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ARTICLE

## 'It Was Hame': Cosmopolitan Belonging in Anne Donovan's *Being Emily*

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This article explores the notion of 'hame' as central to Scottish understanding of identity, focusing on Anne Donovan's 'Crossover' novel *Being Emily* (2008). The analysis probes the novel's reconfiguration of 'hame' (home) so that this space can become a notion/nation that is able to accommodate diverse races, genders, ethnicities and sexual orientations. McCulloch reads the novel as an example of the optimistic cosmopolitan possibilities open to a new generation of Scots and Scottish writers.

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**Keywords:** Cosmopolitanism; hame/home; post-devolution Scotland; adolescent agency; citizenship; neoliberalism; nation; gentrification; gender; feminism; heteronormativity; queer; Anne Donovan

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In Anne Donovan's novel *Being Emily* (2008), Glasgow is 'hame' to its teenage protagonist Fiona O'Connell. In terms of her relationship with this urban topography, hame is a key trope that resists the Anglocentric hegemony of home, a concept ever more precarious within the tenets of a wider neoliberal globalisation. But it is not the hame of traditional masculinist depictions still spectrally haunting a city notoriously stereotyped as a hard man culture established with the likes of H. Kingsley Long and Alexander McArthur's *No Mean City* (1935). Instead, as a contemporary Scottish woman writer Donovan relocates, reconfigures and reclaims 'hame' to accommodate cultural others regarding gender, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity. Her text re-envisages Glasgow through an aspirational kaleidoscopic rather than conventional prism and, as such, offers its readership a rejuvenated cosmopolitan city that they can actively identify with and contribute to as contemporary citizens, rather than feel passively excluded from. In that sense, I will argue that *Being Emily* resonates

with a post-devolution optimism that repositions Scotland within a relationship of self and other that seeks to cosmopolitically remap the cartography of the nation as an all-encompassing hame. Although not categorised as young adult (YA) fiction, Donovan's text charts the development of Fiona through a stage where boundaries are crossed in what might be considered hybrid or 'Crossover fiction' that traces 'areas of intersection between the child's interests, and the adult's' (Falconer 2009, 31). Falconer argues that crossover fiction encourages readers to identify with their own Kristevan strangeness (Falconer 2009, 9), just as Donovan's border-crossings provide a vital voice in the cosmopolitical journey of post-devolution and, more recently, post-independence referendum Scotland. With the increased agency shown by adolescent citizens during and post-independence referendum, *Being Emily* offers a vibrant young woman's reconsideration of the geopolitics of hame.

Glenda Norquay notes that Janice Galloway's fiction wonders how far Scottish women can speak of 'hame' in terms of an active citizenship that permits their authenticity of voice (Norquay 2000, 140–141). It is testament to the post-devolution literary map that its geopolitical trajectory is being reconsidered through hitherto unheard voices that allows for a renewed sense of belonging. For Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden, 'The breadth of the work of contemporary Scottish women writers now ensures the redrawing of the literary map of Scotland, allowing for these writers a natural assumption of place in a culture previously more accessible to male Scottish writers' (Christianson and Lumsden 2000, 140–41). Women's contribution to Scottish culture has since been acknowledged more fully but, nevertheless, Norquay has recently argued that there is 'still work to be done in reshaping our understanding of Scottish literary patterns through a cognizance of women's role', for 'there is still a proportional (and historically determined) imbalance in their representation' (Norquay 2012, 5–6). With the first female First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, now leading post-referendum Scotland, it is hopeful that her advocacy of gender equality will disrupt cultural hegemony and usher in a more all-encompassing citizenship that can, in turn, be reflected in its literature.

A current plethora of women writers, such as Zoe Strachan, Ali Smith, Louise Welsh, Julie Bertagna, Theresa Breslin, and Jenni Fagan, to name a few, certainly

signals a seismic shift towards a more inclusive, heterogeneous and cosmopolitical outlook. Similarly, focussing on a specific locale Alan Bissett notes that 'never before have so many female Glaswegian novelists simultaneously achieved such prominence' (Bissett 2007, 62). Though Bissett identifies Donovan as an important writer, it is worth tying her role in Glaswegian/Scottish women's writing directly to the vibrant field of contemporary Scottish children's and YA fiction that is otherwise critically side-lined, given her crossover credentials. Scottish YA women writers are integral to redrawing the literary map for the benefit of a dynamic future citizenship, so it is incumbent on critics to hear their voice (see McCulloch dates 2014 and 2007). Hame is fundamental to Donovan's literary landscape, cropping up frequently in *Hieroglyphics and other Stories* (2001) and often associated with outsider figures like the dyslexic girl, Mary, who brought schoolwork 'hame tae copy up' (Donovan 2004 [2001], 9), or the father with asbestosis who would 'come hame' full of 'stour' (14), until his 'body came hame' (18) for the funeral. For Donovan, hame is a vital space in remapping Scotland, even having the last word in *Gone are the Leaves* (2014).

Bissett argues that 'The immediate question the novel asks is how to bridge gaps between religious faiths blighting both the city and a wider post-9/11 world' (Bissett 62) Although referring to Donovan's debut novel *Buddha Da* (2003), this is still an important way to consider *Being Emily* where, here too Donovan shifts the focus away from a traditional Catholic/Protestant divide within a masculinist heteropatriarchal Glasgow to consider more globalised influences, including transnational identities and geopolitical responses in a post-9/11 climate. For instance, Fiona's relationship with Jas, who is from a Sikh family, extends her understanding of global events, including the climactic impact of 'fossil fuels' or the geopolitics of the '*situation in Iraq*' (Donovan 2009 [2008], 21). In turn, Donovan challenges her reader to step out of familiar identity frameworks and get to know a hame inclusive of cultural others. The text presents a mixture of national and global within a glocal ethics of understanding, in what Ulrich Beck refers to as a cosmopolitical outlook that resists 'world risk society' (Beck 2007 [2004], 176).

To summarise *Being Emily*, Fiona is the narrator and protagonist who charts the centrifugal impact of the death of her mother Geraldine upon her life and the wider O'Connell family. A bookish and arty child, she becomes ever more isolated in grief, while the nuclear family detonates around her: her father turns to the numbing effects of alcohol and television, until he falls asleep and accidentally sets fire to the family home, thus triggering a necessary eviction and relocation to another home. While Fiona and Jas date in secondary school, she has a sexual relationship and miscarriage with his brother Amrik during her student years. Structurally, the text cyclically returns to the original but renovated family home at its close, with Fiona and Jas married and living there, expecting their first child. The loss of their mother and their family home intertwines and impacts upon all of the O'Connells. Just as their father's irresponsibility causes the fire, he is also culpable for not keeping up with building insurance payments, so '*You won't be able to go hame*' (Donovan 2009, 97). For Fiona, 'That's when it hit me. The flat where we'd all been brought up wasnae just a building that could be done up again, it was hame. The love that had been put intae it had made it hame, Mammy'd made it hame, and since she'd gone it wasnae hame any mair' (2009, 97). These psycho-spatial losses trigger inevitable shifts physically, emotionally and financially within the family.

Fiona's brother Patrick feels alienated from the masculinist heteronormative traditions of hame and culture, and escapes to explore his gay identity in London; her sisters, Mona and Rona (twins) are inseparable and associate more with post-feminist lifestyles of consumerism, popular culture and perpetuating neo-traditional lifestyles, including Mona getting pregnant at fifteen years of age because the '*Pope says you shouldnae*' (Donovan 2009, 142) use contraception as well as forbidding abortion. Mona marries the baby's father Declan, assuming the patronymic as a heteropatriarchal norm that reinforces her refusal to listen to 'wanny they feminist rants' (Donovan 2009, 151). The eldest daughter, Fiona assumes the domestic role left vacant by Geraldine, yet keeps pointing out her failure to successfully fill this position. This compares with her younger self in the novel's first section set four years previously, when her obsession with Emily Brontë encourages her to perform

domestic chores while reading and writing poetry. The text's heteroglossia voices the feminist concerns of the gendered domestic space and how this contemporary space is paralleled with the Victorian private sphere familiar to the likes of Brontë. Female embodiment within the home includes the ensuing childhood/womanhood changes heralding the onslaught of sexuality that potentially maintains a woman's domestic confinement. This encompasses the bodily housing of pregnancy and childbirth, a recurring theme alongside tropes of death and mourning, including death by childbirth for Geraldine and her unborn baby, as well Fiona's own miscarriage later in the novel. As Fiona points out, one could well expect a woman to die in childbirth in a Victorian novel, but it is a far more shocking element in a contemporary novel, which gives Donovan's text an anachronistic aura and blurs the lines between Brontë's nineteenth-century rural Yorkshire and Donovan's twenty-first century Glasgow. Fiona's semi-orphaned status resonates too with an array of Victorian protagonists.

A resentful ire against her self-pitying father manifests itself in the raging fire just at the point where she feels acutely entrapped by domesticity, like some attic madwoman. By necessity, this reconfigures the hame so that it is remapped beyond the borders of the angelic mother's role. Only her maturation to adulthood resolves the narrator's anger and she is reconciled to her family and hame. A crucial part of that *bildung* developmental process is her art, as *Being Emily* charts a portrait of the artist as a young Scottish woman who battles her demons to embrace a confident identity, finally at hame within herself. (Marie-Odile Pittin-Hedon also acknowledges Donovan's 'portrait of the artist as a young woman', but regards Fiona as 'an Irish girl' rather than, like Emily Brontë, from Irish descent (Pittin-Hedon 2015, 8–9). The renovated tenement is no longer haunted by a spectral domestic ideal but, instead, simultaneously houses Fiona's new family and provides a blank canvas to continue her artwork: 'But there were nae ghosts here [. . .] I had to rely on the spirit inside me, the one she'd helped tae shape and form' (Donovan 2009, 267). While her past life and memories are integral to her identity, Fiona emerges as her own artist just as the tenement is simultaneously old and new: 'it took me a while tae feel that the

house was mine, to reconcile the echoes of the past life with the new one that was beginning to unfold' (Donovan 2009, 273).

Prior to reaching that peaceful destination, Fiona observes that 'in our fragmented lives I kept hauding on tae every bit of continuity there was' (Donovan 2009, 215). This refers to Patrick's uncertainty regarding whether he will remain for Hogmanay or return to London, which 'would be the first time ever' (Donovan 2009, 215). Fiona tries to maintain familiarity to offset the otherwise precarious flux experienced since her mother's death and the inevitable shifts in contemporary family dynamics: even though Patrick stays this time, his geofamilial disconnection will impact future family events, as the text continues to push the frontiers of hame's comfort zones. Patrick, who renames himself Patric after several years of residing in London, embodies the uncanniness of hame felt since Geraldine's death and her absent presence haunting her family. Patric's unfamiliarity echoes his geographical estrangement, just as he seems more at home flitting around other people's houses in London and becomes a visitor to his hame town of Glasgow. As though reflecting a vacuous commodity-driven neoliberal culture, 'He doesnae get attached tae things, moves on. Like never owning a house, just living in someone else's. He makes it his ain for a while, then when he's had enough, he leaves. Sure he could afford to buy something but that would be too permanent. The only things that have any permanence in his life are us, his family' (Donovan 2009, 259). By refashioning himself as Patric, his values are more akin to an affluent London lifestyle and crucially he stops staying in the new O'Connell family hame when he visits, instead choosing hotels, emphasising the corporate consumerism and transience of modern life with its extended circle of family and friends rather than the more traditional enclosed space of the nuclear family.

It also signifies, though, Patrick's lost relationship with hame, accentuated by grief and the relocation of the O'Connell family hame to an unfamiliar rented council space. A social other in terms of his homosexuality, he does not feel accepted by his father or, in turn, his Scottish culture, so he flees from a hame that is uncanny to him and relocates elsewhere, never putting down permanent roots. As he becomes

more remote from his family and cultural hame, the deracinated ties loosen and he adopts a polished Anglo-influenced accent. The narrator observes, 'He'd come up every three months or so, and every time he looked a bit different; smoother, shinier, his hair blonder, his accent flattened out just a bit mair' (Donovan 2009, 44). His unfamiliar shiny accent and whitened veneered teeth links to his career as a food stylist's focus upon image, consumption and commodification, so that 'Patric, well he was different fae Patrick' (Donovan 2009, 132). Glasgow's notorious hard man image seems unable to accommodate Patrick's/Patric's alternative masculinity. The challenge for a post-devolution and post-referendum Scottish society is that it dismantles its embedded heteronormative masculinity and embarks upon a welcoming hame rather than cultural eviction of its marginalised others. While it is problematic that *Being Emily* associates an affluent Londresque neoliberal corporatisation with a gay male lifestyle preoccupied with surface expense at the cost of family/national values, nevertheless it links fully to Patric's dislocation from hame. Interestingly, Sarah Schulman connects such a consumerist-driven depoliticised gay identity to a community devastated by AIDS, 'a trauma that has yet to be defined or understood, for which no one has been made accountable – [which] has produced a gentrification of the mind for gay people' (Schulman 2013 [2012], 155) so that 'we assimilate into the culture that allowed us to be destroyed' (156). By erasing Patrick, Patric identifies with hegemonic culture and, as a food stylist, consumes a space hitherto occupied by a politicised community.

However, Fiona's aunt Janice seems to fare better within Glasgow: in a lesbian relationship, she has a daughter and then a son by the novel's close. Yet, for Schulman, such reproduction is part of a psychological gentrification process where, feeling alienated from a male-dominated gay community, lesbians assimilate within hegemonic values in a 'highly gendered but recognizably legitimate social role of lesbian mother' (Schulman 2013 [2012], 158). Though Janice forms a loving family, notably her brother-in-law is inflexible in his heteropatriarchal outlook, viewing her as a threat to the traditional nuclear family, fuelled by his unquestioned acceptance of Catholic discourses regarding sexuality and family. Just as he fails to accept his gay



son, he remains equally reluctant to understand lesbianism, later conceding '*I'm a dinosaur, hen. Extinct*' (Donovan 2009, 218). Each of his prejudices, the text hints, are not part of an individual blame but, rather, lie with a wider sociocultural hegemony that perpetuates a central norm against which all others are measured and found wanting. Yet, it is the traditional heteronormative hame that disintegrates numerically through death and absence, spiritually through loss and mourning, and spatially through fire, abandonment and relocation. By comparison, 'It was easy when Mammy was alive. Everything had a routine then, she held it all together' (Donovan 2009, 86). Rather than offering a site of warmth and unconditional belonging, the hame thereafter becomes a menacing spectre of its former self, with the kitchen ceasing to function as its traditional heart. In her relationship with Jas, the narrator notes that 'Their kitchen was warm while ours was draughty. I wondered if this was what it would have been like if it'd been my daddy, no my mammy, that had died. And in my bed that night, when I heard him stumble through the hall [. . .] I wished it had been' (Donovan 2009, 48). Fiona associates the mother's love and understanding with family ties holding a hame together, cooking homemade meals and regulating their church attendance. Subsequently, the draughty kitchen's cold comfort only offers TV dinners and a lack of family mealtimes. The mother is an embodiment of the concept of hame, associated with the kitchen as its central ideal. Nevertheless her loss provides the trajectory towards growth for Fiona as artist, where hame becomes a space of production as well as reproduction.

The dynamics of family life are represented as shifting from traditional models to reflect a contemporary cultural landscape where hame is recast to incorporate those hitherto erased. These new Scottish voices are depicted very positively and effectively challenge the hostilities of prejudice and hate by demonstrating their ordinary loving relationships. Donovan's engagement with contemporary society reminds future citizens that there is a kaleidoscope of valued human identity, though her queer characters remain peripheral rather than central. It is a pity, then, that her central protagonist perpetuates a heteronormative, albeit mixed-race lifestyle, finally settling down with Jas and approaching motherhood, just as in YA fiction 'romance is historically a

conservative genre [. . .] advancing the primacy of heterosexual couples' (Basu, Broad and Hintz 2013, 8). Likewise, Fiona's pregnancy threatens to confine her to domesticity, perpetuating a traditionalist core in an otherwise progressive cosmopolitan text. In that sense, Fiona's art, like Brontë's, must satellite around familial chores. But, in terms of hame's fragility, Donovan disrupts nuclear family norms, killing off Geraldine as Angel in the House to liberate the female artist. Frustratingly, though, queer culture's gentrification spatially closets it in domesticity rather than in the nation's hame. Schulman refers to Herbert Marcuse's "repressive tolerance", in which communities become distorted and neutered by the dominant culture's containment of their realities through the noose of "tolerance". The dominant culture doesn't change how it views itself or how it operates, and power imbalances are not transformed' (Schulman 2013 [2012], 50). Instead, she continues, 'the oppressed person's expression is overwhelmed by the dominant person's inflationary self-congratulation about how generous they are. The subordinate person learns quickly that they must curb their most expressive instincts in order to be worthy of the benevolence of this containment' (50). Schulman argues that the likes of Patric and Janice 'have been streamlining into a highly gendered, privatized family/marriage structure en masse' (2013 [2012], 155), so that queer politics are subsumed by hegemonic gentrification. Gavin Miller's reliance on Steve Bruce et al.'s 'factual' assessment that 'homophobia is declining' (Miller 2009, 168) in Scotland seems to echo such "repressive tolerance". Yet Stonewall Scotland's 2013 survey reports that 'homophobic hate crime remains a serious problem in Scotland. One in six lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Scotland have been the victim of a homophobic hate crime or incident in the last three years' (*Homophobic Hate Crime: The Gay British Crime Survey, Scotland Cornerstone Document* 2013, 3). In Donovan's text, gender and sexuality's confinement to hame – often described as fragile and oppressive – is ambivalent, perhaps symptomatic of gentrification's privatisation of space and its diffusion of urban solidarity.

Prior to Geraldine's death, her husband refuses to budge from their bought tenement, ironically regarding it as indestructible: 'Solid, he'd say. *Built tae last*' (Donovan 2009, 9). Yet, when his wife dies, the flat's combustion forces the family to be rehoused

in rented council accommodation, emphasising the precariousness of the family unit. The Church, perceived by believers as the House of God, equally fails to accommodate their needs. The disarray of the family following Geraldine's death pivots around the effects of her demise on the house, both religious and familial, and the blurring boundary between these in a devout Catholic household. Just as Fiona finds cold comfort at home, the church is similarly a place of inhospitable incomprehension and inane platitudes. As an artist, though, she must become a resistant reader against grand narratives of religious doctrine to interpret and advocate agency over her own life. This is dramatised with the key motif of the Festival of Light, when Glasgow's historic architecture is displayed in a light show that allows the narrator and the city's populace to see its cultural heritage in a different light. Religiosity's association with light is interrogated and transformed by Donovan so that enlightenment equates with secularity's intellectual, political, cultural and artistic awakening, vital for Fiona's developing artistic maturation. The light's symbolic juxtaposition to the darkness signifies her profound shift from the darkness of grief, of ignorance, of unquestioning dominant discourses, of being alone and isolated, to stepping out publicly into the light and being enlightened. The historic architecture is bathed in a contemporary light show, fusing past and present, signifying Glasgow's journey towards a coalescence of its cultural heritage with contemporary influences. Fiona's maturation from darkness to light as a critique of established religion is dramatized in the confessional, revealing that 'I never felt anything as I went through my list' (Donovan 2009, 202). Numbly, she: 'stumbled out the words, stumbled out the box, out the chapel, blinking into the grey light of a November street' (202). Repeated from rote memory, the act of contrition is an empty utterance symbolising the Church's lack of insight to her pain as she exits into a grey winter evening. Any revelation of truth is concealed to her, its dead signifiers obscured like the fading winter light.

Pivotal, this impenetrable moment precedes her immersion in the Festival of Light which triggers a time of reconciliation and regeneration when she encounters Jas and they embark upon a rekindled relationship, both altered by their respective experiences. Fiona says, 'It was as if the city had been reborn' (Donovan 2009,

204): crucially, rebirth does not occur within domestic/religious confines but *outside* where Glasgow is cast in a new light of art and culture. She continues, 'I kept thinking about the light installations, the way they had made the city a different and lovely place' (209). Jas echoes this observation, saying '*I feel like I'm no in Glasgow [. . .] Naa, that's no right – it looks different, but it feels like Glasgow underneath*' (206). Like the buildings, she sees Jas in a new light: 'Jas was the same as he'd ever been but there was another layer to him, a greater strength and solidity that I was just beginning tae know' (261). The mingling of familiar/unfamiliar, which Freud describes as the uncanny or *unheimlich*, reverberates with the theme of hame. Significantly, Fiona and Jas reunite at this festival, where her experience of Glasgow (architecturally reflective of Empire) offers a new outlook enhanced with the uncanniness of also seeing through Jas's eyes. To feel 'unhomely' is, for Homi K. Bhabha, intrinsic to 'extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiation' and, as such, is 'a paradigmatic colonial and post-colonial condition' (Bhabha 2010 [1994], 13). However, the in-between state of the hybrid stranger can shift from unhomely to homely if they act as 'a bridge' that fuses their ontologically familiar culture with an unfamiliar state of being (13). Bhabha continues, 'In another's country that is also your own, your person divides, and in following the forked path you encounter yourself in a double movement . . . once as stranger, and then as friend' (xxv). So, the unfamiliarity of familiar territory is a shared experience for Fiona and Jas, whose revisited relationship forms part of their renewed selfhood and their repossession of hame. While welcomingly assuring, it is filled with unknown potential and creative possibility, much like Fiona's position as young female artist seeking a place in a dynamic city that is continually being recreated by its heterogeneous citizens.

Donovan's topographical remapping of hame is undoubtedly linked to her preference for Scottish citizens to articulate their rich diversity. For Donovan, writing in dialect offers a more intimate and honest portrayal of her characters, since they are speaking in a voice that refutes the filtered mimicry of Standard English, providing 'a more direct line to the heart, you get closer' (cited in Scott 2005, 15). In her writing, heart and voice are fundamental to a sense of belonging in a vernacular articulation

that hame is where the heart is. Her 'direct line' of intimacy and authenticity often depicts ordinary working-class characters in a sympathetic rather than judgemental light. As such, her linguistic line to the heart speaks to Nicholas Royle's concept of 'cardiogrammatology', contemporary writing that philosophically ponders the role of the heart (Royle 2003, 192). Donovan utilises dialect as a cosmopolitical cardiogrammatology that seeks to empathetically connect with others by speaking from the margins.

According to Jeremy Scott, Donovan's writing 'portrays Scots as the natural language of feeling and emotion, expressing fundamental psychological aspects of the human condition, whereas Standard English is depicted as the language of authority, rationality and logic' (Scott 2005, 14–15). While this offers a degree of depth to her characters, nevertheless it genders 'feeling and emotion', accentuated in Scott's view that her writing differs from James Kelman's political use of dialect. Thus, 'where Kelman approaches this task of legitimising voice from a highly politicized perspective, Donovan operates at a more humanistic level' (Scott 2005, 14), and Marie-Odile Pittin-Hedon concurs that Donovan's 'approach is less politicised and more humanistic than Kelman's' (Pittin-Hedon 2015, 23). For myself, Donovan's cardiogrammatological approach combines political and humanistic rather than reflecting a gendered binary, just as hame is both domestic/national and global/local. Scott continues, 'The validity of language for Donovan, then, is linked explicitly and inextricably to its cultural context – in this case, Scotland. For Scots to rely on what is, essentially, a foreign tongue for their expressive needs is incoherent and an anomaly' (Scott 2005, 15). For Scott, Donovan's writing taps into a more realistically authentic human psyche than the constrained and measured authoritative voice of Standard English as a cultural hegemony that suppresses individuality and imposes an Anglocentric matrix. This is agreeable to an extent, but falls short of acknowledging the grass roots cosmopolitical belonging that Donovan's use of dialect posits.

Although dialect is significant cardiogrammatologically, Fiona's voice alters with each section of the text. The opening section occurs four years before the main section, while the end section's timescale is four years after the central section. With

each part Fiona's narrative voice oscillates, its auditory nuances detecting transitional developments upon her journey. Her younger voice's stronger dialect also compares with an older intonation affected by an education system's emphasis upon Standard English. But rather than losing her dialect, her voice becomes more dialogic, influenced further by her development as an avid reader who is also steeped in the polytonal hetero-glossia of cosmopolitical Glasgow, including her relationship with Jas. It is not that Anglo-centric language is internalised, so much as Fiona is now replete with cosmopolitan diversity and is now capable of fluid dialogism. Scott's argument that Donovan resists Standard English through dialect is, then, too reductively binary. Rather, for a woman writer intent upon reshaping Scotland beyond phallogo-centric hegemony, 'there is no such thing as a mother tongue' since 'all tongues carry the name of the father' (Braidotti 1994, 11). Instead, Donovan presents an uncanny heterogeneity to disrupt phallo-cratic inscription:

The bit at the beginning when she's about 12 is quite a very strong Glasgow Scots voice [. . .] I wanted again to differentiate between that bit and [. . .] the second bit but still keeping it Scottish. Because I wanted to show an older voice. I also wanted to show somebody who's quite [. . .] bookish [. . .]. She's read a lot of 19<sup>th</sup> Century stuff, so that kind of affects her [. . .] I think there's quite a lot of movement of the voice. The voice is not standardised or consistent. (Searle 2015)

Fiona's voice contains a plethora of dialogic intonations that reflect the diversity of her interests and relationships as a cosmopolitan citizen of Glasgow. The change of voice is also indicative of an individual's multiple selves, altered by the transitional crossover of childhood to adulthood and the many stages in between. Identity, like voice, is fluid and shifting rather than static and coherent. Donovan notes:

I seem to often find myself writing in the voices of girls around the ages of 12 or 13. I think it is an interesting age, a crossover period when there is a great deal of perceptiveness and understanding and sensitivity but also an

openness which is more childlike (not childish). I like the energy and positiveness which a young narrator can give. (cited in McLaughlin 2014)

The young female voice, for Donovan, offers energetic malleability in its 'crossover' potential for maturation which is vital for such fiction. Adolescence's physiological and psychological alterations embody uncanniness when one often no longer feels comfortable or at home with oneself and must adapt to these necessary ontological shifts.

Dialogically, other voices beyond Fiona's indicate a wider prism of Scottish inflections, each engaging with the narrative voice to produce a more polytonal text. For instance, the Scottish-South Asian intonations and cultural influences of Jas and his family, as well as Fiona's Scottish-Chinese friend Monica, enrich and diversify the central narrative's concept of home. This reminds the reader that contemporary Scotland encompasses a broader outlook with so many global transnational shifts affecting its demographic. Jas vilifies multiculturalism as '*just paying lip service to the real diversity of our culture and smoothing over the racism and suspicion that divides us*' (Donovan 2009, 23). When he and Fiona are reconciled at her sister's wedding, he notes: '*East meets West. The city council would love this – some kind of cross-cultural box they could tick here*' (263). Jas's political awareness awakens Fiona and the reader to multiculturalism's shortcomings as a superficial solution to entrenched cultural and racial divisions. While those from mixed race backgrounds ought to epitomise multicultural healing, he argues such blurred categorical boundaries prove awkward for bureaucrats who cannot easily condense people into containable categories. With his understanding of cultural, political and environmental issues, Jas's activism educates others through 'cosmopolitanism from below' (Hanafin 2013, 40). As well as being a real relationship, his love for Fiona embodies cosmopolitan empathy rather than the 'lip service' paid by spin doctors and media soundbites. Their union enhances their cultural backgrounds, while preserving and accepting their differences. Multiculturalism, he posits, dilutes the lived experience of individuals and cultures to a box-ticking exercise, abandoning people to the limited field of vision afforded by their immediate community.

Likewise, Beck argues that 'multiculturalism remains trapped in the epistemology of the national outlook, with its either/or categories and its susceptibility to essentialist definitions of identity' which 'lacks a sense of cosmopolitan realism' (Beck 2007 [2004], 66). *Being Emily* insists that equality can be attained through a cosmopolitan drive towards respecting humanity's diversity rather than multicultural binaries which perpetuate disenfranchisement from mainstream society. For Kwame Anthony Appiah, 'multiculturalism' is 'another shape shifter, which so often designates the disease it purports to cure' (Appiah 2007 [2006], xi). Donovan's resistant text advocates a cosmopolitical outlook: Jas and Fiona's solidarity represents a new generation's voices in a reconfigured post-devolution hame that heralds the 'emergence of multiple "Scotlands" to replace the Scotland of old' (Craig 2004, 239). Nation and self are in dialogical renegotiation: 'Scotland [. . .] might stand as exemplar of the fact that nations have never been pure and that identity is precisely the dialogue between alternative possibilities of the self' (Craig 2004, 250). Miller, however, regards such critical favouring of plurality as neo-nativism: 'This intrinsic Scottishness is diversity itself; plurality becomes the new essence of Scottishness' (Miller 2009, 158). Such critics, though, are not advocating an *essential* heterogeneity; they are noting that post-devolution Scotland has shaken off a homogenous nationalism and acknowledged that it, like any nation, is a composite. In turn, this allows spatial possibilities for those "others" hitherto marginalised to engage in the dialogic shaping of contemporary cosmopolitics. Geopolitically, Scotland is marginalised by hegemonic Anglocentricism, thus othering is surely a 'Scottish distinctiveness' (Miller 2009, 171) that requires redress.

Cosmopolitan connectivity broadens its scope to encompass a planetary hame: 'Afore I met Jas, I'd never thought much about the environment but it was one of his things [. . .] being with him had made me aware of how folk just chucked stuff out, of the overpackaged products and the way you got handed a poly bag in every shop – I'd even started taking bags to the supermarket myself' (Donovan 2009, 59). He attunes her to develop an ecological consciousness which, in turn, informs her



*bildungsroman* journey towards maturity. Notably, such literary interaction with social and environmental issues helps to shape as well as reflect the external world beyond fiction: in 2014 shops in Scotland began charging for carrier bags, so encouraging their reuse. But it is problematic that, as is so often the case in YA fiction, the narrator is educated about environmentalism from a boy, rather than developing an independent understanding where 'awakening is not bestowed upon her by a male awakener; instead, she wakes herself' (Trites 1997, 8). Although alluding to YA dystopias, Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad and Carrie Hintz regard love cosmopolitically, since 'romantic feelings steer the adolescent lovers to stand up to dystopian forces in order to create a better world for each other', so that 'the fight for a better world is itself a fight for love' (Basu, Broad and Hintz 2013, 8). In their mutual otherness regarding gender, race and Scottish ethnicity, Fiona and Jas similarly fight for a 'better world' where their unity signifies cosmopolitan solidarity.

Though dialect is evidently vital, language often fails to convey the characters' inner turmoil or emotions, leaving many issues unspoken and unresolved. What is not articulated is often more important than what is revealed through dialogue, leaving gaps and silences that speak volumes. So, for instance, after Fiona's miscarriage, 'The nice doctor tried tae get me to talk, made an appointment for the counsellor, but I never went' (Donovan 2009, 131). Historically, 'No one talked about miscarriages then. Did Mammy ever have a miscarriage? The gaps between us' (129). Likewise, Fiona is unable to communicate with Amrik about the miscarriage since he is aloofly preoccupied with his music and, later in the novel, he trivialises her trauma. Similarly, Patrick cannot articulate his gay identity, triggering a psycho-geographical journey whose distance perpetuates further silence. Fiona reveals through her narrative:

I didnae know what tae say. As usual. My life seemed to be full of folk wanting me to say things, talk about my feelings [. . .] That was what was so bad about the auld days, they say. After the war all these men who came back, never able to talk about it. Stiff upper lips. And that leads tae all kinds of

trauma. I wish I'd lived then – no I don't mean that – it's just, I don't want  
tae talk. (Donovan 2009, 150)

Even though characters fail to communicate effectively with each other, Fiona's position as narrator communicates directly with the reader, revealing that which she conceals even from close friends. Her multiple losses (Geraldine and her unborn baby, Fiona's own miscarriage, her family hame) all become material appropriated for her art. Silenced by trauma, art becomes her voice and, as she matures both as a person and an artist, so does her work develop. Like most artists, though, critics and the public try to simply equate her art with personal circumstances. But, Donovan's text reminds us that art is far more complex than straightforward biography. While life influences art, there are wider influences of culture, politics, history, other literature and so on. The novel philosophically ponders this relationship between art and life and makes metafictional comments throughout on the role of the artist as well as the role of language in concealing as well as revealing emotions or perspectives.

In its uncanny return to the same yet altered hame at its close, the text charts seismic shifts in between. Fiona too is both the same but altered, now an adult in her early twenties, pregnant with her first child and married to Jas. The tenement's history contains the palimpsestic revenant of previous lives, including her family's. In her return, she grapples 'with the politics of space repossession' (Germanà 2013 [2010], 137). Instead of *Being Emily*, Fiona becomes an artist influenced by Brontë's work to create new endeavours, while Donovan's novel is both original and intertextualising literary predecessors, including *Wuthering Heights*, which Fiona constantly re-reads. Geraldine/Emily die on the 19 December, fusing familial/literary mothers as formative influences in shaping Fiona's creative voice. Fiona/Emily associate strongly with home, both of them reluctant to leave: as she explains when visiting the Brontë parsonage, Emily '*loved it here, Jas. She hated to be away, got homesick – and no just sad, physically ill*' (Donovan 2009, 82). Fiona's art draws upon and imbriates her father and Branwell Brontë's rescues from fire, while both novels feature passionate yet destructive relationships. Further, 'No Coward Soul is Mine' serves as

a literary revenant that signals Fiona's forthcoming trauma, where she must endure the 'world's storm-troubled sphere' (4), providing the crux of the heroine's trajectory towards reconfiguring hame. The Glasgow tenement becomes an art canvas – its 'studio with white walls' (273) – that Fiona can mould and shape her new life around, while respecting its past structure and people, just like the Virgin Mary painting that she is working on. The mural fuses contemporary art with religious and cultural influences. Similarly, it mirrors her mother and child, as well as herself as an expectant mother. The Madonna is depicted by Fiona in the way her mother envisaged: not remote, but '*human [. . .] daeing a washing or making a dinner*' (65). So 'Mary, in blue jeans and a white tee shirt, is hanging out the washing in her back court. I know she'd of had dark skin and eyes but this Madonna has a peely-wally west of Scotland complexion and eyes that hover between blue and green. Jesus is dark-skinned, lighter than Jas but no much' (275). It is a cosmopolitan collage of a mixed race child depicting a spiritual fusion of cultures.

The value of art and culture is prioritised over contemporary society's avid consumerism and TV-watching. Fiona is an anachronistic heroine in her love of Brontë as well as her disinterest in contemporary commodification: owning a Walkman rather than an iPod is, for Patric, '*like something out the dark ages*' (Donovan 2009, 169). On her return journey to Glasgow after visiting Patric, 'flicking through wanny the magazines' he purchased, she reads about 'how tae have perfect hair and skin, organise your work and rustle up lovely meals in ten minutes. Photies of all the must-have accessories you couldnae live without. I tossed it aside' (171). Her desperation to leave London is epitomised in her critique of her brother's lifestyle, akin to the photoshopped magazines she rejects and an emphasis on commodity-driven simulated living. For Fiona, Glasgow is more real. Consumption is considered a passive activity as opposed to the actively empowering creativity associated with artists like Fiona.

Yet for Bissett, Glasgow is a prime example of a city rebranded from its industrial heritage of production to a post-industrial image of 'shopping, business and tourism magnet', transforming a working-class city to a gentrified playground (Bissett 2007, 59). Glasgow's tenements, associated with working-class life in the nineteenth

and twentieth centuries have been remarketed so that historical architectural features, like high ceilings and decorative coving, become lucrative sought after commodities that increase property prices exponentially, pushing the poor further and further to the peripheries of trendy modern city living. While Miller claims, 'to be working-class is not to have a particular *cultural* identity' (Miller 2009, 164) and, via Walter Benn Michaels, argues that they all aspire to be affluent, this is a dangerously reductive view of class consciousness. While few people would celebrate poverty, that does not legitimise erasure of an entirely valid and richly diverse culture in the face of vacuous gentrification. Just four years before *Being Emily* was published, Glasgow underwent a makeover with the marketing slogan 'Glasgow: Scotland with Style' and, in response, Kirsteen Paton notes, 'No longer characterised by working-class industrial urbanism [. . .] The Glasgow model for regeneration is effectively gentrification, whereby culture is used as a material force', thus 'obscuring enduring socio-economic inequalities' in its 'transformation to a neoliberal city' (Paton 2010, 213–14). For Paton, culture itself is commodified, though Fiona vehemently resists such hegemonic appropriation, while her father rages against the erasure of Glasgow's public spaces: '*The dear green place they used tae cry it. There'll be nae green left and it's already far too dear tae live here. They've nae right to be selling aff bowling greens. When the city was designed they were part of the plan, so folk living in tenements could have a wee patch of grass to look at*' (Donovan 2009, 161). On Fiona's trip to London she notices, 'They're nice, these wee gardens scattered about London. In Glasgow they're building on every square inch that isnae already built on' (161), reinforcing Paton's view that Glasgow's 'model for regeneration is effectively gentrification'.

Donovan metafictionally utilises art, including crossover fiction, to attack a neoliberal social hegemony that values profit, ruthless individualism and private lives rather than community and cultural currency. Readers are resultantly urged to question their estrangement from reality and to ethically engage with others, while understanding the importance of art/imagination in a world preoccupied with consumerism's hyperreality. For Donovan, people blindly consume rather than notice the bigger picture of globalised capitalism's

dehumanising effects. To numb his grief, Fiona's father consumes alcohol and television, both inhibitive drugs that disable moving on in any meaningfully active manner, just as Patric and Janice's 'gentrification of the mind' prevents resistance to "repressive tolerance". Notably, Grace's (Mona and Declan's baby) arrival triggers an intervention in Fiona's father and her wider family's, encouraging them to reassess their current predicament, finding inner peace and a renewed understanding of each other, just as Fiona reconfigures hame within Glasgow's public space.

Donovan cardiogrammatologically voices her characters' vernacular heartfelt desire to repossess Glasgow in a new light that encompasses all of its citizens just as semi-orphaned Fiona feels at hame in Mother Glasgow. The dialect of hame is the uncanny double of hegemony's Anglocentric home, signalling *Being Emily's* desire to offer an alternative accommodation to neoliberal alienation and the privatisation of space. In Kristeva's sense of accepting our uncanny inner foreignness, Donovan's text urges Scotland to harness its cosmopolitical otherness and to value its merits over the soulless divisive currency of commodification. Though Scotland failed to gain independence in 2014, its dynamic journey continues, reflected in the SNP's landslide victory in the UK General Election of May 2015. In a city which voted for independence from neoliberal, Westminster-driven, austerity policies, signalling hopeful cosmopolitical grass roots solidarity rather than fearful individualism, it is not 'I', but 'Aye', that belongs to Glasgow.

### **Competing Interests**

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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