

**TRACING  
INTERTEXTUALITY:  
JACKIE KAY'S USE OF  
SCOTS IN *FROM A DRUNK  
WOMAN LOOKS AT HER  
NIPPLE***

*María del Coral Calvo Maturana  
Universidad de Granada*

*Abstract*

This article explores the intertextual use of Scots voices in Jackie Kay's poem, "From A Drunk Woman Looks At Her Nipple (After MacDiarmid)," which is included in the collection: *New Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Crawford, ed. 2009). Kay's poem alludes to numerous sources and different styles of literary and popular Scots: it is most immediately both a homage to Burns and a parody of MacDiarmid's 'A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle.' This article analyses the intertextual elements of the poem, drawing in part on the *Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing 1700-1945* (CMSW), which includes a digital version of the Kilmarnock edition of Robert Burns' *Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect*. This text is at the same time supplemented by an electronic version of MacDiarmid's poem, available on the Web. Using the Kilmarnock edition and MacDiarmid's poem as reference corpora, we can compare Jackie Kay's Scots with that of the other two poets. Kay's poem was re-contextualised as part of her theatrical piece, 'The Maw Broon Monologues', performed at the Tron Theatre, Glasgow, in November

*Resumen*

Este artículo estudia el uso intertextual de las voces escocesas en un poema de Jackie Kay, titulado "From A Drunk Woman Looks At Her Nipple (After MacDiarmid)" y recogido en la colección *New Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Crawford, ed. 2009). Este poema hace referencia a una pluralidad de textos y estilos escoceses, de carácter tanto literario como popular. Así, actúa como homenaje a Robert Burns y, a su vez, parodia el poema 'A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle' de MacDiarmid. Este artículo analiza los rasgos intertextuales en el poema de Kay, apoyándose en parte en el *Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing 1700-1945* (CMSW), que incluye una versión digital de la edición que Kilmarnock produce para la colección *Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect* de Robert Burns. Este texto está igualmente contrastado con una edición electrónica del poema de MacDiarmid, disponible en la red. En este trabajo, utilizamos la edición de Kilmarnock y el poema de MacDiarmid a modo de corpus de referencia. Así, comparamos el escocés en Jackie Kay con aquel de los otros dos poetas. El poema de Jackie Kay ha sido también recontextualizado a través de una obra de teatro, 'The Maw Broon Monologues', representada en el *Tron Theatre* de Glasgow en Noviembre de 2009.

2009, a move which also aligns it with the Scots of the cartoon family, ‘The Broons’. The article considers how the different styles of Scots drawn upon contribute to the interpretation of this highly intertextual performance poem.

*Keywords:* Stylistics, corpus linguistics, intertextuality, Literary Scots, Jackie Kay, Robert Burns, Hugh MacDiarmid.

Queda así establecido un segundo vínculo con el cómic ‘The Broons’. Este artículo describe y analiza cómo esta combinación de estilos escoceses participa en la interpretación de un poema caracterizado por su naturaleza intertextual y dramática.

*Palabras clave:* Estilística, lingüística de corpus, intertextualidad, voces escocesas, Jackie Kay, Robert Burns, Hugh MacDiarmid.

## INTRODUCTION

Jackie Kay’s *From A Drunk Woman Looks At Her Nipple (After MacDiarmid)* is an example of the unstable, multi-layered nature of contemporary writing in Scots, as regards the plurality of voices or the range of issues addressed. Published in *New Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Crawford, ed. 2009), it functions first as part of a homage to and dialogue with the Burnsian Scots of the Kilmarnock edition. The poem is thus included in one of the several anthologies produced on the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Burns’ birth. ‘Fiere’, another poem by Jackie Kay in response to Burns’ ‘John Anderson, my Jo’, appears in *Addressing the Bard: Twelve Contemporary Poets Respond to Robert Burns* (Gifford, ed. 2009). Despite its inclusion in an anthology celebrating the anniversary of Burns, the title and content of *From A Drunk Woman Looks at her Nipple* – and indeed some of its lines – obviously allude directly to Hugh MacDiarmid’s ‘A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle’, the key work of another type of literary Scots, one that, in MacDiarmid’s often-quoted rallying-call (‘Not Burns – Dunbar!’) renounced the Burnsian vernacular in favour of a synthesis of older and new forms of Scots in a reconstituted ‘Lallans’. Jackie Kay is not the first to offer a feminist response to MacDiarmid: Denise Mina, a Glasgow-born writer, is the author of *A Drunk Woman Looks At The Thistle*, a short play performed in Oran Mor, Glasgow, in 2008 (Cooper, 2009). Kay’s piece, however, is shorter – only twenty-four lines long. In it, the eponymous ‘Drunk Woman’ embarks on a philosophical reverie, in which she compares her breast to a galaxy and her nipple to a castle standing amidst a milky moat, recalls the experience of breast-feeding a child, and ponders the fate of the planet.

Moreover, Jackie Kay’s brief poem reappears as part of a more extensive theatrical piece, one of ‘The Maw Broon Monologues’ (2009), itself a Scottish response to Eve Ensler’s successful feminist play ‘The Vagina Monologues’ (1996). In Kay’s performance piece, the speaker of the monologues that constitute the play

is the matriarchal icon from the long-running comic strip 'The Broons', which has appeared in *The Sunday Post* since the mid-1930s. Several of the Maw Broon monologues have also been published separately as poems, and indeed Kay has indicated her willingness to include a 'Maw Broon' poem in every book she writes, since the character allows such scope for playing with stereotypes.<sup>1</sup> For our present purposes, the comic strip functions as the stereotypical source of a third kind of literary Scots – this time a popular form rather than a modernist synthesis.

The present section begins by using Jackie Kay's poem to demonstrate how digital corpora and computer-aided tools for text analysis provide instruments for tracking and better understanding the nature of intertextuality in literature. It then goes on to suggest how the intertextual elements contribute to the poem's meaning and serio-comic impact.

## JACKIE KAY'S USE OF SCOTS

Jackie Kay's use of Scots in *From A Drunk Woman Looks at her Nipple* is a self-conscious contribution to a literary tradition that has evolved through the centuries. The evolution of Scots and its use in literature are treated in some depth in Corbett, McClure and Stuart-Smith (eds.) (2003). McGuire (2009:45-51) summarizes this development, which peaks with the Union of Crowns (1603), the conjoining of the Scottish and English thrones, and the subsequent devaluation of the Scots tongue. In the following century, however, literature in Scots enjoyed a 'vernacular revival' whose principal exponent was Robert Burns. Burns' first major success was *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* and 'Burnsian Scots' became a template for subsequent literary production in poetry, song and – in time – popular genres such as cartoon strips (cf. Hoyer 2010).

At the beginning of the 20th Century, the appropriation of Burnsian Scots by sentimental literature and music hall comedians occasioned a 'high literary' reaction characterised as the 'Scottish Renaissance',<sup>2</sup> Hugh MacDiarmid attempted to recover the dignity of literary Scots by writing in what became known as 'Lallans' or 'synthetic Scots'. This Scots was based in part on his own Border Scots, supplemented by terms found in historical sources such as John Jamieson's

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<sup>1</sup> See further, author, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> The term renaissance was used to allude to a group of writers who emerged during the early 1920s with 'a desire to recover and resituate the place of Scottish culture' (McGuire 2009: 7-8).

*Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language* (1808) and in different contemporary dialects of lowland Scots. MacDiarmid thus offered ambitious Scots poets an alternative to the Burnsian paradigm.

Nowadays, the debate has moved beyond the question of using either English or Scots in literary texts – or indeed whether Burnsian Scots or Lallans is the proper medium for Scottish literature. That is, the focus now is on the possibility of including different Scottish varieties, representing a plurality of voices, within literature. McGuire’s observation is typical of current thinking with respect to a democratization of voices, or the ‘freedom of voice’:

The language question can no longer be lumped into convenient dichotomies juxtaposing English and Scots. The linguistic politics of recent writing asks us to consider a set of alternative concerns such as *class, ethnicity, gender, region, and so on*. Late twentieth-century Scottish writers *celebrate* rather than lament their lack of linguistic homogeneity (McGuire 2009:44; emphasis added.).

The first issue we address here, then, is how a polyphonic plurality of voices is achieved in Jackie Kay’s poem.

## CORPUS-BASED LANGUAGE STUDIES

The growth of large-scale digital language corpora since the 1980s, together with the availability of many literary texts electronically on the web, offer new opportunities to the scholar of literary stylistics (eg. Fischer-Starcke 2009; Toolan 2009). Initially, most of the main corpora designed and made widely available were of varieties of contemporary Standard English.<sup>3</sup> In more recent times, the Scottish Corpus of Texts and Speech (SCOTS) and the Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing, 1700-1945 (CMSW), have offered online resource for the study of contemporary and historical spoken and written Scots alongside Scottish Standard English.<sup>4</sup> These corpora can be supplemented – if with caution – by electronic versions of Scottish texts that have been made freely available on the web.

These resources are particularly useful for comparative study. The use of language in a particular text – here the Jackie Kay poem – can be set against a larger

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<sup>3</sup> For example, the British National Corpus and Corpus of Contemporary American English, available at <http://corpus.byu.edu>.

<sup>4</sup> URL: <http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk>

body of language in Scots and/or English, and electronic text analysis tools can be used to identify points of similarity and contrast. In this section, we have used the Wordsmith suite of electronic text analysis tools (Scott, 1999).

As a first step, Jackie Kay's poem was compared to two reference corpora. The first consisted of the Kilmarnock edition of Burns' *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, downloaded as plain text from the Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing (CMSW), with long <f> shown as <s>. From this version, we deleted the title and author, the anonymous initial epigraph, the bibliographical reference information, the preface, the list of contents, and the final glossary. The aim is to compare the language in Burns' anthology to the language in Kay's poem. Simply put, this procedure is designed to determine points of comparison and contrast between Burns' Scots and that used by Kay in *From A Drunk Woman Looks at her Nipple*. The second reference corpus is a version of MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*. It was obtained from a website (see References below), and the different sections of the poem were copied and saved as plain text. We are aware of the limitations of the second reference corpus: different versions of MacDiarmid's poem exist, in different editions, and there is no guarantee of the reliability of the version used. Some obvious errors (e.g. 'amma' for 'amna', 'died' or 'deid' and 'daen' for daein') have been silently corrected with reference to Buthlay's edition. Although some discrepancies may remain, the electronic version used here is useful in demonstrating the procedure by which some lexical relations between a parody and an 'original' text might be explored. Similarly, the different size of the reference corpora with respect to Jackie Kay's poem is not an issue here, since our aim is largely to check whether Kay draws on Scots words that also exist in Burns and/or MacDiarmid.

To carry out this comparison, we used the text analysis program *Wordsmith 3.0*. (Scott 1999). We created a wordlist for Kay's poem and selected the Scot words she uses. The list of these words is included in the first column of the table below. Then, we created two more wordlists, one for the Kilmarnock edition, and the other for MacDiarmid's poem. Finally, we checked which Scot words in Kay are found in both Burns and MacDiarmid. The results are presented in the second and third columns of the table below. Note that the absence in either Burns or MacDiarmid of a Scots word used by Kay is only considered to be relevant if it is replaced by an English word or a different spelling of the word in Scots. That is the reason why the table sometimes not only includes the Scot words but also the English equivalent(s) (which are presented in square brackets).

KAY	BURNS	MACDIARMID
Abune (1)	<i>Above (6)</i>	<i>Abune (14) / [Above (1)]</i>
Affy (1)	--	--
Ain (1)	<i>One (14)] Ane (18), Ane's (2)</i>	<i>[One (1)] Ane (14)</i>
Amna (1)	---	<i>Amna (2)</i>
Aroon (1)	<i>[Around (1)]</i>	--
Auld (1)	<i>Auld (64), [Old (6)]</i>	<i>Auld (13)</i>
Canna (1)	<i>Canna (5)</i>	<i>Canna (35)</i>
Daeing (1)	<i>[Do (13)]</i>	<i>Daein (2)</i>
Deid (1)	<i>Dead (15)]</i>	<i>Deid (11)</i>
Dinna (1)	<i>Dinna (8)</i>	<i>Dinna (10)</i>
Fou (1), fu (1), [ <i>drunk (1)</i> ]	<i>[Drunk (1)]</i>	<i>Fou (6), [Drunk (8)]</i>
Frae (1)	<i>Frae (36) [From (12)]</i>	<i>Frae (98), [from (3)]</i>
Fu (1)	<i>Fu' (1), Fou (6), [Full (5)]</i>	<i>Fu (1)</i>
Hoo (1)	<i>[How (54)]</i>	<i>Hoo (22), [how (3)]</i>
Jist (2)	<i>[Just (28)]</i>	<i>Juist (11)</i>
Ken (1)	<i>Ken (15), [Know (7)]</i>	<i>Ken (29), [Know (2)]</i>
Lichts (1)	<i>[Light (25), Lights (1)]</i>	<i>Licht (61), Lichts (3), Licht's (2)</i>
Ma (1)	<i>[My (189)]</i>	<i>[My (179)]</i>
Muckle (2)	<i>Muckle (14)</i>	<i>Muckle (14), Muckle's (1)</i>
Mune (2), <i>Moon (1)</i>	<i>[Moon (10), Moons (1), Moon's (3), Moonshine (1)]</i>	<i>Mune (17)</i>
'neth (1)	<i>[Beneath (17)]</i>	<i>Neth (7)</i>
Nicht (2)	<i>[Night (56)]</i>	<i>Nicht (17), Nichts (1)</i>
Niver (1)	<i>[Never (33)]</i>	<i>[Never (31)]</i>
Oor (1)	<i>[Our (42)]</i>	<i>Oor (37), [Our (2)]</i>
Richt (1)	<i>[Right (1)]</i>	<i>richt</i>
Sae (2)	<i>Sae (35), [So (21)]</i>	<i>Sae (38), [So (1)]</i>
Tae (2)	<i>[To (460)]</i>	<i>Tae (14), [To (366)]</i>
Toon (1)	<i>[Town (2) Towns (2)]</i>	<i>Toon (2)</i>
Wee (2)	<i>Wee (27) [Little (17)]</i>	<i>Wee (6), [Little (18)]</i>
Weans (1)	<i>Wean (1), Weans(2), Weanies (1), [Child (1)]</i>	<i>Wean (1) [Children (1)]</i>
Whaur (1)	<i>[Where (23), Whereon (1)]</i>	<i>Whaur (21), [Where (1)], Whereo' (1)</i>
Whit (2)	<i>What (29), whate'er (1), whatever (1), what's (3)]</i>	<i>[What (64), whatever (4)] whate'er (2)</i>
Wis (1)	<i>[Was (95)]</i>	<i>Was (35)</i>
Yin (2)	<i>Ane (18), Ane's (2)</i>	<i>Yin (2), Yin's (1), Ane (14), [One (1)]</i>

Table 1: Scots words used in Kay's poem and their frequency, in comparison with Burns and MacDiarmid.

The table should be approached with a certain care since not all of the apparent correspondences are actual. For example, both Kay and Burns appear to use the form 'ma' while MacDiarmid prefers 'my'. The wordlist for the Kilmarnock edition indeed registers two examples of the wordform 'ma'; however, they form

part of two expressions: 'clish-ma-claver' and 'deil-ma-care' and should therefore be discounted. Similarly, Kay and MacDiarmid use the form 'wis'; however in Kay this is a phonetic spelling for 'was' while in MacDiarmid it is a separate lexical item meaning 'wish' ('I wis nae man'll ever see'). When such instances are taken into consideration, then, perhaps not surprisingly, given the nature of parody, we find more similarities between the Scots words used in Kay and MacDiarmid than between the Scots terms in Kay and Burns. The obvious conclusion is that this resemblance is due to Kay's aim of echoing MacDiarmid's poem. Moreover, it is reasonable to expect that MacDiarmid's poem, published in 1926, should have more linguistic similarities to Kay's poem than to 18<sup>th</sup> century Ayrshire Scots. One interesting observation is that the Kilmarnock edition is more likely to employ 'anglicised' spellings of Scots cognates – 'light', 'town', 'where' – while both MacDiarmid and Kay opt for their Scots counterparts – 'licht', 'toon', 'whaur'. However, there is also a common pool of Scots that Kay and MacDiarmid share with Burns ('auld', 'canna', 'dinna', 'ken', 'muckle', 'wean') for example. However, there are some subtle differences that cast light on the development of Scots between the times of Burns and MacDiarmid and Kay.

First of all, Robert Burns uses 'ain' in its dictionary spelling. Warrack (2006: 15) defines 'ain' as '*adj* own'. Jackie Kay conflates two homophones and uses the 'ain' spelling for 'ane': *In ain year, there's enough waste*. The Kilmarnock edition has eight examples of 'ain' meaning 'own'. MacDiarmid also uses the spelling 'ain' for 'own' and keeps 'ane' separate.

Burns systematically alternates between two spellings for the Scots form of *full*: the adjectival form 'fou' as in 'An fou o' glee' and the adverbial intensifier 'fu' as in 'fu' cozie in the neuk'. MacDiarmid follows these spellings, though using the adjective in its metaphorical sense of 'drunk'. He also uses the spelling 'fu' to indicate an intensifier '(And wag fu' mony a celestial heid)'. Kay, like Burns and MacDiarmid, alternates between the two spellings 'fou/fu' in the senses of 'full' and 'drunk' but does not distinguish between the two grammatically; indeed she confines her use to the adjectival meanings.

There are five instances of the word 'richt' in MacDiarmid's poem; however, it does not have the same sense as in Kay's poem. In Kay's poem the word 'richt' is the opposite of 'left', while, in MacDiarmid's poem the word is used to mean 'being correct' or 'not mistaken' and it is also used as an emphazier (eg 'My spirit's gane richt through'). Nevertheless, we can observe that both authors select the same spelling of this polysemous word.

As these examples show, the relationship between lexis, orthography, grammar and semantics in the Scots of Burns, MacDiarmid and Kay is complex. Burns and to a certain extent MacDiarmid systematically differentiate between orthographic forms used for discrete grammatical purposes; however, Kay tends to



use these orthographic forms in free variation. In some instances ('fou/fu') she follows the meaning of MacDiarmid but blurs the orthographic form; and in other instances she draws upon the availability of a Scots word or spelling while neglecting the opportunity to use the form in a more markedly Scottish way.<sup>5</sup>

The general conclusion we can draw from this analysis is that the Kay's Scots voice in this poem directly imitates that of MacDiarmid, but that both Kay and MacDiarmid draw on a common Burnsian lexis. Kay and MacDiarmid accentuate the 'Scottishness' of certain words through their spellings, while the Kilmarnock edition uses standard English spelling and leaves implicit the accent in which they are to be spoken. Kay departs from both MacDiarmid and Burns in the occasional use of colloquialisms such as 'ma' (*my*) and 'affy' (*awfully*) which may allude to the music-hall, comic strip genres of Scots, and although her lexis is identifiably Scots, the grammatical range of some of the lexical items chosen (e.g. 'wee' and 'richt') is narrower than in the earlier texts. Her orthography tends to alternate phonetic and traditional forms like 'ain/ane' and 'fou/fu' in free variation rather than keeping them grammatically and semantically discrete.

## INTERPRETING 'A DRUNK WOMAN'

Thematically, as well as linguistically, *From A Drunk Woman Looks at her Nipple* parallels MacDiarmid's epic poem. By ironically claiming, in the title of her poem, that it is in fact only a section of a much larger work, Kay jokingly suggests that she has produced an epic on a similar scale to the similarly episodic poem she is parodying. In addition, Kay's opening line 'I amna fou sae muckle as tired – deid dune' and her closing two lines 'I dinna ken as muckle's whaur I am/Or hoo I've come to sprawl here 'neth the mune' are directly lifted from 'A Drunk Man'. The latter appropriation signals Kay's and MacDiarmid's shared interest in rendering the intimate cosmic. In Kay's poem, as in MacDiarmid's, this conjunction is mainly accomplished through metaphor. Starting in lines 2 and 3, an extended metaphor is built along the poem comparing the narrator's breasts with the constellation of the Corona Borealis. The narrator compares her breasts with the stars, through apposition: 'ma big bare breasts,/wee stars aroon a moon abune a toon'. The contrast here between 'big' breasts and 'wee' stars is intensified by the semantic anomaly that 'big' breasts are smaller than 'wee' stars.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, she does not follow Burns or MacDiarmid in using 'richt' as an adverbial intensifier or 'wee' nominally, in expressions like 'wait a wee'.



We can therefore distinguish two semantic domains in this poem: the narrator's breasts and their astronomical analogues. The resulting extended metaphor is shown in Table 2 below:

The domain of anatomy	The domain of astronomy
Breasts (line 2)	Stars (line 3)/ Star (line 7)
Nipple (lines 4, 5, 9, y 13)	Corona Borealis (line 4)
Aurola (line 11)	Aurora Borealis (line 11)/Areola Borealis (line 19)
Areola (line 19)	Galaxy (line 5)
Lactiferous ducts (line 11)	Milky Way (line 5)
Milk (line 17)	Planet (lines 6 & 7)
	Moon (line 18)/ Mune (line 22)
	Earth (lines 20 & 22)

Table 2: Semantic fields: Anatomy and Astronomy.

Jackie Kay's ingenuity here results in punning relationships between both semantic fields. The 'milky way' alludes both to the galaxy and the narrator's lactiferous ducts. A similar linguistic game is played between the astronomical and anatomical terms 'Corona borealis' (a small constellation in the northern sky), 'Aurora borealis' (the northern lights) and the similar-sounding 'Areola', the coloured, circular area around the nipple (lines 4/11/19). While MacDiarmid's conjoining of thistle and moon leads to a philosophical reverie on the nature of the drunk man's existence, Kay's metaphorical merging of breast and galaxy leads to an inebriated rumination on the future of the earth. Within the lexical set of 'ecology', we can include the following words: 'ozone' (line 10) 'hole(s)' (lines 10/20), 'dustbins' (line 22) and 'waste' (line 21). As has been suggested by Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) and Romero and Soria (2005), literary metaphor has the effect of stimulating us to re-imagine the world by prompting us to transfer concepts from one unlikely source domain of experience to another. The success of Kay's extended metaphors is confirmed by an interview conducted by Neil Cooper (2009) for *The Herald*, in which he suggests that the areola in the poem develops into 'an eco-friendly symbol of the planet'. Furthermore, Kay's metaphorical games and puns contribute to the semantic density of her work, a trait that, in another interview, she clearly values: 'When you read poetry you realise that there are many multiple meanings in one single short poem' (Sprackland 2001).

The intertextuality of Jackie Kay's poem also contributes to its political character as a feminist work. Her work must be read against male-dominated Scottish literature: despite revisionist work by such as Whyte (1995) and Gifford and McMillan, eds. (1997), the phallogocentric work of Robert Burns still dominates the national canon, while MacDiarmid is pictured amongst his largely male coterie

in Sandy Moffat's well-known painting, 'Poet's Pub.' In *From A Drunk Woman Looks at her Nipple*, Jackie Kay breaks with several expectations for the readers of MacDiarmid's poem. First, and most obviously, she chooses a female rather than a male narrative voice. While 'a drunk man' may be a Scottish stereotype, if not fondly regarded then at least relatively socially acceptable, 'a drunk woman' still generally invites social contempt. Secondly, she substitutes 'the thistle' for 'a nipple', thus feminising Scotland's national emblem. Finally, she breaks social taboos as regards sexuality and appropriates a stridently male Scots voice in a female cause.

Even so, the intertextual nature of *From A Drunk Woman Looks at her Nipple* allows it to sustain its comedic character, despite the challenge it invokes to the traditions it draws upon. This poem follows a contemporary approach to feminism that Kay highlights in one of the interviews noted earlier. In the interview, she compares the directness of feminist theatre in the 1970s to that produced at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is 'more satirical, but still packs a punch' (Cooper 2009). Though her poem is short, comic and funny, it still 'packs a punch' as a serious satirical comment on Scottish traditional values and a male-governed world: a world that tolerates drunk men, but not drunk women, a world that draws a veil over female sexuality and maternal behaviour, and a world that denies to the planet the care that is necessary for its future survival.

The ambivalence of the poem's comedy is only heightened by its inclusion in *The Maw Broon Monologues*, which extends the space that the poem occupies amongst different intertextual networks. The cartoon character of Maw Broon is, of course, a stereotypical figure of Scottish motherhood, and in Kay's monologues, she becomes the subject of a series of subversive monologues that both draw upon the continuing affection for the character amongst the Scottish population and challenge many of the assumptions implicit in her representation. In the comic strip, 'The Broons', Maw Broon is married to Paw Broon, and mother to eight children (Daphne, Maggie, Hen, Joe, Horace, the Twins, and the Bairn); in recent years her position as a domestic goddess has been further solidified by the success of spin-off publications such as *Maw Broon's Cookbook* (2007), *Maw Broon's But'n'Ben Cookbook* (2008), *Maw Broon's Remedies and Suchlike* (2009), *Maw Broon's Kitchen Notebook* (2010), *Maw Broon's Cooking with Bairns* (2010), all published by Waverley books, in conjunction with DC Thomson. From this domain come some of the more colloquial Scots expressions in Jackie Kay's poem, e.g. 'the spit o'' and 'I've an affy feeling we're all for it.' Yet, even as she draws on the familiarity of such expressions – even if they are only really current in comic strip discourse – Kay defamiliarises the character by presenting her as having a black alter ego, getting drunk, meeting her namesake (the then Prime Minister, Gordon 'Broon') and philosophising on her intimate anatomical regions (see also Burnside, 2009). The comedy of incongruity reaches its peak in 'Maw Broon Goes for

Colonic Irrigation', which was also published in *New Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*.

To conclude, then, this chapter has begun to unpeel the many layers of discourse that contribute to the complexity of a single, short poem. The meanings attributed to Jackie Kay's *From A Drunk Woman Looks at her Nipple* are construed in part by its position as a homage to the Burnsian vernacular tradition, and in part as a parody of MacDiarmid's high modernist 'Lallans'. The Wordsmith analysis using digital sources shows the extent to which Kay's Scots vocabulary alludes to and departs from the canonical texts her poem refers to. The inclusion of the poem as part of *The Maw Broon Monologues* re-situates it in a more populist, comic-strip tradition, and accounts for another style of Scots that is evident in the text: the colloquial, couthy Scots of popular humour. As we have seen, Kay's artistry is in part to sustain the comedy released by the incongruous union of her disparate sources, while making serious points about the ongoing representation and treatment of women in Scottish society, and, on a broader scale, our continuing disregard for the future of the planet.

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*Author's contact:* coralcm@ugr.es