UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE – FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA
ÚSTAV ANGLOFONNÍCH LITERATUR A KULTUR

Renderings of the Self: The Theme of Fluid Identity in the Work of Jackie Kay

Ztvárnění sebe sama: Téma fluidní identity v díle Jackie Kay

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

Vedoucí bakalářské práce (Supervisor):

PhDr. Soňa Nováková, CS.

Zpracovala (Author)

Anežka Stehlíková

Studijní obor (Subject):

Anglistika – amerikanistika

Praha, květen 2020

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Above all, I would like to thank my supervisor, PhDr. Soňa Nováková, CSc. for the patient guidance, encouragement and assistance she has provided throughout my BA studies. Likewise, I am beyond grateful for the support, advice and inspiration that she has given me in the course of writing this thesis, which would never have been completed without her.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Jackie Kay, skotská literatura, současné spisovatelky, fluidní identity, gender, skotská národní identita

KEY WORDS

Jackie Kay, Scottish literature, contemporary women writers, fluid identity, gender, Scottish national identity

ABSTRACT

The bachelor thesis performs an analysis of the treatment of Scottish national and gender identity in selected poetry and fiction of the third modern Scots Makar, Jackie Kay (1961-), and argues that the author's works, regardless of genre, portray identities as self-invented and fluid rather than fixed and environment- or birth-determined. Kay's speakers, characters and narrators recurrently (re)construct their own identities, often in defiance of socially given norms, and, consequently, display one's ability to flexibly formulate own self-concept. The argumentation demonstrating the given depiction of identities is based on an examination of the poetry collection *The Adoption Papers* (1991), the novel *Trumpet* (1998), and the short story collection *Why Don't You Stop Talking* (2002) respectively.

The analysis of Kay's poetry and fiction is preceded by the survey of the theoretical framework germane to the identity subcategories focused on in the thesis: Scottishness and gender identity. Conceiving both as social identities which, among other components, constitute an individual's self-concept, the overview provides the chief approaches to the formation of each identity category separately. Delimiting the civic, ethnic and cultural perception of Scottish national identity and the essentialist, constructivist and performative perception of gender identity, this review expressly accentuates which approaches understand the pertinent category as relatively flexible and individual-dependent and therefore are to be presumed as inclined to by the subsequently examined literary works. Furthermore, in view of the inevitable interaction of the components constituting one's self-concept, this chapter contains a succinct discussion of the two identities' intersection.

A separate chapter is dedicated to the examination of the abovementioned identity portrayal in each selected work. The rendering of Scottishness and gender identity is assessed in separate sections, with the analysis focusing on speakers, characters and narrators who display identity (re)invention. Concurrently, it is observed that the fluid self-construction is

performed not only due to variability in time but also in confrontation of socially established standards and boundaries: the characters and speakers are recurrently viewed as nonconformist by the majority of the society, this for example owing to the colour of their skin, their transgenderism or inability to bear children. However, these idiosyncrasies enable the characters to (re)define their identities, cross artificially established borders separating the proper and improper images of Scottishness and gender, and, subsequently, validate the significance of personal choice in self-construction.

With the works being polyvocal, representing a variety of perspectives and consequently accentuating identity flexibility and self-definition, the thesis also claims that Kay verbalises the experience of socially apparently marginal voices whilst (re)delineating ostensible contradictions as authentic modes of existence. Thus, Kay's characters, identifying with the place of birth, language, everyday objects as well as cultural heritage of other countries, render Scottishness unique and transcultural. Additionally, they become women and men not by virtue of their anatomy, inborn characteristics, or social determination, but via acts of parental love and expressions of gendered behaviour, such as gestures, mannerism, or wearing specific clothes. Therefore, the analysis of each selected title repeatedly demonstrates that Kay's work endorses the fluidity of identity as well as human capability of self-invention, encouraging social diversity and difference.

ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce provádí analýzu vyobrazení skotské národní a genderové identity ve vybrané poezii a próze třetí moderní národní skotské básnířky, Jackie Kay (1961-), a argumentuje, že její díla, nezávisle na žánru, vykreslují identity jako vytvořené jedincem a fluidní, spíše než fixní a vrozené či určené okolním prostředím. Lyrické subjekty, postavy a vypravěči Kay opakovaně (re)konstruují své vlastní identity, často navzdory sociálně daným normám, a tudíž znázorňují schopnost flexibilně formulovat své sebepojetí. Argumentace ukazující toto ztvárnění identit je založena na rozboru básnické sbírky *The Adoption Papers* (1991), románu *Trumpet* (1998), a sbírky povídek *Why Don't You Stop Talking* (2002), v tomto pořadí.

Vlastní analýze poezie a prózy Kay předchází přehled teoretického rámce relevantního vzhledem k podkategoriím identity, na které se tato práce soustředí, tj. skotská národní a genderová identita. Považujíc obě za sociální identity, které spolu s dalšími složkami tvoří sebepojetí jedince, toto shrnutí uvádí hlavní přístupy ke vzniku každé kategorie identity jednotlivě. Tento souhrn, který vymezuje občanské, etnické a kulturní pojetí skotské národní identity společně s přístupy k genderu založenými na esencialismu, sociálním konstruktivismu a performativitě, také zdůrazňuje, které z daných teorií pokládají příslušnou kategorii za relativně flexibilní a určenou jedincem a tudíž lze předpokládat, že se k nim rozebíraná literární díla budou přiklánět. Kromě toho, vzhledem k nevyhnutelné interakci jednotlivých součástí lidského sebepojetí, tato kapitola obsahuje stručnou diskuzi intersekce skotské národní identity a genderové identity.

Analýze výše zmíněného vyobrazení identity v každém z vybraných děl je věnována samostatná kapitola. Ztvárnění skotské národní identity a genderové identity je vyhodnocováno v oddělených sekcích, s tím, že rozbor se soustředí na lyrické subjekty, postavy a vypravěče, kteří vykazují známky (re)invence identity. Zde je pozorováno, že fluidní konstrukce sebe sama

je vykonávána nejenom vlivem proměnlivosti v čase, ale i jako konfrontace společensky vytvořených standardů a limitů: většina společnosti opakovaně vnímá postavy a mluvčí v díle Kay jako nekonformní, například z důvodu barvy pleti, transgenderismu nebo impotence. Tato ojedinělost nicméně umožňuje postavám (re)definovat vlastní identitu, překonat uměle vytvořené hranice oddělující vhodné a nevhodné projevy skotské národní identity a genderu, a následně prokázat významnost osobní volby v procesu vytváření sebe sama.

Jelikož vybraná díla jsou vícehlasá, reprezentují rozmanité perspektivy, a tedy zdůrazňují proměnlivost identity a možnost definice sebe sama, tato práce také tvrdí, že Kay formuluje zkušenosti těch, jejichž hlasy mohou působit společensky nevýznamně, a tímto (opětovně) vymezuje zdánlivé kontradikce a definuje je jako autentické způsoby existence. Spisovatelčiny postavy, které se ztotožňují s místem narození, jazykem, každodenními předměty i kulturním dědictvím jiných zemí, tak činí skotskou národní identitu jedinečnou a transkulturní. Vedle toho, ženami a muži se tyto postavy stávají ne kvůli anatomii, vrozeným vlastnostem nebo společenské determinaci, ale díky činům vyjadřujícím rodičovskou lásku a projevům genderově zabarveného chování, včetně nošení určitého oblečení, gestikulace a celkového vystupování. Analýza každého z vybraných titulů tudíž opakovaně dokazuje, že literární dílo Jackie Kay podporuje fluiditu identity stejně tak jako lidskou schopnost sebe-invence, a tímto způsobem povzbuzuje společenskou diverzitu a různorodost.

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1. Introduction

The main objective of this bachelor thesis is to perform an analysis of the theme of identity in three selected works of the third modern Makar, Scots poet laureate, Jackie Kay (1961-). Kay, an openly lesbian Black Scottish writer currently living in England, is a daughter of a white Scottish mother and a Nigerian father. Born in Edinburgh, she was adopted by a white couple by whom she had been brought up in Glasgow. As that of a prolific and critically acclaimed writer, Kay's work traverses a wide variety of genres, comprising literature for adult and children readers both. Holding the position of the third modern Scots Makar since 2016, Kay is predominantly viewed as a poet; nonetheless, she has published numerous prose works, including three short story collections and one novel, as well as several plays. In view of the wide range the author's bibliography encompasses, the first published titles of three selected genres have been chosen for the subsequent analysis. Namely, these are the poetry collection *The Adoption Papers* (1991), the novel *Trumpet* (1998), and the short story collection *Why Don't You Stop Talking* (2002).

Kay has previously expressed a keen interest in the potential fluidity of identity and people's capability of self-invention,[1] which perspective prominently manifests itself in her fiction and poetry alike. Correspondingly, the predominant aim of this thesis is to argue that the author's works, regardless of genre, depict various interrelated identity subcategories as changeable and self-constructed, frequently in a way that represents a subversion of socially established standards and fixities. Necessarily selective, the primary focus will be on two prominently rendered categories, both of which are based on social group membership: Scottish national identity and gender identity. Demonstrating the pervasiveness of the abovementioned identity characterisation, the genre variety of the works on which the subsequent argumentation

[1] Jackie Kay, "Jackie Kay," *New Blood*, ed. Neil Astley (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1991) 73.

will be based shall enable to emphasize the idiosyncrasies of each individual title as well as compare their analogous features.

In order to accurately ascertain the way Kay's work portrays Scottishness and gender, here understood as social identities belonging among the components of human self-concept, the following pages will provide a survey of the relevant theoretical framework and establish germane terminology. It shall be crucial to recognise the identity markers each approach to the specific category values, as well as whether it conceives the phenomenon as more reliant on the individual's will and thus fluid, or as more reliant on set determinations and thus fixed. The chapter will demonstrate that the main theories of the nature of Scottishness and gender may be classified into three groups respectively. As to the former, the currently most popular (politically, academically and it appears that also statistically) perspective is the civic one, which emphasises the significance of the place of birth, territory and democratic conduct, thereby encouraging diversity and flexible inclusiveness. Contrariwise, the ethnic approach understands Scottishness as based on one's origins and bloodline, which inevitably offers a more exclusive stance. Finally, the cultural interpretation of Scottishness in a way merges the previous ones, encompassing a wide range of markers which may enable a fluid (re)identification with the given group but also accentuate the limitations faced by those who lack cultural representation in their society.

As to gender identity, it shall be seen that the currently most widely accepted approach, Judith Butler's notion of gender performativity, affirms said identity's changeability and the role of the individual in its formation. Furthermore, in Butler's view, the word gender represents a verb rather than a state. The remaining approaches, essentialism and constructivism, adopt a more fixed perspective of gender conceived as an innate attribute or determined externally: the former equates it with a specific feminine or masculine essence, and the latter equates it with a male or female biological makeup to which social discourse ascribes a proper expression.

Finally, as it is vital to take into account the fact that the identities composing one's self-concept do not exist individually but interact with one another, a consideration of the intersection of Scottishness and gender identity is indispensable, and, accordingly, a brief discussion will be devoted to it.

Justifiably, understanding the theoretical scale is imperative in order to recognise the identity markers Kay's characters use to (re)invent their identities, often in resistance to the socially perpetuated notions of the normal. Consequently, the thesis intends to claim that most of the characters do not draw on the markers valued by a single approach in the process of their self-invention but rather combine more of them to create a unique identity, displaying fluidity not only in the recurrent process of identity formation but also in the destabilisation of distinct, often artificially founded boundaries. Kay herself has stated in an interview with Nancy Gish that, for her, "[t]he self is multitudes. The self is complex and often contradictory."[2] Congruently, it shall be observed that much of her fiction redefines ostensible contradictions as exceptional, but nonetheless valid self-concepts, rendering the literary space of her works a gallery of diverse ways of being human.

Significantly, all the works that will subsequently be analysed are characterised by multivocality and multitudinous perspectives, their form itself consequently enacting flexibility and self-definition. A separate chapter will be dedicated to the study of each work, in which the rendering of Scottishness and gender identity shall be examined respectively, focusing on the personae, characters and narrators who illustrate the process of identity (re)construction. As to Scottishness, it shall be maintained that Kay repeatedly criticises its prevalent equation with whiteness and questions this social attitude by having Black characters assert themselves as Scottish by means of an extraordinary amalgamation of identity markers, most frequently

[2] Jackie Kay, "Adoption, Identity and Voice: Jackie Kay's Innovations of the Self," interviewed by Nancy K. Gish, in *Imagining Adoption: Essays on Literature and Culture,* ed. Marianne Novy (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004) 174.

merging cultural and civic values. As to gender identity, a theme most evidently dealt with in *Trumpet*, the range of subjects that Kay considers is extensive, including not only transgenderism but also comparatively unanticipated forms of internal conflict which result in identity (re)invention, such as the inability to bear children, lesbian parentage or merely a deviation from the socially established standards of femininity. Therefore, it shall be argued that, rejecting the notion of gender as corresponding to one's biological makeup, social inscription or a specific inborn "essence," the works endorse gender understood as a performance largely dependent on the will of the individual.

2. Identities: Theoretical Framework and Characteristics

Discussions of the various identities detectable in today's world span an extensive assortment of disciplines and often relate to the circumstances and spatio-temporal variables that influence the individual. The following sections may, accordingly, offer countless possible definitions and theories. Nevertheless, in agreement with the qualities argued to be thematised in Jackie Kay's work, emphasis is placed on those demarcations that elucidate the fluidity of identity and the process of self-construction. Before progressing to deliberations of distinct identity categories, a clarification of what is understood by identities in general is imperative. Daphna Oyserman et al. assert that these

> are the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles and social group memberships that define who one is […]. Identities are not the fixed markers people assume them to be but instead are dynamically constructed in the moment. Choices that feel identity-congruent in one situation do not necessarily feel identity-congruent in another situation.[1]

This definition indicates the imminent role of the environment (geographical, social or other) in identity (re)construction. Correspondingly, Ronald L. Jackson understands identities to be, among others, frequently shifting, manifold, co-established by interaction and, thus, both public and private, and potentially either self-selected or imposed.[2] The listed characteristics imply the coexistence and recurrent reformulation of a gamut of identities that each individual oscillates between in adjusting to external circumstances.

The identities that one assumes comprise the self-concept, "a complex and dynamic system of learned beliefs and attitudes that one believes to be true about one's own personal existence."[3] Justifiably, a part of this phenomenon is constituted by one's social identities, comprehended by Tajfel and Turner as often emotionally charged entities, originating in the

[1] Daphna Oyserman, et al., "Self, Self-Concept and Identity," *Handbook of Self and Identity,* eds. Mark R. Leary and June Price Tangney (New York: The Guilford Press, 2012) 69-70.
[2] Ronald L. Jackson, ed. "Introduction," *Encyclopedia of Identity* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010) xxvi-xxvii.
[3] Cary Stacy Smith and Li-Ching Hung, "Self-Concept," *Encyclopedia of Identity,* ed. Ronald L. Jackson (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010) 674.

awareness and perception of one's own relation to certain social groups.[4] The subsequent sections examine identity categories that are precisely of this kind: both national and gender identity may be thought of as linked by virtue of their signifying an individual's affinity – often emotionally marked – to a larger social group with which he or she shares particular traits and characteristics. Necessarily, they will be treated from a selective perspective, and primarily separately. Nevertheless, it needs to be acknowledged that the identities supposed to compose one's self-concept do not function independently; rather, they influence one another. Namely, how a person perceives their national identity is likely to be related to the gender they identify with and vice versa. This intersectionality will be observed in the following literary analyses, but in order to detect it accurately an elucidation of the suitable theoretical framework as applicable to Scottish national and gender identity disjointedly is indispensable.

2.1. Scottish National Identity

2.1.1. General Insights

Examining a distinct type of identity, one is inevitably to ask what constitutes it, who and how forms it, and whether it is changeable or stable. As these enquiries are germane to national identity as well, this section aims to introduce the frequently suggested answers in connection with Scottish national identity, also termed Scottishness. What generates the grounds for its creation, is it determined externally or rather self-constructed, and is it a fixed entity or a fluid phenomenon the identification with and perception of which is liable to modification? There is a whole gamut of possible solutions to these queries and the following sections may, consequently, solely introduce the ideas that are most commonly agreed upon. In other words, notwithstanding the extensive scope of theories and definitions concerning the subject of Scottish national identity certain tendencies do prevail. To ascertain the prominent

[4] Henri Tajfel and John. C. Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour," *Psychology of Intergroup Relations,* eds. Stephen Worchel and William G. Austin (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1986) 16.

delineations of Scottishness, it is advantageous to discuss the applicable definitions of national identity in general.

Understandably, any nation's identity is likely to be modified in time, along with its features, characteristics and demarcations. Anthony Smith's definition aptly illustrates the voluminous dimensions that may comprise the entity, professing that the

> [n]ational identity and the nation are complex constructs composed of a number of interrelated components – ethnic, cultural, territorial, economic and legal-political. They signify bonds of solidarity among members of communities united by shared memories, myths and tradition.[5]

Moreover, for Smith, this unit based on an array of shared values also denotes self-definition in its "providing a powerful means of defining and locating individual selves in the world, through the prism of the collective personality and its distinctive culture."[6] Correspondingly, Hugh Seton-Watson, underlining the role of the individual's attitude and conduct, argues that "a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one."[7] Similarly individual-oriented is Tim Edensor's metaphor of national identity as performance, focusing on how it is "enacted and reproduced, informing and (re)constructing a sense of collectivism. The notion of performance also foregrounds identity as dynamic; as always in the process of production."[8] These insights, manifesting the multidimensionality and self-invented quality of national identity, also illustrate the diversity of factors that may be conclusive in the making of Scottishness as it appears in the last few decades, and just how rudimentary the following account will inevitably be.

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[5] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991) 15.
[6] Smith 17.
[7] Hugh Seton-Watson, N*ations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 2019) 5.
[8] Tim Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2002) 69.

2.1.2. Scottish Singularities

The theoretical scope to be recognised is signalled not only by the abovementioned multiplicities, but also by temporal mutability. The everlasting fluctuation of Scottishness, of its relation to Britishness, as well as of individual understanding of said nationality is observed by Tom Devine and Paddy Logue, who caution that "Scottishness itself meant different things at different periods, […and] was subject to change and reinvention."[9] The potential meanings and viewpoints are specified by Fiona Douglas, who asks whether Scottishness is initiated by being born in the country, one's ancestry and ethnicity, the country's history, or 'otherness' and non-Englishness.[10] This inventory anticipates the following considerations of Scottishness as predominantly defined either by territory, origins, or culture. The threefold model is reinforced by Stephen Shulman's dividing the content and components of national identity into (1) civic, including territory, citizenship, will and consent, political beliefs, institutions and rights, (2) ethnic, comprised of ancestry and race, and (3) cultural, incorporating entities such as language, religion and tradition.[11] It will be seen that while the first two approaches are often directly opposed, the third is to a degree an intersection that completes them.

According to Douglas, Scotland is unique by virtue of its inhabitants, their identification with Scottishness and their positions in regard to it.[12] Undeniably, national identity often serves as a distinguishing device, underlining an antagonism or exclusivity in relation to another group of people. Nathalie Duclos argues that while "a national identity is generally defined in opposition to an 'Other,' which is its rival for people's national loyalty, Scottishness is often characterized as being part of, or complementary to, Scottish people's other national identity:

[9] Tom M. Devine and Paddy Logue, eds. "Introduction," *Being Scottish: Perspectives on Scottish Identity Today* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002) i, ix.
[10] Fiona Douglas, *Scottish Newspapers, Language and Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008) 17.
[11] Stephen Shulman, "Challenging the Civic/Ethnic and West/East Dichotomies in the Study of Nationalism," *Comparative Political Studies* 35 (2002): 559.
[12] Douglas 20.

the British one."[13] Nevertheless, the 2011 Census data show a noteworthy trend: while 62% of all people stated that their identity was "Scottish only," the second most common answer, "Scottish and British identities only," was chosen by 18% and only 8% felt they had "British identity only."[14] The total of Scottish inhabitants who said they felt, at least to some degree, Scottish being 83% confirms the prominence of Scottishness in the country.

Further development of the Scottish/British identity binary and national awareness is to be expected in the 2021 Census, not only due to the United Kingdom's leaving the European Union, but also due to Scottishness' being regularly assumed by younger respondents. An analogous inclination has been manifested by the results of the UK's 2019 general election, where the Scottish National Party (SNP) gained 45% of the vote, which is 8.1% more than in the 2017 general election,[15] feasibly indicating a growing support in favour of Scottish national interests and, by extension, another independence referendum. While these facts suggest that the ratio of people identifying as distinctly Scottish is high, there are substantial differences as to what they think it implies. As Douglas argues, "Scottishness is not a monolithic unalterable identity but rather it is a dynamic process whereby individuals can 'stake claim' to those facets of Scottishness that appeal to them, and they are therefore directly involved in the construction and maintenance of that identity."[16] These qualities may be selected from a wide and layered assortment, associated, for instance, with the land, blood or culture.

2.1.3. Civic Perspective: Territory and Citizenship

It has been shown above that the values national identity is erected on from the civic perspective are predominantly the territory, citizenship and political ideology. To clarify the

[13] Nathalie Duclos, "The Idiosyncrasies of Scottish National Identity," *National Identity: Theory and Research,* eds. Richard R. Verdugo and Andrew Milne (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2016) 84.
[14] Office for National Statistics, *2011 Census: Aggregate Data*, UK Data Service (Edition: June 2016) <http://dx.doi.org/10.5257/census/aggregate-2011-1> 14 Nov. 2019.
[15] "Results of the 2019 General Election in Scotland," *BBC News*, BBC <https://www.bbc.com/news/election/2019/results/scotland> 14 Dec. 2019.
[16] Douglas 20.

idiosyncrasies of the civic and ethnic models, Leith and Soule define the former as associated with "the perceived values of a democratic polity – open, pluralistic, civic and inclusive – while the other emanates from a place of bounded emotional belonging and ancestry – closed, homogenous, non-civic and exclusive."[17] Additionally, civic identity is complex and multi-layered: as Calvin L. Troup acknowledges, it ranges "[f]rom informal community activities to formalized political processes and state affairs, […it] involves formation and negotiation of personal and group identities as they relate to presence, role, and participation in public life."[18] In emphasizing the local sector, including community culture and customs, Troup's explanation connects the civic approach with the cultural one. Nevertheless, in the case of Scottishness, it is the political, state level that is of particular importance.

It ought to be acknowledged that Scotland has essentially formed a stateless nation since the 1707 Act of Union; thus, the 1999 founding of the Scottish Parliament has notably increased its potential of self-government within the UK.[19] The significance of this capacity has recently been signalled by Scotland's vote to remain in the EU and ensuing talks of its independence. Neil Davidson asserts that in the second half of the twentieth century, with Scottishness being increasingly culturally prominent, "there seems to be a division between Scottish national consciousness, which has grown, and Scottish nationalism, which has not."[20] Regardless, studied within the customary civic/ethnic binary, Scottishness is, as David McCrone and Frank Bechhofer claim, often officially depicted as the former by the country's elites and political classes,[21] presumably due to its diplomatic inclusiveness. This also involves the SNP, which as claimed by Mitchell et al., "is civic in the sense that its policies are amongst the most liberal of

[17] Murray Leith and Daniel P. J. Soule, *Political Discourse and National Identity in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011) xii.
[18] Calvin L. Troup, "Civic Identity," *Encyclopedia of Identity,* ed. Ronald L. Jackson (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010) 80.
[19] Peter Childs and Mike Storry eds. *British Cultural Identities* (London: Routledge, 2002) 37.
[20] Neil Davidson, *The Origins of Scottish Nationhood* (London: Pluto Press, 2000) 2.
[21] David McCrone and Frank Bechhofer, *Understanding National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) 159.

any mainstream party in the United Kingdom on citizenship, emigration, and multiculturalism."[22] Moreover, McCrone distinguishes between those who hold the civic perspective, the "civics," and those who prefer the ethnic point of view, the "ethnics:" while the "ethnics" are likely "to be older, to be lower class, to have no educational qualifications, and slightly more likely to say they are 'Scottish not British,' […the "civics"] tend to be younger, of higher social class, and better educated."[23] Although democratic engagement is in this view indispensable, equally formative is the territory.

Land, space and the daily life within it are some of the key facets of Scottishness. Michael Rosie supposes that an individual born, raised and living in Scotland "will not only self-identify as Scottish, but be accepted as Scottish by others. Scottishness, at least superficially is 'inclusive', based as it is on place of birth and upbringing, rather than on 'bloodline.'"[24] Simpson and Smith, drawing on the 2011 Census data, show that this position is, indeed congruent with that of the residents themselves: "94% of the Scotland-born choose Scottish as their national identity alone or with other identities, but less than half of those born outside Scotland do so."[25] Additionally, the relative comprehensiveness of the civic position and the significance of territory may be illustrated on the question of holding passport, where 79% of the "civics," as opposed to the 46% of the "ethnics," said that "'anyone living permanently in Scotland' should be entitled to one."[26] Practically, this means that anyone born in Scotland and participating in the country's civic life may consider themselves Scottish regardless of their ancestry, ethnicity or culture. Therefore, this standpoint contrasts with the abovementioned ethnic assessment.

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[22] James Mitchell, Lynn Bennie, and Rob Johns, *The Scottish National Party: Transition to Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 116.
[23] McCrone, Bechhofer 154.
[24] Michael Rosie, "A' the Bairns O' Adam? The Ethnic Boundaries of Scottish National Identity," *Nationalism, Ethnicity and Boundaries: Conceptualising and understanding identity through boundary approaches*. Eds. Jennifer Jackson and Lina Molokotos-Liederman (London: Routledge, 2015) 125.
[25] Ludi Simpson and Andrew Smith "Who Feels Scottish? National Identities and Ethnicity in Scotland," *Dynamics of Diversity: Evidence from the 2011 Census* (Manchester: The University of Manchester, 2014) 1.
[26] McCrone, Bechhofer 154-155.

2.1.4. Ethnic Perspective: Ancestry and Ethnicity

As has already been suggested, contemporary stances on national identity often tend to adopt either the civic, ethnic or cultural perspective. The second approach emphasises shared ethnicity and ancestry of those forming and belonging to the nation, which renders its position considerably exclusive and fixed. In its view, it is not sufficient to be born in Scotland, live there, or actively participate in its political and cultural life, as is supposed by the civic approach; rather, one needs to be of Scottish descent. Shulman cautions that while one may, for example, adopt a culture to join the nation, "it is very difficult for 'outsiders' to meet the ethnic criteria because one cannot choose or change one's genes or ancestors."[27] It will be observed that this attitude is consequently marginal in the analysed works, although it may appear conclusive in forming Scottishness, especially when one recognises the Scottish clan history, which is still highly culturally projected, even if possibly more prominently expressed abroad by Scottish migrants than in Scotland itself.[28]

It has previously been shown that the civic viewpoint is more often adopted officially, presumably for its openness to diversity, while those that express a preference for the ethnic criteria form a minority. Still, McCrone states that just "under a third of Scots favour a more 'ethnic' viewpoint."[29] The expression of ethnic or ancestral sentiment is recurrently enabled by particular language, such as: "'they are Celts; we are Saxons', 'it's genetic'; 'something to do with the blood system'; 'we are not them'[.]"[30] Also, although it is frequently underlined that Scotland is increasingly ethnically diverse, according to the 2011 Census 84% of Scottish inhabitants identify as "White: Scottish," with ethnic minority groups forming 4% of the population.[31] Nevertheless, national identity is observed to be "currently more ethnically

[27] Shulman 559.
[28] Reshmi Sen, "Clan Identity," *Encyclopedia of Identity*, ed. Ronald L. Jackson (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010) 85.
[29] McCrone, Bechhofer 155.
[30] McCrone, Bechhofer 161.
[31] *2011 Census*.

inclusive in Scotland than is English in England,"[32] and Andrew Smith declares that the growing diversity does not result in "'polarised islands of different groups' but a 'mosaic of differently mixed ideas.'"[33] Correspondingly, Rosie, interested in the limitations of Scottishness and the verity of its comprehensiveness, concludes that in its creation the greatest emphasis is indeed placed on territory and one's place of birth, accentuating "the extent to which Scottishness is constructed around ideas of 'place' rather than of 'tribe.'"[34] However, hereditary qualities may be found within the nation's cultural aspect as well.

2.1.5. Cultural Perspective: Language, Symbols and Tradition

As culture may be defined in countless ways, the approach which derives its foundations from it is wide-ranging. Generally, its basis is a shared, common culture, which is understandably vital in Scotland, and which, inevitably, includes an array of elements. The cultural approach is, in a way, also an intersection of the previously introduced perspectives: traditions and language are inherently connected with ancestral heritage and clan identity is described as a facet of a nation's culture;[35] however, it has also been shown that participation in communal and cultural public life is considered a layer of civic national identity. Nonetheless, it ought to be cautioned that regarding such national identity as is Scottishness, which has plausible civic as well as ethnic markers, culture is likely to operate more on a supplementary and performative level. Therefore, Roel Daamon warns that in contrast to colonized peoples' sense of national identity, culture is not "a sole pinnacle of Scottishness, for Scotland has managed to retain several distinctive national institutions such as a different legal and educational system, not to mention religion and language."[36] The crucial role of language

[32] Simpson, Smith 2.
[33] "How Has Ethnic Diversity Changed in Scotland?" *University of Glasgow*, Policy Scotland, 27 May 2014 <https://policyscotland.gla.ac.uk/ethnic-diversity-changed-scotland/> 14 Nov. 2019.
[34] Rosie 133.
[35] Sen 83.
[36] Roel Daamon, "A Confluence of Narratives: Cultural Perspectives in Postmodernist Scottish Fiction," *Cultural Identity and Postmodern Writing*, eds. Theo D'haen and Pieter Vermeulen (New York: Rodopi, 2006) 123-124.

will be considered within the cultural scheme here, but other, perhaps more figurative, constituents should be discussed first.

Significantly, Scotland has its own national cultural institutions such as the National Museum, the National Gallery or the National Theatre. Furthermore, it has its own symbols and traditions, some of which are considerably stereotyped (tartanry) but also possibly reclaimed, such as the thistle or the Highland games. James Mitchell declares that the variety of Scotland's culture, the Kailyard school and its novels, myths, historical figures, works of authors such as Robert Burns and Walter Scott, print media and local press all "ensured the survival of Scottish identity"[37] when it couldn't be based on the civic markers. Currently, as explained by Shulman above, it is culture that facilitates self-construction and fluidity of national identity as its values are reasonably available to be adopted by the individual. Anthony P. Cohen claims that "[t]he histories, literatures, folklores, traditions, languages, musics, landscapes, and foods of Scotland are social facts on which individuals draw in providing themselves with a shared vocabulary."[38] Language being a communicational device, it itself embodies a manifest indication of Scottish identity.

Scotland is linguistically rich; accent is one of the most straightforward markers of the nation's identity. Less frequently emerging is Gaelic, which, despite having fewer speakers, is acknowledged to have a deep symbolical value as well. Additionally, Scots, or Lallans, a language with its own orthography, lexis and grammar and considerably more speakers, is also considered significant:[39] as McClure affirms, "the Scots language is a mark of the distinctive identity of the Scottish people."[40] The linguistic indicators are frequently incorporated in the nation's literature and will thus be rediscovered in the following analyses as one of the

[37] James Mitchell, *The Scottish Question* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 36.
[38] Anthony P. Cohen, "Personal Nationalism: A Scottish View of Some Rites, Rights, and Wrongs," *American Ethnologist* 23.4 (Nov. 1996): 805
[39] Chris Chhim and Éric Bélanger, "Language as a Public Good and National Identity: Scotland's Competing Heritage Languages," *Nations & Nationalism* 23. 4 (Oct. 2017): 932-933.
[40] J. Derrick McClure, *Why Scots Matters* (Edinburgh: The Saltire Society, 2009) 69.

multitudinous means of installing nationality. It is ultimately unfeasible to include all the multiplicities of a culture as abundant as the Scottish one, also in view of its current global appeal, but it ought to be considered that it enables the preservation and positive continuation of the national identity and allows the individual to (re)form own affinity with it and exhibit the nation's uniqueness. Tim Edensor proclaims that the identity of a nation is

> partly sustained through circulation of representations of spectacular and mundane cultural elements, including […] the landscapes, everyday places and objects, famous events and mundane rituals, gestures and habits, and examples of tradition and modernity which are held in common by a large number of people.[41]

This lucidly insinuates just how complex a scrutiny is required to do justice to Scottishness in regard to its culture, its shifting varieties and peoples: as Cohen perceives, Scotland is largely heterogeneous and plural.[42]

2.2. Gender Identity

To revisit the theoretical framework formulated at the beginning of this chapter, gender identity is another category complying with the demarcated parameters of an identity that partially constitutes one's self-concept, signals an affinity with a social group, and is necessarily a manifold and complex entity co-established by interaction. The previous section was concerned with the ways Scottish national identity is established and formulated, what facets constitute it and to what extent it is either determined or fluid; a similar outline may also be adopted when inquiring into the elucidations of gender identity. What basis is a substance appearing to be as vital as one's gender erected on, who does so, under which conditions, and just how permanent is this formation? Essentially taken to signify the individual's identification with one of the genders, now commonly understood to be socially perpetuated constructs, there are still varying criteria expected to be satisfied for the identity to be accepted.

[41] Edensor 139.
[42] Cohen 805.

The general understanding of gender identity, not inevitably interrelated with biological sex, thus evaluates the substance "on a continuum of how a person identifies himself or herself on a spectrum of masculine-androgynous-feminine."[43] This assumption signals another trait of the entity: namely, it is no more considered stable, for, according to Philomena Essed et al., "the ways in which gender is lived are highly fluid, subject to perpetual sociocultural redefinition and to individual interpretation and expression."[44] Justifiably, the demarcations of what gender and the corresponding identity are built on are not nearly as unanimous as these general observations may suggest. Rather, the approaches have evolved in time under the influence of sociocultural variables and the growing awareness of intersectionality. Although the following account is in no way exhaustive and serves more as a preliminary theoretical framework within which operates the analysis of gender in Kay's literary works, there are currently recognised three most frequent categories of gender definitions: the essentialist, constructivist and performative paradigms.[45] The three sections, each of which aims to explain the idiosyncrasies of one approach, will be followed by a brief exploration of the intersection of gender identity and Scottishness.

2.2.1. Essentialism: Inborn and Fixed Gender

Representing the earliest approach to gender identity, a clarification of gender essentialism is necessary especially as it functions as a statement against which argue the subsequent theories and ensuing literary works both. What is seen as disputable about this, debatably most conservative, attitude is its judging gender as innate and stable. In its view, the feminine or masculine "essence" within each person "dictates that persons' gender(ed)

[43] Judy Elizabeth Battagalia, "Gender," *Encyclopedia of Identity*, ed. Ronald L. Jackson (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010) 305.
[44] Philomena Essed, David Theo Goldberg and Audrey Kobayashi, eds. "Introduction," *A Companion to Gender Studies* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 1.
[45] Battagalia 305-306.

behaviour."[46] The fixed and predetermined nature of gender is further implied by the predominant placement of emphasis on the role of biological sex: the sexual anatomy, secondary sex characteristics, or the chromosomal and hormonal makeup, the combination of which traditionally installs the male/female binary. Gizelle V. Carr maintains that this view thus "surrogates body to identity by positioning gender as fixed, natural and immutable."[47] Consequently, the perspective is now supposed traditionalist with some of its implications controversial, and troubling especially for transgender people. Judith Howard and Jocelyn Hollander caution that while in this school of thought's recent research the assessments are not as radical anymore, the principal postulations still equate sex with gender, with the body forming the basis for ascribing an appropriate code of behaviour and characteristics to individuals belonging to either of the two genders.[48] Nevertheless, these features are precisely what lays the foundations for ensuing approaches to gender identity.

2.2.2. Constructivism: Social and Discoursal Gender Formation

If essentialism accentuates the role of an inborn and universal, if twofold, gendered substance in forming gender identity, determining the individual's behaviour as either masculine or feminine, and largely corresponding to the biological male/female binary, later approaches shift their focus on the function of social environment. Social constructivism in general, claims Vivien Burr, "replaces the self-contained, pre-social and unitary individual with a fragmented and changing, socially produced phenomenon who comes into existence and is maintained not inside the skull but in social life."[49] Thus, observing the way social discourse moulds reality entails considerations of its significantly shaping the individual and their social

[46] Battagalia 305.
[47] Gizelle V. Carr, "Black Americans and Transgender Identity," *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Psychology and Gender*, ed. Kevin L. Nadal (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 2017) 212.
[48] Judith A. Howard and Jocelyn A. Hollander, *Gendered Situations, Gendered Selves: A Gender Lens on Social Psychology* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2000) 27.
[49] Vivien Burr, *Social Constructionism* (London: Routledge, 2015) 122.

identities, including gender.[50] Gender, no more an innate essence, is thus granted by virtue of a societal agreement or systematic perpetuation within the particular society, nevertheless still customarily originating in one's biological sex.[51] While the previous attitude denied any sense of gender fluidity, constructivism acknowledges that the variables pertaining to, either geographically or historically specific, societies, cultures and their discourses will necessarily institute uniquely formed identities.

A particular society with its particular dynamisms and relations is thus of principal importance. Howard and Hollander aptly explain that recognising the social impact on gender identity justifies the flexibility and coexistence of diverse gendered behaviours across cultures, for "[m]any aspects of the situation are influential: the expectations of those with whom one interacts, the differential opportunities for interaction, and the differential rewards and punishments for behaviour accorded to women and men."[52] Still, as the terminology included in this quotation indicates, i.e. reward and punishment as the conditioning forces in the process of socialization, this approach to gender retains the control of its construction outside of the individual, requiring a suitable external expression of one's gender identity in form of conformist gender roles.[53] Therefore, while Maggi Price and Avy Skolnik connect fluidity with socialization and constructivism, because "[a]s an individual develops, their sense of self may diverge or converge with social pressures, thus making gender identity a malleable construct subject to change with personal growth and social forces,"[54] the constructivist perspective positions gender as the component of self-construct the control of which is largely external. In

[50] Battagalia 306.
[51] Battagalia 306.
[52] Howard, Hollander 29, 39.
[53] John Money, *Gendermaps: Social Constructionism, Feminism and Sexosophical History* (London: Bloomsbury, 1995) 25.
[54] Maggi Price and Avy Skolnik, "Gender Identity," *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Psychology and Gender*, ed. Kevin L. Nadal (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 2017) 666.

other words, on the basis of biological indicators, the society imposes a culturally specific and conformist expression of a gender on the individual.

2.2.3. Performativity: Doing and Re/Gendering

The final approach, commonly classified among the major and most influential theories of gender, is the performative paradigm, pioneered by the philosopher Judith Butler. To explain the basis of this theory Tim Edensor's view of national identity as a performance, included at the beginning of the previous chapter, may be juxtaposed here. These theories locate the charge of each of these identities in the hands of the individual: scrutinised from this perspective, both gender and national identity are, to an extent, initiated by one's acts. Furthermore, it is this concept that largely pertains to flexibility and fluidity of gender. Berthold Schoene emphasizes that "[a]lthough within any cultural context individual self-identification is controlled by imperatives of performative imitation of the socially acceptable and systematically requisite, there is always leeway for manoeuvre."[55] Thus, while the enactment is still culturally specific and not fully unrestricted, people may position themselves with relative autonomy through their conduct. Butler herself declares gender performativity to depends on a

> metalepsis, the way in which the anticipation of a gendered essence produces that which it posits outside itself. Secondly, performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration.[56]

In this conception, then, the category of gender is something that one does, repeatedly and within the outline of externally established expectations.

One of the ways in which this approach differs from constructivism is that discourse is understood not only to shape reality, but to be a reality in itself. Furthermore, Butler radically

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[55] Berthold Schoene, "Queer Politics, Queer Theory, and the Future of 'Identity': Spiralling out of Culture," *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Literary Theory*, ed. Ellen Rooney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 299.
[56] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006) xiv-xv.

erases the sex/gender binary that has dominated previous studies in this field and that has been insisted on by feminists of earlier generations. By claiming that not only is gender a culturally fabricated entity, but that the notion of sex itself is also artificially constructed rather than innately existing, Butler ultimately obliterates the traditional binary and concludes that "[i]t would make no sense, then, to define gender as the cultural interpretation of sex, if sex itself is a gendered category."[57] Returning to this notion in her later work, the scholar states sex to be "an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time,"[58] thereby questioning the notion of one having any inborn, or essential, identity at all. As Paul McIlvenney argues, Butler thus counteracts "both a deterministic linguistic constructivism and a voluntarism, and she opposes the latter by reminding us that discourse constitutes subjects, so that we do not have an essential identity prior to discourse."[59] Consequently, this interpretation of gender grants the individual a degree of choice in self-identification, as the person is assumed to be able to flexibly do and undo own gender identity by virtue of gendered behaviour and discourse. In other words, the performativity of gender enables the entity's multiplicities within the social and cultural framework. It is the person's conduct, for instance the way they walk, dress or talk, as Butler illustrates on hyperbolic performances such as drag, that (de)constructs gender and the corresponding identity, but inescapably in connection with the socially instigated pattern.

2.3. Intersections: Evaluating Scottishness and Gender Identity

Having introduced the two identities separately, it is pertinent to inquire into the nature of their interaction: as has been said, they belong among the constituents of one's self-concept and most people will identify with a specific gender and nationality both. It is, therefore, appropriate to ask how one's gender identity shapes their identification with Scottishness,

[57] Butler, *Gender Trouble* 10.
[58] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011) xii.
[59] Paul McIlvenny, "Critical Reflections on Performativity and the 'Un/Doing' of Gender and Sexuality in Talk," *Talking Gender and Sexuality* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2002) 140.

whether Scottishness is in any way a gendered identity, or whether the two may function as separate phenomena. Admittedly, these questions are not easily answered, scholars repeatedly criticise the lack of conclusive research in this area, and the subsequent paragraphs may, consequently, solely scratch the surface of the issue. Lynn Abrams states that at the beginning of the 21st century, Scotland "is a culturally diverse country where gender equality is high on the political agenda and where women regard themselves as equal in the national story."[60] Indeed, only in 2019 the Scottish government has introduced a set of reforms which seek to further install gender equality on a social and economic level, also in reaction to the first annual report of the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls, established in 2016 to assist in challenging existing inequalities.[61] This reflects the notion of Scottishness' being presented as a civic, inclusive identity, the identification with which should not be limited by gender no more than it is limited by other variables. Accordingly, David McCrone suggests that while an individual may choose to privilege certain identities over others, the preference of Scottishness over Britishness remains unaffected by gender, social class and other sections.[62] Nonetheless, historically, Scottishness and its symbols have been prevailingly associated with masculinity.[63]

If one is to consider the previously described outlines for defining gender identity, culture and society indisputably influence it. Therefore, gender expressions being plausibly connected with one's functioning within a nation, Scottish culture and community with their discourse and expectations may be presumed to particularly shape Scots' gender identities. Given its aforementioned masculine connotations, accentuated by the previously given cultural

[60] Lynn Abrams, "Introduction: Gendering the Agenda," *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700,* eds. Lynn Abrams, et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) 1.
[61] "Driving forward gender equality," *Scottish Government*, 26 June 2019 <https://www.gov.scot/news/driving-forward-gender-equality/> 13 Dec. 2019.
[62] David McCrone, "National Identity," *Renewing Democracy in Scotland*, ed. Jim Crowther, et al. (Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, 2003) 12-13.
[63] Esther Breitenbach and Lynn Abrams, "Gender and Scottish Identity," *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700,* ed. Lynn Abrams, et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) 17.

symbols of Scottishness, including the literature of Robert Burns, Walter Scott, and the Kailyard school, as well as the values famously displayed in the 1995 film *Braveheart,* it is justifiable that women found themselves in a position which necessitated a creation of own cultural representations to defy the role ascribed to them by the conservative gender binary. Correspondingly, it ought to be acknowledged that the situation on the cultural level relates to state politics in regard to the marginalised group. Indeed, Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden observe that in the artistic sphere, the 1990s mark an increase of "Scottish women writing from a more confident assumption that being female and being Scottish are linked and culturally positive."[64]

This may be due to the gradual increase of recognition of women in arts in the course of the second half of the twentieth century, congruent with the feminist movement, and largely multiplied from 1970 onward.[65] These efforts include compiling anthologies of works written by women, which, Siân Reynolds states, "fit[s] an established pattern in women's history: the rediscovery and re-evaluation of forgotten or neglected voices."[66] Still, in 2000 the editors of *Gender in Scottish History since 1700*, state that they realise the need to write about Scottish history inclusive of women's experience,[67] suggesting that the process of incorporating women into the Scottish story is still, at least to some degree, underway. Recalling Christianson and Lumsden's remark, or the fact that the last two Scots Makars were women, the quest seems to be efficacious. The position of Liz Lochhead, as a "a lone female voice, almost a token presence in Scotland,"[68] has changed and the country's literary world resonates with the diverse voices of Janice Galloway, A. L. Kennedy, Ali Smith, Carol Ann Duffy or Jackie Kay. Finally,

[64] Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden, eds. "Introduction," *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011) 1.
[65] Siân Reynolds, "Gender, the Arts and Culture," *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700,* eds. Lynn Abrams, et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) 185.
[66] Reynolds 172.
[67] Lynn Abrams, et al., eds, "Preface and Acknowledgements," *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) vii.
[68] Reynolds 188.

however, it ought to be recognised that the interplay of identities that compose one's self-concept is a complex phenomenon and the interaction will never include solely two identities without the interference of other major categories, such as ethnicity, class, or sexuality. Awareness of this multiplicity characterises the works of many contemporary authors, including Jackie Kay.

3. *The Adoption Papers* and Other Poetry

If one were to demarcate some of the main concerns of Jackie Kay's work, including her first poetry collection, *The Adoption Papers*, deviation from the norm would be among the foremost candidates. As Gabriele Griffin claims, throughout the sequence, "Kay subtly exposes and defamiliarizes notions of what is natural."[1] The display of nonconformity serves as a vehicle for examining identity (re)invention: those who do not meet the conventional criteria for belonging are forced to generate own identity markers and (re)assert themselves. Furthermore, containing three distinct voices signalled by different typesets (those of the biological mother, the adoptive mother and the adopted daughter), the sequence "The Adoption Papers" has fluidity ingrained in its very form. Its three parts, which in ten chapters encompass nineteen years, follow the story of transracial adoption and coming to terms with a marginal position within the society, all the while indicating pervasive identity fluctuation. Predominantly, this is the case of the daughter and her adoptive mother, who have to confront the normative formulations of national and gender identity respectively. Deryn Rees-Jones argues that Kay "throws into question ways of marking difference whether by colour or nationality, or gender, asking what it means to mother, to be a mother, to be Scottish, to be female, to be black."[2] These issues of self-definition will be illustrated both on the main poetic sequence and several other poems, exhibiting their pervasiveness in Kay's work.

3.1. Scottishness

It has been asserted above that the theories of Scottish national identity's formation are chiefly classified into three categories: the civic, the ethnic and the cultural approach. What "The Adoption Papers" demonstrates is a unique interplay of these attitudes. Importantly, whilst

[1] Gabriele Griffin, "In/Corporation? Jackie Kay's *The Adoption Papers,*" *Kicking Daffodils,* ed. Vicki Bertram (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997) 173.
[2] Deryn Rees-Jones, *Consorting with Angels: Essays on Modern Women Poets* (Tarset, Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 2005) 202.

unveiling the fluidity of various identities, the sequence questions and modifies the fixed ethnic view, partly replacing it by the alternative of self-chosen value system. The quest for Scottishness pervades the voice of the adoptee; this chiefly because of the colour of her skin, her origins, as well as her adoption. The girl's biological mother is a white woman from the Scottish Highlands, her biological father is a black man from Nigeria (nonetheless, it is not his person that the girl contemplates), and her adoptive parents are white Scottish communists from Glasgow. Growing up in the 70's and 80's, she faces the prevailing outlook which equates Scottishness with whiteness, the uncertainty of her parentage as well as the lack of cultural representation. Consequently, adoption highlights the mutability of her identity; she gradually begins a pursuit for her own self, shifting between different positions relative to who her real parents are and what her nationality, ethnicity and culture are based on. Ultimately, she exemplifies identity self-invention, asserting herself as a Black and Scottish daughter of her adoptive mother, combining civic, ethnic and even cultural indicators in the process of establishing a singular self-concept.

The static ethnic perception of Scottishness routinely discriminates against the daughter, marking her as alien on the basis of skin colour. Caroline Gonda asserts that Kay "has a powerfully angry sense of some white Scots' attempts to deny Black people full Scottishness."[3] Furthermore, C. L. Innes proclaims that "these poems challenge what in Britain are commonly assumed connections between racial and cultural inheritance."[4] Indeed, at school the girl encounters racism in form of the children's behaviour as well as in that of the authority: the teacher scolds her when she does not know a dance considered typical of the African ethnic

[3] Caroline Gonda, "An Other Country: Mapping Scottish/Lesbian/Writing," *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature,* ed. Christopher Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995) 10.
[4] C. L. Innes, "Accent and Identity: Women Poets of Many Parts," *Contemporary British Poetry: Essays in Theory and Criticism*, eds. James Acheson and Romana Huk (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996) 337.

group, telling her: "I thought / you people had it in your blood."[5] Gamal Elgezeery cautions that the "daughter's inability to perform a dance that most Africans are hypothetically used to dance attests to the fact that the daughter's Black identity is not a given or inherited fact."[6] Due to the antagonistic influences permeating her surroundings, the daughter ascribes wavering importance to her origins, oscillating between multitudinous contradictions which mirror the conflict between what she feels and what is imposed on her. Thus, despite the daughter's denunciation of people's "trying to make it matter, / the blood, the tie, the passing down," (29) her mother notes "colour matters to the nutters; / but she says my daughter says / it matters to her." (24) Nevertheless, this inconsistency eventually enables the self-invention of identity.

The fluxes are stabilized in the awareness of the possibility of being Black and Scottish simultaneously. Griffin clarifies that "[o]ne of the major preoccupations of Kay's poetry in this volume is this issue of the marked surface, of the appearance which establishes difference, and of how that difference is read."[7] Skin as a method of othering is also thematised in a poem which is just four lines long, three of them repeating "Scotland is having a heart attack,"[8] with the final line echoing the poem's title, "The Broons' Bairn's Black."[9] Another poem employing an apparent separation from the majority on the basis of skin colour is "In My Country," where the speaker recounts a direct confrontation with the ethnic view, being circled by a women who asks her where she comes from, judging the colour of her skin to be a contradiction of Scottishness. Significantly, the challenged speaker declares "'[h]ere,' I said, 'Here. These parts.'"[10] Analogously, the daughter in "The Adoption Papers" reclaims her Scottish ancestry together with Scotland as "the land I come from / the soil in my blood," (29) choosing the

[5] Jackie Kay, *The Adoption Papers* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 1991) 25. All subsequent quotations from this edition in this chapter will be indicated in the text by the page number in parentheses.
[6] Gamal Elgezeery, "Fluid Identity of the Daughter in Jackie Kay's *The Adoption Papers*," *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature* 4.4 (2015): 130.
[7] Griffin 174.
[8] Jackie Kay, *Darling: New and Selected Poems* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 2007) 159.
[9] Kay, *Darling* 159.
[10] Kay, *Darling* 82.

territorial civic marker of the place of birth as the foundation of her national identity. This section also elucidates the magnitude of self-construction as the girl assigns own worth to diverse symbols designating who she is. Similarly, self-constructed identity is noticeable in another of Kay's sequences, "Race, Racist, Racism," where the speaker emblematically selects the colour of his skin, all the while indicating the prospect of his choice's shifting:

> I will be grey or brown or red.
> I will be yellow or tan or beige.
> I will be oak or hazelnut or coffee.
> I will be toffee, I will be donkey.
> But I will not be black, said he.[11]

Undeniably, what frequently enables own affirmation of national identity in face of external rejection is language.

It has been contended above that language and accent are heralded as some of the most crucial and straightforward signals of Scottishness. Nancy Gish additionally observes that "[t]o be Scottish is, significantly, to be already aware of multiple identities and voices because every Scot is bilingual, trained in school to speak English, yet retaining Scots or Gaelic in varying degrees."[12] The phenomenon being ubiquitous in Kay's work, in "The Adoption Papers," accent is repeatedly highlighted as essential in representing similitude or discrepancy. When the adoptive mother meets the biological one, she immediately remarks on her "Highland voice," (19) and, comparably, when the biological mother imagines the person her daughter has become, she wonders whether she talks "broad Glasgow" (30) as her adoptive mother does. Furthermore, it is the child's accent in which her Scottish identity finds expression: "Ma mammy bot me oot a shop / Ma mammy says I was a luvly baby." (21) These linguistic markers, Gamal Elgezeery maintains, imply that the daughter "shares the ethnic identity of her adoptive mother. […Her] natural use of Scottish in the poetic sequence attests to the fact that she

[11] Kay, *Darling* 130.
[12] Nancy K. Gish, "Adoption, Identity and Voice: Jackie Kay's Innovations of the Self," *Imagining Adoption: Essays on Literature and Culture,* ed. Marianne Novy (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004) 185.

linguistically regards herself as having a Scottish identity."[13] This illuminates Kay's usage of language and accent as some of the means by which her characters, speakers and narrators may choose to construct own identity. This includes the adoptee, who thereby affirms herself as the Scottish daughter of her Glaswegian parents. However, as the daughter matures, the rendering of her accent disappears. It is not entirely clear whether her accent vanishes fully as she begins to hesitate in the identification with her adoptive mother, or as the society imposes on her claim that she is not truly Scottish, or whether it solely mirrors the fact that the adoptive mother's accent is mostly not depicted either. Nevertheless, this change may be understood as yet another enactment of identity alternation. Additionally, it goes without saying that many of Kay's speakers, frequently emerging merely as voices, are identified as Scottish solely on the basis of their accents and vocabulary. However, other aspects of culture may not be as easily obtained and adapted to.

Together with other collectively fabricated norms, the poetic sequence reflects on Scottishness as historically and culturally masculine. Multiply marginalized (as Scottish within the UK, as a Black person in Scotland, and as a woman within a nation whose culture traditionally correlates with masculinity), the daughter strives for a picture akin to herself, admitting: "Angela Davis is the only female person / I've seen (except for a nurse on TV) / who looks like me." (27) Initially expressing a desire of identification with unconventional models of femininity in the roles of Bette Davis, the "hot temper," (26) of Katherine Hepburn, the image of "Elizabeth Taylor, drunk and fat," (26), or the character of Jean Brodie, she ultimately seeks not only a woman, but one that shares the colour of her skin, a need that is multiplied by her adoptive mother's being white. Finally, she centres on the United States with its Blues, Bessie Smith and Angela Davis, all of whom provide her with self-recognition through an affinity with looks, origins and ideals. Relevantly, Gish repeatedly draws attention to the fact

[13] Elgezeery 130.

that Kay's voice is self-described as Scottish and Blue: "[s]pecifically, she uses the multiple 'different' form of identity she attributes to adoption to challenge dominant culture through the fusion of Black and Scottish and Blue."[14] Thus, the daughter's culture is not restricted to Scotland; moving freely among the transcultural spheres, she uses them to create a unique national identity and, by extension, self-concept. In this, identity is fluid not only due to its changeability, but also because "the various aspects of identity may have no clear-cut boundaries among them."[15] The transcultural representation provides a sense of ethnic belonging, language offers a clear expression of Scottishness, and so does the girl's place of birth, her Scottish parents and bringing up. Thus, the girl epitomises one's ability to variably formulate own self by synthesising identity markers across interdependent categories of national, ethnic, cultural and familial identities.

3.2. Gender Identity

While the daughter's quest for identity is largely connected with her origins, ethnicity and culture, representing a question which conceivably dominates the sequence, the adoptive mother's (re)evaluation of her own identity is inherently associated with gender and maternity. Indeed, Elgezeery claims that the girl's search for ethnic identity is concurrent with "the adoptive mother's search for her gender identity through adoption."[16] Further, if the daughter's voice is maintained to defy the fixed view of national identity, that of the adoptive mother is used to destabilise both the inflexible essentialist approach to gender and the constructivist view of social control, inclining preferably to the performative perspective instead. As Alison Lumsden asserts, while issues of gender are not that prominent in the sequence, "they are present and are again expressed in terms of a binary tension between essentialist and socially

[14] Gish 184.
[15] Elgezeery 125.
[16] Elgezeery 128.

constructed notions of femininity."[17] The omnipresence of gender is implied by the three voices, combining to tell the story and examine diverse personalities and consciousnesses, being those of women who deliberate on each other's roles in their own lives, all the while depicting experiences conventionally ascribed to their sex.

The entire sequence, and thereby collection, opens with the adoptive mother's confrontation of her woman's identity through a notion habitually associated with it: motherhood. Anita Ilta Garey explains that while "their identities as mothers are particularly salient in women's self-concepts […] some mothers have to struggle to claim their identities as mothers in a social world that defines them in opposition to dominant conceptions of motherhood."[18] This being the case of the adoptive mother facilitates an enactment of fluid (re)invention of identity via nonconformity. Maternity, in the adoptive mother's own view "that natural thing / that women do," (10) being something that she is excluded from renders an expression of failure in the biological and essentialist sense of gender. Griffin argues that here materialises "the presentation of an overweening desire for maternity which, by virtue of the identifications the poems invite, reinforces the notion that every woman wants to be a mother."[19] However, it is not to be assumed that the collection thereby endorses the givenness of the biological. On the contrary, the systematising view of gender as based on the reproductive organs and other biological markers is resisted through a departure from what is commonly understood as natural. Becoming a mother through adoption rather than childbirth, the woman has to uphold her identity as equally authentic and real; notwithstanding people telling her "'ah / but it's not like having your own child though is it,'" (23) she proudly maintains that it is love which makes her a mother rather than "this umbilical knot business." (23) This renunciation of

[17] Alison Lumsden, "Jackie Kay's Poetry and Prose: Construing Identity," *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers,* eds. Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011) 81.
[18] Anita Ilta Garey, "Motherhood" *Encyclopedia of Gender and Society*, ed. Jodi O'Brien (London: SAGE Publications, 2009) 585.
[19] Griffin 171.

the purely biological in preference to the performed creates a new value system enabling an identification both as a mother and a woman to someone formerly isolated from these categories.

Furthermore, the adoptive mother's discerning her own voice beneath that of her daughter's and observing their parallel mannerisms, in words of Gish contemplating their "physical connectedness,"[20] reciprocates the adoptee's favourable regard for deeds over genetics; in spite of the mother's internalised social anxieties, the daughter asserts "[n]ow I come from her, / the mother who stole my milk teeth / ate the digestive left for Santa." (20) When the woman states "she's my child, I have told her stories / wept at her losses, laughed at her pleasures," (23) she instigates mothering, and by extension gender, as performative, analogously to Irene Oh's declaration that "motherhood as performative emphasizes mothers' agency by focusing upon what mothers self-consciously do rather than what mothers biologically are."[21] Thus, the woman, once more oscillating between different positions under the influence of diverging social circumstances, is enabled to affirm both her womanhood and motherhood flexibly and by her actions: that is, in a way that is defined and controlled by herself rather than by any inborn qualities, primary characteristics or social hegemony. While the first section of the collection is more focused on maternity and its connection to gender is implicit, the second half offers more explicit explorations of the subject.

The part of the collection entitled "Severe Gale 8" may be characterised as an assortment of diverse figures used to examine the concept of the customary. Indeed, Griffin maintains that it "invites consideration of personas who push the boundaries of convention even further while insisting that they do so in the name of precisely those desires endorsed by conservative middle England, such as the wish to have children."[22] An example of a poem which thematises

[20] Gish 186.
[21] Irene Oh, "The Performativity of Motherhood: Embodying Theology and Political Agency," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 29.2 (Jan. 2009): 4.
[22] Griffin 172.

sexuality, gender, parentage and identity formation is "Mummy and Donor and Deirdre," which (again) incorporates several voices: those of a lesbian couple and their child, who is confronted by the standard view of family and gender roles and ostracised for not having a father. Gina Wisker observes that while the women worry about "how to manage fitting into the constraints of conventional situations, […the son] settles down […] to recognize that there are differences and different relationships, but everyday normality,"[23] thereby ratifying his own identity as well as that of the women. Perhaps more pointedly, the poem "Dressing Up," juxtaposes Scottish social and familial norms with gender identity. Here, a son, portraying the ability to perform gender identity through garments, stresses that his mother, for whom, ironically, masculinity equates certain clothes,[24] herself wears bruises from her husband. What the son is dressed in is a "highly-sexualised version of femininity,"[25] in Butler's terms a means of probing or parodying "the notion of an original or primary gender identity"[26] by its performance. Moreover, Griffin emphasised that the poem "raises the question of what violations are tolerable in a society, insisting that built into the dominant itself are transgressions which are ultimately more destructive than those engaged in by the ostracised outsiders."[27] Nevertheless, it is predominantly in Kay's only novel, *Trumpet*, that gender identity, its changeability and performative nature are underlined, likewise by means of clothes.

[23] Gina Wisker, *Post-Colonial and African American Women's Writing: A Critical Introduction* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000) 281.
[24] Rees-Jones 204.
[25] Rees-Jones 204.
[26] Butler, *Gender Trouble* 187.
[27] Griffin 175.

4. *Trumpet*

Another critically acclaimed work by Jackie Kay notable for its portrayal of the fluctuation and self-invention of identity is her, so far, only novel *Trumpet* (1998). Revolving around the story of a transgender trumpeter Joss Moody, who, after his death, is found to have been biologically female, the novel depicts a gamut of perspectives deliberating on the changeability of identities, the difference between the social and the personal and, among others, the nature of nationality and gender. Among these, the prevalent viewpoints are those of Joss's widow Millie, his adoptive son Colman, and the journalist Sophie Stones, who represents the conservative social domain. As Ali Smith asserts, "Kay's work, formally expansive and inclusive, often an exploration of the hurt done by small-mindedness and its attendant exclusivity, is always about the opening up of our notions of identity."[1] It is precisely this that *Trumpet* is predominantly concerned with. Inspired by the life of Billy Tipton, the novel accentuates the self-determination of one's self-concept as well as the inherent multiplicity and flexibility that characterises it.

The novel is composed of a plethora of diverse voices all of which are interconnected by the persona of Joss Moody, the death of whom triggers their ponderings on identity and self-narration. The character of Joss thereby questions the socially regulated notion of gender as inborn, replacing it with a manifestation of the Butlerian concept of gender performativity instead. However, it is not only Joss's self that is being probed. Moody's death and the realities surrounding it provide circumstances to which his adoptive son, Colman, has to adjust as to restructure his own identity, not only as a man and a son, but as a Black Scottish-born person. Additionally, it will be seen that Joss and Colman's respective approaches to Scottishness and gender influence one another significantly. It is primarily these two personalities that will be

[1] Ali Smith, "Ali Smith on Trumpet by Jackie Kay: A Jazzy Call to Action," *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 16 Jan. 2016 <www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jan/16/rereading-trumpet-jackie-kay-ali-smith> 13 March 2020.

examined here; nevertheless, each of the voices emerging throughout the novel demonstrates the mutable and self-created character of identity.

4.1. Scottishness

Having grown up partly in Scotland and partly in England, being a child of one Black and one white parent (without the knowledge of which was which), and having been adopted by Scottish parents (a white mother and a father who shares the child's skin colour), the position of Colman Moody is, in several aspects, similar to that of the adoptee in "The Adoption Papers." Undeniably, he illustrates one's oscillation between different markers of national and familial identity and a defiance against their boundaries. The construction of his self-concept is further complicated by the revelation of Joss's having been biologically female. Irene Pérez Fernández emphasizes that Colman experiences an identity crisis, feeling "that he can no longer apply social conventions, based on heterosexual normativity, to his particular family."[2] Additionally, his adoption heightens the attentiveness to identity fluctuation: pondering the association of a name with a personality, he concludes: "[b]efore I became Colman Moody, I was William Dunsmore. If I'd stayed William Dunsmore all my life I'd have been a completely different man."[3] The awareness of this phenomenon reappears throughout the novel as a persistent reminder of the flexibility of identity: Joss had changed his name from Josephine Moore to Joss Moody; Joss's father became John Moore upon his arrival to Scotland, and Millie alludes to the dynamics of naming by claiming "[t]he girl I was has been swept out to sea. She is another tide entirely," (8) and recounting that she had been Millie McFarlane, later became Millie Moody, Joss Moody's wife, and now is Joss Moody's widow.

[2] Irene Pérez Fernández, "Re/Articulating Identity in Jackie Kay's *Trumpet,*" *A Rich Field of Pleasant Surprises,* eds. José Francisco Fernández and Alejandra Moreno Álvarez (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014) 58-59.
[3] Jackie Kay, *Trumpet* (London: Picador Classic, 2016) 56. All subsequent quotations from this edition in this chapter will be indicated in the text by the page number in parentheses.

While the character of Joss Moody demonstrates an already accomplished self-invention in several identity categories, Colman represents the process and its possible complications. In other words, while Joss is specific by his notion of limitless identity selection, be it gender, nationality or ancestral relations, Colman struggles to fully establish himself. Where Joss expresses the civic approach to Scottishness in telling his son he "was Scottish. Born there," (51) Colman reacts by claiming he "didn't feel Scottish. Didn't feel English either. Didn't feel anything." (51) The many aspects of his self-concept that are deemed non-standard by the general society and its norms make him feel alien to all the social groups that he may potentially belong to. Finally, the product of this crisis is not a disintegration but a "catharsis:"[4] Colman overcomes the issue by constructing a uniquely complex identity by virtue of self-narration, as many of Kay's characters do. One of the concepts that *Trumpet* thus resists is the fixedness of national identity as defined by ethnicity and biological heritage, in a way that is parallel to, although perhaps more profound than in, "The Adoption Papers."

One manner in which descent as a determining factor is argued against is Joss's notion of generating one's own bloodline. Reanalysing the relationship with his famous father, Colman recalls Joss's unwillingness to talk about his own father's past, insisting on the capability of electing own origin through imagination. Having been offered various plausible stories, Colman reminisces:

> It drove me mad. Which one? I said. Which one is true? Doesn't matter a damn, he said. You pick. You pick the one you like best and that one is true. It doesn't change me who my father was or where he came from, and it certainly doesn't change you, he said. He was wrong about that. (59)

Joss's father having been an African immigrant in Scotland, Colman seeks the story of his arrival to the country. This interest mirrors the recurrent need of confronting own Blackness in

[4] Irene Rose, "Heralding New Possibilities: Female Masculinity in Jackie Kay's Trumpet," *Posting the Male: Masculinities in Post-war and Contemporary British Literature*, eds. Daniel Lea and Berthold Schoene-Harwood (New York: Rodopi, 2003) 154.

the process of reasserting his Scottishness. The colour of Colman's skin makes him subject to categorical presumptions which equate Scottishness and Englishness with whiteness. He admits that people often ask him where he is from, "Morocco, Trinidad, Tobago, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Jamaica," (58) and considering it unsubstantial, resolves to give them the affirmation they strive for, thereby enacting the possibility of recurrent identity alternation. Aptly, Lumsden cautions that his "experiences as a black person in Britain reiterate a sense of alienation."[5] Particularly, Colman struggles with racism encountered in London and the stereotypes it continually imposes on him. Eventually, what triggers a change in Colman is not where his father came from, but the acceptance of his own origins together with Joss's nonconformist identity.

Ultimately, it is Colman's journey to Scotland to meet his father's mother that enables the positive affirmation of his self. Consequently, he symbolically blends the territorial marker of the civic approach and the ancestral marker of the ethnic approach. Nevertheless, even the ancestral marker is to be understood as self-defined in that Colman and Joss are not blood related. Therefore, despite the initial repudiation of Joss's identity and its delineation as a flexible phenomenon, it is correspondingly to Joss's conception of chosen origins that Colman concludes that Joss was his father, exclaiming "I am Colman Moody, the son of Joss Moody, the famous trumpet player. He'll always be daddy to me," (259) assigning value to parental love and deeds rather than to biology. Subsequently, Colman opens the letter his father left him, which recounts the sought family history and, according to Matthew Brown, offers the addressee "a notion of identity and citizenship predicated on a cosmopolitan merger of local

[5] Alison Lumsden, "Jackie Kay's Poetry and Prose: Construing Identity," *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers,* eds. Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011) 88.

and transnational spaces."[6] Similarly, Peter Clanfield argues that Colman gradually begins to see the

> positive potential of the Scottish part of his heritage, which he has previously discounted. […T]he final stages of the book certainly document the historical extent to which blackness and Scottishness have been intermixed, [… and t]he letter implies that Colman is in some way now the custodian of Scotland's hybrid heritage.[7]

Thus, the letter verbalizes the amalgamation of identity indicators and enables the crossing of socially constructed boundaries which previously rendered Colman alien. For Joss, this multidimensional identification is provided by his embracing transcultural values.

Culturally, the character of Joss Moody represents the merger of standards that delineate both his Blackness and his Scottishness. As to the former, he perceives own hereditary affinity with Africa, Black history, culture and music, as depicted by his telling Colman that there is "more future in the past than there is in the future […] Black people and music. Black people and music; what would the world be without black people and music. Slave songs, work songs, gospel, blues, ragtime, jazz." (190) Additionally, it is jazz that, according to Gigi Adair, supplies the "diasporic cultural production […] between band members, between musicians and listeners, and across the Atlantic and across chronological time, as the jazz community reinvents and reimagines bonds to jazz musicians and audiences of the past."[8] On the other hand, Joss and Millie surround themselves with everyday objects almost stereotypically associated with Scotland. Colman, who doesn't experience the feeling of affinity with Africa, who doesn't like jazz nor share the cultural bond with Scotland, remembers "[h]ow his father liked them all to have Scottish things, daft naff Scottish things to keep them in touch. Every time they went to Torr they returned with packets of tattie scones, slice of square sausage,

[6] Matthew Brown, "In/outside Scotland: Race and Citizenship in the Work of Jackie Kay," *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature,* ed. Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) 226.
[7] Peter Clanfield, "'What Is in My Blood?': Contemporary Black Scottishness and the work of Jackie Kay," *Literature and Racial Ambiguity,* eds. Teresa Hubel and Neil Brooks (New York: Rodopi, 2002) 18-19.
[8] Gigi Adair, *Kinship Across the Black Atlantic* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019) 161.

bottles of Barrs irn bru. Shortbread. Black bun." (139) These objects and sentiments display the ability to easily adopt a national identity regardless of place and time through material items. However, as the examination of language, another significant marker within the cultural paradigm, elucidates, this may not always be the case.

Language is imperative in *Trumpet* as well as in many other works by Kay in that it indicates whose consciousness is being recorded. As Alena Hairston observes, "*Trumpet* is progressively recursive, facilitated by language that is both languorous and urgent. […] Sometimes paratactic leaps occur, beautifully incorporating a jazz modality to establish a character's stream of consciousness."[9] Arguably, the pattern of Colman's word usage is incongruent with that of his mother or, for example, Sophie Stones, which enacts subjectivity as rendered by speech. Additionally, the implementation of accent and language may equal an assumption of a nationality. Millie observes this phenomenon in her mother's behaviour, saying that "living in Scotland had made [her] believe she was Scottish. She spoke with a weird accent, quaint and unauthentic, the way you might expect a woman on a tin of shortbread to speak if she came to life." (85) Thus, while important for the woman herself, her pronunciation partly impedes the association in the eyes of others. Another character exemplifying that one's accent may become both an aid and obstacle in assuming national identity is Colman Moody.

The Moody family having moved from Glasgow to London when Colman was seven years old, he claims that he almost abandoned his Glasgow accent, whereas Joss fervently "clung on to his. Determined that everyone would know he was Scottish." (51) Thus, where accent and language are important in signifying Scottish national identity, there their lack may become a barrier in identification. Hence, Colman's loss of the Glaswegian accent is the prevalent argument against his Scottishness, "[h]e can do one, like all children of Scottish parents, but it's not him." (190) Nevertheless, his rejection of one marker does not, ultimately,

[9] Alena Hairston, "*Trumpet* by Jackie Kay," *Callaloo* 29.2 (Spring 2006): 693.

suggest a loss of that identity: rather, it implies that there is not one correct way of being Scottish or English, both of which are here more a process rather than a state. As Alison Lumsden claims, the narrative thus epitomises that "identity and subjectivity are fluid and flexible; struggles and journeys of will or imagination as we construct for ourselves fantasy Africas, Scotlands or genders."[10] The question of fabricating gender itself forms the core of the novel.

4.2. Gender Identity

Together with his defying the restrictive, socially imposed norms by self-construction, it is mainly the character of Joss Moody that serves as a vehicle for examining the dubious connection between the body and gender. More specifically, Joss himself decides to change his gender, becoming Joss Moody in place of Josephine Moore, and he does so by adopting gendered behaviour. Additionally, Joss forms the unifying element of the novel in that the multitudinous reflections on identity are triggered not simply by his death, but more importantly by the subversive act of his not conforming to the standard social understanding of gender as equal to one's biological makeup or socially given conduct. The different perspectives often indicate not only the transformation of Joss's gender, but the alternation of the characters' own identities, as seen above. Alison Lumsden argues that the method of recounting diverse voices enables Kay to picture "the evasive fluidity of the inscribed subject, since the multiple narratives allow the reader no fixed position by which Joss's constructed identity may be contained."[11] The novel may thus be held compatible with the postmodern feminists' drawing "upon the postmodernist critique of identity to challenge the idea of gendered identities as being stable, inner, and core, emphasizing instead the fluid, transient, multiple, and contradictory nature of identities."[12] Moreover, Joss conveys the fluidity of gender not only in his having

[10] Lumsden 89.
[11] Lumsden 87.
[12] Ann Branaman, "Feminism and Identity," *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies,* ed. Anthony Elliot (Oxon: Routledge, 2011) 33.

selected and implemented a new gender in his adult life, but also in its persistently oscillating even after his decease.

Joss Moody is post-mortally reduced to the female body of Josephine Moore by the public, epitomised mainly by the character of the journalist Sophie Stones, who strives to write Joss's biography as a way of contradicting and fixing his self-invented, unconventional identity. Kay juxtaposes the irrefutable givenness of gender that one's body seems to suggest to the society and officials with the gendered behaviour which functions as an identity constituent in view of the people who were close to Joss, and thus denotes the contrast between the effectivity of the public and private enactment of self-invented identities. Accordingly, it is Millicent Moody, Joss's widow, who thinks herself to be "the only one who can remember [Joss] the way he wanted to be remembered." (40) Furthermore, Millie participates in Joss's dressing and self-fashioning, and even during his life thus carries a role "in legitimizing his masculinity."[13] In an echo of Millie's stance, the letter from Joss to Colman reminds the addressee of the parental deeds as markers of identity and, consequently, familial relationships: "Remember sitting on my shoulders. Remember playing my trumpet. Do you remember fishing on the old boat with Angus? I'm being silly: remember what you like." (277) This approach is directly contradicted by the authoritative voices of the doctor (first to officially inscribe the deceased's biological sex), and the funeral director (pondering the elusive margins dividing men and women).

Recounting the past, even the characters belonging to the private sphere of Joss's life accentuate having witnessed preliminary boundaries in his assuming the masculine identity in spite of his female body. Namely, it is Millie who struggles with Joss's not being biologically male: notwithstanding her later contemplations of having hurt "his manhood," (39) indicating her full acceptance of his gender identity, it is when the impossibility of having a child is acknowledged that the couple encounter a boundary that self-interpretation alone cannot

[13] Pérez Fernández 55.

modify: “Why can’t he give me a child? He can do everything else. Walk like a man, talk like a man, dress like a man, blow his horn like a man. Why can’t he get me pregnant.” (36) Millie’s account is essential in its assigning one’s clothing, movements and activities a gender, implying that by employing their proper, understandably culturally and socially conditioned, display, Joss also assumed masculinity. Eventually, this boundary of the female body, too, is conquered: by adopting Colman, Millie and Joss consciously adopt the identities of a mother and father. As has been shown above, Colman himself needs to accept his father’s lacking the male reproductive organs and overall biological makeup, and that mostly because of the supposed eradication of their shared masculine experience, which he matches with the body. Himself suggesting that the problem is precisely his linking gender with the physique, Colman says: “My father wasn’t a man like myself […] What was his puberty like? I mean he’d have got periods, wouldn’t he?” (67) Nevertheless, even the young man ultimately manages to overstep these preliminary obstacles, realising that parentage becomes authentic through acts of love, thus tacitly accepting “his father’s female masculinity.”[14]

However, it is chiefly the incorporation of the conservative public perspective that enables Kay to question the customary criteria for belonging to a certain social group. Monica Germanà classifies *Trumpet* among those novels that expose the enduring curiosity “in the slippage between biological sex and an individual’s gender identity, which encompasses the adherence/resistance to the complex cultural and social norms of patriarchal heteronormativity as well as one’s sexuality.”[15] By featuring the constricting social views, Kay articulates what her characters ought to resist. Carole Jones maintains that the novel “explores identity as performance, and in doing so also posits masculinity as a masquerade[.]”[16] It has been argued

[14] Rose 156.
[15] Monica Germanà, *Scottish Women’s Gothic and Fantastic Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010) 175.
[16] Carole Jones, *Disappearing Men: Gender Disorientation in Scottish Fiction 1979-1999* (Amsterdam: Radopi, 2009) 95.

above that Joss's performance involves movements, conduct and clothes. Clothing in particular is critical as displayed by Colman who, owing to Joss's funeral suit, again perceives his father as a man, and by the funeral director, in front of whose very eyes the naked body seems to shift. These transformations are also recounted in one of the two chapters transmitting Joss's subjectivity: "He can taste himself transforming. Running changes. The body changes shape. From girl to young woman to young man to old man to old woman." (133) Epitomising the challenge of the physical boundaries, this passage is pertinent to Butler's claim that sex, too, is an ideal construct, "not a simple fact or static condition of a body, but a process whereby regulatory norms materialize 'sex' […] through a forcible reiteration of those norms."[17] Understandably, some of these regulatory norms are of a linguistic quality.

Language largely participates in constructing not only national but also gender identities. Analogously to the abovementioned liberating power of one's accent and its potential contradictory function as a barrier, language may operate as a restrictive device when it comes to gender as well. On the one hand, it enables Joss to distance himself from the female experience of Josephine Moore and construct her not solely as a past identity but rather as a wholly separate person, telling his wife to "'[l]eave her alone.' As if she was somebody else. He always spoke about her in the third person." (93) Moody thereby disowns and repudiates the feminine identity by using the third person to refer to a former component of his self-concept. Nevertheless, the magnitude of language is also heightened by the distinct use of personal pronouns when those belonging to either the public or private sphere refer to Joss: while Millie always uses masculine pronouns, Sophie Stones prevalently uses the feminine ones, later attempting to apply the he/she variant. Additionally, the gradual adjustment of Colman's consciousness to his father's masculinity is signified by his exclamation: "Don't bother with this him/her bullshit. That's bollocks, man. Just say him." (142) This demonstrates

[17] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011) xii.

that language may posthumously distort the authenticity of Joss's identity, necessitating another method of self-expression to depict the metamorphosis of his own self: jazz.

For Joss, jazz becomes not only a method of establishing a cultural kinship, but a new signifying system in itself: the musical performance becomes a metaphor for identity construction, transculturalism and transgenderism. When Joss plays, he is "Scotland. Africa. Slavery. Freedom. He is a girl. A man. Everything, nothing. He is sickness, health. The sun. The moon. Black, white." (136) Thus, it is music, as Jeannette King cautions, which enables liberation in its being

> potentially gender-free. Jazz, in particular, by definition demands improvisation, the abandoning of scripts and precedents, the ability to construct variations on given melodies, rather than being tramlined by agreed roles and forms. Seen from this perspective, Joss's life transcends not only gender, but every kind of category used to impose social identity.[18]

Similarly, Ryan Fong argues that "the trumpet also provides a means for Joss' personal transformation and functions as the instrument, in the broadest sense of the word, through which he comes to understand and construct his gender identity[.]"[19] Consequently, it is jazz through which Kay manifests both the ability of an individual to adopt a transcultural national identity, express the fluidity of the separate constituents of the self-concept and transform one's gender. As Fong claims, "[u]nmooring heteronormative and gendered biases from the processes of national and ethnic identification, Joss's expression of identity is produced within a queer diasporic frame."[20] Hence, Joss Moody embodies diverse identity intersections, which, due to their self-invented character, are delineated as positive, contextualising Scottishness with both ethnicity and gender and redefining contradictions as authenticities.

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[18] Jeannette King, "'A Woman's a Man, for A' That': Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*," *Scottish Studies Review* 2.1 (Spring 2001) 107.
[19] Ryan D. Fong, "Weaving a Different Kind of Tartan: Musicality, Spectrality, and Kinship in Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*," *Indiscretions: At the Intersection of Queer and Postcolonial Theory* 22 (2011): 251.
[20] Fong 237.

5. *Why Don't You Stop Talking*

Until now, Jackie Kay has published three collections of short stories. The first of them, *Why Don't You Stop Talking* (2002), represents an assortment of diverse voices and characters, most of whom are women. Revealing unexpected rarities, the collection is another work of Kay's that questions the socially given notions of the normal, thereby examining identity as a crucial element. However, while supporting the argument that the theme of self-invented and fluid identity frequently resurfaces in Kay's fiction regardless of genre, the collection manifests a slightly modified perspective on the subject. The flexibility of the protagonists and narrators' identities is frequently epitomised by a transformation that, as it is caused by an internal struggle, only the characters themselves are aware of. Furthermore, the portrayal is subversive in that the noncompliance with the custom and attempts at self-construction do not always lead to a positive affirmation in a way that was observed in previous analyses: on the contrary, Thelma of "Why Don't You Stop Talking" at last resorts to self-harm; Brian's phobia in "Shark! Shark!" results in his death; Doreen of "Shell" finds herself metamorphosed into a tortoise, and Irene of "The Woman with Fork and Knife Disorder" eventually eats grass and turf in the company of a group of ducks.

Ultimately, many of the stories indicate the damaging effects of social norms. By exposing the mental and physical injuries, the narratives insist on accepting the diverse, conceivably nonconformist, ways of being human. In this, Kay, again, defies essentialist ideas of identities which impose restrictive labels on individuals. As Alex Clark proclaims, "for all their surface absurdities, these pieces contain – and ultimately liberate – definitively human ordinariness, a rigmarole of isolation and love, fidelity and betrayal, noise and silence, birth and death."[1] Clark's observation implies that the voices occupying the space of the collection

[1] Alex Clark, "Review: *Why Don't You Stop Talking* by Jackie Kay," *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media 2 Feb. 2002 <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/feb/02/fiction.reviews> 29 March 2020.

address a plethora of themes and it is, thus, necessary to choose only the most significant episodes representative of the two identity categories chiefly analysed in this thesis. While the treatment of nationality and gender is more subtle here than in the previously discussed works, it will be seen that the fluidity together with the self-invention of identities is recurrently emphasized by the overstepping of given boundaries, the self-conscious, sometimes imaginary, bodily and mental alternations as well as social progress.

5.1. Scottishness

As has been previously shown, Kay's works regularly problematize the standardised identity markers and the demands that these impose on the individual. In *The Adoption Papers* and *Trumpet* both, the view of Scottishness established on the grounds of whiteness is reviewed and replaced by an approach that enables a more inclusive understanding of nationality. Correspondingly, Zoë Strachan accentuates that Kay often tells "about immigrant and adoptive Scots, alerting us to the fact that our country is made up of many different Scotlands, and increasingly we hear more varied voices from Scots who are not fair-haired, blue-eyed Celtic males."[2] In *Why Don't You Stop Talking,* the stories de-emphasise the notion of skin colour to underline "more significant aspects of [the] characters' personas."[3] Still, the body becomes a marker of difference in view of the external world. According to Matthew Brown, some of the narratives highlight "the continuing presence of racist violence in the UK, caused mainly by what Kay perceives as a general, large-scale regression to culture being apprehended as racially defined and enclosed."[4] Brown's commentary suggests that the collection does not focus solely on Scottishness but also on Englishness, although both are criticised chiefly for their

[2] Zoë Strachan, "Is that a Scot or am Ah Wrong?" *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature,* ed. Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) 54.
[3] R. Victoria Arana, "Clothing the Spirit: Jackie Kay's Fiction from *Trumpet* to *Wish I Was Here*," *Women: A Cultural Review* 20.3 (2009): 252.
[4] Matthew Brown, "In/Outside Scotland," *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature,* ed. Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) 226.

exclusivity. Thus, in "Why Don't You Stop Talking," Thelma is abused because of her ethnicity (her father is Jamaican), gender and socio-cultural background[5] on the streets of London. Likewise, Rose McGuire Roberts of "Out of Hand," having come to England from Jamaica on the *Windrush* to help the country as a nurse, continually encounters racism. Consequently, incessantly regarded as alien owing to her skin colour, she is never allowed fulfil her initial intention of adopting England as her home. However, the effects of the ethnic perspective may be counterbalanced by the rise of self-affirmed identity.

Throughout the collection, there materialise characters who confront racism and the exclusive approach to national identity. Melanie, the protagonist of "Trout Friday," is a typical character of Kay's fiction in that her late mother was Irish and her father, who left the family when Melanie little, was from Trinidad; thus, her parentage complicates the construction of her identity. Persistently, Melanie wonders about which components of her personality are her father's as well: as Ulrike Zimmermann maintains, "Melanie's body is imagined as the site of genetic as well as cultural heritage when she searches for traces of her dead mother and lost father in front of the mirror."[6] This deliberation includes the woman's skin colour, which marks her as distinct and forces her to consider the diverse labels socially assigned to her. Alluding to self-fashioning in thinking about people as if they "were paint,"[7] she approves of neither of the terms "beige," "half-caste," "mixed-race," or "mulatto." (71) Additionally, although her father eventually offers to meet her, thereby providing a means of affirming Melanie's identity, she resolves to do so by herself without the reunion. As R. Victoriana Arana explains, this ending "underscores the idea that Melanie's notional rejection of her father denotes her individuation,

[5] Ulrike Zimmermann, "Out of the Ordinary – and Back? Jackie Kay's Recent Short Fiction," *Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000+: New Perspectives in Literature, Film and the Arts*, eds. Lars Eckstein, et al. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008) 127.
[6] Zimmermann 131.
[7] Jackie Kay, *Why Don't You Stop Talking* (London: Picador, 2011) 71. All subsequent quotations from this edition in this chapter will be indicated in the text by the page number in the parentheses.

the healthy merger of her inner spirit and its outward expression."[8] Similarly, when the protagonist of "The Oldest Woman in Scotland," the first part of "Wha's Like Us," faces racism, she reacts by emphasizing the values of selected heritage and community. Detecting an offence in a woman's claim that her white daughter's adopting Black children "was brave," (122) she replies: "They've got braw skin like mine." (123) In this, as Bettina Jansen states, the collection articulates post-ethnicity, questions essentialist and ethnic definitions of Scottishness, and illustrates "that Scottish community is a matter of choice and deliberate association."[9] Thus, the protagonists intentionally adopt markers which they associate with a national identity, or, alternatively, ultimately choose not to belong, as Rose does. One of the methods of self-inventing Scottishness is, again, via space and culture.

As the title "The Oldest Woman in Scotland" suggests, the idea of place is crucial in the story. Equating Scottishness with the country, the protagonist also associates language with it. Subsequently, she is unable to understand her great-grandson owing to his English accent, thinking to herself: "An awful shame when families move away to England and lose their good Scottish tongues. The young boy doesn't even ken who Rabbie Burns was." (122) Additionally, her character here establishes the status of the country's literary heritage in national awareness. The second part of "Wha's Like Us," "A Guid Scots Death," elaborates on the weight of linguistic markers. Analogously to the first section, the account is that of an older person partly ascertaining the shifts that had swept over the Scottish nation in her lifetime. Narrated by a dying woman shocked by people talking about sex, objecting to contemporary lack of diligence, and perceiving superfluous social changes, the story, rendered in Scots, reveals the function language constantly has in identification. Recording specific accent and lexis has been demonstrated to be typical of Kay, and Emma Liggins et al. suggest that her "use of Scottish

[8] Arana 253.
[9] Bettina Jansen, *Narratives of Community in the Black British Short Story* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) 161.

dialect and idioms for some of [her] narrator figures gives authenticity and works in tandem with the focus on black identity to interrogate standard notions of Britishness."[10] Therefore, showing the significance of fairly flexible identity markers such as language, Kay signals the changeability of Scottishness and other national identities, in regard to the characteristics historically associated with them and their present state as well as one's capability of choosing them.

5.2. Gender Identity

It has been asserted above that most of the narrators and protagonists of *Why Don't You Stop Talking* are women. In fact, Brian of "Shark! Shark!" is the only male protagonist in the collection. While gender is not dealt with as explicitly as was observed in *Trumpet,* the stories, too, critically comment on the subject. More precisely, by depicting diverse women and their experiences, Kay portrays fluidity and self-definition of gender identity. Her characters are mothers, adopted daughters, lesbian partners, women who are mentally, physically or terminally ill, or simply those who do not meet the standard criteria of beauty or femininity. By having her characters wilfully cross these socially constructed boundaries, the author explores the potential of creating own gendered self together with the harm group norms may occasion. As Molly Thompson claims, Kay's world, often "oppressive, is 'translated' into internal states of conflict, which, in turn, reveal themselves as physical or mental illness. Kay's recurrent use of this trope of the sick female body or the fluctuating, uncertain body, is therefore both figurative and metaphorical."[11] The considerations of gender are, thus, indicated by bodily transformations induced by subjective changes as well as the repressions women are subject to.

[10] Emma Liggins, et al., *The British Short Story* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 248.
[11] Molly Thompson, "'The Body is a Bloody Battlefield': Jackie Kay and the Body in Flux," *Gender Forum: An Internet Journal of Gender Studies* 14 (2006): 73, < http://genderforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/200614_RaceingQuestionsIII.pdf> 13 May 2020.

Among others, Rose McGuire Roberts ("Out of Hand") observes the painful alternation her identity has undergone in England on the skin of her hands' becoming swollen and wrinkled; Thelma ("Why Don't You Stop Talking") slashes her tongue for causing her trouble, and Doreen ("Shell"), "silenced and criticized by her bullying son, Louis; deserted by her son's father; and shunned by neighbours,"[12] feels her body harden and become immovable as a result of her self-articulation's being suppressed. Doreen's endorsement of a unique identity in defiance of social norms manifests itself in one of the conversations with her son, who wants to cut his hair the way all Black boys do, during which she asks him: "'So you've got to be the same as everyone else?' 'Of course I've got to be the same as everyone else.' 'Well I enjoy being different,' she says." (141) This dialogue epitomises the conflict between social demands and self-expression, which, as is here intimated, may be achieved through appearance. Doreen's wish to re-invent herself, is, significantly, imagined as a woman lover's helping her "reach parts of herself she hasn't been able to find," (148) implying not only the discovery of her female body but of her identity as a whole. The position of a woman who loses control over herself due to the regulating demands imposed on her is thereby possible to be overcome with the assistance of another woman's love which represents the release from conventional bonds. As a result, lesbianism replaces heteronormativity and concurrent gender roles.

Julie Fish and Susan Bewley explain that "[s]exuality is influenced by the cultural, social and political customs of a society. It refers to values and attitudes, gender roles, body image, sexual relationships, language, and even clothing."[13] Also, it is pertinent to draw attention to Judith Butler's query about the way "non-normative sexual practices call into question the stability of gender as a category of analysis[.]"[14] Arguably, as sexuality and gender are considerably interrelated, lesbianism, appearing in several stories in the collection, aids in

[12] Thompson 66.
[13] Julie Fish and Susan Bewley, "Lesbian," *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Psychology and Gender*, ed. Kevin L. Nadal (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 2017) 485.
[14] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006) xi.

subverting the essentialist notion of gender. The positive affirmation of lesbian identity is thematised in the story of "Physics and Chemistry," the protagonists of which are teachers who never mention the nature of their relationship until they are outed and lose their employments. Yet, as Strachan notes, "being identified as lesbian proves ultimately liberating[.]"[15] The recognition of their sexuality also enables the women to evade the performance of gender codes that they felt necessary to submit to before, as "Physics stop[s] wearing skirts altogether." (226) Additionally, the narrative accentuates the flexibility of identity by eventually replacing the protagonists' names of Physics and Chemistry by Plain and Purl, adding that the spark between them "could always change colour." (228) Moreover, performativity is reflected in Kay's fiction by understanding the roles gender identities traditionally entail, such as those of mothers and fathers, as verbs rather than essentially, biologically or socially given fixities. Those characters who feel themselves to have failed in the conventional understanding of gender often equalise their position by deeds. This occurs with Melanie, who indicates identity performativity by launching "a set of strict rules in her everyday life to keep everything under control"[16] after she has had a miscarriage and lost her partner. Also, Butler claims that the matter of gender and sexuality "has become more acute as we consider various new forms of gendering that have emerged in light of transgenderism and transsexuality, lesbian and gay parenting, [and] new butch and femme identities,"[17] most of which points Kay's fiction discusses.

It was seen above that transgenderism is considerably dealt with in *Trumpet* and some poetry of *The Adoption Papers* draws on the issue of lesbian parenting, which subject ultimately resurfaces in *Why Don't You Stop Talking*'s "Big Milk." The title of the story refers to the name the protagonist's lesbian lover's child gives to one of her mother's breasts. The exceptionality

[15] Strachan 54
[16] Zimmermann 131.
[17] Butler, *Gender Trouble* xi.

of the protagonist's situation results in her jealousy. Subsequently, this behaviour renders her similar to a man: as Sarah McCellan states, "a 'second mother,' an adopted mother, the narrator in 'Big Milk' has no defined role. She does not have a maternal bond, nor is it a paternal bond, though some of the feelings of jealousy experienced by the second mother are borne by the same impulse as those of a father."[18] Herself having been adopted as well as lacking a role assigned to her by the heteronormative model of parentage, she feels displaced and finally goes to Scotland in search for her own biological mother. Joanne Winning comments on this situation as combining "issues of family and parenting with questions of national identity. Both positions, that of the non-biological lesbian parent and that of the displaced Scot, are shown to be loaded with anxiety and grief."[19] As the protagonist ultimately finds only an empty house, the ending indicates that roles may be invented outside of the socially given limits by performance rather than biology. As Jansen declares, the "powerful final image in the story highlights that the quality of familial relationships depends less on blood ties and the ability of breastfeeding, and more on actual presence, attention, care, and love."[20] Furthermore, according to Sarah Knott, this story signifies that "[r]ights to choose encompass 'breast or bottle' as well as reproduction,"[21] which, again, hints at the potential of self-defining behaviour. Therefore, the collection defies permanency of gender identities determined by heteronormativity, the assumption that motherhood is exclusively linked with heterosexuality as well as emphasizes that women's experience changes in time (e.g. the disappearance of "auld wives" (132) in "A Guid Scots Death"), and identities are as multitudinous and diverse as the voices and stories it represents.

[18] Sarah McClellan, "The Nation of Mother and Child in the Work of Jackie Kay," *Obsidian III* 6.1 (2005) 116.
[19] Joanne Winning "Crossing the Borderline," *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature,* ed. Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) 288.
[20] Jansen 157.
[21] Sarah Knott, *Mother is a Verb: An Unconventional History* (New York, Sarah Crichton Books: 2019) 160.

6. Conclusion

The analysis of the three selected works written by Jackie Kay demonstrates that her fiction and poetry recurrently depict diverse identity subcategories as fluid and self-invented whilst indicating the potentially damaging effects of socially imposed norms as well as one's ability to subvert them. The survey of the theoretical framework germane to Scottishness and to gender identity respectively enables to establish that Kay's speakers, protagonists and narrators recurrently draw on identity markers valued by those approaches which conceive the given identity subcategory as more flexible and individual-dependent than fixed and environment- or birth-dependent. Therefore, Scottish national identity is portrayed as a merger of the civic markers of the place of birth and cultural markers of language, national artistic heritage, and everyday objects in defiance of the, for Kay, socially dominant ethnic approach, which is perceived as equating Scottishness with whiteness. However, as the characters are often members of a minority group and thus viewed as nonconformist, the cultural approach may not only facilitate changeable and largely voluntary identification, but also complicate their self-invention in that it often reflects the socially prevalent tendencies.

Thus, the Black and women characters ought to confront the issue of the cultural representation's in Scotland being largely white and masculine, necessarily seeking the models for own identity (re)construction elsewhere. Consequently, the essential values of many characters are transnational and transcultural, amalgamating diverse markers in a combination that is both unique and affirmative. Overcoming the limited view of Scottishness, *The Adoption Papers*' adoptee and *Trumpet*'s Joss Moody turn to the United States, political activists, Blues, Jazz as well as African heritage to (re)assert and (re)define their Scottish identities. Accordingly, if Kay's work, as Valerie L. Popp suggests, "envisions modern Scotland as a zone

where multiple incarnations of 'Scottishness' and 'Britishness' collide[,]"[1] her characters, narrators, protagonists and personae epitomise incarnations of multidimensional identities, with their unrestricted changeability in time as well as in defiance of socially established categories. Furthermore, Kay emphasizes the magnitude of personal choice in the fluid identity invention by revealing the possibility of ultimately rejecting one's nationality as a reaction to the injuries caused by social norms imposed on the individual, as is the case of Rose in "Out of Hand."

Choice is an element Kay's work stresses also in regard to gender identity, the portrayal of which approximates an enactment of Judith Butler's theory of performativity. The reasons the characters eventually (re)define their gender identities correspond to the reasons of (re)inventing their national identities: they do not meet the standard criteria to attain the specific social group's membership. Be it the inability to bear children of the adoptive mother in *The Adoption Papers*, the transgenderism of Joss Moody in *Trumpet*, the lesbian parentage in *Why Don't You Stop Talking*'s "Big Milk," or any other form of nonconformism, Kay has her speakers and characters transgress the conventional boundaries of gender identity via their behaviour. In fact, rather than one's biological makeup, any inborn "essence," or socially given roles, it is own choice, parental love, clothing, or movements which define who they are.

Depicting identities as fluid and self-invented, Kay's work thus endorses the dissimilar ways of being human, underscoring the idea of tolerance, human connection, inclusive communities characterised by diversity and acceptance, as well as verbalizes the rejection and subversion of the oppressive structures determining who people are by grouping them on the basis of a single generalised aspect, such as skin colour or anatomy. With difference and contradiction becoming redefined as valid and unique modes of existence, Jackie Kay's work suggests that literature operates as a significant device in exposing and, perchance, altering the ways in which identities are both read and (re)constructed.

[1] Valerie L. Popp, "Improper Identification Required: Passports, Papers, and Identity Formation in Jackie Kay's 'The Adoption Papers,'" *Contemporary Literature* 53.2 (Summer 2012): 298.

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