

## 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.