589, quoted in Berthold Schoene, “Going Cosmopolitan: Reconstituting ‘Scottishness’ in Post-devolution Criticism” in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature*, ed. Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2007), 7.

⁶ Aida Edemariam and Kirsty Scott, “What Happened to the Trainspotting Generation?” *The Guardian*, August 15, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2009/aug/15/scotland-trainspotting-generation-dying-fact>

⁷ Steven Brocklehurst, “How Edinburgh Became the Aids Capital of Europe,” *BBC Scotland News*, December 1, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-50473604>

⁸ Richard Finlay, “Changing Cultures: The History of Scotland since 1918,” in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature, Volume 3, Modern Transformations: New Identities (from 1918)*, ed. Ian Brown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 4.

⁹ George Galloway, “The Battle of Trafalgar Square: The Poll Tax Revisited,” *Independent*, March 10, 2010, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/battle-traffic-square-poll-tax-riots-revisited-1926873.html>

¹⁰ David McLean, “Scotland in the 1990s: The Biggest News Stories of the Decade,” *The Scotsman*, March 12, 2021, <https://www.scotsman.com/heritage-and-retro/heritage/scotland-in-the-1990s-the-biggest-news-stories-of-the-decade-3162991>

very optimistic events for the Scottish people, for example, Glasgow was announced the European City of Culture. The most important event took place on the 11th of September 1997, when Scotland voted in support of the establishment of their own parliament, which opened in 1999. Since then, the parliament has been in charge, among other things, of Scotland's education, health and social services, housing or agriculture. The new-brought confidence and greater independence led Scots to start thinking about a genuine independence from the United Kingdom. But these high expectations were not fulfilled as Scottish independence referendum took place on the 18th of September 2014, and more than 55% citizens voted against it.

3 Scottish Identity: Double Identity?

“Country: Scotland. Whit like is it?
It's a peatbog, it's a daurk forest.
It's a cauldron o' lye, a saltpan or a coal mine.
If you're gey lucky it's a bonny, bricht bere meadow or a park o kye.
Or mibbe... it's a field o' stanes.
It's a tenement or a merchant's ha'.
It's a hure hoose or a humble cot. Princes Street or Paddy's Merkit.
It's a fistfu' o' fish or a pickle o' oatmeal.
It's a queen's banquet o' roast meats and junkets.
It depends. It depends...
Ah dinna ken whit like *your* Scotland is. Here's mines.
National flower: the thistle.
National pastime: nostalgia.”¹¹

Scotland has been a part of the United Kingdom since 1707. Ever since then, the country has often portrayed itself as a victim, as a nation oppressed by the ruling English, and most of the imagery connected to “traditional” or “historical” Scotland only supports that, such as “Scotland the Brave played by a pipe band in Highland costume, William Wallace heroically crying out for freedom, or the discussions about a second Independence Referendum.”¹² With this in mind, it is easy to understand that Scotland has been portrayed in binary oppositions to England, nurturing the idea of

¹¹ Liz Lochhead, “Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off,” in *Liz Lochhead: Five Plays*, ed. Nick Hern Books (London: Nick Hern Books, 2012), 84.

¹² Ema Jelínková, “The Concept of “Caledonian Polysyzygy” in Kate Atkinson’s short story collection *Not the End of the World*,” *SKASE Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies* [online] 1, no. 1 (January 2019): 22.
http://www.skase.sk/Volumes/SJLCS01/pdf_doc/03.pdf

“Scottish inferiority complex,” as Beveridge and Turnbull describe it in their book *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture* (1989), where the country is depicted as “the repressed other of what England is clearly not.”¹³ They list several terms, which were used by critics to describe Scotland, such as dark, violent, uncouth or harsh. In opposition to these terms, England was being described as enlightened, decent, refined and gentle.¹⁴ In addition to this binary differentiation between Scotland and England, even the Scots themselves were (and to some extent still are) used to apply binary oppositions against each other, as Ema Jelínková mentions, for example, these: “Scots and Gaelic, Highlands and Lowlands, Edinburgh and Glasgow, Catholics and Protestants.”¹⁵

One of the major problems in modern times, that Scotland often had to deal with, was defining what Scotland and Scottish people are in terms of nation and nationality. There seems to be a great difference in understanding how Scotland is presented on the outside and what Scotland and its people really are like. The notion of nation itself is rather tricky and eludes a proper definition which everyone would agree on. With regards to Scotland, Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities* (1983), defines nation as an imagined construct, where people share stories about themselves, true or imagined, which helps them construct their national identity¹⁶, and for example, Julia Kristeva’s book *Strangers to Ourselves* (1988) challenges the idea of this type of national self-formation, which can take a quick turn and change the national “we” into a dangerous and estranging problem for the people outside (the nation or community) – that includes, in Scotland’s case, immigrants and people of colour.¹⁷ In recent years, Homi Bhabha’s discussion of nationhood seems to be the most popular. He focuses on “the role of literature in constructing our understanding (both general and particular) of national identity and demonstrated a relationship between nation and narrative form in their shared dependence upon ideas of selectivity, boundedness, progress and linearity.”¹⁸ It is therefore clear that the connection between nationhood and literature, or narrative, is deeply rooted in our understanding of what constitutes a nation.

The 19th century was the time when modern national states emerged, capitalism started coming into play and many countries gained the approximate state borders we

¹³ Eleanor Bell, *Questioning Scotland: Literature, Nationalism, Postmodernism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 72.

¹⁴ Ibid. 72 – 73.

¹⁵ Jelínková, “The Concept of “Caledonian Polysyzygy,” 23.

¹⁶ Bell, *Questioning Scotland*, 49.

¹⁷ Ibid. 95 – 96.

¹⁸ Kaye Mitchell, *A. L. Kennedy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 45 – 46.

know nowadays. During this time many novelists turned to writing about their national and political ideas. France had Victor Hugo, Russia had Alexander Pushkin. One of the most important figures for Scotland was Sir Walter Scott, the author of poems, plays and historical novels, such as *Waverley* (1814), *Ivanhoe* (1820) or *Rob Roy* (1817). Juliet Shields argues that Scott “invented Scotland” through his writing, mostly through his *Waverley* novels.¹⁹ The novels (and narrative poems) skilfully describe Scotland’s striking countryside and Scott is definitely to be thanked for attracting the first waves of tourism in Scotland – Melrose Abbey and Loch Katrine became the first major spots to be heavily visited due to the success of Scott’s narrative poems *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810).²⁰ But Scott describes Scotland as a place from the past, the Highlands as a romantic, solitude place, as a place of virtues, which were no longer found in the modern, industrialized world, and the (often poor) Scottish people are seen only as a part of the landscape.²¹ Stuart Kelly describes Scott’s influence as such: “Scott re-imagined Scotland. When Samuel Johnson and James Boswell journeyed through Scotland the generation beforehand, it had been an anthropological expedition into the primitive, and the landscape was ‘horrid’. Under Scott’s influence, it became ‘sublime’. ... Instead of Jacobites being treacherous fifth columnists, Scott re-imagined them as mistaken idealists. Highlanders were not rude barbarians but noble savages.”²² As a result, Scott re-imagined Scotland into a romantic place of beauty and noble virtues, but by that he clouded the everyday reality of the real Scottish people. For example, what readers of Scott’s writing and people touring Scottish Highlands did not realize is that not so amiable events took place among Scots, such as the Highland Clearances, which took place during the 18th and the 19th centuries and were the reason for the desolate Highlands. During this time, tenants were evicted from their land by their landlords, to make space for sheep-runs, which became more profitable. Most people were relocated to coastal areas, where they had to make a living as fishermen, while others travelled to the Lowlands to work in factories.²³ Therefore, while Sir Walter Scott presents his readers one image of Scotland and its people, the reality was often much less romantic and picturesque. But during the 19th century

¹⁹ Juliet Shields, “Did Sir Walter Scott Invent Scotland?” (lecture, London, January 17, 2017), Gresham College, <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/did-sir-walter-scott-invent-scotland>

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Stuart Kelly, “Sir Walter Scott’s Lasting Legacy for the Whole Nation,” *Scottish Field*, February 8, 2019, <https://www.scottishfield.co.uk/culture/sir-walter-scotts-lasting-legacy-for-the-whole-nation/>

²³ Nathaniel Harris, *Heritage of Scotland: A Cultural History of Scotland & Its People* (London: Bounty Books, 2004), 41.

Scott's description of the country became the default, especially for people from outside of Scotland. What is important to realize is that even for Scottish people, especially contemporary people, this contradiction between reality and representation, creates a problem with defining a person's identity within Scotland. The search for national identity becomes much harder when literary representation of the past, which is important in creation of national narrative, and real history diverge in such considerable ways. Writers and artists in general have always been vocal in this field, and the way that Scots see themselves has changed considerably due to their efforts. In 2014, just a month before the independence referendum, Allan Little made a short documentary on Scottish national and cultural identity. There, he discussed how Scots have been pushing against the romanticised stereotypes, that "Walter Scott conjured a Scottish identity that could fit in the wider British context. Scotland's artists have been pushing at the boundaries of that for forty years."²⁴

3.1 Caledonian Antisyzygy vs. Caledonian Polysyzygy

G. Gregory Smith, a Scottish literary critic born in 1865, coined the term Caledonian Antisyzygy to describe the condition of Scottish literature. He writes that "...the literature is remarkably varied, and that it becomes, under the stress of foreign influence and native division and reaction, almost a zigzag of contradictions. The antithesis need not, however, disconcert us. Perhaps in the very combination of opposites what either of the two Sir Thomases²⁵, of Norwich and Cromarty, might have been willing to call "the Caledonian antisyzygy" we have a reflection of the contrasts which the Scot shows at every turn, in his political and ecclesiastical history, in his polemical restlessness, in his adaptability, which is another way of saying that he has made allowance for new conditions, in his practical judgement, which is the admission that two sides of the matter have been considered."²⁶ To support his ideas of the motif of duality within "the Scot," Smith uses two books – James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, written in 1824, and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, written in 1886. As Jelínková puts it "Smith regards the inherent schizoid split of the Scottish psyche as a harmless

²⁴ Allan Little, "What Is Scottish National and Cultural Identity?" *BBC Newsnight* video, 8:20, August 27, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-scotland-28939597>

²⁵ Thomas Browne, English physician and author, and Thomas Urquhart, Scottish writer and translator.

²⁶ G. Gregory Smith, *Scottish Literature: Character and Influence* (London: Macmillan and co., 1919), 4.

peculiarity, even a creative advantage,”²⁷ but consequent usage of the term in critical theory often took it out of its context and according to Kirsten Stirling made it “a justification of the representation of Scotland as having some kind of psychological deformity,”²⁸ even though that was not Smith’s objective.

As mentioned above, Scotland has always been put into binary opposition with England, but after the devolution in 1997, which supported the establishment of a Scottish parliament, Scottish people, and therefore even writers, started focusing on and working with the differences among themselves. As Monica Germanà explains “the advent of devolution in 1997 seemingly has shifted the emphasis from the binary Scottish/English opposition to the intrinsically heterogeneous and problematic diversity *within* Scottish culture.”²⁹ Mitchell further considers the sources of the many voices in Scotland. She writes that “the lack of a unified or agreed upon vision of Scottishness also stems from the inevitable disjunction between classes, between country and city (the aforementioned tension between a romanticized rural Scotland and a squalid urban Scotland) – and also between genders.”³⁰ Thus, even though Scotland does no longer feel so strongly about the differences between them and the English, and rather focuses on the great number of voices inside Scotland itself, there still is not a unified vision of what constitutes true “Scottishness.” Which brings us to a more modern approach which distances itself from Smith’s antiszygy, and as Jelínková suggests, “contemporary Scottish writing should more appropriately be described as springing from polyszygy, which corresponds to a Bakhtinian polyphony of a multitude of voices entering in incessantly shifting interactions and creating a harmony in their own right.”³¹ Stuart Kelly is of the same opinion, explaining polyszygy as a term “which refers to a diverse set of multiple alignments, plural connections, a web of interlinked ideas and words”³² It becomes easier to understand that the number of voices in Scotland are not as much contradictory, as Smith suggested in 1919, but rather working together from different

²⁷ Jelínková, “The Concept of “Caledonian Polyszygy” in Kate Atkinson’s short story collection *Not the End of the World*,” 23.

²⁸ Kirsten Stirling, *Bella Caledonia: Woman, Nation, Text* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 103.

²⁹ Monica Germanà, *Scottish Women’s Gothic and Fantastic Writing: Fiction Since 1978* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 5.

³⁰ Mitchell, *A. L. Kennedy*, 20.

³¹ Jelínková, “The Concept of “Caledonian Polyszygy” in Kate Atkinson’s short story collection *Not the End of the World*,” 26.

³² Stuart Kelly, *Headhook: Contemporary Novelists and Poets Writing on Scotland’s Future* (London: Hachette Scotland, 2009), 12.

points of view. I believe that it is important to regard Scotland and Scottish literature this way, and as Cristie L. March suggests, as “a collection of various identities.”³³

4 Women and Feminism in Scotland

Up until the 1990' it seemed as if women in Scottish history simply did not exist (perhaps with the exception of Mary Queen of Scots and Flora Macdonald). But since then, many studies started to focus on the role of women in Scottish history, among them Eleanor Gordon or Esther Breitenbach. Many researchers concluded that Scottish women suffer from double marginalization – one, they are women and two, they are Scottish. That meant being silenced by the traditionally male dominated society of Scotland which was itself being dominated by the British (or English) society. This is proved in an article *Understanding Women in Scotland*, where Esther Breitenbach, Alice Brown and Fiona Myers conclude that “women in Scotland suffer a double disadvantage of marginalization within a male-dominated Scotland, and marginalization within an English-dominated Britain. Thus the problem is not simply Scottish male chauvinism; it is also English ignorance and chauvinism.”³⁴ The above mentioned Esther Breitenbach argues in her own article published a year before *Understanding Women in Scotland* that women in Scotland face marginalization from three directions: “Their marginalization within Scottish history, within British feminist history, and within debates on nationalism.”³⁵

However we look at this topic, women were often excluded from the history of their own nation, and it was only in the late 20th and in the 21st century when they began receiving the proper amount of attention from researchers from across a number of fields of study. This newfound attention to the importance of women was connected, in the words of Carole Jones, to the “general decline in western patriarchal authority towards the close of the twentieth century. This waning of men’s social dominance is due not only to feminism’s success in achieving greater equality for women but also ... to the terminal decline of the traditionally male dominated heavy industries, which

³³ Mitchell, *A. L. Kennedy*, 16.

³⁴ Esther Breitenbach, Alice Brown, Fiona Myers, “Understanding Women in Scotland,” *Feminist Review*, no. 58 (Spring 1998), 62.

³⁵ Esther Breitenbach, “Curiously Rare? Scottish Women on Interest or The Suppression of the Female in the Construction of National Identity,” *Scottish Affairs*, no. 18 (Winter 1997), 82.

proved particularly significant in Scotland, a country historically dependent on them. Feminism and economic change significantly transformed gender relations.”³⁶

5 Scottish Literature from 1980

The last two decades of the 20th century are often regarded as the “New Scottish Renaissance,” or “The Second Scottish Renaissance” and readers were introduced to authors such as Alasdair Gray, Irvine Welsh, James Kelman, Liz Lochhead or Ian Banks, many of who were non-traditional and often from a working class background. Alasdair Gray’s novel *Lanark* was undoubtedly one of the most important books for the modern Scottish literature. Published in 1981, *Lanark* was one of the first books written by a Scottish author to get widespread coverage south of the border.³⁷ It has quickly become a great influence for young contemporary writers, among them Ian Banks, Ali Smith, Janice Galloway or A. L. Kennedy. Galloway commented on the book and its influence on her career as a writer as such: “I’d always assumed that what my education taught me was true: that my country was a totty wee place with no political clout, a joke heritage, dour people, and writers who were all male and all dead. Not so, the book said: on a number of levels, not so.”³⁸ Together with James Kelman, whose books *A Disaffection* (1989) and *How Late It Was, How Late* (1994) ensured his fame, the two authors, with their narrative experimentations, brought a new standard into Scottish literature.

During this time, Scottish authors returned from the Scottish realism of the 60’ and the 70’ back to, as Monica Germanà puts it, “the fascination with the supernatural.”³⁹ She further explains that “the Scottish supernatural does not belong in a transcendent other world, but challenges the stable boundaries of seen and unseen, real and imagined, same and other.”⁴⁰ The utilisation of gothic in contemporary Scottish writing is undeniable and Markéta Gregorová explains that “fantasy provided a powerful literary means of challenging the dominant (English) discourse,”⁴¹ and

³⁶ Carole Jones, “Burying the Man that was: Janice Galloway and Gender Disorientation,” in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature*, ed. Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2007), 210.

³⁷ Rodge Glass, *Alasdair Gray: A Secretary’s Biography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 166.

³⁸ Janice Galloway, quoted in Rodge Glass, *Alasdair Gray: A Secretary’s Biography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 167.

³⁹ Germanà, *Scottish Women’s Gothic and Fantastic Writing: Fiction Since 1978*, 2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 2.

⁴¹ Markéta Gregorová, “The Horror of the Everyday: Janice Galloway and A. L. Kennedy,” in *Scottish Women Writers of Hybrid Identity* (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2014), 14.

furthermore that “gothic and fantastic elements can be effectively utilised to call into question any form of oppression, whether based on nationality, gender, class and/or some other grounds.”⁴² It was the perfect form to utilize against the standard English literary discourse.

When it comes to women writers, they, just like women in Scotland in general who were excluded from their own national history, they were often excluded from literary history. Marilyn Reizbaum explains that “[there is] the phenomenon of “double exclusion” suffered by women writing in marginalized cultures, where the struggle to assert a nationalist identity obscures or doubly marginalizes the assertion of gender (the woman’s voice) ... [there is] the historical interaction between the marginalization of culture and sexism.”⁴³ This means that the assertion of national identity has been deemed as something more important than letting women express their own voice, their own struggles as Scottish women – in brief, Scottish voices (which were dominantly male) regarding nationality have been regarded as more important than Scottish women voices, and their struggles were pushed aside for a long time.

Identity has been a popular and an important topic for Scottish writers for a long time. Their position as an occupied nation within the United Kingdom has made it even harder to assert their identity as a stable and clear characteristic of their people. It became even harder for Scottish women. Seda Gasparyan nicely summarizes her thoughts on the condition of contemporary Scottish women writers, who deal with the theme of identity, which “can be interpreted with the help of counter-concepts of emotional fulfilment vs. isolation and feminist vs. domestic expectations.”⁴⁴ This clashes between expectations and reality (meaning expectation on the part of the female character and also on the part of the society around her) and/or between what the female character wants and what others want from her, are present in the writing of all of the three authors chosen for this thesis.

When writing about the many different voices in Scottish literature, written by women or by men, Bernard Sellin wrote that “it is a sign of the vitality of modern Scottish literature that it is more difficult than ever to restrict it to neat definitions,

⁴² Ibid.14.

⁴³ Marilyn Reizbaum “Canonical Double Cross: Scottish and Irish Women’s Writing.” In *Decolonizing Tradition: New Views of Twentieth Century “British” Literary Canons*. Ed. Karen R. Lawrence. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992) 165, quoted in Mary McGlynn, “I Didn’t Need to Eat”: Janice Galloway’s Anorexic Text and the National Body, Critique,” *Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 49, no. 2 (Winter 2008), 223.

⁴⁴ Seda Gasparyan, “In Search of Identity: Trauma and Irony in the Cognitive Light,” *Cognition, Communication, Discourse* 20 (2020), 29.

categories or traditions. Instead we have individual voices expressing themselves with originality and growing self-confidence.”⁴⁵

5.1.1 Postmodernism

The term “postmodernism” was first used by Jean-Francois Lyotard, when he published his book *The Postmodern Condition* in 1979.⁴⁶ Similarly to the elusiveness of a definition of a nation, trying to unanimously define Postmodernism (not only in literature) is not easy, as the entry from the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy verifies in the very beginning of its definition “that postmodernism is indefinable is a truism.”⁴⁷ According to Linda Hutcheon, one of the most prominent figures in postmodern literary theory, “postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts the very concepts it challenges.”⁴⁸ Here she writes about all the possible fields that postmodernism can work within. Since we are to remain only within the field of literature, Bran Nicol offers a list of the most prominent features of a postmodern text: “(1) a self-reflexive acknowledgement of a text’s own status as constructed, aesthetic artefact. (2) an implicit (or sometimes explicit) critique of realist approaches both to narrative and to representing a fictional ‘world.’ (3) a tendency to draw the reader’s attention to his or her own process of interpretation as s/he reads the text.”⁴⁹

The reason I decide to include a chapter on postmodernism is that I believe that the features mentioned above are present in all of the books regarded in this work, and that there are important reasons why the authors chose postmodern techniques. But since postmodernism is a vast topic that would require its own thesis, I will only explain the postmodern techniques used in the books chosen for this thesis, and the ways they relate to my topic regarding identity and women’s experiences. It is also important to mention that some of the books considered here were written in an era of post-postmodernism, and may not completely comply with postmodernist theories (for example, A. L. Kennedy is very hard to classify into a single slot), but all of the works

⁴⁵ Bernard Sellin, “Varieties of Voice and Changing Contexts: Robert Jenkins and Janice Galloway,” in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature Volume 3: Modern Transformations: New Identities (from 1918)*, ed. Ian Brown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 232.

⁴⁶ Gary Aylesworth, “Postmodernism,” *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, February 5 2015, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/postmodernism/>

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1988), 3.

⁴⁹ Nicol Bran, *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xvi.

make use of the core techniques that writers of the postmodernist era did, such as non-linearity or fragmentation of narrative.

Furthermore, since I am researching only women writers it is important to see the connections of postmodernism with feminism (which is not saying that all women authors follow feminist theory in the literary and/or political term). Lidia Curti explains that “the elements of the shared discourse between feminism and postmodernism are the decline of a strong, steady, undivided subjectivity, the refusal of canonised forms, the opposition to a morality of consensus, the stress on the hidden and the marginal,”⁵⁰ all of these elements can be found in the researched books.

The author most noticeably relying on application of postmodern techniques in her writing is definitely Janice Galloway, who experimented with genre, structure and typography. The novel *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, for example, uses pastiche, which is most often defined as “a piece of art that intentionally copies the style of someone else's work or is intentionally in various styles, or the practice of making art in either of these ways.”⁵¹ Galloway clearly makes use the various styles mentioned in the definition. The text jumps from one style or form to another and the reader moves from conventional prose to scripted dialogues, newspapers, comedic sketches, lists of words or activities to diary entries. According to Frederic Jameson pastiche “is a neutral practice of [such] mimicry, without parody's ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without laughter.”⁵² Margaret A. Rose explains that “neither pastiche nor parody can be said to be exclusively post-modern, but they can be used in post-modern works for a variety of post-modern purposes,”⁵³ which is also the case of other postmodern techniques, such as intertextuality, which is found in Kate Atkinson's work, which I will explain further below..

Fragmentation, or fragmented narrative, is a technique which we can find in the work of both Janice Galloway and A. L. Kennedy. Both of the authors force the reader to put together the stories from pieces of narration that usually does not happen in a linear chronology. Fragmented narratives are used in “works of fiction that deny completeness, linearity and coherence in favour of incompleteness, disruption and

⁵⁰ Lidia Curti, *Female Stories, Female Bodies: Narrative, Identity and Representation* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 2.

⁵¹ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “pastiche,” accessed March 16, 2021
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/pastiche>

⁵² Frederic Jameson, “Postmodernism and Consumer Society,” in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), 125.

⁵³ Margaret A. Rose, “Post-Modern Pastiche,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 31, no. 1 (1991), 32.

gaps.”⁵⁴ Since fragmentation is often closely linked to non-linearity, the chronological order of the narrated events is sometimes harder to put together and forces the reader to re-read the stories, or at least pay a very close attention to what is being said and done by the characters and how it relates to the whole story.

Further narrative strategy that needs to be mentioned is magic realism, which is significantly present in Kate Atkinson’s short story collection *Not the End of the World* (2002). Magic realism has been included as a part of postmodernist storytelling techniques and to explain its elements and how it builds its worlds, I have chosen an excellent explanation by Wendy B. Faris, who summarizes it into five points, which are easily applicable to Atkinson’s short stories:

“(1) The text contains an “irreducible element” of magic, something we cannot explain according to the laws of the universe as we know them. In the terms of the text, magical things “really” do happen.

(2) Descriptions detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world— this is the realism in magical realism.

(3) The reader may hesitate (at one point or another) between two contradictory understandings of events—and hence experiences some unsettling doubts.

(4) We experience the closeness or near-merging of two realms, two worlds

(5) These fictions question received ideas about time, space, and identity.”⁵⁵

Atkinson also often uses intertextuality in her writing. While reading her short story collection *Not the End of the World*, readers meet many of the characters several times in different stories, and the whole book itself often alludes to many other works. Atkinson’s use of (often Greek) mythology is connected with intertextuality and is also associated with postmodernism because it “involves a return to early narrative forms – the fairytale movements and mythic structures that never really disappeared from more popular forms of literature – but with an awareness of their artificiality.”⁵⁶ Her intertextuality is also aimed at her own writing since readers often meet characters from several different short stories that appear in the same collection. They are either a

⁵⁴ Vanessa Guignery and Wojciech Drąg, “Introduction: the Art of the Fragment,” in *The Poetics of Fragmentation in Contemporary British and American Fiction*, ed. Vanessa Guignery and Wojciech Drąg (Delaware: Vernon Press, 2019), xi.

⁵⁵ Wendy B. Faris, “Scheherazade’s Children: Magical Realism and Postmodernist Fiction”, in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, ed. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 167 – 173.

⁵⁶ Brian Attebery, *Strategies of Fantasy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 40, quoted in Martin Horstkotte, *The Postmodern Fantastic in Contemporary British Fiction* (Bochum: Bochum: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2004), 157.

visiting friend, a sibling, or someone that is simply mentioned to exist within more of the stories, perhaps a co-worker.

It is clear that postmodernist techniques are very popular among contemporary women writers as is proved by these three Scottish women writers. The reasons and purposes for the usage of such techniques will be, to an extent, discussed further below.

6 Janice Galloway

Ever since publishing her first novel *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* in 1989, Galloway became a successful and celebrated writer, not only in Scotland, but also internationally. The novel has won several awards, and since its publishing, Galloway wrote two more novels (*Foreign Parts* in 1994 and *Clara* in 2002), four collections of short stories and two autobiographies. All of her works deal with women's experiences, especially those of urban working class. Her characters are ordinary woman plagued by society's and men's expectations of them as they try to manoeuvre their place in life. As Gillian Sargent puts it, all of her works bear a narrative "voice of the under-represented or marginalised."⁵⁷ Linda Jackson describes Galloway's fiction as "showing women trapped into passivity yet attempting to resist being silenced by conventional views of what they should be or do."⁵⁸ Galloway chooses utilizing very experimental ways to convey her ideas and her narratives are often just as disconnected and fragmented as her characters' identities and lives.

For this thesis' purposes I have chosen two of Galloway's novels, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* and *Foreign Parts*.

6.1 *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*

“*Love/Emotion = embarrassment: Scots equation. Exceptions are when roaring drunk or watching football. Men do rather better out of this loophole.”⁵⁹

The rather famous quote from Janice Galloway's first novel, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, not so inconspicuously illustrates that the novel has a lot to say about contemporary Scotland's society, its norms and expectations. *The Trick* follows the story of a young elementary school drama teacher named Joy Stone, who experiences

⁵⁷ Gillian Sargent, *Janice Galloway's The Trick is to Keep Breathing* (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2016), 3.

⁵⁸ Linda Jackson, "There is no one at the other side?" in *Exchanges: reading Janice Galloway's fictions*, ed. Linda Jackson (Edinburgh: The Centre for the History of Ideas in Scotland, 2004), 3.

⁵⁹ Janice Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* (London: Mandarin Paperbacks, 1991), 82.

the death of her lover Michael. Consumed by grief and guilt, Joy finds it hard to survive everyday life, developing an eating disorder, suffering from depression and eventually going through a breakdown, before realizing that she actually wants to get her life under control again and live. Written in an experimental style, it is sometimes hard to make out the chronology of the events. For example, Galloway presents Joy's memories (sometimes manifested in dreams), and counts on the reader to piece together what truly happened before the novel's actual events, and to realize that Michael's death was only the last straw for Joy's horrible mental state – from unfulfilling and rather unhealthy relationships with men, financial worries and other societal pressures, to the death of her mother. The experimental style of writing goes to a great length to show how Joy's mind is distorted, and how un-well she truly is. In addition, Joy soon reveals herself as an unreliable narrator, sometimes telling the same story in several versions, only making it harder to understand where the truth really lies.

6.1.1 Narrative Style and its Consequences

As I mentioned in the chapter dealing with postmodern techniques used in the three authors' writings, there are reasons and purposes for the chosen techniques.

The way the book is styled, from structure to typography “allows us to hear Joy's version of events as she interprets them, but also affords us glimpses of the world, as Joy experiences it.”⁶⁰ The way Joy narrates the story is often misleading and she could be called an unreliable narrator, since she even admits on the very first page of the novel that she “can't remember the last week with any clarity.”⁶¹ The way that Joy describes herself as “a liar and a cheat,”⁶² is only reinforced by the fact that she is a drama teacher – she knows how to act, how to pretend. All of this forces the reader to view her story with some scepticism, since “Joy is often unable to describe or remember events coherently, most likely due to her deteriorating mental health.”⁶³

The fragmentation we are presented in the novel is both internal and visual. Internal, in the sense of Joy's thoughts not being connected to a previous part of the text and sometimes being incomplete. It is visual in the way we see incomplete sentences and word on the margins of the page or the general typography, where words are sometimes scattered all around the page. All of this is used to graphically depict Joy

⁶⁰ Sargent, *Janice Galloway's The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 13.

⁶¹ Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 6.

⁶² Ibid. 95.

⁶³ Sargent, *Janice Galloway's The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 13.

trauma and depression. Her traumatic memories of Michael's death resurface in the form of italics nineteen times in the novel. Jessica Aliaga Lavrijsen explains that "traumas tend to be partially re-experienced through compulsive or uncontrollable repetitions."⁶⁴ She further explains that Galloway's different graphic modes of text are used as "a means of trying to convey subsidiary narratives that are hidden in the main text. Some of the experimental techniques used by Galloway ask readers to actively participate in the construction of the meanings of the texts, to enter a dialogue with the different voices presented (and hidden) in the texts."⁶⁵

6.1.2 The Woman in *Extremis*

It is clear from the first pages of the book, that Joy is deeply un-well. She is plagued by guilt, which could be seen as one of the main motifs of the novel. Her mental health has been in a miserable state for some time, but Michael's death is the last straw that sends her spiralling into a self-destructive depressive breakdown. Eve Lazovitz explains that Joy "is haunted by feelings of hopelessness, fear, non-existence, and guilt. Her reaction to her lover Michael's drowning is typically female in that she wonders if she is to blame."⁶⁶ Joy blames herself for a lot of things and also feels guilty about a lot of things. She always tries to act the way she thinks she is supposed to, not imposing her problems on others, in case she would bother them or take too much space for herself. Lazovitz continues that Joy feels the guilt "for having been a mistress rather than a wife, for being unwell, for having emotions, for wasting people's time, for not being perfect, and for being womanly in some respects while distinctly unfeminine in others"⁶⁷ These feelings are closely connected to her self-destructive behaviour that take the form of anorexia, bulimia, alcoholism and self-harm, and they are "acts of punishment, escape, control, submission, as well as cries for help."⁶⁸ Joy feels that she should not exist, she suspects that everybody around her thinks that as well, because if she disappeared so would her problems. The way Joy is absolutely left out of the reverend's speech during Michael's service only reinforces this idea of her non-

⁶⁴ Jessica Aliaga Lavrijsen, "Female Scottish Trauma in Janice Galloway's *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing* (1989)," *Is this a Culture of Trauma? An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 90.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 91.

⁶⁶ Eve Lazovitz, "A woman's guilt, a woman's violence: Self-destructive behaviour in *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*," in *Exchanges: reading Janice Galloway's fiction*, ed. Linda Jackson (Edinburgh: The Centre for the History of Ideas in Scotland, 2004), 125.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 125.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 129.

existence, as she explains: “1. The Rev Dogsboddy had chosen this service to perform a miracle. 2. He’d run time backwards, cleanse, absolved and got rid of the ground-in stain. 3. And the stain was me. I didn’t exist. The miracle had wiped me out.”⁶⁹ Later, after many episodes of self-harming Joy admits her thoughts about suicide: “I toy with suicide. I toy with pills, the fresh collection in my locker saved for emergencies. I toy with broken glass and razor blades, juggernauts and the tops of tall stairwells.”⁷⁰ Lazovitz explains that Joy “toys with non-existence, with absolute compliance with the powers in her life. She toys with killing herself, with becoming the non-existent woman that people see in her.”⁷¹ Fortunately, Joy eventually finds her way out of her miserable state. Her outlet becomes a scream and she slowly starts a long journey of recovery, and realizes that “You can’t stay too long in one place. Something base and human as the need to pee. The body converts and processes. It does what it can. I will Take Advice and Try Harder.”⁷² Towards the end of the book Joy seems in a better mental state and she starts forgiving herself, letting go of her enormous guilt: “I forgive you. I hear it quite distinctly, my own voice in the empty house. I forgive you.”⁷³

6.1.3 Role in Society

“This is my workplace.

This is where I earn my definition, the place that tells me what I am.”⁷⁴

Joy has no idea where she belongs in her own life. She struggles with all the social roles that have been prescribed to her – she is a daughter and a sister, but her mother has been dead for some time and she is terrified of her sister, she is a mistress, but her lover tragically died, and she is a school teacher, but could be described as anything but a good example for the children she teaches. And among all this, she is a woman in the rather patriarchal society of Scotland in the late 1980s.

Joy oscillates between acting against social expectations and fulfilling them as much as possible. Markéta Gregorová sees Joy’s actions against herself as a “perverted revolt against the reductive images of woman as imposed on her via glossy magazines that she reads vicariously: Joy no longer menstruates, thus rejecting the socially

⁶⁹ Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 79.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 199.

⁷¹ Lazovitz, “A woman’s guilt, a woman’s violence: Self-destructive behaviour in *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*,” 132.

⁷² Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 216.

⁷³ Ibid. 235.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 11.

promoted role of woman as mother; she marks her body in ways that arguably render her unattractive to the male gaze; and she does not eat, which is an ultimate refusal of a culture of consumption.”⁷⁵ Although Joy in a way revolts against societal expectations, she also does her best to fulfil them quite often. This is described for example in Joy’s “Bathing Ritual.” Joy does everything a woman should do (at least from the magazines’ – and perhaps society’s – point of view) when expecting a male visit. Joy plays the role of the attractive woman, even though she feels anything but. During the ritual she basically repeats the lines that the magazines tell her: “The oil will make me smooth ... I leave my armpits free from chemical interference: deodorant matts, it tastes bad.”⁷⁶ or when shaving “It gives a better finish slicing upward, against the hair: it severs more closely I have to be careful it doesn’t draw blood. That would be unsightly.”⁷⁷ She concludes her ritual with: “I am to be entirely inviting in case. In case.”⁷⁸ According to O’Grady this is one of the ways to reveal “internalised social control techniques that are, effectively, a form of self-policing. ... All this effort is a deference towards society’s expectations of an attractive woman’s appearance.”⁷⁹

Joy often uses certain forms of escapism to get away from her problems. She wants to, in correspondence to Baudrillard’s disappearance strategy “disappear into a superficial, objective existence where the complexities of subjective identity can be escaped; temporarily at least.”⁸⁰ As mentioned above, Joy consumes media, mostly women magazines, goes shopping and also uses drugs (anti-depressants mixed with alcohol). O’Grady describes drug use as “one of the most popular methods of escape from Scottish identity within Scotland itself,”⁸¹ which is closely connected to the increasing drug use of the 1980s. In the novel, Joy takes her anti-depressants and it is implied that she washes them down with more than one glass of gin: “Gin tastes sweet and bitter at the same time, stripping down in clean lines, blooming like an acid flower in the pit in my stomach. I top up the glass till it’s seeping. If I get drunk enough, I won’t go to work tomorrow either. This is cheering and helps me through another mouthful. ... Red and yellow pills: two thirds of a traffic light. ... He prescribes only a

⁷⁵ Gregorová, “The Horror of the Everyday: Janice Galloway and A. L. Kennedy,” 23.

⁷⁶ Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 46 – 47.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 47.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 48.

⁷⁹ Darragh O’Grady, “Alienation, disappearance strategy and existentialism,” in *Exchanges: reading Janice Galloway’s fictions*, ed. Linda Jackson (Edinburgh: The Centre for the History of Ideas in Scotland, 2004), 81 – 82.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 82.

⁸¹ Ibid. 85.

week's worth at a time in case."⁸² O'Grady summarizes Porter's thoughts on Baudrillard's theory as such: "drug use and consumerism are inextricably linked as effects of capitalism ...Consumption is, therefore an umbrella term under which we can put tourism, drug-use, media-consumption and shopping. All these activities involve the consumption of meaningless signifiers in the search for a hypnotic disappearance into hyperreality."⁸³ Joy wishes to escape from her life, from her problems and especially from herself and from the society that is trying to make her non-existent.

6.1.4 The Men in Joy's Life

In this part, I would like to focus on two groups of men Joy encounters in her life. The first group are men she has been in a relationship with, and the second group are men who have an authority over Joy – mostly bosses and doctors.

The first important partner in Joy's life was Paul. The couple started dating when they were both teenagers, and their relationship lasted for seven years. Joy seems much more outspoken and defiant as a teenager than as the rather timid woman we meet during the novel. She recalls that one day "a stray teacher caught sight of us. He shouted SEPARATE YOURSELVES. ... He said we were a terrible example. I wiped the cream off my nose as defiantly as I could and said I couldn't see why. He stopped short. ... You're holding a cigarette. That's worse example to impressionable young minds than anything we're doing."⁸⁴ Eventually as an adult Joy and Paul quickly fall into the expected gendered roles and Joy becomes the dutiful housewife: "I learned to cook good meals and run a house."⁸⁵ It's clear that as the pair grew older they no longer felt happy together, but still tried to make it work. Joy wants to talk about their problems; Paul wanted to solve their problems with buying Joy "sexy" underwear. Sargent concludes that "we might infer from this that Paul believes their problem exists because Joy is not appearing to make a big enough effort to please him sexually."⁸⁶ The couple grows more apart and both start having affairs, eventually splitting up.

David is much younger than Joy, and he actually used to be one of her students. Joy is very much aware that their relationship is problematic and is also aware that she is responsible for the affair happening in the first place: "It was me who started it. I

⁸² Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 87 – 88.

⁸³ O'Grady, "Alienation, disappearance strategy and existentialism," 87.

⁸⁴ Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 41.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 42.

⁸⁶ Sargent, *Janice Galloway's The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 38.

kissed his neck. Out of the blue. I started to undress him in the car.”⁸⁷ Even though David’s presence is not as dominant in the novel as that of Michael or Tony, he “serves an important function as he is Joy’s one constant.”⁸⁸ He gets to see Joy at her lowest points but still continues to visit her and help her though some evenings, even if it is in the form of drinking and sex. His presence eventually saves Joy from committing suicide as his knocks on her door one evening force her to realize that she does not want to die: “If I answer I have to accept what it says about me. That I don’t want to die. That I don’t want to live very much but I don’t want to die.”⁸⁹ After this incident, the book begins to feel more optimistic as Joy starts getting better. Sargent explains that “it is clear that David and Joy are not destined to be romantically linked; however, their companionship is more valuable to Joy and exactly what she needs at this stage in her rehabilitation.”⁹⁰

Joy met Michael at school as a fellow teacher and they started an affair even though he was married. Her relationship with Michael was probably not as perfect as it might seem at first sight. Joy most likely had some problems with mental health even before meeting Michael and moving in with him. She admits that “the Bowie poster hides wine stains where I threw a glass at the wall. A wee accident.”⁹¹ The couple first move in together into Joy’s cottage and it happens rather quickly, because Michael’s wife finds out about their affair, not because they want to. Not long after, the roles turn as dry rot starts destroying Joy’s cottage, and Michael manages to get hold of a council house. They are again forced to live together, even though their relationship is not yet public and they would both feel more comfortable living alone: “The cottage could be fixed while I stayed here, then I’d go back to my own home. When he came to me or I to him, it would be from choice.”⁹² But Joy cannot admit to herself (and to us, readers) that her relationship with Michael was not perfect because she blames herself for his death.

Tony is Joy’s boss during her Saturday shifts as a bookie. He is always trying to get Joy’s attention, rather openly lusting after her, even though he is married. Sargent suggests that “Tony exists as the epitome of the patriarchy that Galloway sets out to

⁸⁷ Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 131.

⁸⁸ Sargent, *Janice Galloway’s The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 41.

⁸⁹ Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 203.

⁹⁰ Sargent, *Janice Galloway’s The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 43.

⁹¹ Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 19.

⁹² *Ibid.* 65.

critique in the novel.”⁹³ Tony touches Joy inappropriately all the time, as Joy describes, he “squeezed my hip,” and “my backside.”⁹⁴ Joy is a very vulnerable woman, especially during this time in her life. Alexis Logsdon explains that Joy “finds it less frightening to succumb to his attacks than fight him off.”⁹⁵ He continually tries to invite Joy on dates, promising to take her see dog-racing. Joy notes that even though she “never heard his wife’s name,”⁹⁶ she knows the name of “Tony’s Queen,” his greyhound. Joy eventually reluctantly agrees to a date. It is clear that Joy would not go with him if he was not her boss. After their first date, Tony kisses Joy and she recollects that “he kissed me again before he went for the car and I came in and threw up like an animal.”⁹⁷ Tony’s advances and Joy’s lack of power to fight him results in him raping her. As with many things, Joy blames herself for it. Logsdon explains that Joy “feels complicit in the rape: not only does she “give in”, refuse to “pull back”, and undo “the buttons herself to make it quicker,” but she also internalises the notion that the rape is her fault.”⁹⁸ The power dynamics between these two characters are clearly complicated. Logsdon explains that “the boundaries between Tony and Joy’s work and personal relationships blur when Tony uses his power as her boss.”⁹⁹ He clearly uses, and is aware of his power over Joy, especially after the rape: “He tells me to come with him for cash slips... I have to go. In the back room, he puts his arms round me and tries to push me against the wall. ... Don’t, I say, shamefaced. A whisper. ...Still too skinny, he says, sliding a hand out and onto my hip. ... Outside, I feel the notes in my hand and look down. An extra fiver.”¹⁰⁰ Joy needs the extra money she earns during her Saturday shifts and Tony is aware of that.

When it comes to the doctors treating Joy, “Galloway uses dramatic role-play between Joy and various doctors to underline the patriarchal/hierarchical nature of society.”¹⁰¹ Joy realizes that most of the male doctors are not taking her seriously, and that she is simply another patient they have to deal with, and she falls into the

⁹³ Sargent, *Janice Galloway’s The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 34.

⁹⁴ Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 173.

⁹⁵ Alexis Logsdon, “Looking as though you’re in control: Janice Galloway and the working-class female gothic,” in *Exchanges: reading Janice Galloway’s fictions*, ed. Linda Jackson (Edinburgh: The Centre for the History of Ideas in Scotland, 2004), 153.

⁹⁶ Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 32.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 100.

⁹⁸ Logsdon, “Looking as though you’re in control: Janice Galloway and the working-class female gothic,” 153.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 153.

¹⁰⁰ Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 205 – 206.

¹⁰¹ O’Grady, “Alienation, disappearance strategy and existentialism,” 81.

prescribed roles of the authoritative doctor, who is always right and the submissive patient, who does not really know what they are talking about. Nevertheless, it is clear that she is very much aware how artificial these roles are, yet she continues to follow them, because “Dr Stead went to a lot of trouble to get you this appointment. You have to try.”¹⁰² She does not *try* because she wants to necessarily get better, but because she feels that she should be grateful that someone gave her an opportunity. At her first meeting she realizes several of these things and marks them as “lessons” in her mind. She starts with: “LESSON 1: Psychiatrists aren’t as smart as you’d think,”¹⁰³ and continues with “LESSON 4: Psychiatrists are just like all the rest.”¹⁰⁴ Joy says this when she notices the uncomfortable body language of the doctor at her display of emotions.

6.2 *Foreign Parts*

“What are we doing here? Rona opened her eyes after a moment and looked out of the windscreen. We’re on holiday, she said. That’s what. On Holiday.”¹⁰⁵

In Galloway’s second novel, which was first published in 1995, we encounter two women, Rona and Cassie, who travel across the English Channel to France to have a rather uneventful holiday. The women are very close friends, even though they couldn’t be more different from each other – Rona loves planning and does not scare away from speaking a foreign language that she does not know properly, and Cassie is a daydreamer, who avoids interacting with strangers at any cost. There is also certain tension between them from the very beginning. Both Rona and Cassie are nearing their middle age, and we learn that they’ve travelled together before. The story is mostly told from Cassie’s point of view, which moves among the third, second and first person narrative. The story is full of questions, mostly formed by Cassie’s never quiet mind. Dorothy McMillan sums up the book’s questioning of life as such: “Rona’s grandfather’s letters and the spoof guidebook entries ask how things got to be like this; the snapshot commentaries ask how I, Cassie, got to be like this and the whole asks why, in the light of this, we go on, why we do things and what the doing means.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 103.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* 103.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 105.

¹⁰⁵ Galloway, *Foreign Parts* (London: Vintage, 1995), 63.

¹⁰⁶ Dorothy McMillan, “Gender and Creativity in the Fictions of Janice Galloway,” in *The Contemporary British Novel Since 1980*, ed. James Acheson and Sarah C. E. Ross (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 157.

6.2.1 Relationships with Men

“They’re Not Us by which in general I mean they’re selfish bastard.”¹⁰⁷

Throughout their journey, we learn about Cassie’s past relationships with several men. We discover the most about Chris, who was Cassie’s partner for 13 years. Chris was definitely the dominant one in the relationship and very comfortable in that role. It seems he had enjoyed Cassie’s submissiveness and took steps to make Cassie reliant on him. Chris refused to teach Cassie how to drive, which is something that could have made her more independent on him: “That was the first time I asked him to teach me to drive. I thought if I could drive I could drop him off somewhere and get out of his hair for a while. He said no. Fair enough. His car.”¹⁰⁸ Cassie tried to play the good girlfriend for quite a long time, but we quickly see from her memories that she slowly grew unhappy with her role in the relationship. She tried not to argue, letting Chris have his way: “We never got lost either. He said it was because he had a great sense of direction but it wasn’t that. He was too bloody-minded ever to admit he didn’t know where we were, just pretended it was a diversion he’d meant to take all along. And I let him. I knew fine but I kidded on I didn’t.”¹⁰⁹ He seems to be the type of a man who requires a constant looking after from his female partner, but rarely gives anything in return. Cassie remembers that “when his things got dirty he’d stand there looking down at them regretfully and I was meant to come to the rescue. I didn’t mind, I suppose. ... It made me feel part of a tradition of women doing the same thing.”¹¹⁰ From this excerpt, it is clear how easily young women fall into the stereotypical roles that are often expected of them by their male significant other. When Cassie tried to suggest a visit to a museum on one of their holidays, which is something she enjoys, Chris was quick to refuse: “Cassie I get two weeks to relax, two weeks: I can do without museums. It seemed reasonable at the time. I didn’t say two weeks was all I got too.” She used to do all of these things because that was what she thought a good girlfriend does and because Chris automatically expected it of her – no arguing with his decisions, taking care of him and not requiring anything in return. Over the years, Cassie starts understanding that she is not content in the relationship and eventually makes the final decision to leave Chris.

¹⁰⁷ Galloway, *Foreign Parts*, 249.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 31.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 80.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 111.

Generally, the men in both of the women's lives are only the ones stored in their memories – be it Cassie's dead father, her ex-boyfriend Chris or Rona's barely mentioned past partner Ian or her grandfather, whose name she is trying to find on a memorial at a war cemetery. The men are never given voice, they are always only described through the women's filter – we do not get to hear or see their side of the story. Carole Jones describes this narrative strategy as such: “all men find themselves corralled into one stereotype, just as women do on confrontation with the universal truth-claim of male-authored representation.”¹¹¹

When it comes to their everyday confrontations with men, Cassie seems rather wary and tries to avoid any unnecessary attention or conflict. When the two women separate in a cafe, Cassie eyes the men standing by the counter and tries to find a free spot to sit: “Cassie scanned the nearest tables, feeling for the novel in her back pocket. It was always good to carry a novel or a notebook in case you needed to look absorbed, a woman not to be trifled with.”¹¹² She is aware that the chances the men would bother are very slim, but she still tries to look occupied, just in case. But when a car with two men pulls close to her and they start yelling obscenities at her, she is not afraid to yell “FUCK OFF,”¹¹³ at them at the top of her lungs, even though they probably cannot hear her through the roaring engine. When Rona asks her what happened, Cassie just shrugs it off with: “Just boys being boys. Being bastards,”¹¹⁴ this seems to nicely sum up Cassie's general feelings about men. Rona is more straightforward when approaching men. While Cassie hides behind her book, reading, Rona is not afraid to go and ask a couple of stranger for help in the middle of the night: “See? Over there. Where it says restaurant? There's light. I'm going over. ... Rona was coming back. Two men following behind her... All smiling.”¹¹⁵

Towards the end of the novel Cassie starts asking Rona, whether she actually likes men and goes on a long monologue about the male sex: “They're all waiting for their bloody entitlement, Rona, expecting to be made feel they're the important thing off you being the not-important thing. ... They're not interested in what we want, Rona. ... What other powerful persons i.e. other men think – THAT'S what interests men. Women might as well not fucking exist. Heterosexuality is a complete farce, Rona. A

¹¹¹ Jones, “Burying the Man that was: Janice Galloway and Gender Disorientation,” 213.

¹¹² Galloway, *Foreign Parts*, 23.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* 55.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* 58.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* 83 – 86.

CON. Because what men are REALLY in love with is men.”¹¹⁶ Cassie is angry at men, she is angry at how unimportant they made her feel in the past and how, from time to time, they still treat her nowadays. Rona cannot do more than simply agree, although later she says that “men use up too much energy. ... They need a lot of attention, one way and another. I suppose there’s other things I’d rather be doing.”¹¹⁷ The women are spilling out rather bitter truths, which seem relatively harsh towards men, but Cassie’s rant bears a lot of accuracy in it, at least from the perspective of these two women.

6.2.2 Cassie and Rona, Rona and Cassie

Although the two women might seem as the exact opposite of each other, they remain close friends and keep going on holiday together. Markéta Gregorová nicely sums up the relationship between the two women: “Cassie depends on Rona for her everyday practical survival in the foreign country, whereas Rona depends on Cassie for the pleasure as well as necessity of human company.”¹¹⁸ Cassie sees Rona as the more dominant one of the duo as it is clear from Cassie’s thoughts: “Rona = driver, planner and executive agent. ... Cassie ≠ anything much.”¹¹⁹

Cassie gets easily irritated by Rona and some of her everyday actions, and sometimes it is clear that Rona is also trying not to lose her nerves with Cassie’s nagging. Gregorová quotes Ewa Szymańska-Sabala on the two women’s friendship: “Even though an overt affection is rarely noticeable, it surfaces in everyday practicalities and can be measured by both sides contribution to maintaining their being together. Initially perceived by Cassie as a relationship of power, it is finally resolved into a bond free from dependency that eventually achieves harmony in disharmony.”¹²⁰ We witness Cassie thinking about Rona and some of her habits that Cassie cannot stand or even finds disgusting, but then there are passages where we see Cassie praising Rona, even if only in her mind: “I watch her in the new clothes, bringing glasses out to the

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 171 – 172.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 246.

¹¹⁸ Markéta Gregorová, “English, Female, Tourist”: Coping with Otherness in Janice Galloway’s *Foreign Parts*,” *Moravian Journal of Literature and Film* Vol. 5, no. 1 (2014), 78.

¹¹⁹ Janice Galloway, *Foreign Parts*, 60.

¹²⁰ Ewa Szymańska-Sabala, “Re-presenting Representations in Janice Galloway’s *Foreign Parts*,” *Scottish Literary Review* 5, no. 1 (2013): 78–79 quoted in Markéta Gregorová, “English, Female, Tourist”: Coping with Otherness in Janice Galloway’s *Foreign Parts*,” *Moravian Journal of Literature and Film* Vol. 5, no. 1 (2014), 78.

table, looking fine fine fine. Sometimes Rona does, that burned black hair going grey, the sober eyes. She looks just fine.”¹²¹

The way that a lot of the text is introduced by “Cassie and Rona, Rona and Cassie” clearly shows that the two women are, in a way, fighting for dominance in their friendship. But slowly they start realizing that there is no need for this fight and that relationships and friendships should not be built upon one of the pair being the dominant one. When the women rent a cottage they easily slip into their domestic roles and seem genuinely happy, probably for the first time during their travels. At one moment, while Cassie is in the kitchen making soup from their leftover food and Rona is washing their clothes in the garden, Cassie “thought about the day being young, the goat, the sunflowers, the sky the colour it was. Rona out in the middle of it, washing knickers and laughing all by herself. ... Cassie laughed back.”¹²² Gregorová, using De Beauvoir’s theory says that “in order to create a balanced relationship with any other human being, one consciousness should strive to know, acknowledge, and accept the other without attempting to dominate it.”¹²³ This is something that the women are trying to accomplish, knowing that in their past relationship with men (or at least in Cassie’s case), the men were always trying to be the dominant ones, taking away the women’s agency. At the end of the novel Cassie starts thinking about her and Rona sharing a flat and by this “she establishes the friendship of two women, not necessarily with homosexual implications, as a valid alternative to the traditional romantic heterosexual relationship.”¹²⁴

6.2.3 Escapism

Both of the women are trying to escape from something in their lives, even if it is only for a while. Rona and Cassie choose the form of tourism to escape “the complexities of subjective identity.”¹²⁵ One part of their subjective identity is their Scottishness and also that they are both working-class women. O’Grady quotes Jackie Kay who commented on Galloway’s characters as such: “The point about her characters is that they don’t feel at home in Scotland.”¹²⁶ The two women travel to a foreign

¹²¹ Galloway, *Foreign Parts*, 79.

¹²² *Ibid.* 163.

¹²³ Gregorová, “English, Female, Tourist”: Coping with Otherness in Janice Galloway’s *Foreign Parts*,” 78.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* 82.

¹²⁵ O’Grady, “Alienation, disappearance strategy and existentialism,” 82.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* 82.

country where they “escape the subjective environment of home ... and where they shed their Scottish identity by travelling in an unfamiliar environment, taking on the identity of the surroundings.”¹²⁷ They hope that by this, they can find out something about themselves, they can even become someone else, at least for a while, and in a way it happens, with Cassie acknowledging how important Rona’s friendship is to her and that she would much rather spend her life with her than with domineering men.

7 Kate Atkinson

Kate Atkinson is the only author who is not Scottish by birth. Born in 1951, she spent her childhood in York, but decided to study English literature in Scotland at Dundee University, and eventually settled in Edinburgh. Jelínková considers Atkinson as a “border-crossing”¹²⁸ writer. Many of her stories are set in both England and/or Scotland, and sometimes, readers cannot be sure, unless she decides to explicitly tell them.

As discussed above, Atkinson often works with magic realism in her books. One of the influences that she encountered as a child was her love for reading and especially her love of *Alice in Wonderland*, which she claims to have read once a week for five years.¹²⁹ The book mostly influenced her novel *Emotionally Weird* (2000). She wrote several more novels, such as *Life After Life* (2013) or *Transcription* (2018), and also detective novels such as *Case Histories* (2004).

Furthermore, Kate Atkinson is a writer who unashamedly draws on the concept of Caledonian antiszygy, “manifested in the recurring motif of the doppelgänger,”¹³⁰ which is something found very often in Atkinson’s writing in the form of twins and/or actual doppelgängers. Most of her writing is rather bleak, often dealing with unpleasant things such as death and infidelity. When asked about the miserable topics of her books, she argued that: “You can’t write a novel about happy people having happy lives. There is so much misery around, I never seem to get round to it.”¹³¹ For this thesis’ purposes, I

¹²⁷ Ibid. 82.

¹²⁸ Ema Jelínková, “Anglo-Scottish and Scoto-English Prose by Female Writers,” in *Scottish Women Writers of Hybrid Identity* (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2014), 98.

¹²⁹ Alex Clark, “The Fragility of Goodness,” interview with Kate Atkinson, *The Guardian*, March 10, 2001, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2001/mar/10/fiction.alexclark>

¹³⁰ Petr Anténe, “Women Crossing Borders – the Gothic and the Fantastic,” in *Scottish Women Writers of Hybrid Identity* (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2014), 63.

¹³¹ Lisa Allardice, “I live to entertain. I don’t live to teach or preach or to be political,” interview with Kate Atkinson, *The Guardian*, June 15, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/jun/15/kate-atkinson-interview-i-live-to-entertain>

have chosen Atkinson's first novel *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* and her first short story collection *Not the End of the World*.

7.1 *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*

Kate Atkinson's first novel was published in 1995. The book begins in 1951 with the exclamation "I exist!"¹³² as we meet the newly conceived Ruby Lennox, whose family story we are about to explore. Ruby is born into a York working-class family consisting of her parents and two older sisters. Apart from Ruby, we discover the life stories of her relatives, moving among the flashbacks of her great-grandmother, grandmother and mother with several parts including the view-points of the male relatives. Ruby's family is filled with people dying, and many of the tragic events are described in a tragic-comic way and they are often foretold by the all-knowing narrator - Ruby.

Generally, Atkinson's writing is described as "a critique of received ideologies of the family and notions of family values, ruthlessly exposing the myth of the maternal instinct and the fiction of fathers' abilities, or inclinations, to care for and protect their children,"¹³³ and *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* covers all of these issues, with mothers running away leaving their children behind, indifferent fathers, and unhappy familial relationships built on anything but love and affection.

7.1.1 Death

From the very beginning death looms over the story. First we meet the ghosts living "Above the Shop" and later we start learning about all the untimely deaths in the family throughout more than three generations. The Lennox family seems very unlucky, when regarded how often they experience a tragedy in the form of a deceased family member. But the most important death that haunts the whole book is connected to the narrator of the story. After we find out that Ruby had lost her twin sister at the age of four, the whole text suddenly requires a different reading. Sinead McDermott argues that "this family saga is constructed around a central traumatic core; its tonal disjunction between high comedy and painful loss a symptomatic dissonance which can only be understood in light of the repressed-memory story at its centre."¹³⁴

¹³² Kate Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* (London: Doubleday, 1995), 11.

¹³³ Sinead McDermott, "Kate Atkinson's Family Romance: Missing Mothers and Hidden Histories in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*," *Critical Survey* 18, no. 2 (2006), 67.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* 68.

The narration often alludes to the deaths a long time before they actually happen. There is an ever-present feeling of dread and expectation that something horrible is about to happen. Gillian's untimely death is hinted at from the beginning of the book and confirmed soon after, when Ruby muses over the golden curls some of their family members inherit: "She does not yet know that the price exacted for this unearthly splendour is, generally speaking, an untimely death. Poor Gillian!"¹³⁵ But her actual death does not happen until almost a hundred pages later. Ruby and Patricia are not allowed to mourn Gillian's death properly, as they do not attend her funeral, as Ruby remembers: "although neither Patricia nor myself were sorry to have missed this particular social occasion, it did leave us for a long time afterwards – perhaps for ever – with the feeling that Gillian was, if not exactly alive then not exactly *dead* either."¹³⁶ Kenneth J. Doka, a professor of psychology, who specializes in death and grief, writes that children: "should be given a choice about funerals. Funerals are important family rituals. When they are done well, they can be highly therapeutic events. They reinforce the reality of the death—often critical for a child."¹³⁷ Neither Ruby nor Patricia were given the choice to attend Gillian's funeral, which might have resulted in the deep seeded trauma, which stems from the lack of closure.

It is clear that death of a family member can become a very formative process for an individual, especially when such a thing happens during childhood. And Ruby witnesses the deaths of her twin sister Pearl, of her older sister Gillian and eventually parts with the oldest sister Patricia, who moves to Australia. Ruby must be terribly traumatized. When she starts remembering what truly happened during the fateful day of her twin's death, Ruby becomes very emotional, realizing her loss and her mother's strange reaction – again, both must have been very traumatizing. Ruby recalls: "My mother really did blame me. She packed me off to her sister in Dewsbury because she couldn't bear to look at me." ... "Because you reminded her of Pearl, not because she hated you," Dr Herzmark suggests. I shrug. "Both, I suppose."¹³⁸ The way Ruby is sent away after her twin's death definitely does not help her cope with it. Just like after Gillian's death, both of the parents disappear, leaving Ruby, Patricia and Nell, the grandmother who is hardly able to take care of all of them, alone in the flat for nearly a

¹³⁵ Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, 74.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* 168 – 169.

¹³⁷ Kenneth J. Doka, "Should Children Attend Funerals?" *Psychology Today*, May 20, 2018, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/good-mourning/201805/should-children-attend-funerals>

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* 295.

week to fend for themselves. The parents' reactions to the deaths are definitely not appropriate, and unquestionably leave some scars of their remaining daughters. Ruby's life and her whole identity have been formed around death and we can only hope she can, in the future, escape from such a dreadful, hereditary, fate.

7.1.2 Family and Missing Mothers

Family is not exactly a happy place in this novel. Most families are built upon the traditional belief that marriage and parenthood are something that should be done once a person reaches a certain age. Starting a family used to be a way to secure a better life in the future. The women in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* rather quickly become dissatisfied with their family lives and some eventually leave. Nell's mother, Alice, left her family, leaving her children thinking that she had died. Similarly, Bunty also leaves her family, but eventually comes back. When she was younger, Bunty dreamed about being swept away by a handsome man during the Second World War, yet she settles for an unsatisfactory intercourse at her sister's wedding reception: "Bunty felt absolutely disgusted by the whole process, particularly as he banged her head off the drainpipe in his excitement."¹³⁹ She even thinks about marrying the man, simply because there is no one better around. But eventually, Bunty gets engaged to George, even though "she wasn't entirely sure about this, but, with the war now drawing to a close, the possibilities were beginning to fade."¹⁴⁰ One might argue that these experiences are not to be considered very contemporary, but I believe that the idea of marrying and becoming a mother, simply because it is the norm a woman should comply to, is still more than relevant today.

From the beginning, Ruby questions Bunty's ability to be a good mother. Right after her conception, Ruby muses: "Would I be better off with a mother with a different name?"¹⁴¹ She quickly learns that she does not have really loving parents, at least not in a very affectionate way. Starting from Alice, Ruby great-grandmother, all the women in the family end up being mothers, even though it is not something they really yearn for in their lives. McDermott explains: "Like Bunty later on, Alice is struck by the realisation that she has been "living the wrong life;" but whereas Bunty grimly persists in her role of Martyred Wife, Alice's life takes a different course: she elopes with the travelling photographer who takes her picture, abandoning her children in the

¹³⁹ Ibid. 89.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 98.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. 11.

process.”¹⁴² Bunty definitely lets her unwanted role of a mother be known, for example, when Patricia, Ruby’s older sister, says she does not like porridge, “Bunty hisses back, “Well, I don’t like children, so that’s too bad for you, isn’t it?” She’s joking, of course. Isn’t she?”¹⁴³ Ruby is unsure about her mother’s love towards her children and McDermott characterizes the relationship between Bunty and Ruby as “one characterised by disappointment: Bunty's failure to demonstrate maternal love is matched throughout by Ruby's daughterly ingratitude.”¹⁴⁴ After Gillian dies, Bunty gets more protective of her remaining children, but in a rather invasive way: “the world appears to be populated by objects intent on attacking us.”¹⁴⁵ Ruby then comments on their current situation where their mother is being overprotective yet irritated at them all the time: “Our poor mother – can’t bear us out of her sight, can’t bear us in it.”¹⁴⁶ Patricia is not allowed to explore her role as a mother, when she discovers that she is pregnant during their Scottish holiday. Since she is only seventeen, without a husband, she is forced to give the baby up for adoption. Apparently, this breaks her and is the final straw that makes her cut ties with her family: “Patricia got a second holiday that year, staying in Clacton in a Methodist mother-and-baby home. When she came back, a mother-and-no-baby, she was a different person somehow. ... Patricia never went back to school, never took her A levels, and she was so full of darkness that in some awful way it was quite a relief when she walked out one bright May morning and never came home again.”¹⁴⁷

Consequently, there seems to be two options for women, dissatisfied in their roles as mothers: either to disappear like Alice did and be erased from the family’s history and/or be replaced by a stepmother, or to persist as Bunty does until her death, and have none of her daughters’ genuine love and affection. Even though the women in this family seem doomed to be unhappy in their domestic lives, Ruby is one of the few characters that may break the circle. Ruby “follows Alice’s lead by leaving her unhappy marriage, but takes her daughters with her. By offering these counter-narratives the novel offers a possibility of agency, or at least repetition-with-a-difference, to counter

¹⁴² McDermott, “Kate Atkinson's Family Romance: Missing Mothers and Hidden Histories in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*,” 72.

¹⁴³ Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, 16.

¹⁴⁴ McDermott, “Kate Atkinson's Family Romance: Missing Mothers and Hidden Histories in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*,” 69.

¹⁴⁵ Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, 183.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 183.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 236.

the apparent determinism of the family story.”¹⁴⁸ Maybe Ruby can find happiness in being a mother, even if a single mother.

7.1.3 Doubles

“It’s strange to be alone in my bedroom and I have a distinct feeling that something – or somebody – is missing.”¹⁴⁹

Throughout the novel we encounter several characters who have a double, someone almost same as themselves. In *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, these doubles often manifest themselves as twins. Before we know that Ruby herself had a twin, we meet Daisy and Rose, her twin cousins who make her feel uneasy and even scared when she needs to sleep in the same room with them right after Pearl’s tragic death. Germanà suggests that Ruby’s fear of the twins is connected to the post-traumatic amnesia, which she experiences after Pearl’s death. She explains that “[the] post-traumatic amnesia casts a shadow on Ruby’s identity, who fears annihilation via her assimilation to the alien set of twins.”¹⁵⁰

Throughout most of the story, Ruby does not realize that she used to have a twin sister and the book often alludes to strange events where there are two Rubys: “I don’t know how I move so fast – one moment I’m standing by the television set, the next I’m hurtling through the passage to the kitchen. If you blinked you’d almost think there was two of me.”¹⁵¹ She simply has no memory of Pearl and even the clues hidden around the house are not enough to beat the traumatic amnesia: “... black and white photographs in each frame – thirty-six of Patricia, thirty-six of Gillian and, for some reason, seventy-two of me.”¹⁵² The only moments when Ruby seems close to remembering her sister is during her encounters with water: “as we stand watching the frozen river and contemplating the olden days, a curious feeling rises up inside me, a feeling of something long forgotten. It has something to do with the cold and the ice and something to do with the water too.”¹⁵³ Together with Ruby, the reader has no idea what these comments made by Ruby might mean, definitely not on the first read. Germanà quotes Roger Luckhurst on the way the texts works with the reader: “Atkinson manoeuvres the reader into the position of the unknowing subject of repressed

¹⁴⁸ McDermott, “Kate Atkinson’s Family Romance: Missing Mothers and Hidden Histories in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*,” 73.

¹⁴⁹ Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, 113.

¹⁵⁰ Germanà, *Scottish Women’s Gothic and Fantastic Writing: Fiction Since 1978*, 114.

¹⁵¹ Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, 73.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* 80.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* 203 - 204.

memories.”¹⁵⁴ But once we discover what happened to Pearl, even the reader themselves doubles – on one hand we have the unknowledgeable reader, unaware of Pearl’s tragic death and on the other we have the reader who knows what Ruby means by her words, and sees the hidden meanings.

Ruby’s duality also stems from her position as the story’s narrator. Emma Parker explains that Ruby “tells her story from her own point of view but also enjoys diemonic powers associated with a third person omniscient narrator who typically stands outside the action and describes events in a detached, impersonal, objective manner.”¹⁵⁵ Therefore, Ruby is aware of and narrates her mother’s thoughts and her father’s affair even though she is only a newly conceived embryo. This creates a question about how credible Ruby’s narration is – a third person narrator usually tells the events as they happened, but the fact that Ruby is a first person narrator (even if omniscient), gives us some doubt.

After Ruby loses her twin, she doubts herself, her existence, her identity. From the starting assertive exclamation of “My name is Ruby. I am a precious jewel,”¹⁵⁶ she moves to the uncertain “just Ruby.”¹⁵⁷ But as an adult, after she finds out everything about her twin sister and about her Scottish roots, Ruby eventually settles in Scotland to write, and Jelínková concludes that “Ruby sets up her home in the realm of language and emerges as a newly empowered creature – the narrator of strange powers that cross borders happily, never having to settle for one alternative.”¹⁵⁸ She can move between her English and Scottish identity freely, without restrictions, even though she still admits her thoughts: “I belong by blood to this foreign country.”¹⁵⁹ In the end she returns to her confident exclamation adding her belonging to the definition, which became to be Scotland: “I am in another country, the one called home. I am alive. I am a precious jewel. I am a drop of blood. I am Ruby Lennox.”¹⁶⁰ Ruby worked out her traumatic past and attempts to live a content life with the identity she feels comfortable in, at least for the time being.

¹⁵⁴ Germanà, *Scottish Women’s Gothic and Fantastic Writing: Fiction Since 1978*, 112.

¹⁵⁵ Emma Parker, *Kate Atkinson’s Behind the Scenes at the Museum: A Reader’s Guide* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002), 32.

¹⁵⁶ Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, 43.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 105.

¹⁵⁸ Jelínková, “Anglo-Scottish and Scoto-English Prose by Female Writers,” 99.

¹⁵⁹ Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, 331.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 333.

7.2 *Not the End of the World*

Kate Atkinson's first short story collection, published in 2002, makes a great use of all kinds of mythology to explore rather everyday events (discounting the first and the last story, which take place in an unnamed British dystopian city during what seems like the end of the world). Greek mythology is perhaps the most prominent, with references to Greek gods, or artefacts connected to them. Atkinson chose Magic Realism (elements of which are explained above) to convey her stories and messages. Atkinson's stories further correspond to Tzvetan Todorov's theory of fantastic – which occurs when we encounter “an event, which cannot be explained by the laws of this familiar world,”¹⁶¹ and the characters need to choose whether a supernatural event actually took place or whether they were victims of an illusion of their senses. Some of the stories, such as *The Cat Lover* or *Evil Doppelgängers* work with the marvellous, where we need to accept that the supernatural truly exist within the stories. Others, such as *Tunnel of Fish* or the ending of *Unseen Translation*, can be seen as examples of the fantastic, because as long as there is an uncertainty between what really occurred, the story works with the fantastic. This “hesitation creates the fantastic effect.”¹⁶²

The stories explore domestic problems, families falling apart, love and hatred for parents and children alike. Atkinson explores these topics, which could be considered taboo or at least highly unusual, similarly to her novel *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*. Family remains the core focus in the short stories.

7.2.1 Dysfunctional and Non-Traditional Families

It seems that none of the short stories present us with a typical nuclear family, with clearly defined roles of the wife, the husband and their children – and yet all the short stories seem to be about families, from one point or another. Instead, Atkinson introduces us to single mothers with eccentric male acquaintances, children caught in the unhealthy labyrinth of adult relationships, or women yearning for families without needing relationships with men. According to Clare Hanson, in Kate Atkinson's writing “the idea(l) of the happy family is a dangerous illusion and home is always uncanny, marked by absence, loss, and trauma.”¹⁶³ She places Atkinson's writing in the concept

¹⁶¹ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1975), 25.

¹⁶² Ibid. 26.

¹⁶³ Clare Hanson, “Fiction: From Realism to Postmodernism and Beyond,” in *The History of British Women's Writing 1970 – Present*, ed. Mary Eagleton and Emma Parker (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 32.

of “neodomesic writing,” which was explained by Kristin J. Jacobson as such: “interest in relational (as opposed to oppositional) domestic space, its emphasis on domestic mobility, that is the idea that home, both as an ideology and as physical space, can occupy multiple locations, and its interest in reconfiguring (or ‘renovating’) the traditional home.”¹⁶⁴ And domestic space is where we find basically all of the characters in *Not the End of the World*.

In *Tunnel of Fish*, June is expecting her third child. Her second child, a boy named Eddie, seems as rather introverted, with peculiar interest in fish – he enjoys cataloguing fish, visiting the Deep Sea World, and even expresses a wish that “if [he] could have chosen, he would have been a fish.”¹⁶⁵ June worries, that her son might be on the autistic spectrum, but thinks it has more to do with genetics, than the way of her parenting. Throughout the short story we learn that June was first pregnant when she was only fifteen, but decided for abortion, despite her parents’ wishes. She had Eddie when she was eighteen, and now, at thirty, expects a baby girl. None of the babies were conceived inside of a stereotypical family unit. She doesn’t mention anything about the person, she expected the first child with, but it is not of great importance, since she was basically still a child herself.

When it comes to Eddie’s conception, June recounts her holiday on Crete, where she was dragged into an underwater kingdom at the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea, where she remembers only fragments of meeting a male entity. She blames drugs for the experience: “...everything was confused in her memory and what happened next was so very rich and strange that she thought that someone must have given her acid.”¹⁶⁶ She describes a throne, a chariot and the man as having a beard – all of which are common imagery used to describe Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea. On the other hand, one needs to realize that Scotland has its own folk story about sea creature that often seduces ordinary people; one that changes from a seal to human form by shedding their seal skin on the land – the selkie. Folktales about selkies most often involve a selkie woman, whose seal skin is taken and hidden by a man she then marries and has children with. A traditional tale includes a selkie woman who is “removed from her animal life and must conform to human society. She often longs for the sea, but she resigns herself

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. 31.

¹⁶⁵ Kate Atkinson, *Not the End of the World*, 25.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. 41.

to her fate and becomes a dutiful wife and mother.”¹⁶⁷ And while we do not see June longing for the sea, as she claims that she has been scared of it since her visit to Crete, it is her son Eddie who is fascinated by the sea, sea creatures and Greek language. One could see Eddie as a result of a combination of Greek and Scottish mythology – or simply of Greek and Scottish ancestry, where Eddie’s father is simply a Greek man that June does not remember properly, and Eddie’s fascination with fish is simply a hobby, he might have inherited from his mother who used to love swimming and the sea as a child.

June’s yet-to-be-born baby was conceived with a man named Hawk, and June wonders how long he is going to stay in her and her children’s lives. It is clear she expects him to leave, sooner or later: “She wished he would leave now instead of putting her through the misery of waiting for him to go.”¹⁶⁸ When June thinks about family, it is only her and her children: “What shall we call the baby?” Eddie asked from the back of the van and June’s heart gave a little flap at the word *we*. June and Eddie. June and Eddie and the baby. A family.”¹⁶⁹ Hawk is not included in her thoughts about family, even though he is sitting in the van with them.

In her everyday life, June is sometimes worried about the way people around her see her. She is nervous when attending the parent’s evening at Eddie’s school: “...all those female teachers looking at her, wondering how old she was when she had Eddie, judging her.”¹⁷⁰ June is aware that she does not appear as a proper mother in the eyes of the society around her. She is not married, the father of her unborn child is a rather eccentric man, and she does not even know the identity of Eddie’s father. She needs to deal with society’s expectations and pressures to be a perfect mother, even though that is an unattainable goal.

In *Dissonance* and *Wedding Favours* we encounter the same family twice. This family consists of Pam, the single mother of Simon a Rebecca. Pam is a divorced middle aged teacher, dating her university friend Brian. In *Dissonance*, she unsuccessfully tries to be involved in the lives of her two children, who are approaching adulthood. Simon is a typical teenage boy, who refuses to tidy up his room and causes trouble from time to time. Rebecca is a little older, and is the exact opposite of her

¹⁶⁷ Nancy Cassell McEntire, “Supernatural Beings in the Far North: Folklore, Folk Being and the Selkie,” *Scottish Studies* 35 (2010), 127.

¹⁶⁸ Atkinson, *Not the End of the World*, 43.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 41.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 35.

brother, neat, coordinated, with big plans for her future. Both of the siblings despise their mother for a number of reasons, which might seem trivial, but also seem to hide some deeper rooted problems inside the family. Simon is irritated by his mother's incessant requests and remarks towards his behaviour. The short story actually begins with the sentence: "Simon wished his mother would die. Right that minute."¹⁷¹ Although Rebecca seems like the obedient daughter, she desperately wants to leave for university, to escape her mother's care. We quickly learn that her feelings towards her mother are very similar to Simon's: "Why don't you just die? ... Drop dead of a brain haemorrhage and leave us to get on with our lives."¹⁷² There seems to be an enormous amount of anger, or even rage, build up in the two siblings against their mother, but we are never sure why. On the other hand, Pam seems like a normal middle aged woman, who is trying her best rearing these two teenagers and we only see her through Rebecca's and Simon's eyes, so, maybe we only experience their familial life the way teenagers experience their lives – everything is driven to unnecessary extremes, culminating in hatred and verbal arguments and harassments.

In *The Cat Lover*, readers meet Heidi, a young woman working in a male geriatric ward. She is single, and realizes that her work is greatly to blame, as she is unable to stay in a relationship with a man and perhaps does not really require one: "Working with old men ... had influenced the way Heidi looked at the male sex. She had tendency to think of them as helpless, toothless and childlike, a tendency which had proven fatal for her relationships."¹⁷³ Heidi is scared that any man she would end up with would eventually need her help and "would have to be tucked into bed all the time."¹⁷⁴ On the other hand, Heidi wishes for children and we once again encounter the idea that a family can be consisted only of a mother and her children, similarly as in *Tunnel of Fish*. But unlike June in the previous story, Heidi finds out she does not even need an actual man to have babies. Heidi unintentionally adopts a stray cat that she eventually names Gordon. From a thin and sickly looking tomcat, Gordon grows into the size of a tiger, and ultimately starts sitting in an upright position and sleep in Heidi's bed "not on top of the bed like a normal cat, but beneath the covers, his body rolling against hers."¹⁷⁵ The way Gordon behaves makes Heidi wonder, whether the cat is

¹⁷¹ Ibid. 71.

¹⁷² Ibid. 78.

¹⁷³ Ibid. 187.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. 188.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. 195.

actually a man under some sort of a spell. From this point on the short story begins to feel as an odd retelling of *Puss in Boots* and/or *Beauty and the Beast*. Heidi even tries to break the curse, she thinks might have been cast upon the tomcat: “...when Gordon fell into a doze, she leant over and warily kissed his downy cheek. Gordon’s ear twitched and he stirred but instead of being transformed into a man he simply swiped her away with a sleepy paw. Heidi wasn’t sure whether she was disappointed or not.”¹⁷⁶ It is clear that Gordon takes on the role of Heidi’s boyfriend, and she herself realizes that as she buys groceries that he specifically likes. The story ends with Gordon leaving Heidi’s apartment and Heidi finding out that she is pregnant: “There were at least four, possibly five of them, nestling inside her, curled kittenwise around each other. Heidi didn’t think she’d ever seen anything more beautiful.”¹⁷⁷

Similar retelling of fairy tales can be found in writings of several women writers of the late 20th century, for example in Angela Carter’s *The Tiger’s Bride* or *Puss-in-Boots* published in her book of short stories *The Bloody Chamber* (1979). As Fiona Tolan explains, “Atkinson employs a reworking of fairy tale and myth that moves against the traditional boundaries of these genres.”¹⁷⁸ Retelling of fairy tales usually brings forward the female protagonist as an active agent in her life, since “the traditional folk narrative structures of fairy tales and myths frequently restrict and proscribe the female role.”¹⁷⁹

8 A. L. Kennedy

Born in 1965 in Dundee, Alison Louise Kennedy’s work is perhaps the hardest to analyze out of the three writers I have chosen. As Kaye Mitchell writes in the preface to her book on the author, “she does not comply neatly with any of the styles or groupings that fall under the heading of contemporary fiction, such as postmodern metafictionality or the new realism. In short: she is not quite like anyone else.”¹⁸⁰ Her prose is difficult to categorise into either women’s writing or Scottish writing (or even Scottish women’s writing), since her writing is not concerned only with female characters, or written from a female perspective. She is the only one of the three authors considered in this thesis to

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. 195.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. 198.

¹⁷⁸ Fiona Tolan, “Everyone Has Left Something Here: The Storyteller-Historian in Kate Atkinson’s *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*,” *Critique* 50, no.3 (2009), 275.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 275.

¹⁸⁰ Mitchell, *A. L. Kennedy*, ix.

choose an acronym (A. L.) instead of her full name (Alison Louise), and therefore is the only one who is not, at first glance, immediately recognized as a women writer. Kennedy is the one of the writers who does not consider herself a feminist, and claims that she “never got the feminist thing,”¹⁸¹ her work is nevertheless shaped by a “feminist consciousness,”¹⁸² as Rebecca Munford claims. When asked about her position as a Scottish writer, she refuses to have anything to do with nationalism and/or trying to write any real opinions about being Scottish. She comments: “It’s just where I live. ... I am not saying anything explicit about Scotland other than that I’m a Scottish writer because I live there and I was born there.”¹⁸³ When asked whether there are any particularly Scottish aspects to her writing, Kennedy answers: “I couldn't tell. Possibly choice of subject matter, possibly sense of humour - but there are other European countries where there are similar tastes and themes and jokes.”¹⁸⁴

Characters in her works deal with everyday problems of everyday lives and they often took a rather dark twist. The works chosen for this thesis are one volume of Kennedy’s short stories *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains* (1990), and her first novel *Looking for the Possible Dance* (1993). Although, as was stated above, Kennedy does not deal with solely female characters, the works chosen for this thesis reflect only female experience.

8.1 *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains*

“Contrary to popular belief, people, many people, almost all the people, live their lives in the best way they can with generally good intention and still leave absolutely nothing behind.”¹⁸⁵

Kennedy’s first collection of short stories, first published in 1990, emphasizes people whose lives are objectively not important, small people, who generally disappear after death. Characters in her works deal with everyday problems of everyday lives and they often take a rather dark twist. Kennedy’s early stories most noticeably focus on

¹⁸¹ Cristie March, “Interview with A.L. Kennedy”, *Edinburgh Review*, 101 (1999), 107, quoted in Rebecca Munford, “Girl Power, the Third Wave, and Postfeminism,” in *The History of British Women’s Writing 1970 – Present*, ed. Mary Eagleton and Emma Parker (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 139.

¹⁸² Rebecca Munford, “Girl Power, the Third Wave, and Postfeminism,” in *The History of British Women’s Writing 1970 – Present*, ed. Mary Eagleton and Emma Parker (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 139.

¹⁸³ Stephanie Merritt, “What’s It Like Being a Scottish Writer? I Don’t Know I’ve Never Been Anything Else,” interview with A. L. Kennedy, *The Observer*, May 23, 1999, 13, quoted in Kaye Mitchell, *A. L. Kennedy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 14.

¹⁸⁴ Gavin J. Grant, Interview with A. L. Kennedy, *Indie Bound*, n. d., <https://www.indiebound.org/author-interviews/kennedyal>

¹⁸⁵ A. L. Kennedy, *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains* (London: Phoenix, 1993), 34.

search for identity of marginalized people, often female. Mitchell explains that her stories can be “read as an examination of identity crisis, pertaining to that Scottish experience (although of course not a uniquely Scottish experience) of having no identity.”¹⁸⁶

8.1.1 Defamiliarisation, Trauma and Female Identity

Kennedy uses a technique called desamiliarisation which narrates “the ordinary or everyday in a way that makes it seem strange or unfamiliar. ... it serves to underline the spaces between people (including the gaps in understanding and communication) and what we might see as the uncanny nature of the domestic realm, the strangeness of home.”¹⁸⁷ This technique is used in all of her stories and I will explore it further below on concrete examples. The next important thing frequently explored in Kennedy’s short stories is trauma, usually female trauma – be it domestic abuse, rape, death or a broken family. The way Kennedy describes these traumatic events is closely connected to her technique of defamiliarisation. Rhys Leys, who focuses on psychic trauma, describes a traumatic experience as such: “the wounding of the mind brought about by sudden, unexpected, emotional shock.”¹⁸⁸ To explain what traumatized people go through, she continues: “The experience of the trauma, fixed or frozen in time, refuses to be represented as past, but is perpetually re-experienced in a painful, dissociated, traumatic present.”¹⁸⁹ These people, affected by traumatic event, experience “flashbacks, nightmares and other re-experiences, emotional numbing, depression, guilt, autonomic arousal, explosive violence or tendency to hyper vigilance.” All this in turn results in people’s inability to talk about the traumatic experience in normal terms, because experts “distinguish between two kinds of memory – “traumatic memory,” which merely and unconsciously repeats the past, and “narrative memory,” which narrates the past as past.”¹⁹⁰ And here is when Kennedy’s narrative style comes into play. Mitchell explains that Kennedy’s use of defamiliarisation is used as “a way of approaching subjects that might otherwise be considered non-narratable. In brief, it can be used as a way of dealing with trauma.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ Mitchell, *A. L. Kennedy*, 44.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 49 – 50.

¹⁸⁸ Ruth Leys, *Trauma: a Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 4.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 2.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 105.

¹⁹¹ Mitchell, *A. L. Kennedy*, 51.

The third aspect of Kennedy's writing that is present not only in her short stories, but also in her novels is her depiction of formation of a woman's identity. Kennedy's approach to identity is, just like everything else in her writing, rather complicated. We feel that her characters have trouble belonging somewhere, their identity, female or national, is always on the brink of collapsing and its being questioned all the time.

The title story *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains* deals with a woman who gradually realizes that her husband is unfaithful to her and eventually stumbles upon him in bed with another woman. She was aware of her husband's infidelity before this incident, as she muses over her memories: "And I was a good wife. I even answered the telephone with a suitably unexpected voice, to give his latest girlfriend her little shiver before she hung up. Like a good wife should."¹⁹² She also realizes that while she played this role of a good wife, she slowly became only that, her own personality slowly disappearing, at first in her husband's eyes, then even in her own: "Never knowing how Duncan saw me inside his head. It seems I was either a victim, and obstacle or a safety net. I wasn't me. He took away me."¹⁹³ This slow and continuous stripping of her identity starts culminating when she discovers that Duncan no longer loves her. She looks in a mirror and thinks: "There I was; unrecognisable. I looked for a long while until I could tell it was me."¹⁹⁴ She cannot recognize herself during this depressive period, where she comes to terms with her failing marriage. She sees a desperate woman, whose whole identity is on the verge of collapsing. When realizing that their marriage would sooner or later end, the narrator realizes that even though she can be content with her achievements in life apart from being a good wife, she has no idea who she will be after the divorce: "My future, and this surprised me, was much harder to redefine. All the hopes you collect: another good holiday abroad, a proper fitted kitchen, children, a child. ... I can't imagine where it all came from, I only know that it was hard to give away."¹⁹⁵ Her identity has been built around their marriage for such a long time that she has no idea what will become of her after – perhaps she is afraid of becoming that unrecognizable woman in the mirror. She tells us all of this, while starting the whole story with her not understanding the number of trains terminating in Garscadden. For her, the trains are closely connected to the whole discovery of her husband's infidelity. Philip Tew explains that "this betrayal is numbing, but so too are years of

¹⁹² Kennedy, *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains*, 30.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* 31.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 31.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 32 – 33.

repetitive commuting that she associates with the marriage. Removing her experience from its context, she transforms her unconscious everyday fears and her daily travel frustrations, and projects these into her current emotional condition.”¹⁹⁶ The trauma of being cheated on is shifted, making a connection with such an unimportant event such as late trains, which, for her, will forever be linked to her failed marriage.

In *The moving house*, we are trying to piece together the story of Grace from a very fragmented narrative. Eventually, we find out that she has been raped by her mother’s boyfriend, even though the event itself is only hinted at the end of the short story and is not described directly. The story begins at present time, after the abuse happened and Grace is trying to keep her thoughts away from it: “Think of something else to keep it away. The first thing you remember: think of that.”¹⁹⁷ She thinks of her father, who left when she was very young, about how she moved in with her great aunt, who was a rather old woman. We learn that Grace’s great aunt eventually died and as it is described, Grace’s thoughts again shift away from the traumatic memory: “She’d been expecting it, because you shouldn’t trust old people, they always die, and as soon as she opened the door, she knew. Back at the start, the beginning, Remember that.”¹⁹⁸ Mitchell explains that “the time sequence of this narrative emphasises the difficulty of describing traumatic events directly and explicitly.”¹⁹⁹ This is why the narrative moves back and forth, but at the end, Grace more or less truly narrates what happened to her, which could signal that she will move on from the trauma.

Sweet memory will die deals with a young unnamed woman who is trying to shake off her father’s influence: “I am a good hater. I find it easy. That was what my father made me do. ... Elmer made me hate and now I am tired of hating and now I am here to see him and put that right.”²⁰⁰ The narrator’s father either lives with or is married to a woman who is around the same age as his daughter. From the text we understand that the daughter ran away from home when her father started seeing the young woman, and that she was still rather young. She realizes that her father still makes impacts upon her

¹⁹⁶ Philip Tew, “The Fiction of A. L. Kennedy: the Baffled, the Void and the (In)visible,” in *Contemporary British Fiction*, ed. Richard Lane, Rod Mengham and Philip Tew (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), 123.

¹⁹⁷ Kennedy, *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains*, 35.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 37.

¹⁹⁹ Mitchel, *A. L. Kennedy*, 52.

²⁰⁰ Kennedy, *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains*, 57.

life, even though she has not seen him in a long time: “I thought that I’d left him behind when I ran away.”²⁰¹

It seems that the narrator meets a partner quite quickly, and they have a baby boy named Sandy. Kennedy is very ambiguous with her explanations and we can only guess what happened, but surely, it was something traumatic. In snippets of her memory we find out that the narrator and her partner Paul became very abusive towards each other after the baby was born: “Sandy kept us too busy, wanting things and breaking things. He broke us. It would have come in any case, of course, he only made it faster.”²⁰² They start to deal with their problems with arguments, then with aggressive sex which then turns into beating and essentially a rape: “I hit Paul. I didn’t want him near me, so I kicked him and he kicked me,” and this turns to her only worrying about Sandy not hearing what is happening: “I didn’t want him to know. He would have heard me falling, he would have heard the body, the feet, the head, but he didn’t hear my voice. I never made a sound that might worry him.”²⁰³ The couple separates after that and it seems that Sandy was given up for adoption: “Sandy will be here, somewhere, nearly grown to be a man. He was a good boy, nice looking, appealing to adoptive parents. ... We only said we couldn’t cope for a while and asked if they could help us out. ... They helped us out and took him, but I never got him back.”²⁰⁴ We have no idea what is happening in this woman’s life at the present time. She does not even confront her father after all and simply drives away at the end of a story, alone.

A quote from *The role of notable silence in Scottish history* “there’s no point being Scottish if you can’t make up your past as you go along. Everyone else does,”²⁰⁵ tells us quite a lot about how open-ended identity is – personal and national. Mitchell comments on it as such: “Being able to “make up your past as you go along” (perhaps even being compelled to do so), renders (Scottish) identity tantalisingly open (a work of constant creation and revision) but also troublingly contingent; it is whatever you want it to be, but also nothing (de)finite.”²⁰⁶ The lack of definition for Scottish identity and its adaptability is something we have encountered in all of the stories considered here. People change and so do their identities with regards to everything that happens in one’s

²⁰¹ Ibid. 57.

²⁰² Ibid. 59.

²⁰³ Ibid. 59 – 60.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. 60.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. 62.

²⁰⁶ Mitchell, *A. L. Kennedy*, 55.

life. The traumas of the characters might stop their identity from overcoming a certain stage for some time, but they always move forwards, eventually.

All of the stories deal with traumatized characters and the creation and change of identity under such troubled circumstances. Mitchell explains Kennedy's writing on identity as such: "The fragmented, non-linear and discontinuous narratives reveal identity as something which is always in the process of being made and unmade, according to the shifting configurations of past, present and future."²⁰⁷ We know little to nothing about the characters Kennedy presents us, and by the way her stories are put together by disrupted sequences of events, "we are made aware of the work that must be done by the reader to reconstruct the histories of her characters and so ascribe to them an identity."²⁰⁸

8.2 *Looking for the Possible Dance*

"Our present and our past creep in to change each other and we feel angry and sad and Scottish. Perhaps we feel free."²⁰⁹

Kennedy's first novel was published in 1993 and it follows the story of a young Scotswoman's life as she tries to come to terms with losing her father, her boyfriend coming into her life again and looking for a new job. Margaret Hamilton's whole story is framed by her train journey away from Glasgow towards London, where she wants to find a new job, as the one she left was anything but enjoyable. Throughout her journey she remembers and thinks about her life before this central decision that would considerably change things for her. She muses over her relationships with her father, with her lover Colin and with her boss Mr. Lawrence, and realizes that each of them had let her down in one way or another. The motif of a journey functions "as a metaphor for personal growth and development, a movement from past to present to future, from childhood to maturity, from a near dependence upon her father to a committed, adult relationship with fiancé Colin."²¹⁰

Most of the aspects of Kennedy's writing discussed above with regard to her short stories can be applied to her novel. The characters are relatively unimportant people, trying to live their ordinary lives, surviving traumas and making out their belonging. Even though Kennedy denies any association of her writing with feminism,

²⁰⁷ Ibid. 53.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. 53.

²⁰⁹ A. L. Kennedy, *Looking for the Possible Dance* (London: Mandarin Paperbacks, 1994), 146.

²¹⁰ Mitchell, *A. L. Kennedy*, 59.

her works, be it short stories or novels, deal with topics often used in feminist writing and her books, as Glenda Norquay suggests “show her alertness to the inequalities classically associated with such structures of power.”²¹¹ She further explains that “her central female characters could, however, be described as post-feminist, working with an explicit recognition of the ways in which their own lives might be mapped out very differently from women of a previous generation.”²¹²

8.2.1 Attachment and Dependence

Even though Margaret’s father passed away, she still cannot escape his influence on her. Growing up without a mother and with an eccentric father left its mark on Margaret, and the past continues to hold power over her, making it hard to move forward: “She was almost a dead end herself, almost past the point where she could imagine a change for the better, any change at all. That was how she felt. Prematurely finished.”²¹³ David Borthwick explains that “The figure of Margaret’s father stalks through her tale like a fading God, a redundant and yet imperative influence whose rituals must nevertheless be observed.”²¹⁴ Margaret still observes her father’s birthdays, the day he died, and any time she looks up at the moon, she thinks about him. This kind of attachment makes it hard for her to fully commit herself to her relationship with Colin. Borthwick suggests that “her formative years caused her identity to become so inextricably entwined with his [her father’s] that as an adult she cannot exist independently.”²¹⁵ He also suggests that “Colin only wishes to supplant Edward’s control with his own,”²¹⁶ because when visiting the place where Margaret’s father’s ashes were scattered, Colin says: “Edward Alisdair Hamilton, I’m taking away your daughter now and I hope that we’re both very happy.”²¹⁷ Right after this event, Margaret has a dream about her father in which he basically guilt trips her into joining him: “I’m on my own. Margaret, I’m on my own. Stay with me. ... If you’d love me, you’d be here. ... You and me, we’re the same thing. We’re family. We’re more than

²¹¹ Glenda Norquay, “Partial to Intensity: The Novels of A. L. Kennedy,” in *The Contemporary British Novel Since 1980*, ed James Acheson and Sarah C. E. Ross (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University press, 2005), 144.

²¹² Ibid. 144.

²¹³ Kennedy, *Looking for the Possible Dance*, 99.

²¹⁴ David Borthwick, “A. L. Kennedy’s Dysphoric Fictions,” in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature*, ed. Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2007), 265.

²¹⁵ Ibid. 270.

²¹⁶ Ibid. 270.

²¹⁷ Kennedy, *Looking for the Possible Dance*, 151.

family, we're the same. Two parts of one thing, do you see?"²¹⁸ When she wakes up crying, she "let Colin hold her, knowing she would tell him nothing because he would not understand and because this had been something private."²¹⁹ This is one of the moments when we realize how dependent on her father Margaret really is. She refuses to let Colin in, to share her "private" moments with her father with him. It is events like these that show that Margaret still cannot be truly committed to her present life and relationships.

Furthermore, the text itself is rather telling about Margaret's attachment to the past. Norquay notes, what has been said above, that Kennedy's "writing [is] characterised by fragmented narratives, with episodic and chronological disjunction,"²²⁰ but she further notes that "the movement between past and present tenses dominates even her sentence structures. In *Looking for the Possible Dance* this narratological complexity is indicative of Margaret's adherence to the past and its shaping power on her understanding."²²¹ Margaret remembers that "Every year, in November, her father died. In March, her daddy had his birthday,"²²² and "He died tomorrow."²²³ Margaret still dwells in the past and it is visible even in her choice of words and tenses.

Fortunately for her and her future self, Margaret slowly starts realizing that she needs to let go of her father, of the past she had with him and that she needs to focus on her present life and what is important to her, as an individual: "You said I should live Dad. Everything else is a waste of time. You told me. ... But all I do is waste my time. How am I supposed to do anything else? Nobody told me."²²⁴ Margaret's uncertainty in her life is something she must learn to overcome in order to live (at least little more) happily and independently. Even though she does not know where to begin or how to become her own person, the experiences in her life force her to it – be it her loss of employment or Colin's near crucifixion, both traumatic experiences that, nevertheless, force her to move forward in search of more stable future.

Regarding Margaret's starting independence which frames the whole story, Mitchell suggests: "In order ... to render her separateness as independence and thus, paradoxically, assert her attachment to home, Margaret must go away. ... She must

²¹⁸ Ibid. 153 – 154.

²¹⁹ Ibid. 155.

²²⁰ Norquay, "Partial to Intensity: The Novels of A. L. Kennedy," 149.

²²¹ Ibid. 149.

²²² Kennedy, *Looking for the Possible Dance*, 86.

²²³ Ibid. 88.

²²⁴ Ibid. 175.

choose to be with Colin, chose to stay in Scotland, rather than getting stuck there, with him.”²²⁵ Moving away from Glasgow is a big step in Margaret’s life and a signal of visible change in her. She eventually lets go of her father and remembers him and thinks about him in a bit healthier way, not so dependently like at the beginning. While on the train she realizes: “She misses her daddy and she misses Colin more.”²²⁶

8.2.2 Scotland vs. England

Margaret studied at an English university and eventually she is introduced to Colin “who was Scottish, just like her.”²²⁷ Ultimately everyone thinks of them as a couple: “Everybody was certain they’d end up in bed. The only two Scots on an English, English literature course; they ought to form a natural pair.”²²⁸ Both of them are singled out of the predominantly English territory. That is not meant in a hateful way, but they are seen as different from the other (English) students. Margaret and Colin are described as visibly recognizable to be different: “There was a formality about them that some of their fellow students found off-putting”²²⁹ They dress a little bit differently than the other students and everyone can tell they are Scottish.

On other occasion, when Margaret wants to buy Colin a record, the girl behind the desk “seemed to find Margaret’s accent incomprehensible.”²³⁰ Both of them realize this but they do not ascribe it much importance. Later the same evening, someone starts playing horn outside the campus, and “Colin stuck his head out of the window. “Listen you fucking drunken English bastard. Play one more fucking note on your fucking horn and I’m gonny come down and disembowel you with it.”²³¹ He continues with more cussing and when the horn player goes away, Colin asks Margaret: “Do you think that’s me conforming to a national stereotype?”²³² Even though the question is asked as a simple joke, there is still the underlying awareness that they are in a foreign country, where people see them a certain way. When Margaret later realizes that she crossed the border to a foreign country (England) and that she would miss her home (Scotland), it is

²²⁵ Mitchell, *A. L. Kennedy*, 61.

²²⁶ Kennedy, *Looking for the Possible Dance*, 236.

²²⁷ *Ibid.* 37.

²²⁸ *Ibid.* 38.

²²⁹ *Ibid.* 38.

²³⁰ *Ibid.* 43.

²³¹ *Ibid.* 44.

²³² *Ibid.* 44.

“[England’s] foreignness what makes Scotland home and what gives her the outsider perspective that she so needs.”²³³

Mitchell writes about the Scotland of the novel as such: “[it] is rife with contradiction – caught between tradition and the contemporary, rural and urban, heritage Scotland and violent/criminal Scotland, pride and shame, and burdened with a sense of its own inauthenticity and indeterminacy.”²³⁴ Even the ceilidh the protagonists plan and attend functions as a way of constructing Scotland and its myths. The unpublished invitation for the ceilidh introduces the event as “a uniquely unsullied flowering of Scottish culture,”²³⁵ and ends with “as every languageless, stateless, selfless nation has one last, twisted image of its worst and best, we have the ceilidh. Here we pretend we are Highland, pretend we have mysteries in our work, pretend we have work.”²³⁶ No one of the characters we meet is a Highlander, no one wears a kilt as a part of their everyday attire, yet for this one evening everyone pretends that it is all a part of their culture, something to be celebrated and kept as a tradition. This is all a part of the contradictory status of Scotland mentioned above.

9 The Authors’ Further Development

It would be unfair not to mention the authors’ further published works, as all of their other books would tell us more about their views on women’s experiences and identity. Furthermore, all three authors still actively continue writing and publishing. Unfortunately, their further works will have to be left for further research as they cannot all fit into this Master’s thesis.

Janice Galloway’s two books of autobiography *This is not about Me* (2008) and *All Made Up* (2011) would definitely give us closer look at the author herself and her views on growing up and maturing in Scotland as a woman. Galloway is truly a versatile writer as she moves in the realms of novels, short stories and poetry. Her writings include a historical novel about the German pianist Clara Schumann *Clara* (2002), several short story collections including *Blood* (1991) and *Jellyfish* (2019) or a book of prose and poetry combined with imagery of obstetrician instruments titled *Rosengarten* (2004) on which Galloway collaborated with Ane Bevan, who is a Scottish visual artist.

²³³ Mitchell, *A. L. Kennedy*, 62.

²³⁴ *Ibid.* 59.

²³⁵ Kennedy, *Looking for the Possible Dance*, 145.

²³⁶ *Ibid.* 146

Kate Atkinson is nowadays probably known the best for her Jackson Brodie novels, which are detective stories, set in both England and Scotland. She has been publishing these novels since 2004, starting with *Case Histories*. When it comes to books, which are closer to the topic of this thesis, the novels *Human Croquet* (1997) and *Emotionally Weird* (2000) definitely deserve to be mentioned. Both novels have female protagonists and similarly to her other books, the narratives move between the present and the past, both deal with storytelling and dysfunctional families. Atkinson's latest novel *Transcription* (2018) is a spy novel with a female protagonist Juliet Armstrong.

A. L. Kennedy's is perhaps the most active of the three writers. Since publishing *Looking for the Possible Dance* in 1993, she has written nine more novels, among them *So I Am Glad* (1995) or *Paradise* (2006), and most of them keep her typical bleak tone and troubled characters. She also wrote four books of non-fiction, for example *On Bullfighting* (1999), covering the topic of this deadly and bloody Spanish sport, and *On Writing* (2013), and she continues to write short story collections, among them *What Becomes* (2009) which deals a lot with love and hope, or *All the Rage* (2014), dealing with similar topics.

10 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore and analyse the ways in which women's experiences and identity are portrayed in contemporary Scottish fiction, namely in the works of Janice Galloway, Kate Atkinson and A. L. Kennedy. Even though I have chosen to group these three authors together, their work is extremely diverse. The only thing that truly connects them is that they are women, who are based in Scotland. No person holds the exact same opinions and ideas. Yet, saying that, when it comes to these three authors and their diverse writing styles, it is still possible to find quite a lot of ideas and thoughts they have in common, especially, when choosing to explore their texts from the standpoint of my topic. It becomes clear that their ideas about contemporary working-class women, who are somehow troubled with their lives, their identities, share some very important features.

Writing about marginalized people has been an important topic in Scottish literature for quite a long time, most noticeably since the 1980s. The fact that Scottish women are marginalized from at least two directions only explains their confusion when it comes to defining their identity in a clear and definite way. This marginalization comes from the fact that the characters are women in a still rather patriarchal country, which has been dominated by English rule and is still seen as a periphery of the United Kingdom. The way this thesis explores Caledonian Antisyzygy and Polysyzygy can be easily applied to the contradictory and/or various feelings about one's identity – just like Scottish identity, the identity of the examined female characters is in constant flux, it is always changing, depending on the circumstances and it rarely stands still for their whole lives. One aspect of their identities is that they are very often only performative (knowingly or not) – this could be the case of Joy in *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, of Cassie in *Foreign Parts*, or of the narrator of *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains*. Most commonly, their identities shift when they live with or communicate with a man – Joy, Cassie and even Bunty from *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* are able to swiftly turn into dutiful housewives, no matter what they genuinely wish for.

Another aspect that all of the texts and its female characters have in common is some kind of trauma they went through and survived. The way that trauma has been said to be hard to narrate for the survivor, is expressed in the writing by using experimental styles, often using postmodern techniques such as fragmentation of the narratives, non-linearity or pastiche. Traumatic experiences are rather diverse in these

six books, but all of them share at least two, and those are unhappy or at least complicated familial relationships and strong disappointments in men, often connected to death, infidelity or rape. None of the books has a very optimistic outlook for contemporary Scottish women, even though they often conclude on a more hopeful note than they begin – their general existence is plagued by their past traumas, by societal pressures or uncertain future.

One important point needs to be added: it is important to note that Scotland at the present time is a culturally diverse country of people with very different origins. The fact I studied only three white women writers, who all have Scottish or British roots, leaves an enormous area of research on Scottish women writers of different ethnic roots or with immigration background and their views on their own (Scottish) identity and experiences, which, I believe will diverge considerably in several aspects. My conclusion can therefore only be applied on white, working-class women, either born in Scotland or living there for most of their life.

Resumé

Cílem této práce bylo prozkoumat a analyzovat způsob, jakými jsou zobrazeny životní zkušenosti žen a jak jsou propojeny s hledáním identity v současné skotské literatuře, jmenovitě v knihách Janice Galloway, Kate Atkinson a A. L. Kennedy. Přestože jsem se rozhodla tyto tři autorky seskupit, jejich práce se vzájemně velmi významně liší. Jediné, co tyto tři autorky skutečně spojuje je to, že jsou ženy, které žijí a pracují ve Skotsku. Nikdo nemá úplně stejné názory ani myšlenky. Přesto, pokud jde o tyto tři autorky a jejich různorodé styly psaní, je možné u nich najít podobné náměty a některé myšlenky. Ve chvíli, kdy se na jejich texty zaměříme z úhlu pohledu mého tématu, jsou jejich společné rysy velmi patrné. Jejich názory na současné životní zkušenosti žen z tzv. nižší střední třídy, které se potýkají s jistými problémy, spojenými např. právě s identitou, se v mnoha věcech shodují.

Lidé z okraje společnosti jsou již dlouho oblíbeným tématem skotské literatury, nejviditelněji od 80. let minulého století. Skotské ženy jsou vytlačovány na okraj hned ze dvou různých směrů, a to vysvětluje jejich problém s určováním vlastní identity. Ženské postavy v těchto knihách jsou vytlačeny na okraj společnosti z toho důvodu, že jsou ženy ve společnosti, která se dá stále považovat za patriarchální, a také protože Skotsko je zemí, která byla ovládnuta Anglií a je stále považována za periferii Spojeného království. Způsob, jakým byla v této práci studována problematika kaledonské antiszygie a polyszygie, je jednoduché aplikovat na pocity rozporuplnosti a nejednotnosti identity – stejně jako se stále mění skotská identita, tak je v neustálém pohybu také identita zde zkoumaných ženských postav. Jejich identita se neustále mění v závislosti na okolnostech, a nikdy nezůstává stejná po celý jejich život. Jednou z vlastností identity je to, že její povaha je velmi často pouze performativní (ať už úmyslně, či ne). To je případ Joy z *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, Cassie z *Foreign Parts*, nebo vypravěčky z *Night Geometry and the Garcadden Trains*. Nejčastěji se identity těchto žen mění ve chvíli, kdy začnou žít nebo jinak komunikovat s muži – Joy, Cassie a dokonce i Bunty z *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* se jednoduše změní ve svědomité hospodyně, a to i přesto, že je to ta poslední věc, po které ve svém životě touží.

Další aspekt, který mají všechny texty a jejich ženské postavy společný, je nějaké prožité trauma, kterým si v minulosti prošly. Jak již bylo řečeno, jakékoliv trauma je pro oběť velmi náročné popsat a vylíčit. Tento problém je v těchto knihách

vyřešen použitím experimentálních stylů psaní, které často využívají postmoderní techniky, jako jsou například fragmentace vyprávění, nelineární děj nebo pastiš. Traumatické zážitky jsou v těchto knihách různorodé, ale všechny mezi sebou sdílejí alespoň dva typy traumat: nespokojené anebo komplikované rodinné vztahy a silné zklamání v mužích, které je často spojené se smrtí, nevěrou nebo znásilněním. Žádná ze zkoumaných knih nenabízí současným skotským ženám zrovna optimistický pohled na jejich životy. Existence těchto žen je sužována prožitými traumaty, různými nátlaky společnosti a nejistou budoucností. Přesto ale většina z těchto šesti knih končí s pozitivnějším tónem, než s jakým začala.

Na závěr je důležité dodat jednu věc: Skotsko je v dnešní době kulturně velmi různorodá země, ve které žijí lidé mnoha různých původů. Tato práce se zabývala pouze třemi spisovatelkami, které mají skotské či britské kořeny, a proto nechává velký prostor pro další bádání o skotských spisovatelkách jiného etnického původu než europoidního, a o jejich pohledu na (skotskou) identitu a ženské zkušenosti. Věřím, že se zde najde mnoho rozdílů. Můj závěr mohu tedy aplikovat pouze na ženy z nižší střední třídy bílé barvy pleti, které se buď narodily ve Skotsku, nebo tam alespoň žijí většinu svého života.

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Annotation

Author: Bc. Kristýna Drejslová

Department: Department of English and American Studies

Title of Thesis: Contemporary Scottish Women's Experience and Search for Identity in the Works of Janice Galloway, Kate Atkinson and A. L. Kennedy

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Key Words: Janice Galloway, Kate Atkinson, A. L. Kennedy, Scotland, Identity, Women writers, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, *Foreign Parts*, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, *Not the End of the World*, *Night Geometry and the Garcadden Trains*, *Looking for the Possible Dance*

Annotation: This thesis concentrates on six works published by three Scottish women writers, namely Janice Galloway (*The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, *Foreign Parts*), Kate Atkinson (*Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, *Not the End of the World*) and A. L. Kennedy (*Night Geometry and the Garcadden Trains*, *Looking for the Possible Dance*). The aim of this work is to comment on the way how (Scottish) identity is created and how it is connected to contemporary women's life experiences. The works also analyses how the three authors describe and write about these problems.

Anotace

Autor:	Bc. Kristýna Drejslová
Katedra:	Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky
Název práce:	Současné životní zkušenosti skotských žen a hledání identity v knihách Janice Galloway, Kate Atkinson a A. L. Kennedy
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Klíčová slova:	Janice Galloway, Kate Atkinson, A. L. Kennedy, Skotsko, Identita, Spisovatelky, <i>The Trick is to Keep Breathing</i> , <i>Foreign Parts</i> , <i>Behind the Scenes at the Museum</i> , <i>Not the End of the World</i> , <i>Night Geometry and the Garcadden Trains</i> , <i>Looking for the Possible Dance</i>

Anotace: Tato práce se zabývá šesti knihami publikovanými třemi skotskými spisovatelkami – Janice Galloway (*The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, *Foreign Parts*), Kate Atkinson (*Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, *Not the End of the World*) a A. L. Kennedy (*Night Geometry and the Garcadden Trains*, *Looking for the Possible Dance*). Cílem této práce je popsat jak se vytváří (skotská) identita a jak je tento proces spojen se současnými životními zkušenostmi žen. Tato práce také zkoumá, jakým způsobem tyto tři spisovatelky o této problematice píší.