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The Intertextuality in the Works of Kate Atkinson

(Diplomová práce)

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto práci vypracovala samostatně a že jsem uvedla úplný seznam citované a použité literatury.

V Olomouci dne ... ...

Bc. Barbora Jirošová

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1 INTRODUCTION

Since she won the Whitbread Book of the Year in 1995 for her debut novel *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* (1995), Kate Atkinson's status as a recognised author has only been enhanced. Being a postmodern author, the distinctive features of her writing include her ingenuous mixing of elements of high and low culture, as well as the complex deployment of intertextual references. The objective of this thesis is to analyse these intertextual allusions in selected novels and a collection of short stories, to find and comment on individual allusions and identify ways in which specific context changes the interpretation of either Atkinson's text or the original text.

The analysis of individual allusions will take into account not only the context of their appearance in the active text, but also in the source. In the words of Mary Orr: "Among intertextuality's most practical functions is (re-)evaluation by means of comparison, counter-position and contrast."[1] Thus the thesis will help gain a different perspective on not only the works of Kate Atkinson, but also on the original texts. It is also essential to concentrate on the context of both the first and the second texts. In Roland Barthes's words, a text works as follows:

> The text is a productivity … any text is an intertext; other texts are present in it, at varying levels, in more or less recognisable forms … Any text is a new tissue of past citations. Bits of codes, formulae, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages, etc. pass into the text and are redistributed within it … the intertext is a general field of anonymous formulae whose origin can scarcely ever be located; of unconscious or automatic quotations, given without quotation-marks.[2]

[1] Mary Orr, *Intertetextuality. Debates and Context* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003) 7.
[2] Roland Barthes, "Theory of the Text," in *Untying the Text: A Postructuralist Reader*, ed. Robert

From Barthes's perspective, everything that is conceived or used in a text has been used previously in another text; other texts are present in the text that is read. In the case of Kate Atkinson, this is employed very consciously and it is the aim of this thesis to provide an objective analysis of and arguments for the intertexts she creates. The analysis will thus be mainly comparative, predicated in combination with the theories of formalism (Bakhtin) and structuralism and post-structuralism (Riffaterre, Barthes). The thesis does not pretend to cover all the referenced works, as its aim is not to present an exhaustive list of allusions that would become merely a boring enumeration, but it develops those that are relevant for developing a theme or motif. Furthermore, descriptive allusions that only present a personal trait of a character and offer a comparison with another protagonist, without providing a deeper insight into the character, are also left aside.

The beginnings of intertextuality as a term date back to the 1960s and the work of the French theorist Julia Kristeva, who coined the term. Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality would not have been possible without the work of her precursor, Mikhail Bakhtin, and his idea of dialogism. The theory states that all that is said, has already been said in some other time or place. Everything repeats, everything is intertextual. Bakthin's theory of language is concerned with everyday dialogism and he divides literature into the monologic and dialogic.[3] A person who takes part in a dialogue or, in the context of the thesis, the author, suffers from the "interference of two sources: word's preexisting meanings and the alien intentions of a real interlocutor."[4] With regard to the reader, the 'alien intentions' are that which the reader has read before and with which they make free associations while reading a different work. The reader's participation must therefore be counted as much as the author's intentions.

Young (Boston: Routledge, 1981) 36-38.

[3] See Michael Worton and Judith Still, "Introduction," in *Intertextuality. Theories and Practices*, eds. Michael Worton and Judith Still (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990) 15.

[4] Worton, "Introduction" 15.

When highlighting the importance of the reader, Barthes mentions the pleasure principle as the reader's driving force. This taking pleasure in a text is inevitable. In contrast to this, the questioning of authorial intentions might seem problematic, as pointed out by Worton and Still: "a delicate allusion to a work unknown to the reader, which therefore goes unnoticed, will have a dormant existence in that reading. On the other hand, the reader's experience of some practice or theory unknown to the author may lead to a fresh interpretation."[5] The author may employ allusions consciously or unconsciously in the same way as the reader perceives them consciously or unconsciously. The motivation of the author is thus sometimes hidden even to the authors themselves.

The novels selected form a loose trilogy, starting with the afore-mentioned *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, continuing with *Human Croquet* (1997) and concluding with *Emotionally Weird* (2000). Atkinson's short-story collection *Not the End of the World* (2002) is further included due to its highly referential, and self-referential, style. Atkinson is also a successful writer of crime fiction, creating the popular series about the detective Jackson Brodie; these novels are, however, excluded as they belong to a different genre. The thesis also includes an analysis of her most recent novel *Life After Life* (2013), in which Atkinson abandons the crime fiction genre and returns to her literary roots after a gap of several years.

Concerning secondary sources, three main types of work are consulted: first of all, while theoretical works on intertextuality and its features are used mainly in the second chapter, theories of individual scholars are found throughout the thesis. Its role is introduced in the context of postmodernism as it is one of the crucial elements, through which postmodernism seeks to interpret the complexity of the modern world. Other elements of postmodernism are mentioned only briefly, as they do not fall within the remit of the thesis. The original texts from which allusions are derived are then mentioned in order to provide a comparison

[5] Worton, "Introduction" 2.

with its occurrence in Atkinson's work. Last but not least, the few sources on Atkinson herself that have thus far been written are also presented.

First of all, the theory of intertextuality is presented in order to explain the term in its entirety and justify its employment in postmodern writings. This is followed by a chapter on the context of Scottish literature, as it is important to clarify Atkinson's position within it. She has often been called Anglo-Scottish or Scoto-English, which may be misleading; it is thus essential to place her more precisely. The synopsis of the selected works assigned for analysis follows these theoretical sections. Within the main body of analysis, allusions are sorted into thematic areas based on the author whose works are referenced by Kate Atkinson, and are ordered chronologically according to their respective year of birth. This is done not only for the sake of clarity and organization, but also follows Atkinson's own method of creating series of interconnected themes.

2 POSTMODERNISM AND THE ROLE OF INTERTEXTUALITY

Intertextuality is one of the many indispensable features of postmodernism. Indeed, as is the case with postmodernism, its definition is very vague and varies across different theories. Besides Atkinson's mixing of elements of high and low culture, her employment of intertextuality is the predominant trait of postmodernism in her writings, and that is the reason why the following paragraphs are going to deal with this particular feature. Nevertheless, it is crucial to point out that postmodernism is not always intertextual and that intertextuality is not always postmodern. That is why first of all both concepts and the relation between them are going to be defined.

Most definitions of postmodernism also relate to intertextuality because "postmodernism . . . favours bricolage or pastiche to original production, the mixing of styles and genres, and the juxtaposition of 'low' with high culture."[6] It is precisely for this reason that Kate Atkinson is able to employ various types of allusions ranging from literature through music to TV series. Postmodernism has established itself as a term "to designate a related attitude of self-reflexivity or ironic knowingness that permeates our culture as a result."[7] The conscious self-reflexivity that is also inherent to intertextuality means that the two terms are closely related. All in all, "popular culture is irrepressibly 'intertextual': it constantly refers to, comments on . . . previous pop culture texts."[8] If the contemporary is perceived as postmodern, then it has to also be considered in terms of its intertextuality. As postmodernism enables the mixing of pop culture with high culture, there are no borders as to its application. The employment of

[6] Bran Nicol, *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009) 2.
[7] Bran Nicol, "Introduction: What We Talk About When We Talk About Postmodernism," in *Postmodernism and the Contemporary Novel. A Reader*, ed. Bran Nicol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 2.
[8] Nicol, "Introduction" 4.

low culture suggests the degree to which culture is influenced by modern media,[9] which is going to be commented on as well.

In his definition of postmodernism Graham Allen also highlights the function of intertextuality: "many descriptions of Postmodernism depict a transnational cultural situation in which pastich and parody of earlier forms and styles predominate. Postmodern art, many argue, rejects notions of originality and Modernism's desire to 'Make it New,' and cultivates a wilfully derivative, mixed and thoroughly intertextual approach."[10] Although the connection between intertextuality and postmodernism is a very close one, there have been objections to this close proximity of the terms. For example, there is Mary Orr's criticism: "If, in fact, intertextuality is interchangeable with, or collapses into, the word 'postmodern' or 'deconstruction' via the outworkings of deferral such as ambiguity, indetermination or equivocation, it is already doomed to redundancy."[11] Yet, the resolution of vagueness lies in clearly explaining and distinguishing terms and establishing terminology so that it is applied consistently. As for the questions of its redundancy, the fact that it has been used for over fifty years speaks for itself and suggests that no better term or definition has been found so far.

2.1 Intertextuality and Its Features

The basic function of intertextuality is its referentiality. Yet, the scope of reference differs and depends upon the point of view and approach taken, be it semiotic or postmodern. Therefore, "referentiality is then interreferentiality of text to text, not text to referent outside it."[12] In this sense it is the context of literary criticism in which the approach towards intertextuality differs, "as intertextuality

[9] See Nicol, "Introduction" 4.
[10] Graham Allen, *Intertextuality.* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2011) 224.
[11] Orr, *Intertextuality* 4.
[12] Orr, *Intertextuality* 10.

is thus 'refined', it becomes (purer) semiotics, (post-)structuralist poetics, socio-criticism, deconstruction, depending where the referentiality is pinned."[13] It is for this reason that it is so difficult to establish a clear definition of intertextuality without it being too vague or too narrow. In attempting to compensate for all those theories that are relevant in the literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, these approaches will be taken into account but none will be paramount over the others. This will allow the definition to be as general as possible, so that it will be applicable to any theory.

The disadvantage of intertextuality, the aspect that makes it so hard to define, is that it seemingly refers only to texts, mainly written, and fails to embrace referentiality to other disciplines or genres outside a text or literature. That is why the term 'interdisciplinarity' could allude to other types of media, such as cinema or fashion, and "interdisciplinarity can then examine itself through its disciplines and also as 'meta-discipline.'"[14] For Mary Orr, "interdiscursivity and interdisciplinarity manifest the same ability to colonize cultural space."[15] Yet, the terms are basically interchangeable and overlap with each other. Nevertheless, interdisciplinarity is nowadays employed more in relation to research than to postmodernism as such.

In literary approach towards textual theory text may be anything, not only a written text. To introduce the issues surrounding this, it is appropriate to present points made by John Frow, for whom it is of paramount importance to introduce textual theory and understand the concept of text as differential and historical, "texts are traces and tracings of otherness. They are shaped by the repetition and the transformation of other textual structures."[16] For this reason, intertextuality is to be perceived as an inherent feature of any text. Frow further adds that the

[13] Orr, *Intertextuality* 11.
[14] Orr, *Intertextuality* 46.
[15] Orr, *Intertextuality* 15.
[16] John Frow, "Intertextuality and Ontology," in *Intertextuality. Theories and Practices*, eds. Michael Worton and Judith Still (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990) 45.

analysis of intertextuality is an act of interpretation, yet he highlights the importance of identifying more general features such as genre, ideology, etc. as the relevant part of intertextual analysis which "is distinguished from source criticism both by this stress on interpretation rather than on the establishment of particular facts, and by its rejection of a unilinear causality."[17] In contrast to mere source-hunting which may serve as a guide for readers and is often perceived as being elitist, intertextual analysis seeks not only to identify the source, but also to offer a valuable interpretation that comes up in relation to the identified intertext and is also helpful in classifying art and the world in general as an interconnected system.

The emergence of new media, particularly the Internet, has necessitated the rewriting of intertextual theory. The Internet's potential to connect means that it is closely connected to the theory of intertextuality: both of them create and contain a plethora of texts. Nevertheless, compared to the Internet, intertextuality seems to lose its drive. The Internet age supports the doubts of the sufficiency of intertextuality as a term, yet, at the same time it proves its existence "because of their similarly connective structures."[18] Mary Orr shares this anxiety for the future of intertextuality, which "is very much at risk from electronic media forms of cultural reproduction and interdisciplinarity."[19] The development of both technology and intertextuality has proven that these concerns are unsubstantiated. On the contrary, they both can coexist in a mutually-beneficial state of symbiosis.

Even Mary Orr acknowledges that "'intertextuality' as the generic name for interactions of 'text' is indeed fitting and applicable to any electronic medium conceived after the closed form of printed text. Film is then 'text', as is an opera, a radio play and a television documentary."[20] Intertextuality is not endangered by

[17] Frow, "Intertextuality and Ontology" 46.
[18] Orr, *Intertextuality* 49.
[19] Orr, *Intertextuality* 103.
[20] Orr, *Intertextuality* 170.

information technologies. On the contrary, it proves itself to be a fruitful term while analysing both the Internet[21] and the literary world. Allusion, whether to another literary work or another type of art, is still a part of intertextuality, concerned as it is with texts that have become other types. Intertextuality thus becomes an all-encompassing term that enables the critic to analyse the modern world in its entirety and complexity.

According to Graham Allen, these new concerns suggest that attention is being drawn from text to media and from textuality to mediality and mediation.[22] While the focus may have changed, text can, as have been already demonstrated, be anything that is referred to and for this reason there is no need to alter or reconstruct terminology.

The scope of reference differs and depends upon the point of view and approach taken. "Consequently there can be no outside of the text if language is its paradigm."[23] That is why it is referred not only to novels or poems but to movies, music and others. Considering referentiality as the basic characteristics of intertextuality, narrowing intertextuality just to its relation to another text seems too limited and stiff an approach which does not take into account the development of other genres outside literature. With this particular perspective, the concept of intertextuality approaches that of the all-inclusive *Gesamtkunstwerk.* In Horstkotte's opinion "language is not able to convey 'truth' or 'meaning' any longer since there always exist several versions of them. In addition, the lack of any objective extratextual referent renders postmodern fantastic texts self-referential to a large extent."[24] On the other hand, if boundaries are stretched too far, one ends up with definitions as vague as those that have been already set up. This is why it is important to maintain a reasonable degree of

[21] See Orr, *Intertextuality* 174.
[22] See Allen, *Intertextuality* 214.
[23] Orr, *Intertextuality* 45.
[24] Martin Horstkotte, *The Postmodern Fantastic in Contemporary British Fiction* (Bochum: Wissenschaftlicher Velag Trier, 2004) 63.

scientific objectivity when defining a concept of intertextuality that takes into account both the possibilities of its referential function and the limits imposed by common sense.

One of the most important aspects of intertextuality is that it cannot function on its own. It always has to be put in a context. In the words of Mary Orr: "Terms such as 'love' or 'intertextuality' can be nothing without the qualifiers and contexts in which they can speak again."[25] This is why one can speak of the "intertextuality of intertextuality" or, if taking into account the concept of influence, to be discussed below, "copy of copy … returns us to the big questions about mimetic theories of referentiality, authenticity or derivativeness."[26] The context plays a crucial role and it is important to look through and inside a text to find out why a reference is there. In contrast to this, Patricia Waugh claims that "it exploits the indeterminacy of the text, forcing the reader to revise his or her rigid preconceptions based on literary and social conventions, by playing off contemporary and earlier paradigms against each other and thus defeating the reader's expectations about both of them."[27] This is not necessarily true, as a reference may be used to emphasise a point or revise an idea, resulting in both modification of the original and of the text that refers to it. Mary Orr calls the process translinguistic and transformational productions.[28] There is no hierarchy with regard to the importance of texts, "prior text materials lose special status by permutation with others in the intertextual exchange because all intertexts are of equal importance in the intertextual process."[29] The original text thus loses its individual existence and enters into a relationship with later texts, with which it starts living in a state of mutual interdependency.

[25] Orr, *Intertextuality* 5.
[26] Orr, *Intertextuality* 93.
[27] Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction. The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1993) 67.
[28] Orr, *Intertextuality* 28
[29] Orr, *Intertextuality* 28.

The usefulness of intertextuality has been questioned as well. Most voices have accused it of elitism, as suggested in Riffaterre's approach. Critics have maintained that only well-read individuals would recognise allusions, making the work unintelligible to other, less educated people. For example, Bakthin acknowledges a different approach towards a work when one is familiar with the preceding works by other authors that influenced the author in question.[30] In other words, the work appears accessible only to a closed group of individuals. Consequently, both the reader and the writer must be familiar with the same works of art.[31] Nevertheless, some works form a canon based on an unwritten consensus about information with which everyone should be familiar. Here, the debate becomes more one on common knowledge and education, rather than on intertextuality itself. Many allusions further work on their own and are perfectly comprehensible even without the need to find, or become particularly familiar with, the original text. According to David Lodge, "intertextuality is not, or not necessarily, a merely decorative addition to a text, but sometimes a crucial factor in its conception and composition."[32] This is why intertextuality can form a crucial part of a work of art and needs to be taken into account and to provide its analysis and interpretation.

On the other hand, intertextuality has been criticized for presupposed lack of originality,[33] or even plagiarism. As the author is dead, at least according to Barthes, the intention of plagiarism or the plagiarism itself is dismissed. Or if the plagiarism is acknowledged, its originator is unknown. According to Jacques Ehrmann,

> the criterion of "originality" of artistic production is both modified and

[30] See Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakthin, *Formální metoda v literární vědě: kritický úvod do sociologické poetiky* (Praha: Lidové nakladatelství, 1980) 194.
[31] See Mary Orr, *Claude Simon. The Intertextual Dimension* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow French and German Publications, 1993) 201.
[32] David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction* (London: Penguin Books, 1992) 102.
[33] See Edmund Smyth, "Introduction," In *Postmodernism and Contemporary Fiction*, ed. Edmund J. Smyth (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd, 1991) 14.

> contested. To write would be first of all to quote. The "writer" would not be the one who "listens to a voice from within," but rather the one who quotes, who puts language in quotes; who both sets it off and calls it to himself, who, in a word, *designates* it as language.[34]

This is why a writer cannot write something original, and their work cannot be considered original, as everything has been already written somewhere by someone else. The same thing happens in Jorge Luis Borges's short story *Pierre Menard*, where the protagonist tries to write a new Quixote and he happens to write a text identical to that written by Cervantes.

At this point the question of the usefulness of intertextuality is again posed, as the quality of intertextuality is not easily assessed. Mary Orr is of the opinion that "the logic of intertextuality certainly breaks down old boundaries concerning taxonomies of items . . . It can neither evaluate their efficacy nor assess alternative taxonomies for (positive) change or (more invidious) control. 'Good' intertextuality cannot then readily be determined from 'bad': it is quite simply summative, redistributive and relative."[35] Those features are certainly inherent to the concept of intertextuality, both good and bad. Contrary to this statement, it is not difficult to find examples of 'bad' intertextuality, above all when the allusion is used per se, for its own sake.

Disregarding the question of quality, it is more useful to state the different types of intertextuality, such as direct and indirect uses of intertextuality. For the sake of indicating a direct type, it is when the allusion contains the name of the author or of his work, indirect is when the author employed forms an intrinsic part of the text and the reader has to find for him-/herself where it comes from. Still, if

[34] Jacques Ehrmann, "The Death of Literature," In *Surfiction. Fiction Now… and Tomorrow*, ed. Raymond Federman (Chicago: The Swalow Press Inc., 1975) 243.
[35] Orr, *Intertextuality* 45.

the reader recognizes the allusions, it brings them to the world that lies behind the text on its own. Thus previous texts facilitate the more profound, evocative understanding of another text.

As in any analysis, it is essential to maintain as objective point of view as possible. Nevertheless, it is not only reader's private interpretation of the text, but also their own perception of books that they have read previously because, as Barthes claims, "this 'I' which approaches the text is already itself a plurality of other texts."[36] It is not only plurality of texts, but also of experiences, of knowledge, of emotions. In addition, Riffaterre's intertextual reader has to presuppose the existence of intertext in order to be sensible and open towards it.[37] All in all, it is essential that references are not based on one's subjective reading or knowledge but on ideas that are properly supported by an argument or by a citation from the text.

The advantages of employing the term of intertextuality should be now clear, it is a traditional and established notion. Moreover, in the realm of literature it makes more sense to talk about texts than disciplines. "Deconstructionists tend to say that if a text seems to refer beyond itself, that reference can finally be only to another text."[38] An allusion to a painting in a novel that is put down on a page makes it a text. The basic medium that is worked with while analyzing intertextuality in literature is a text and that is the reason why the term intertextuality will continue to be employed further on without any doubts and now, hopefully, without any ambiguous terminology.

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[36] Roland Barthes, "From *S/Z*," in *Postmodernism and the Contemporary Novel. A Reader*, ed. Bran Nicol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 227.

[37] See Michael Riffaterre, "Compulsory Reader Response: The Intertextual Drive," in *Intertextuality. Theories and Practices*, eds. Michael Worton and Judith Still (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990) 56.

[38] Madan Sarup, *An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism* (Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988) 57.

3 CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY SCOTTISH LITERATURE AND THE POSITION OF KATE ATKINSON

Although Atkinson was not born in Scotland, she is nevertheless often included into the realm of Scottish literature. Pamely Bickley challenges the question of identity and cultural hybridity thus: "In a strictly geographical sense, the British novel could be said to be any work of fiction written by an English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish writer. But must that writer be born here?"[39] It would be very easy to state that Atkinson is a British author and adhere to this characterization; however, Atkinson has often employed methods that are characteristic of Scottish authors. Eleanor Bell nicely challenges assumptions about a Scottish writer: "what they come down to is a writer of Scottish birth. But when we talk of an English writer we do not think of English birth: we hardly think of such things at all. A Scottish writer is in a false position, because Scotland is in a false position."[40] The question of Scottish identity is a spark for many discussions, regardless the matter of the place of birth. Disregarding place of birth as a condition, Atkinson studied and now lives in Scotland, facts that have influenced, and continue to influence, her writing. Ruby in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* also moves to Scotland in the end, creating a parallel with Atkinson's own life. Furthermore, Ruby does not know anything about the country in which she lives,[41] emphasising the uncertainty of identity under discussion.

Pastiche and schizophrenia can be regarded as the two most important features of postmodernism.[42] As both form an indispensable part of the so-called

[39] Pamela Bickley, *Contemporary Fiction: The Novel since 1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008) 19.
[40] Eleanor Bell, *Questioning Scotland. Literature, Nationalism, Postmodernism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 15.
[41] See Hywel Dix, *Postmodern Fiction and the Break-Up of Britain* (London: Continuum, 2010) 99.
[42] See Hans Bertens, "Postmodern Culture(s)," in *Postmodernism and Contemporary Fiction*, ed.

Caledonian Antisyzygy, a term introduced by the critic G. Gregory Smyth, and denoting the concept of a split personality (e.g. in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*), postmodernism claims to be a typical movement of Scottish literature, which is why recent Scottish literature has proven itself so fruitful. This feature of doubleness is enhanced by the tendency to swing, sometimes manically, between realism and fantasy.[43] This doubleness is also reflected in Kate Atkinson's favorite employment of *doppelgängers*. According to A. J. P. Thomson, postmodernism is then the obvious connection in Scottish literature both in terms of nationalism and literature.[44] Intertextual references then come up as logical method for exploring those areas and "these new literary imaginings do not enjoy the privilege of entering the world unchallenged, and constant intertextual negotiation between the dominant images of Scotland and the emergent ones has been required."[45] Also Tom McGuire claims that "contemporary Scottish literature speaks about and emerges from a more global set of circumstances."[46] In employing a myriad of intertextual and intercultural references, this is exactly what Atkinson does. Furthermore, it is the reason that not only postmodernism, but also the employment of intertextuality, is one of the features of Scottish literature.

Douglas Gifford provides an analysis of the mythological experience in Scottish fiction. According to Gifford, "past defines present; roots are deep and tenacious; contemporary individuals are powerless to resist the effects of tradition, and they will only successfully realize themselves if they move with the grain of "Scottish" experience."[47] Atkinson describes the process of realization of one's

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Edmund J. Smyth (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd, 1991) 132.

[43] See Gerard Carruthers, David Goldie and Alastair Renfrew, eds., *Beyond Scotland. New Contexts for Twentieth-century Scottish Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004) 11.

[44] See Alexander John Peter Thomson, "Phrasing Scotland and the Postmodern," in *Scotland in Theory. Reflections on Culture & Literature*, eds. Eleanor Bell and Gavin Miller (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004) 69.

[45] Ian A. Bell, "Imagine Living There: Form and Ideology in Contemporary Scottish Fiction," in *Studies in Scottish Fiction: 1945 to the Present*, ed. Susanne Hagemann (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 1996) 221.

[46] Matt McGuire, *Contemporary Scottish Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 19.

[47] Douglas Gifford, "Imagining Scotlands: The Return to Mythology in Modern Scottish Fiction," in *Studies in Scottish Fiction: 1945 to the Present*, ed. Susanne Hagemann (Frankfurt am Main:

roots via the growing up. In *Emotionally Weird*, Effie lives in a house of her ancestors, far in the north of Scotland, and through her mother's fragmented narrative she tries to define herself in terms of her family past. Gifford further likens *Emotionally Weird* to *The Wasp Factory* by Iain Banks or *O Caledonia* by Elspeth Barker.[48] The setting in the far north of Scotland certainly is a mutual denominator here.

According to Gifford, Scotland forms a matrix of myths and histories.[49] In the same way, Atkinson creates a matrix of mythological references and other stories that together form a part of her experience in the world. Gifford splits the Scottish writers into two categories: those who refer to a sub-text of tradition, legend and myth and intent to connect contemporary and past Scotland, and those who consciously draw on the supernatural as both fact and comic and tragic allegorical material in order to identify the place of a man in the history.[50] From this point of view, Atkinson belongs to the second group as she explores both comic and tragic elements of human life via intertextual reference to stories of magic and myth. However, the intent of connecting past and present is also a very strong one in her writing.

There is a parallel in Atkinson's approach towards Scottishness and the development from Englishness towards Scottish features in her novels. *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* is set in York but the family goes on holiday to Scotland that ends in disaster as they explore only the *faux* Scottishness,[51] although Ruby sees a stag that she pictures as a personification of Scotland. She even traces her

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Peter Lang GmbH, 1996) 20.

[48] See Douglas Gifford, Sarah Dunnigan and Alan MacGillivray, eds., *Scottish Literature in English and Scots* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2002) 973.

[49] See Gifford, "Imagining Scotlands" 32.

[50] See Gifford, "Imagining Scotlands" 38.

[51] See Tracy Hargreaves, "Redressing the Queen's Two Bodies in Kate Atkinson's *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*," *Literature & History* 18.2 (2009): 45, *ACADEMIC SEARCH COMPLETE*, 6 May 2014 <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=ef15f595-b6a3-4f5b-8029-fb271134aa2f%40sessionmgr113&vid=5&hid=106>.

origins to Scottish ancestors and spends time working in Edinburgh. On the other hand, Atkinson still portrays a typical English way of life, including the coronation of the queen in 1953 or the 1966 World Cup final. Overall, "when Ruby asserts her own Scottishness, she not only rejects England but resists a grand narrative of nationhood in which Scotland is often subsumed by or seen as synonymous with England. Ruby's Scottishness resists English hegemony."[52] Thus it represent the gradual progress towards the employment of Scottish elements. *Human Croquet* creates a bridge between the English and Scottish phase. Atkinson chooses a northern Scottish setting for *Emotionally Weird,* and it is at this point where she starts to leave her English origin behind. What is more, *Life After Life* was chosen as one of the fifty best Scottish books of the last fifty years by the *Scotsman* newspaper.[53]

Talking of Atkinson's position in literature, one can also adopt a point of view on the theory of postcolonialism. Although there is a reluctance to include Scottish literature within the postcolonial literature due to the contradiction between Scotland the colonized and Scotland the colonizer[54], there is a strong tendency to regard Scottish literature as postcolonial in terms of its relations to England as the colonizer. In order to overcome the anxiety of the act of colonization, "hybridity becomes part of a strategy of resistance by which the colonised native can undermine and expose the contigency of imperial and cultural authority."[55] Indeed, not only does Atkinson juxtapose and contrast the two cultures in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum,* when the Lennox family goes on holiday to Scotland or when she presents a "subversive pardy of monarchic culture,"[56] but she also adopts a strategy of hybridity while heavily employing

[52] Emma Parker, *Kate Atkinson's* Behind the Scenes at the Museum. *A Reader's Guide* (New York: Continuum, 2002) 68.
[53] See Kelly Stuart, "50 Best Scottish Books of the Last 50 Years," *The Scotsman* 30 Aug. 2013, 4 Nov. 2013 <http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/books/50-best-scottish-books-of-the-last-50-years-1-3165481#.UnHFYYg4fWk>.
[54] See McGuire, *Contemporary Scottish Literature* 122.
[55] McGuire, *Contemporary Scottish Literature* 123.
[56] Dix, *Postmodern Fiction* 13.

intertextual references. As with Leila Aboulela or Alistair Macleod, she presents the point of view of an outsider who is, nevertheless, situated within the realm of Scottish literature.

In this section it has been shown that, just as it is difficult to define intertextuality, it is difficult to define a Scottish author. It is perceived as more of "an imagined (and to some extent as an imaginary) community or communities, where the elusive but inherently valuable token of 'Scottishness' (or in some formulations 'Scottishnessness') may be defined and redefined by a host of commentators."[57] Even though Atkinson is not primarily concerned with a search for Scottish identity, her protagonists look for self-definition via a search for their own roots and background, "Scotland is significant throughout Atkinson's oeuvre either in terms of setting or ancestry."[58] As a Scottish trait, magic and myth thus form an indispensable part of this search.

As a compromise, Anglo-Scottish or Scoto-English is the attributive that has been proposed, for example by Gifford.[59] However, the term does not make it clear whether one is Scotticising English culture or vice versa.[60] Still, if Atkinson is regarded as Anglo-Scottish, it enhances the idea of duality in Scottish literature. Gifford is of the opinion that contemporary Scottish writing offers a mixture of optimism, uncertainty and desire.[61] This is perhaps too general a conclusion for any twenty-first century national literature, yet Atkinson meets these conditions. She is an optimistic writer with a hint of insecurity and uncertainty, which manifests itself in intertextual references. She pursues the desire of creating a complex world, yet she is aware of the fact that this is an impossible goal, and thus ceaselessly questions the border between reality and fiction.

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[57] Bell, "Imagine Living There" 222.
[58] Parker, *Kate Atkinson's* Behind the Scenes 18.
[59] See Gifford, *Scottish Literature* 973.
[60] See Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999) 29.
[61] See Gifford, *Scottish Literature* 980.

4 SYNOPSIS OF THE WORKS BY KATE ATKINSON

4.1 *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*

Kate Atkinson's debut novel was a great success and won the prestigious Whitbread Book of the Year (now known as the Costa Book Award) in 1995.

The narrator Ruby Lennox relates her life from the very beginning, from her conception till her forties. She lives with her mother Bunty who is unhappily struggling to be a perfect housewife, her father George, who escapes from the tedious atmosphere at home by spending time with his mistresses, and her sisters, the reclusive Patricia and malicious Gillian. The family saga is interspersed by the story of Ruby's ancestors, mainly of her great-grandmother Alice, who supposedly died during childbirth. The main story of Ruby and the substories involving her relatives, which form so called footnotes, are interconnected via various souvenirs from the past, for example a silver locket or a rabbit's paw.

The Lennox family is tormented by several unexpected deaths, such as Gillian's death after being hit by a car when she is only 12. Ruby all the time has a strange feeling that she is missing something, something deep inside her that she should be looking for. In the end it is revealed that she had a twin sister, Pearl, who drowned when she was only four years old, and that Ruby had suppressed her memories of the past. This explains their mother's cold behaviour towards her, because Gillian accused Ruby of pushing Pearl into water, while it was actually she that was to blame after making Pearl walk on thin ice, which then broke. Ruby was then unable to defend herself because she had forgotten the whole situation. The family thus acted as if nothing happened and Pearl had never existed, while secretly blaming Ruby for Pearl's death. This creates an irony, as she positions herself as an omniscient narrator (and she often is), while not being aware of the

existence of her own twin sister.

4.2 *Human Croquet*

Isobel Fairfax lives with her father Gordon, brother Charles and aunt Vinny in the former aristocratic manor-house of Arden. The brother and sister are looking for their lost mother, about whom no one wants to give them any clues as she is a taboo subject in the family. Their mother Eliza was an elegant, non-conformist woman and, as such, not very popular with Gordon's mother and sister. As they did not get along well, she demanded that they move away from them. Following an argument at a family picnic, Eliza went for a walk in the forest, where Gordon followed her. The discussion got heated when Gordon wanted to know if she had been unfaithful to him. Eventually, he hit her head against a tree and Eliza lost consciousness. Gordon then fled to Australia and returned after seven years with a new wife, Bunty.

Isobel and Charles struggle through their childhood as losers. Charles is obsessed with missing people, alien abduction and science fiction, while Isobel is hopelessly in love with Malcolm Lovat, who considers her a friend only. Isobel then starts to experience strange states of mind, travelling back in time. This intensifies and she experiences Christmas Eve twice, when she sees Malcolm die in a car accident. In the end it is revealed that she has been in a coma after being hit by a falling tree. Nevertheless, following her recovery Isobel meets William Shakespeare and then develops the story when he was a tutor at the Fairfax family. All in all, the themes of the circularity of time and déjà-vu form the main focus of the novel.

4.3 *Emotionally Weird*

Atkinson's third novel already points the way and development to the

crime novels that she would later start writing. Although at the beginning there is a disclaimer that the story is fictional and bears no relation to real-life events, at least two things that Atkinson has in common with the main protagonist and narrator, Effie, is that she also studied at Dundee and did not finish her degree.

Effie studies creative writing and struggles to finish her crime novel, entitled *The Hand of Fate*, and the essay on George Eliot. The story is narrated retrospectively, when she and her supposed mother, Nora, temporarily live on an island in the north of Scotland when the weather is particularly bad. To pass the time, Effie tells the story of her life at university and wants Nora to tell her about her past. The narrative is interspersed with extracts from the works of Effie's classmates and professors and from her own work, not to mention occasional comments by Nora about Effie's story and her own narrative where, in the end, she explains what happened to Effie's true mother. As such the story contains references to a number of fictional books. Graphically, the various stories are set in different typefaces, usually corresponding to the stories' relevant theme.

More than the first two, this novel focuses on different types of narratives and does not contain such a high quantity of intertextual references. Besides a few other literary allusions, rich sources of references are the *Star Trek* and *Doctor Who* TV series as Effie's boyfriend Bob lives in the world of sci-fi.

4.4 *Life After Life*

Atkinson's most recent novel, for which she won the Costa Book Award 2013 for the best novel, tells the story of Ursula, who suffers from *déjà-vu* and the feelings that she knows what will happen and that she has already experienced some events. It is therefore not surprising that she has the chance to live her life over and over again; the novel describes her various life stories, with slight changes of detail meaning that her life differs between tellings. By the way, she

dies nineteen times over the course of the novel.

She is born in winter 1910. In some of her lives she survives the birth, and in others she is strangled by the umbilical cord. Due to the various coincidences she is a witness of the major events of the twentieth century, be they the Great War or the Second World War. Sometimes she even takes action, such as when she tries to kill Hitler and thus change the course of history. In another plotline, on the other hand, she marries a German lawyer and spends the Second World War with Eva Braun at Obersalzberg, as a silent witness to the atrocities of the Nazis.

In most of her lives, she dies from unnatural causes, and from natural causes only one plotline, where she is an active member of a volunteer group during the air raids in London in the Blitz and dies from a stroke, though unmarried and childless. Atkinson's in-depth research on both wars, noted in the bibliographical list, means that she is able to provide a detailed description of historical events. All in all, the novel resembles the ouroboros, a snake eating its own tail, the symbol of circularity, of no past and no future, just present time.

4.5 *Not the End of the World*

The last work to be analysed in the thesis is Atkinson's only collection of short stories. The collection consists of twelve short stories that are intertwined with each other, thus forming a complex, homogenous work as Charlene and Trudi tell each other stories to pass the time when they are locked up in Charlene's flat during an unspecified apocalyptic catastrophe.

The collection is full of allusions to other works, as will be shown later in the thesis, but also alludes to itself via the characters that overlap within and between the short stories. As the number of short stories, twelve, symbolises the number of months in a year and thus creates a circle, the narrative itself is also

circular as the first and last short stories deal with the fate of Charlene and Trudi. The art of storytelling is the principal theme which helps them survive and keep their minds occupied during the apocalypse.

The references to other works thus also create a connection with the past and, through them, Charlene and Trudi try to create a point where to establish their existence in the world with an uncertain future. Each short story is introduced by a quotation from another work, creating a stable point of reference for the following story. This collection is, for this reason, a primary example of Atkinson's work synthesising her major themes, dealing with the circularity of time, cultural inheritance from the past and the importance of storytelling.

5 ANALYSIS OF INTERTEXTUAL ELEMENTS

5.1 Kate Atkinson, Classical Mythology and the Ovidian Concept of Metamorphosis

Mythology is closely connected with postmodernism as 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. Postmodernism is a return to storytelling in the belief that we can be sure of nothing but the story."[62] Brian Attebery here sums up the basic principles of intertextuality and metafiction. Via (self-)referentiality they disrupt the borders between fiction and reality, truth and meaning. Furthemore, the employment of mythology suggests tendency towards exaggeration that helps to span the distance between realism and fiction.[63] Embodying the qualities mentioned by Attebery, Kate Atkinson is a great example of the employment of fairy tales and mythology in modern literature. In particular, the return to story-telling is significant in the short story collection *Not the End of the World* where narrating of stories helps the protagonists to survive the apocalyptic conditions.

In *Human Croquet*, the outcome of all this interest in Greek mythology is a scene resembling one from a Greek tragedy, "Mrs Baxter, standing over him, bloody knife in hand, is like some terrible figure from Greek tragedy . . ."[64] Though the scene is very serious, it is possible to find aspects of parody which for Bakthin forms the basis of recurring to mythology, "the novel parodies other genres precisely in their role (as genre), it exposes the conventionality of their forms and their language, it squeezes out some genres and incorporates other into its own peculiar structure, reformulating and re-accentuating them."[65] The notion

[62] Quoted in Horstkotte, *The Postmodern Fantastic* 157.
[63] See Nicola Allen, *Marginality in the Contemporary British Fiction* (London: Continuum, 2008) 102.
[64] Kate Atkinson, *Human Croquet* (London: Black Swan, 1998) 283.
[65] Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of

of parody is even stronger as it is Isobel's coma dream when the murder of Mr Baxter happens. Another device employed by Kate Atkinson is from classical Greek theatre, "Auntie Babs, Auntie Gladys and Bunty – the invisible Greek chorus in our heads – throw their heads in horror, exclaiming, 'Shop-bought!' but do we care? No, we don't."[66] The basic purpose of the chorus was to provide commentary on onstage events. The same is true for this scene and, apart from the comic relief, the influence the chorus has is ironically small, or even non-existent, as the girl are not really interested in their indignation. Based on Bakhtin's ideas and the examples presented, Kate Atkinson reevaluates the classical inheritance beyond both the struggle and the incorporation through the stylization of elements taken from Greek tragedy.

Kate Atkinson also alludes to the concept of Pythagorean philosophy as a whole when, in the space of half of a page she mentions its most important aspects, "the visible world is false and illusive. Abstain from beans. . . . in case they obtain the soul of an ancestor . . . men and women are equal and property held in common. All things are numbers . . . and the transmigration of the soul."[67] Pythagoreans were prohibited from eating beans because they believed they might contain a soul of an ancestor as well as that numbers constitute the true nature of things and that the soul reincarnates. The latter is, in essence, a version of metamorphoses. Atkinson revives the reference in the short story "Sheer Big Waste of Love," where Addison, when on honeymoon on an unspecified Greek island, feels as if he is on a long journey through space[68] reflecting the Pythagorean philosophy of metempsychosis and transmigration of the soul.

Latin, as the language of Antique culture, also appears in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*. Though a dead language, it is not so dead as to not have an

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Texas Press, 1986) 5.

[66] Kate Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* (London: Black Swan, 1996) 158.

[67] Kate Atkinson, *Not the End of the World* (London: Black Swan, 2003) 39.

[68] See Atkinson, *Not the End* 135.

influence on modern culture and education, as Ruby strives to do a translation of the death of Theoxena.[69] In her narration Ruby combines citations from the Latin text with her theory of the Lost Property Cupboard, where people, after death, find everything they have ever lost, including memories. Consequently, the whole novel can be seen as an "attempt to make up for Pearl's loss by remembering and recovering the missing and the dead."[70] As Ruby strives to find out about her past via the various footnotes regarding her ancestors, and knowing she lacks some information about herself, she needs to see the contents of her cupboard. In order to do this, she has to die and, as Theoxena made her children choose between death by the hand of a king or suicide, Ruby chooses suicide. Furthermore, Emma Parker points out that Theoxena's mother was called Berenice,[71] as Ruby's mother. Similarly as for Theoxena and her family, death for Ruby represents security and means of finding the truth.

Certain references to Antique culture may pass even to the language itself, as is the case with the idiom 'between Scylla and Charybdis' which, Kate Atkinson nevertheless employs with considerably greater skill. When the Lennoxes and the Ropers are on their trip on a boat near Oban, the relationship between Clive and Bunty becomes more obvious, "Mr Roper is not helping his wife at all, but has moved over to Bunty's side of the boat so that we're now listing dangerously caught between the Scylla of George's jealousy and the Charybdis of Oban Bay."[72] Originally, Scylla and Charybdis were two monsters living in a channel of water so narrow that the sailors could not pass safely between them without approaching one or the other too closely. Thus there is no possibility of avoiding both dangers: the wild waters in the bay and George's

[69] See Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 320.
[70] Sinead McDermott, "Kate Atkinson's Family Romance: Missing Mothers And Hidden Histories In *Behind The Scenes At The Museum*," Critical Survey 18.2 (2006): 77, *ACADEMIC SEARCH COMPLETE*, 6 May 2014 <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=ef15f595-b6a3-4f5b-8029-fb271134aa2f%40sessionmgr113&vid=15&hid=106>.
[71] See Parker, *Kate Atkinson's* Behind the Scenes 40.
[72] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 263.

apprehension of his wife's unfaithfulness.

In *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, Bunty, despite her desperate attempts to be the perfect housewife, lacks the features to be described in terms of mythology, where the mother figure is a strong character. Ruby thinks she is not her real mother as she is ignoring her. Ruby is looking for her real mother and Ruby's real mother is "Queen of the Night, a huge, galactic figure, treading the Milky Way in search of her lost infant."[73] This juxtaposition of a fairy-tale queen and mythological element is an example of the complex way in which Kate Atkinson treats allusions. Indeed, there are two aspects relating to Ruby's ideal mother. In Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*, the Queen of the Night is the character who wants the prince Tamino to save her daughter Pamina: Ruby wants to be saved, either by her hypothetical mother or by a prince, from a family that does not pay her sufficient attention. The other point presents the creation of Milky Way. There are many stories dealing with its creation, but the one that brings a new point of view is that from Ancient Greece, when it was thought that Milky Way was a herd of cows guarded by the constellation of Gemini, the twins Castor and Polydeuces or Pollux, but does not form part of the Milky Way. The twin sisters, Ruby and Pearl, are Gemini in this case. In analogy with the myth, they are to look for their mother as Gemini guardians, yet Ruby has to face the task on her own.

Castor and Polydeuces had sisters, also twins, who hatched from an egg: Helen of Troy and Clytemnestra. As Helen of Troy was hatched from an egg, Isobel from *Human Croquet* suspects that their mother might also have been born this way as she has very little information about her relatives on her mother's side, - yet even Helen had her relatives: "our mother had no relatives apparently – although she must have had them once, unless she hatched from an egg like Helen

[73] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 43.

of Troy, and even then, Leda must have sat on the nest, surely?"[74] Thus Isobel tries to trace Eliza's mysterious origin and, in her helplessness, refers to mythology as a possible explanation.

In *Human Croquet*, Kate Atkinson associates the story of Phaeton with the beginning of the Earth's history, "flies are being trapped in drops of amber – which are the tears of poor Pheaton's sisters, who were turned by grief into black poplars (*populus nigra*)."[75] Phaeton was a mortal son of the sun god Helios; when he visited his father, Helios was so overwhelmed with happiness, that he promised his son anything he wanted. Phaeton wanted to drive his father's sun chariot, pulled by shining horses and representing the movement of the sun. Phaeton's inexperience led to the horses getting out of control and causing chaos, meaning that Zeus had to intervene and save the Earth by killing Phaeton with a thunderbolt. As a result, his sisters Heliades turned into poplar trees, whose drops of amber represent their tears. In the description, the evolutionist theory of creation of the Earth is combined with the creation myth. Moreover, the narrator also mentions the calculations of the archbishop James Ussher, who represents the creationist theory.[76] As a consequence, it juxtaposes all the main theories of the birth of Earth in an uncompetitive way.

The same reference is used in the short story "Sheer Big Waste of Love" where Addison imagines his father overseeing him "high in the clouds, like a god in a chariot."[77] However, when Addison comes to visit his father, he is not at all pleased with him and does not let him enter his "official" family, in contrast to Helios and Phaeton, which is probably a good thing as Addison might have met a similar fate to Phaeton. Moreover, as the pregnancy was a surprise, his father is

[74] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 27.
[75] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 12.
[76] See Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 11.
[77] Atkinson, *Not the End* 134.

likened to Zeus, "he came in a fucking shower of gold."[78] Yet, the use of the 'f-word' suggests that it is an exaggeration and that Addison is no Perseus. In another short story, "Unseen Translation," Romney wants her child named Zeus or then, by alliteration: Athene, Aphrodite or Artemis. Consequently, Missy comments on those choices: "Athene was smug and thought she knew everything, Aphrodite was a troublemaker, and very irritating, I might add, and only Artemis had any sense."[79] As her preferences are clear and she is in favour of the chase and shooting stags, this is the reason why she herself metamorphoses into an Artemis. In Sarah Annes Brown's feminist reading, "Atkinson excavates a more positive model for present and future women in myth by turning to a godess rather than to mere mortal women for inspiration."[80] Yet, this gained independence also refers to Arthur who accompanies her on the journey.

The Roman goddess Diana is a common allusion in Shakespeare's work, which is why she also appears in *Human Croquet*, where both metamorphoses and the works of Shakespeare play a crucial role. When experiencing a strange influence of the moon, Isobel feels that "a moment longer and we will be running for the woods, bows and arrows in our hands, hounds at our heels, converts to Diana . . ."[81] The influence of the moon is not a coincidence, as Diana was considered goddess of the moon. After having seen her naked, the hunter Actaeon was changed into a stag by Diana, after which he was hunted down by his fellow hunters and dogs. Fortunately for the girls, nothing so brutal happens, although it does foreshadow future events dealing with metamorphoses and gradually creates the mosaic of metamorphoses in the novel.

An Ovidian dream also foreshadows real events when Isobel dreams about

[78] Atkinson, *Not the End* 134.
[79] Atkinson, *Not the End* 172.
[80] Sarah Annes Brown, "Science Fiction And Classical Reception In Contemporary Women's Writing," *Classical Receptions Journal* 4.2 (2012): 222, *HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS WITH FULL TEXT*, 6 May 2014 <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=ef15f595-b6a3-4f5b-8029-fb271134aa2f%40sessionmgr113&vid=8&hid=106>.
[81] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 53.

Eunice becoming a cow. Later that day Isobel is saved from being raped at a birthday party when she changes into a tree, as happened to Daphne, because "metamorphosis is part of the hyperreality of Arden and Boscrambe Woods in *Human Croquet*."[82] For Dina Sherzer, the transformation of Daphne is "a means to protect herself and to have nothing to do with the rest of the world."[83] Yet, reality has to be questioned as, in another irony, the party does not really happen because Isobel is in a coma after being struck by a falling tree. On the other hand, the whole story is fictional, making reality even more than relative. After having been changed into a tree, there was the "mad Dionysian light in his eyes turning to confusion. He seems to look right through me."[84] In relation with Dionysius, it has to be mentioned that Dionysius was the brother of Apollo, who wished to rape Daphne. Yet, for Bakhtin this interconnection of the worlds is not entirely possible, "one can only accept the epic world with reverence, it is impossible to really touch it, for it is beyond the realm of human activity, the realm in which everything humans touch is altered and re-though."[85] That is why Isobel does not stay a tree forever but still retains the features of a classical heroine. The result of this is the re-thinking of both texts, where it is the author, Kate Atkinson in particular, who creates the link between the two worlds.

Metamorphosis is also a recurring element in *Emotionally Weird*. At the beginning, Effie ponders whether Nora "will ever die, I think she will merely change state . . . Perhaps soon she will crawl back into the watery realm of Poseidon and reclaim her Saurian ancestry. Or metamorphose into something monumental – an ice-capped ben . . ."[86] Water is the most important element in the novel, as Effie's mother is supposedly drowned and is referred to as a 'water-child' so that consequently her sister Nora also has a place in the oceans of

[82] Julia Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares. Twentieth-century Women Novelists and Appropriation* (Manchester, Manchester UP, 2001) 78.
[83] Dina Sherzer, "Postmodernism and Feminisms," in *Postmodernism and Contemporary Fiction*, ed. Edmund J. Smyth (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd, 1991) 162.
[84] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 262.
[85] Bakthin, *The Dialogic Imagination* 18.
[86] Kate Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* (London: Black Swan, 1998) 23.

Poseidon. Moreover, Kara's baby is called Proteus, chiefly in reference to the oldest son of Poseidon. Eddie from the short story "The Tunnel of Fish" seems to come from another time and may even be the actual son of Poseidon as well. Interested in Latin and encyclopaedias, reclusive and dreaming about being the King of Fish, whose description resembles Poseidon's realm,[87] moreover, when he mentions the Nereids,[88] Greek sea nymphs, it might be that he is a King of Gods as he was conceived at the isle of Crete, associated in mythology with Zeus; it might at least account for his unusual character.

Nora from *Emotionally Weird* is described as the tenth Muse, daughter of Zeus, "before she had a purpose (turning into landscape) Nora herself was always distracted and absent-minded person. Mnemosyne's forgotten daughter."[89] In Greek mythology, Mnemosyne is the personification of memory, who had nine daughters, the Muses, with Zeus. Memory is a significant feature in the novel as Effie wants Nora to remember what lies in her past and tell her the truth about her family. Truth and memory are therefore one of the basic themes of the novel.

The short-story collection *Not the End of the World* also contains a myriad of references to the Antique culture, and especially to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In Bakthin's view, the Ovidian metamorphosis "suffices unto itself and constitutes in itself a closed, poetic whole. The mythological sheath of metamorphoses is no longer able to unite those temporal sequences that are major and essential."[90] Taken separately, metamorphoses from Ovid form single sequences of events, yet in Atkinson's case she creates a complex relationship among the original source and the modern employment. The trend is indicated right at the beginning of the collection, when the first short story is introduced with a quotation from the very

[87] See Atkinson, *Not the End* 64.
[88] See Atkinson, *Not the End* 66.
[89] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 24.
[90] Bakthin, *The Dialogic Imagination* 114.

beginning of *Metamorphoses*[91] narrating the genesis of forms via metamorphoses, which forms one of the central themes of the collection. Ovid further invites the author to continue in his work, which Atkinson does by continuing in Ovid's tradition of storytelling that crosses to the unreal and fantastic worlds as "underneath all the startling differences lies some vital, tell-tale similarity."[92] Furthermore, the final story, which closes the circle of the previous stories stories returning to the very first one as it continues the story of Charlene and Trudi, also opens with a quotation from Ovid, this time from the end of *Metamorphoses*,[93] nicely summing up the overall theme of the collection: humans are mortal, yet what endures is their work, art, justifying the immense employment of references. Everything is interconnected and nothings happens on its own.

Classical culture also serves as a fruitful point of reference for poetically describing the day time, "Eospohorus, the morning star, rose and heralded the coming of his mother, Eos, the dawn."[94] Eosphorus is actually the planet Venus in its morning appearance, while Eos belongs to the generation of Titans and is the goddess of the dawn. By the same token, while admiring the Milky Way Charlene recalls its origin[95] when it is said to have originated from milk from Hera's breast which is one of the many versions of its creation. Another god connected with nature is Selene, the goddess of Moon, whose silver beams Charlene admires[96] or, in another short story, "Transparent Fiction," "Selene drove her silvery exhausted horses, gleaming with silvery sweat, the last few paces of the night."[97] For Sarah Annes Brown, this employment of personalized nature elements suggests Atkinson's preference over classical mythology than the science fiction features that would imply the dystopian setting.[98] Yet, this decision is furthermore

[91] See Atkinson, *Not the End* 19.
[92] Brown, "Science Fiction" 222.
[93] See Atkinson, *Not the End* 323.
[94] Atkinson, *Not the End* 32.
[95] See Atkinson, *Not the End* 37.
[96] See Atkinson, *Not the End* 39.
[97] Atkinson, *Not the End* 84.
[98] See Brown, "Science Fiction" 221.

influenced by the heavily employed intertextuality and the overall recurring to science fiction via references to *Buffy* or *Star Trek*.

It is not only Greek mythology that helps to describe a time of day or a character when Hawk from "The Tunnel of Fish" names himself after the hawk-headed sun god Ra but, as it is a nickname that he has given himself, it is more wishful thinking than a serious description. Yet, it is cross-referenced in another short story, "The Cat Lover," where the cat catches the god and the world goes dark, just like in a true apocalyptic story, as well as the fact that the character of Hawk appears once more in the short story "Dissonance." Furthermore, Egyptian mythology is a logical reference in this short story as they were fond of cats.

In *Human Croquet*, Isobel and Charles are told that their father has died. When he reappears after seven years, he claims that he suffered from amnesia while being on "his seven-year voyage on the waters of Lethe (the north island of New Zealand actually)."[99] Lethe is one of the five rivers of the Greek Underworld, the river of forgetfulness or oblivion that flows around the cave of Hypnos. While on this journey, it is no wonder he forgot about his children for some time.

Hades is also mentioned in *Emotionally Weird* as the idea of writing an essay on George Eliot makes Effie "feel as weary as an inhabitant of Hades"[100] and describes the corridors of university full of "the Stygian gloom."[101] In those examples, Hades, god of the Underworld, is identified with the realm itself. For Effie, studying at university becomes a nightmare as she struggles to hand various essays and drafts of her work in on time, so it starts to seem like an underworld. Similarly, both Hades and Tartarus, the dungeon of torment far below Hades, are used descriptively in the short story "Evil Doppelgängers," where Fielding's

[99] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 30.
[100] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 67.
[101] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 67.

workplace is likened to Tartarus, including the entrance to Hades. Making the overall picture more complex, one night he wakes up in the street with a hangover. When he recovers he sees a dog that looks as if it had three heads, exactly like Kerberos, who guards the entrance to Hades's realm. A tramp then approaches to him and says: "Coin . . . No boat trip for you, sonny."[102] It is as if Fielding was in the underworld, but has no money to pay Charon to ferry him across the Acheron, the river of sorrow and woes. After this, Fielding goes home and finds his doppelgänger in bed with his boss. Fielding's life is for him a Tartarus, not only due to the description but also by the way in which he is tortured.

Another part of the Greek underworld is the Elm of the False Dreams that also growths at Fielding's workplace, which may account for the inexplicable events in his life. To make the image even more complex, both Styx and Lethe, the rivers of the underworld, form part of the short story, "was the Styx the river that made you forget everything? Or was that Lethe?"[103] Not only Fielding cannot remember what he does when he is asleep as he is apparently capable of doing several things at a time, the citation is one of the many comic elements found in Atkinson's fiction when Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, makes Fielding forget not only what he does but also which river it is that makes him do it.

As the god of the Underworld, it is Hades who brings death, as witnessed by Marianne during her car accident in one of the short stories in *Not the End of the World*. Yet, she does not die. She continues her life as before, but no one can see her and her family thinks that she died. Surprisingly, she ends up neither in Tartaros, nor in the Elysian fields nor the Plain of Asphodel. The reason for this lies in the name of the short story, a temporal anomaly (as in the referred episode of *Star Trek*),[104] as she comes back to life in the end as if nothing has happened, although not for long as she hears Hades's chariot after coming back to life. As

[102] Atkinson, *Not the End* 218.
[103] Atkinson, *Not the End* 208.
[104] See Atkinson, *Not the End* 289.

with Fielding from "Evil Doppelgängers," she has no coin for her passage across the Acheron and also doubts if she has not actually spent it.[105] She also does not make it there and needs to return back to her ordinary life. There is one other connection between those short stories, as it is TV that helps Marianne to survive the loneliness she feels as a ghost where she watches, amongst many other programmes, *Green Acres*, a fictional series about which Fielding from "Evil Doppelgängers" writes a review.

Norse mythology and cosmology also have a place in *Human Croquet*. Similarly to the Greek underworld, in addition to the great tree Ysggadril, or Yggdrasil, connecting the nine worlds, there is also "a Ratatosk who runs up and down the great ash Ysggadril."[106] Having the role of a messenger, the squirrel Ratatosk functions as a connective point between the unnamed eagle and the wyrm Níðhöggr, as in the ballad of Grímnir in the *Poetic Edda.*[107] There are many theories as to its role, one of these is the idea that it chews the tree and thus represents the cycle of re-birth and constant growth and destruction, fitting with Atkinson's theme of circularity. These mythical creatures are found in the *Poetic Edda*, alongside with great eagle Hraesvelg who, according to the epic poems, sits at the end of the world and is the cause of the wind. Moreover, Atkinson is not afraid of comparing various mythologies as she juxtaposes Hraesvelg with Boreas and Eurus,[108] two of four gods of the winds in Greek mythology.

Central and northern European mythology, too, has a place in *Emotionally Weird*, "he didn't look as if he was on a harmless date with the Sandman, but more as if he was stranded in the Land of Nod for ever with no map and compass of return . . ."[109] The Sandman is said to bring good dreams while the Land of Nod is the place of exile where Cain went after murdering his brother, and as such is a

[105] See Atkinson, *Not the End* 285.
[106] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 157.
[107] See *Edda* (Praha: Argo, 2004) 92.
[108] See Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 205.
[109] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 129.

symbol of wandering.

The reason why a lot of writers return to mythology is the importance of telling stories. Kate Atkinson looks back at the mythological stories as the cradle of all story-telling. In her work she is concerned with sharing a story, which is a basic feature of mythology. It provides her a vast source of possible references that endow the story with a notion of both antiquity and postmodernity at the same time. In contrast to history, myth endures, and "understanding history requires a journey into the regions of myth."[110] This is why Atkinson does not write historical novels; myth provides a much more creative space than history itself. On the other hand, Bakthin claims that the world of myths is inert, "this past is distance, finished and closed like a circle."[111] Kate Atkinson proves that it is possible to penetrate this circle and connect it via intertextual references to her own circle, thus creating a complex relationship enabling the re-thinking of both areas. Moreover, magic prevails in the world of myths and Atkinson suggests that the connection between past and present via mythology is a much deeper one. What is more, history suggests that there is linear evolution. Myths, on the other hand, use cyclical time as their basis.

All in all, metamorphosis complements the complex range of themes Kate Atkinson is interested in, which are interconnected even amongst themselves.

> Everything dies, but gets transformed into something else – dust, ash, humus, food for the worms. Nothing ever truly ceases to exist, it just becomes something else, so it can't be lost for ever. Everything that dies comes back one way or another. And maybe people just come back as new

[110] Craig, *The Modern Scottish* 142.
[111] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* 19.

people – maybe the baby's the reincarnation of someone else?[112]

The additional theme of circularity is explored via the theme of metamorphoses. Kate Atkinson deals mainly with the circularity of time, but also with the circularity of ideas, explaining her abundant use of intertextuality.

5.2 Kate Atkinson and Fairy Tales

Similarly to mythological references, fairy tales, too, serve as an indispensable source of inspiration for Kate Atkinson enabling her to contrast the real world with the world of fiction. As the real world is cruel, she therefore often uses the harsh tales of the Brothers Grimm. Besides them and Hans Christian Andersen, Atkinson's intertexts also include Scottish or Norwegian tales as well as the classic children's book *The Wizard of Oz* or the works by Edith Nesbit.

According to Julie Sanders, the basic texts for *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* include 'Babes in the Wood' and 'Hansel and Gretel' as Isobel's murdered mother can be likened to the Sleeping Beauty.[113] The last play Gillian sees is 'Hansel and Gretel' where she comments on the show aloud. Then, in her suicidal dream, Ruby contemplates the witch's treasure and tries to reach for a string of pearls and consequently save her twin sister. The fairy tale has a unifying power that the sisters miss in their real lives, with regard to Gillian's bad relationship with her sisters and Pearl's absence, in particular. A Hansel-and-Gretel-like scene also appears in *Human Croquet* when Isobel and Charles get lost in the forest following an unsuccessful picnic that should have ended in reconciliation, "they knew the plot, unfortunately, and any minute expected to find the gingerbread cottage – and then the nightmare would really begin."[114] Yet, the ending is not a fairy-tale one; they are found by their father, but lose their mother

[112] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 156.
[113] See Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 73.
[114] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 130.

who is murdered in the forest. On the other hand, they are lucky not to die, like the children in 'Babes in the Wood.'

Goldilocks is a typical fairytale that uses the pattern of three. In *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, Ruby wonders who Bunty served the third bowl of porridge to, leading to her finding out about her second sister, Patricia. Based on the so-called Goldilocks principle, this means that something is just right. Patricia is the member of the family who has the most common-sense way of thinking and thus she, according to the Goldilocks principle, fits into certain limits and completes the triad of sisters. She is driven by the environment she lives in, ending up pregnant and running away from home subsequently, yet, she remains the only person with a sense of rationality.

Atkinson also draws on nursery rhymes. For example, the sight of Gillian in the park brightens the gardeners' mood because "the child that is born on the Sabbath Day / Is bonny and blithe, and good and gay."[115] This well-known song, called 'Monday's Child,' relates the character of a child to the day on which he or she was born. However, this only partially applies to Gillian taking into account only her appearance, but not her true personality. To seal Gillian's future forever, the author terminates her life rather abruptly, "our Gillian, the promise of the future. (Not much of a future as it turned out, as she gets run over by a pale blue Hillman Husky in 1959 . . .)."[116] as if to punish for not fitting into the Sunday characterization. Through the discrepancy Gillian's character is described by contrast.

Ruby puts herself into the position of Snow White: she not only thinks about Bunty in terms of her not being her real mother, but also as the evil queen

[115] Iona Opie and Peter Opie, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997) 365.
[116] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 19.

from the classic fairy tale, "I will be reunited with my real mother – the one who dropped ruby-red blood onto a snow-white handkerchief and wished for a little girl with hair the colour of a shiny jet-black raven's wing."[117] According to Sinead McDermott, this dysfunctional mother-daughter relationship exposes "the myth of the maternal instinct."[118] Nevertheless, Ruby is mistaken in looking for her real mother as she already has one – Bunty. In reality, she is looking for her twin sister – the missing part of her, as she was ripped away from her life as well as from her memories. The significance of the story of Snow White also lies in the name of Ruby as she describes herself: "My name is Ruby. I am a precious jewel. I am a drop of blood. I am Ruby Lennox."[119] In contrast to Ruby, Pearl lacks the colour of blood as she is not alive and drowned in winter, continuing the motif of the colour white. Moreover, the duality recalls the sisters from the Grimm's tale 'Snow-white and Red-Rose.' Same as Ruby, Ursula in *Life After Life* also embodies a Snow White character as snow falls every time she is born.[120] What is more, in a way she also "survives" her various deaths, as Snow White did.

The importance of Snow White and the character of an unloving mother/step-mother runs in the Lennox family as Ada tells Albert "the story of Snow White and her wicked stepmother, and many other stories too in which the new usurping mother had to dance for ever in red-hot iron clogs."[121] Family traits are distinguishable, even across many generations, developing one of Atkinson's favorite themes – the circularity of time. Ruby even owns a proper Snow White alarm clock. As members of the family inherit one after the other, those with curl blond hair dying early, Ruby is the modern Snow White in the Lennox family.

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[117] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 43.
[118] McDermott, "Kate Atkinson's Family Romance" 67.
[119] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 44.
[120] See Amanda Craig, "Time And Again," *New Statesman* 142.5149 (2013): 46. *BUSINESS SOURCE COMPLETE*, 6 May 2014 <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=ef15f595-b6a3-4f5b-8029-fb271134aa2f%40sessionmgr113&vid=12&hid=106>.
[121] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 135.

Snow White also appears in another novel by Atkinson, *Human Croquet*. In this novel, the dialogue between Malcolm and Isobel is full of references to fairy tales. Leaving aside the references to Norwegian tale "East of the Sun, West of the Moon," Isobel is relieved when the apple he gives her is not poisonous and, moreover, she projects her love onto the fruit, "how intimate a thing it is to place your hand inside someone else's pocket – and have the bonus of pulling out food as well, a lovely rosy-red apple the kind that in another place would be smeared with poison. But not this one."[122] Isobel further does not dream about Malcolm saving her – she is the one who always saves him – and she cannot be Snow White eating a poisoned apple then being saved by a kiss from the prince, as Malcolm would not be the one. She is even missing such a saviour during the scene where she is kissed by Richard Primrose, "where's a time warp when you need one? Or the Dog? Or a woodcutter?"[123] As in the previous example, Isobel is not a princess, nor is she Little Red Riding Hood, to be saved by a stranger. Not only she does not have the visual appearance for it, neither does she live in a fairy-tale world.

In the Scottish ballad "Tam Lin" it is also the girl who saves her love, "perhaps I am Janet to Malcolm Lovat's Tam Lin. Perhaps the Queen of Elfland – instead of turning him into a snake in my arms, or a lion or a red hot bar of iron – is trying to wrest away her human tithe from me by constantly killing him."[124] Not only does the story fit the idea of Isobel saving Malcolm, but it also contains the motif of transformation. This is a further attempt to explain the apparently unexplainable events experienced by Isobel. Furthermore, the epilogue of the novel is a poem about Thomas the Rhymer, another Scottish bard, who was also believed to have been carried away by the Queen of Elfland.

The importance of storytelling is common to both *Tales of a Thousand and*

[122] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 217.
[123] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 227.
[124] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 305.

One Nights and Atkinson's work. In *Human Croquet*, when in hospital, Isobel depends on the unknown patient from the bed next to her who "is my own Scheherazade, she knows everything, she must be the storyteller from the end of the world. But how does it begin?"[125] Thus the narrative forms a circle, with Isobel's starting with the creation of the Earth. Storytelling, be it in the form of fairy tales or mythological stories, therefore creates the foundation of the world – as at the beginning there is the word. It helps one to survive, to escape or to find explanations. In the end it emerges that there was no one in the neighbouring bed and Isobel rediscovers her own narrative voice, "I am the storyteller at the end of time. I know how it ends. It ends like this."[126]

Apart from the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen is another example of a writer of fairy tales *par excellence*. "The Snow Queen" is one of his most famous stories and, unsurprisingly, it is Bunty who is compared to her. George as Kai forgets about his Gerda, the Floozy, and is kept by the Snow Queen (Bunty) in her own domestic kingdom. What is more, in the short story "Evil Doppelgängers," a relevant mention is made of Andersen's story "The Shadow" because it offers a possible explanation for the impossible events in Fielding's life: in the story, the shadow takes over its master's life.

Debbie from *Human Croquet* is, in many ways, similar to Bunty. She is desperately trying to keep Arden tidy and clean, pushing the level of housewife-ness to whole new dimensions, "soon I expect we'll find Debbie in the hearth separating lentils from the ashes."[127] Unlike Bunty, she is not likened to a queen, but to Cinderella, as she, as a stepmother, does not have the same status as a mother. Yet, for Isobel and Charles, the true Cinderella would be their mother Eliza, "the shoe has travelled through time and space to tell us something. But what? If we found its partner would it help us find the true bride ('it fits, it fits!')

[125] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 309.
[126] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 378.
[127] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 46.

and bring her back from wherever she is now?"[128] For Sinead McDermott such "fairytale motifs serve to debunk the myth of the ideal family by offering paradigmatic tales of cruelty and loss (wicked stepmothers, orphaned or abandoned children), but they also reinforce the myth by suggesting that an ideal, desired family exists, if only the protagonist could find it again."[129] According to Atkinson herself, "fairy stories teach girls about life. They teach girs about how to negotiate the pitfalls of living in a male world."[130] In this case, it is true not only for Isobel, but also for her brother Charles, as it presents a "reliance by these characters on the structure and power offered by fairy-tale imaginings."[131] Consequently, the children refer to fairy tales to help them explain the mysterious disappearance of their mother, while hoping that fairy tales might provide the key to bringing her back.

The approach to fairy tales may be very different as well, as there are various versions of stories: see for example the brutal versions by the Brothers Grimm, compared to other, altered, nicer and more polished fairy tales, which usually have a different ending. Consequently, a different attitude towards fairy tales is shown in the characters of Mrs Baxter and Eliza, "Mrs Baxter knew the same stories as Eliza but when Eliza had told them they had frequently ended badly and contained a great deal of mutilation and torture . . ."[132] Contrastingly, a different approach towards life is evident with Eliza being more realistic, whereas Mrs Baxter escapes from her violent husband into the land of fairies and games, where she seeks happiness. What is more, one chapter, narrating a Christmas party that ends in a disastrous car accident that Isobel is forced to relive, is even

[128] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 62.
[129] McDermott, "Kate Atkinson's Family Romance" 68.
[130] Philip Tew, Fiona Tolan, and Leigh Wilson, eds., *Writers Talks. Conversations with Contemporary British Novelists* (London: Continuum, 2008) 8.
[131] Fiona Tolan, "'Everyone Has Left Something Here:' The Storyteller-Historian in Kate Atkinson's *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*," *Critique* 50.3 (2009): 277, *ACADEMIC SEARCH COMPLETE*, 6 May 2014 <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=ef15f595-b6a3-4f5b-8029-fb271134aa2f%40sessionmgr113&vid=21&hid=106>.
[132] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 192.

mockingly called THEARTOFSUCCESFULENTERTAINING. Furthermore, after killing her husband Mrs Baxter is in a state of shock and suggests playing games, once again demonstrating an escape from reality: in this case the fact of committing a murder.

The breakup with fairy tales can be very harsh when one has to face reality. Although Patricia's growing-up is described in terms of the books she reads, she also has to accept certain roles that she is not prepared for: for example after Gillian's death, "it must have been doubly difficult for her to undertake this role, for although she's thirteen years old and arguably the most grown-up member of the family, it is Patricia more than anyone who mourns the way magic has drained from our world. No Father Christmas, no Tooth Fairy, no Fairy Godmother – no fairies at all."[133] This realization is a step towards becoming an adult, although the effects may be disastrous when dealing with this too early. This is all the more sad and nostalgic as it also means the end of childhood. This is enhanced by the death of Gillian on Christmas Eve, which is supposed to be the most magical day of the year.

Another characteristic of fairy tales is their healing power. To deal with her sister's death, Ruby not only suppresses the memory of her but, also comforts "Teddy by telling him stories, stories that involve a lot of rescuing – Rapunzel, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty . . ."[134] Rescuing refers to Pearl, whom Ruby was unable to save. It is for this reason that she escapes to the world of fairy tales with happy endings thanks to a rescuer, which Ruby herself could not be.

5.3 Kate Atkinson and Children's Books

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum is also a favourite point of

[133] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 185.
[134] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 122.

reference in Atkinson's works. The Skylon tower, built for the Festival of Britain, reminds Ruby of a science-fiction Oz. "The crowds will be flocking into the Exhibition Halls and the Dome of Discovery, craning their necks at Skylon and the shimmering emerald city of tomorrow."[135] As the festival was supposed to be a celebration of the British spirit but was not met with the same success as the 1851 Exhibition,[136] the *science-fiction* description refers to the qualities the makers wanted it to have, but failed to achieve. This comparison to the Emerald City suggests that people in Britain are fooled by the Festival, which was designed to make them believe they had not ceased to be an imperial world power.

The Wizard of Oz demonstrates an impressive way to start a chapter. When Ruby spends some time with her aunt's family she is surprised to be there, "I don't think this is Kansas, Teddy."[137] She refers to the fact that Dorothy is caught in a cyclone and carried to the Land of Oz. The position of Dorothy's dog Toto is occupied by Ruby's brought-to-life teddy bear. Another example is "We're off! Not to see the wizard, but on holiday,"[138] in this case referring to a song in the film based on the book. What connects the scene of departing to go on holiday with the song is an atmosphere full of joyful expectations and celebration. Furthermore, "intertextual allusions to *The Wizard of Oz* confirm the repetition of roles and identities,"[139] and Ruby's search for home,[140] that she eventually finds in Scotland. The whole journey to Scotland subsequently revolves around references to *The Wizard of Oz*. Ruby compares their journey to "following the yellow brick road,"[141] which in the children's book is a road that leads Dorothy to the Emerald City, the seat of the wizard. Parallel to this, the goal of the Lennoxes' journey is Scotland, the land of miracles. *The Wizard of Oz* is another example of Kate

[135] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 26.
[136] See Michael Frayn, "Festival Spirit," *The Guardian* 3 May 2001, 26 March 2014 <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2001/may/03/britishidentity.features11>.
[137] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 111.
[138] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 246.
[139] Parker, *Kate Atkinson's* Behind the Scenes 50.
[140] See Parker, *Kate Atkinson's* Behind the Scenes 62.
[141] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 253.

Atkinson skilfully referring to several types of art: in this case a book and a film.

A fruitful source of inspiration for Kate Atkinson is the author Edith Nesbit. In *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* Ruby receives *The Railway Children* as a Christmas present that deals with a family whose father spends time in prison after being accused of spying. Atkinson thus further develops the theme of incomplete families, one that is even stronger for the Lennox family at Christmas following the death of Gillian. *The House of Arden* by the same author is also very present in *The Human Croquet*. The house were the Fairfax family lives is called Arden and as such closely resembles the once-glorious estate found by the children in *The House of Arden*. Arden as a magical place also changes into Narnia, "what am I doing up here? Have I climbed into the wardrobe and *disappeared*?"[142] In the series, the wardrobe serves as an entrance to another world adding yet another fairy-tale dimension to the mosaic of worlds in the novel, which tries to find an answer to the question of where the disappeared people go.

Overall, Kate Atkinson uses fairy tales to explore the reasons why little girls are not princesses any more, based on their dysfunctional families. Moreover, "the longing for a different family, a more loving mother, persists in spite of the protagonists and author knowing better, and is reinforced through the series of fairytale motifs."[143] This is especially true for the relationship between Ruby and Bunty when Ruby places herself into a position of Snow White living with her step-mother. Also, "the reincorporated image of the Queen is recognised as part of a new imaginary, precisely as an image of the lost or ideal mother."[144] This further explains Ruby's fascination with Queen's dress. As the example of Snow White also shows, it also develops characters further as they are endowed with yet more characteristics. In the case of Charles and Isobel, their narrative is accompanied

[142] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 62.
[143] McDermott, "Kate Atkinson's Family Romance" 67.
[144] Hargreaves, "Redressing the Queen's Two Bodies" 44.

by "longing to recover and mend the family, if only via memory and imagination; and an attempt to restore wholeness by some kind of offer of substitution and restitution."[145] This is the reason why they picture their lost mother as Cinderella. Fairy tales as such further offer an escape from reality or a means of explaining mysteries or unhappy events.

5.4 Kate Atkinson and the Bible

When still a child, susceptible to all kinds of influences, Ruby becomes strongly religious and, though it seems to leave only superficial marks, when she collapses during her suicidal attempt, she sees Jesus together with the Lost Property Cupboard, "there's light ahead and I think, *The Light of the World*, and know that I must be coming to the bottom of the Cupboard."[146] Jesus talked about himself in these terms and it is in this way he also approached his disciples. His 'light' is often opposed to the 'darkness' as he is the force with which darkness is fought. Ruby hopes to find an explanation of the missing part of herself either in the Cupboard (via suicide) or in religion (where it resulted in sore knees). This juxtaposition of seemingly incompatible concepts shows the naïve perspective from which she narrates her story. Moreover, Ruby's fall very strongly resembles that of Alice in *Alice in Wonderland*, as "Carroll and Atkinson both construct narratives of personal development and self-discovery that feature young heroines making the transition from childhood and adulthood."[147] Subsequently, Ruby attempts to define her own identity not only via religion, but also via the parallels with Carroll's work.

The Last Judgement Day of the Shop and of the Lennox family serves to purify everyone. Kate Atkinson seeks a parallel event in the Great Fire of London of 1666, "just as the Great Fire of London helped to purge the Great Plague, so the

[145] McDermott, "Kate Atkinson's Family Romance" 68.
[146] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 330.
[147] Parker, *Atkinson's* Behind the Scenes 22.

Great Pet Shop Fire helped to purge the death of Gillian."[148] Together with time, moving from a place after such a difficult time is one of the best healers. This purification is also seen through the eyes of Ruby, who is, at the time a fervent believer, influenced by her friend Kathleen, "I pray to the bloodstained, smoke-damaged Lamb to make everyone in Heaven very happy. Many things are uncertain but there is one thing we can feel sure about – this morning, the arms of Jesus are very full indeed."[149] This childish vision of Christianity and purification is one of the factors that help Ruby to overcome the difficult times she has to face – the death of her twin sister Pearl, then of Gillian and the fire and also the death of the pets.

The beginning of *Human Croquet* echoes the Book of Genesis. The narrator starts her story with the origin of the Earth, both scientific and Creationist. As a source of life and oxygen, trees are used as a motif for developing this theme of inception. "Perhaps this is the tree of life or Eve's knowledge tree? Zeus' own Dodona oak or the great oak sacred to Thor? Or maybe Ysggadril, the ash, the world tree, that in Norse mythology forms the whole round of the globe . . . Trees of Life."[150] Trees are given both biblical and mythological significance, apart from their biological significance, as they form the basis of life. Yet, they also signify death as Eliza dies resting against a tree trunk. Connecting the various areas where there is a significance given to the trees, Atkinson celebrates everyday miracles in nature and supernatural ones that are also found in Ovid himself. As a corollary to this, *Not the End of the World* can be regarded as a metamorphosis of the *Metamorphoses.*[151] This juxtaposition of mythology and religion can also be found in the novel *Life After Life* where Sylvie "considered the biblical deity to be an absurd, vengeful figure (Tiffin and so on), no more real than Zeus or the great god Pan."[152] As a corollary to this, her

[148] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 215.
[149] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 217.
[150] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 139.
[151] See Brown, "Science Fiction" 221.
[152] Kate Atkinson, *Life After Life* (London: Doubleday, 2013) 102.

rather pragmatic attitude justifies the frequent employment of mythological, as opposed to biblical references.

The beginning of the third novel, *Emotionally Weird*, also draws on the story of Mary, mother of Jesus, "MY MOTHER IS A VIRGIN. (TRUST ME.) MY MOTHER, NORA – A FIERY Caledonian beacon – says she is untouched by the hand of man and is as pure as Joan of Arc or the snow on the Grampians."[153] Besides questioning the notion of the omniscient narrator, the concept of immaculate conception foreshadows the real conception of Effie as her true mother, Mable, was married to Nora's father, Donald, who was already very ill and impotent, so her pregnancy comes as a shock and, as the father is unknown, the idea of immaculate conception is one of the impossible explanations. Furthermore, the above quote is a good example of Atkinson's employment of references as she juxtaposes Virgin Mary and Joan of Arc with the story's Scottish setting.

A quotation from 1 Corinthians by St Paul introduces the short story "Dissonance," named after String Quartet no. 19 in C Major by Mozart, known for its unusually slow beginning. The beginning of the story is about the love that Jesus felt towards everyone, and it is in sharp contrast to the subsequent description of a family whose members do not understand each other and constantly argue. Although the characters are depicted rather stereotypically and in a way that seems clichéd, it stands for the difference between the quotation and the plot and between the sister and the brother themselves. This "dissonance" is also reflected in allusions in which Kate Atkinson mixes elements of high and low culture in a postmodern way, thus bringing together Korn and Mahler, Tekken 3 and Sparta, *Captain Corelli* and *Portrait of a Lady*.

While Kate Atkinson should not be perceived as a religious author, she

[153] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 21.

does employ biblical allusions in her work. For her, religion forms an indispensable part of cultural tradition and, regardless of one's personal beliefs, is important in terms of art. In the words of Mary Orr, commenting on the postmodern use of biblical connotations: "Postmodern intertextuality pertains to be all-inclusive of text, including the Bible. Yet its antireligious spirit of interpretation, that all texts are text, in fact delivers tokenism and taboo packaged together."[154] One can question whether the spirit of interpretation is necessarily antireligious. In Orr's view, postmodern art leaves room for more religious doubt, or doubt of any kind, than previously. This is certainly true, as postmodernism doubts even its own existence and undermines itself. On the other hand, the employment of the Bible in postmodern literature does not deny religion in itself.

5.5 Kate Atkinson and William Shakespeare

One of the biggest influences for Atkinson is William Shakespeare, to the extent that she introduces him as a character in *Human Croquet* and also questions his genius, "I don't suppose this is how he imagined his readers. If he imagined them at all."[155] While feeding a baby, Isobel tries to analyse one of his sonnets, suggesting the liberty Shakespeare used while writing, caring about neither literary preconceptions nor the reader. Nevertheless, readers of Shakespeare are still here and ready to be overwhelmed by his genius and it is for this reason that he is a fruitful source of inspiration for Atkinson. They share not only the intertextual space, but also have various themes in common, such as the concept of time or mistaken identities.

William Shakespeare is a favourite playwright of The Lythe Players in *Human Croquet*. In the Lythe production of his play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Debbie plays Helena even though she does not find the genius of Shakespeare very appealing, "he [meaning Shakespeare] could have made the whole thing a lot

[154] Orr, *Intertextulity 117.*
[155] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 230.

shorter in my opinion, and he uses twenty words when one would do, it's ridiculous. Words, words, words."[156] What is ridiculous is that she is, perhaps even unknowingly, quoting Hamlet, even his own words. The production represents a kind of a 'play within the play,' as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, only in the case of *Human Croquet* it is appropriate to call it a 'play within the novel,' although it does not have the dimension of metatheatre, as is the case in the play itself.

It is no coincidence that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is the very play in production in the novel. Midsummer's Eve is considered to be a night of magic and supernatural occurrences, undermining Isobel's seemingly reliable narrative. The play further overlaps with the novel in its Ovidian themes. After realizing that this all is not true as Isobel was in a coma, the production of the play lies still ahead, only with Debbie playing the part of Hermia, and not Helena.[157] Both characters can be seen as interchangeable due to changes of their lovers and their affection, thus asserting the same character of Debbie in both realities, that of Isobel's coma and that of her awakening.

In *Human Croquet* William Shakespeare is mentioned right at the beginning, becoming a much-quoted resource, "some say that Shakespeare himself spent time at Fairfax Manor. Keen supporters of this explanation of Shakespeare's famous lost years . . . point to the evidence of the initials "WS" carved into the bark of the great Lady Oak."[158] The narrator then tries to prove this theory using the story of the Fairfax family, where Shakespeare was a tutor. The introduction of Shakespeare as a character towards the end of the book is not surprising as it has been already hinted at by Isobel, "imagine meeting Shakespeare! But then what would you say to him?"[159] According to legend,

[156] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 65.
[157] See Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 352.
[158] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 14.
[159] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 65.

Shakespeare was a tutor at the Fairfax manor and his influence at Arden is manifested in Isobel's frequent use of his work, even dreaming about him as she lies on her bed and eventually being kissed by him. Furthemore, she even imagines him as her lover, via the recurring motif of a tree, "I embrace the Lady Oak like a lover, feel its bark, its age, its electricity. I close my eyes and kiss the faded initials. What if it really was Shakespeare himself who carved his name here? What if we had both touched, embraced, admired, this same tree."[160] Trees function as a point of connection with the past, as they were already there at the beginning as guardians, silently overlooking their surroundings and being a memory of the olden days. To use Shakespeare as a character is a risky step. Even Atkinson is quite ambivalent towards it, as shown in the following comment in her other novel, *Emotionally Weird:* "Personally, I don't think it right to make up things about real people – although I suppose there's an argument for saying that once you're dead you're not real any more."[161] While this may sound slightly apologetic it is, nevertheless, a rather ironic comment on her previous work.

According to Julie Sanders, William Shakespeare embodies the dominant male position in world literature. As a corollary to this, women writers often challenge this position and 'talk back' to him.[162] Though Atkinson introduces him as a character in her novel, she seldom challenges this position. Those women writers usually rewrite such themes as relationships between fathers and daughters, as in *King Lear* or *The Tempest*, but Atkinson prefers the romantic comedies. For Horstkotte, it represents the example of metafiction becoming fantastic when the characters cross over into reality and thus subvert the boundary between fiction and fact.[163] To Atkinson, Shakespeare is an important point of connection with the past, transcending history, the past itself, and even genres.

[160] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 355.
[161] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 170.
[162] See Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 13.
[163] See Horstkotte, *The Postmodern Fantastic* 192.

In order to perceive the both texts and not only the author, Michael Riffaterre stresses the importance of the reader, who is the 'perceiver' and language code-breaker, yet he advocates disciplined reading and not letting oneself get lost in one's imagination and free associations. Riffaterre further stresses the importance of not only the reader, but also their ability to identify an intertext, "an intertext is one or more texts which the reader must know in order to understand a work of literature in terms of its overall significance (as opposed to the discrete meanings of its successive words, phrases, and sentences)."[164] In relation to the identified intertext, Riffaterre highlights the subordination of content to form, rather than the referentiality on its own. It is for this reason that it is essential to analyse an intertext in relation to the text containing an allusion in terms of comparative analysis. As a consequence, one must not only acknowledge the existence of the intertext, but also be familiar with the form and content of the intertext and, as such, it is important to perceive not only the author, but also his particular work that is alluded to, which justifies Atkinson's employment of Willliam Shakespeare's oeuvre not as a challenge to his position, but as a means of establishing a continuous tradition.

Hamlet's experience of Elsinore is also reflected in *Human Croquet,* "the time is seriously out of joint in Arden, I fear."[165] This echoes the scene where Hamlet talks to the ghost of his father. Similarly, Isobel is in touch with the supernatural and seeks not revenge, but the truth about what happened to her mother. Also, "lady Fairfax feels that peace reigns in the forest rather than in her lordship's disordered, unnatural household where incest rules, *Hamlet*-esque, over the 'sty'. But more often than not, the forest, as in Shakespearean comedy, forces people to confront sometimes unpalatable truths, and re-emerge with changed personalities."[166] This reflects exactly what happens to the characters of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* after spending the night in a forest as the victims of

[164] Riffaterre, "Compulsory Reader Response" 56.
[165] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 297.
[166] Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 75.

the tricks of the King of the Elves, Oberon. As a parallel to this, Isobel spends most of the time in a coma and, as in the play, dreaming and sleeping triggers the happenings.

In *Behind the Scenes at the Museum,* there is a recurrent reference to Hamlet via the phrase "Poor someone." In Hamlet it is poor Yorick, the dead jester, and in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* it is anyone that is referred to as poor. The crucial scene is when Ruby realizes her own past, "shall we go through every person in the world, dead or alive, and say 'poor so and so' and 'poor so and so' and will we ever come to 'poor Ruby'?"[167] While Hamlet is refering to a dead person, in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* it can be anyone, although Ruby does not refer to herself in this way, not even to her dead sister. Ruby does not know herself as she is not aware of the existence of her twin sister and cannot say "Poor Ruby, I knew her," as Hamlet says of Yorick. In his monologue, Hamlet ponders the frail boundary between the living and the dead, the very boundary that separates the twins, Ruby, who is alive, and Pearl, who is dead.

Shakespeare's work also appears through other forms of art. In *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, Ruby pictures herself as *Ophelia* from Millais's painting.[168] All this happens in the chapter titled *Wisdom* where Ruby finds out about her twin sister Pearl. Before this wisdom, Ruby imagines herself committing suicide by drowning, as did Ophelia, unconsiously providing a link with her twin sister, who also drowned, though not willingly. Another picture connected with water and pearls is Botticelli's *Venus*, who is the embodiment of Pearl in Ruby's post-suicidal vision.[169] Millais's painting is further connected to Audrey from *Human Croquet*, "she's looking very soulful, like Lizzy Siddal in Rossetti's *Beata Beatrix*."[170] Connecting those two artists, Lizzy Siddal was the

[167] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 338.
[168] See Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 315.
[169] See Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 331.
[170] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 220.

model who stood for both Ophelia and Beata Beatrix. It further depicts Dante's Beatrice, thus forming a referential cycle.

Atkinson also employs misquotes in order to point out the faults of a character. For example, Derek Oliphant, Ursula's husband in the novel *Life After Life*, misquotes Hamlet and instead of "frailty, thy name is woman," he says "vanity, thy name is woman."[171] The important point is his reaction when he is corrected by Sylvie, which he apparently does not like at all, but suppresses his anger. Later, Derek misquotes not only Hamlet, but many other sayings, yet Ursula does not correct him as his ego would not stand it. Nevertheless, no matter what she does, domestic violence is inevitable. Similarly, although the quotations in *Life After Life* tend to be clear, Atkinson sometimes tries to mislead the reader, "truth is truth to the end of reckoning. What was that from? *Measure for Measure?*"[172] The question mark suggests that the reader should question and doubt the suggestion and in the end it emerges that the quote comes from *The Tempest.*

As *Emotionally Weird* is set in Scotland, Shakespeare's Scottish play, *Macbeth*, serves as a rich resource of references. Archie's wife Philippa "would have made a good wife for Macbeth; she certainly wouldn't have fretted about a few blood spots."[173] One of the characters is even called Mrs. Macbeth, which is a rather ironic name as she is quite good-natured and is called 'Mrs.' rather than 'Lady.' Yet, this serves to distract the reader, giving them a red herring about the identity of the probable murderer. Her late husband is referred to as Mr. Macbeth, "how odd that sounded, as if the Thane of Cawdor had decided to give up on ambition and settled in the suburbs and worked towards his pension."[174] As a corollary, it also serves as a means of comic relief. Furthemore, there is an

[171] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 212.
[172] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 339.
[173] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 122.
[174] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 138.

insurance policy on her that her son-in-law Grant Watson would like to obtain. Thus Mrs. Macbeth also becomes the one whose death is highly desirable.

Pamela from *Life After Life* likens Hitler to Macbeth, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury."[175] The following quote is taken from the same play too: "life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage."[176] The life in Nazi Germany bore a close resemblance to what Shakespeare had in mind, also expressing the idea of the world as a stage and men as the actors.

In the narrative one notes the naïve tone of Ruby. She observes the world around her, or from her mother's belly, and when seeing a peacock she thinks for herself: "Brave new world that has such creatures in it!"[177] A similar line appears in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, where it functions as an ironic element, as Miranda is observing drunken sailors, but is genuinely delighted by them because she has lived her life in seclusion. This is an example of double allusion as it has already been used by Aldous Huxley, sharing the same ironic features. It is for this reason that Ruby thinks she is being serious – but, as the previous cases were highly ironic, it offers an image of Ruby as an naïve and inexperienced girl. This is logical as it is her first-ever day in the world, but as she presents herself as an omniscient narrator it makes her narrative skills slightly dubious.

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* again appears as an important point of reference in a crucial scene in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*. When Ruby is reading her twin sister's death certificate, she is reminded of "*The Tempest* and *those are pearls that were his eyes.*"[178] The very same line is delivered by the spirit Ariel to Ferdinand, when he falsely informs him of his father's death, an

[175] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 321.
[176] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 346.
[177] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 18.
[178] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 328.

analogical situation turned upside down. It is further also quoted in *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot, hence another double allusion. The song speaks of decay after death, which is appropriate to the situation of Pearl, who has been dead for twelve years. There is a further connection with her name as a kind of premonition, or even predestination. Overall, it enhances Atkinson's and Shakespeares's common concept of family and its impact on individual identity.[179]

The school environment is one of the contexts used by Atkinson to introduce a writer or a work of art, as happens in the short story "Dissonance," where the teacher, Pam needs to mark essays on Shakespeare, one of which comes to the conclusion "what a sheer, big waste of love *Romeo and Juliet* is!"[180] This further refers to the following short story, entitled "A Sheer Big Waste of Love." This contrasts with the introductory quotation from the Bible, that speaks of the love of Jesus, whose love was also wasted on humankind.

Just as there are mainly direct allusions in the novel *Life After Life*, Shakespeare is referred to via a word-for-word quotation, "*golden lads and girls must, / as chimney sweepers, come to dust*."[181] Thanks to this quote from "Cymbeline," Sylvie realizes the transitory nature of her feelings towards George, which will come to an end, as all good things do. Generally speaking, poetry is mostly referenced in this novel and is often cited directly. Ted believes in the healing power of poetry and thus quotes from Shakespeare's Sonnet I, "contracted to thine own bright eyes."[182] However, he will not have the chance to start a family and leave a legacy on Earth. This feature of poetry is also shared by John Donne or John Keats, as will be shown in the subsequent chapters.

One theme that Atkinson and Shakespeare have in common is their

[179] See Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 75.
[180] Atkinson, *Not the End* 105.
[181] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 59.
[182] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 282.

concept of family and its impact on individual identity. The forest plays a crucial role in the works of both writers. "These locations, places which allow for liberation from social convention and the discovery of new identities and perspectives, and which are, potentially at least, a site of magic – had an important intertext of his own: Ovid's *Metamorphoses.*"[183] There is a common thread running through Ovid, via Shakespeare to Atkinson. Ovid's metamorphoses often occur in a forest, or his characters are changed into a tree. In Atkinson's work, trees often stand for primordial sources of life and are indispensable for humans. Frequently, the origin of life and world itself is connected to them. One can make a connection with the theories on the origins of humanity to the art of narration and, subsequently, to other works of art. As in *Human Croquet*, "the beginning was the word, but at the end is only silence."[184] This deals with narration over the course of time and the phrase echoes both the Bible and Hamlet, a further example of the complex nature of Atkinson's allusions.

In *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare employs themes of cross-dressing and mistaken identities, which is referenced in Atkinson's most Shakespeare-esque novel, *Human Croquet*, "Miss Thompsett asks sarcastically, 'where you come from, Isobel?' Where would that be? Illogical Illyria, the planet of unreason."[185] Shakespeare's play is set in Illyria, and Isobel uses it as a basis for wordplay based on the common theme of questioning and changing identities. Furthermore, Isobel is even writing an essay on *Twelfth Night* entitled 'Appearances can be deceptive: discuss,' a recurring motto of the novel, thus developing one of the basic themes of unreliability of both the narrator and reality itself:

> I like Shakespeare's masquerading heroines, his Violas and his Rosalinds, if it came down to it I'd rather be one of them than a Hilary. If I was Viola I would have a Sebastian to twin me, one face, one voice, one habit, but

[183] Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 76.
[184] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 378.
[185] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 214.

> two persons (an apple cleft in two). Perhaps an incest wouldn't be so bad if it was with someone you were so close to. Malcolm Lovat, for example.[186]

Atkinson had already developed the theme of twins in her previous novel, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*. Behind the theme of incest lies a real one in the Baxter family, where Mr Baxter abuses his own daughter and she falls pregnant. No-one knows about it as 'appearances may be deceptive.' Yet, cross-dressing as such does not appear in the novel, only in terms of theatre performance. Otherwise, no-one pretends to be someone else, at least not in the excessive manner as depicted. Sometimes, perhaps, only hiding their true selves, as in the case of Mr Baxter or Malcolm.

Atkinson shares with Shakespeare an interest in the topic of time, where closure constitutes only a temporal trick or illusion.[187] This explains the status of Isobel as an unreliable narrator. Both Atkinson and Shakespeare employed an abundance of Ovidian themes providing a means for the circulation of allusions and references across centuries of literary history. This supports Atkinson's idea of the circularity of time. The use of references to his work also employs an intergeneric transition from theatre to prose.[188] Intertextuality can refer not only to disciplines other than literature, but also to other literary genres. The importance of the topic in Shakespeare's work is exemplified in the personified figure of time in *The Winter's Tale.*[189] To present an example of an intertextual reference, Isobel's rumination: "I should never have tried to kill time. I wasted it and now it's wasting me"[190] echoes *Richard II.* Overall, the notion of killing time and its consequences pervades Atkinson's whole oeuvre: see Carroll's Mad Hatter, who also supposedly murdered Time.

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[186] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 224.
[187] See Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 6.
[188] See Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 3.
[189] See Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 71.
[190] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 159.

Time and timing is also important in *Human Croquet*. Isobel was born on April Fool's Day which suggests that her narrative is merely a trick.[191] She then wakes up on 23 April, the birthday of William Shakespeare. On the other hand, this is merely a presupposed date and the question of reliability recurs. The events on Halloween, Christmas Eve and Midsummer are also their significant in *Human Croquet.*[192] It is not only the time period but also the forest of Arden, that connects the novel with Shakespeare's *As You Like It*[193] and also to Nesbit's *The House of Arden*. Furthermore, both are concerned with absent fathers and time travel.

It has been shown that the employment of Shakespeare's oeuvre and his literary persona in general is fundamental to the interpretation of Atkinson's work, helping to expand her themes, such as the circularity of time or the notion of time as an illusion or a trick. Furthermore, it also presents the complexity of her allusions as references to Shakespeare appear in other works by distinguished authors, such as Faulkner, T. S. Eliot or Aldous Huxley, thus creating an interconnection between these writers.

5.6 Kate Atkinson and John Donne

To seek refuge in metaphysical poetry may be a soothing tool at the time of war, as expressed by Edmund in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*: "*Repaire me now, for mine end doth haste. I runne to death, and death meets me as fast.*"[194] Though the poem conveys the atmosphere of World War I, it is a sonnet by John Donne where the poet seeks help in God's hands, and thus it has some force, even in the modern day. At this particular moment Edmund is falling through the sky and loses consciousness. When he comes the himself, he is found by a German, but dies anyway. "Despaire behind, and death before doth cast / Such terrour, and

[191] See Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 67.
[192] See Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 67.
[193] See Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 67.
[194] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 275.

my feeble flesh doth waste / By sinne in it, which it t'wards hell doth weigh."[195] The sonnet, though written three hundred years before World War I, aptly captures the atrocities of the war, presenting a personal meditation on the transience of life and the decisive moment when everything changes. Donne further also shares this idea of ephemerality with John Keats or Gerard Manley Hopkins, that who will be dealt with in the following chapters. At the end of the poem he acknowledges human weakness and sees in God the only force that gives him strength to overcome them and survive. Even though Edmund dies, he dies with hope and faith in God.

5.7 Kate Atkinson and Laurence Sterne

Laurence Sterne can be regarded as a granddaddy of all metafictional novels,[196] and for this reason it is inevitable that the reader will come across references to his work in Kate Atkinson's writings. As *magnum opus, The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman,* is a highly idiosyncratic novel in which the titular Tristram tells the story of his life, starting from his very conception; but he does not get very far as he wants to retell every detail, leading to an endless series of digressions, which is according to Bakhtin, motivated.[197] "Everything is connected with other things that occurred before or after or in another place."[198] As a corollary to this, intertextuality and metafiction is the ultimate form of the narrative that attempts to reflect the world in its entirety, while at the same time being aware of the futility of the endeavour. Unlike Tristram, Ruby manages to get farther with her narration. She reaches her forties and even explains a lot of her family history, turning the novel into a kind of family saga.

In Patricia Waugh's analysis of Sterne's approach to writing, she compares

[195] John Donne, *The Poems of John Donne* (London: Oxford UP, 1929) 293.
[196] See Lodge, *The Art of Fiction* 206.
[197] See Bakhtin, *Formální metoda* 142.
[198] Lodge, *The Art of Fiction* 81.

it to contemporary writers and tendencies:

> For Sterne, as for contemporary writers, the mind is not a perfect aestheticizing instrument. It is not free, and it is as much constructed out of, as constructed with, language. The substitution of a purely metaphysical system (as in the case of Proust) or mythical analogy (as with Joyce and Eliot) cannot be accepted by the metafictionist as final structures of authority and meaning. Contemporary reflexivity implies an awareness both of language *and* metalanguage, of consciousness *and* writing.[199]

Contrary to this, Kate Atkinson is able to combine both metafictional and metalinguistic approach with mythical analogies. She is aware of how both tendencies can coexist and be present at the same time; intertextuality thus becomes the predominant device for exploring this connectedness.

As Tristram Shandy, Ruby is able to narrate her own life and progress, even past situations that she/he could not have experienced. Starting the narration in the same way as Tristram, she begins with the night of her conception, which is marked by the chime of a clock. Similarly, Tristram Shandy also narrates what preceded his conception and the conception itself, which was influenced by the exclamation of his mother during the very act: "*Pray, my Dear*, quoth my mother, *have you not forgot to wind up the clock?*"[200] As Tristram Shandy, like his father, believes that these inconspicuous details of no real consequence predetermine his future, he attributes a lot of his misfortunes to this situation.

During the conception of Ruby Lennox, the clock was obviously wound up

[199] See Waugh, *Metafiction* 24.
[200] Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986) 5.

and she does not blame anything to the fact that the conception is not very elegant as her father was drunk at the time. On the contrary, she is happy to be in the world and as a foetus she gaily observes and comments on what is going on outside her mother's belly. On the other hand, the clock in the bedroom belonged to her great-grandmother Alice, and Ruby, as did her great-grandmother, will leave her husband, although she will take her children with her, which Alice could not do. Therefore, it may, in a way, predetermine her future. Via these details (often found in the footnotes) Atkinson traces "'family resemblances' in the lives of women across different generations."[201] There is not only a dysfuctional mother-daughter relationship between Bunty and Ruby, but also between Nell and Bunty. Moreover, the theme of missing mother, when Ruby thinks about Bunty in terms of not being her real mother, recalls the real events in the life of Alice's children whom their mother really left.

Sterne also spent some time in Yorkshire and even was a prebendary of York Minster; for this reason, Sterne is a strong presence in the novel, "you can hear them if you listen hard, . . . and the *scratch-scratch* of the Reverend Sterne's quill."[202] Ruby's sister Patricia is even reading *Tristram Shandy* on their way to Scotland, which her mother Bunty considers rude as it does not conform to the regular norms of a classical narrative.

5.8 Kate Atkinson and Tobias Smollett

Tristram Shandy and *On the Road* are not the only books Patricia reads on their holiday in Scotland in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*: when one is on a journey it is appropriate to read a proper travel story which, in the case of Scotland, is an epistolary novel by Tobias Smollet entitled *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker*, which futher enhances the postcolonial reading of Atkinson's

[201] McDermott, "Kate Atkinson's Family Romance" 71.
[202] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 10.

work.[203] A typical satirical novel from the 18th century, it comments on the vices of contemporary society, in this case through the members of a group that visits various spas, each of whom is looking for something, some for health, some for a husband, some for relief from an unhappy love affair. As is the custom, the story has a happy-ending and a number of weddings. Compared to the Lennox family, every member of the family seems to live alone and pursue its own goals. Patricia is, at that time, already pregnant, which may symbolise an unhappy love affair or having an illegitimate child (like the titular Humphrey Clinker in Smollett's novel). On the other hand, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* does not criticize the vices of the society to such an extent, nor does it end conventionally with a series of marriages. Overall, these novels deal with growing-up and taking responsibility for one's own life, which is the very thing that Patricia is about to do.

5.9 Kate Atkinson and Christopher Smart

The opening motto of the short story "The Cat Lover" provides a further dimension to the story as a whole, as it is taken from the poem "Jubilate Agno" by Christopher Smart. The author was in a mental asylum while writing the poem and had as a companion a cat named Joffrey, who is celebrated in the poem; this is probably the most well-known poem about cats in the English language. Thus again there is a circle between the short story and the motto as the protagonist adopts a cat who starts behaving as a man. The protagonist, Heidi, is the twin sister of Trudi from the first short story of the collection. This story is also interconnected with the previous story, which features Fielding, who once dated Trudi and was rather uneasy about her having a twin sister. Moreover, Atkinson contrasts her preferable theme of dogs to cats. This antithesis further explores the idea of duality, with the circular structure only emphasising the theme.

5.10 Kate Atkinson and William Blake

[203] See Justin D. Edwards, *Postcolonial Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 14.

As one William Blake's literary inventions was his own mythology, which based on the *Bible* and Greek mythology, it is not surprising that Kate Atkinson uses a quotation from "Auguries of Innocence" as an introduction to one of her short stories, "The Tunnel of Fish," "Joy and Woe are woven fine, / A Clothing for the Soul divine / Under every grief and pine / Runs a joy with silken twine."[204] Not only does the poem itself start with a vision of the world and the concept of eternity, which are also Atkinson's favourite themes, it also presents various animals and, by analogy, the main character Eddie visits the sea world on his birthday. Furthermore, he is an ostracized boy living in his own world who, despite the drawbacks he suffers, maintains a positive attitude to life.

5.11 Kate Atkinson and Leigh Hunt

Leigh Hunt was an English poet, a contemporary of Keats and Shelley, who worked as an editor of various newspapers, e.g. *The Examiner,* where the introductory poem to *Human Croquet* also appears, "this green and laughing world he sees / Waters and plains, and waving trees, The skin of bird and the blue-doming skies."[205] This *Ode for the Spring of 1814* is an allegorical and descriptive poem written in Spenserian that describes the peace in the Peninsular War juxtaposed with the coming of spring. The chosen section is the most optimistic one in the poem and, with regard to the story of the novel, it reflects the novel's motto of 'appearances can be deceptive.' Another frequent refrain, which oddly complements the first, reads "just because you can't see something doesn't mean it isn't there."[206] Consequently, it creates a feeling of paranoia that is a logical result of the tricks that time plays with Isobel.

5.12 Kate Atkinson and John Keats

[204] Atkinson, *Not the End* 45.
[205] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 7.
[206] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 13.

John Keats's work is referenced in detail in *Human Croquet*, deepening the interpretation of the text. Isobel's dream of Malcolm Lovat's head has an explanation in her reading, "the eyelids of the head were closed, giving it a passing resemblance to Keats's death-mask . . ."[207] Not only is Keats's death-mask one of the most famous ones, but his poem *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil* also deals with heads; not to mention the similar names of both female characters. As for its content, it deals with a head planted in a pot of basil, "it's hard enough to keep a geranium alive in Arden, I can't imagine trying to cultivate a head."[208] The fact that Isobel is reading this poem is the reason why she sees one in her dream. Moreover, it is not only Keats who is alluded to but also Boccaccio's *Decameron*, as the poem comes from a tale adopted from the Italian allegory.

Keats's influence does not end with one poem: Atkinson also mentions "The Eve of St Agnes," "any minute my dream lover (Malcolm Lovat) will cross the threshold and ravish me and carry me away from this dreariness."[209] The original poem is based on the belief that if a girl goes to sleep naked, she will be visited by her future husband. In the poem, Porphyro takes advantage of Madeline who believes she is dreaming about her future man, yet, in the end they fall in love. Nevertheless, Isobel is visited not by Malcolm, but by Richard Primrose, who really does try to have sex with her. Thankfully, Isobel is not asleep, is conscious of reality and manages to defend herself.

The same poem also appears in the novel *Life After Life*, "there was a line in 'The Eve of St Agnes,' what was it? Something about the stone effigies in the church *in icy hoods and mails*."[210] Based on this example, the reference is not very well-concealed in the text, as the name of the poem is mentioned and thus it is not difficult to identify it. Ursula then goes to find the concrete part and it

[207] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 55.
[208] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 56.
[209] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 225.
[210] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 135.

makes her shiver as if she had a premonition about her forthcoming death. Yet, she ends as in the "Ode to a Nightingale," "to cease upon the midnight with no pain,"[211] without remorse, without sadness, very quietly gassed to death.

Ursula's next life is also connected to Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale," "this was Keats's *beaker full of the warm South*, was it not?"[212] Ursula justifies her drinking via Keats, as Keats wished to drink wine and forget the outside world, "drink, and leave the world unseen."[213] In this course of life, Ursula gets into a circle of alcoholism, unhappy marriage, domestic violence and consequent death. The ode forms a leitmotif for the whole chapter and is the uniting thread of the story. When Ursula dies after being attacked by her husband, she thinks of "easeful death."[214] As Ursula thinks about Keats before her various deaths, Keats symbolises dying and, even more, premature death, if the biographical point of view is taken into account.

This poem also comes to mind during Second World War air raids in London, "the *Queen-Moon*, surrounded by *all her starry Fays*, although she suspected Keats was writing about a full moon and the moon above Argyll Road seemed more like a moon-in-waiting. She was in a – rather poor – poetic mood. It was the enormity of war, she thought, it left you scrabbling for ways to think about it."[215] Ursula herself doubts the appropriate choice of a poem and this is the reason why John Donne appears on the scene, "despair behind, and death before."[216] As her favorite author, Donne is with Ursula at the end of one of her lives when she dies during an air raid, "salute the last and everlasting day."[217] The magnificent transcendence of Donne appears much more appropriate than the lyrical nature of Keats's work. Keats thus has meaning to her when she dies

[211] Atkinson, *Not the End* 141.
[212] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 206.
[213] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 206.
[214] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 230.
[215] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 263.
[216] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 266.
[217] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 269.

unhappily and violently or when she struggles to find her true identity, while Donne, whom she prefers, is the companion in her happier life, when she is her own self.

In general, John Keats is probably one of the most cited authors in the novel *Life After Life.* As the novel is more explicit in dealing with references, allusions are clear at first sight, as their authorship is usually mentioned. Nevertheless, there are instances when one has to be alert to spot the allusion. For example, when Clarence describes a garden as "a thing of beauty."[218] Later on, Pamela appraises him and calls him a poet; he is not, however, the first person to utter these words, as they are taken from Keats's poem "A Thing of Beauty (Endymion)." Like Keats, Clarence finds beauty in the most simple things as he knows the value of life after experiencing the Great War.

5.13 Kate Atkinson and Nathaniel Hawthorne

Another connection to classic literature is in the relationship between *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* and *The Scarlet Letter*. Like the child of the adulterous Hester Prynne, Ruby's twin sister is also called Pearl. Ruby's name creates the opposite character in terms of colour and characteristics. Moreover, Ruby is also connected to the colour of the letter with which Hester was marked. Nevertheless, Ruby has "no handy freckle to mark me out as the Ruby Lennox who left them so long ago. Perhaps they will cry 'Impostor!' and refuse to let me back in."[219] There is an insinuation that Ruby could have a twin sister, as her aunt's twins are distinguished by a freckle that one of them has on their chin. Overall, there are parallel contrasts between Hester and Pearl and between Ruby and Pearl.

[218] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 83.
[219] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 124.

In the same novel Bunty is, during her love affair, referred to in the terms of the scarlet letter, "by this time, the offending couple are vertical and looking modestly decent, but I think we can all see the blazing scarlet letter 'A' branded across Bunty's beige turtle-neck sweater."[220] The letter has been given many meanings, including *angel*, amongst others, but the most common one is *adultery*, which is very appropriate to the situation. Unlike Hester Prynne, Bunty does not wear it on a simple dress, but on a sweater, adding an element of humour. A similar mark is mentioned in the short story "Evil Doppelgängers"[221] though in relation to a man, and not in connection with adultery.

5.14 Kate Atkinson and Edgar Allan Poe

The personification of a house is a common feature between Atkinson's *Human Croquet* and Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," "this house . . . has a life of its own."[222] Subsequently, the bleakness of the house of Usher and of Arden is very comparable, "Arden was in decay, there was wet-rot in the floors and dry-rot in the stairs. The windows stuck, the doors jammed. The wallpaper peeled."[223] In contrast to the emotional and moral decay of the family of Usher, in *Human Croquet* it suggests rather the stiffness of both Vinny and the Widow and the fact that Charles and Isobel, who both still hope to find their mother, even though they know deep down that she is already (and irrevocably) dead, live in and do not want to let go of the past.

Not only the house but also Poe's characters or their characteristic traits appear in Kate Atkinson's novels. When Patricia goes through a difficult growing-up process, having to deal with and experience responsibilities and losses too early in her life, she gets a "Madeline Usher laugh,"[224] laughed by Madeline

[220] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 264.
[221] See Atkinson, *Not the End* 207.
[222] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 46.
[223] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 205.
[224] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 208.

Usher when leaving the vault in which she had been buried alive. This foreshadows Patricia's escape from home, the metaphorical vault in which she could not breath.

Edgar Allan Poe's poetry is not left aside and it appears in its full span when his poem "A Dream Within A Dream" opens the short story "Evil Doppelgängers," "All that we see or seem / Is but a dream within a dream."[225] The short story subsequently deals with false appearances, questions the reality that surrounds the main character and examines the possibilities of leading a double life and of parallel universes. Yet, the character hopes that it is is just a bad dream. As a corollary to this, based on the introductory quotation, it is suggested that even his life, as presented from his point of view, may be another dream, thus corresponding with the idea of a dream within a dream. This idea is supported by a scene in which he discusses with one of his colleagues the TV series *Buffy*, which is more heavily referenced in the collection and in this short story than anywhere else. They try to explain the event in Fielding's life via *Buffy*; of couree, *Buffy* is not real, "and you think this is real, Fielding?"[226] Regarding other references to mythology, science fiction "stands to reveal much about the roles played by Ancient Classics as well as new 'classics' in the modern world."[227] Hence, mythology, science fiction and the classics complement each other in a non-competitive way. "The range of Atkinson's intertextual allusions expands her writing beyond its formal boundaries, indicating the debt of previous works owed by all authors, while also reinforcing a key theme of Atkinson's own writing: the repetitive circularity of history."[228] All in all, the short story examines another of Atkinson's favorite themes, the thin border between reality and fiction. What is more, this theme also accounts for her employment of intertextuality when a work of art is both real and fiction at the same time.

[225] Atkinson, *Not the End* 191.
[226] Atkinson, *Not the End* 216.
[227] Brown, "Science Fiction" 209.
[228] Tew, *Writers Talk* 14.

5.15 Kate Atkinson and Charles Dickens

As an important representative of English realism, Charles Dickens cannot be ommitted from an overview of references. In the doll house at Ruby's aunt's house there is even a library containing tiny books, amongst them *Great Expectations*. This alludes to a lot of stiffness that is found in the house of her aunt and the doll house serves as a microcosm of the household. The same novel also appears in *Emotionally Weird*, specifically in the chapter where Effie finds out about her parentage, which is entitled "Great Excitement," alluding to Dickens's *Great Expectations,* where Pip also does not know about his ancestors and only learns about them later.

Dickens's work is also a source of a witty wordplay, as in *Human Croquet* where Vinny is characterised as "a bleak housekeeper in hard times."[229] Besides invoking the atmosphere of Dickens in terms of a struggle and hardship, it evokes two of his novels – *Bleak House* and *Hard Times* – all in one phrase, thus intensifying the mood of bleakness and decay. Mr Baxter is further likened to a Gradgrind,[230] a character from *Hard Times*, an entrepreneur who believes only in profit, to the total exclusion of emotions; while Mr Baxter's only interest is to educate, with no interest in emotions, either. Unlike Thomas Gradgrind, Mr Baxter does not change his philosophy, and he ends up being killed by his wife.

Perhaps the most famous novel by Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*, is mentioned in *Life After Life*, "annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery."[231] In this chapter it is contrasted with another famous quotation about money and wealth, this time by Jane Austen, from her novel *Mansfield Park*, "a large income is the best recipe for happiness I ever heard of."[232] Both are

[229] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 200.
[230] See Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 203.
[231] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 171.
[232] Atkinson, *Life After Life*164.

related to the character of Izzie, who is fond of nice things and thus craves a large income (like Fanny in *Mansfield Park*), but is irresponsible about the money she does get (like the Micawbers in *David Copperfield*).

5.16 Kate Atkinson and Charlotte Brontë

The use of a same surname that has already appeared in another text is usually not a coincidence. Furthemore, if the surname is Fairfax, this often rings a bell. Edward Fairfax Rochester is one of the main characters of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, though the fact that he is mostly referred to only as 'Rochester' makes the allusion less obvious. *Human Croquet* deals with the history of the Fairfax family. The common denominator in both stories is a once respected and wealthy family that has lost all of its property. The bleak atmosphere of their estates is also reflected in both novels, "some also said that he had a beautiful child wife, herself already with child, locked away in the attics of Fairfax Manor. Others said the woman in the attics was not his child wife but his mad wife."[233] This represents a famous, recurring motif of a madwoman in the attic, i.e. Rochester's wife, whom he keeps secret. In the story it is Isobel who lives in the attic of Arden. While she is not mad, later on she is in a coma, and certainly not in a very good condition mentally. Incidentally, a Fairfax family really did live in North Yorkshire, and were the ancestors of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. The historical Fairfax, however, was called Thomas, and not Francis as in the novel. In its complexity, this reference combines allusions to Charlotte Brontë, history and even Shakespeare, who supposedly spent some time at Fairfax manor.

A mad woman in the attic corresponds with a "skeleton in the closet," a past thing or event that the owner wishes to keep hidden. In *Emotionally Weird*, Nora even promises that her narrative will contain one, "we shall have murder and mayhem, plots and sub-plots, a mad woman in the attic, purloined diamonds, lost

[233] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 14.

birthrights, heroic dogs, a soupçon of sex, a suspicion of philosophy."[234] Nonetheless, there is no mad woman in the attic as such, but many of skeletons in the closet, such as the aforementioned murder or incest. In the end no madwoman appears, "'You promised madwomen in the attics.' One madwoman, I only promised one madwoman and there wasn't enough room for her."[235] Thus Atkinson plays with the possibilities of a metafictional narrative that allows commentaries by its characters on the development of the plot.

By the same token, the novel is referenced in the short story "Unseen Translation" when Missy tries to find out what happened to Arthur's last nanny, "fell in love with the master who had a mad wife in the attic and who became hideously disfigured in a fire?"[236] Clearly, this is a much condensed summary of the plot of *Jane Eyre* as it is one of the possible fates of nannies in general.

5.17 Kate Atkinson and Emily Brontë

As the younger sister of Charlotte, Emily Brontë also makes an appearance in the references in Kate Atkinson's work, notably her most famous work *Wuthering Heights.* Towards the point when Ruby realizes she had a twin sister, she goes through a profound crisis imagining herself in various kinds of suicidal attempts, such as "what I have a sudden, overwhelming urge to do – is to smash the glass and saw my wrist against the broken edge, backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, like Lockwood did to poor Cathy's ghost . . ."[237] The fact that Ruby adresses Catherine using the familiar 'Cathy' may create confusion, as Cathy was Catherine's daughter. Nevertheless, it is Catherine who haunts Heathcliff's house. Although there is a difference, acknowledged even by Ruby, that, while she wants to end her life, Catherine wanted to be allowed back into the

[234] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 26.
[235] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 391.
[236] Atkinson, *Not the End* 181.
[237] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 318.

house.

5.18 Kate Atkinson and Herman Melville

One of the most iconic citations from Melville's most celebrated novel *Moby-Dick; or the Whale* is its beginning "Call me Ishmael." Paraphrasing this, *Human Croquet* begins with "call me Isobel."[238] She expresses the doubts as to the starting point of the narrative[239] and the starting point of the world, as Atkinson mixes this reference with references to the Bible. She puts herself to the same position as Ishmael, who is an omniscient narrator. Isobel's question is about where to begin and eventually begins "with the word,"[240] echoing the Book of Genesis, same as the original reference to Ishmael in Moby-Dick. The connection of *Moby-Dick* and the *Bible* is well documented in the following quote: "I am Isobel Fairfax, I am the alpha and omega of narrators (I am omniscient) and I know the beginning and the end. The beginning is the word and the end is silence. And in between are all the stories. This is one of mine."[241] By analogy, for Ishmael "Nothing exists in itself,"[242] which justifies the employment of intertextuality, as all the texts in the world are interconnected and dependent on each other. Paradoxically, Isobel's omniscience does not lead to plausibility, as Isobel is either not aware of her mother's fate, or does not want to be aware of it. The narrator knows the beginning and the end, but does not know her own story.

By this way of starting a narrative, Isobel also mocks her position as a supposedly omniscient narrator as "the new text achieves a certain level of legitimacy from being posed in conjunction with established work. The interaction that occurs between them in that context becomes more a dialogue than an

[238] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 11.
[239] See Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 68.
[240] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 11.
[241] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 20.
[242] Herman Melville, *Moby Dick or the White Whale* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1969) 61.

argument, less a matter of ridicule than an issue of comparisons and contrasts."[243] Although it presents a mocking point of view of both texts, it still retains a heroic mode.

There are even more similarities in the stories of Ishmael and Isobel. In the *Bible*, Ishmael was the son of Abraham whom he had with his maid-servant Hagar, who was given to him by his barren wife Sarah. After Sarah's son, Isaac, is born, she drives Ishmael away to the desert; this is how he became the symbol of wanderers and outcasts same as Isobel who, by analogy, looks for the truth what happened to her mother and is conscious of her not very appealing appearance.

What is more, Kate Atkinson goes even further regarding the complexity of her allusions. "Call me Daphne"[244] in the rape scene, when Isobel is saved by being transformed into a tree, refers not only to Melville, but also to Ovid. There are more allusions in one and this complexity is one of the peculiar features of Atkinson's employment of intertextuality. This combination of seemingly incompatible sources – Ovid, the Bible and Herman Melville – creates an intricate web of intertextual references that makes the reader aware of the interconnectedness of the world.

5.19 Kate Atkinson and William Topaz McGonagall

William Topaz McGonagall was a Dundee-based poet whose work was of famously poor quality; yet, his work is referenced in Atkinson's Dundee novel, *Emotionally Weird*, in which Effie lives in his old apartment on Paton's Lane.[245] McGonagall is the symbol of all doggerel poets and similarly, as to him, Effie also strives to be appreciated by her creative writing teacher. Nevertheless, in the end

[243] Joan Douglas Peters, *Feminist Metafiction and the Evolution of the British Novel* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2002) 7.
[244] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 262.
[245] See Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 29.

she comes to be recognized as a successful writer of crime novels as compensation for her lost years at university.

His most notorious poem is "The Tay Bridge Disaster," coincidently, one of Nora's ancestors died in this accident in 1879. Another poem cited in the novel is "The Clepington Catastrophe," about which Effie says: "Poor Dundee, surely not doomed for ever to be the town of McGonagall and the *Sunday Post*?"[246] This lamentation is indebted to the fact that McGonagall is considered to be the one of the worst poets in history[247] and *Sunday Post* is also a sentimental, poor-quality newspaper.

5.20 Kate Atkinson and Emily Dickinson

In *Emotionally Weird* Kate Atkinson mildly criticizes the situation at Dundee University, when Olivia plucks up the courage to discuss structuralism with her professor, using as an argument a quote from Emily Dickinson's poem. Archie's reaction is that "the next person to quote Emily Dickinson in his tutorial would be taken out to the Geddes Quadrangle and publicly flogged."[248] Another member of the class, The Boy With No Name, introduces himself by saying, "Hello, I'm nobody, who are you?"[249] This is an example of the witty comic relief often employed by Atkinson, as The Boy With No Name is an actual Nobody, who then logically disappears. Atkinson's interest in Emily Dickinson is further reflected in the title of the crime novel from Jackson Brodie series *Started Early, Took My Dog*.

[246] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 295.
[247] See Andy McSmith, "The Story of William McGonagall, the Worst Poet in the History of the English Language," *The Independent* 17 May 2008, 5 May 2014 <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/the-story-of-william-mcgonagall-the-worst-poet-in-the-history-of-the-english-language-829993.html>.
[248] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 45.
[249] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 46.

Terri is a Gothic-like character from *Emotionally Weird,* with an interest in cemeteries, black colour and dogs (she eventually becomes the owner of a pet cemetery). Consequently, "death was never going to have to worry about Terri not stopping for him."[250] This refers to a line from another Dickinson's poem "Because I could not stop for death, he kindly stop for me." It is no surprise that Dickinson's bleak atmosphere of solitude and darkness has a certain magical appeal to 'emo' characters such as Terri.

The short story "Transparent Fiction" opens with a quotation from a poem by Emily Dickinson[251] that has the same theme as the following short story – eternity and the cycle of life. In this story Atkinson examines and questions the predestination of human beings to mortality and the possibilities of overcoming it, which is scientifically based on the study of genes, yet the real key to the try lies in the Jamesian clash between the old and the new worlds.

5.21 Kate Atkinson and Lewis Carroll

Carroll's two books on Alice are another fruitful source of inspiration for not only Kate Atkinson, but also Western culture in general. While classified as children's books, their influence beyond their genre deserves a separate chapter. One of the most popular characters in the books is the Cheshire cat, "the smile on George's face fades Cheshire-cat like,"[252] similarly to the way in which the cat's grin is still visible when its disappears, same George retains the rather fake smile when he sees his wife is back. Also, Hawk from the short story "The Tunnel of Fish" is from Cheshire, "a place that was a mystery to both June and Eddie, who could think only of cheese and cats."[253] No wonder it brings a touch of mystery, as the cat's smile is as mysterious as the Mona Lisa's.

[250] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 77.
[251] See Atkinson, *Not the End* 73.
[252] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 162.
[253] Atkinson, *Not the End* 53.

Charles from *Human Croquet* is obsessed with parallel universes as he tries to explain his missing mother. In reality, all of the Fairfax family start to have paranoid ideas about reality, e.g. Debbie constantly finds things replaced by perfect copies, complementing Atkinson's employment of the doppelgänger motif. Charles develops this theory about his father Gordon as well, "Somebody *pretending* to be Daddy – an impostor . . . Or perhaps he was from the parallel world. A looking-glass kind of father."[254] The border between the worlds is a fragile one, as Isobel passes ceaselessly from one to another, realizing that she has been all the time confined to the 'other' world of her coma state.

Nevertheless, Charles may also look like coming from the other world – in Isobel's words: "If I am the April Fool, then Charles, born the first of March, must be the mad March hare."[255] 'Mad as a March hare' was originially an English idiom that Carroll aptly converted into a nervous character for whom it is always tea-time because the Mad Hatter supposedly murdered the time. The theme of madness also appears in *Human Croquet* as the inexplicable happenings cause the characters to question their own sanity, "we are both as mad as tea-party hatters."[256] The notion of killing time, looking for time, storing time or time lost and regained is another common theme in *Human Croquet* and *Alice*, also echoing the work of Marcel Proust.

In *Emotionally Weird*, an extract from Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*, where Humpty Dumpty discusses the various meanings of a word with Alice, forms the introductory part, thus presenting the themes of the novel: how a meaning is created, the importance of storytelling and the possibilities of changing reality via words. Moreover, it challenges the variety of naming things, "I am narrated therefore I am. What would that be – a narratee? That can't be a word. It sounds like a sea-animal. The young narratees leapt and frolicked in the wake of

[254] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 37.
[255] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 45.
[256] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 84.

the ship. The narratees swam in playful circles."[257] Establishing a relationship between the text and its content, the narrator expands the possibilities of their narrative via a musing that Humpty Dumpty would be proud of.

A related theme is the question of whether there is limited number of words, "'how long are you going to go on without stopping him? . . . You're wasting words.' 'There isn't a finite stock of them.' 'How do you know? You might suddenly just run out and then you won't be able to finish the—'"[258] Besides the humourously unfinished sentence, it justifies creation and creativity in the invention of new words in order to avoid running out of them. As *Emotionally Weird* presents various narrative voices and narrative threads, it also serves as a highly metafictional novel, allowing comments on the text itself.

Similarly, Atkinson deals with the nature of words and the reality they may or may not create:

> I supposed the angry mythical beast was an allegory or a metaphor but who knows – perhaps it was real, in as much as fiction is real, which it must be because it exists, unless something can exist without being real. And even if it only exists in the form of words, words themselves must exist or we wouldn't be able to use them . . .[259]

As a corollary to this, words have the ability to create reality, even parallel worlds, that are no less real than the reality itself. Hence, the border between fiction and reality is blurred and this idea is enhanced by intertextuality.

5.22 Kate Atkinson and Henry James

[257] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 175.
[258] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 180.
[259] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 230.

As a master of 19th-century English literature, Henry James cannot be overlooked in any analysis of intertextual references. Not only does Ruby's stay with her aunt strongly remind the reader of the bleak atmosphere of *The Turn of the Screw*, Patricia is even compared to Miss Jessel herself.[260] Like Patricia, she, too, had a secret relationship with her colleague Peter Quint. By the same token, this novella appears in the short story "Unseen Translation," "she killed herself, she came back as a ghost and wandered round a lake?"[261] This is clearly a brief summary of the plot of this particular novella, suggesting one of the possible fates of a nanny, regardless of historical period.

Henry James is present in *Emotionally Weird* not only as a critic of Eliot's *Middlemarch* Effie has to write an essay on and the theme of her dissertation, but Atkinson also names one of the characters Maisie, a nine-year-old girl, who is as advanced for her age as James's Maisie from *What Maisie Knew*,

> Maisie's full name was Maisie Ophelia. I can't help but think that it's an unfortunate custom to name children after people who come to sticky ends. Even if they are fictional characters, it doesn't bode well for the poor things. There are too many Judes and Tesses and Clarissas and Cordelias around. If we must name our children after literary figures then we should search out happy ones, although it's true they are much harder to find. ('Ratty' and 'Mole' are Maisie's suggestions.)[262]

Maisie's reaction suggests that Effie employs indirect speech to express her way of thinking. One of the chapters is even called "What Maisie Did Not Know," in which she does not know that erythrophobia means fear of blushing, demonstrating a limited understanding and lack of insight own to children.[263]

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[260] See Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 265.
[261] Atkinson, *Not the End* 181.
[262] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 125.
[263] See Parker, *Kate Atkinson's* Behind the Scenes 52.

Overall the quote suggests that this naming does not necessarily mean that characters have anything in common, be it character traits or fate. The name a child is given might be a quite arbitrary decision of its parents, both in the novel and the alluded novella. Nevertheless, what the two Maisies do have in common is being more mature for their age, "Maisie . . . did her impression of a little girl, whereas in reality, as we all knew, she was a seventy-year-old woman trapped in the helpless body of a small child."[264] This is a result of the indifferent treatment they receive from their parents. Though a person's name does not necessarily have to be connected to their qualities, the naming after another famous character is never completely random, as already shown at the case of the Fairfax family.

Another common point is the way that James's Maisie and Maisie from *Emotionally Weird* are treated, "they both had the same neglected air about them with their unbrushed hair and unkempt uniforms."[265] On the other hand, in *What Maisie Knew* the neglect lies in the fact that her parents or stepparents are not interested in her wellbeing, though it might seem like it, but rather use her as a weapon against their opponents. Maisie from *Emotionally Weird* switches identities with her classmate and pretends that her father is Roger Lake, "if Maisie carried on much longer with this charade she would forget who she was. 'He's not actually your father,' I reminded her."[266] Similarly, in *What Maisie Knew*, Maisie may get confused as to which father to choose – her biological father or her stepfather.

The short story "Transparent Fiction" shows a slight Jamesian influence, telling the story of an American who goes on a 'grand tour' in Europe, a rite of passage for young Americans that was often depicted by Henry James, e.g. in *Daisy Miller*, "untroubled by death or history or love, Meredith was, in short, an

[264] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 273.
[265] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 223.
[266] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 274.

all-American girl."[267] Yet, the journey often proves to be fatal, not only to the characters of Henry James, but also those of Atkinson, such as Meredith's sister Nanci, who died during a dental surgery and whose story is told in another short story, "Bodies Vest." Nevertheless, this particular short story is more obscure and it is suggested that, as in the works of James, the source of these unhappy endings is the clash of European and American culture, "Meredith Zane's blue, all-American-girl eyes looked deep into Merle Goldman's glittering old European eyes."[268] Consequently, it is hinted that Meredith has found the source of immortality and "Meredith Zane ran into the future for ever."[269] To understand this event, it is important to mention the theme of her doctoral thesis: "The conservation of telomere length in the human myocardium: the role of telomerase reverse transcriptase."[270] Telomeres protect the end of chromosomes, ensuring that they do not fuse with their neighbours and preventing the degradation of genes, thus ensuring a certain type of eternity. Yet, based on her research, "Meredith thought about the cells in her body slowly, invisibly dying, life never to be replaced. Meredith knew what mortality was, it was her speciality."[271] Nevertheless, and to her own surprise, her "last" moments transcend into the other world as she tries not to step on the golden apples of Aphrodite; the quotation from Emily Dickinson further hints at Meredith's eternal existence.

5.23 Kate Atkinson and Gerard Manley Hopkins

The loss of innocence and coming to awareness are themes that connect Kate Atkinson and the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. Gordon sees Isobel's picture of a tree and asks her: "Oh Margaret, are you grieving over goldengrove unleaving?"[272] This is a quote from Hopkins's "Spring and Fall," in which the narrator also asks a child. The question is full of melancholy and sadness about

[267] Atkinson, *Not the End* 73.
[268] Atkinson, *Not the End* 93.
[269] Atkinson, *Not the End* 94.
[270] Atkinson, *Not the End* 76.
[271] Atkinson, *Not the End* 83.
[272] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 104.

the oncoming maturity where one cares more about things of human importance than more subtle things, such as falling leaves. In Isobel's case it is the acceptance of her mother's death, as she died lying by a tree.

One of Hopkins's most notorious poems also has its place in the canon of Atkinson's references. "As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame" appears in the novel *Life After Life* as part of an elegant allusion, "a dunnock keeping company with a kingfisher. And sometimes Millie burnt just a little too brightly."[273] Because of her nature, Ursula cannot be a colorful kingfisher but rather a more inconspicuous bird, such as a dunnock, and it is Millie who is more full of life, i. e. a kingfisher. Obviously, sharing a flat is not always a pleasant experience and Ursula might get hurt in such company.

5.24 Kate Atkinson and Bram Stoker

Kate Atkinson also employs the double allusions when, not only does the text allude to a second text, but the second text contains an allusion to yet another text. This can be observed in the scene when Patricia compares their situation to a sequence from *Dracula* by Bram Stoker when "the *Demeter*, sailing out of Varna, ended its voyage."[274] She goes even further and suggests that Lucy-Vida might have been named after Lucy Harker, Dracula's mistress. The whole comparison during the holiday emphasises the bleak atmosphere of the place, but in a rather pleasant way, as Patricia is delighted by it and Lucy-Vida is not at all scared by her suggestions. Moreover, Demeter was also the Greek goddess of harvest which is an ironic name, as the ship is wrecked, allowing Dracula to go on a hunting spree. Later in the novel, Atkinson connects the whole scene with Lucy-Vida's name and the visage of Lucy Harker, which Lucy-Vida adopts as she is pregnant.[275] Nevertheless, the character of Lucy Harker comes not from the novel,

[273] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 250.
[274] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 155.
[275] See Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 290.

but from the film *Nosferatu*, and is a combination of not only Mina Harker and Lucy Westenra but, in Atkinson's case, also of two artistic media.

5.25 Kate Atkinson and William Butler Yeats

Many poems by William Butler Yeats were adapted into songs as they originated from Irish folk culture and, indeed were, in many cases, originally songs themselves. This applies to "Down by the Salley Gardens," sung by Gordon on their way to the fatal picnique.[276] In the poem, a woman begs her lover not to take life too seriously and to enjoy what they have right now – but her lover did not listen to her and there is no happy ending. This serves as a parallel to Gordon's and Eliza's relationship: Eliza takes life as it comes, while it is Gordon who pushes her to be somewhere she does not want to be. Just like in the poem, the relationship ends unhappily.

5.26 Kate Atkinson and Marcel Proust

The preoccupation with the flow of time and the evoking of memories is one of the basic themes shared by Kate Atkinson and Marcel Proust, and it is not surprising that Patricia reads "volume three of the library edition of *Á la recherche du temps perdu*, which I see is about 'the metaphysical ambiguity of reality, time and death and the power of sensation to retrieve memories and reverse time'. Exciting stuff – but how can time be reversible when it gallops forward, clippity-clop and nobody *ever comes back*. Do they?"[277] Kate Atkinson develops this theme even more strongly than in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* in her most recent novel *Life After Life*. There is also a sense of *déjà-vu* in *Human Croquet* as this theme is closely connected to the time-travel experienced by Isobel, when she suddenly appears in the past, not only being there, but also feeling it.

[276] See Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 123.
[277] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 210.

Julie Sanders also finds a similar treatment of time between *Human Croquet* and *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf, especially in the section of 'Time Passes'.[278] It treats the concept of time in similar manners. Natural time is what has real significance, not clock-based time, which is a human construct. As time repeats itself in cycles, intertexts repeat themselves throughout human history.

The treatment of a text is another feature shared by the works of Atkinson and Proust. When the class discusses what a text is in *Emotionally Weird*, Professor Cousins's response is: "Well, according to Proust . . . it's a web."[279] Similarly, Atkinson creates a web of intertextual reference that are interspersed throughout her texts.

5.27 Kate Atkinson and Franz Kafka

One of the dominant themes in Atkinson's work is metamorphosis, and naturally this thesis must include a consideration of Franz Kafka. "Mr Rice is a travelling salesman and we must hope that some day soon he will wake up and find that he's been transformed into a giant insect."[280] This is a reference to Kafka's novella *The Metamorphosis*, in which a travelling salesman (another similitude) called Gregor Samsa metamorphoses into a beetle. For Isobel, this is an original way of getting rid of someone. Isobel then expresses another wish in connection with salesmen, this time with reference to *Death of a Salesman*,[281] the play by Arthur Miller. Isobel's wish of metamorphosis comes true when Mr Rice wants to leave Arden, "Mr Rice moves a leg and sees something thin and black and hairy waving in front of him. His legs were never very manly – but not that bad, surely? He tries the other leg, to the same effect. And then his other four

[278] See Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 72.
[279] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 173.
[280] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 25.
[281] See Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 75.

legs."[282] This is his transformation into an insect. Even Debbie finds the appropriate words for him when she finds out he had left, "a real insect."[283] The narration of the metamorphosis scene from the point of view of Mr Rice and its writing in italics casts doubt on its reliability in relation to Isobel's overall narrative.

5.28 Kate Atkinson and D. H. Lawrence

The story of Sir Thomas Fairfax and his wife is strongly reminiscent of the plot of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D. H. Lawrence, when the title character falls in love with her husband's servant, Master Kavanagh, "he was stripped of leather jerkin, and of his sark also, so that I was able to admire the fine brown skin of his back with its coat of sweat . . . He knew I was there, he was a man who could hear the tread of the deer and the rabbit . . . but continued with his exhibition of himself."[284] This is a paraphrase of the famous, fatal meeting of Lady Chatterley and the gamekeeper Oliver Mellors. Yet, in the case of Mrs Fairfax, she was not seeking for the pleasure that she could not receive from her husband, but instead escaping from him and his cruelty.

Another similarity is in the scene where they first have sex, "he took a step closer, which brought him very close indeed, so I took a step back and so we jigged prettily for a while until I had nowhere to go, for I was pushed up against the table. I could feel the heat coming from his body, see the sharpness of his eye-tooth and the fine shape of his top lip."[285] As in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* the atmosphere is full of physical sensuality and sexual tension and the whole scene occurs in a forest as well.

[282] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 144.
[283] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 146.
[284] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 363.
[285] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 365.

A similar relationship between a woman from the upper-middle class and a working-class man is that between Sylvia and George Glover in *Life After Life*, "his strong square hands, his beautiful dappled greys, like big rocking horses, and the way he had lolled on the grassy bank eating his lunch, posed rather like Michelangelo's Adam in the Sistine Chapel but reaching for another slice of pork pie rather than the hand of his Creator."[286] Nevertheless, while nothing happens between them, this might be considered a kind of foreshadowing, as in one of Ursula's lives she does indeed find herself a lover, albeit in London. On the other hand, the way of describing his physical appearance, the way it affects Sylvie and her bodily sensations very strongly echo D. H. Lawrence. Nevertheless, in another course of Ursula's life, George is badly wounded during the Great War and comes back crippled, making a possible future romance between them out of question.

5.29 Kate Atkinson and T. S. Eliot

When the narrator in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* refers to the No Man's Land, it might suggest that she is really speaking about a land that belongs to no one. However, later on Frank "was no longer advancing across No Man's Land but was walking through Hell and that's what Hell was going to be for Frank – to trudge for ever across No Man's Land towards the enemy trenches."[287] This is distinctly reminiscent the passages from Eliot's *The Waste Land* and *The Hollow Men*. Moreover, it is also the title of a play by Harold Pinter that also echoes T. S. Eliot's work. One of the striking features of the use of the phrase is the capital letters, not normally used when referring to a land that belongs to nobody. The fact that the narratives deals with World War I also supports a possible connection to Eliot's works.

As T. S. Eliot employed the terminology from tarot cards, the following quotation refers not only to the game itself but also to the poem *The Waste Land*,

[286] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 59.
[287] Atkinson, *Behind the Scenes* 62.

"perhaps we should set you up in a gypsy caravan, get you a crystal ball, Tarot cards. *The drowned Phoenician sailor* and all that."[288] Moreover, the whole poem abounds in references to other authors, such as Dante, who is also referenced in *Life After Life*, "si lunga tratta di gente, ch'io non avrei mai creduto che morte tanta n'avesse disfatta."[289] In Bakthin's view, the employment of a foreign language creates its own functional significance that is not, nevertheless, a poetic language.[290] Moreover, the usage of the translated text is basically an employment of an intertext. This part in particular is explicitly echoed in *The Waste Land*, creating a complex triangle of references from Dante to Atkinson and Eliot, as well as between Eliot and Atkinson.

5.30 Kate Atkinson and Kate Atkinson

In this case, it is more appropriate to talk about *intratextuality* than intertextuality. Introduced by Fitch, the term means "the author's use of his or her own *oeuvre* as regenerative reference points"[291] and also raises different issues than classic intertextuality. Usually there is no problem with misquoting, yet "when one quotes oneself, *autocritical* examination is at stake."[292] While it may seem arrogant to recycle one's own work, on the other hand, it may also suggest a reevaluation of and a new critical approach to one's previous writing.

Generally speaking, there is a group of themes that are treated in almost every novel by Kate Atkinson. Then it is surprising if "reviews and essays fail to detect the underlying connection between the different works, namely the literary presentation of unstable identities in contemporary society."[293] This leads to

[288] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 157.
[289] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 160.
[290] See Bakhtin, *Formální metoda* 109.
[291] Orr, *Claude Simon* 175.
[292] Orr, *Claude Simon* 175.
[293] Sandra Meyer, "The Quest for Identity and its Literary Representation through Metanarrative and Metafictional Elements in Kate Atkinson's *Emotionally Weird* and *Human Croquet*," *English Studies* 91.4 (2010): 444, *ACADEMIC SEARCH COMPLETE*, 6 May 2014

general looking for identity as another such theme. Other examples include incomplete families (absent fathers, missing mothers, lost siblings, abandoned children, deaths), broken relations in families or its positive, uniting power, replacing these missing persons or omniscient narrators who do not know everything. Furthermore, telling each other stories holds a special position in Atkinson's oeuvre. It can help overcome the hollow space a missing person has left (*Behind the Scenes at the Museum*), explain why the missing person is not present (*Human Croquet*), make somebody tell the truth about someone's life (*Emotionally Weird*) or help survive apocalyptic conditions (*Not the End of the World*).

In *Human Croquet*, Isobel encourages the reader to read between the lines: "Just because you can't see something doesn't mean it isn't there."[294] This is reminiscent of the phrase usedy by Atkinson in *Emotionally Weird* "Just because I'm paranoid doesn't mean they aren't after me."[295] Both parallel structures bring up the notion of alertness: one has to be careful while doing anything, especially when reading metafictional and intertextual novels.

Cyclical narration is found both in *Human Croquet* and in *Not the End of the World*. "The circularity of *Human Croquet*'s narrative is best evidenced by the opening and closing chapters: both are titled 'Streets of Trees', and begin and end in the forest."[296] It creates a spiral or ouroboros structure, "returning to its beginning while at the same time ascending to a higher lever, that of metalanguage."[297] Furthermore, in *Not the End of the World* it is not only circularity, but also interrelatedness and intrusions by other characters from other short stories that form part of the same collection. This circularity also suggests

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<http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=ef15f595-b6a3-4f5b-8029-fb271134aa2f%40sessionmgr113&vid=18&hid=106>.

[294] Atkinson, *Human Croquet* 69.

[295] Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird* 69.

[296] Sanders, *Novel Shakespeares* 73.

[297] Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1987) 111.

the problem of defining a beginning. Nevertheless, there is no beginning and no story without a teller.[298] Atkinson further refines this theme in her most recent novel *Life After Life.* Deepening the cyclical narration, it recycles the story of Ursula over and over again, altering the details only slightly, but enough to change the course of her life. The novel thus cites and references itself as scenes repeat. The novel is further introduced with a quote by Edward Beresford Todd, "what if we had the chance to do it again and again until we finally did get it right? Wouldn't that be wonderful?"[299] The uninitiated reader realizes only at the end that he is the brother of the main character, and pronounces the very words in the text itself. Atkinson thus cites herself and fictionalises the fiction even further. In fact, she cites something that has not yet been said.

Atkinson also employs fictional works when she alludes to books that in reality do not actually exist, such as in *Emotionally Weird*, which is set in a university with creative writing course, where a lot of the students eventually become writers. In a Scottish context, this recalls the novel *Lanark* by Alasdair Gray, which includes a complete list of false references.

Sylvie in the novel *Life After Life* warns the children that „staircases were very dangerous places, according to Sylvie. People died on them. Sylvie always told them not to play at the top of the stairs."[300] Not only does she foreshadow Ursula pushing Bridgit from the stairs, trying to stop her going to London to celebrations of the end of the war, and thus coming back with the flu, but Widow from *Human Croquet* also dies on the stairs by being pushed by her grandchildren.

[298] See Waugh, *Metafiction* 27.
[299] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 7.
[300] Atkinson, *Life After Life* 129.

6 CONCLUSION

In the thesis the employment of intertextual references in the work of Kate Atkinson has been studied. It has been shown that she consciously employs allusion to various works of art as a part of her intricate way of writing and via intertextuality she is able to explore more profoundly the themes that preoccupy her. In her debut novel, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, the references help to develop the theme of the search for identity via digging into family history that is interspersed throughout the narrative. *Human Croquet* is visibly influenced by her interest in William Shakespeare, where not only his work is presented as a play the local players perform, but he also makes his appearance as a character himself. *Emotionally Weird* is not so rich in allusions to literature as the others, while it abounds in references to TV series or science fiction genre. Furthermore, it is a cleverly metafictional novel. Her most recent novel, *Life After Life*, offers mainly direct quotes, particularly to poetry that offers solace in the time of war and distress. The last analysed work is a short story collection, *Not the End of the World*. Besides a myriad of intertextual references to a great variety of artistic media, and as such containing the highest concentration of allusions, it also references itself as the short stories are interconnected.

The theoretical part has dealt with the concept of intertextuality, which has been presented in relation to postmodernism, as it is one of its indispensable features. Its basic characteristics include referentiality, while it always has to be put in a context as it cannot function on its own. From the point of view of textual theory, the text has been defined as anything that can be referred to in any text and thus the term of interdisciplinarity and other proposed rival terms have been disregarded. This part has also tackled the criticism of source-hunting or èlitism, while offering a deeper interpretation of the text as it enters into a relation with another text. This is why a comparative analysis has been chosen as an appropriate methodological approach. Furthermore, one has to retain a scientific objectivity in order to recognise author’s conscious employment of a reference.

The following part has included the view of Atkinson's position in the literary world, mainly within the realm of Scottish literature. As she is often regarded as an Anglo-Scottish or Scoto-English writer, she often stands outside the academic interest of Scottish or English studies and thus suffers a double-marginalization. This marginalizaton is further enhanced by her being a woman. It has been shown that, though born in England, her work shows a growing development towards Scotishness. At this moment, the point of view of postcolonialism comes in handy. Furthermore, her writing includes such typical features of Scottish literature, as intertextuality and postmodernism, magic and myth, pastiche and schizophrenia or doppelgängers, which can be regarded as a kind of Caledonian Antisyzygy.

The practical analysis has offered a profound insight into specific areas of her references. It has been shown that the allusions to various artists enables her to explore her themes even deeper. Furthermore, she often connects various authors that at the first sight might seem incompatible, e.g. the Bible, Ovid and Herman Melville, helping to develop the motif of the beginning of the world. It can be also stated that individual works have a chief point of reference. For *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* it is Ovid and fairy tales as it deals with growing-up, for *Human Croquet* William Shakespeare who further connects the novel with Ovid, *Life After Life* abounds in direct references to poetry and *Not the End of the World* contains a myriad of allusions to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Human Croquet represents a novel that features Shakespeare as a character and his own work as its main inspiration. Their common themes include mistaken identities, dreaming, time playing tricks, family or the motif of forest. Furthermore, it indirectly echoes Shakespeare via double references, e.g. T. S. Eliot or Aldous Huxley, or via other means of art, such as paintings. This combination of artistic media is also reflected in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* through Stoker's *Dracula* and its adaptation as the film *Nosferatu*. Overall, those

themes are further described in other novels through other writers as well. Mistaken identities are also developed in the allusion to Henry James's *What Maisie Knew* in *Emotionally Weird*. Furthermore, the motif of dreaming is present in the short story "Evil Doppelgängers," which is moreover introduced by a quote from Poe's poem "A Dream Within a Dream."

Particularly, she is immensely interested in how time works, which for her goes in circles. She shares this circularity of time with William Shakespeare and also enhances it via references to Norse mythology. Furthermore, Lewis Carroll's work also explores the notion of time and as such he appears among Atkinson's references. Similarly, Proust's idea of evoking or retrieving a memory is developed in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, where the main character traces her family diaspora through souvenirs related with the past. Via recurring to intertextuality she highlights the circularity of ideas as well.

The theme of family is explored via references to Shakespeare, fairy tales or Ovid. Characters often search for the lost or ideal mother, as *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* playfully echoes *Snow White*. Fairy tales also offer a means of breaking up with the childhood, as in the case of Patricia in the same novel. In general, children's books are strongly present among Atkinson's system of references, particularly *Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* and *The House of Arden* by Edith Nesbit in *Human Croquet*. Fairy tales also offer a unifying power among brothers and sisters, as in *Human Croquet*, or a healing power that can help explain events that a character does not understand, as in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*. The latter fuction is also found in poetry that provides solace in times of war, mainly in *Life After Life* which abounds in direct references to John Donne, John Keats or Gerard Manley Hopkins, who often explore the ephemeral sense of life.

Story-telling is one of the most essential activities that often help characters

to explain events or to search for their identity and ancestors. Similar trait can be found in Sheherezad and other fairy tales or Ovid. As both Sterne and Atkinson like to experiment with narrative devices, they both employ metafiction and unreliable narrators as favorite means of exploring the narrative possibilities. For both Lewis Carroll and Atkinson, there is a thin border between fact and fiction, between reality and fantasy. It is the reason why Atkinson heavily employs intertextuality in such a complex way in order to attempt describe the world in its entirety that can even switch between different worlds. Giving her works a notion of reality and creating a stable point of reference, she often returns to her own writings via intratextuality and revises and revisions her previous work.

All in all, the thesis has offered a particular approach towards literature as system or, to put it even more boldly, it views text as system, which echoes its original meaning of mutually interwoven sequences. This is why it features a systematic classification concerning various authors that enter into relation with one another and offering its analysis and interpretation. As a corollary, it creates a ouroboros structure, not only between other texts, but also between her own work.

7 SUMMARY

Cílem této diplomové práce bylo provést analýzu intertextuálních elementů a vztahů ve vybraných románech a v souboru povídek od skotské autorky Kate Atkinsonové, nalézt a okomentovat tyto aluze a reference a identifikovat způsoby, jakým konkrétní kontext mění interpretaci díla Atkinsonové i původního zdroje. Její psaní je silně ovlivněno postmodernismem, což jí umožňuje toto komplexní používání intertextuálních prvků, jakož i kombinování „vysoké“ a „nízké“ kultury. Celá analýza byla především komparativní a zakládala se na teoriích formalismu (Michail Bachtin) a strukturalismu a poststrukturalismu (Michael Riffaterre, Roland Barthes). Diplomová práce si nekladla za cíl představit vyčerpávající seznam aluzí, ten by se mohl stát pouhým nudným vyjmenováním, ale zmínila ty, které jsou relevantní pro rozvoj tématu nebo motivu. Popisné odkazy byly také většinou vynechány, pokud neposkytly hlubší vhled do charakteru postavy.

Pro analýzu byla vybrána volná trilogie prvních tří románů Atkinsonové, která začíná její debutovou knihou *V zákulisí muzea* (*Behind the Scenes at the Museum*), za kterou v roce 1995 získala prestižní cenu Whitbread Book of the Year. Toto dílo se zabývá především tématem hledání vlastní identity prostřednictvím bádání v rodinné historii a často se označuje za rodinnou ságu. Druhý román *Human Croquet* je výrazně ovlivněn zájmem Atkinsonové o osobu Williama Shakespeara, jehož dílo často reflektuje, a Shakespeare se zde dokonce objevuje i jako postava. *Emotionally Weird* není tak bohatý na literární reference jako ostatní díla. Na druhou stranu překypuje odkazy na TV seriály nebo žánr science fiction. Mimo to se také jedná o inteligentní metafikci, kdy vypravěč komentuje vlastní proces psaní a aktivně do něj vstupuje. Nejnovější román Atkinsonové *Život po životě* (*Life After Life*) poskytuje hlavně explicitní citace, a to nejčastěji poezie, která postavám poskytuje útěchu v době války. Posledním analyzovaným dílem byl soubor povídek *Not the End of the World*. Kromě nepřeberného množství intertextuálních odkazů na širokou škálu uměleckých

činností, díky čemuž obsahuje nejvyšší koncentraci aluzí ze všech analyzovaných děl, také odkazuje sám na sebe, jelikož jednotlivé povídky jsou propojené.

Argumenty byly podloženy třemi základními typy sekundárních zdrojů. Teoretické práce zabývající se intertextualitou samotnou a jejími charakteristikami se vyskytují hlavně v druhé kapitole „Intertextualita a její znaky“ („Intertextuality and Its Features“), zatímco díla jednotlivých teoretiků byla použita napříč diplomovou prací. Intertextualita byla představena v kontextu postmodernismu, protože je jeho neoddělitelnou součástí, pomocí které se postmodernismus snaží interpretovat komplexitu současného světa. Další rysy postmodernismu jsou pouze krátce zmíněny, jelikož nespadají do tématu této práce. Původní texty, kde se identifikované aluze nacházejí, poskytly srovnání s jejich výskytem v textech Atkinsonové. V neposlední řadě byla citována ta trocha článků, které o Atkinsonové do současné chvíle vyšly.

Teoretická část se zabývala konceptem intertextuality v jejím vztahu k postmodernismu. Mezi její základní charakteristiky patří odkazování (*referentiality*), přičemž ta musí být vždy umístěna do určitého kontextu, protože nefunguje sama o sobě. Z hlediska teorie textu byl text definován jako cokoli, na co může být v textu odkazováno, a díky tomu byl zavržen termín interdisciplinarita a další konkurenční terminologie. Kritikové intertextualitě vyčítají jistý elitismus a pouhý „hon za zdroji.“ Kritika však byla odmítnuta s tím, že tento prvek umožňuje hlubší interpretaci textu, který vstupuje do vztahů s jinými a je jimi obohacen. Z tohoto důvodu se komparativní analýza jeví jako ideální metodologický přístup.

Následující část poskytla pohled na pozici Atkinsonové v literárním světě, a to především v rámci skotské literatury. Bývá považována za anglo-skotskou nebo skoto-anglickou spisovatelku, a proto často stojí mimo akademický zájem pouze skotských či pouze anglických studií. Tato dvojitá marginalizace je dále

zesílena o další, která se jí týká jako ženské autorky. Bylo prokázáno, že i když se narodila v Anglii, ve vývoji postupuje směrem k skotským prvkům a tzv. *Scottishness* (skotskost). I z toho důvodu se na její dílo může nahlížet z hlediska postkoloniální teorie. V jejích textech se vyskytují takové inherentně skotské prvky, jako je pastiš a schizofrenie (součást tzv. *Caledonian Antisyzygy*, kaledonská antisyzyga), doppelgängři, magie a mýtus a v neposlední řadě i intertextualita a postmodernismus.

Praktická analýza poskytla detailní vhled do konkrétních oblastí, na které Atkinsonová odkazuje a kde jí aluze k různým autorům umožňují hlouběji prozkoumat témata, která ji zajímají. Často také propojuje na první pohled neslučitelná díla a autory, např. Bibli, Ovidia a Hermana Melvilla, jejichž pomocí rozvíjí motiv stvoření světa. U jednotlivých románů a souboru povídek se dá také určit základní referenční bod. Pro *V zákulisí muzea* je to Ovidius a pohádky, jelikož zde je hlavním tématem dospívání. Pro *Human Croquet* je zdrojem inspirace William Shakespeare, který tento román dále propojuje se světem Ovidia. *Život za životem* je plný přímých odkazů na poezii a *Not the End of the World* obsahuje spoustu aluzí k Ovidiovým *Metamorfózám*.

Human Croquet představuje román, ve kterém figuruje Shakespeare nejen jako autor svých her, ale také jako literární postava. Společnými jmenovateli obou autorů jsou témata jako záměna identit, snění, nespolehlivé časové osy, rodina nebo motiv lesa. Dále často odkazuje k Shakesperovi prostřednictvím dvojitých aluzí, např. skrze T. S. Eliota nebo Aldouse Huxleyho, nebo pomocí jiných druhů umění, třeba malířství. Tato kombinace uměleckých prostředků se reflektuje i *V zákulisí muzea* skrze Stokerova *Drakuly* a jeho filmové adaptace *Nosferatu*. Zmíněná témata se objevují i v dalších románech a jsou opět zdůrazněna prací jiných autorů, např. problémem s identitou se zabývá *Emotionally Weird* pomocí aluze na *Co všechno věděla Maisie* od Henryho Jamese. Dále je motiv snění rozebrán v povídce „Zlý doppelgängři“ („Evil Doppelgängers“), která je uvozena

citací z básně od Edgara Allana Poea „Sen ve snu“ („A Dream Within a Dream“).

Pojetí času u Atkinsonové je velmi netradiční, jelikož podle ní je čas kruh. Cirkularitu času sdílí opět se Shakespearem a dále ji zdůrazňuje odkazy na norskou mytologii. Stejným způsobem vnímal čas i Lewis Carroll, který se také objevuje mezi citacemi Atkinsonové. Podobně Proustova myšlenka obnovení nebo rekonstrukce vzpomínky se rozvíjí v románu *V zákulisí muzea*, kde hlavní postava zkoumá diasporu své rodiny prostřednictvím suvenýrů z minulosti. Díky opětovnému používání intertextuality Atkinsonová upozorňuje nejen na koloběh času, ale i na koloběh myšlenek.

Téma rodiny prozkoumává opět prostřednictvím odkazů na Shakespeara, pohádky nebo Ovidia. Postavy často hledají své ztracené či ideální matky, např. *V zákulisí muzea* si pohrává s evokováním *Sněhurky* (*Snow White*). Pohádky často slouží jako prostředek odstřižení se od dětství, což je případ Patricie ve stejném románu. Obecně se dá říct, že i knížky pro děti patří do prezentovaného systému odkazů, především *Čaroděj ze země Oz* (*The Wizard of Oz*) od Franka L. Bauma v románu *V zákulisí muzea* nebo *The House of Arden* od Edith Nesbitové v *Human Croquet*. Pohádky také poskytují sjednocující sílu mezi sourozenci, jako v *Human Croquet*, nebo pomáhají vysvětlit obtížně pochopitelné situace, např. v díle *V zákulisí muzea*. Poslední zmíněnou funkci nacházejí postavy také v poezii, která nabízí útěchu v době války, především v románu *Život za životem*, který je plný přímých referencí na Johna Donna, Johna Keatse nebo Gerarda Manleyho Hopkinse, kteří se často zabývají efemérní stránkou života.

Vyprávění příběhů je pro postavy velmi důležitou činností, ta jim pomáhá hledat předky nebo sebe sama a vysvětlit různé události nebo se s nimi vyrovnat. Podobný rys se dá nalézt i v pohádkách, např. v souboru *Z tisíce a jedné noci*, nebo v Ovidiovi. Laurence Sterne i Atkinsonová rádi experimentují s vypravěčskými postupy, oba využívají metafikci a nespolehlivé vypravěče. Ty

patří mezi jejich oblíbené prostředky, jak zkoumat a posouvat vypravěčské možnosti. Pro Lewise Carrolla i Kate Atkinsonovou platí, že existuje tenká hranice mezi faktem a fikcí, mezi realitou a fantazií. Z toho důvodu Atkinsonová komplexním způsobem vytváří intertextuálni vztahy a jejich prostřednictvím se snaží popsat svět v jeho úplnosti, a to i skrze intratextuální reference na své vlastní dílo. Díky odkazům vytváří stabilní referenční bod, a tím ubikuje dílo v reálném světě.

Závěrem se dá říci, že diplomová práce vidí literaturu a dokonce i text jako systém, což odkazuje k původnímu významu slova text a vzájemně propojeným sekvencím. Z toho důvodu obsahuje systematickou klasifikaci příslušných autorů, jejichž dílo vstupuje do vztahů mezi sebou a tím rozšiřuje interpretační možnosti. Přímým důsledkem je vize literatury jako struktury ouroboros, tedy hada požírajícího vlastní ocas.

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Jméno autora / The author's name: Barbora Jirošová

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Abstrakt: Cílem diplomové práce je poskytnout komplexní analýzu intertextuálních vztahů v dílech Kate Atkinsonové, které mají zásadní vliv na interpretaci jejího díla. Intertextualita je jedním z klíčových znaků postmoderní literatury a v jejím díle hraje velkou roli. Důraz je kladen na úvodní volnou trilogii, která bude doplněna o sbírku povídek a o nejnovější román.

Abstract: The aim of the diploma thesis is to provide a complex analysis of the intertextual relations in the work of Kate Atkinson that have serious consequences on the interpretation of her work. Intertextuality is one of the key elements in postmodernist writings and plays a special role in the author's works. The thesis will concentrate on her initial loose trilogy, which will be completed by analysis of a short-story collection and her most recent novel.

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