Journal of Philosophy and Linguistics
Research Article Peer-review, Open Access

Heideggerian Conception on the Human Existence in Kathleen Jamie ‘Selected Poems

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Abstract: Very few poets have explored existential concerns as fully as Kathleen Jamie has in her poetry by directly challenging and contrasting competing worldviews. Her writings defy categorization and explore a wide range of cultural themes. Allegory, spirituality, mythology, contemplation of human values and moral philosophy, examination of human life, and meditation on the natural world are some of the topics covered in her collections. She is at home in both Western and Eastern cultural circles, and she adeptly seeks answers within a variety of theoretical frameworks. Martin Heidegger acted as a catalyst in influencing her poetic view. Deep questions into the nature of humanity and the meaning of belonging that go beyond narrow national categories of customs, geography, and culture. It adds to the study value of Jamie's poetry.

Keywords: Kathleen Jamie, Heidegger, Existence, poetry, nature

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Introduction

Kathleen is a Scottish-born essayist, non-fiction writer, and editor who is considered one of the leading poets of her age by Monika Szuba (2019, p.91). Jamie was born in Johnstone, Renfrewshire, and grew up in Currie, a hamlet near Edinburgh. She attended a comprehensive high school and now teaches philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. In 2021, she was voted as the fourth bearer of the title The Scots Maker. Despite not coming from a literary background, Jamie demonstrates a natural aptitude for writing from a young age, with her mother working as a solicitor's clerk and her father as an accountant. She began composing poetry at the age of fifteen and released her first collection of poems in a booklet called *Black Spiders* (1982).

Jamie's writings entered the public domain in 1982. Most of her published works have either received or been shortlisted for national honors, such as the Eric Gregory Award in 1981 and the Somerset Maugham Award in 1995 for *Queen of Sheba* won the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize in 2000 for *Jizzan* and the Forward Poetry Prize in 2004 for her work *The Tree House*. Several of her poems have been selected for

exhibition on national monuments in Scotland, the British Isles, and North America. Jamie is a frequent writer for The London Review of Books, The Guardian, and Orion Magazine in the United States. Additionally, Jamie contributes to BBC radio programming and writes non-fiction. Her essays Findings(2005*)*, *Frissure*(2013), and *Sightlines* (2012) are highly regarded as significant pieces of nature and landscape literature. The book received the John Burroughs Medal and the Orion Book Award when it was published in the United States in 2012.

Discussion

As a writer, Kathleen Jaime is known for always reflecting on her theories in her work and how she perceives the world. Her discovery of these is invariably linked with inward-looking. In her, poems she also deals with questions of the freedom of the human will and its limits, and reflections. The figure that stands out in the background of these reflections is Martian Heidegger whose thoughts are visible in her poems. Her poem also contains references to concepts that are at the basis of *Being and Time* (1927). In this book, Heidegger outlines the program of his philosophy, the task of which he considers to be the renewal of classical metaphysics. He asks questions once again about the meaning of *Being* in the world authentically, a problem he maintains has been forgotten by philosophy. The other questions about the nature of man, history, and human temporality are subordinate to this most important question of all.

Authenticity in existential experience pertains to a certain state of being. Farah Yeganeh (2009) defines existentialism as a philosophy focused on self-discovery and the meaning of life via free will, choice, and human responsibility. It investigates how individuals seek to understand their identity and purpose (p.355). Regarding fundamental ontology—the study of what it is to be human—Heidegger employs a phenomenological approach. The philosophical discipline known as phenomenology is defined by its emphasis on the methods of revelation and demonstration rather than its thematic goal. As *Dasein* is a manifestation of Being, Heidegger unveils the critical connections that, in each case, give a different perspective on Being and man (1988,p.5). The existential frameworks of "worry," "care," and "being flung into the world" describe man, for instance. All of these structures and their meanings come together to build a web expressing human life's reality. Being "thrown into the world" exposes man to many things, including fear, loneliness, and the reality of his death (1988,p.6). Death is the one thing that may show us how special we are and open the door to the fundamental possibilities of our genuine (eigentlich) existence. Building on the ontological frameworks, the ontic level encompasses all mental states. His research approach, on the other hand, is not based on psychology. Instead of seeing worry and care as mental emotions, we examine them as ontological frameworks.

Heidegger argues that philosophical thought has emphasized theoretical encounters with objects. Martin Heidegger‘s "Being if we are completely honest and are not deceiving ourselves, then we must concede... being as distinct from beings, and yet we understand it. Understanding the being of beings accordingly does not already (Heidegger,2024,p.86). The essence of humanity, according to Heidegger, is "being in the world". Through a description of our fundamental encounters with objects in our daily lives, shaped by instrumental connections, he explains this idea in terms of actuality. Poetically, one must endeavor to describe the ways of tracking reality that are alternatives to theoretical thought systems; this is similar to Manner's thinking, which aims to explain the pre-theoretical link with reality. Jamie has acknowledged the influence of Heidegger's philosophy on her thought, but elucidating the philosophical meanings conveyed in her poetry is a far more daunting undertaking. In it, Jamie explores a significant link between the old Scottish customs and how contemporary women interpret them, giving fresh philosophical weight to the concepts and pictures that surfaced in her earlier works. "More concerned instead to transcend the often mundane realities surrounding her by establishing connections with another plane of being, capable of galvanizing and eventually transforming them" is Christopher Whyte's (2004) assessment of the poet's desire to find new ways to change old traditions (p.221).

Her 1999 poetry collection, *Jizzen*, revolves around the fulcrum patterns of domesticity and traditions coexisting with wildness, in which the ancient past and domestic life are twisted and mixed to produce something surprising, new, and original. "*Jizze*n" means "childbed" in old Scots (Falconer, 2015, p. 77).

She juxtaposes previous dreams with contemporary realities using Scottish traditions, artifacts, tales, and landscapes. The fanciful and mythological are the insurgent irruption of Jamie's fascination with hidden subversive energies and networks of resistance. Kathleen thinks the key to Scotland's progress is learning about and re-creating its history and culture. In Heidegger's cyclic evolution concept of being, patterns recur across the cosmos, and this equation also overlaps with it. Based on the guiding principle of "as within, so outside," human reality mirrors an individual's internal experiences in the present moment. Every nation's ancient stories contain some fundamental truth, says the poet. Since all myths originate in human imagination—which in turn originates in cosmic ideation, sometimes called "the universal world soul"—this is unsurprising. Her works shed light on a history that is better left forgotten, emphasizing pragmatic philosophy. She paints a picture of the tragic struggle between holding on to the past and moving forward, between feeling and nostalgia, and between the status quo and progress. I struggle with my feelings about the past; on the one hand, I want to erase it, but on the other, I want to hold on to some things (Fraser, 2001, p. 21). To paraphrase Paterson and Brown's argument (2007), "These inquiries constitute our most honest prepositional attitude towards the cosmos" (p. 67), and they are interwoven throughout Jamie's works.

In Jamie's view, asking questions is a form of philosophical practice. She bases her many identities on the question's origin. "Means to situate oneself as an undistinguished component of the inquiry itself," says Maurice Nastanson (1973, p. 233), who defines questioning as an activity. When a question arises in Jamie's poetry, she does her most outstanding work in rhetorical forms, exploring what it means to be a spiritual person. In "Alder," her question reaches a breaking point as she imagines a period before people separate themselves from nature in the "unfolding" condition.

> Alder, who unfolded before the receding glaciers
>
> first one leaf then another
>
> won't you teach me a way to live
>
> on this damp ambiguous earth? (ll.7-12)

This is a mental cramp of a philosophical question. But, is it a question? or perhaps a cry for help? The definite description of" a way" suggests, or at least presupposes, that there is only one way to live. Relying on this, one could answer the question by looking for the only way that helps him to live this life, but this temptation seems misguided because of "this damp, ambiguous earth" (1.12).

The poem demonstrates Jamie's philosophy's intimate association with the concept of "unfolding". The verb is preferred, with its suggestive nature, as well as its implication of revealing what is hidden and devolving from the center outwards. It is always related to the unification of the truth as a result of Jamie's attitude. To her, there is no separation between that alder and the human being; she explored the concept of Emerson's over-soul, where a universal spirit that exists in everyone can arise. The over-soul according to Emerson (1901), "is the one that lives all, we see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul " (p.4). Likewise, Rachel Wheeler's (2022), arguments are similar to those of the poet, Wheeler compares the process of growing up for human beings to that of plants:

> humans are seedlike who grow from small early stages and are nourished by all the things that face us over time, then blossom in the sense of coming into visibility with the potential to bear fruit; and finally, our lives offer fruit like some plants for others who are nourished by our being. (p.14)

Humans, according to what has been mentioned above, have more in common with many creatures that they share life with and never realize. The poet is addressing nature which is us one way or another, alder is a tree that is commonly found somewhere near wetlands so it is open to both land and water. The ambiguity of the earth presents the materiality that it contains, which ought to be spiritualized. This spiritualization, however, is the hypothesis of meaning on the unformed, unclear earth. Meaning is the

bestowal of form in life itself. As such, a meaningful life is a healthy one that grows continually to be more definite and have a complete realization of its purpose. The only way to avoid the ambiguity crisis and devastation in reciprocity is to reconnect with nature. P. Wesley Schult (2002), goes further by describing connectedness as "to be the individual starting point of including nature within his/her cognitive representation of the self " (p.67).

In " The Tay Moses " from Jizzen (1999) which is written during the period between 1999 to 1995 when Jamie had two children. The poem can be viewed as a presentative of the collection as a whole in which the poet expresses her fears of disliking the child she gives birth to. The poem is about parental ambivalence and is set in the context of the biblical Moses story and a Scottish landscape miniaturized with feelings of despair and delightful dreams. The most striking aspect of the poem, according to Monika Szuba and Julian Wolfreys(2019), "is the delicate balancing act maintained between elements or impulses that appear to be at odds with one another" (p.203).On the one hand, the described situation is in many ways similar to a very down-to-earth one that emphasizes what Jamie admits to being [a common source of concern among expectant mothers]; on the other hand, through its biblical intertext, takes on archetypal resonance not only refers to the well-known scene from the Book of Exodus, but it is also an example of the much more common mythological motif of the newborn," a child is abandoned to its fate "(Szuba &Wolfreys,2019, p.204).

either

the flow, when, watertight

you‘ll drift to the uplands

my favorite hills held safe

in eddies where salmon, wisdom

and guts withered in spawn,

rest between moves – that

slither of the body as you were born –

or the ebb, when the water

will birl you to snag

on reeds, the river

pilot leaning over the side

Name o‘ God! and you‘ll change hands:

tractor-man, grieve, farm-wife

who takes you into her

competent arms (ll.6-21)

The poem is essentially an imaginative exploration of the poet-fear that she will not be able to establish an emotional connection with her son. When her baby arrives, she will bond with it. If everything goes well, the baby will be carried upstream, where it will be "held safe/ in eddies" with " wisdom"; otherwise, the infant will float downstream on the ebb tide "to snag on reeds" with " grieve "

The title "The Tay Moses" according to Amy C. Mulligan (2016), "relates to both the wickerwork basket in Tay in Scottland, and the Hebraic account of Moses's mother transporting her threatened newborn downriver in a basket" (p. 766). She presents an image of cold and danger environment that could exchanges her worm hands in "bottom-up" orientation. Though these thoughts are small, they mirror the long journey of Scotland having its national identity located between "grieve or wisdom " which is akin to what Heidegger presents, in which man is the microcosm of the universe itself, and he can gain a deeper

understanding of the cosmos by first comprehending himself. As a result, the efforts of letting that Moses basket sail down the river are like the poet's thoughts running away with her anxieties that she would not be a good mother and she decides to restore her child.

change hands:

tractor-man, grieve, farm-wife

who takes you into her competent arms‘ (ll.18-20)

The ultimate split allows the poet to speak as " I", meaning that identity can be viewed as a flexible phenomenon. Besides, since the mother sees herself as an extension of "the natural," she is unconcerned with the baby's "drifting to the uplands" (I. 19). The poem, in Louisa Gairn's (2008) words " demonstrates the "felt correspondences between feminine experience and the natural environment" (p.345). Furthermore, the poem confirms the feelings of fear for both the child as the microcosm and having a separated identity for Scotland as the macrocosmic. Leaving may denote a rootless source from them since they are left to the mercy of "the flow of tide''.The separation is renounced near the end of the poem," sobbing / LEAVE HIM! Please, / it's okay, he's mine " (l.30). The poem celebrates birth's potential to restore linkages with the landscapes of the body, history, and spirit. Because what happens on a higher plane reflects on a lower one, the poet was able to infer the principles and higher realities underlying specific experiences by applying the concept of being, his progress from the individual to the universal allows him to speak about much bigger political matters of Scotland that combines spiritual aims with political ones. As a result, " physical delivery" according to Dósa (2009)," serves as a metaphor for the rebirth of national Scotland following the Second World War".Following the success of the Scottish devolution referendum in (1997) and the establishment of the Scottish Parliament " it seemed to be that Scotland is having a rebirth of its own, so the title functions both ways: personally and politically " (p.14). Heidegger's concept of existence is shown as something permanent in her pursuit of similarity between various aspects of reality, such as the relationship between world traditions and the process of single human existence in the poem because what happens on a larger podium is mirrored on the smaller one.

In "The Spider", and in an illusionary way, Jamie puts the readers in the location of an indictment. Which works as a rhetorical device. Furthermore, she is aware of the danger of misunderstanding or apprehending her subject at all levels of philosophy in her writing. Rather than becoming weary of such failures, Jamie's acceptance of the inevitable lack of connection with the nonhuman prompts her to write about relationships between herself and her subjects, and in doing so, she investigates the concept of "an ecological ethic" in Jonathan Bates' words(1991). Most of Jamie's poems are about creating a new self and new feeling of poetic shape, that forms two reciprocal and opposite movements: one approaching, the other springing away.

The poem is about a private incident where she meets a spider at night, who is authentic, to have this authenticity of living openly in the world. The question in this poem is more direct and surprisingly contains an answer where humans have never considered any way to make the world sustainable, and never considered to live according to natural law, and because of this irresponsible deed, humans are living in horror.

I squeeze from my gut

the one material.

Who tore the night?

Who caused this rupture?

You, staring in horror

– had you never considered

how is the world sustained?

…[…]

the spiders mending endlessly (ll.16-22,l.23)

Reading the poem the way it is presented, will give a misleading path that the spider and all nature's creatures are the ones who cause the rupture and destroy the world, causing the night to be torn. But the commonplace "mending" and eternal "endlessly" collide in the poem's final line, and then the pronouns switch. The spider formerly spoke in the first person:

when I appear to you

by dark, descended

not from heaven, but the lowest

branch of the walnut tree

bearing no annunciation (ll.1-5)

Now it speaks from his viewpoint," the spider mending" the change implies that it makes no unique claims for itself outside of its genus. If someone reads the paragraph too rapidly, he may mistake it for the voice of the author of the poem. This is resonant, helpful confusion for the humble spider who is so happy in his act of creation, putting the reader in the position of the main cause of destroying the world's sustain. The location of the spider is also significant. While viewing humans "in the lowest", spiders are somewhere not in the material, which indicates their being in a spiritual realm. Humans are to blame for the world's horrors, as well as for early Taoism, which displayed a consistency in its ideas on the origins of evil and how to deal with it. "Evil is defined as everything that weakens or is opposed to life. Everything must be done to protect and even expand life, which is the ultimate good " (Eggen, 2008, p.230).

As the poem shows, Jamie is trying to find a genuine way of being, an authentic experience of (how the world sustains), which brings her face-to-face with the existential crisis she faces in the modern world. However, there is a metaphysical dimension to this existential crisis, and logical reasoning cannot resolve it. The pronoun "I" declares that gaining information is not the fundamental goal of the investigation. Rather, what counts is getting over the "natural dread" that people experience when faced with an insurmountable perception. The pursuit of metaphysical reality starts at the break in the chain of causation, even if it is ultimately unreachable. Emotion and subjectivity are the basis of experience. Contrarily, the poetry makes allowances for experience. It is possible that the metaphysical opening is only a theory, and that no proof exists for it. The presumption is based solely on an emotive and nebulous sense of dread. It acts as a buffer between the realm of cognition and the realm of ordinary common sense, shielding it from the so-called "irrational" events that do not belong there. But an illogical event could trigger an epiphany.

In "Springs," from "Five Tay Sonnets", the poet is frequently concerned with what is present but not necessarily visible where the force of the Spring tides and winds shatter the Tay's banks, revealing the river's hitherto hidden contents. The rivers' secrets of their estuarine essence are left behind. The storm exposes proof of Tay's "inner life". The contents of the net-like river are also deposits "unsorted" across town. As a result, the final lyrics of "Springs" are displays of disappointments rather than discoveries of meaning. Human springs are the non-human fall, and "*there is nothing can be done*"(l.7), her adoption of Scots as a literary language is a reclaiming of linguistic diversity, a powerful proof of the potential of literature to take concrete action in defense of a planet increasingly under attack. "and a salmon /dead flung beneath the see-saw" (ll.14-15).

the town‘s last fishing boat

raved at the pier-head, then went down; diesel

corrupted water cascaded into front yards, coal-holes,

garages, and *there's naethin ye can dae,*

said the old boys, the sages, which may be true; but the river –

what have you left us? Evidence of an inner life, secrets

of your estuarine soul hawked halfway (ll.4-10)

Learning these "secrets" is part of Jonathan's ecological ethics that leads to that hoped "being " between the human and nonhuman world to reach the over-soul state. This philosophy provides people with opportunities for self-discovery, it helps to have a more fulfilling, intuitive spirituality than lock-stepping into religious dogma. It is concerned with what is concealed, not obvious, and must be discovered by non-discursive intuition. In this poem, an estuary is a substantially contained coastal body of seawater that receives water from one or more rivers or streams and has free access to the open sea and "estuarine soul" that Jamie wants to know how to have. Ordinary living is not going to provide Jamie (or whomever the persona is) what she is seeking or yearning for, to be in the world in an authentic way, and to enhance this connection, in theory,' 'should lead us beyond any regular experience", because it has a changing influence on lives, relationships and how we perceive things. It is not only about; being but also about acting, it entails a search for higher ideals, inner peace, and things that give life purpose'.

Methodology

This research primarily examines the concepts of being and existence in the world through the lens of Martin Heidegger's existentialist philosophy and applies these ideas to Kathleen Jamie's poetic perspectives.

In conclusion, Jamie‘s poetry succeeds in evoking a sense of place and representing the experience of being in the world. Her poetry demonstrates a departure from the dominant human-centered worldview, aiming to emphasize the relationships between humans and the planet. The lyrical aspect of her work fully expresses the merging of the person with the world. Jaime emphasizes that habitat is more significant than clan, and location is more important than nation and state in a world where the beauty of reality surpasses that of the virtual. Guided by the philosophy of Martin Heidegger.

The application of Heidegger to analyze Jaimes's poems and allegories is thus a useful preparation for pursuing the methods of any society because it is necessary to have some knowledge of the law of correspondence to pursue that object. To investigate unexplained laws of nature and psychic powers latent in man, one must understand how the nature of man is related by analogy to the nature of the planetary chain on which he evolves, and one must gain some proficiency in applying the law of analogy in detail. A man cannot use his powers or the hidden forces of nature until he understands them, and he cannot learn to understand them unless he constantly applies himself to learning about them. As for the recommendations for further studies, the researcher recommends analysis the Taoistic aspects in Jamies's poems.

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