



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Università degli Studi di Padova

Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari

Corso di Laurea Magistrale in
Lingue Moderne per la Comunicazione e la Cooperazione Internazionale
Classe LM-38

Tesi di Laurea

**Being in-between
in Jackie Kay's *Trumpet***

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Anno Accademico 2014 / 2015

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Preface

Trumpet by Jackie Kay was published in 1998 and won the Guardian Fiction Prize. The novel tells the story of Joss Moody, an African-Scottish, transgendered jazz trumpeter, who was born female but lived as a man throughout his life. As other works in Kay's production, this novel reflects her interest in stories in which individuals live across conventional borders of nation, gender and race and challenge the concept of identity. Kay's sensibility to these themes comes from her direct experience, since she was adopted at an early age, and she soon began to experience racial prejudices. Her literary paths reflect her personal voyage to find her African roots and her birth parents. In particular *Trumpet* explores the themes of love, loss, grief, memory, cultural belonging to a home, a culture and it shows how issues such as nationality, gender and sexuality contribute to the construction of an individual's identity. The inclusion of transgender identity and transracial adoption in the novel is useful to explore gender categories, in particular the concept of lesbian specificity. She explores some of the ways in which homosexual love can be expressed in a heterosexual culture by asserting difference. She depicts gender and sexuality as unstable concepts and negotiates lesbian love within the context of a society still constrained by the idea of sexual binary oppositions. In an interview Kay said:

I was interested in how fluid identity can be, how people can reinvent themselves, how gender and race are categories that we try to fix, in order perhaps to cherish our own prejudices, how so called extraordinary people can live ordinary lives. I wanted to write a love story where the reader would become so involved with the story that they too would believe Joss and be calling him 'he' to themselves.¹

Kay's desire to explore "how fluid identity can be [...] how gender and race are categories that we try to fix", calls into question the idea that man and woman are natural categories in *Trumpet*. She shows that the self is a collection of 'multiplicity of selves'.²

¹ <https://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/0499/kay/interview.html>

² King 2001, pp. 106-107.

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss issues revolving around identity construction in relation to *Trumpet*. I try to explain how sex, gender, nationality and jazz music contribute to this process and to demonstrate that none of the transgender subjects I have examined can be definitively identified as transsexual and none can be read as lesbian. Kay points out that it is not possible to state the identity of a person just by using a label. I present the possibility for multiply-constituted people to occupy a “third space”, where everyone is described as “hybrid”.

My work is divided into five chapters. The first one introduces the author and the novel. I explain how the story of Billy Tipton, a famous American jazz player is related to Joss Moody, the main character of *Trumpet* by comparing it with Middlebrook’s *Suits Me: The Double Life of Billy Tipton*. Then I focus on the use of a multiple perspective narration and analyze the main characters and their perspectives, which all contribute to build Joss Moody’s story.

In the second chapter I contextualize the concepts of ‘homosexuality’ and ‘heteronormativity’, and I discuss the meaning of ‘queer’ and ‘trans-people’. Then I tackle the character of Joss Moody which is an absent presence in the novel, as Hargreaves suggests:

The subject position from which Joss speaks is always liminal; his is a spectral voice haunting the text, a metaphysics of presence, and yet his speaking is also, in a very literal sense, a matter of life and death, implying that there is much, politically, at stake in his speaking.³

I focus on how he constructs his identity, outlining the fact that he has always been at the same time a man and a woman. Kay represents identity as not fixed, something which is in constant change since it is defined by many different aspects, such as sex, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, class and ethnicity.

In chapter three I deal with practices and theories of cross-dressing and how it is related to *Trumpet*. In the novel Kay discusses this issue and the difficulty of fitting into identities that do not reflect who people really are. I try to justify some of the reasons which have led Joss Moody to cross-dress. I outline the impact that Joss’s construction of identity and death has on Millie and Colman. Through the representation of a

³ Hargreaves, p. 15.

seemingly typical heteronormative family, Kay shows how insufficient this discourse is when there is the need to identify people. Joss and Millie's relationship is different from the traditional one, but this goes unnoticed from the beginning of the novel. Kay depicts Joss as a typical heterosexual man in a typical heterosexual marriage, a ritual which automatically labels them as "husband" and "wife". As Knockaert points out, "these institutionalized identities are [institutionalized] in the sense that they have become part of officially established practices and institutions, and they are clearly instrumental in the perpetuating heteronormative discourse".⁴ I therefore focus on the implication of using labels.

In chapter four, I talk about the importance of jazz music as a tool of identity formation. In the novel the repetition of chapter headings, multiple narrative perspectives and language create a structure which reflects jazz rhythm. First I discuss the origins of jazz and I outline the main music references presented in the text. Then I argue how Joss Moody uses jazz as a mean to define his identity.

In chapter five I illustrate how Kay uses jazz music in the novel to explore identities related to diaspora. Then I discuss how the author constructs Black-Scottish identities in *Trumpet* and how her Black-Scottish characters are subjected to racist prejudices. Lastly I talk about the importance of names, their roles and meanings.

⁴ Knockaert, p. 5.

CHAPTER 1

Trumpet, a multiplicity of voices

1.1 Jackie Kay's life and career

My adoption is a story that has happened to me. I couldn't make it up.⁵

Jackie Kay's autobiography *Red Dust Road* opens in a hotel in Abuja (Nigeria), where she is confronted by her biological father. He is a Christian faith healer and wants Kay to give herself to Christ, in order to acknowledge her publicly as his daughter. "I am sitting here",⁶ Kay writes, "evidence of his sinful past, but I am the sinner, the living embodiment of his sin".⁷ This was the first and last time that Kay saw his natural father. *Red Dust Road*, which she has called a 'love letter' to her white adoptive parents, is Kay's 20-year search for her birth parents and for her existence to be recognized.

Jackie Kay was born to a Scottish mother and a Nigerian father in Edinburgh in 1961, and was adopted as a baby by a Scottish family who lived in Glasgow. When she was a child she wanted to be an actress, so she used to go to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama on Wednesdays and Saturdays for years. After Alasdair Gray, a Scottish writer, told her that writing was what she should be doing, she decided to concentrate on writing. She graduated at Stirling University in 1983. Then she went to London and during this period her first collection of poems, *The Adoption Papers*, was published and gained the Saltire Society Scottish First Book Award. These poems tell the story of a black girl who is adopted by a white Scottish couple from three different points of view (the mother, the birth mother, and the daughter).

Kay has often been categorized as black, lesbian, Scottish and this is why she wanted to escape categorization as a writer. She published several different kinds of works, from collections of short stories (*Why Don't You Stop Talking?* 2002) to works for radio (*The Lamplighter* 2007) and theatre (*Twice Over* 1988), writings for children (*Strawgirl* 2002), and novels (*Trumpet* 1998). *Other Lovers* (1993) is a collection of poems that is also about identity, but revolving particularly around colonial histories and slavery. Further poetry collections include *Life Mask* (2005), inspired by the experience

⁵ Kay, 2010.

⁶ Kay, 2010, p. 6.

⁷ Kay, 2010, p. 6.

of sitting for the sculptor Michael Snowden, *Darling: New and Selected Poems* (2007) and *Off Colour* (1998), poems which explore illness.

Now she is Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Newcastle. In 2006 she was appointed Member of the Order of the British Empire.

1.2 Who was Billy Tipton? How did he become Joss Moody?

Trumpet is based on the story of the American white pianist and saxophonist Billy Lee Tipton. Kay said that she read about the death of the musician in a newspaper: “I just happened by chance to be reading in a newspaper, some years ago now, about the death of a jazz musician called Billy Tipton”⁸ and she was also intrigued by the fact that Tipton was not only a woman dressing as a man but that had lived his life as a man. The author stated that she was fascinated by his story and by what his adopted son said: “He’ll always be daddy to me”.⁹ Initially she wanted to explore the son’s full acceptance of his father’s constructed identity and the paradox of living as a male and dying as a female.

I wanted to write a love story where the reader would become so involved with the story that they too would believe Joss and be calling him ‘he’ to themselves.¹⁰

Trumpet was published in the same year as Middlebrook’s biography of Billy Tipton, *Suits Me: The Double Life of Billy Tipton* (1998). Middlebrook began her narrative of Tipton’s life from the premise that he was a woman who played a role: “This is a story of a female jazz musician named Billy Tipton, who lived as a man from the time she was nineteen until ‘he’ died at the age of seventy-four and was discovered to be a female”.¹¹

Tipton (1914-1989) was born in Oklahoma City with the name of Dorothy Lucille Tipton. She wanted to become a jazz singer, but she soon realized that nobody would

⁸ Jaggi 1999, p. 53.

⁹ <https://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/0499/kay/interview.html>

¹⁰ “An interview with Jackie Kay”.

¹¹ Middlebrook, p. xiii.

ever hire her because she was a woman. When she was 19 she decided to cross-dress as a man; in this way she gained access to jazz male bands and became well-known.

Dorothy apparently gained from the brutal economic pressure of the early 1930s an enabling insight, namely, that playing saxophone was not just playing an instrument, it was playing a role, for which trousers were required.¹²

In 1958 he quits his band fearing that too much success would reveal his secret identity. When he died, the doctor asked his son William if his father had a sex change.¹³ Two days after his death the autopsy established that his body was that of a normal female. This fact came as a shock to all the people who had known him, including his five wives and three adopted sons who did not know anything.

Billy Tipton's death [...] made news all over the world, not because Billy was a well-known musician but because the *scale of the deception* and the scarcity of explanations endowed the skimpy available facts with an aura of myth.¹⁴

In the biography Middlebrook describes Billy as “someone who fits the profile of the female-to-male transgenderist or female ‘gender blender’, that is a person with a female body but an indeterminate gender identity”.¹⁵ This will be the central theme of my thesis and I will talk about it in the second chapter.

In *Trumpet*, Kay relocates Tipton's story to Scotland, Glasgow, and she re-writes the main character as Joss Moody, a black male jazz trumpet player, who was discovered to be a woman after his death, just like Tipton. It is also a love story that tells us how Millicent MacFarlane fell in love with Joss. They married and they adopted a biracial son, Colman. Joss became a very successful trumpeter; they seemed to have a perfect life until he died. At that point their life began to fall apart because the whole world learnt about Joss's biological sex. The narration starts soon after his death and it tells how the revelation of his secret affected the different characters. His wife Millie knew his secret whereas his son Colman felt angry and betrayed because he didn't know

¹² Middlebrook, pp. 56-57.

¹³ Middlebrook, p. 3.

¹⁴ Middlebrook, p. xiii.

¹⁵ Middlebrook, p. 217.

anything and decided to collaborate with a journalist, Sophie Stones, to reveal his father's life.

The novel is deeply based on questions of race and identity, a matter which characterizes the author's life and relationships. The author celebrates hybridity and "suggests a revision of Scottishness, based not on fixed abstract categories or stereotypes but on personal experience"¹⁶. Kay is a Scottish writer who does not live any longer in Scotland because she is "tired of having to assert herself as a black person in Scotland". She declares that she loves her country but she is not sure if her country loves her. Another autobiographical element the author introduces is the experience of adoption and the question of being biracial: as Colman, Joss's son, Kay is herself biracial, born in Scotland to a Scottish mother and a Nigerian father, adopted by a white couple. Kay is also lesbian and in the novel this theme is developed through the character of Millie.

1.3 *Trumpet vs Suits Me: The Double Life of Billy Tipton*

According to an interview, Kay denies having read Middlebrook's biography of Tipton: "I didn't read it. I didn't want the story of Billy Tipton to get in the way of my character"¹⁷. Indeed *Trumpet* shows many differences from the original story even if it is inspired by Tipton's life. As Kay stressed, "Joss Moody is black and Scottish, and a Trumpet [sic] player, not a piano player. I wasn't interested in trying to research Billy Tipton or in writing a fiction about a real person"¹⁸. Tipton is a white American person while Joss Moody is half-black and African and Scottish and his wife knows his secret. Tipton's wife stated that she never knew that he was a woman. She asserted that their marriage never involved sexual relations and he told her that due to an injury he had to wear bandages covering his chest. He was a piano player, while Moody plays the trumpet. Joss's career is set in the 1960s: he publishes his first record "Millie's Song" in

¹⁶ Monterrey, p. 169.

¹⁷ Jaggi 1999, p. 53.

¹⁸ "An interview with Jackie Kay".

1958 when Tipton decided to end his musical career. Also the two seem to play two different kinds of music: in *Trumpet* we can find the bop and free jazz movements of the 1960s and 1970s, while Tipton's performances were swing oriented of the dance-hall kind.¹⁹ The time difference is significant in both cases because, as Kay herself stated, Joss could have made other choices today, and his transgendered existence could have been different. Billy Tipton became an emblem of transgender life after his death.²⁰

However Kay made Joss Moody's story very similar to Tipton's. Both characters were discovered to be women after their deaths. Middlebrook describes a young Dorothy wrapping a sheet round her chest and fixing it with a safety-pin, before joining a male band;²¹ Kay uses this detail too. Both Tipton and Joss did not want to call a doctor during their lives because they were afraid that their secret could be exposed to the world. Kay also incorporated in the novel some details from the reports of Tipton's death. For example Dick O'Neil, the drummer of Tipton, commented on the discovery of his friend's biological sex as "I would almost fight anybody who said that. I never suspected a thing"²² and in *Trumpet* these very words are said by Big Red McCall, Joss's drummer (p. 35).

1.4 Structure of the novel, points of view and style

The core of this novel is polyphony: Kay uses multiple voices to convey multiple sides of the story. She "wanted to tell a story, the same story, from several points of view", so like American jazz music, the different voices would give "the same story a different note".²³ She tries "to reproduce a musical effect with the different chapters speaking to each other and echoing ideas and phrases as they tell and retell the same story from

¹⁹ Eckstein and Reinfandt, p. 55.

²⁰ Saxophonist Jessica Lurie founded the Billy Tipton Memorial Saxophone Quartet, a group of female jazz musicians in Seattle. Tipton also inspired the opera *Billy* (1995), the play *Stevie Wants to Play the Blues* (1997) and the jazz musical *The Slow Drag* (1996). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billy_Tipton#Works_inspired_by_Tipton

²¹ Middlebrook, p. 4.

²² Middlebrook, p. 174.

²³ <https://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/0499/kay/interview.html>

different perspectives”.²⁴ The author stated in an interview that “I wanted to have a multiple-voiced narrative also so that it would be like a piece of jazz, with several instrument having their solo turns. I wanted to build a world in voices so that the reader too could make up Joss from all these different pieces”.²⁵ The use of this literary strategy, the multiple perspectives narration, allows the reader to establish a 360 degrees overview of the central character: his past and present life and his private and public sphere.

The novel is divided into two narrative sections which construct the trumpeter’s identity both on a private, intimate level and in a more public way. The first half is mainly composed by the stories of characters, such as the doctor, the registrar, the funeral director and the journalist that are “outsider” to Joss’s life: they have the function of deconstructing Joss’s identity in public. On the opposite side, the second half is composed by the “memories of those who knew him, starting from the most recent, the drummer, going back to the cleaner, the mother, the school friend and finally the letter of Joss himself”.²⁶ These people represent Joss’s private dimension so this second half reconstructs Joss in private by showing him as a loved person among his friends and family.

Trumpet is divided into 35 chapters each one of different length, and each has a heading which indicates the nature of the character speaking within it.

1. HOUSE AND HOME p.1	14. INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE p. 161	27. GOOD HOTELS p. 256
2. PEOPLE: <i>The Doctor</i> p. 42	15. PEOPLE: <i>The Cleaner</i> p. 171	28. THE STARS THIS WEEK p. 257
3. COVER STORY p. 45	16. TRAVEL: <i>London</i> p. 180	29. GOOD HOTELS p. 259
4. PEOPLE: <i>The Registrar</i> p. 73	17. HOUSE AND HOME p. 196	30. EDITORIAL p. 262
5. HOUSE AND HOME p. 82	18. OBITUARIES p. 208	31. INTERIOR p. 263
6. PEOPLE: <i>The Funeral Director</i> p.101	19. GOOD HOTELS p. 209	32. HOUSE AND HOME p. 267
7. INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE p. 117	20. TODAY’S TELEVISION p. 216	33. TRAVEL: <i>The Coast Road</i> p. 269
8. MONEY PAGES p. 124	21. INTERIORS p. 223	34. LAST WORD p.271
9. MUSIC p. 131	22. STYLE p. 232	35. SHARES p. 278
10. SEX p. 137	23. HOUSE AND HOME p. 238	
11. PEOPLE: <i>The Drummer</i> p. 144	24. FEATURES p. 241	
12. HOUSE AND HOME p. 152	25. PEOPLE: <i>The Old School Friend</i> p. 245	
13. LETTERS p. 159	26. EDITORIAL p. 254	

²⁴ Valdivieso, p. 180.

²⁵ <http://literature.britishcouncil.org/jackie-kay>

²⁶ C. Jones 2009, p. 116.

Some of the headings are repeated more than once through the novel. Among them, there are the ones that includes the voice of Millie, “House and Home” chapters (1, 5, 12, 17, 23 and 32). Millie represents the most private space of Joss’s life, and the headings of the chapters dedicated to her, explicitly refer to that intimate dimension. All these chapters are narrated in the first person and in the present tense: they are not interior monologues but Millie narrates her thoughts and the movement of her first weeks as a widow, evaluating and justifying them.

Another important voice in the novel is Colman’s. His point of view on the story comes under the newspaper sections: “Interview Exclusive” ch. 7, 14, “Cover Story” ch. 3, “Sex” ch. 10, “Travel: London” ch. 16, “Interiors” ch. 21, “Good Hotels” ch. 19, 27, 29, “Travel: the Coast Road” ch. 33 and “Shares” ch. 35. “Interview Exclusive” and “Cover Story” are newspaper sections which serve to arise public interest. They are the first two chapters told from Colman’s point of view and show the impact that the discovery of Joss’s secret had on his son; consequently they explain his entering into relation with the media as represented by Sophie Stones. “Cover Story” is the chapter of the novel which best represents the realistic spoken discourse: it includes idioms and abbreviated grammatical forms. Colman’s ironic language style contrasts with his mother language style, more elegant and poetic.²⁷ “Interview Exclusive” is interesting from the point of view of the narration because the chapter shifts continually between the first and the third person narration, alternating Colman and Sophie’s focalization. The other chapters involving Colman “are symbolic of [his] displacement after the news of his father being a woman is broken. [...] The headings make reference to the action of traveling, which symbolically stands for the interior journey Colman has to experience in order to re-negotiate his father’s identity as well as his own”.²⁸

Another bunch of chapters are those expressing the point of view of the mass media, in the figure of the journalist Sophie Stones. The headings of the chapters

²⁷ Smith, p. 165.

²⁸ Fernández, p. 276.

regarding Sophie (“Money Pages” ch. 8, “Style” ch. 22 and “Interior” ch. 31) refer to the sections of a British newspaper. As Fernández points out, “these headings symbolically emphasize the depersonalization that occurs through the incorporation of certain pieces of news into newspaper. These three headings also address some of the most frivolous sections than can be found in newspaper: they all invoke external appearance and money”.²⁹ In these chapters Sophie uses the first person narration alternating it with references to herself in the third person: “I wake up every morning at exactly the same time. Sophie Stones has never needed an alarm” (p. 124). In Metz’s opinion the use of two different styles of narration indicates that Sophie is in some way a torn character. She is “her own third person, to use an expression Millie coined for the relationship between Joss and his former female self”.³⁰ “but whenever the name Josephine Moore came up, he’d say, ‘Leave her alone,’ as if she was somebody else. He always spoke about her in the third person. She was his third person” (p. 93). Smith points out that “The effect of Sophie’s ‘I’, then, is increasingly to isolate her, and demonstrate her ignorance of the changes taking place around her”.³¹

Other repeated headings are the ones which represent the voices of the people whose lives come into contact with Joss before and after his death: “People” chapters (“People: the Doctor” ch. 2, “People: the Registrar” ch. 4, “People: the Funeral Director” ch. 6, “People: the Drummer” ch. 11, “People: the Cleaner” ch. 15 and “People: the Old School Friend” ch. 25). Contrary to the warmth and familiarity expressed by the concept “House and Home”, the term “People” denotes an impersonal category, as Fernández suggests. “People” chapters are written partly in the third person and mostly in free indirect discourse (FID), what Cohn calls “‘narrated monologue’, ‘a character’s mental discourse in the guise of the narrator’s discourse’”.³² Smith points out that “here, the narrator-function does not adopt an omniscient approach to the

²⁹ Fernández, p. 273.

³⁰ Metz, p. 144.

³¹ Smith, p. 167.

³² Cohn, p. 14.

consciousness of its characters [...] instead, although mediated, their `voice' is at least (spectrally) evoked".³³ In the novel this kind of narration is used both to represent the point of view of characters who did not know Joss when he was alive and do not understand his decision, and the characters who loved him deeply, such as his mother or the drummer. All the 'People' chapters are narrated with the past tense and focalized by each character's point of view.

'People: The Drummer' chapter shows a more sentimental and intimate narrative style than the chapters describing medical profession characters' point of view despite the use of the third person pronoun.

McCall loved nothing more than a wee jam with Moody. A wee practice. Just the two of them. Blowing room. They'd doodle and noodle and smear. They'd make the odd clinker. [...] Big Red McCall was not the least bit interested in his private life. He was no gate-mouth. He had never clyped in his life. Some blokes liked to blether and gossip but McCall wasn't one of them (pp. 146-147).

Smith points out that "in Big Red's section colloquialisms abound and the almost audible hybrid of Scottish and jazz discourses stand out amidst the comparatively Standard English of the rest of the text. In this sense, *Trumpet* is an extension of Kay's project in her early poems about the legendary blues performer, Bessie Smith, in which she brought together different cultural modes to articulate something specific about her own hybrid racial identity: "What you end up with is an experiment I suppose, something new or something different: a Black voice that is Scottish and Blue".³⁴

Ch. 20 "Today's Television" and ch. 28 "The Stars This Week" are the only two which include Joss's mother's point of view. They report Joss's life before becoming a man. The two headings were not chosen randomly. Since she lives alone and she is alone, the only thing she can do is watching TV shows (from which the heading of the chapter):

Edith opens her paper to see what's on the telly today. The telly keeps her better company that anybody now. It's a good day today because the snooker is on and Edith loves

³³ Smith, p. 167.

³⁴ Smith, p. 170.

watching the snooker. And at eighty-thirty on BBC 2, there's a big romance with costumes. Edith enjoys seeing them, all dressed up in the fineries from the past (p. 222).

Joss's voice is mostly absent from the narrative. We only get to know Joss's thoughts in two chapters, "Music" ch. 9 and "Last Word" ch. 34, "which give some facts about his family origins in Africa and suggest that music submerged him into gender-free moments of intense experience".³⁵ These chapters will be discussed later in the present work.

The novel also includes a mix of "newspaper sections" whose headings are significant: "Letters" (chapter 13), "Obituaries" (chapter 18) and "Editorial" (chapters 25 ad 29). These sections are spaces where people express their reaction to Joss's death. The chapter "Letters", which includes seven letters, "reflect[s] some aspects of the [...] debate that originated from [his] death".³⁶ According to Fernández the use of these letters has the function to show the reactions to Joss's choice to live his life as a man.

LETTER 1

There were people who said he had a baby face. There were people who said he had a high voice. I'd fight anyone who said those things. I never suspected a thing.

Big Red McCall, Joss Moody Trio (p. 159)

LETTER 6

What I can't understand is how he managed to go on the road with us. I never noticed anything exceptional. That takes some doing. I mean we shared rooms and shit. I don't remember him going to the john. I'm trying to remember him going to the john but I can't. The point is he seemed just like the rest of us. I suppose if I'm looking for something I'd say his features had something about them - I don't know what, something about the soft face, the lips. Once you know, it's staring you in the face. And the laugh was way over the top and sounded a bit...girlish. But we loved that laugh. It was crazy sounding.

Sean Lafferty, UK Trumpet Society (p. 160)

These two letters are written by two people who worked with Joss. They both express a reaction of surprise and incredulity but for both Joss had always been a man.

LETTER 3

³⁵ Valdivieso, p. 180.

³⁶ Fernández, p. 274.

I am writing the authorized biography of the trumpet player, Joss Moody. Please refer all correspondence to me. My book will look into the fascinating details of every aspect of her life. I would like anyone who knew her, who played in a band with her, or who corresponded with her to get in touch with me urgently.

Yours, Sophie Stones (p. 159)

LETTER 5

We are planning to bring out four CDs to mark Moody's phenomenal impact on jazz music. They will be called *The Best of Moody: The Man and The Woman*, to acknowledge the strange circumstances surrounding the trumpet player's death. These will be available later this year.

John Anderson, Columbia Records (p. 160)

Letters three and five are written by people who have interests in making money from Joss's story. The former is written by the journalist who is looking for people who knew the trumpeter in order to find information about his life for her biography. The latter is from a delegate of a record company that announces the release of some CDs of Moody's music.

LETTER 2

I was surprised, but I don't see what all the fuss is about. When It all blows over, we'll be left with his music. That's what matters.

Soloman Davis, Joss Moody fan (p. 159)

LETTER 4

We question this notion that somebody who lives their life as a man and is discovered to be female at the time of death was really a woman all along. What is 'really' in this context? What is the force of that reality?

Transvestites Anonymous Group (TAG) (pp. 159-160)

LETTER 7

Can we please let the dead rest in peace? Has this country forgotten how to do that?

Ann Gray, address provided (p. 160)

The last three letters written by unknown people, stress the irrelevance of the debate created around Joss's real sex and concentrate on the fact that Moody was a talented trumpet player.

The chapters "Obituaries" and "Editorial", "take their titles from parts of a newspaper devoted to informing the readers about recent deaths, to pay tribute to important people

in society and to critically comment on current events”.³⁷ These are the only two chapters that do not concern the sex/gender issues arisen from Joss’s death. “Obituaries” pays homage to Joss by including a list of his works and by asserting this truth about his life: “Joss Moody, trumpet player, born 1927; died 27 July 1997” (p. 208). The voice which talks in the chapters ‘Editorial’ is the closest to the one of an authorial presence in the novel, according to Smith. Talking about Kenan’s theory of ‘author-versions’, which is based on one of the best known jazz novels, Toni Morrison's *Jazz*, Smith points out that “Author-versions orchestrate the process of narration from the outside yet simultaneously emerge from within the fictional world by way of both thematic and structural designs”³⁸. Ginsberg and Rimmon-Kenan argue also that

How can one speak for a community without labeling it and stereotyping the individuals who belong to it? The challenge is to represent a group while respecting the freedom and diversity of its members, It is for this purpose that any version must be seen as open and provisional [...] For the same reason, narrators must renounce authority, speak not about a character, but with him.³⁹

The first “Editorial” chapter begins with:

What happened to Josephine Moore? Look at this photograph. There she is, bright as a button, chocolate brown eyes. [...] Look at this photograph. Look at it again. And again. This is Josephine Moore when she was seven years old. The woman next to her, holding her hand, is her mother, Edith Moore (pp. 254-255).

In Smith’s opinion, the author wants us to look behind Joss sensational tabloid story, and try to find a more intimate and private setting.

The second “Editorial” points the question of who has the right to write biographies, outlining the points of view of those who feel the right to write about other people’s life:

Ghost writers often fall in love with their ghosts. [...] Very soon they are incapable of keeping a clear boundary between their life and the life of their subject. Many ghost writers believe they are the real authority on their subject and not the ghost themselves. They tend to get irritable if their subject disagrees with them (p. 262).

This ironic chapter is a critical comment about failed ghost writers and can be read in relation to Sophie’s sections. In the previous extract the editor talks about what can happen to ghost writers and concludes that many of them “believe they are the real

³⁷ Fernández, pp. 275-276.

³⁸ Ginsberg and Kenan, p. 67.

³⁹ Ginsberg and Kenan, p. 84.

authority on their subject and not the ghost themselves” (p. 262). It is as if the editor sets Sophie up for failure, since she elaborates her ideas for the book and begins to write it, unaware of Colman’s change of mind. E. Smith states that “Editorial” like other chapters is “a comment on media culture and an indictment of the sensationalist media representations that make Sophie rich and see Millie persecuted. [...] The `editor' is responsible for overseeing all the representations that appear in the novel, including the intolerant and the ignorant, and in this light s/he is complicit with them”.⁴⁰ In Fernández’s opinion these three chapters create a break between the accounts of Joss’s private life, the public interest shown by Sophie Stones and the other voices dealing with Joss’s story.

The final chapter, “Share”, is short and in the third person narrator, it tells the encounter between Millie and Colman; it can be considered as an open ending where Millie and Colman’s narratives symbolically reunite.

1.5 Multiple perspectives: an analysis of the characters

The novel begins one month after the trumpeter’s death. His story is told through the voices of the people who met him when he was alive (his wife, his son, the drummer, the cleaner, his old school friend, his mother) or had to do with his death (the doctor, the funeral director, the registrar, Sophie Stones). Both major and minor characters offer an important perspective on the life and death of the trumpeter. All character’s point of view is a piece of puzzle which has the function of constructing a 360 degree view of Joss’s identity.

1.5.1 Millie, Colman and Sophie Stones

The first narrative voice we encounter is Millie’s, his wife. She is always represented in closed and intimate spaces. The first one is the family house in London, where she lived with her husband and her son, which is now surrounded by journalists: “I crept out of my house in the middle of the night with a thief’s racing heart. Nobody watching. I

⁴⁰ Smith, p. 175.

drove into dawn. Relief as I crossed the border into Scotland” (p. 2). She feels menaced in that house and decides to leave in order to find refuge in her Scottish holiday home in Torr. She hides here to escape from the flashes of photographers and from the reporters because they want to interview her about Joss’s identity revelation: “[Millie] never imagined that people could make such a fuss. [She] know[s] now why they call reporters hounds. [She] feel[s] hounded, hunted. Pity the fox” (p. 5). She will remain in that cottage for the rest of the novel. This is fundamentally a reduced space in which she feels protected since it is full of memories of her past life. Torr is a timeless space which keeps alive Millie and Joss’s memories of the life they lived together:

Joss’s holiday clothes are all here. Colman’s model aeroplanes, fishing rods, old green bottles dug up from the sea. Colman’s little antique collection. His coins. Joss’s records. A box of his mild cigars. Everything that mattered to us, we celebrated here (p. 5).

This space during the novel changes to Millie’s eyes: it becomes an hostile environment for her because it becomes surrounded by journalists and photographers:

Torr is not the same Torr any more. Since the letters came. It is a new place, with a new chubb and yale. It is familiar the way a memory is familiar, and changed each time like a memory too. Utterly changed, the size of the rooms are different today. Much smaller. The kitchen shelves are higher. The kettle’s whistle is much shriller. The flush in the bathroom is so loud it makes me jump every time I flush it. The mirrors in the cottage make me look different too. I barely recognize myself (p. 92).

It is interesting to outline that Millie never mentions anything that belonged to her in the cottage: all the stuff she talks about belongs to Joss and Colman.

The opening can be considered the description of the struggle between the public and the private domain, since Millie is hiding from the “public” in order to preserve her private life. She waits looking through the window for photographers to destroy her life. The photographers can be considered as a border which divide the private and the public spheres, ready to violate Millie’s life:

I pull back the curtain an inch and see their heads bent together. I have no idea how long they have been there [...] looking as conspicuous as they please. Each time I look at the photographs in the papers, I look unreal. I look unlike the memory of myself. I feel strange now. [...] I have to get back to our den, and hide myself away from it all. Animals are luckier; they can bury their heads in sand, hide their heads under their coats, pretend they have no head at all (p. 1).

According to Metz, the first lines of the chapter show Millie’s shame reactions. “Very generally, intimacy shame has the function of protecting the private sphere and it

emerges in response to the violation of physical or psychological boundaries of the self”.⁴¹ She feels “ashamed of having violated norms in the eyes of others”,⁴² but she does not feel ashamed of the way she has lived her life and in her past she has never had shame reactions linked to her husband’s sex.

For Millie what reporters keep on writing are only lies about her life with Joss:

One of the newspaper articles had the line *Living a lie*. They found people who claimed to be Joss’s friends who said things like, ‘He fooled us completely. But it didn’t feel like that. I didn’t feel like I was living a lie. It felt like I was living a life. Hindsight is a lie (p. 95).

Millie had fallen in love with Joss without knowing his secret, and she only knew the truth after falling in love with him. From then onwards she has always known Joss’s real sex. Anyway she insists upon the ordinary nature of her marriage: she considers Joss as her husband and considers herself his wife. She seems to consider her relationship with Joss as a form of symbiosis:

I feel pain in the exact place Joss complained for months. A subbing pain on my left side. We couldn’t die of the same thing? [...] I don’t know what is real and what is not, whether the pain in my side is real or imagined. The terrible thing about pain is that it doesn’t matter, it still hurts. It hurts like hell (pp. 1, 4-5).

She is afraid of being categorized:

No doubt they will call me a lesbian. They will find words to put on to me. Words that don’t fit me. Words that don’t fit Joss. They will call him names. Terrible vertigo names. I can see myself holding the book out at arm’s length, to see what words they have used, sinking with them. Down to the bottom, below the green film, to where the thick black mud lies (p. 154).

Millie does not see any reasons to blame herself or her actions.

It was our secret. That’s all it was. Lots of people have secrets, don’t they? The world runs on secrets. What kind of place would the world be without them? Our secret was harmless. It did not hurt anybody. There must be a mistake we made. A big mistake; hiding somewhere that I somehow missed (p. 10).

Despite that, at a certain point she “can feel [her]self coming down with something. Coming down a long way. It is like walking slowly down endless steps in a dark cellar, round and around. Dizzy. Out of kilter” (p. 82). According to Metz what she feels is guilt for the shame of her son experiences. She thinks that Colman would never speak to

⁴¹ Metz, p. 68.

⁴² Metz, p. 69.

her again. He told her that “he was too ashamed to go out” (p. 5) and Millie seems to be similarly worried about the society reactions:

Our friends in London have turned sour or too curious. I don't want to see anyone. Except Colman. I wish I could see Colman. What could I tell him – that his father and I were in love, that it didn't matter to us, that we didn't even think about it after a while? I didn't think about it so how could I have kept it from him if it wasn't in my mind to keep? (p. 22)

Millie claims that he has never told anything to Colman because for her there was nothing strange to tell him. In Metz's opinion shame not only touches Millie's intimacy but also covers up mourning, what should be her first emotion. Millie is presented to us with the difficulty of dealing with death, because Joss still lives in her memory and thoughts even if he is dead. She thinks that “Loss isn't an absence after all. It is a presence” (p. 12).

At a certain point Millie meets an old friend, Mrs Dalsasso, who did not know about Joss's death, and “he is the first person to make [her] feel like an ordinary widow, to give [her] respect, not prurience” (p. 24). She consider herself as an ordinary widow:

My husband died. I am now a widow. [...] Why can [reporters] not understand how ordinary that is? Many women have become widows. Many women have gone through what I've gone through. Many women know the shape, the smell, the colour of loss (p. 205).

In contrast to Millie, Colman, her son, finds it difficult to accept that his father was anatomically female at the beginning. The secret was revealed to him by the funeral director. Colman's first appearance in the novel is connected with the media in the chapter “Cover Story”. He states that “the life, the one I thought I knew I'd lived, changed. Now I don't know what I lived. It suddenly isn't the same life” (p. 46). He always felt in his life that he was living in an untraditional family:

I was a traditional boy in an untraditional house. I was Always going about the place freaked out and embarrassed. My parents were not like other people's parents. [...]

I liked the dark corners of sulking. I liked sliding along the walls of our house in a state of chronic depression. I liked counting the blackheads of my acne. I didn't care. I was in my own world. I pretended I didn't give a flying fuck what my father thought of me. But I did. I suppose I wanted him to be proud of me as a man, as a black man. I fucking worshipped him. [...] (pp. 46-47, 49)

As far as Metz is concerned, the memories of his childhood outline Colman's "negative self-perception and also create an atmosphere of lingering shame":⁴³

I goes in my father's bedroom. I am six years old. I opens their wardrobe. My daddy keeps his trumpet in here. I opens the big silver box, and there it is, all shiny inside. I touched it. I did touch it. Then I strokes it like I've seen my father do and it purrs.

That's my daddy. The one with the orange tie. See. See, standing next to the man with the big drum. He is My Daddy. [...] My daddy finish and people clap. Clap, clap, clap. I stands on my chair and claps too. I have on a sailor suit. I just gets it. My mummy says, Sit down, Colman. But my daddy comes and picks me up, swings me up, swings me in the air; high, high, through all the big smiles. Then sits me on his big shoulders. Says, All right, wee man.

He is sitting on the edge of my bed, my daddy. [...] He gives me a spoon of medicine. I open my mouth wide and wait for the spoon to be put in my mouth and wait for my daddy to say, Brave boy. [...] He pats my head. Strokes my head. Hair just like mine, he says. Then he pulls my cover right up to my chin, says, Coorie in, son, Coorie in (pp. 49,64,68).

These lines are written in spoken children's language. In these extracts there is no evidence that Colman's parents did not love him. On the contrary they both demonstrate to be patient and supportive during Colman's adolescence when he was "surly, sullen, selfish, shameless. It's true. [He] was a total animal" (p. 165).

After his father's death Colman "is forced to undergo a rite of passage".⁴⁴ He starts a process of self-analysis motivated by the anger he feels for his father's lies and by a thirst of revenge. "The feeling of anger after a loved person dies is a common reaction in the bereavement process".⁴⁵ Now he feels the need to go back over his whole life "with a fine-tooth comb" (p. 165).

Both Millie and Colman, despite their different reactions, consider Joss as a man who lived his life as an ordinary husband and a father: "I look at the picture on the album cover, but no matter how hard I try, I can't see him as anything other than him, my Joss, my husband" (p. 35).

Colman judges both his parents for their "freakish" lives. He is not able to understand the nature of his parents' relationship neither his father's real nature: "My father didn't have a dick. My father had tits. My father had a pussy. My father didn't have any balls" (p. 61). Indeed Colman still goes on talking about his father using the male

⁴³ Metz, p. 46.

⁴⁴ Fernández, p. 276.

⁴⁵ Fernández, p. 276.

pronouns “he” or “him” and referring to him as “his father”. According to Calitz, “Colman represents the heteronormative voice in the novel as he struggles to accept or embrace his father’s transgender identity”⁴⁶. His reaction can be seen as an expression of the fact that he feels betrayed because he was denied the truth. He also questions the foundation of his relationship with Joss. The revelation of the secret radically alters the father-son’s relationship which was fundamental to Colman’s identity construction. When he was a child he loved his father he depended all his life on his father’s approval:

He’d hold my hand in the street. Liked that. Holding my hand in the street for people to see. Father and son out and about in the street. People that I didn’t know I was adopted said things like, ‘You’re your father’s spitting image, you are.’ What I wanted when I was a kid was to look like my father. You could write a list of things after his name. Good-looking. Talented. Charismatic (p. 45).

For a long time he had suffered from a inferiority complex for not being as talented and successful as his father. He saw himself as a failure in comparison to him. He had to be “Joss Moody’s son”.

I was all right, it was, being Joss Moody’s son. Only when I become Colman Moody did everything start to become a total fucking drag. It’s a tall order when you are expected to be somebody just because your father is somebody. The children of famous people aren’t allowed to be talentless, ordinary fuckwits like me. [...] I mean, what am I? [...] Colman Moody, son of Joss Moody, the famous trumpet player. You know the one. The one who pretended to be a man and fetched up a woman at his death. Conned his own son. That boy must have been thick. Two planks. Colman Moody the guy who didn’t do nothing (pp. 45-46).

He tried to be accepted by Joss all his life, and for this he now feels doubly betrayed. Driven by rage he tries to revenge by collaborating with a journalist in writing a book about his father’s life: “I’ll write his fucking biography. I’ll tell his whole story. I’ll be his Judas” (p. 62). Colman always meets Sophie in impersonal enclosed bounded spaces such as cafés and hotel halls. As Fernández asserts, these are temporary spaces of social interaction which do not include personal characteristics. Places such as airports, hotels, cafés, etc... are liminal spaces; places of transition because they stand between the public and the private. This is relevant for both Sophie and Colman. On the one hand Sophie is herself a liminal character because she is an outsider to Joss’s life but at the same time she wants to enter into his privacy by collecting information from the

⁴⁶ Calitz, p. 69.

interview with the people that knew Joss. On the other hand Colman feels he is an outsider to his familiar spaces after his father's death. In these spaces he constructed his social relations which now have become unreal by the revelation of his father's secret. "Space(s) are not fixed categories but are an ongoing process of signification and change. Colman feels trapped in the spaces surrounding him and has a need to escape".⁴⁷

Jesus. It's embarrassing, that's the worst of it. Pricks saying, really, Cole didn't you know? Bastards asking me questions. I'm so fucking embarrassed I could emigrate. [...] Thinking, thinking all the time now about doing this book. He has been offered a sixty grand advance which would allow him to dump this heap of a flat and get the fuck out of the country. The need to escape, to go to a place where no one has ever heard of Joss Moody, where no one knows him, grows daily (p. 46).

He changes attitude after visiting his paternal grandmother; he seems to understand his parents' decision and he finally accepts his father's identity. Colman's change of attitude during the novel can be seen as a sign of growth, as Parker asserts that with "the evidence of problematic reactions to parental bereavement there is also evidence that the death of a parent is often followed by personal maturation".⁴⁸

Blinded by rage, Colman agrees to collaborate with Sophie Stones, a freelance journalist working for the *Daily Sky*, who wants to write a biographical exposé of Joss's life. She is intrigued by Millie and Joss's love story.

The question of Mill Moody's attraction to Joss Moody intrigues me. She married a woman who pretended she was a man. Why? A woman who stuffed wet cotton into a condom and tied on a couple of walnuts to fake the balls and penis. (Well, I don't know if Joss had a so-called 'three piece suit' or not; but I've read about that somewhere) (pp. 126-127).

She tries to modify the story so that it can be more intriguing for the public. She wants to become a well-known journalist with this biography. She hopes for "Big Money" (p. 129) even if she is aware of the fact that what she is doing is "disgusting" (p. 129).

Too much of my money goes on designer clothes. If I pull this off, it will be a case of Armani, Givenchy. I can visualize the money columns in these blue books changing rapidly like a wild cash register. "We're talking big money," I say to my bank book. "Big Money." Disgusting, I know. But Sophie deserves it more than anybody. I kiss my blue bank babies and put them back in my drawer (p. 129).

⁴⁷ Fernández, p. 298.

⁴⁸ Fernández, p. 277.

According to Fernández, the book represents “the violent eagerness of re-inscribing [Joss] story”.⁴⁹ Halberstam considers transgender biography “as a sometimes violent, often imprecise project which seeks to brutally erase the carefully managed details of the life of a passing person and which recasts the act of passing as deception, dishonesty and fraud”.⁵⁰ In her article the author states that the lives of Teena and Tipton were “dismantled and reassembled through a series of biographical inquiries”.⁵¹ Sophie feels entitled to write the biography: “I am Colman Moody’s ghost writer. His psyche. I like the idea of finding his voice. His subconscious” (p. 125). She deeply wants to expose Joss’s lesbian identity, and, according to Hargreaves, her stereotypes about Joss’s transgender identity can be seen as social ignorance about gender difference. Just look at the title she considers for her book:

The Trumpet Man/Woman. The Life and Times of the Transvestite Trumpet Player. Now You See Her, Now You Don't.” or “*The True Story of a Trumpet Transvestite. Blow Her Trumpet. Daddy, You Blew It. Blow That Thing. Joss Moody's Gamble* (p. 125).

As we can see she is one of the few characters to use the feminine third person pronoun to talk about Joss. She always refers to him as a lesbian and she is curious about how Josephine became Joss. She has never met Joss and before even interviewing anyone who knew the musician she already has in her mind the story: a story of scandal that will sell well since, “people are interested in weirdos, sex-changes, all that stuff” (p. 125). Kellner notices that capitalist systems need ‘difference’ to create desire and sell commodities:

Difference sells. Capitalism must constantly multiply markets, styles, fads, and artifacts to keep absorbing consumers into its practices and lifestyles. The mere valorization of “difference” as a mark of opposition can simply help market new styles and artifacts if the difference in question and its effects are not adequately appraised.⁵²

She represents what she describes to be the trend of the nineties:

This is exactly the kind of stuff that will sell the book. The nineties are obsessed with sex, infidelity, scandal, sleaze, perverts. The nineties love the private life. The private life that

⁴⁹ Fernández, p. 296.

⁵⁰ Halberstam 2005, p. 48.

⁵¹ Halberstam 2005, p. 48.

⁵² Kellner, p. 40.

turns suddenly and horrifically public. The sly life that hides pure filth and sin. The life of respectability that shakes with hypocrisy [...] The dirtier the better. The more famous, the better. [...] Lesbian stories are in. Everyone loves a good story about a famous dyke tennis star or actress or singer. And this one is the pick of the bunch. The best yet. Lesbians who adopted a son; one playing mummy, one playing daddy. The big butch frauds. Couldn't be better (pp. 169-170).

She uses a very vulgar and aggressive language in this passage. As Williams claims in her essay, Sophie represents the crudest aspect of media, for this her character can be seen as a critique of tabloid journalism, and “by extension, her role as onlooker and voyeur is a critique of the tabloidisation of British society writ large.”⁵³ Tabloid culture in Britain is based “on selling “scandalous” stories about gay couples with children and transvestites with lesbian lovers”.⁵⁴ In some way this quotation can describe the process by which Joss's private life becomes a public domain.

Sophie also represents heteronormative discourse, and tries to force Colman to tell her details about his father's private life.

I need to get right under Colman Moody's skin. It will not be the first time. Why should I have scruples when man have been using me for years? As long as it takes to make good copy. He's playing the same game, isn't he? (p. 170)

Due to the fact that she manipulates the others, in the novel Sophie is cast in a negative light and her attitude never changes. Both Millie and Colman call her “this/that Sophie Stones” (pp. 41,139). She is seen like a shark, ready to do everything in order to achieve her goals, without caring about damaging the others. May Hart expresses her opinion about her, too:

What would Josephine have thought of this young woman writing a book about her? She did not look the part. She looked all wrong. Sleek and sophisticated wearing designer clothes and smile and exuding false charm. The older she has become, the more adept she is at picking out falseness in people (p. 249).

Big Red McCall talks about her, too: after having hung up the phone he refers to Sophie as “Stupit fucking cow” (p. 149).

Sophie lives in the shadow of her sister Sarah. She describes her as her opposite. Sarah “is what you call a decisive person” (p. 149); for her “gossip doesn't utilize the

⁵³ Williams, p. 158.

⁵⁴ Williams, p. 158.

intellect” (p. 125). Their parents and other people in the past seemed to have preferred Sarah to Sophie:

My parents will have to stop saying, ‘Sarah this and Sarah that’ to everything (p. 129).

[Sarah] nabbed my first boyfriend, Paul Ross. I never forgave her for that. The *first*. I’ll never forget that feeling I had when I watched him holding Sarah’s hand walking down our street. He gave her a look he never gave me. [...] It just knocked me out. I’ve still never seen a look like that on a man’s face for me (p. 235).

Metz in her essay claims that Sophie loves to see herself in control, but she always fails because she does not trust herself. In the following lines it is possible to see how sure she feels of herself and at the same time how anxious she is:

Being plump made me silly and inferior so I went on a diet and I got thin. But I can’t be too careful: there is always the fat person, lurking around, waiting for a chance to take me over. If I looked away, she’d be in there quicker than I could snap my thin fingers (pp. 124-125).

Her name is ironic because “Sophie” comes from the Greek and means “knowledge”, but actually she is not clever, and she hides it with fashion and clothes: “I pull my hair up and put some pins in. I look clever with my hair up. I knew I had it in me. Clever Sophie” (p. 128). And “Stones”, in Monterrey’s opinion, “is referred not only to her weight, as she is very fat, but also to her intellectual abilities”⁵⁵ as she never changes her mind about Joss, not even after having talked about all the people who knew Joss, loved and respected him whether or not he was a man or a woman.

Sophie is an insecure and “vulnerable” (p. 181) character and she is afraid to be ridiculed. To fight her insecurities and anxieties she chooses futile remedies such as shopping which will inevitably lead her to fail. “The minute I even sniff a whiff of depression coming on, or a slight wind of paranoia I am out in the shops, sometimes before they have even opened their doors. Shopping staves depression. Definitely” (p. 234). In the chapter “Style” she describes herself as a “savage” shopper. “I can be spotted in the changing rooms of classy boutiques with feathers around my mouth and blood on my face. Shopping is a blood sport. ‘Tally ho!’ I cry to myself when Sophie sets out on a spree” (p. 232). Metz claims that shopping is another competition to Sophie to win against her sister. When she wears something

⁵⁵ Monterrey, p. 173.

[She is] glad at least that I'm size ten - still not as slim as Sarah - but not obese like the woman next to me, squeezing herself into a size 16 when she is probably a size 22, her Marks and Sparks bloomers riding the crack of her arse. Poor fat cow (p. 232).

In the end, her attempts to get information from other people are unsuccessful and even Colman when accepts his father's identity refuses to keep on collaborating with her: "Who do you think I am? I am Colman Moody, the son of Joss Moody, the famous trumpet player. He'll always daddy to me. [...] It's my morals. I can't do it" (p. 259). When Colman goes away in the middle of the night, after having spent the night with Sophie, she thinks that he "is trying to humiliate [her]" (p. 265), but actually it is Sophie who tried to humiliate him and his family with her book.

Colman is bound to see from this that I'm not going to write the usual Hack book, that I'm not The Ghost Writer From Hell. I have my sensitivities too. He will probably be flattered by how well Sophie understands him. [...] Especially now, if the whole book is written as Colman. *Under My Skin*. [...] I'll propose it to him. Later, after a bottle of good wine [...] I'll miss Colman when we finish this book. Silly Cole and his stupid note! (p. 266)

At first she does not understand that in leaving the room in the middle of the night, Colman also decided to stop helping her with the book.

1.5.2 PEOPLE: the doctor, the registrar and the funeral director

As stated before, chapters entitled "People" relate the different perspectives of other characters, whose lives came into contact with Joss and their reactions to the discovery of the trumpeter's secret. The first three characters are those which represent the legal and medical professions: the doctor, the registrar and the funeral director. Fernández asserted that these three characters "appear in the novel in a gradual order that symbolizes the process of 'making public' Joss's body; his coming out from the private dimension to the public one is a slow and hierarchical movement that starts at his death and proceeds with the appropriation, construction and display of his/her body/life in a different fashion from what he wanted to portray during his life".⁵⁶ According to Knockaert those characters who write certificates cover institutionalized parts. With their certificates they create identities even if they are not allowed to state a person's identity. Certificates have the power to 'decide' if someone is alive, dead, married or

⁵⁶ Fernández, p. 270.

divorced. It seems that when reality is not reliable, certificates have the power to produce it: I mean that if Joss's secret had not come out, there still were certificate to prove his 'male' identity and everybody would have believed in them. These characters embody the state and stand for "the dominance of restrictive hegemonic discourse"⁵⁷. They all have the power to rename Joss as a female, even if their action to establish a gender identification for him is not legitimate. "They try to match Joss into the heterosexual matrix, the apparent 'natural' institution which consolidate an inevitable connection between gender and sex."⁵⁸ According to Sarah Claeys "they thus perpetuate the binary system and, since they have the power to change people's name and write or adjust (death) certificates, they might be understood as defenders of the heterosexual matrix".⁵⁹

Doctor Krishnamurty's is the second person to see Joss's dead body, after Millie. She arrived at Joss's house early in the morning, after Millie had phoned her. The first thing she did as soon as she arrived was to ask the wife the time of death. When she got to the room where "the body" was, she began to examine Joss's body and to fill in the certificate of death as a common procedures requires: "Doctor Krishnamurty got out her medical certificate and started filling in the obvious, prior to her examination. Time of death: 1.12. Date: 21 July 1997. Sex: Male" (p. 43). What the doctor soon noticed about the body was that:

There were many bandages wrapped around the chest of the deceased which she had to undo. [...] Each wrapping of bandage that she peeled off felt unmistakably like a layer of skin. So much so that the doctor became quite apprehensive about what kind of injury the bandages could be hiding (p. 43).

This unsentimental extract reminds of Millie's loving account of the first time Joss undressed for her. In E. Smith's opinion "Millie's experience of the bandages leaves its ghostly trace within Doctor Krishnamurty's different account, and so, traces of the

⁵⁷ Calitz, p. 50.

⁵⁸ Claeys, p. 91.

⁵⁹ Claeys, p. 91.

doctor's actions with her red pen haunt the registrar's story"⁶⁰ ("Mohammad found the last minute change hurtful. The use of the red pen seemed unnecessarily violent" p. 43). At first sight, to the doctor "the body" was obviously that of a man, but when she unwrapped the bandages she discovered Joss's breasts. Her reaction is described as:

When she first saw the breasts [...] she thought that they weren't real breasts at all. At least not women's breasts. She thought Mr Moody must be one of those men that had extra flab on top - male breasts. But they really were too big for that. [...] It took her pulling down the pyjama bottoms for her to be quite certain (p. 77).

At first she seemed to have a rational reaction: she justified the presence of the breasts as not real women's breast but as male breast "that had extra flab on top". This rational reaction contrasts with her use of her "emergency red pen" (p. 44) immediately after correcting what was a mistake to her.

She got her red pen out from her doctor's bag. What she thought as her emergency red pen. She crossed 'male' out and wrote 'female' in her rather bad doctor's handwriting. She looked at the word 'female' and thought it wasn't quite clear enough (p. 44).

According to Fernández the pen, since it is extracted from the doctor's bag, symbolizes "a tool of legitimate power inscription".⁶¹ Through her action of rewriting the word "female" she restates her previous conclusion: "She crossed that out, tutting to herself, and printed 'female' in large childish letters".⁶² The doctor's "professional authority is questioned since her personal identity (self) takes over her professional one and, accordingly, she loses the power bestowed by her occupation and reacts, in that unusual and unexpected situation, as one of the most defenseless human beings, a child. Her handwriting is no longer that of a doctor, but that of a small girl".⁶³ She felt obliged to use the "correct" word to categorize Joss because, as a State representative, her duty is to clarify his biological sex as the law needs the agreement of Joss's sex and gender.

⁶⁰ Smith, p. 169.

⁶¹ Fernández, p. 304.

⁶² Fernández, p. 304.

⁶³ Fernández, p. 304.

The registrar, Mr Mohammad Nassar Sharif, a Bangladeshi man, has the task of issuing certificates that officially declare people's death. He is described as a kind, respectful and caring person towards the other:

He gave those women his pen gently, trying to pour as much love into his gesture as possible. Mr Sharif had kind eyes. His kind eyes and his elegant hands were all he had to offer the bereaved.[...] Mr Sharif believed that everyone in his office needed a moment of quiet (pp. 74-75).

“The registrar had seen everything” (p. 73) in his life. But in his life

[He] had never [...] seen a medical certificate where male was crossed out and female entered in red. On the grounds of pure aesthetics, Mohammad found this last minute change hurtful. The use of the red pen seemed unnecessarily violent. [...] the red biro should never have been born (p. 77).

Millie was waiting in his office with all the necessary documents, even with more documents that she actually needed: “She had a birth certificate for the deceased bearing the name Josephine Moore. [...] A marriage certificate for the deceased bearing the name Joss Moody” (p. 78). When Millie brings him the death certificate he cannot believe that Joss and Josephine were the same person: “It was as if she had brought to him the certificates and papers of two completely different people - a woman and a man” (p. 79). The registrar is one of the few characters who gives Millie the respect she needs. To him Millie is a widow, and he believes that “everyone in his office needed a moment of quiet” (p. 75). Anyway he feels to be in an awkward position because he did not know what to do with all the certificates which report two names for the same person. From the conversation between the registrar and Millie a moment of deep tenderness and humaneness emerges.

He had a problem, he confessed, in deciding what name to put on the death certificate, given the name Joss Moody was never officially sanctioned anywhere. The woman leaned forward towards Mr Sharif. She looked at his hands. She looked out of the window at the sun. A few drops of sweat appeared on her forehead. She didn't say anything for a moment. There was total silence between them. The silence had an unusual quality to it today because the woman's spirit was so fine. Mohammad could sit silent with this particular woman in his registrar office for a year, maybe two. [...] That woman would not take his lovely handwriting for granted. She would be happy she had a beautiful death certificate. He did not want it spoiled. He said nothing to her (pp. 80-81).

Despite the particularity of the story the registrar stays apparently indifferent. Contrary to the doctor, Mr Sharif is calm, rational and composed when he fills in the death certificate. His reaction is totally appropriate and sober. Kay describes the registrar as a

human character because he cares for the lives of those who died: “There was nothing Mohammad Nassar Sharif could do to reverse the terrible finality of a death certificate. [...] The certificates were not simply pieces of paper with names and numbers on them. There were people there” (p. 73). A similar description of humanity can be also found in the chapter regarding the registrar: “Everyone called it ‘the body’, but for Doctor Krishnamurty, so soon after the death itself, it was not just a body to her. It was a man, a person. Even a soul” (p. 43).

The chapter contains a long reflection of the registrar about “names” and their importance. He concludes that to him, coming from Bangladesh, names are something really important and he “would not be a registrar today were it not for his name” (p. 77). I want to outline this reflection about names because Millie will ask the registrar to change the name in Joss’s death certificate. So it is interesting to analyze the registrar’s opinion about names and then see what he will do with Joss’s name. Mr. Sharif asserts that “changing name is a complicated business and [he] would wisely advise [...] to keep the certificate the same” (p. 77). Millie asked him if he could register Joss as a man in the certificate because “this would have been important for her husband, to be registered in death as he was in life” (pp. 79-80). The registrar told her that “he could not lie on a death certificate” (p. 56). He finds it impossible to reconcile the disjunction between Joss male identity and his feminine body. He is not able in term of power to change what the doctor wrote in the certificate but at the end Millie succeeds in convincing him to write “Joss Moody” on the death certificate.

He dipped his marbled fountain pen in the black Indian ink and wrote the name *Joss Moody* on the death certificate. He wrote the date. He paused before he ticked ‘female’ on the death certificate. [...] The woman smiled at him. The intimacy between them had been like love (p. 81).

With the action of writing the name “Joss” the registrar preserves the complexity of Joss’s identity. Calitz considers “Joss’s name, as a signifier of his performance as a masculine subject, [and in her opinion, it] legitimates his existence above his biological sex”.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Calitz, p. 74.

In her essay, Metz, claims that the chapter *The Registrar* has two important functions. On the one hand it counterbalances the tactless reactions of the media to Joss's death. In some way it restores the social norms that were violated. On the other hand the registrar's description of Millie through free indirect speech has the function of revealing how deeply disturbing was this experience for her, since the third-person descriptions of her and the first-person passage of "House and Home" were not enough to give a complete view of Millie's character.

The third authority that analyses Joss's body is the funeral director, Albert Holding. He considers his role very important, equal to that of a doctor; he helps the dead through the process of death since for him death is a process:

They might have been pronounced dead by a doctor but, as far as he is concerned, it's a slow business. It is a process. People don't suddenly die. Death is not an event. Not even when they have suffered a heart attack or been in an accident, do people suddenly die. There is life long after the heart has stopped beating. [...] Death is not the finite moment that we are told it is. death is the infinite moment (p. 105).

He tries to make the dead look as good as possible putting some make up on their faces. He is fascinated by their character and the way they have chosen to die. In his office there is a plate reporting "*Death hath ten thousand several doors / For men to take their exits*" (p. 103).⁶⁵ He thinks that there are as many different death for all the different people.

He prepared himself to embalm the body; he took off the pyjamas and what he noticed was that "the man's legs were not hairy. Then Holding noticed that he had rather a lot of pubic hair. A bush. The absence of the penis did not strike him straight away" (pp. 108-109). Rarely something has ever shocked Holding in his life. But after the examination of Joss's body, he is stunned by the absence of the penis.

[He] actually found himself rummaging in the public hair just to check if there wasn't a very, very small one hiding somewhere. The whole absence made Albert Holding feel terribly anxious, as if he had done something wrong. As if he was not doing his job properly (p. 109).

⁶⁵ This is a sentence taken from John Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* Act IV, scene ii, pronounced by the Duchess herself.

Then he took off the pyjamas and the bandages and discovered Joss's breast. At this point he looked at Joss's face and was upset to see that:

The face had transformed. It looked more round, more womanly. It was without question a woman's face. How anybody could have ever thought that face male was beyond Albert Holding. How he himself could have thought it male! There she was, broad-boned face, black hair, with spattering of grey, full lips, smooth skin. Quite an extraordinary looking woman. [...] It had never happened to him before. He had never had a man turn into a woman before this very eyes (pp. 110-111).

The registrar believes that each person was born with a definite personality. When someone dies, he can die with the personality he was born with, or with another one; this explains why dead people can be unrecognizable:

Personality - people are born with one; people die with one. It might be the same one. Or it might change suddenly at the last minute in time for the next life. Most people die with the same personality that they were born with [...] some people change personalities the moment they die [...] that's why you hear a lot of people say that the dead are unrecognizable [...] because the dead person has changed (pp. 103-104).

Now certain that the body was a female one he begins to feel anxious: "What of there was an inquiry? What if the doctor never properly examined the body? What if the medical certificate read 'male'. What if the wife turned up with the death certificate which said male too?" (p. 112). As the registrar and the doctor, the funeral director does not know how to name the subject, as a male or a female. But in his mind he has clear that "the body" belonged to "Mrs Moody's husband": "He still found himself referring to it as 'Mrs Moody's husband'. He couldn't think what else to call it but 'Mrs Moody's husband'" (p. 112). In biology the definition of sex is clear, there is no possible ambiguity. So the funeral director can only correct Joss's certificate:

Holden pulled open his special drawer to check that his red pen was still there. If there was anything untoward in the death certificate, he would be duty bound to correct it with this very red pen. He picket it up and rolled it between his thumb and forefinger. This pen would need to do the deed. [...] If he could have the satisfaction of brutally and violently obliterating 'male' and inserting female in bold, unequivocal red, then at least he would have something to do (p. 112-113).

According to Calitz "the red pen signifies the urgency with which gender errors need to be corrected. [...] Joss's body [...] now becomes a threat to the essentialism of heteronormative discourse".⁶⁶ The funeral director has to find a way to connect Joss's

⁶⁶ Calitz, p. 73.

sex and gender because his duty is to make sure that people are classified according to the right category.

When Colman arrives at Holding's office to see his father's body, the registrar does not know how to explain the issue about his father sex.

He had to delay. The words were a struggle. [...] 'What I mean to say' Holding said, coughing into his fist, 'is that your father is not a man at all, but a woman. In other words he does not possess the male body parts, but instead the person lying through next door that I am given to understand is your father is actually a woman. She is in possession of the female body parts' (pp. 113-114).

I would like to highlight how the registrar uses pronouns referring to Joss in this passage. At the beginning Holding uses "he" to talk about Joss, then when he reveals to Colman that his father was a woman, he changes and uses the pronoun "she".

The chapter ends as it began, with a short description of what Holding's profession duties are. Then the last sentence recalls Holding's shock: "There was nothing he had not seen. Until today. This was a first all right. This was a first" (p. 116).

1.5.3 PEOPLE: the drummer, the cleaner and the school friend

This second part deals with those characters who were closer to Joss, such as the drummer, the cleaner and the school friend whose points of view are expressed in the chapters entitled "People". Last but not least, I will talk about Edith Moore, his mother. Both his mother and his school friend provide important perspectives about Joss, because they had known him only as Josephine and "thus inscribe the traces of his transgendered journey into Trumpet's communal biography".⁶⁷ All these characters share feelings of love and grief for the same person and these feelings seem to overcome the importance of gender difference, as Sarah Claeys states in her essay.⁶⁸

Big Red McCall, a white Scotsman, is the drummer Joss worked with. He had his proper name but he never answered to it all his life. Since he was a child he was given many nicknames: at three 'Big Man', around six 'Brassneck', at twelve 'Poacher', for a

⁶⁷ Smith, p. 170.

⁶⁸ Claeys, p. 89.

long time 'Bunk', until he was nineteen 'Malki'. The "Red" nickname is due to his bad temper, he did not remember who was the one who gave him the nickname, but he was proud of it: "[It] was his favourite [nickname] because he believed in communism and had a red hot temper" (p. 145). For McCall nicknames were something magic, because "they let people know what they were in for" (p. 145). But if you already have an important name, a name that sounds "too cool for anybody to ever want to change it [such as] Miles Davis. Charlie Mingus. Joss Moody" (p. 146), there is no need to change it.

McCall met Moody when the drummer of Moody's band took food poisoning; one of Joss's mates asked McCall to take the drummer place. He loved playing with Joss; he thought they were a great team because "Moody was private with his trumpet and McCall was extrovert with his drums. [...] They understood each other perfectly like bad twins" (pp. 146-147). McCall always defended Joss when people said strange things about him or his voice:

One time [McCall] caught a guy saying, 'There's something strange about that Moody' [...] [McCall] cornered the guy, poked him hard with his fat fingers. Who, jab, are, jab, you, jab, calling, jab, strange? The guy stood his ground - 'Moody's voice is high like a woman's' McCall knocked him down (p. 144).

Talking about Joss, the drummer claims that "a lot of people said Moody had a baby face [...] but [he] didn't think so. [He] beat up anybody who said that" (p. 148). He has always considered Joss as a man:

He accepted Moody had a bit of a squeaky voice. Big deal. Lots of people squeak. As for baby face, millions of jazz man have baby faces. [...] A man with a baby face could send you to town. A man with a baby face could have you away ta ta on a big raft sailing for an island you've never heard of (p. 147).

When Sophie calls him for an interview, he refuses to talk to her about his friend's death because he hated the 'capitalist press' (p. 147) considering them "weak-willed unintelligent bastards" (p. 148). He says to her: "It's the fucking music that matters [...] Away and write yir stupid book. It won't tell us anything about Moody. If you want my advice, you'll drop it. It u'll upset his family" (pp. 148-149). He also refuses her money: "Sophie says, 'We will of course be paying a handsome fee'. Big Red pulls himself up to his full height in his all. 'Are you trying to bribe me? Away and raffle yourself'" (p.

149). He hangs up the phone and goes back to bed singing songs then he tries to remember the last time he saw Joss, and if he was suffering from an illness. But he can't remember and when he realizes that his friend died he mourns his loss:

[He] punches his fist into the pillow saying to himself over and over, 'I can't get fucking comfortable'. [...] It's been years since he had a cry. At first he can't believe those are tears sliding down his face. Then the sound comes out of his mouth and he knows (p. 151).

The Cleaner, Maggie, when first arrived at Moody's house did not know that he was a well-known trumpeter. The Moody family has always helped her to resolve her problems and listened to her. She says that "Mr Moody was a bit of a special man" (pp. 171-172). In Maggie's opinion Joss had style, and he wore unusual shirts; he was always well dressed. He was gentle and polite and it was obvious that he loved his wife. She comes to know about Joss's biological sex from one of her neighbors that read the news in the newspaper. When the neighbors phoned her, she asked her if she had read the newspaper about the Moody's family. In the beginning she thought that something awful had happened to them and was sad about that. Then the neighbors told her about Joss's sex.

'The one you thought was a man, is dead, and they've discovered he wasn't a man after all.' 'Well, what was he?' Maggie asked stunned. 'A woman of course. It's in the paper. Will I bring it round?' (p. 174)

One morning Maggie was called by Sophie Stones for an interview and they arranged a meeting for the next day. When Sophie arrived Maggie was reluctant to talk about the Moody family but she listened to what Sophie had to say. The cleaner did not want to believe about Joss's biological sex, to her they had made a mistake. From the interview we get to know that once Maggie was cleaning Joss's room, she found some letters on the desk which reported: "Dear mum, I am enclosing some money for you. I miss you. I am very busy. [...] But the strangest thing was how the letter[s] [were] signed. [They were] signed *Josephine*" (p. 178). While Maggie thought that Joss had written the letter on behalf of somebody else, Sophie found the scoop she was looking for. When the journalist left the house, the cleaner tried to find a proper place where to hide the money Sophie gave her. The journalist asked her if she still had Mr Moody's key to the house

and she said she did not have it anymore. But at the end of the chapter we come to know that she still had it, so she lied to the journalist to protect the Moody family.

May Hart, the old school friend, still addresses Joss using the pronoun “she” because she only knew Josephine. The chapter begins with a description of some of May’s dreams about Josephine she had had for four nights after she heard about her death: “Josephine Moore had died every night for four nights on the trot. She is always eleven years old. In only one of her dreams was May Hart young with her, but that was the worst dream of the lot” (p. 246). Five days before Sophie Stones had arrived at her house. May did not know about Josephine’s death but she still remembered her: “She could not remember everyone’s names now, but she always remembered Josephine. She was the only coloured one in the class. A very pretty girl. Beautiful teeth. Lovely smile” (p. 247). When she first met Sophie she felt that she could not trust her: “She looked all wrong. Sleek and sophisticated, wearing designer clothes and smile and exuding false charm. The older she has become, the more adept she is at picking out falseness in people” (p. 249).

Here again in this chapter comes back the question of names and their importance, as in “The registrar” chapter or as in “The drummer” chapter. Looking at the old pictures

Names started returning to her. [...] Everyone was called the name on the register. At last half the people in the class were not known by those names. Some of them weren’t even similar. They all had two personalities (p. 249).

It seems as if the author tries to express that a person was born with a precise name, but during his life he can chose his name/nickname and be consequently the person he has chosen to be. Mr Sharif stated that he became a registrar thanks to his name; Big Red had always had nicknames and he had never answered to anyone calling him with his birth given name; his nickname represents also his personality. Here in “The old school friend” chapter, a step ahead is made: names stand for people’s personalities: so Josephine chose to be Joss, so she chose to live her life as a man.

There is no love like the love you have as girls. [...] As a girl, May Hart would have died for Josie. She loved everything about her. [...] May even loved Josephine Moore’s silence (p. 251).

Two things about names should be noted here. First, May calls her friend with the diminutive Josie, which show May's deep affection for her friend. Second, once Josephine had the surname 'Moore' (the one of her father John Moore) which later becomes 'Moody'. I will deepen the question of names in the last chapter.

When Sophie shows her the picture of Josephine dressed as a man, she was so upset about the piece of news that she burst into tears.

Underneath the man's face, she could see the girl she remembered. Josie was there all right in those eyes. Actually, if she just looked at the face, Josie hadn't changed a bit. [...] Looking at Josie all dressed up as a man, May realised that she'd missed her all her life. Didn't she have style! Look at that suit! Her Bert never looked like that in a suit. She was moved to tears (p. 251-252).

As the majority of the other characters, May does not care what the real sex of Joss was. She has lost her friend.

From her memories we come to know that when Maggie and Josephine were young, the latter had kissed her once. This episode can be seen as the starting point of Josephine's transformation into Joss. Now Maggie only feels the desire to get Sophie out of her house. She begins to feel worried about what Sophie could have done to Josephine: "A sick feeling rose up in May's stomach. What had she done to her wonderful Josephine? Had she harmed her in any way? She would never, never harm Josie for all the world" (p. 253). Maggie seems to feel something more important than friendship for Josephine. This is also because in the following excerpt she shows a bit of jealousy:

When she asked the journalist how Josephine had managed to have a son, living her life as a man, the journalist had said, Josephine married a woman and they adopted a son. When she asked her what this woman looked like the journalist had made May Hart deeply unhappy by replying, 'Beautiful. Really quite stunning. I've got a photograph of her here that her son gave to me, if you'd like to see it' (p. 253).

At first she refused to see the picture, but than she looked at it:

What did she want to see a picture of Josephine Moore's wife for? It was absurd. May took the photograph the journalist had given her. Josephine was wearing an elegant suit: her lovely lips were blowing her trumpet (p. 253).

1.5.4 Edith Moore

As regards Edith Moore, Joss's mother, she still considers Joss her "daughter", so she addresses him with the female pronoun. Joss kept on writing letters to her mother, but "the strangest thing was how the letter[s were] signed. [They were] signed *Josephine*" (p. 178).

She has in her possession many letters from her, safe in an old suitcase under her bed. The living, curly sight of her own daughter's handwriting. She has not had one thing she'll say for Josephine: she kept sending her cheques, every week. Every week for the past thirty years (p. 218).

Edith remembers the last time she saw her daughter: she brought her a carry-out curry. She wonders why that time her daughter was wearing a man's suit. But she cannot understand. She cannot remember everything anymore, the older she becomes the less she can remember.

Some memories have become more vivid as gone up. [...] When those memories arrive home, [...] when they arrive in through the back door she is shocked and still. But delighted. Old memories are like old relatives (p. 218).

The chapter "Today's television" provides some new information about Joss's father.

Edith passes a lot of her time remembering her husband, John Moore. [...] [He] was different from any man Edith had ever met. His skin was very dark, his eyes the deepest darkest eyes she had ever seen. She saw John Moore's eyes in the eyes of her little daughter. John Moore has been dead such a long time now (p. 219).

Looking at the picture of her husband, Edith wonders why Josephine went away and why she was dressed like his father. She cannot remember what she said to her the last time they met: "The memory has no sound. It is a silent movie" (p. 221).

Edith lives alone in a residential complex, so her existence is characterized by loneliness. She misses her daughter. She wonders why she has not written to her for ages and why she has not come anymore to visit her: "Nobody knows her like Josephine knew her. And if nobody knows you how can you be yourself? Edith could be somebody different every day and most probably nobody would notice" (p. 221). One morning Colman goes to meet her. Their first approach is a public meeting. They are introduced to each other by Mrs Mason, one of Edith's neighbours, because Colman did not know what Edith looked like, nor did Edith know Colman: "Mrs Moore, just the

person we've been looking for. You have a visitor here.' This is not how Colman had imagined it happening. This public meeting" (p. 227). Colman looked "for anything in the dignified, proud, but slightly face of Edith Moore that might remind him of his father" (p. 228).

We don't know what the two said to each other when Edith met Colman, but the meeting seems to be an important step for a future relation between the two. When Edith asks Colman who he was, he answers that he was one of Josephine's friends. Then we do not know what happens between the two, we do not know what their conversation is about. The author does not talk about it. We just know that Colman arrived at Edith's house at 11.18 and he left at 9 p.m.: "He leaves her watching the nine o'clock news. He is carrying the photograph of Josephine, aged seven. Edith Moore has given it to him in a brown envelope" (p. 241).

CHAPTER 2

Joss Moody: the man and the woman

2.1 Contextualizing theories about ‘homosexuality’, ‘heteronormativity’, ‘queer’ and ‘trans-people’

2.1.1 History of homosexuality and heteronormativity

Society is divided into two views when talking about homosexuality:

- A conservative view which considers homosexuality an aberration, a disorder
- A progressive view which sees it as something normal, natural, one of the variants in the human condition.

The debate around homosexuality has ancient origins. In Aristophanes' Speech in Plato's *Symposium*,⁶⁹ Aristophanes believed that “the sexual desire alone is not strong enough to create homosexuality, but that the cultural environment allows or forbids the relationship to occur”.⁷⁰ In Greece same sex relationships were something natural. Foucault points out that the relations between people of the same sex which existed before the 19th century were condemned by the Church and the law. In the 19th century the homosexual becomes an object of study in many disciplines. In psychology, theorists tended to view homosexuality as something ‘abnormal’. Freud’s psychoanalytical theory gave a totally new approach to the treatment of the ‘abnormal’ and came in 1935 to a definition of homosexuality:

Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function produced by a certain arrest of sexual development. Many highly respectable individuals of ancient and modern times have been homosexuals, several of the greatest men among them (Plato, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci etc.). It is a great injustice to persecute homosexuality as a crime, and cruelty too.⁷¹

Another point of view about this issue is expressed by the planophysical theories which consider it as an “error of nature, a freak-produced, no doubt, by nature, but not

⁶⁹ Aristophanes’ Speech.

⁷⁰ Thorp, pp. 54-65.

⁷¹ Freud.

in accordance with her grand plan”.⁷² Among them I quote Halperin, who was a Freudian psychologist, and developed the Freudian assumption that homosexuality derived from an unresolved Oedipus complex, even if he failed to produce scientific evidence.

Foucault claimed that “homosexuality became because we made it so”.⁷³ He believed that “homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species”.⁷⁴ Differently from many theorists of the 20th century, Foucault insisted that the category of homosexuality came out of a particular context in the 1870s and, like sexuality, it has to be considered as a constructed category rather than as a discovered one.⁷⁵ The concept of homosexuality was created by just choosing a name for those groups of people engaged in homosexual acts. As Jagose stated, “around 1870, and in various medical discourses, the notion of the homosexual as an indefinable type of person begins to emerge”.⁷⁶ The word itself is a Greek and Latin hybrid: it comes from the Ancient Greek *ὁμός*, meaning ‘same’, and Latin *sexus*, meaning ‘sex’.⁷⁷

Before the 1970s, a homosexual was considered a perverse or a deviant type and to be cured. It was an aberration from the heterosexual norm. Indeed in the 1970s the term begins to be used as a synonymous for ‘lesbian’ or ‘gay’, and from being a word associated only to legal or medical practices, it started to refer also to a person’s identity, but taking on negative connotations. Consequently it was subjected to marginalization and social control. In this context, the notion of the *closet* came out

⁷² Shagor, p. 3.

⁷³ T. Taylor.

⁷⁴ Foucault, p. 43.

⁷⁵ Spargo, p. 17.

⁷⁶ Jagose, p. 11.

⁷⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexuality>

also.⁷⁸ It is based on the assumption that some people are ‘visible’ for what concern their sexualities and others remain silent, this means that “the emergence of homosexuality was accompanied by its disappearance”.⁷⁹

Rubin suggested that once a category labelled ‘deviant’ is created, automatically its opposite is set up, a category labelled ‘normal’. So with the creation of the ‘homosexual’ category there was the need to create the alternative category which was named ‘heterosexual’. Both categories are discursively constructed but the last one defined itself as the “unmarked natural form of sexuality”,⁸⁰ the norm, the natural way of life. Richardson claims that: “Heterosexuality is institutionalised as a particular form of practice and relationships, of family structure, and identity. It is constructed as a coherent, natural, fixed and stable category; as universal and monolithic”.⁸¹

According to Coates, heteronormativity “is a term used by queer theorists to refer to a system in which heterosexual identities, relationships and practices are seen as the norm against which all sexuality is judged”⁸² and states that “sexual and marital relations are most (or only) fitting between people of opposite sexes”.⁸³ Those discourses inevitably sustain ‘homophobia’, as laws such as the Sexual Offences Act⁸⁴ of 1967 indicate.

The homo/hetero schema is “written into the cultural organization of Western societies”,⁸⁵ so the homosexual/heterosexual matrix becomes more important than the one of personal identity. As many theorists such as Fuss, Sedgwick and Butler have

⁷⁸ Sedgwick.

⁷⁹ Fuss, p. 4.

⁸⁰ Knockaert, p. 3.

⁸¹ Richardson, p. 20.

⁸² Coates, p. 219.

⁸³ <http://languageofinclusion.com/tag/heteronormativity/>

⁸⁴ In 1967 the Sexual Offences Act was passed which decriminalized private homosexual acts between men aged over 21, while at the same time imposing heavier penalties on street offences. The law was not changed for Scotland until 1980, or for Northern Ireland until 1982. In <http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/relationships/overview/sexuality20thcentury/>

⁸⁵ Seidman, p. 155.

noticed, heterosexuality is a notion which depends on what it is not, 'homosexuality'. "Each is hunted by the other"⁸⁶ and homosexuals are those who come to represent the "terrifying [sexual] other"⁸⁷ of the heterosexual. If someone decides to be an 'out' homosexual, this assumption is closely related to the centrality of heterosexuality and that outlines the difficulty of locating oneself 'outside' dominant discourse. As Namaste notices, "an attempt to declare oneself to be *out* of the closet marks nonheterosexuals who are presumably *inside*"⁸⁸. In order to be able to assert a sexual identity outside the norm, one has to place first oneself inside dominant definitions of sexuality. As Fuss claims, these gestures represent "a transgression of the border which is necessary to constitute the border as such".⁸⁹

What happens to those people who do not identify as either heterosexual or homosexual? Is 'homosexual' the only available category to resist heterosexual hegemony? What is the right category to represent those who claim to be bisexuals or transgendered? A field of study called 'queer theory' aims at including all those people who fall in the nonheterosexual matrix. In the next paragraph I will go through the main aspects of that theory.

2.1.2 Queer theory

Some people which considered labels such as 'gay' or 'lesbian' inadequate or restrictive found in 'queer' a place where they could fit their identities. In popular culture the term means 'sexier', 'more transgressive', "a deliberate show of difference which didn't want to be assimilated or tolerated".⁹⁰ In the 2nd Edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*⁹¹ the word 'queer' comes from the early 16th century Scottish meaning 'strange, peculiar,

⁸⁶ Fuss, p. 4.

⁸⁷ Raymond, p. 105.

⁸⁸ Namaste, p. 224.

⁸⁹ Fuss, p. 3.

⁹⁰ Spargo, p. 38.

⁹¹ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/queer>

eccentric' or perhaps from the Low German *queer* 'oblique, off-center'⁹² related to German *twerh* meaning 'cross' or 'oblique'.⁹³ During the 1910s and 1920s *queer* co-existed with *fairy*, both referring to homosexuals, even if they carried different connotations. "*Fairies* referred to effeminate, flamboyant, males sexual involved with other man. *Queers*, in contrast, were more masculine men who were sexually involved with other man and who generally shunned, even detested, the woman-like behavior of fairies".⁹⁴ Chauncey suggests that "the men who identified themselves as part of a distinct category of men primarily on the basis of their homosexual interest rather than their womanlike gender status usually called themselves *queer*".⁹⁵ The fair-queer distinction was not only based on gender but on class as well: "Many queers were men from the middle class who potentially risked more in their professional lives where they to display the femininity typical of fairies".⁹⁶ Because they showed a high marked effeminate fairies gender deviance, they were considered as representative of the stereotypical connotations of all homosexual men: "Heterosexuals used *queer* and *fairy* interchangeably and without distinction, thereby homogenizing all men who engaged in sexual activity with other man, regardless of their degree of femininity/masculinity or self-identification".⁹⁷ Both words were finally fused into the same category, and equated homosexuality with femininity. Even if the term does not have a precise time origin with the modern meaning which embrace many different categories, we can claim that it begins to be used in the 1980s in the United States at some academic conferences which addressed gay and lesbian topics in relation to poststructuralist theories.⁹⁸ Teresa de Lauretis was one of the first theorists to use the term 'queer' in her work in 1990. The term experiences this rebirth during this year because of "the limitation of *gay* and

⁹² <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=queer>

⁹³ Brontsema, p. 2.

⁹⁴ Brontsema, pp. 2-3.

⁹⁵ Chauncey, p. 16.

⁹⁶ Chauncey, p. 106.

⁹⁷ Chauncey, p. 15.

⁹⁸ Spargo, p. 41.

lesbian as universal categories and homosexuality itself as their foundation; the AIDS crisis and its behavior-based prevention education and identity-transcendent activism; and Queer Nation's coalitional politics of difference and its impact on the reconceptualization of sexual identity".⁹⁹ When used by heterosexual it takes an offensive and aggressive connotation. As 'lesbian' and 'gay' becomes included in the 'homosexual' category, in recent years 'queer' becomes an umbrella term which is used to include all these categories and many others. This use of the word, which is now well established and spread among gay people, has the aim to deprive the other label of the negative connotations they had over the years.¹⁰⁰

Queer theory as a new post-structuralist field of study started to develop between the 1960s-1970s. It comes from gay/lesbian studies which existed as a discipline only from the 1980s. While gay/lesbian studies focused only on questions of homosexuality, queer theory expands its domain of investigation and deals with everything included into normative and deviant categories, in particular sexual activities and identities. It explores the border of sexual identities. Once it was a term of homophobic abuse but recently it comes to include many kinds of behavior such as those of gender-blending, and those involving non-heterosexual forms of sexualities, such as gay, lesbian and transgender. Even if it is still difficult to establish exactly which categories the term excludes and which ones it includes, there is a general agreement that 'queer' rejects binary opposition and embraces more fluid categories. Indeed queer theory is based on the assumption that identity is not fixed, natural or innate but it is a social construction, consequently it is not possible to define a person's identity with generic label such as 'heterosexual', 'woman', 'lesbian', and so on. Queer theory wants to give voice to those minorities which are marginalized, previously excluded from the cultural dialogue.¹⁰¹ In

⁹⁹ Brontsema, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/queer>

¹⁰¹ Kellner, p. 24.

Raymond's opinion, marginalized identities not only are oppressed by power, they are also, as Foucault points out, constructed by those very same power relations.¹⁰²

Queer theory insists that all normative and deviant sexualities and behaviors are socially constructed and reject the assumption that sexuality is determined by biology or standards of morality and truth. For those theorists sexuality is a complex domain in which forms of individual activity and institutionalized power interact to establish what is normative or deviant in that particular moment.¹⁰³

Queer theory recognizes the difficulty to determine if an individual can be considered to be totally outside or inside heterosexuality and claims the impossibility to move outside the traditional conception of sexuality. Terms such as heterosexuality and homosexuality, for examples, define each other in relation to the other. So what queer theorists suggest is to negotiate the limits between binary opposite categories, that is to try to find a meeting point between the inside and out.

In 1997 Jagose wrote *Queer Theory: An Introduction*, where she defined 'queer' as "those gestures or analytical models which dramatize incoherencies in the allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desire".¹⁰⁴ She claims that identity was rather "fluid, the effect of social conditioning and available cultural models for understanding oneself".¹⁰⁵ Many other theorists wrote important works about that theme, the majority of them followed Michel Foucault's work; here I would like to quote Judith Butler, since my dissertation is based on her writings. She develops Foucault's work in relation to feminist theories of gender to explore normative models of gender and heterosexuality. She extended Foucault's assertion that sexuality is discursively produced and builds the concept of "gender as a performative effect experienced by the individual as a natural identity."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Raymond, p. 109.

¹⁰³ Harris.

¹⁰⁴ Jagose, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ Jagose, p. 8.

¹⁰⁶ Spargo, p. 54.

2.1.3. Trans-people: transsexual and transgendered

In this paragraph I will introduce and explain the terminology regarding trans-people, then I will relate those concepts to *Trumpet*. Before doing that I would like to focus briefly on what sex and gender mean. Butler begins her work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* with a quotation by Simon De Beauvoir: “One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one”.¹⁰⁷ What she means is that “sex is assigned at birth and refers to a person’s biological status as male or female. In other words, sex refers exclusively to the biological features”.¹⁰⁸ Gender is “an achieved status rather than an ascribed biological characteristic, and is based on tasks performed and the significance of clothing as well as anatomical and other factors”.¹⁰⁹

The word ‘trans’ means ‘across, on the opposite side of, beyond, through, on the other side of’. It comes from the Latin trans-, from trans (prep.) ‘across, over, beyond’ perhaps originally present participle of a verb *trare-, meaning ‘to cross’.¹¹⁰ One of its meanings refers to “the misalignment of one’s gender identity with one’s biological sex assigned at birth”.¹¹¹ “In the gender-related sense, this prefix is attached to certain words, most notably transsexual and transgender”.¹¹² It means that “if someone who was assigned one sex at birth, but comes to identify and live as a member of the other sex, is called a ‘transsexual’ (because they have crossed from one sex to the other)”;¹¹³ they may have or not take hormones or have surgery to make their body reflect their gendered/sexual identities.

Transgender is a term which includes different categories of people, “transsexuals (pre, post and no-op); transvestites; cross-dressers; [...] persons who have chosen to

¹⁰⁷ Butler 1999, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.medicaldaily.com/what-difference-between-transsexual-and-transgender-facebooks-new-version-its-complicated-271389>

¹⁰⁹ Bullough, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=trans->

¹¹¹ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/trans->

¹¹² <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/trans-#Etymology>

¹¹³ Koolen, p. 78.

perform no gender at all”.¹¹⁴ The term addresses to those people whose identity, expression, behavior, or general sense of self does not reflect the sex they were born. They are not either female or male, they are in an ‘in-between state’.¹¹⁵ While sex is more a matter of the body, gender is considered to be something relative to the mind. It is influenced by many factors, such as class, culture, race and so on. People often use a binary system of terms to describe sex or gender, but the latter is a more complex concept because it involves more than two possibilities. Transgendered people usually blend or alternate the binary concepts of masculinity and femininity. *Trumpet* is characterized by the presence of binary opposites such as male/female, life/death and so on: choosing one does not automatically mean rejecting the other. It can just mean that someone can be more attracted to that option rather than the other. But according to the binary opposition system the mixture of two alternatives is not possible; the option which was not chosen becomes something totally rejected.

Trumpet provides a useful critique of transphobia showing how transphobic beliefs can negatively affect both trans-people and heterosexuals. The novel shows that the assumption that gender identity reflects one’s biological sex can prevent the development of satisfactory relationships with trans-people. On the one hand those who knew Joss when he was alive cannot change the memory they have about him being a man, on the other hand they cannot forget his female body. According to Koolen, “in order to reconcile Joss's maleness and femaleness [the] readers of *Trumpet* must recognize the limits and exclusionary nature of the male/female gender binary”.¹¹⁶

The main character of *Trumpet*, Joss Moody, is the perfect example of someone whose life goes beyond the binary system of gender. He chooses to construct an identity which defies society’s binary oppositions between gender and sex. A feminine gender does not imply a female body, he does not need to be one or another gender; he goes beyond biological binaries. Joss embodies gender liminality and his career as a trumpeter reflects this status since the trumpet has an ambivalent form: as Monterrey

¹¹⁴ Koolen, p. 72.

¹¹⁵ Koolen, p. 72.

¹¹⁶ Koolen, p. 71.

notes, “When Joss plays it [...] the phallic trumpet physically compensates for his absence of male sexual members”.¹¹⁷ The trumpet also has “a concave end, combining thus the masculine and the feminine in its form”.¹¹⁸ Joss’s liminality is also represented in his past as a girl. He seems not to identify himself with his past: “He was something else. Somebody else. Her. That girl” (pp. 131-132). But with the following statement it is clear that he has fully accepted his girlhood, and so he can be considered a transgendered: “He is himself again, years ago, skipping along the railway line with a long cord his mother had made into a rope. In a red dress. It is liberating. To be a girl. To be a man” (p. 135). Indeed, agreeing with Sophie Stones, Joss cannot be considered a ‘normal’ transvestite:

What I want Colman Moody to find out is this: what made Joss Moody into a transvestite? What was the real reason for pretending she was a man? She is different, I’m quite sure, from other transvestites. Joss Moody only returned to being a woman in death. The rest of the time she dressed like a man, lived her life as a man, her own son believed her to be a man. No, this isn’t a straight-forward tranny (p. 128).

Butler argues that transgendered subjects open up the possibilities of subversion because they “pass or cross-dress or simply refuse normative gender categories”.¹¹⁹ She considers subversion as “working within the norms that existed in order to defeat the aims by which they are originally mobilized. [She] was interested in accepting the norms of compulsory heterosexuality as the inevitable field of political agency, for instance, so in my insistence that one could not, by fiat, move outside those norms, [she] chose ‘subversion’ as a way of insisting on working within them”¹²⁰. So in Butler’s view, subversion opens up to new possibilities. The fact that Joss makes a split between gender and sex reveals that those categories are constructed, more than the natural ones. He creates his own self by changing his name, by cross-dressing and by choosing to perform a different role in society than the one he was born with.

¹¹⁷ Monterrey, p. 172.

¹¹⁸ Monterrey, p. 172.

¹¹⁹ Halberstam 2000, p. 62.

¹²⁰ Rosenberg, p. 380.

2.2 The trumpeter: the man and the woman

What makes Joss's death different from a common man's death is the fact that it raises the questions about sex/gender division because he goes beyond the traditional division of sex/gender categories in a binary system (male/female) since his sex does not represent the gender he has chosen to perform during his life. Consequently the traditional and social norms about the division between sex/gender are broken and subverted. Butler point out that:

'Woman' need not be the cultural construction of the female body, and 'man' need not interpret male bodies. This radical formulation of the sex/gender distinction suggests that sexed bodies can be the occasion for a number of different genders, and further, that gender itself need not to be restricted to the usual two.¹²¹

In living his life as a man, Joss repeatedly recreated male gender stereotypes: dressed as a man, he marries a woman, he is a trumpet player, adopts a son and so on. Consequently after his death, the difference between his sex and gender threatens to destroy the legitimacy of the relationships he successfully created in his life because it undermines the bases on which the concept of heteronormativity is built on. Both feminist theorists and queer theorists agree on the fact that sexed identity is a public matter: "Both feminist and queer theory accounts regard sexed identity not as a 'private matter' of individual 'choice' or 'fate' that is somehow divorced from wider social and material contexts, but as a 'public matter'".¹²² This is what happens in *Trumpet*: Joss's death becomes a public matter because of the revelation of his biological sex which challenges social conventions. It is interesting that the core of the novel is Joss's gender more than his sex as King suggests:

[It] is gender, not sex, that is at issue here: there is no suggestion that either Billy [Tipton] or Joss considered sex-change operations or hormone treatment. If most of us are so resistant to the idea of people changing gender, this is surely because gender plays a central role in determining our inter-personal responses.¹²³

¹²¹ Butler 1999, pp. 142-143.

¹²² Richardson, p. 7.

¹²³ King 2001, p. 101.

In this context we can read Joss as a woman who does “not choose transitional surgery to change [her] sex, but who prioritize[s] passing as man”.¹²⁴ Agreeing with Fernández “the social space in which the novel sets Joss’s childhood and teenager years, Scotland in the 1950s, reduced Joss’s possibilities of exhibiting his gendered identity in public spaces to two categories: male or female”.¹²⁵ Heteronormativity was the norm in this period of time, consequently Millie and Joss’s relationship reproduced the heterosexual stereotypical model. Joss’s death, however, occurs in the 1990s, where heteronormativity had been already questioned:

At this time, (unconventional) sexed identities and (alternative) sexualities were publicly displayed. During the 1960s and 1970s there was an emergence of gay and lesbian movements against the “normative” and “restrictive” views of the self. Together with this movement of transgression, there was a plea for citizenship by which these ‘marginalised’ groups claimed recognition and respect within the law.¹²⁶

According to Weeks, these movements outlined the need to explain what he calls “the sexual citizen”:

The sexual citizen, therefore, is a hybrid being, breaching the public/private divide which Western culture has long held to be essential. Yet this intermingling of the personal and the public is precisely what makes the idea of the sexual citizen so contemporary. Even 30 years or so ago, no one would have said, for example, ‘I am gay/lesbian’, or ‘sodomasochist’, or ‘transgendered’, or ‘queer’, or anything like that as a defining characteristic of personhood and of social involvement and presence”.¹²⁷

Therefore this concept has the function “to make one’s identity in more pluralistic and sexualized terms, but at the same time to be entitled to protect it within society”.¹²⁸ This idea of people having inside more than one identity is also expressed in *Trumpet* by May Hart when she remembers that in her class children were not known by the name on the register but by nicknames, as if “they all had two personalities” (p. 249), and when Millie shows Maggie one of her Russian dolls and says “we’re all like that, aren’t we? We’ve all got lots of little people inside us” (p. 173), and Maggie replied “When you think about it. It’s true, you know” (p. 173).

¹²⁴ Calitz, p. 65.

¹²⁵ Fernández, p. 284.

¹²⁶ Fernández, p. 284.

¹²⁷ Weeks, p. 36.

¹²⁸ Fernández, p. 285.

What about Joss Moody? How do we have to consider him, a man or a woman? The funeral director expresses very clearly his thoughts about what the traditional binary gender categories system consists on:

All his working life he has assumed that what made a man a man and a woman a woman was the differing sexual organs. Yet, today, he had a woman who persuaded him, even dead, that he was a man, once he had his clothes on. That young man believed his father was a man; who was he to tell him different? (p. 115)

But *Trumpet* challenges those rigid categorizations of gender as I previously asserted. Millie is the first one to express the need to move beyond the traditional gender categories: “Joss Moody is not Joss Moody. Joss Moody was really somebody else. Am I somebody else too. But who else was Joss? Who was this somebody else? I don’t understand” (p. 98). Joss and Josephine are the two sides of the same person. Since he has a feminine body and a masculine identity, we can consider him a place of ‘gender blending’¹²⁹. In my thesis I will sustain that he stands in an in-between space.

2.2.1 The man: Joss Moody

Sophie describes Joss as a person who is not a man but only tries to pass as one:

Walking down the street with that walk she must have practiced [...] She studied that walk all right. She didn’t just wake up one day and decided to be a man. She must have practiced first. She must have given it a lot of thought. [...] She’s studied that walk. That cool look (p. 264).

On the contrary, the characters closest to Joss share Loretta’s thoughts, one of Tipton’s wives’ sister:

Loretta [...] rejected the claim that Billy was a woman acting the part of a man. ‘Billy was a man’, she asserted. [...] What did she mean? That Billy’s conduct was not only stereotypically masculine (smoking cigars and so forth) but also honourable, truthful to a cultural idea we label ‘manly’? Loretta [...] did not permit the revelation of Billy’s biological sex to influence the assessment of his character.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Reyes.

¹³⁰ Middlebrook, p. 174.

Colman is one of the main characters who can assert his father's masculinity. He remembers him performing the ritual of masculinity and playing the role of man/father when they went together to the barber's shop or when they were in the bathroom in front of the mirror and Joss donates Colman his first shaving set: "Colman remembers the excitement of that first shaving set, the honour, the coming into manhood" (p. 123). There are also other memories Colman has of Joss playing the role of his father:

He is sitting on the edge of my bed, my daddy. He pulls my yellow blanket back. I am too hot and it is too early for bed. He gives me a spoon of medicine. I open my mouth wide and wait for the spoon to be put in my mouth and wait for my daddy to say, Brave boy. My daddy smells of his trumpet club. He takes my hand and sings, Dreams to sell / Fine Dreams to sell / [...] He pats my head. Strokes my head. Hair just like mine, he says (p. 68).

Big Red McCall never doubted about his friend masculinity. Joss had very masculine and heterosexual markers: he smoked cigars, he shaved, he plays his trumpet like a man, "[he] took his whisky grinning like a man" (p. 144). Millie says "[he can] walk like a man, talk like a man, dress like a man, blow his horn like a man" (p. 37). The first time she sees Joss, "[h]e was well dressed, astonishingly handsome, high cheekbones that gave him a sculpted proud look; his eyes darker than any I'd ever seen. Thick black curly hair" (p. 11).

According to some theorists such as Davies, the possibility of gender subversion is only a denial of a lesbian identity. But neither Millie nor Joss feel to be lesbian. Calitz claims that "the embodiment of Joss's masculinity in his anatomically female body subverts the gender identity that would be expected of Joss as a woman, and more specifically as a black woman in the 1960s and 1970s".¹³¹ For both Millie and Joss, his performances of masculinity are 'ordinary subversive', but actually they are an imitation of the heterosexual man's performances. Butler argues that "the masculinity in women is thrown into relief by the existence of the female body".¹³² Joss gives the possibility to challenge heteronormativity because of the great difference between his female body and his male identity.

¹³¹ Calitz, p. 51.

¹³² Butler 1999, p. 123.

2.2.2 The woman: Josephine Moore

Before the existence of a young man, there was Josephine, a young woman who decided to become Joss, and will appear again only in death. According to the reporters Joss is “this person who is obviously a woman, once you know” (p. 100). What I would like to outline is that Joss’s alter ego, Josephine Moore, does exist in Millie and Joss’s relationship but it exists “as a shadow rather than an actual person”¹³³. For Millie, Josephine does not exist because, as she points out, for Joss his past as a girl is something apart: “He always spoke about her in the third person. She was his third person” (p. 93). The only time Joss speaks about his past to Millie is few days before dying, when he knows that it cannot affect their relationship:

Joss told me a few days before he died more about being a girl than he had ever done in a lifetime of marriage. [...] He had said those words, for the first time in his life with me: ‘When I was a girl my favourite pudding was ambrosia creamed rice.’ (p. 203)

When he finally told her what his name was as a girl, Millie remembered that she felt unable to answer: “I was so surprised that time, I couldn’t say much. I remember finding it slightly distasteful, the idea of Joss having another name. If I am honest, perhaps I found it frightening too” (p. 93). For the first time Joss admits that he has not always been a man: “My mother called me Josephine, after her sister” (p. 93). This implies that during his life he has constructed his identity, so again identity is not something you were born with but it is what each person chooses to be. It is a choice, it is a construction. Millie’s reaction is that of denying the existence of Joss’s alter ego: “No matter how hard I try, I can’t see him as anything other than him, my Joss, my husband” (p. 95). Joss does not speak willingly about his past as a girl, too, when his wife tried to ask something: “Whenever the name Josephine Moore came up, he’d say ‘Leave her alone’, as if she was somebody else” (p. 93). It is as if Joss created “a distance between his two identities to prevent them ever coming too close together again”,¹³⁴ Davies points out. Actually each person has a complex identity, so Joss is made up of both his past and how he has decided to live his adult life. Josephine

¹³³ Davies, p. 10.

¹³⁴ Davies, p. 11.

becomes Joss, but Josephine has always been present in Joss's life, just considering the fact that he has always had a feminine body. Only Millie seems to distinguish Josephine from Joss: "I can't properly imagine even what [Josephine] looked like. I can't imagine her hair, how she would have worn her hair. I don't want to" (p. 93). However, Millie's denial of Josephine existence falls after Joss's death when she admits: "[He] looked unlike himself when he was dying. Unlike the man I married. I don't know who he looked like. Maybe he looked more like her in the end. More like Josephine Moore" (p. 94). In death Joss is unable to sustain his performative aspect as a man and in one way he comes back to 'wear' his biological identity. Anyway Millie totally refuses to think about her:

I don't want to think about her. Why am I thinking about her? [...] I can't stare at these pictures and force myself to see *'this person who is obviously a woman, once you know'* - according to some reports. I can't see her. I don't know if I'll ever see her (pp. 94, 100).

In Davies's opinion Millie chooses to ignore the existence of Josephine just "because knowing Joss to be a woman undermines her own construction as a heterosexual woman".¹³⁵ But the truth is that Joss only exists because "one day Josephine Moore just plucked the name Joss Moody out of the sky and called himself with this name and encouraged others to do likewise" (p. 80).

During the novel it comes out that several characters have seen Joss's 'female' traits, but some of them never talked explicitly about that. After removing the bandages from Joss's body, Doctor Krishnamurty can state that Joss is "in possession of the female body parts" (p. 114). When Millie went out with Joss for the first time, before knowing the truth, she immediately doubts about Joss's name and his walk.

He tells me his name is Joss Moody and I ask him if that is his real name. [...] I tell him it sounds like a strange name, like a name that someone would make up in anticipation. [...] He has a slow deliberate walk, like he's practiced it (pp. 13, 15).

Furthermore Millie says that Joss combed her hair every night and she considered this action as "one of the few feminine things he did" (p. 8). Both Maggie, the cleaner and Melanie, Colman's girlfriend, find him very gentle "so different from the other men" (p.

¹³⁵ Davies, p. 15.

119). Another feminine trait that can be attributed to Joss, is his interest in clothes which is usually considered a feminine interest.

The funeral director noticed something about his face, too, soon after he discovered his sex: “The face had transformed. It looked more round, more womanly. It was without question a woman’s face. How anybody could have ever thought that face male was beyond Albert Holding” (p. 110). Colman also points out that his father “never taught [him] to swim. [...] He never went to the doctors [...] He never fucking used the urinals” (p. 56), and he had always to knock on his parents’ bedroom before going in. After speaking with Edith Moore, Colman left the house and looked at a picture of the young Josephine:

Colman stops under a street lamp and stares at the photograph again. He can’t get away with it. Now that he’s seen the little girl, he can see something feminine in his memory of his father’s face that must have been there all along (p. 241).

The picture helps Colman to place his father as a woman and as the ‘other’. As Serano explains the ‘before-transformation’ photos of trans-people are often used “to emphasize the ‘naturalness’ of the trans person’s assigned sex [at birth], thereby exaggerating the ‘artificiality’ of their identified sex”.¹³⁶ With the picture Colman is not able to definitively locate his father as a male or female but he can now see “something feminine in his memory of his father’s face” (p. 241). Koolen points out that even if Colman sees something feminine in his father, he still perceives himself as a man and this suggests that he is moving toward the acceptance of his father’s identity.

Halberstam introduces the concept of ‘female masculinity’ which is masculinity without man. She aims to remove masculinity from the stereotype of the “white male middle-class body”¹³⁷ and to focus on “the shape and form of modern masculinity [which] are best showcased within female masculinity”.¹³⁸ She claims that female masculinity can become a space in which it is possible to challenge the prejudice against masculine representation in female bodies:

¹³⁶ Serano, p. 62.

¹³⁷ Halberstam 1998, p. 2.

¹³⁸ Halberstam 1998, p. 3.

Female masculinity is a particularly fruitful site of investigation because it has been vilified by heterosexist and feminist/womanist programs alike; unlike male femininity, which fulfills a kind of ritual function in male homosocial cultures, female masculinity is generally received by hetero- and homo-normative cultures as a pathological sign of misidentification and maladjustment, as a longing to be and have a power that is always just out of reach.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Halberstam 1998, p. 9.

CHAPTER 3

The practices of cross-dressing and labelling

3.1 Cross-dressing in *Trumpet*

Walker's thought is based on the fact that we can be two things at the same time. The problem occurs only when these two things are different according to the binary system of gender. She argues that

A cross-dresser operates between these opposites and by resisting assimilation within a system of binary oppositions, he or she reveals the inadequacy of this system, and, furthermore, questions the extent to which appearance and identity are coextensive.¹⁴⁰

Kay's attention has always been directed on women who cross-dress, as she stated in an interview: "I've also always found women who dressed up as men really interesting. I've found them very sexy, the Greta Garbos and the Marlene Dietrichs, Julie Andrews looks great doesn't she and Josephine Baker".¹⁴¹ Cases of female cross-dressing have been common in Western history, as Wheelwright points out in *Amazons and Military Maids: Women who Dressed as Men in the Pursuit of Life, Liberty and Happiness*:

The theme of female cross-dressing is not confined to Britain but has been common throughout Europe and North American folk literature. Beginning with the legendary Amazons, a tribe of Syrian women who vowed to defend themselves and to forsake marriage when their husbands were killed and they were driven from their homeland, female soldiers' stories have persisted for centuries.¹⁴²

Who is a cross-dresser? According to Sophie Stones "the word transvestite has got more in it than the word cross-dresser. What is a cross-dresser anyway when he or she is at home? Someone who dresses in a fit of fury" (p. 126). Actually this definition is far from being the reality. Orn describes this practice as "when someone generally accepted as being part of one gender decides to dress according to the standards provided for the other gender".¹⁴³ The practice of cross-dressing destabilizes the binary system on which Western culture is based: the cross-dresser stands between the markers of female/male, feminine/masculine, unconventional/conventional. As Walker points out, "the cross-

¹⁴⁰ Walker, p. 35

¹⁴¹ Jaggi 1999, p. 53.

¹⁴² Wheelwright, p. 7.

¹⁴³ Orn, p. 10.

dresser functions as a disorderly and subversive presence”.¹⁴⁴ “Cross-dressing is synonymous with choosing”.¹⁴⁵ as I previously argued, identity is not fixed but it is fluid and often contradictory. This practice can reveal the real nature of the ‘other’.

Cross-dressing can have an important role within gay and lesbian culture. Harrison tries to explain the difference between the practice of cross-dressing and what gay and lesbian identities are:

Someone asked me if the transgendered community is like the gay/ lesbian communities. I said no, because the gay/lesbian communities are based on who one relates to, whereas the transgendered experience is different: it’s about identity-relating to oneself. It’s a more inward thing.¹⁴⁶

It seems to subvert norms by conforming to a gendered dress code. It cannot exist without the binary systems based on ‘the normal’ and ‘the other’. Walker points out “Cross-dressing can be queer and, indeed, queer can find itself in crossing: both exist in the space between norms, expectations, and binary oppositions”.¹⁴⁷

Since Joss leads a double life which included cross-dressing, he shows the characteristics of the transvestite described by Garber: “Transvestism is a space of possibility structuring and confounding culture: the disruptive element that intervenes, not just a category crisis of male and female, but the crisis of category itself”.¹⁴⁸ Joss is able to be a father, a husband even if he is not anatomically male; he is able to cross from one gender category to the other.

Suthrell talks about the great importance of clothing in the life of cross-dressers:

We [...] use dress, consciously or unconsciously, as one of the ways in which we project ourselves, the self we wish to present to the world, the group with which we wish to be associated. It is a strong and visible part of our need to assert identity [...] and thus forms part of our individuation.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Walker, p. 35.

¹⁴⁵ Walker, p. 35.

¹⁴⁶ Bornstein, p. 67.

¹⁴⁷ Walker, p. 37.

¹⁴⁸ Garber, p. 17.

¹⁴⁹ Suthrell, pp. 14-15.

Consequently in order to cross-dress there must be a gender dress code which is described by Eicher in her introduction to *Dress and Ethnicity*:

Coded sensory system of non-verbal communication that aids human interaction in space and time. The codes of dress include visual as well as other sensory modifications (taste, smell, sound, and feel) and supplements (garments, jewelry, and accessories) to the body which set off either both cognitive and affective processes that result in recognition or lack of recognition by the viewer. As a system, dressing the body by modifications and supplements may facilitate or hinder consequent verbal or other communication.¹⁵⁰

Suthrell also points out that cross-dressing and secrets are often very close: “They are a very small minority group and yet attract large headlines when ‘discovered’ since transvestism is arguably more of a guilty secret than, for example, having an affair or being a wife-beater”.¹⁵¹ Even if she is referring to transvestites, I believe that this statement is also appropriate to talk about *Trumpet*, since it revolves around the consequences that keeping Joss’s secret had on the lives of the people who had to do with him in his life. The fear of being discovered could have ruined Joss’s career as a musician.

Clothing has a double function: on the one hand it is significant for queer identities, on the other hand it is used as a means to parody social norms and values. As Butler claims:

Within feminist theory, such parodic identities have been understood to be either degrading to women, in the case of drag and cross-dressing, or an uncritical appropriation of sex-role stereotyping from within the practice of heterosexuality, especially in the case of butch/femme lesbian identities. But the relationship between the “imitation” and the “original” is, I think, more complicated than that critique generally allows.¹⁵²

When cross-dressing is successful, from being an act of imitation, it becomes a practice of assimilation.

As I stated before, clothing can be used to parody cross-dressing. In *Trumpet* this aspect does not take an erotic view. References to Joss acts of dressing are few and only functional to the story. For example:

He put on his boxer shorts and I turned away whilst he stuffed them with a pair of socks [...] He was always more comfortable once he was dressed. [...] His breasts weren’t very

¹⁵⁰ Eicher, p.1.

¹⁵¹ Suthrell, p. 15.

¹⁵² Butler 1999, p. 137.

big. They flattened easily. Nobody except me ever knew he had them. I never touched them except when was wrapping the bandages round and around them. That was the closest I came to them, wrapping them up (pp. 238-239).

Before knowing the truth, Millie asks herself why the man she goes out with does not try to kiss her or to find a more intimate contact, he “never tries to touch” (p. 15). She is worried and thinks that there is something wrong: “either Joss is terribly proper and old-fashioned or there is something wrong” (p. 15). She feels “terribly frustrated at the lack of sexual contact”.¹⁵³ Millie remembers the first kiss, before knowing the truth, as “he is kissing me” (p. 19). In Davies’s opinion this statement is seen as an emphasis that “the relationship is following a traditional model, with the male taking charge of sexual matters”.¹⁵⁴ When she asks for an explanation about the lack of contact, Joss reveals her the truth during an intimate encounter, with him not telling her but showing her his femaleness, taking off his clothes, and showing her the bandages:

He is undoing the buttons of his shirt [...] I’m excited watching this man undress for me. Underneath his vest are lots of bandages wrapped around his chest [...] I feel a wave of relief: to think all he is worried about is some scar he has. He should know my love goes deeper than a wound. [...] ‘Did you have an accident? I don’t care about superficial things like that.’ I go towards him to embrace him. ‘I’m not finished,’ he says. He keeps unwrapping endless bandages. I am still holding out my hands when the first of his breasts reveals itself to me. Small, firm (pp. 20-21).

Joss’s body is unwrapped three times in the novel: by Joss himself, by the doctor and by the funeral director. The last two characters want only to search for knowledge, that is for Joss’s biological real self. In contrast he unwrapped himself to share the ‘knowledge’ of his body to Millie. She initially misunderstands the situation: she thinks that Joss is seducing her and she feels “excited watching [that] man undress for [her]” (p. 21). But as soon as she noticed the bandages she feels that there is something strange. Kay ends the scene sharply and does not let Millie express her feelings. If she silently accepted Joss’s transgender identity, it’s because the question about his sex was not what defined their relationship. We know that she does not care about his biological sex, because her “love goes deeper than a wound” (p. 21). Kay shows the normality of their relationship in Millie’s description of their love, for example the first time they met.

¹⁵³ Davies, p. 8.

¹⁵⁴ Davies, p. 8.

I can still picture him the day we met in that blood donor's hall in Glasgow. How could I have known then? He was well dressed, astonishingly handsome, high cheekbones that gave him a sculpted proud look; his eyes darker than any I'd ever seen. Thick black curly hair, the tightest possible curls, sitting on top of his head, like a bed of springy bracken. Neat nails, beautiful hands. I took him all in as if I had a premonition, as if I knew what would happen. His skin was the colour of Highland toffee. His mouth was a beautiful shape. I had this feeling of being dragged along by a pack of horses (p. 11).

This description does not focus on their physical differences but on Millie's desire for him. To Millie, Joss is masculine with no doubt, and she keeps on describing him as her husband and lover: "I married a man who became famous. He died before me. He died recently. Now what am I? Can I remember? Joss Moody's widow" (p. 8).

Only later in the text is Millie able to express some feelings about that night in which Joss revealed to her:

I remember feeling stupid, then angry. I remember the terrible shock of it all; how even after he told me I still couldn't quite believe it. I remember the expression on his face; the fear, that I would suddenly stop loving him. I remember covering his mouth with my hand and then kissing it. But I don't think I ever thought he was wrong. I don't think so (p. 35).

Millie never reveals what Joss had told her on that occasion. It cannot be denied that at that point Millie had had to confront and accept Joss's 'true' identity. But as she herself states, this has never been a problem to her. We do not know how Millie has justified the relationship to herself, but in Davies's opinion one explanation can be that "Millie felt in love with Joss before she had any idea that he was female".¹⁵⁵

The revelation of Joss's femininity arrives through the appearance of the breasts. Williams points out that "Joss's breast are the active agent; they reveal themselves to Millie, creating a gap between Joss as an active (male) subject and his (female) body. By prefiguring Joss's vagina in Millie's assumption that he is uncovering a wound, Kay points to the fact that Millie's love goes beyond corporeality".¹⁵⁶ Even when the funeral director uncovers Joss's bandages, his breasts are personified, as an 'active agent':

Even though Holding was expecting them, he still gave out a gasp when he saw them. There they were, staring up at him in all innocence - the breasts [...] Holding had a strange feeling staring at those breasts [...] It was as if they knew they had hardly been seen by anybody. As if they were secrets (p. 110).

¹⁵⁵ Davies, p. 7.

¹⁵⁶ Williams, p. 160.

Talking about the bandages, Millie says that every morning she wrapped the bandages around Joss's breasts. But she never felt that action as inappropriate. This represents the performative repetitive gesture through which the passage from woman to man is completed.¹⁵⁷ The domestic and intimate space of the bedroom where the 'ritual' of the bandages is performed, becomes something else, an 'anteroom' of the social scene. The room becomes the place of secrets, the 'closet',¹⁵⁸ which is regulated by its norms which lead on to secrecy and illegality. Secrets lay between the walls of the room and get stuck in the flaws between the private and public sphere.¹⁵⁹ Millie pronounces herself about the question of secrets and says:

The world runs on secrets. What kind of place would the world be without them? Our secret was harmless. It did not hurt anybody [...] My mother was always saying, 'You never know what goes on behind those four walls. Families have their own dark secrets. You just don't know'. Or she'd say, 'Each to their own. Who am I to judge?' Or, 'It's their private business. Keep your nose out of it.' (p. 87)

Calitz points out that with the ritual act of the bandages, Kay wants to alert "the reader to the fact that gender is a conscious performance, which in this case serves as a complex masquerade":¹⁶⁰

I wrapped two cream bandages around his breasts every morning, early. I wrapped them round and round, tight. I didn't think about anything except doing it well. [...] He didn't care if it was uncomfortable. It probably was a little. I don't remember us saying anything whilst I did this. I don't remember thinking much. I had to help him to get dressed so that he could enjoy his day and be comfortable (p. 238).

¹⁵⁷ Marinelli, p. 22.

¹⁵⁸ In her essay Sara Marinelli compare the room to a 'closet'. It is interesting to look at the various meanings of this word. According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, Third Edition, p. 242, the word *Closet* can mean:

1. To tell the people that you are homosexual after hiding the fact.
2. To admit you believe something or to discuss something that was previously kept secret.
3. *old use* a small room where people went to study, pray etc alone.
4. someone who is a HOMOSEXUAL, ALCOHOLIC etc but who does not want to admit it.
5. To shut someone in a room away from other people in order to be alone or to discuss something private.

The last two meanings can be adapted to our case since Joss does not admit to his son or the world the truth about who he is; furthermore Joss and Millie close themselves in the room in order to perform the 'ritual' and shut the world out.

¹⁵⁹ Marinelli, p. 22.

¹⁶⁰ Calitz, p. 58.

Their silence during this practice is due to the fact that the action had become something normal for them by now. Nothing to be ashamed for, it is an acceptance of their situation. As Butler argues

[G]ender is in no way a stable identity [...] rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.¹⁶¹

Gender is not innate but it is produced through the performance of rituals and repetitions in everyday life. What Butler calls ‘performativity’

Must be understood not as a singular or deliberate ‘act’, but, rather as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names. [...] The regulatory norms of ‘sex’ work in a performative fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies and, more specifically, to materialize the body’s sex, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative.¹⁶²

Joss’s gender as male is located in his performances as Millie’s husband and Colman’s father. He has created his own identity through a lifetime of performative acts. Gender is not an individual choice nor a cultural inscription of norms:¹⁶³

As a public action and performative act, gender is not a radical choice or project that reflects a merely individual choice, but neither is it imposed or inscribed upon the individual, as some post-structuralist displacements of the subject would contend. The body is not passively scripted with cultural codes, as if it were a lifeless recipient of wholly pre-given cultural relations.¹⁶⁴

In the novel gender as a performative act is evident in the use of clothing. Joss daily transforms himself from a woman into a man with bandages and clothes. The practice of dressing as a man is important because it establishes Joss’s identity as a male. Maybe for him it is easier to assert his masculine identity when dressed as a man, as Millie points out: “He was always more comfortable once he was dressed. More secure somehow” (p. 238). Clothes serves him to increase his sense of self-confidence. Maggie, the cleaner, notices immediately the accuracy and singularity of Joss’s outfit and the abundance of male accessories:

¹⁶¹ Butler 1988, p. 519.

¹⁶² Butler 1999, p. 236.

¹⁶³ Calitz, p. 60.

¹⁶⁴ Butler 1988, p. 526.

The man had style. He wore unusual shirts that had five cufflinks, specially ordered. Beautifully stitched. He never looked like he's just got out of bed. His trousers over creased. She never saw him wearing anything casual, although plenty of his music friends turned up at the door in jeans and T-shirt (p. 172).

He does not only use male clothes to appear as a male, but clothes become the symbol of his embodied masculine masquerade. His clothes, his walk and his mannerism are the tools which allowed Joss to perform his male identity through his life. Butler claims that gender as a performative masquerade is subversive when it is played in the everyday life:

On the street or in the bus, the act becomes dangerous, if it does, precisely because there are no theatrical conventions to delimit the purely imaginary character of the act, indeed, on the street or in the bus, there is no presumption that the act is distinct from a reality; the disquieting effect of the act is that there are no conventions that facilitate making this separation.¹⁶⁵

Joss's performances can be considered subversive both because they are 'invisible' and the way they are integrated in his daily life.

After wrapping the bandages, Millie does not witness the most important part of Joss's transformation, the construction of genitals: "[Millie] turned away while he stuffed them with a pair of socks" (p. 238).

Joss and Millie's story is an example of the power that each individual has to construct his own truth and reality. At some point they both decide to accept a particular vision of reality, to enter the territory of cross-dressing and everything linked to that: "'For a split second, I feel jealous, imagining what it would be like if Joss were ever unfaithful to me. Then I remember and feel safe. We have our love and we have our secret'" (p. 29).

3.1.1 The 'ritual' of the wedding ceremony

Joss's masculine performances are fully expressed with his marriage with Millie. Since they are husband and wife, it can be argued that their identities are built on institutionalized parts. Jagose explains that marriage and family are part of "the normative relations between sex, gender and desire that naturalize heterosexuality".¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Butler 1988, p. 527.

¹⁶⁶ Jagose, p. 84.

The ceremony puts both of them into the heterosexual pattern but on the other hand the 'ordinary subversive'¹⁶⁷ nature of their relationship distances Joss from the confines of the heterosexual matrix because of his feminine body. Many feminists theorists, such as Rich, consider marriage an oppressive institution. In Knockaert's opinion, "Marriage is one of the very clearly discernable institutions that reward and therefore perpetuate heterosexuality, certainly at the time of Joss and Millie's marriage".¹⁶⁸ The wedding ceremony is a strong proof that their relationship is a traditional heterosexual relation. Millie's "pale green slinky dress" (p. 26) is proof of her not being virgin anymore, since the traditional color of the wedding dress should be white, considering also the time when the story takes place. According to Davies "when Millie refuses to wear white because she is not anymore a virgin, Joss is 'proud of himself', because he has proven his masculinity".¹⁶⁹ The marriage recognizes Joss and Millie's roles of a husband/manhood and of a wife/womanhood. Kay's idea was that "if people love him enough then they will believe him. [...] Through love an identity can be created and sustained, and that love can allow someone to do the impossible".¹⁷⁰ Millie is aware of the fact that the ceremony could be an occasion for the secret to be exposed, and her thoughts are all around that fear: "At the Registrar's Office, I kept thinking of that bit in *Jane Eyre* where the minister asks if anyone knows of any reason why Mr Rochester and Jane should not marry and the man from the Caribbean suddenly stands up and says, Yes" (p. 26). This parallel with *Jane Eyre* is interesting because, since Mr Rochester was already married to Bertha Mason and knew that he could not marry another woman, in Millie and Joss's context it can symbolize the wrongness of their marriage because to society their relation is not a conventional one. Joss is so compared to the figure of Mr Rochester, whose dark secret was the reason for which the ceremony was called off.

Marrying Joss means for Millie to create distance between herself and the other for fear that she could reveal the truth about her marriage and Joss: "When I married

¹⁶⁷ Calitz, p. 8.

¹⁶⁸ Knockaert, p. 13.

¹⁶⁹ Davies, p. 9.

¹⁷⁰Nicol.

Joss I become lee close to my mother. I didn't want her to get too near" (p. 84). She becomes well aware of the possible impact that the revelation of the secret could have on the other people, understanding that a simple "doctor's visit could ruin [their] lives" (p. 87). She justifies the fact of never telling Colman about the secret since for her it was something irrelevant: "What could I tell him - that his father and I were in love, that it didn't matter to us, that we didn't even think about it so how could I have kept it from him if wasn't in my mind to keep?" (p. 22). According to Davies Millie "was not lying for the sake of being deceitful, but as an act of love".¹⁷¹ She has always deeply loved Joss and tried to protect their relation from those who would have not fully understood them.

I managed to love my husband from the moment I clapped eyes on him till the moment he died. I managed to desire him all of our married life. I managed to respect and love his music. I managed to always like the way he ate his food. I managed to be faithful, to never be interested in another man. I managed to be loyal, to keep our private life private where it belonged. To not tell a single soul including my own son about our private life. I managed all that (p. 208).

For Millie her relation is perfectly natural, heterosexual, far from being subversive or deviant. But when they decide to have a child, she acknowledges the consequences of having Joss as a husband: "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?" (p. 37). This obstacle to fulfill a normal life makes her feel a failure because she cannot respect the expectations of society. The obstacle is overcome when Joss replies that: "Miracles are not possible. [...] You never said I was expected to perform a fucking miracle, did you?" (p. 38). And Millie acknowledges that she has "hurt his pride [...] his manhood" (p. 39). So they decide to turn to the alternative of adopting a child. They both agreed that the decision to adopt a child would be due to the fact that Joss could not produce sperm anymore: "'What would we say was our reason for adopting?' I ask. 'We'd say you've had a hysterectomy', Joss says. 'No, we'll say your sperm count is too low!' The look on his face is a picture" (p. 40). Davies claims that "although this appears to be an attack on Joss's masculinity [...] using Joss's sperm

¹⁷¹ Davies, p. 15.

count as the reason to adopt means that Joss validates the request for a child, thus regaining the position provider within the relationship”.¹⁷²

In *Trumpet* both Millie and Joss are neither homosexual nor heterosexual. This does not mean that they do not have a sexual life. Kay describes Joss as a very “sexualized (masculine) being”.¹⁷³ On their wedding night Millie says: “We are both drunk and laughing. He starts to undo my green dress and we fall into bed, kissing. We go down into our other world, till we are both drowning in each other, coming up suddenly gasping for air and going back down again” (p. 31).

After Colman asked Joss if he had never cheated on Millie, he answered “No, with complete sincerity, no effort involved at all” (p. 168), because he is “not interested in anybody besides [Millie]. Only she can turn me on” (p. 168). Joss suggests that he could have cheated on Millie but he did not feel the necessity since his strong attraction for her stopped him. Millie’s accounts on her sexual life with Joss recurs through the novel. As Walker outlines, they seem to conform to the stereotypical heterosexual model of possession and penetration where Joss appears to be the sexual dominant partner: “I know he wants me [...] He’s pulling open my legs and moving down me [...] I feel myself being taken away [...] I feel myself being turned around. He straddles me. Pushes himself into me” (p. 197). This dynamic asserts Joss’s masculinity and Millie’s womanhood. We could also read this passage as describing a lesbian act of sex; but as Walker points out, “Joss does not revert to being Josephine Moore just because he has taken his trousers off”.¹⁷⁴ The same can be said about cross-dressing; it has not to be read as describing a lesbian identity just because “the genitals are consistent with such a description”.¹⁷⁵ As I have already pointed out, cross-dressing is a personal choice, an act of self-determination.

¹⁷² Davies, p. 12.

¹⁷³ Ivi, p. 8.

¹⁷⁴ Walker, p. 42.

¹⁷⁵ Walker, p. 42.

3.2 Discussing the main reasons to cross-dress: ambition or sexual orientation?

The most important thing which remains unrevealed is why Joss decided to turn into a man since Jackie Kay never reveals any reasons in *Trumpet*. In his journey Colman asks himself some kind of questions regarding those who have chosen to live outside the rigid traditional distinction male/female: “He wonders how come his father shaved. How the hair got there. Or was there never any hair. Did he just pretend? Did he take hormones to make himself hairy? Fucking Jesus. What did he do?” (p. 122). Sophie tries to answer the same questions, but for different reasons: she needs to understand Joss’s choice only for her book, to make more money. As Williams points out, “Kay juxtaposes two desires for knowledge”:¹⁷⁶ on the one hand Colman, complicit with Sophie, tries to reunite with his father, exploring the choice he made about his gender; on the other hand Sophie wants to find as many superficial pieces of information as possible to satisfy the curiosity of her reader.

The question of Mill Moody’s attraction to Joss Moody intrigues me. She married a woman who pretended she was a man. Why? A woman who stuffed wet cotton into a condom and tied on a couple of walnuts to fake the balls and penis. (Well, I don’t know if Joss had a so-called ‘three piece suit’ or not; but I’ve read about that somewhere) (pp. 126-127).

According to Monterrey if we try to give an explanation to this issue in heterosexual categories, Millie and Joss’s relation could fall into “a butch-femme lesbian model”.¹⁷⁷ But quoting Nestle it is possible to discard this explanation:

None of the butch women I was with, and this includes a passing woman, ever presented themselves to me as men; they did announce themselves as tabooed women who were willing to identify their passion for other women by wearing clothes that symbolized the taking of responsibility.¹⁷⁸

So why did he decide to cross-dress? Scholars suggested that it could have been for professional reasons, for economic factor or for cultural circumstances. In King’s opinion “it was very difficult for a woman musician to find any work in America during

¹⁷⁶ Williams, p. 164.

¹⁷⁷ Monterrey, p. 175.

¹⁷⁸ Case, p. 302.

the 1930s Depression”,¹⁷⁹ and this seems to have been part of Tipton’s motivation. However, in Kay’s novel there are no hints to support this thesis; the story is set during the 1960s in the UK and according to Colman during this period the jazz world should have had more freedom than the 1930s:

If the jazz world was so ‘anything goes’ as my father claimed, then why didn’t he come clean and spit it out, man? The 1960s were supposed to be cool. Flower people. Big joints. Afghans. Long hair. Peace. Why not a woman playing a fucking trumpet, man, what was wrong with that? (p. 57)

Colman points out that the 1960s should have been the time where ‘anything goes’, in particular for the entertainment world, but his reflexion appears to cast doubts on the idea that his father’s reasons to cross-dress were solely professional. Remembering the early days of their courtship, Millie says: “I approach him and ask him out. It is 1955. Women don’t do this sort of thing. I don’t care. I am certain this man is going to be my lover. When you are certain of something, you must take your chance” (p. 57). During the 1950s and 1960s, society was still based on a patriarchal system and sex changes were not still understood or accepted. Joss Moody would not have been able to become a famous trumpeter if he had kept his image as a woman, since musicians were prominently men. He deeply wanted to succeed as a jazz musician that he cross-dresses to achieve his objective. In Calitz’s opinion Joss cannot be considered as “a lesbian woman who adopts masculinity as a mask to enable him to negotiate his existence as a musician in a male-dominated environment”.¹⁸⁰ So social circumstances at the time in which the story takes place, the 1950s, can be one of the reasons which led Joss to cross-dress.

King suggested another possible reason: maybe Josephine adopted a male role because of her sexual orientation. Maybe Joss was “a lesbian and want[ed] to love and live with women”.¹⁸¹ Middlebrook suggested that although Billy’s earliest relationship were with women, he lived the rest of his life as a man, and apparently convinced his

¹⁷⁹ King 2007, p. 86.

¹⁸⁰ Calitz, p. 52.

¹⁸¹ King 2005, p. 87.

wives of his male identity. What about Joss Moody? Morris points out that in the 1970s many Anglo-American feminists saw heterosexuality as the keystone of male power, and lesbianism represented a way of withdrawing from heterosexuality and therefore bringing patriarchy to an end. For females masculine power is something desirable in society. Sophie Stones “is convinced of the fact that Joss was a lesbian trying to overcome heterosexual male power”:¹⁸²

Dressing up as a bloke and blowing that horn turned her on. There has been too much talk about Joss Moody just wanting to play the trumpet. There have been articles about how there were no women jazz musicians in the 1950s [...] She liked wearing those bandages, didn't she? She liked the big cover up. Going about the place taking everybody in. Going to the Gents. She got a buzz going to the Gents, didn't she? Slicking down her hair. Getting a new man's shirt and taking out the pins, the tiny pins. Shaving [...] Most of all, she liked the power. The power: the way women treated her, the way men treated her [...] Yeah, she liked playing the trumpet all right, but there was more to it than that. She liked being a man. Pure and simple (pp. 263-264).

According to King, Sophie's point of view seems to support “a specific feminist position which sees heterosexuality as a collaboration with the male oppressor and which puts lesbianism forward as a way out of this patriarchal power structure”.¹⁸³

None of those reasons successfully explains why Joss Moody cross-dressed. As Kay herself suggests, Joss wanted to be a man for its own sake, not for professional reasons. And sexual orientation is a reductive explanation which does not take into consideration Joss's gender, which is something more linked to the mind of a person than to the biological aspect.

3.3 Consequences of Joss's death on Millie and Colman's lives

The complexity of Joss's identity is what provokes an identity crisis in Millie and in Colman after his death. What makes the discovery of Joss's secret really shocking is the fact that he had been successful in passing as a man throughout his life, so the people around him never suspected a thing and are shocked by the news. Rose points out that “Kay exposes the ‘open secret’ of the closet by making it apparent that the success of Joss's choice to live as a man was actually predicated on his understanding of the

¹⁸² Claeys, p. 87.

¹⁸³ Claeys, p. 87.

heterosexual matrix and its inevitably [...] willful ignorances owned and practiced by all the peripheral characters”.¹⁸⁴ As Middlebrook points out in her biography of Tipton, “his death in the provincial western city of Spokane, Washington, made news all over the world, not because Billy was a well-known musician, but because the scale of the deception and the scarcity of explanations endowed the skimpy available facts with the aura of myth”.¹⁸⁵

The greatest challenge to Millie’s sense of identity comes when Joss dies and the media interferes with her life. She claims that “[her] life is a fiction now, an open book. [She] is trapped inside the pages of it” (p. 154). She is not anymore in control of which information the public is now allowed to know: “There is no line I can draw which says: ‘Stop here’. It will be all over the top, crossing the boundaries” (p. 158).

Remembering the time when she knew Joss she says: “She always wanted marriage, I remember. Marriage, children. She wouldn’t have been surprised at that” (p. 8). The fact that she addresses herself in the third person stresses that after her loss, she cannot identify any longer with the person she was in the past, because she had always identified herself through her husband: “He died recently, Now what I am? Can I remember? Joss Moody’s widow. [...] I felt myself, the core of myself, being eat away. My soul” (pp. 2,8). Even her familiar home in Torr is not anymore a safe place for her, she finds herself lost there: “Now here I am, out in the elements of this most familiar place, uncertain about everything. Even my own life. specially my own life” (p. 25). At some point Millie seems to be angry with Joss: “He tricked me, he made me fall in love with him [...] I couldn’t do anything but marry him” (p. 48). But her anger is not due to the fact that she really felt tricked, but perhaps this anger is an expression of her grief for her loss. Butler argues that in case of a loss the autonomy of the self seems to vacillate. Butler considers grief a state which produces a change, “something is larger than one’s own deliberate plan or project, larger than one’s own knowing” (p. 48). Its effect becomes problematic when “one finds oneself fallen. One is exhausted but does

¹⁸⁴ Rose, p. 147.

¹⁸⁵ Middlebrook, p. xiii.

not know why”.¹⁸⁶ Millie, as a mourning widow, is a perfect example of how our identity can suffer for the death of someone beloved. She shows her lack of control after her loss: “My hand was shaking when I lit the fire. That’s how absurd I’ve become. I can’t even light a tiny cottage fire without shaking” (p. 4). According to Butler this is an example of how “grief displays the way in which we are in the thrall of our relations with others that we cannot always recount or explain, that often interrupts the self-conscious account of ourselves we might try to provide in ways that challenge the very notion of ourselves as autonomous and in control”.¹⁸⁷ Millie’s loss of Joss affected her self control. For Millie, Joss’s absence is rather a presence: “The space next to me bristles with silence. The emptiness is palpable. Loss isn’t an absence after all. It is a presence. A strong presence here next to me” (p. 12). She finds it difficult to define herself as something different from a widow or Colman’s mother. Her feeling of being destabilized is well expressed when she says:

I stare at myself in the mirror as if I am somebody else. I don’t know what feeling like myself is any more. Who is Millicent Moody? [...] Have I been a good mother, a good wife, or have I not been anything at all? Did I dream up my whole life? (p. 98)

Another thing that the revelation of the truth produces in Millie is the sense of guilt. Soon after Joss’s death Millie remembers when once she watched a movie: “There’s a film I watched once, *Double Indemnity*, where the guy is telling his story into a tape, dying and breathless. I feel like him. I haven’t killed anyone. I haven’t done anything wrong” (p. 1). The movie is a flashback and it begins from the end of the story just like *Trumpet*. The protagonist, Walter Neff, has been wounded (literally) but nevertheless he succeeds in telling his story. The same can be said for Millie, who has been ‘wounded’ figuratively by the media but succeeds in telling her story. Walter Neff fell in love with a married woman who used him to kill her husband; then she ran away alone with the money of an insurance. In the end he had to confess his crimes. The relation between Millie and the protagonist is interesting. Both Millie and Walter had to confess something of which they were guilty. Millie feels guilty for having kept the secret to her friends and to her son in particular:

¹⁸⁶ Butler 2004, p. 18.

¹⁸⁷ Butler 2004, p. 19.

I am lying to myself. I am always lying to myself and I really must stop it. I am alone. My friends don't know how to talk to me or write to me anymore. They are embarrassed, confused, shocked. Perhaps angry. I don't know. Perhaps they are angry like Colman is angry. I don't know. Perhaps they want to know how I 'managed' it (pp. 205-206).

She is now alone because of the way she has lived her life, keeping a secret to all the people around her and who loved her. In Nicol's opinion "You are cheating something false and asking people to believe that it is true, which is all that a lie does".¹⁸⁸ Millie has lived a lie and refuses to admit the truth to herself.

Not only has Millie lost the love of her life, but she has also lost apparently her son, who abandoned her immediately after Joss's death. In Washburn "Colman's abandonment of his mother [...] displays a failure to fulfill his obligation to his mother in the jazz ensemble that is their relationship. His moral transgression manifests in a failure to support his mother, and they each lose themselves in the process".¹⁸⁹ So Millie is devastated because she has lost the most important people in her life at the same time. She desperately wishes to see her son:

I don't want to see anyone. Except Colman. I wish I could see Colman. What could I tell him - that his father and I were in love, that it didn't matter to us, that we didn't even think about it after a while? I didn't think about it so how could I have kept it from him if it wasn't in my mind to keep? (p. 22)

Like his mother, Colman feels lost in his childhood home without his parents: "I went round to their house yesterday. It was strange. It felt like the whole house had died, not just my father. It gave me the spooks. The hall was all quiet and stealthy when it used to shake with music" (p. 65). Colman is the one who has changed his mind most, because he moves from feeling angry to feeling love when he understands his father's choice. Throughout the novel he is described as hostile, angry and depressed; he distances himself from his friend and family. It is possible that his anger is not due to the fact that he cannot accept his father's identity, but to the fact that Joss does not seem to trust his son, since he kept such a secret from him. As Fernández argues "the fact that Colman, although belonging to the private world of family life, is excluded from the 'family secret' emphasises once more Doreen Massey's view of space as a set of social relations. In this sense, Millie and Joss can be said to establish a private dimension, or

¹⁸⁸ Nicol.

¹⁸⁹ Washburn, p. 19.

rather, an intimate space within the private space of the family house”.¹⁹⁰ This is what leads Colman to begin a destructive search for his father’s origins, his ‘real’ story, and to collaborate with Sophie. Colman’s transphobia and isolation derives from the crisis of masculinity he experiences following the revelation that his male role model was a woman. Lewis talks about the role of father in the socialization of children:

Fathers are particularly important in the intergenerational struggle over shame. [...] Fathers, through their behavior and action, provide both a model and an ally for their sons. [...] Fathers and sons have their own negotiation around shame. [...] When they are successful in negotiating the shame-anger-shame axis, their relationship across the life span is ensured. When they are not successful, the son must separate himself from both parents.¹⁹¹

This is true for Joss and Colman because when he left home, “[he] got on better with the old man” (p. 165).

As pointed out in the first chapter, Colman feels betrayed and ashamed after knowing the truth about his father. He describes his father as “the man who pretended to be a man and fetched up a woman at his death. Conned his own son” (p. 67).

He never hit me. never raised a hand or a fist. A belt a buckle or a boot. I’ll stay that for him. Not once. Hardly ever raised his voice. Didn’t need to. He’d hold my hand in the street. Liked that. [...] It was all right, it was, being Joss Moody’s son. Only when I became Colman Moody did everything start to become a total fucking drag (p. 45).

The revelation of the secret caused an identity crisis in Colman:

I am cut up. Since my father dies I’ve been walking around, half alive myself, sleepwalking, with this pain chiselled into my chest. Jagged. Serrated. Nothing makes it disappear (p. 67).

He stops to look in the mirror at himself. [...] There are two Colman Moodys in the mirror: the boy with the glasses from the past; and the man now (p. 181).

He feels that the life he lives now is no more the same he had lived. He experiences an identity crisis which makes him feel nameless and unreal:

If I saw a photograph of her, I could convince myself that I’m not living some weird Freudian dream, some fucked-up dream where I don’t know my father, my mother or myself. I don’t know any of us any more. He has made us unreal (p. 60).

As Kay herself observes, “Colman Moody is convinced he has started to grow backwards” (p. 139). In Reyes’s opinion Colman is now trapped in an unresolved

¹⁹⁰ Fernández, p. 286.

¹⁹¹ Lewis, p. 192.

Oedipal complex since his father's new reality makes him think about his past life and diagnoses it as a "weird Freudian dream" (p. 60).

For the first time in his life he sees his father naked in the funeral parlour. He feels disgusted and and fearful of his father's body, it is a devastating experience for him.

I walked out of that place as fast as I could. [...] I was soaked. [...] Maybe I could just melt, I remember thinking, just melt away.

The day I went to the funeral parlour I still had the remains of a hangover. I puked in the toilet of the creepy place before I left. [...] My father looked fake. Everything about him. [...] I was too freaked out. I was scared shitless. I've never been so frightened (pp. 63, 69).

Metz claims that "the visual impact of his dead father's body, his breasts and his female genitals seem to question Colman's own social and sexual integrity".¹⁹²

What is it that is eating me? [...] It's probably the fact that my father didn't have a prick [...] he had to do this big masculine number on me because he didn't have one. He wanted one and he didn't have one, did he [...] My father couldn't cope with me becoming a man [...] Probably jealous of my cock now I think about it (pp. 66, 123, 163, 169).

King suggests that Colman seems also to recognize the Freudian notion of the 'penis envy' in Joss, which "leads a woman to pretend to have a penis to have access to power accredited to men in patriarchal society".¹⁹³ The same concept is expressed by Sophie Stones:

Most of all, she liked the power. The power: the way women treated her, the way man treated her. Walking down the street with that walk she must have practiced. [...] She studied that walk all right. [...] She must have given it a lot of thought. It can't have been easy for her, hiding like that. [...] She moved town, didn't she? [...] Yeah, she liked playing the trumpet all right, but there was more to it than that. She liked being a man. Pure and simple (pp. 263-264).

Colman has the impression that his genitals are bigger after his father's death: "His cock seems bigger since his father died. Bigger and harder. [...] There's more come too since his father died. That's weird, but it's definitely true. He is losing it" (p. 140). In his mind the penis is the symbol of masculinity, and discovering that his father did not have one, provokes in Colman aggressive and transphobic behaviors. Considering the fact that he describes his father as a 'pervert', 'psycho' and 'freak' (pp. 63-64) and that "his cock seems bigger since his father died" (p. 140), it seems as if he is trying to position his

¹⁹² Metz, p. 68.

¹⁹³ Claeys, p. 87.

father's maleness as inferior to his own. In Koolen's opinion, "Colman's belief that his penis is bigger, harder, and more potent than when Joss was alive reflects an attempt to assert the 'realness', and thus superiority, of his maleness in contrast to his father's 'performed' and 'inauthentic' masculinity".¹⁹⁴ Colman's acceptance of his father identity and Millie's grief as a widow who has lost her husband support Joss's masculinity and the fact of having or not a penis becomes irrelevant to Joss's claim of masculinity. Rose points out that the penis in this case becomes only a "pathetic prosthetic substitute, not the guarantor of phallic power but its imperfect, inadequate and ultimately redundant *usurper*".¹⁹⁵ Kay criticizes the patriarchal conception that the penis is a symbol of masculine power continually returning to the frame that it is "simply the music that matters" (p. 159).

Considering Butler's description of gender as a "repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame",¹⁹⁶ Colman resists to recognize the process of repetition and mimicry which brought him to the expression of his adult gender because it would mean to him to accept that his identity as a man has as a model his father's 'fake' masculinity.¹⁹⁷ He seems to fail in finding parallels between his experience and the one of his father until almost the end of the novel when he begins to empathize with him and understand the problem his father had to face in his life for his choice. His change is evident when he begins to feel guilty for helping Sophie Stones to gather information about his father's private life and he begins to remember memories of his father's caring nature, which show Colman's pride for him:

My father never got a leg over. Had a hard-on. My father was never tossed off. He never stuck it up, or rammed it in, never spilt his seed, never had a blow job. What did he have down his pants? A cunt—is that it? Or did he wear a dildo? Shit. If he did, he would have rammed it in, I promise you (p. 169).

¹⁹⁴ Koolen, p. 74.

¹⁹⁵ Rose, p. 151.

¹⁹⁶ Butler 1999, pp. 43-44.

¹⁹⁷ Koolen, p. 74.

He tells Sophie that cannot help her any longer because, he claims, “I am Colman Moody, the son of Joss Moody, the famous trumpet player. [...] He’ll always be daddy to me” (p. 259). This sentence can be seen as the point in which he starts to understand his father’s identity.

His desire to protect his father’s private life from the exposure is present in a dream in which he met

A small girl, his father. The girl has a mass of curly black hair, like himself. She is deaf. The girl takes a liking to him and starts to play with him. Then she leads him down to the basement [...] Suddenly the whole place starts to fill with water [...] Colman puts the deaf, curly-haired girl on his back. He is going to have to save her from drowning. [...] He has got a little girl's life on his back. He has to save her. Has to save her. Has to (p. 260).

This dream shows how, in his subconscious, Colman feels the responsibility to protect his father from exposure. His decision to read his father’s letter means that he desires to understand his father and begins to reconcile with him. The letter is a tale about the origins of Joss’s father. It is the legacy that Joss decides to leave to his son.

I sat down here this morning all set to destroy all of this. Burn the lot. I stopped myself. If I do that I'd literally be burning myself. I couldn't do that to myself, to my music. But most of all, I couldn't do it to you. I thought to myself, who could make sense of all this? Then I thought of you. I am leaving myself to you (pp. 276-277)

Koolen claims that “by passing his personal history onto Colman, Joss resists the silencing of his past that he has experienced all of his life”.¹⁹⁸ Joss also leaves his son the role of the father: “It is quite simple: all of this is my past; you are my future. I will be your son now in a strange way. You will be my father telling or not telling my story” (p. 277). When Joss says “remember what you like” (p. 277), he wants him to make his own idea about who he really was. The process of Colman’s understanding his father’s choice culminates in the last chapter when he finally reconciles with his mother. In the end a comparison between father and son is made when Colman is getting out of the bus to meet his mother: “He was walking towards her. He moved so like his father” (p. 278).

¹⁹⁸ Koolen, p. 78.

3.4 Labels and the implication of using them

Another question related to sexualities I would like to discuss is the labelling theory, which on the one hand helps to understand the nonheterosexual communities, but, on the other hand, labelling becomes useless when we try to define a person's identity and it causes marginalization.

Labelling plays a huge role in *Trumpet* because the existence of the main characters seems to depend upon the labels that other characters in the novel have assigned to them. Kay claims that identity is based on how each individual considers himself to be and how he chooses to live his life, not on the definitions that the other tries to impose upon him. In *Trumpet* there is a strong division between gender and sex, especially about which labels/pronouns to use to identify Joss. On the one hand, Colman, Millie, Red Big McCall, Maggie uses 'he' to refer to him while Edith, May Hart, Sophie uses 'she'. On the other hand, the funeral director and the doctor struggle with the decision about which label is the right one to define Joss.

I would like now to focus on the relations expressed by labels such as 'wife, husband, mother, widow, father' and on the importance that being called with the 'right name' seems to have.

Consequently to the revelation of Joss's secret to the world, Millie, who helped him to cover the secret, tries now to protect her identity as a heterosexual wife, and to defend herself and Joss from the accusation of lesbianism. She denies the latter categorization and she defends her right to be called first a wife then a 'widow', but the realization she will be considered 'a lesbian' by the society, makes her feel devastated. This label and what it represents, does not correspond to the truth about her relationship with Joss, so it does not either correspond to her identity. Calitz points out that in refusing these labels for her and Joss, "Millie's voice [represents] the queer alternative, which is the possibility of fluidly expressing gender beyond either male or female sex".¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ Calitz, p. 56.

Millie always talks about her, using the words which define her according to her relation with Joss: “My husband died. I am now a widow.”, to Colman “I am your mother, I love you.”, “I have become Millicent Moody”, “Do I look like a bride?” (pp. 205, 25, 28, 30). These labels create Millie’s identity and her identity is sanctioned by the certificates reporting their names, parenthood and sexual identity. According to Knockaert “the knowledge and truth created by the (political) powers, will obviously result in institutionalized identities, such as those of wife, husband, parent, individual (name) etc., that correspond with the interests of dominant powers”.²⁰⁰ The greatest problem for Millie comes out when the media labels her as a lesbian: “No doubt they will call me lesbian. They will find words to put on me. Words that don’t fit me. Words that don’t fit Joss. They will call him names” (p. 154). She sees that word is only a word among the others which the media imposed on her and Joss. She thinks that neither she nor Joss can be understood within the rigid categorization of society, which will put her and her husband in a ‘marginalized status’²⁰¹. Before the 1970s the word ‘lesbian’ was promoted as “a liberatory label of visibility for same-sex relations between women”.²⁰² However Halberstam points out that this is because before the 1970s “feminist have tended to promote the term lesbian as universal and inclusionist by denying its historical specificities”.²⁰³ She also claims that considering Foucault’s process of the ‘incorporation of perversions’ the label lesbian is a term in which many “pleasurable intersections of embodiments, practices, and roles have been pared down by historical processes and are now taken to denote the precise specifications of an identity”.²⁰⁴ This term associated with same-sex desire was created in the late 20th century with the rise of feminism and it is the development of what Foucault calls a ‘homosexual reverse discourse’.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ Knockaert, p. 12.

²⁰¹ Califa, p.37.

²⁰² Rose, p. 148.

²⁰³ Rose, p. 148.

²⁰⁴ Rose, p. 148.

²⁰⁵ Foucault, pp. 50-51.

Halberstam claims that during the 1970s rise of the white feminist movement the term ‘lesbianism’ was associated to a specific socio-historical meaning:

It was used to identify often presumed, egalitarian sexual relations between women who not only self-identified as women but who also, supposedly, shared a common belief in the purity of lesbian sex as an expression of the feminist rejection of the power dynamics inherent in patriarchal heterosexuality.²⁰⁶

Butler criticizes the concept of lesbianism asserting that if gender identity is located in a single category there is the danger of reverting power back to heteronormativity: “To argue that there might be a specificity to lesbian sexuality has seemed a necessary counterpoint to the claim that lesbian sexuality is just heterosexuality once removed, or that it is derived, or that it does not exist”.²⁰⁷ It can be said that *Trumpet* is not a lesbian novel both because Millie considers Joss her husband, and because Joss can be considered a transgender man.

Sophie categorizes Joss as a ‘transvestite’ because it has “a pervy ring to it” (p. 126) and she continues “what made Joss Moody into a transvestite? [...] No, this isn’t a straightforward *tranny* [...] Was she just a *pervert* or what?” (p. 128). Since for Sophie ‘the biological sex’ is the only ‘truth’ about Joss, she considers him a transvestite and a lesbian. Later in the novel she said: “Lesbian stories are in [...] And this one is the pick of the butch. The best yet. Lesbian who adopted a son; one playing mummy, one playing daddy. The big butch frauds. Couldn’t be better” (p. 170). For Sophie Stones, which represents the media in the novel, homosexuality is something that can allow her to make ‘Big Money’ within the publishing world. She knows that stories involving homosexuality sell well: “Lesbians who adopted a son; one playing mummy, one playing daddy. The big butch frauds” (p. 170). Sophie’s book symbolizes the media tendency to consider transgender people as “a perennial cultural curiosity: sensational, abominable, fascinating”.²⁰⁸ Halberstam claims that Sophie is similar to Diane Middlebrook who wrote Tipton’s biography in which she undermined his gender

²⁰⁶ Rose, p. 149.

²⁰⁷ Fuss, p. 17.

²⁰⁸ Koolen, p. 75.

identity²⁰⁹. “Sophie similarly negates Joss's experiences as a man by understanding his masculinity as a "performance" that gives "her" a thrill”.²¹⁰ In Koolen’s opinion with her book she demonstrates to be insensitive to those trans-people who experience transphobic oppression.

The Western world feels the need to define or impose a meaning upon any kind of private sexual relationship. In her work *Transgender Warriors*, Feinberg tries to explain how labels fail to describe the different nuances and complexities of certain kind of relationships:

Some people refer to my love relationship as lesbian, because they consider the fact that my wife and I are female to be a biological determinant of our sexuality. Others, who label me as “looking like a man”, assume we live in a safe heterosexual space. Neither exactly corresponds to my life. [...] So are my love and I lesbian women, mother and son, lesbian woman and gay male friend, or some other combination? Our relationship is Teflon to which no classification of sexuality sticks.²¹¹

Even if Joss is biologically female and has a sexual relationship with another woman, this does not mean that we are talking of a lesbian relation because Joss considers himself as a man, and so the people around him. On the one hand their relationship cannot be considered ‘lesbianism’; they are husband and wife. By using normal labels such as ‘wife’ and ‘widow’ Millie hopes to change the mind of both the media and the other people who marginalized her and Joss. On the other hand they cannot be considered part of an heterosexual relationship because biologically they are both born women.

How can we decide if Joss’s identity is determined by his gender or by his sex? Holding and doctor Krishnamurty concluded that the labels of man and woman fail to adequately define Joss as they are not “quite clear enough” (p. 44). They both decide at the end that sex has precedence over gender and label Joss in respect to his sex. By doing that we can question Joss’s sexual orientation: should we consider Joss a homosexual because both his and his wife’s sex are female? Or should we consider him an heterosexual because his gender is male? Which is the ‘right’ label? Because he is a

²⁰⁹ Halberstam 2001, p. 24.

²¹⁰ Koolen, p. 75.

²¹¹ Feinberg, p.92.

transgender it is almost impossible to label his orientation correctly. So we could agree with any character's opinion and give him the consequent label according to the character we agree with. But this will only show the ineffectiveness of labels and the uselessness of the binary system. Labels are purely words for things that society feels the need to define. But they do not define who a person is, they only serve to give a wrong presentation of individuals.

This consideration leads me to introduce the concepts of 'hybridity' and Bhabha's 'third space'. The term 'hybridity' is used in horticulture to refer to the "cross-blending of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third, 'hybrid' species".²¹² Young suggests that: "Hybridity [...] makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference, but in a way that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different".²¹³ Many theorists have worked on the concept of hybridity and what it implicates. As Ashcroft points out that 'hybridity' is "one of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in post-colonial theory; hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. [...] Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial, etc".²¹⁴ This contact zone is a site of contradiction because it keeps people out and keeps people in, people who belong neither to one side nor to the other and for this hybridity is produced since they are in an 'in-between' space. The concept has been recently associated with the work of Bhabha who supposes the creation of 'hybrids' and claims that "all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the 'Third Space of Enunciation'".²¹⁵ For him the creation of this ambivalent space can be as a way to overcome cultural diversity "in favour of the recognition of an empowering hybridity within which cultural difference may operate".²¹⁶

²¹² Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, p. 108.

²¹³ Young, p. 26.

²¹⁴ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, p. 108.

²¹⁵ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, p. 108.

²¹⁶ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, p. 108.

It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory [...] may open the way to conceptualizing an *international* culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of culture, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*.²¹⁷

It is an 'in-between' space which carries the meaning of culture, and as he asserts "the production of meaning requires these two places be mobilized in the passage through a third space"²¹⁸ and in this space "the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity and fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, re-historicized and read anew".²¹⁹ In this sense, as Lamia A. Gulcur states, Joss can be considered an hybrid when we refers to his decision to live his life as a man, even if his body is the one of a female, because it is as if he is living in a "third space, nor woman nor man anymore".²²⁰ He stands between two things, he is both. Hybridity is the realm of what is 'undefined', that is of "what is impossible to appropriate because it escapes all definitions of sexuality and gender" (Gulcur). The processes of hybridization and the creation of hybrid beings are often problematic and difficult because they involve also annihilation and the creation of subalternity.

Joss's body "changes shape. From girl to young woman to young man to old man to old woman" (p. 133). He is neither a man nor a woman, neither homosexual nor heterosexual and it is free from any gender categorization:

To the registrar Millie looks just like any other widow: She had the widow's sad skin. [...] A widow who had come to get the piece of paper that would tell her, because she still didn't believe it, that her husband had really died. [...] He asked the woman if Joss Moody ever formally changed her name to Joss Moody. The woman told him she didn't think so. In other words, Mr. Sharif concluded, one day Josephine Moore just plucked the name Joss Moody out of the sky and called himself this name and encouraged others to do likewise. [...] The woman nodded, smiling shyly, proud of her spouse's achievement. [...] He dipped his marbled fountain pen in the black Indian ink and wrote the name Joss Moody on the death certificate (pp. 80-81).

When we think about hybridity we have to consider it as an individual's choice as well, as gender is something which is repeatedly chosen to perform.

²¹⁷ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, pp. 108-109.

²¹⁸ Bhabha 1985. p. 208.

²¹⁹ Bhabha 1985, p. 208.

²²⁰ Gulcur.

Jones argues that “the text itself appropriates a middle space, somewhere between reality and fiction, documentary and storytelling, an appropriate gesture for a protagonist who puts into question the boundaries between identities”.²²¹ As Garber claims, Kay’s text itself can be considered as a ‘third space’:

The third is that which questions binary thinking and introduces crisis - a crisis which is symptomatized by both the overestimation and the underestimation of cross-dressing. [...] The ‘third’ is a mode of articulation, a way of describing a space of possibility. Three puts in question the idea of one: identity, self-sufficiency, self-knowledge.²²²

Suthrell points out that “the secular cross-dressers of Western industrialized societies are consigned by their culture to a position which primarily bears disadvantages, marginalization and disapproval”.²²³ And so he agrees with Duncker who claims that gender can be a prison: “Why do we have to know if someone is a man or a woman? [...] The only possible reason for wanting to know is that you’d treat them differently”.²²⁴ The boundaries created by transgenderism, cross-dressing and so on, lead inevitably to marginalization because if it is not possible to insert a person’s identity into a defined neat label, this person will have problems in participating in certain parts of the social life. Those people who fall out of the ‘gender categorizations’ end up like Billy Tipton or Joss Moody: “vulnerable outsiders who run the risk of ridicule, neglect and death, their position too tenuous to be tenable”.²²⁵ As Feinberg tells, the consequences of transgression can be cruel:

As my temperature spiked dangerously high, I bundled up and travelled through sleet and snowstorms to clinics and hospital emergency rooms. I experienced raw hatred from some health care professionals who refused to care for me solely because I am a masculine female. I heard doctors and nurses refer to me as a “Martian” or as “It” [...] While delirious with fever I learned once again that my human right to be treated with dignity and respect and caring had to be fought for.²²⁶

²²¹ C. Jones 2009, p. 96.

²²² Garber, p. 11.

²²³ Suthrell, pp. 164-165.

²²⁴ Prasad.

²²⁵ Walker, p. 43.

²²⁶ Feinberg, p. 168.

Butler argues that “without names, words and discourse, something that is unarguably real, like the life of an individual, can become dehumanised, unreal”.²²⁷ “On the level of discourse, certain lives are not considered lives at all, they cannot be humanized; they fit no dominant frame for the human, and their dehumanization occurs first, at this level”.²²⁸ Violence is what happens after an individual is dehumanized.

²²⁷ Orn, p. 14.

²²⁸ Butler 2004, p. 25.

CHAPTER 4

Trumpet's music: jazz
as a process of identity formation

The title of the novel has an ambivalent meaning. According to Kay, as a verb, ‘trumpet’ is both “the idea of Joss announcing himself, [and] [t]he journalist [Sophie Stones] trying to trumpet her story”.²²⁹ Monterrey suggests that it also “emphasizes the attitude of the listener/reader to what is being made public, which [...] is controlled by the ideological stance of the narrator”.²³⁰ As a noun ‘trumpet’ refers to the jazz musical instrument which in the novel acquires an ambivalent form. Joss’s choice of sexual identity fits perfectly the ambivalent nature of jazz:

When Joss plays it, the combination of the character and the instrument grants Joss wholeness, as if the phallic instrument physically compensates for his absence of male sexual members. But the trumpet has also a concave end, combining thus the masculine and the feminine in its form, like Joss’s appearance which, being a woman, nobody could ever see anything else but a man’s.²³¹

A trumpet is a musical instrument, but we can read it according to the novel, and consider it a vehicle through which Joss expresses his identity. In this chapter I will discuss the importance of music and how Joss defines his identity by performing jazz.

4.1 The origins of jazz

As many pointed out, the blues is “the spiritual center and musical progenitor of jazz”;²³² it developed from the work songs and spirituals of African slaves on the southern plantations.²³³

The blues is a naturally and human art form of cultural expression that expresses an individual’s struggle with the ‘troubles of world’ and attests to a history of enslavement, oppression, and disenfranchisement of Africans and their descendants.²³⁴

²²⁹ Monterrey, p. 171.

²³⁰ Monterrey, p. 171.

²³¹ Monterrey, p. 172.

²³² Hartley, p. 111.

²³³ C. Jones 2004, p. 8.

²³⁴ Hartley, p. 111.

Taylor points out that “blues have always been a migratory music carried from place to place absorbing influences and effects”.²³⁵ In his *Blues People*, LeRoi Jones describes jazz as “purely instrumental blues (with European instruments)”.²³⁶

Jazz originally was the accompaniment of the voodoo dancer, stimulating the half-crazed barbarian to the vilest deeds. The weird chant, accompanied by the syncopated rhythm of the voodoo invocers, has also been employed by other barbaric people to stimulate brutality and sensuality.²³⁷

Bob Rigter wrote the article *The etymology of the word JAZZ* in which he asserts that before 1918, there is no mention of any use of the word ‘jazz’. A similar word, ‘jass’ was written on the label of the first jazz record on 7 March 1917.²³⁸

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* jazz is “a type of music originating among American Negroes, characterized by its use of improvisation, syncopated phrasing, a regular or forced rhythm, often in common time, and a ‘swinging’ quality”.²³⁹ This definition is not satisfactory and complete since, as Eckstein points out, it includes “indefinites notes of form and performance and ends with a category bordering on the elusive”.²⁴⁰

Not all varieties of post-war jazz, moreover, strive for a ‘swinging’ feel any longer; syncopation and common time will not do describe the temporal complexities of much bebop, hardbop and free jazz; and while its socio-historical origins are certainly American, there are thriving jazz scenes all over the globe.²⁴¹

At the light of this discussion we cannot consider jazz as a fixed form of music and this agrees perfectly with the structure of *Trumpet*, and the consideration of identity as a fluid category. Performance is the main theme in the novel: Joss performs both the role of man, father and husband in his everyday life and the trumpet player.

²³⁵ J. Taylor, p. 306.

²³⁶ L. Jones, p. 71.

²³⁷ Faulkner, p. 16.

²³⁸ Rigter.

²³⁹ Murray.

²⁴⁰ Eckstein, p. 52.

²⁴¹ Eckstein, p. 52.

Jazz originated in New Orleans at the beginning of the 20th century because of the presence of a black Creole subculture. The creoles who inhabited the city were free, French and Spanish speaking Blacks, originally from the West Indies, who lived first under Spanish then French rule in the Louisiana Territory.

They became Americans as a result of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 and Louisiana statehood in 1812. The Creoles rose to the highest levels of New Orleans society during the 19th century. They lived in the French section of the city east of Canal Street and became prominent in the economic and cultural life of the section.²⁴²

Among them there were creole musician who trained in the European musical tradition.

Musicians were in great demand. When in 1898 the Spanish-American war ended and military units were disbanded, second-hand shops were full of clarinets, trumpets, trombones, tubas and drums, which could be bought by even the poorest negroes. For the black man, becoming a musician was one of the few possible escapes from poverty and heavy physical labour.²⁴³

Before jazz, in New Orleans there were two musical traditions: one white, based on those musician who had trained in the European tradition and the other black based on an African oral tradition.²⁴⁴

The Creole musicians [...] trained in Paris, played at the Opera House and in chamber ensembles. Some led the best society bands in New Orleans. They prided themselves on their formal knowledge of European music, precise technique and soft delicate tone and had all of the social and cultural values that characterize the upper class. In sharp contrast were the people of the American part of New Orleans, who lived west of Canal Street. They were newly freed blacks who were poor, uneducated, and totally lacking in cultural and economic advantages. The musicians of the American section, also called the Back o' town section, were schooled in the blues, Gospel music, and work songs that they sang or played mostly by ear. Memorization and improvisation characterized the west side bands; sight reading and correct performance were characteristic of Creole bands.²⁴⁵

The non-creole proletarian blacks played their instruments by ear: they improvised and used the rhythms and scales they brought from Africa.²⁴⁶ Creoles stood in-between white and black music, but closer to the European musical tradition. But when racial segregation began, after the Plessy vs Ferguson case in 1896, colored creoles were considered black and began to suffer social and economic consequences of segregation.

²⁴² Weinstock.

²⁴³ Rigter.

²⁴⁴ Sidran.

²⁴⁵ Weinstock.

²⁴⁶ Rigter.

One of the effect was that they started to go into business with black musicians. The influence between the two group led to the birth of jazz.

The Creole's executional sophistication and theoretical knowledge of European music, the black musician's practical creativity and emotional intensity, and, last but not least, the shared rhythmical roots of blacks and Creoles, gave rise to the music of one suppressed class of coloured musicians. [...] The music was soon imitated and adopted by white musicians. Thus the Original Dixieland Jass Band, which in 1917 made the first jazz record, was all white.²⁴⁷

The most important innovators of this kind of music have been black male musicians. We can define three stage of development of jazz, each one linked to a particular individual:²⁴⁸

Louis Armstrong instituted the individual improvised solo in the 1920s and 1930s. The bebop revolution in the 1940s and 1950s, regarded largely as a black phenomenon, was associated particularly with Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. This was a 'point of transition of jazz from entertainment art', with its emphasis on virtuosity and improvisation around scales instead of melodies, 'producing a mystifying cerebral complexity'.²⁴⁹ The Free Jazz revolution of Ornette Coleman, beginning in the early 1960s, can be described as a liberation from musical conventions, and was intimately entwined with other movements aspiring to cultural liberation characteristic of that decade, notably Black Power.²⁵⁰

Critics has divergent view about the nature of jazz: some outline its openness and transcultural inclusiveness, others draw rigid boundaries around what should jazz look and sound like. For examples Stanley Crouch rejects any jazz musical innovation from the 1960's free jazz movement. Eckstein claims that since jazz is considered to be the 'Great American Music', "[it] is thus made a distinctly national phenomenon, and playing jazz is to respectfully pay tribute to a fixed cannon of American musical giants, most of whom are black, and - with the exception of few singers - male".²⁵¹ Indeed, in popular culture, jazz is considered as the "staid music of the old, and particularly, almost exclusively, the music of old *men*"²⁵² since the majority of jazz musician are male. Byrne and Allen observes that "these statistics support a broader sense of jazz as

²⁴⁷ Rigter.

²⁴⁸ C. Jones 2004, p. 8.

²⁴⁹ Johnson, p. 99.

²⁵⁰ C. Jones 2004, p. 8.

²⁵¹ C. Jones 2004, p. 8.

²⁵² Byrne and Allen, p. 85.

an inherently masculine form that is implicitly reinforced by the paraphernalia surrounding the genre, one which is deeply integrated with 20th-century consumer capitalism”:²⁵³ “*Playboy* championed jazz, as a male music [...] but the music of a certain kind of male [...] and genderized illustrations of the jazz life in its pages made clear [...] celebrating freedom, male bonding, drugs, art, and the hip lifestyle”.²⁵⁴

This genre which is prevalently dominated by male presents many differences between its practitioners and fans. In the 20th century “dissent becomes the only means of asserting difference or individuality, both of which are vital to jazz’s sense of itself as an improvised, ideologically untethered art”²⁵⁵ as McKay points out:

The history of jazz in Britain is one of men supporting men, talking to and writing about men, preserving special male sociocultural spaces, men listening to each other’s music and responding, men filling the willed silences of their daily discoursing with other sounds, men compensating for their societal inadequacy or familiar indolence with a solo, men sharing instrumental secrets with each other, seeking structure or escape in a twelve r thirty-two bar sequence, men helping each other break out of rigid classes expectations, small groups of men on stages and in corners watched, listened to and envied by larger groups of men.²⁵⁶

It is useful to look at the origins of jazz and its structural organization referring to Gunther Schuller’s seminal study of *Early Jazz*, which outlines how “jazz is, above all things, paradigmatically ‘hybrid’ in nature”.²⁵⁷ Hebdidge and others agree on the hybrid nature of jazz and assert that its origins are rooted “in the fusion of African rhythms, particularly African drumming traditions brought and maintained by the slaves to the new world where they took aspects of the European music of their owners and created something that was new and was theirs: a fusion of African rhythm and European harmony”.²⁵⁸ Schuller’s study demonstrates that jazz is a result of a creolization, originated from the influences between European, Caribbean, African and American musical elements:

²⁵³ Byrne and Allen, p. 86.

²⁵⁴ Byrne and Allen, p. 86.

²⁵⁵ Byrne and Allen, p. 86.

²⁵⁶ McKay, p. 246.

²⁵⁷ Eckstein, p. 53.

²⁵⁸ J. Taylor, p. 304.

Drawing on hollers, the blues, Afro-Christian musical traditions, African drumming, European art and folk songs, and a blending of European diatonic and African pentatonic scales and harmonic patterns, the music evolving as jazz cannot claim to have any unified singular origin.²⁵⁹

Keil, and Baker argued that jazz and Afro-American music represents “not only a variety of mixtures between European and African elements but a series of blendings within itself”.²⁶⁰ Keil noted that “the great flexibility or blending capacity of Afro-American musical forms derives primarily from a rhythmic substructure that can incorporate with ease the most diverse melodic and harmonic resources”.²⁶¹

During its coming into the most important cities in the USA jazz appropriates foreign elements adapted to one’s personal style. Because of its hybrid nature, jazz cannot be considered a kind of music conforming to standard rules. As Blake notes:

Jazz has attracted [...] the individualized, implicitly male, ‘heroism’ of the great artist working in the defiance of social norms. This is a convenient view of themselves for lonely suburban men, not gifted with great social skills, but who can play a saxophone or trumpet or who have record collections and opinions thereon.²⁶²

The cultural importance of jazz has always been located in a counter-discourse which was important to the formation of African Americans identities. Since jazz is black music, it is defined by ethnical characteristics. In literature, one of the most important exponents of jazz is Toni Morrison, whose novels are explicitly addressed to the African American community. She uses jazz as a tool of identity formation for the black American communities. This view of jazz in literature links music to categories of race and social belonging. Eckstein claims that “thinking jazz in racial confines is clearly at odds with the fact that in its cultural genesis, jazz transcends any such confines by presenting perhaps the most ‘impure’ form of all art. [...] Such an approach closes down the spaces in-between categories of race and gender which have only recently been conceptually opened by theorists of plural or hybrid identities such as Stuart Hall or Paul Gilroy”.²⁶³ The latter talks about an ‘ethics of antiphony’ which is located in the

²⁵⁹ Eckstein, p. 53.

²⁶⁰ J. Taylor, p. 305.

²⁶¹ Keil, pp. 33-34.

²⁶² Blake.

²⁶³ Eckstein, p. 54.

“experience of performance with which to focus the pivotal ethical relationship between performer and crowd, participant and community”.²⁶⁴ Cornel West sees jazz as a bearer of a “critical and democratic sensibility [that] flies in the face of any policing of borders and boundaries of ‘blackness’, ‘maleness’, ‘femaleness’, or ‘whiteness’”,²⁶⁵ so for him jazz is a place of hybridity which has the function to defy boundaries and social categories. He claim that jazz should be sees as “a mode of being in the world, an improvisational mode of protean, fluid and flexible dispositions toward reality suspicious of ‘either/or’ viewpoints, dogmatic pronouncements, or supremacist ideologies”.²⁶⁶ According to Eckstein, West’s view of jazz is the one which better helps to understand the role of jazz in Kay’s *Trumpet*. Matthews notes that “If the ultimate sources for poetry and jazz are the life of the emotions, the extreme difficulty of describing that life, and the great spiritual cost of *not* trying to describe it, then poetry and jazz are rooted at the very centre of what it’s like to be human”.²⁶⁷

4.2 The influence of music in *Trumpet*

Trumpet outlines the importance of blues as an important part of jazz’s history development, and how jazz and blues emphasize differences between people of Diaspora. In an interview Kay stated:

Jazz is fascinating, because it's always fluid, it has the past in it - work songs, slave songs, blues. Jazz is a process of reinventing itself. And race, too, is less fixed, more fluid, in jazz. There's a sense of jazz being a family.²⁶⁸

Kay employs both jazz and blues in her novel which are symbols of freedom and liberation, “they open up the possibility of redefinition and subversion” (Fernández, p. 279). In an interview she asserts that “without the jazz and the blues traditions, my

²⁶⁴ Gilroy, 1993 p. 203.

²⁶⁵ West, p. 105.

²⁶⁶ West, p. 105.

²⁶⁷ Kelly, p. 647.

²⁶⁸ Jaggi 1998, p. 10.

poetry basically wouldn't be the same. It's consciously and also unconsciously influenced by jazz and blues".²⁶⁹

As I previously argued, the novel is structured according to polyphony which in musicological terms is defined as "two or more melodic parts interwoven in a composition".²⁷⁰ Kay's decision to use multiple narrative perspectives mirrors a piece of jazz music because

[Y]ou have your solo instruments with the different people who have all been affected by this secret. And then you have the same story being improvised and told over and over again in different ways, with different perspectives. And that's the other thing that interests me [Kay] about jazz, how you can take one refrain, one single story and make it play lots of different ways.²⁷¹

The polyphonic model of jazz emerges as a process of improvisation allowing each character to tell again and again their stories about Joss. In Southern's opinion "the polyphonic texture of music [is] a result of 'collective improvisation', which each melody player improvising his or her part in such a way that he parts combined into a balanced, integrated whole".²⁷²

All the minor characters in the novel who talks about Joss, are given enough space to assert their own identities and verbal styles as each jazz soloist should do during a good performance. As I previous outlined Joss is mostly absent from the novel, and we get access to his thought in two chapters: 'Music' and 'Last Word'. As Kay herself stated in an interview, her novel is build according to the rhythm of American jazz music:

I wanted to tell a story, the same story, form several points of view. I was interested in how a story can work like music and how one note can obtain the essence of the whole. I wanted to write a novel whose structure was very close to jazz itself.²⁷³

This association between jazz and literary style is an important choice which has also been illustrated by Morrison in describing her own writing style:

²⁶⁹ Severin.

²⁷⁰ Hartley, p. 112.

²⁷¹ Jaggi 1999, p. 56.

²⁷² Southern, p. 369.

²⁷³ "An Interview with Jackie Kay".

I have wanted always to develop a way of writing that was irrevocably black. [...] I use the analogy of the music because you can range all over the world and it's still black [...] I don't imitate it, but I am informed by it. Sometimes I hear blues, sometimes spirituals or jazz and I have appropriated it. I've tried to reconstruct the texture of it in my writing.²⁷⁴

Whitehead points out that jazz provides a 'fragmented mode of writing'²⁷⁵ because it is an 'elusive and unsatisfying form':²⁷⁶ "Jazz always keeps you on the hedge. There is no final chord. There may be a ling chord, but no final chord. And it agitates you. [...] There is always something else that you want from music".²⁷⁷

According to Eckstein, since "music is not language, and [...] writing is by necessity bound to a linear sequence of signifiers as opposed to music's 'pluridimensionality' and 'spatialization' [which] can never be fully attained in verbal art" (Eckstein, p. 56), we can consider the multiplicity of perspectives and voices which revolves around Joss's death as the explorations of musicians in jazz, since they express a personal point of view about common themes explored by many others. As Kay herself stated in an interview: "[she] wanted to have a multiple-voiced narrative also so that it would be like a piece of jazz, with several instruments having their solo turns".²⁷⁸

Panish discusses how writers represent jazz and blues in fiction and gives two types of literary representations of them:

The particular foci of these representations are the interaction between performer and the audience, and the creative process of the performer himself. The first of these obviously reflects the communal value that has been constitutive of musical performance in the African and African American tradition. [...]. The second focal point of these representations also reflects an essential element of African American music: improvisation. In this literature, improvisation—or, more generally, the jazz musician's creative process while on the bandstand—is invested with a multiplicity of meanings, ranging from the strictly musical to the cultural, political, historical, and social.²⁷⁹

In Hartley's opinion, "the representation of jazz performance in African Diasporic fiction [...] emphasizes the two elements that Panish outlines above: the communal

²⁷⁴ Gilroy 1993, p. 78.

²⁷⁵ Whitehead, p. 143.

²⁷⁶ Whitehead, p. 143.

²⁷⁷ Whitehead, p. 143.

²⁷⁸ Eckstein, p. 57.

²⁷⁹ Panish, pp. 80-81.

value of musical performance and the presence of improvisation”.²⁸⁰ Martin suggests that

Improvisation is generally regarded as ‘entirely spontaneous’, involving ‘unpremeditated, spur-of-the-moment decisions’ made in ‘the suddenness of the creative impulse’. This is misconceived [...] The spontaneity and creativity [...] must be set within the context of a musical culture with its own conventions and constraints. [...] Improvisation is revealed as collaborative and collectively organized, a social matter as well as a psychological one, in which the impulses and aspirations of the individuals must somehow be reconciled with the configuration of normative conventions that confronts them.²⁸¹

As Jones points out, the primary aim of jazz is to create performances, contrary to Western music, and its improvisational nature assures that a performance cannot be repeated since “each performance, of a song, then, can be more or less different from the last, undermining any notion of a definitive version”.²⁸² Those ideas bring to mind Butler’s conception of identity as fluid, “produced through the repetition of permitted and recognized acts rather than created by a stable ‘inner core’ of the individual”.²⁸³ Jazz improvisation is an interesting model of performative identity and helps Kay in describing such process of self-invention. Since improvisation is a mobile model, it can fully represent the ‘in-betweenness’ which pervades Kay’s work. Ellison describes the instability of such model and consequently of identity:

There is a contradiction implicit in the art form itself. For true jazz is an art of individual assertion within and against the group. Each true jazz moment [...] springs from a contest in which the artist challenges all the rest; each solo flight or improvisation, represents (like the canvasses of a painter) a definition of his identity; as individual, as member of the collectivity and a link in certain tradition. Thus jazz finds its very life in improvisation upon traditional materials, the jazz man must lose his identity even as he finds it.²⁸⁴

Hartley notes that “improvisation requires an engagement with the past to build personal identity through communal interaction”,²⁸⁵ in other words it facilitates the access to personal history. Kay uses the technique of improvisation to “fuel the process

²⁸⁰ Hartley, p. 114.

²⁸¹ Martin, p. 140.

²⁸² C. Jones 2004, p. 10.

²⁸³ C. Jones 2004, p. 10.

²⁸⁴ Gilroy 1993, p. 79.

²⁸⁵ Hartley, p. 113.

of deconstructing and reconstructing the self ‘within and against the group’²⁸⁶. Improvisation allows the characters to express their diasporic identities which differ because of different historical and cultural backgrounds. Martin suggests that improvisation as totally spontaneous practice and made in “the suddenness of the creative impulse” is a misconception:

The spontaneity and creativity [...] must be set within the context of a musical culture with its own conventions and constraints [...] It is collaborative and collectively organized [and] the impulses and aspirations of the individuals must somehow be reconciled with the configuration of normative conventions that confronts them.²⁸⁷

Washburn notes that in the novel jazz has also a kind of supportive function as the characters themselves which have to support each other in their relationships:

Jazz involves an ensemble composed of several soloists, and the members of a group have an obligation to support each other, so they can both function as a cohesive whole, and allow the soloists to effectively carry out their individual expression.²⁸⁸

Hagberg points out that “a jazz player has not only a duty to him or herself to play as well as possible, and a duty to the composer of a piece to show the work the respect it deserves, but also a pressing set of duties or, indeed ethical obligations to the other players in the ensemble and to the ensemble as a collective whole”.²⁸⁹ Considering this explanation we can argue that Joss and Millie’s marriage functions as a kind of jazz ensemble since every morning she helps him to get dressed and ready for his male performance in the world and supports him “just as soloists need the help of the ensemble, Joss requires the care of Millie to perform”.²⁹⁰ Washburn points out that “Kay asserts that the inherently collaborative nature of jazz mimics an essential human trait: the natural reliance on others in order to comfortably and fully express oneself”.²⁹¹

Kay is able to present her novel with a colloquial spontaneity stressed by a strong oral presence of the characters. An example of spontaneity in narrative can be found in

²⁸⁶ Hartley, p. 113.

²⁸⁷ C. Jones 2009, p. 102.

²⁸⁸ Washburn, p. 18.

²⁸⁹ Hagberg, p. 188.

²⁹⁰ Washburn, p. 18.

²⁹¹ Washburn, p. 19.

Big Red's chapter which is characterized by colloquialism and hybrid of Scottish and jazz discourses. Bakhtin defines hybridization as "a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousness, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor".²⁹² Since Kay "was interested in how a story can work like music and how one note can contain the essence of the whole"²⁹³ she was attracted by the characters of the registrar, the drummer, the cleaner because "they gave the same story a different note".²⁹⁴ Another example of colloquial spontaneity can be found in the following extract expressing Millie's emotions:

I pull back the curtain an inch and see their heads together. I have no idea how long they have been there. It is getting dark. I keep expecting them to vanish; then I would know that they were all in my mind. I would know that I imagined them as surely as I imagined my life (p. 1).

Her account is spontaneous and narrated in a particular kind of monologue, a solo. Furthermore the short sentences introduced with 'I' give the narration a 'peculiar off-beat rhythm'.²⁹⁵ Colman's narrative is characterized by the same kind of spontaneity: "He never hit me. never raised a hand or a fist. A belt a buckle or a boot. I'll stay that for him. Not once. Hardly ever raised his voice. Didn't need to. He'd hold my hand in the street" (p. 45). Colman's sentences seems to be more spontaneous and immediate than the Millie's ones. As Eckstein outlines, "it is as if the novel's lines emerge while you read them, on the spot, forged in the moment of their enunciation as in a jazz improvisation".²⁹⁶ All character, major and minor, are provided with their own singular/peculiar 'sound'. Eckstein notes that according to Bakhtin's concept of *heteroglossia*, the difference between each characters' styles of narration is due to their different social standings, cultural backgrounds and age groups.

²⁹² Bakhtin, p. 358.

²⁹³ Smith, p. 173.

²⁹⁴ "An Interview with Jackie Kay".

²⁹⁵ Eckstein, p. 57.

²⁹⁶ Eckstein, p. 58.

Joss's performance of improvisation "should be seen as an act of non-linear storytelling that adheres to an aesthetic framework found in jazz":²⁹⁷

The story dwells not just in one solo at a time, but also in a single note, and equally in an entire lifetime of improvisations. In short, the story is revealed not as a simple linear narrative, but as a fractured, exploded one. It is what we take to be the shifting, multiple, continually reconstructed subjectivities of the improvisers, encoded in a diverse variety of sonic symbols, occurring at different levels and subject to different stylistic controls.²⁹⁸

In relocating jazz from an African American context to Scotland, Kay suggests that jazz can extend outside its national boundaries. In this light jazz cannot be considered only a music style, but as Eckstein claims, it should be seen as a way of life, "a state of being in the world".²⁹⁹ This can be illustrated by discussing a particular moment of Joss and Millie's relationship. After they had begun a platonic relation, Joss takes Millie to a jazz club, and having seen how she related to this kind of music, their relation takes a further step ahead:

I try tapping my foot in time to the soft shoe shuffling on the drum. At first I feel self-conscious. I'm not sure that my foot tapping looks like the other tapping feet. [...] After a while I don't even notice myself doing it. I have gone inside the music. It's a strange feeling, but it's there waiting for me. I'm sitting in the middle of the long slow moaning of the sax right inside it. I feel something inside me go soft, give in. I look over to Joss and find him staring at me. He's seen it all happening. He looks right through me (p. 18).

According to Monterrey, Millie perceives this world of jazz as "a utopian possibility of change and renovation of the (cultural?) forces that regulate our present system of hierarchies, and our modes of constructing difference and identity, including the notion of Scottishness".³⁰⁰ In Eckstein's opinion, Millie "becomes part of the dialogic relation between audience and musician when her careful dancing responds to the saxophone's calls that envelope her" and what is happening inside her can be seen "as the vanishing weight of social constraints such as the valuing of heterosexual and sanctioning of interracial relationships".³⁰¹ Later the same night Joss and Millie communion in music is followed by their first sex act. In Eckstein's opinion Joss decided to reveal his

²⁹⁷ Hartley, p. 119.

²⁹⁸ Iyer, p. 395.

²⁹⁹ Eckstein, p. 59.

³⁰⁰ Monterrey, p. 179.

³⁰¹ Eckstein, p. 59.

biological sex to Millie after having witnessed how she opened herself both physically and emotionally to the liberating force of jazz. Consequently jazz has the function to demolish the boundaries of race and gender, themes which are both explored in *Trumpet*. As Millie herself stated, sexuality and race are inseparable notions in *Trumpet*: Joss's "skin was the colour of Highland toffee" (p. 11).

4.2.1 Music references in *Trumpet*

In the novel there are many references to various black/white jazz musicians. The first one can be found before the beginning of the first chapter:

The way you wear your hat;
The way you sip your tea,
The memory of all that -
No, no! They can't take that away from me!
George Gershwin

George Gershwin (Brooklyn 1898 - Hollywood 1937) was born from Jewish parents with the name Jacob Gershowitz; he was a composer, pianist and orchestra leader. He believed that music was "an emotional science".³⁰² His music involves different kinds of genres, from classic music to jazz and blues. He is considered the initiator of the American musical. The previous extract is from the song *They Can't Take That Away From Me* written by him and his brother Ira for the 1937 movie *Shall We Dance*, and sung by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. In the movie it was introduced "in a light-hearted moment when Astaire's character, Peter, and Rogers's character, Linda, are about to divorce and separate. [...] Peter sings to Linda, "Our romance won't end on a sorrowful note". Gershwin received an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Song at the 1937 Oscars.

³⁰² Albright, p. 388.

Our romance won't end on a sorrowful note,
Though by tomorrow you're gone
The song is ended, but as the songwriter wrote,
The melody lingers on.
They may take you from me, I'll miss your fond
caress.
But though they take you from me, I'll still
possess.

The way you wear your hat
The way you sip your tea
The memory of all that
No, no, they can't take that away from me

The way your smile just beams
The way you sing off key
The way you haunt my dreams
No, no, they can't take that away from me

We may never, never meet again

On the bumpy road to love
Still, I'll always, always keep the memory of

The way you hold your knife
The way we danced till three
The way you changed my life
No, no, they can't take that away from me
No, they can't take that away from me

We may never, never meet again
On the bumpy road to love
Still, I'll always, always keep the memory of

The way you hold your knife
The way we danced till three
The way you changed my life
No, no, they can't take that away from me
No, they can't take that away
Can't take that away
Can't take that away from me.

They Can't Take That Away From Me is a song of mixed joy and sadness. It tells of lovers who cannot be separated in spirit, even if they are physically separated the memories cannot be forced from them: "The way you wear your hat, the way you sip your tea. No, no, they can't take that away from me". It is a song of mixed joy and sadness.³⁰³ Kay collocates an extract of that song at the beginning of her novel; it can be considered as an introductory note of the author telling what will be the main themes discussed in *Trumpet*, since the story is based on Millie's reaction to the loss of her loved husband and how she finds difficult to forget about him.

Another reference to one of Gershwin's song is in chapter 1. Millie is at her house in Torr with her family, and one night before meeting Joss she wonders about the lack of love and passion in her life and recalls the song *The Man I Love* by Gershwin:

I wanted a passion, somebody to spend up time with a fast ferocious love. [...] At night, I'd sing in the freezing cold bathroom [...], *Some day he'll come along, the man I love; And he will be big and strong, The man I love...Maybe I shall meet him Sunday, Maybe Monday - maybe not; Still I'm sure to meet him one day - Maybe Tuesday will be my good news day* (pp. 10-11).

³⁰³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/They_Can%27t_Take_That_Away_from_Me
<http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=26807>

When the mellow moon begins to beam,
 Ev'ry night I dream a little dream,
 And of course Prince Charming is the theme,
 The he for me.
 Although I realize as well as you
 It is seldom that a dream comes true,
 For/To me it's clear
 That he'll appear.
 Some day he'll come along,
 The man I love
 And he'll be big and strong,
 The man I love
 And when he comes my way
 I'll do my best to make him stay.
 He'll look at me and smile

I'll understand ;
 And in a little while,
 He'll take my hand ;
 And though it seems absurd,
 I know we both won't say a word
 Maybe I shall meet him Sunday
 Maybe Monday, maybe not ;
 Still I'm sure to meet him one day
 Maybe Tuesday will be my good news day
 He'll build a little home
 Just meant for two,
 From which I'll never roam,
 Who would - would you ?
 And so all else above
 I'm waiting for the man I love.

In the same chapter Millie goes on remembering when she went out with Joss before they started a relationship. She notes that he was a great dancer and she used to go in places where they could dance.

I remember laughing till I cried, watching one man after another get up at the Locarno and imitate Frank Sinatra singing 'Dancing in the Park'. [...] I remember loving the names of those bands at the dance halls - Ray McVey Trio, Doctor Crock and the Crackpots, Joe Loss, Oscar Rabin, Carl Barriteau, Harry Parry, Felix Mendelson, and my favourite, the Hawaiian Serenaders.

The majority of those musicians and groups were part of the British scenario of the 20th century. Many of them were music directors and played jazz music. Further in the chapter Kay mentions the iconic World War II song *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B* (1941) by The Andrews Sisters.

He was a famous trumpet man from out Chicago way. He had a boogie style that no one else could play (p. 26).

He was a famous trumpet man from out Chicago way
He had a boogie style that no one else could play
He was the top man at his craft
But then his number came up and he was gone with the draft
He's in the army now, a-blowin' reveille
He's the boogie woogie bugle boy of Company B

They made him blow a bugle for his Uncle Sam
It really brought him down because he couldn't jam
The captain seemed to understand
Because the next day the cap' went out and drafted a band
And now the company jumps when he plays reveille
He's the boogie woogie bugle boy of Company B

A-toot, a-toot, a-toot-diddelyada-toot
He blows it eight-to-the-bar, in boogie rhythm
He can't blow a note unless the bass and guitar is playin' with 'I'm
He makes the company jump when he plays reveille
He's the boogie woogie bugle boy of Company B

He was some boogie woogie bugle boy of Company B
And when he plays the boogie woogie bugle he was busy as a "bzzz" bee

And when he plays he makes the company jump eight-to-the-bar
He's the boogie woogie bugle boy of Company B

Toot toot toot-diddelyada, Toot-diddelyada, toot-toot
He blows it eight-to-the-bar
He can't blow a note if the bass and guitar isn't with 'I'm
Ha-ha-hand the company jumps when he plays reveille
He's the boogie woogie bugle boy of Company B

He puts the boys to sleep with boogie every night
And wakes 'em up the same way in the early bright
They clap their hands and stamp their feet
Because they know how he plays when someone gives him a beat
He really breaks it up when he plays reveille
He's boogie woogie bugle boy of Company B

Dat-da da-do-do da-dup
Dat-da da-do-do da-dup
Dat-da da-do-do da-dup
Dat-da da-do-do da-dup
Ha-ha-hand the company jumps when he plays reveille
He's the boogie woogie bugle boy of Company B

It can be considered an early jump blues recording which is “an up-tempo blues usually played by small groups and featuring horns. It was very popular in the 1940s, and the movement was a precursor to the arrival of rhythm and blues and rock and roll”.³⁰⁴ The song is based on the story of a Chicago trumpeter who was drafted into the U.S. Army during the pace time draft imposed by the Roosevelt administration. He was a talented musician but the army reduced him only to blow the wake up call in the morning. This “really brought him down, because he couldn't jam”. The company commander decided to enroll more musicians to build a band to keep the trumpeter company. From that moment on, “he found his stride, infusing the military marches with his inimitable street flair: ‘He blows it eight to the bar—in boogie rhythm’. Even his morning calls attain some additional flavor: ‘And now the company jumps when he plays reveille’. But, the

³⁰⁴ Du Noyer, p. 170.

bugler is not only empowered, he is possibly spoiled, because thereafter, “He can't blow a note if the bass and guitar/Isn't with him”.³⁰⁵

During Millie and Joss’s marriage The Moody Men sang various song such as *Ain't misbehavin* (1929) by Fats Waller, Harry Brooks and Andy Razaf, “No one to talk with, all by myself, No one to walk with but I’m happy on the shelf, Ain’t misbehavin” (p. 21):

No one to talk with
All by myself
No one to walk with
But I'm happy on the shelf
Ain't misbehavin'
I'm savin' my love for you

Like Jack Horner
In the corner
Don't go nowhere
What do I care?
Your kisses are worth waitin' for
Believe me

I know for certain
The one I love
I'm through with flirtin'
It's just you I'm thinkin' of
Ain't misbehavin'
I'm savin' my love for you

I don't stay out late
Don't care to go
I'm home about eight
Just me and my radio
Ain't misbehavin'
I'm savin' my love for you.

In an interview in 1941 with Eddie Anderson, Fats stated that “the song was written while ‘lodging’ in alimony prison, and that is why he was not ‘misbehaving’”.³⁰⁶ The song reflects Millie’s feeling after her marriage, since she is now alone, beside her husband, and she cannot talk with anybody about the secret she has to kept to protect her love.

During ceremony, the Moody Men played also other songs such as:

‘Shake, Rattle ’n’ Roll. ‘Billy Bailey’. ‘Take the A Train’, ‘Why Don’t You Do Right?’, ‘Blues in the Night’. *My momma don tol’ me when I was in knee pants*. ‘In the Mood’. ‘Tutti Frutti’. ‘Rock Around the Clock’. ‘Dancing Time’. [...] The Moody Men are in their element, changing music all the time. *Well, all right, OK, you win. I’m in love with you. Well, all right, OK, you win, baby, what can I do?* [...] *Ev’ry honey bee fills with with jealousy when they see you out with me, I don’t blame them, goodness knows, honeysuckle rose*. [...] *When I’m takin’ sips from your tasty lips, seems the honey fairly drips, you’re confection, goodness knows, honeysuckle rose* (pp. 28-29).

Shake, Rattle and Roll is a rhythm and blues song (1954) by Jesse Stone (under the name of Charles E. Calhoun).

³⁰⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boogie_Woogie_Bugle_Boy

³⁰⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ain%27t_Misbehavin%27_%28song%29

Take the A Train is a jazz song written by Billy Strayhorn in 1939. It was inspired to the A line of the New York underground which at that time extended from Brooklyn to Harlem and Manhattan:

After Ellington offered Strayhorn a job in his organization and gave him money to travel from Pittsburgh to New York City. Ellington wrote directions for Strayhorn to get to his house by subway, directions that began, 'Take the A Train'. Strayhorn was a great fan of Fletcher Henderson's arrangements. 'One day, I was thinking about his style, the way he wrote for trumpets, trombones and saxophones, and I thought I would try something like that'.³⁰⁷

Why Don't You Do Right (originally recorded as "Weed Smoker's Dream"), written by Joseph 'Kansas Joe' McCoy in 1936, is considered a classic woman's blues song. "The song has its roots in blues music and originally dealt with a marijuana smoker reminiscing about lost financial opportunities. As it was rewritten, it takes on the perspective of the female partner, who chastises her man for his irresponsible ways and admonishes him to 'Why don't you do right, like some other men do? Get out of here and get me some money too'".³⁰⁸

Blues in the Night is a popular blues song written by Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer for the movie *Hot Nocturne* of 1941. The song is sung in the movie by William Gillespie.

My mama done tol' me when I was in pigtails
My mama done tol' me, "Hon
A man's gonna sweet talk and give ya the big eye
But when the sweet talkin's done

A man is a two-face
A worrisome thing who'll leave ya to sing
The blues in the night"

Now the rain's a-fallin'
Hear the train's a callin', whooee
My mama done tol' me
Hear dat lonesome whistle
Blowin' 'cross the trestle, whooee!

My mama done tol' me, a-whoee-ah-whoee
Ol' clickety-clack's a-echoin'
Back th' blues in the night
The evenin' breeze'll start the trees to cryin'

And the moon'll hide it's light
When you get the blues in the night

Take my word, the mockingbird'll sing
The saddest kind o' song
He knows things are wrong
And he's right

From Natchez to Mobile, from Memphis to St.
Joe
Wherever the four winds blow
I been in some big towns an' heard me some big
talk
But there is one thing I know

A man's a two-face
A worrisome thing who'll leave ya to sing
The blues in the night

³⁰⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Take_the_%22A%22_Train

³⁰⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kansas_Joe_McCoy

The evenin' breeze'll start the trees to cryin'
And the moon'll hide it's light
When you get the blues
Blues in the night

Take my word, the mockingbird'll sing
The saddest kind o' song
He knows things are wrong
And he's right

From Natchez to Mobile, from Memphis to St.
Joe

In the Mood is a jazz song arranged by Joe Garland, Louis Armstrong's saxophonist, in 1939. It became a well known song thanks to Glenn Miller Orchestra's cover of the song in the same year.

Tutti Frutti is a song by Little Richard and Dorothy LaBostrie written in 1955. It became a model for rock and roll itself. The next song which Kay quotes is *Rock Around the Clock* which becomes one of the most representative song of rock 'n' roll. It was written in 1952 in the 12-bar blues format by Max C. Freedman and James E. Myers and pressed in 1954 by Bill Haley & His Comets.

In 1959, Peggy Lee wrote the song *Alright, Okay, You Win* which is quoted by Kay in the novel: "*Well, all right, OK, you win. I'm in love with you. Well, all right, OK, you win, what can I do?*" (pp. 28-29).

Well alright, okay, you win.
I'm in love with you.
Well alright, okay, you win.
Baby, what can I do?
I'll do anything you say.
It's just got to be that way.

Well alright, okay, you win.
I'm in love with you.
Well alright, okay, you win.
Baby, what can I do?
Anything you say, I'll do.
As long as it's me and you.

All that I am asking,
All I want from you,
Just love me like I love you
And it won't be hard to do.

Wherever the four winds blow, winds blow
I been in some big towns an' heard me some big
talk
But there is one thing I know

A man's a two-face
A worrisome thing who'll leave ya to sing
The blues in the night
Yes, babe, only, only blues in the night

Well alright, okay, you win.
I'm in love with you.
Well alright, okay, you win.
Baby, what can I do?
I'll do anything you say.
It's just got to be that way.

All that I am asking,
All I want from you,
Just love me like I love you
And it won't be hard to do.

Well alright, okay, you win.
I'm in love with you.
Well alright, okay, you win.
Baby, one thing more:
If you're gonna be my man,
Sweet baby, take me by the hand.

Here again Kay introduces another Fats Waller's song entitled *Honeysuckle Rose*, written in 1929.

Every honey bee fills with jealousy
When they see you out with me
I don't blame them
Goodness knows
Honeysuckle rose

When you're passin' by,
Flowers droop and sigh
I know the reason why
You're much sweeter
Goodness knows
Honeysuckle rose

Well, don't buy sugar
You just have to touch my cup
You're my sugar
And it's oh so sweet when you stir it up

When I'm takin' sips
From your tasty lips
Seems the honey fairly drips
You're confection
Goodness knows
Honeysuckle rose

Well, don't buy sugar
You just have to touch my cup
You're my sugar
And it's oh so sweet when you stir it up

When I'm takin' sips
From your tasty lips
Seems the honey fairly drips
You're confection
Goodness knows
Honeysuckle rose

Millie remembers that Joss used to whisper in her ear songs replacing the name of the character in the song with hers: "*Oh, Millie had to go and lose it at the Astor/ She wouldn't take her mother's good advice [...] Had to go and lose at the Astor, at the Astor last night*" (p. 36). This is *She Had to Go and Lose It at the Astor* (1940) by Don Raye and Hugh Prince, recorded by Dick Robertson and Pearl Bailey.

SPOKEN: We'd like to tell you a story about a young girl, about eighteen years old, about five feet two, and about to go out. Now, her Mother, realising it was her first time out with a young man, called her into the bedroom and said, "Minnie, you're all dressed up in your finery, your very best clothes, and you look beautiful, you're gorgeous, you're alluring (you look swell, baby), and now Minnie I want you to remember everything I've always told you, and above all I want you to be very, very careful.....

But she had to go and lose it at the Astor
She didn't take her mother's good advice.
Now there aren't so many girls today who have one
And she'd never let it go for any price

They searched the place from penthouse to the cellar
In every room and underneath each bed.

Once they thought they saw it lying on a pillow
But they found it belonged to someone else instead.

But she had to go and lose it at the Astor,
She didn't know exactly whom to blame
And she couldn't say just how or when she lost it
She only knew she had it when she came.

They questioned all the bellboys and the porter
The chef appeared to be the guilty guy
And the doorman also acted quite suspicious
But he coyly said, "I'm sure it wasn't I"

But she had to go and lose it at the Astor
It nearly killed her mother and her dad
Now they felt as bad about the thing as she did
After all it was the only one she had

They just about completed all their searching
When the chauffeur walked up with it in his hand
All they did was stand and gape, there was Minnie's
sable cape,
And she thought that she had lost it at the Astor.

This lyrics is introduced in the novel when Millie talks about her sexual life with Joss. “The song begins with a spoken introduction and tells a story about a young woman [which can be compared to Millie] losing something at the Hotel Astor. By use of double entendre and the repeated refrain, "But she had to go and lose it at the Astor," the listener is led to believe that the song is about her losing her virginity to one of the hotel staff until the very end when it is revealed that what she had in fact lost was her sable cape”.³⁰⁹ This is the last song presented in the first chapter. Here I can argue that Kay has chosen songs which recall Millie most important events of her story with Joss starting from the summer before meeting him to the period soon after their marriage.

In chapter 3, Colman talks about the kind of music he was listening when he was young and outlined that he has always been hundred per cent heterosexual:

I never fancied boys; no. I've always been one hundred per cent heterosexual, except for those times when I was about sixteen and my mates and me would have a joint and a communal wank listening to *Todd* or *Genesis* or *Pink Fucking Floyd*. [...] I don't like that hippy music anymore. It was just a phase (p. 57).

There is a great difference between the jazz and blues musicians listened by his mother and father and the musician of Colman's generation. Both Todd, Genesis or Pink Floyd became famous during the 1960s when Colman was a teenager and they both played rock music.

In chapter “Travel: *London*”, Colman quotes some of the most important black musician of 20th century: “Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis” (p. 192). Eckstein points out that Moody's life (1927-1997) and discography (p. 208) is similar to Miles Davis's ones who started his career in 1945 and died in the 1990s.

JOSS MOODY

1958 *Millie's Song* (Centre)
 1960 *Night Hiding* (ACR)
 1963 *Prodigal Son* (ACR)
 1966 *Fantasy Africa* (Heygana)
 1967 *Moody Moanin'* (Power Label)
 1968 *Wee Blue Bird* (Sugar)
 1972 *Torr* (Sugar)
 1975 *Rainstorms in Italy* (Columbia)
 1979 *Blues in a Wild C* (Columbia)

MILES DAVIS

1951 *The New Sound* (Prestige)
 ...
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 ...
 ...
 ...
 ...

³⁰⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/She_Had_to_Go_and_Lose_It_at_the_Astor

1982 <i>Rubric</i> (Columbia)	...
1985 <i>Slow 'n' Moody</i> (Columbia)	...
1987 <i>Sunday Brunch</i> (Columbia)	...
1991 <i>Joss Moody</i> (Columbia)	...
1994 <i>The Best of Joss Moody</i> (Columbia)	1992 <i>The Best of Miles Davis</i> (Blue Note)
Joss Moody, trumpet player, born 1927; died 27 July 1997 (p. 208)	Miles Davis, trumpet player, born 1926; died 28 September 1991

Joss's often refers to his first album *Fantasy Africa* (1966) and talks about the music of author such as John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, Sun Ra, Pharoah Sanders, Max Roach, all musician who explored African themes in their songs during the 1960s.

4.3 Performing jazz and defining identity

According to Eckstein *Trumpet* uses jazz “as a metaphor of being, as a model of identity formation that privileges a performative approach to the social and biological constraints of gender and race”.³¹⁰ Whitehead gives jazz the function to “act at a metaphorical level in the text to symbolise women’s experimentation with prescribed gender roles and expectations”³¹¹ that means that in the novel jazz is a metaphor of Joss’s process of reinvention of himself which suggests the fluid nature of gender. Jazz represents for Joss a space where there is no need to distinguish between race and gender, a space of improvisation and reinvention. Colman remembers:

Music was the way of keeping the past alive, his father said. There's more future in the past than there is in the future, he said. [...] Black people and music; what would the world be without black people and music. Slave songs, work songs, gospel, blues, ragtime, jazz. [...] All blues are stories. Our stories, his father said, our history. You can't understand the history of slavery, without knowing about the slave songs (p. 190).

Sandoval points out that Joss is able to construct and de-construct his identity through what she calls ‘methodology of the oppressed’:

Under conditions of colonization, poverty, racism, gender, or sexual subordination, dominated populations are often held away from the comforts of dominant ideology, or ripped out of legitimized social narratives, in a process of power that places such

³¹⁰ Eckstein, p. 51.

³¹¹ Whitehead, p. 149.

constituencies in a very different position from which to view objects-in-reality than other kinds of citizen-subjects. The skills they might develop, if they survive, have included the ability to self-consciously *navigate* modes of dominant consciousness, learning to interrupt the “turnstile” that alternately reveals history, as against the dominant forms of masquerade that history can take, ‘focusing on each separately,’ applying a ‘formal method of reading,’ cynically but also uncynically, and not only with the hope of surviving, but with a desire to create a better world.³¹²

Joss’s process of identity creation is strongly linked to play his trumpet and consequently to jazz. Kay notes that jazz is “very fluid, and identity within jazz is very fluid”.³¹³ In *Trumpet* Joss is situated between birth and death. The central chapter of the novel entitled ‘Music’ is for him “a middle space of transition”.³¹⁴ It is a “direct reportage” from Joss written in the third person and present tense form. It starts from his death and goes back to his birth. Eckstein claims that “Joss witnesses his own birth and death while the music takes over his identity, takes it apart, and eventually pieces him together again”.³¹⁵ This chapter also narrates his relation to his music/trumpet which becomes the place where his past, present and future merge.

Thanks to improvisation Joss can “bear witness” to his personal story. According to Hartley, “Kay’s decision to depict Joss in a moment of improvisation reveals her aim to make music a compelling part of her narrative”.³¹⁶ Iyer believes “the story that an improviser tells does not unfold merely in the overall form of a ‘coherent’ solo, nor simply in antiphonal structures, but also in the microscopic musical details, as well as in the inherent structure of the performance itself”.³¹⁷ Hartley suggests that Iyer’s description of jazz performances also “function as a sound model for interpreting Joss’ performance in this text, the musical flights with language that Kay creates. [...] Examining the ‘microscopic’ literary details in the improvised jazz solo represented in the text will generate a more comprehensive ‘story’, just as Iyer’s analysis of the body

³¹² Sandoval, p. 105.

³¹³ Jaggi 1999, p. 55.

³¹⁴ C. Jones 2008, p. 115.

³¹⁵ Eckstein, p. 59.

³¹⁶ Hartley, pp. 116-117.

³¹⁷ Iyer, p. 395.

provides a more complete narrative of jazz performance”.³¹⁸ Joss’s account of himself begins “with frenetic swinging”.³¹⁹

When he gets down, and he doesn’t always get down deep enough, he loses his sex, his race, his memory. He strips himself bare, takes everything off, till he’s barely human. Then he brings himself back, out of this world. Back, from way. Getting there is painful. He has to get to the center of a whirlwind, screwballing in musical circles till he is very nearly out of his mind. The journey is so wacky, so wild that he sometimes fears he’ll never return sane. He licks his chops. He slaps and flips and flies. He goes down, swirling and whirling till he’s right down at the very pinpoint of himself. A small black mark. The further he goes, the smaller he gets. That’s the thing. It’s so fast, he’s speeding, crashing, his fingers going like the hammers, frenzied, blowing up a storm. His leather lips. His satchel mouth (p. 131).

Hartley suggests that the repetition of ‘he’ is important because “it reinforces the notion that this performance moment is a ‘solo’ in the most literal sense of the word - the blues-based repetition emphasizes this moment of individual expression”.³²⁰ In this scene there is a shift from a collective kind of improvisation to an isolation of the musician who self-define himself. The passage “mimics the jazz performer’s solo, the essential ‘break’ that demonstrates the jazz musician’s creative virtuosity”³²¹ and describes the emotional and physical experience of the jazz performer. Joss constantly shifts between representing himself as a man and loosing his sense of a sexed identity. He is finally free to liberate himself from the rigid categorization of man/woman during his musical performances. Joss’s playing the trumpet “does not, as Sophie thought, represent male power so much as enable him to transcend gender totally”.³²² The musician has to strip away his identity to fully accept and embrace jazz: “He loses his sex, his race, his memory. He strips himself bare, takes everything off, till he’s barely human” (p. 131). This metaphorical ‘stripping himself bare’, “takes him beyond all categories by which we try to define each other, such as sex, race, and even personal history”.³²³ Jones argues that none of the features by which society marks us define who

³¹⁸ Hartley, p. 117.

³¹⁹ Hartley, p. 117.

³²⁰ Hartley, p. 119.

³²¹ Byrne and Allen, p. 94.

³²² King 2005, p. 7.

³²³ King 2005, p. 7.

we are, and “identity [is] a cover for an existential void at the centre of being”.³²⁴ Jazz is what allow the player to overcome sexual, racial and personal categorizations. It goes outside boundaries.

The “small black mark” could be seen as “an unreadable, indecipherable sign, a deliberate refusal of cultural assignation. A black mark is also, of course, a slur; or, within the context of Joss's history, it may refer to his own ethnicity, drawing attention back to his blackness”.³²⁵ The mark represents “the very point of himself” (p. 131) in which, according to Hargreaves, he witness his own birth and death before claiming that “it is liberating. To be a girl. To be a man” (p. 135).

This celebration of liberation is one rooted in the process of his musical performance, but the scene of liberation is, within the context of his fantasized narrative, ambiguous: is it liberating to be both at once, or is it liberating to have succeeded in passing from girlhood to manhood, or is it liberating to oscillate between the two?³²⁶

The 'black mark' also can refers to Joss's place within the African Diaspora: he occupies a small but significant part of it, inviting us, as Homi Bhabha does, “to fully realise, and take responsibility for, the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present”³²⁷, since as Joss tells his son, “You can't understand the history of slavery without knowing about the slave song” (p. 190).

In the previous passage there is a reference to one of the most famous jazz musician, Louis Armstrong who was known by the nickname ‘Satchmo’, “a fusion and reduction of ‘satchel’ and ‘mouth’. [...] [He] is a major innovator of jazz soloing. [...] By evoking this iconic figure, Kay connects Joss’ soloing to Armstrong’s artistic individualism and places him on a cultural continuum of jazz history”.³²⁸ Hartley claims that Kay makes this link because if Joss wants to assert his individuality as a jazz musician, he has first to acknowledge the musicians that come before him.

³²⁴ C. Jones 2004, p. 10.

³²⁵ Hargreaves, p. 4.

³²⁶ Hargreaves, p. 4.

³²⁷ Bhabha 1994, p. 12.

³²⁸ Hartley, p. 118.

Through music Joss symbolically changes as much as he has transformed his gender performance; “music opens up the possibility of multiple impersonations for him: he is a man and a woman, he is his past and his future, he is everything and nothing at the same time”.³²⁹

So when he takes off he is the whole century galloping to its close. The wide moors. The big mouth. Scotland. Africa. Slavery. Freedom. He is a girl. A man. Everything, nothing. He is sickness, health. The sun. The moon. Black, white. [...] He holds on. He just keeps blowing. He is blowing his story. His story is blowing in the wind. He lets it rip. He tears himself apart. He explodes. Then he brings himself back. Slowly, slowly, piecing himself together (p. 136).

This passage suits perfectly Kay’s purpose to render identity within jazz very fluid: “so jazz is a process just like what I was trying to say about Joss, constantly reinventing himself, constantly changing how it sounds”.³³⁰ Monterrey points out that “like Joss’s sexuality and race, the world of jazz underline the emphasis on eliminating difference between (patriarchal, heterosexual, racist) fixed categories”.³³¹ Jazz breaks rules and convention, it has been described by King as the music that “by definition demands improvisation, the abandoning of scripts and precedents, the ability to construct variations on given melodies, rather than being trampled to agreed roles and forms”.³³² It provides Joss the means to built and rebuilt his identity and musical performances. As Kristeva argues Joss “to reject wholly the symbolic order which sustains social identity is to leave oneself unprotected and open to the full force of unconscious desire, of which the most powerful is the death drive. To exist in society [Joss] must re-enter the symbolic, he must put himself together again”.³³³

Kay continues to construct the rest of the chapter with the aim to “reflect the dynamism and the extemporaneous creativity of jazz solo”.³³⁴ In the following piece, written in the present tense, Kay tries to ‘musicalize’ the sequence:

³²⁹ Fernández, p. 291.

³³⁰ Monterrey, p. 179.

³³¹ Monterrey, p. 179.

³³² King 2001, p. 107.

³³³ Kristeva, p. 80.

³³⁴ Hartley, p. 120.

And he is bending in the wind, scooping pitch, growling. Mugging heavy or light. Never lying. Telling it like it is. Like it is. O-bop-she-bam. Running changes. Changes running faster, quicker, dangerous. A galloping piano behind him. Sweating like a horse. It is all in his blood. Cooking. Back, from way. When he was something else. Somebody else. Her. That girl. The trumpet screams. He's hot. She's hot. He's hot. The whole room is hot. He plays his false fingers. Chokes his trumpet. He is naked. This is naked jazz. O-bop-she-bam. Never lying. Telling it like it is (pp. 131-132).

Here the language used show Kay's attempt to mirror the improvisational style of jazz characterized by "breathlessness and speed, the off-beat phrasing, the emotional density and the swift changes".³³⁵ Hartley notes that:

The terms 'scooping,' 'growling,' and 'mugging heavy or light' refer not only to technical or musicological aspects of Joss' soloing, but to performance or showmanship aspects as well. In musical terms, *scooping* refers to a change in pitch (or musical note) achieved, in the case of the trumpet, by Joss' mouth positioning, or embouchure. 'Growling' a stylistic technique used by a variety of early jazz musicians alters a note's timbre, or the quality of the note. The act of 'mugging,' or making different facial expressions to entertain an audience, was also used as an early jazz performance technique, and was popularized particularly by Armstrong. All of these terms directly follow the 'satchel mouth' reference, and are linked to Joss' continued innovative expressions of individuality in the face of a jazz history where Armstrong's iconic visage is significant.³³⁶

The 'running changes' can refer to the improvisation of the harmonic changes which can happen in a song. The passage may refer to Joss's inner journey through music which he considers dangerous because it forces him to confront his past. For him, "creating 'naked jazz' demands revelation, leaving the bodies of his past exposed".³³⁷ "Never lying" (p. 131) is a quite important aspect in jazz since, as many real-life jazz musicians express, Joss has to tell the truth through his music. Hartley suggests that Joss "must also be honest to his audience and himself about his personal history. Here, he presents an authentic, complete narrative, revealing his 'true' gender and his experiences as a young Black Scot".³³⁸ Joss sees himself when he was a young female as "skipping along an old disused railway line in a red dress, carrying a bunch of railway flowers for her mother" (p. 132). Then "he goes further back till he's neck in neck with his own birth" (p. 132) and sees the midwife "Kathleen pulling the slippery

³³⁵ Eckstein, p. 59.

³³⁶ Hartley, p. 121.

³³⁷ Hartley, p. 122.

³³⁸ Hartley, p. 122.

powdery, slim baby out and put in the air. The cord wound right round [...] the baby's neck" (p. 132). Here the music and Joss seems to merge:

The music has no breath, no air. Small ghost notes sob from his trumpet. Down there at the bottom he can see himself when he was a tiny baby, blue in the face. The trumpet takes him back to the blue birth (p. 132).

LaGuarida argues that music is a means through which Joss can revive "the first bodily sensations associated with his white mother"³³⁹ as it emerges from the previous extract. The whole chapter can be considered a 'manifesto' of the cultural importance of jazz. One of the association presented is the one between music and blood: "is all in his blood", "He is in the music. The blood dreaming" and "the music is his blood. His cells" (pp. 131, 134, 135). Kay stresses that blood is our common denominator since through it the music "reveals truth; that, 'naked' under the influence of the music [and] encompasses all possible identities".³⁴⁰ Eckstein notes that "the rigidity of blood relations which determine our family and origins, our race and gender, is thus replaced by the performative fluidity of identity formation in the moment of musical creation".³⁴¹ The following passage describes Joss playing his trumpet:

It is liberating. To be a girl. To be a man [...] All his self collapses - his idiosyncrasies, his personality, his ego, his sexuality, even his memory. All of it falls away like layers of skin unwrapping. He unwraps himself with his trumpet. Down at the bottom, face to face with the fact that he is nobody. The more he can be nobody the more he can play that horn. Playing the horn is not about being somebody coming from something. It is about being nobody coming from nothing. The horn ruthlessly strips him bare till he ends up with nobody, no past, nothing (p. 135).

The passage describes Joss's self-creation of identity: "rather than being haunted by his father's lost homeland, [he] engages with it and with his homeland of Scotland in a moving calland- response"³⁴² through loosing himself in the performance. The action of unwrapping himself with the trumpet contrasts the action of the doctor of unwrapping his bandages and revealing his female identity. Music has the power to free himself, as King suggests "music is one of the few forms of artistic communication which don't

³³⁹ LaGuarida, p. 91.

³⁴⁰ Byrne and Allen, p. 94.

³⁴¹ Eckstein, p. 59.

³⁴² Fong, p. 257.

relay on language, like literature, or embodiment like drama and dance, and which are therefore potentially gender-free”.³⁴³ Biological sex or blood are not important, at the end Joss “is a girl. A man. Everything, nothing. He is sickness, health. The sun. The moon. Black, white. Nothing weighs him down. Not the past nor the future. He hangs on the high C and then lets go” (p. 136). This moment represents “the climax of the novel’s thrust to de-essentialise notions of being and identity beyond the purely musical”.³⁴⁴ Joss transcends himself in music and succeeds in defying social conventions in life. Jazz music is the only one which can do this since “classical musicians or the rappers Joss dismisses as ‘shite’ (p. 41) are social animals, dependent on a conductor or the marketplace”³⁴⁵ while the jazz musician is radically individual. Colman does not like jazz too because he considers it to be as oppressive as classical music.

In Eckstein’s point of view “*Trumpet* employs [jazz] as a larger metaphor celebrating the power of creating personal as well as collective identities transcending biological, social and political boundaries”.³⁴⁶ This transcendence of identity in music is never eternal but it has to be created performatively. The relation of jazz and identity is important *Trumpet*: the characters exactly like jazz because it goes beyond boundaries.

³⁴³ King 2005, p. 7.

³⁴⁴ Eckstein, p. 60.

³⁴⁵ Byrne and Allen, p. 94.

³⁴⁶ Eckstein, p. 60.

CHAPTER 5

Constructing a Black-Scottish identity

5.1 The relation between jazz and diaspora

The history of the Black Atlantic [...], continually crisscrossed by the movements of black people - not only as commodities but engaged in various struggles towards emancipation, autonomy and citizenship - provides a mean to reexamine the problems of nationality, location, identity and historical memory.³⁴⁷

African Diasporic identity is a central theme in *Trumpet*, which presents music as the main element that modifies the narrative structure and content. In Hartley's opinion, jazz and blues are "international forms [which] unite disparate communities while maintaining individual difference within those communities. [...] The representations of jazz and blues connect differing Diasporic identities and expand notions of Diasporic subjectivity".³⁴⁸ Jazz refers to the African-American history of the USA and to slavery, emancipation, civil rights and segregation since it has its roots in slave songs which were the only link of slaves to their ancestors. The question of Diaspora in the novel is explored through those forms of music and the character of Joss since he is a black jazz trumpeter.

Gilroy claims that black music, in particular black American music, was very important in the formation of black identity in Britain, and *Trumpet* shows particularly how black identity is built in contemporary Scotland.

Music contributes to a sense of the racial self and provides a source for the discourse of blackness within which blacks in Britain can locate their own struggle and experiences.³⁴⁹

Jones points out that "in the absence of Scottish role models Kay employs African-American culture, especially jazz, in order to create a context of Scottish blackness in Joss. [...] Through it she installs black culture into a Scottish context".³⁵⁰ As Eckstein claims, some theorists try "to essentialise jazz by claiming it as a specifically African American tradition dominated by black, and mostly male musicians, or, alternatively, by explicitly limiting its cultural functionality to the black diaspora".³⁵¹ On the contrary

³⁴⁷ Gilroy 1993, p. 16.

³⁴⁸ Hartley, p. 107.

³⁴⁹ Whitehead, p. 158.

³⁵⁰ C. Jones 2009, p. 102.

³⁵¹ Eckstein, p. 51.

others claims that jazz has an hybrid genealogy and see its dialogic openness “as a form of art that inherently defies boundaries of gender and race”.³⁵² This latter view is the one which best fits *Trumpet*.

In relocating the history of Billy Tipton to Scotland, Kay underscores “the diasporic link shared by Joss and Colman”³⁵³, and the transculturality of both jazz and Joss. Since Joss plays a New World art form, he is “musically an agent of transculturation”.³⁵⁴ In the novel Joss constructs his black identity by embracing his racial heritage and by identifying with various American jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis. Because of its origins jazz links him to his African origins as we can see from ‘Fantasy Africa’, the title of Joss’s first hits. Hartley claims that the chapter ‘Music’ is a testimony of Diasporic history. With his music Joss not only asserts his individual experience as a Black Scot but also represents his whole community:

Joss ‘reach[es] for musical statements in which no less than his whole community could hear its inexhaustible narrative multiplicity reflected’. [He] successfully moves beyond the self to attest to the legacy of the African Diaspora. [His] soloing moment is an assertion of both personal and communal narratives, ‘perfect for encapsulating the story of a “stranger in a strange land,” as it was developed in American to tell the story of Diasporan Africans.’³⁵⁵

Jazz and blues creates an atmosphere of communal festivity at Joss and Millie marriage, despite the racial prejudices of some guests:

I spot some people singing into their partners’ shoulders’ [...]. We dance for ages. We dance as if we are in a movie. Everyone grabs the limelight as if their dance was a solo spot. ‘Shake, Rattle ‘n’ Roll’. ‘Bill Bailey’. ‘Take the A Train’, ‘Why Don’t You Do Right?’, ‘Blues in the Night’. The Moody men start singing the songs that have just come in from America like new trains arriving, steaming at the station. Old Mason Dixon Line (pp. 28-29).

This symbolism about the Moody men and trains is a way to “recall the iconography of the blues and Houston Baker’s construction of blues as matrix”.³⁵⁶ He claims that

³⁵² Eckstein, p. 51.

³⁵³ Stein, p. 261.

³⁵⁴ Stein, p. 261.

³⁵⁵ Hartley, p. 123.

³⁵⁶ Hartley, p. 123.

“Afro-American culture is a complex reflexive enterprise which finds its proper figuration in blues conceived as a matrix [...] a point of ceaseless input and output, a web of intersecting, crisscrossing impulses always in productive transit”.³⁵⁷

Polymorphous and multidirectional, scene of arrivals and departures, place betwixt and between (ever entre les deux) the juncture is the way station of the blues. [...] The singer and his production are always at this intersection, the crossing, codifying force, providing resonance for experience's multiplicities. Singer and song never arrest transience-fix it in 'transcendent form'. Instead they provide expressive equivalence for the juncture's ceaseless flux.³⁵⁸

Using the same comparison about railroad crossing that symbolize his blues matrix, Baker notes that blues, “comprise a mediational site where familiar antinomies are resolved (or dissolved) in the office of adequate cultural understanding”.³⁵⁹ Hartley extends “the geographical boundaries of Baker’s blues paradigm [...] since Kay also evokes the symbol of the train and depicts intersecting or crossing cultures in this scene. Kay uses a blues-based jazz aesthetic to unite various members in this Diasporic setting”.³⁶⁰ Baker’s imagery of ‘train-wheels-overtrack-junctures’ frequently return and underlines the differences between the members of the African Diaspora. During his music performances Joss remembers an image of his past connected with the railroad:

When he starts to come back from the small black point, he finds himself running along the old railway line that his mother never trusted although there were never any trains. Running along he realizes his mother was right never to trust that truck. The trains hurtle alongside him, whistling and steaming. People who fall off the train are met or unmet, loved or not loved. The train charges through the flame (pp. 133-134).

Furthermore Colman goes to Glasgow via railroad to find information about his father’s real life, and during his journey he has to confront his identity:

His father was always telling him: you are Scottish, you were born in Scotland and that makes you Scottish. But he doesn’t feel Scottish. He doesn’t speak with a Scottish accent. He can do a good one, like all children of Scottish parents, but it’s not him. What is him? This is what he’s been asking himself. It’s all the train’s fault: something about the way the land moves out of the window; about crossing a border (p. 190).

³⁵⁷ Baker, pp. 3-4.

³⁵⁸ Baker, p. 7.

³⁵⁹ Baker, p. 7.

³⁶⁰ Hartley, p. 135,

Colman often accused his father of spending “[his] whole time worshipping black Yanks: Martin Luther King, Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis: Black Yanks all of them. You are not an American, are you?” (p. 192). He addresses the same accusation to all those black people who are “obsessed by a history that is really not their own”.³⁶¹

One of the reasons which explain Joss and Colman conflict is that while Joss recognizes the importance of his African heritage, Colman seems to “discount his father’s romanticized heroes and repudiates any form of relatedness”.³⁶² Colman feels the need of stability of self contrarily to what the experience of performance could offer him. He doubts the validity of imaginary relations especially concerning his African origins:

It feels false to him, mates that get dressed up in African gear, wank on about being African [...]. Back to Africa is just unreal as far as Colman is concerned. He’s never been to Africa, so how can he go back? (p. 191)

Contrarily Joss uses jazz and blues music to create images of Africa. Anyway, when Colman goes back to Scotland to visit Edith Moore, his memories show that Scotland is part of him since it was part of his father as well.

Joss and Colman’s processes of identity formation are quite different. Joss identifies as a jazzman, who lives his life as a player, a performer. This performative and creative notion of identity formation does not allow to state a defined ‘origin’ of Joss. Millie remembers one of the first times she mets Joss and she noticed: “He is tall, coloured. His father was African, his mother Scottish. He doesn’t know the exact country, just the continent, he laugh gamely” (p. 17). Eckstein claims that “Joss advocates imagining, rather than historically and socially tracing, one’s own past”.³⁶³ This is true considering his African ethnic background as Millie remembers when Joss played ‘Fantasy Africa’:

We never actually got to go to Africa. Joss had built up such a strong imaginary landscape within himself that he said it would affect his music to go to the real Africa. Every black

³⁶¹ Monterrey, p. 178.

³⁶² Hartley, p. 137.

³⁶³ Eckstein, p. 61.

person has a fantasy Africa, he'd say. Black British people, Black Americans, Black Caribbeans, they all have a fantasy Africa. It is all in the head (p. 34).

He believes that “black people across the diaspora have their own imagined identification with Africa, their own imagined communities”.³⁶⁴ The notion of ‘Fantasy Africa’ has a double meaning: “On the one hand [it] embodies a strong desire to be culturally ‘placed’. On the other hand, it expresses an entirely performative relation to notions of both culture and place”.³⁶⁵ For Joss, every members of the black diaspora has a ‘fantasy Africa’ because it is all in the mind of people. Stein point out that the link between diasporic relationship with Africa and imagination which Joss establishes is important:

He has grown up at many removes from the African part of his cultural heritage, yet has learnt not only to lay claim to it but also to invent it first. [...] This indicates that the African diaspora is viewed by Joss not as a collectively of blood relations but, instead, as an imaged community, one that relies upon affiliation, not filiation.³⁶⁶

He does not need to have real relations but prefers to create those connections through the imagination. Steins notes that he “enunciate an affiliation to Africa by way of jazz”.³⁶⁷ Colman notes that: “This is the reality of Joss’s existence. [...] He looked real enough playing that horn in those smoky clubs; he looked real and unreal like a fantasy of himself. All jazz men are fantasies of themselves, reinventing the Counts and Dukes and Armstrong, imitating them” (p. 190). When Colman asks his father to know more about his African origins, even if Joss is not his biological father, Joss replies that they are related “in the way that mattered”:

He felt that way too about the guys in his bands. He said you make up your own bloodline, Colman. Make it up and trace it back. Design your own family tree - what’s the matter with you? [...] Any of these stories might be true [...] You pick. You pick the one you like best and that one is true (pp. 58-59).

Then he asks his son to “adopt the same improvisational attitude toward the world as he does”.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁴ Whitehead, p. 158.

³⁶⁵ Eckstein, p. 61.

³⁶⁶ Stein, p. 261.

³⁶⁷ Stein, p. 261.

³⁶⁸ Eckstein, p. 61.

He said you make up your own bloodline, Colman. Design your own family tree - what's the matter with you? Haven't you got an imagination? [...] Look Colman, he said. Look Colman, I could tell you a story about my father. I could say he come off a boat one day in the nineteen hundreds, say a winter day. [...] Or I could say my father was black American who left America because of segregation and managed to find his way to Scotland where he met my mother. Or I could say my father was a soldier or a sailor who was sent here by his army or his navy. Or I could say my father was from an island in the Caribbean whose name I don't know because my mother couldn't remember it. Or never bothered to ask. And any of these stories might be true, Colman (pp. 58-59).

The answer does not satisfy Colman: "It drove me mad. Which one? I said. Which one is true? [and Joss] Doesn't matter a damn, he said. You pick. You pick the one you like best and that one is true" (p. 59).

Byrne and Allen note that the paternal life of Joss is infused with improvised reversal of expected gender roles. Kay creates a protagonist who finds himself acting as a father or father-figures³⁶⁹ so he is an improviser since his role is not planned. Speaking of which, Zwerin points out that "improvisers tend to transpose musical values into a life-view [...] Those who create 'the sound of surprise' for a living are not likely to plan very far ahead".³⁷⁰ It is in this role of improvised father that Joss utilizes his "narrative of jazz to create a space for otherwise timid characters to try on identities and engage with the world".³⁷¹ The novel stresses the importance of a father figure in the family sphere but it does not limit this role to those born biologically male.

5.2 Defining a black-Scottish identity

Questions of identity are the core of the novel and they are often linked to the author's personal experience of being Scottish, black and adopted. In *Trumpet*, the author not only represents the formation of a black-Scottish identity, but she also "install[s] a black presence into Scottish culture and history"³⁷² since black people and Scotland relation is one which began a long time ago, in the early 16th century,³⁷³ but has always been

³⁶⁹ Byrne and Allen, p. 96.

³⁷⁰ Zwerin, p. 36.

³⁷¹ Byrne and Allen, p. 96.

³⁷² C. Jones 2004, p. 4.

³⁷³ Fryer, pp. 2-3.

hidden. In this paragraph I will discuss how the writer comes to terms with these questions and with the theme of 'return' (real or imaginary) to her African origins in *Trumpet*. One day Kay told a story about 'mistaken identity' for an interview in *The Guardian* newspaper 2002:

I went to sit down in this chair in a London pub and this woman says, 'You cannae sit doon in that chair - that's ma chair'. I said 'Oh, you're from Glasgow, aren't you?' and she said, 'Aye, how did you know that?' I said, 'I'm from Glasgow myself'. She said, 'You're *not*, are you, you *foreign-looking* bugger!' Kay roars delightedly.³⁷⁴

This passage is an introduction to Kay's poem *In My Country*, and to her it represents a fact which she has always experienced in her life: the contradiction that some people see in being both black and Scottish at the same time.³⁷⁵ Jones notes that "Kay's conception of identity in her work aspire to an inclusive in-betweenness, an 'either/and' formation that exceeds traditional categorization".³⁷⁶

This multiple composition of one's identity implies consequently the question of belonging or in the case of Jackie Kay the question of *not* belonging and the other's refusal to recognize her Scottish identity because of her skin colour. She does not live anymore in her country because she found difficult to assert her identity as black and Scottish. Kay stated in an interview that her decision to move to England gave her more confidence as a lesbian writer.³⁷⁷ She also said that Manchester, the place where she is now living, is a multicultural reality and for her it was important to find a multicultural environment because she did not want her son to be "quizzed permanently about his identity".³⁷⁸ The theorist Afam Akeh considers Kay as a writer of the African diaspora; he insists on the fact that "the diasporic personal experiences of these 'African' writers [has an influence in] 'how they write, (and) what they write'".³⁷⁹ Gina Wisner refers to

³⁷⁴ Brooks, p. 34.

³⁷⁵ Kay 1993, p. 24.

³⁷⁶ C. Jones 2004, p. 4.

³⁷⁷ Wilson and Somerville-Arjat, pp. 126-127.

³⁷⁸ Wachtel.

³⁷⁹ Akeh.

those writers such as Kay who experience what means to be between two culture as writers who

Negotiate potential and real difficulties of working within the diaspora, developing and articulating a hybrid existence and identity, charting passages between cultures and between their perceptions of those within and without their own communities.³⁸⁰

We can say that Kay has defined a new space where someone might feel at home, a space which Bhabha called a ‘third space’.³⁸¹

Kay’s development of the themes of belonging and return is presented throughout her works. Starting from the poem “My grandmother” in the collection *That Distance Apart*, it is clear that Kay is not only interested in reproducing her personal experience in her works, but also in exploring the boundaries between reality and imagination. The poem illustrates this point since the grandmother she describes is only a product of her imagination. Since she explores the question of affiliation and the importance of belonging to a determinate place, the grandmother is deeply linked to the land, home, and language of origins.

Another preoccupation which Kay expresses is the notion of ‘Blackness’ in contemporary Britain related to the issues of identity, hybridity, home and loss. In many interviews Kay talks about her experience of being Black and Scottish and claims that it is a creative inspiration for her works. She tells that when she was young this experience was quite painful and make her feel isolated. This because she has been subjected to racist abuse when she was a teenager. This experience led her to write ‘revenge poems’.³⁸² The tool of imagination which was considered by her as a ‘therapy’ becomes a tool to create different images for herself and to define a space where she could feel at home. Fanon explains how ‘blackness’ becomes a problem when it encounters “a white subject, and when the difference in skin colour is explicitly

³⁸⁰ Wisker, p. 16.

³⁸¹ Bhabha refers to the notion of cultural “hybridity” as the “third space”, which “gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation”. It is defined as a space “which enables other positions to emerge”. See J. Rutherford, “The Third Space. Interview with Homi Bhabha” [online], in Ders. (Hg), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1990, p. 211, <ccfi.educ.ubc.ca/Courses_Reading_Materials/ccfi502/Bhabha.pdf>.

³⁸² Wachtel.

revealed. This is in other words a Hegelian relation in which the two races are dependent on each other but will at the same time also try to overcome each other”.³⁸³ In her *Bodies That Matter* Butler suggests that “race might be performative since ‘a dominant ‘race’ is constructed (in the sense of materialized) through reiteration and exclusion”.³⁸⁴ In this light, ‘blackness’ not only emerges in relation to whiteness, but is also “produced as an ‘other’ or ‘abject’ body, a body – to re-appropriate Butler’s words – that does not matter”.³⁸⁵

In her poems Kay juxtaposes various themes such as belonging, loss, alienation, identity and so on. As Gray points out, this tendency can be considered “as a means of further highlighting the poet’s artistic negotiation with being both Black and Scottish, of belonging to two cultures”.³⁸⁶ Music is another tool used by the poet to express this negotiation: both ballads and jazz music are presented thematically, stylistically and rhythmically in her works serve as a way “of being Black and being Scottish at the same time in words”.³⁸⁷ So, the juxtaposition of themes in her work has the aim to find a place in which one’s identity can be both ‘Afro’ and Scottish.

In her works there is a constant reminder that ‘home can be found elsewhere’ in case of the refusal of the others to acknowledge her Scottish identity because she is an adopted child born to a white Scottish mother and a Nigerian father. Jackie Kay’s love for jazz and blues began at the age of twelve when her father, “a Scottish communist who loved the blues”,³⁸⁸ brought her a Bessie Smith’s album. She started to investigate about her sense of blackness in her novel *Bessie Smith*.

I will always associate the dawning of my own realization of being black with the blues, and particularly with Bessie’s blues. [...] Bessie’s blues still fill me with a strange longing. I don’t know exactly what for. Blackness? A culture that will wholly embrace me? Who knows? (Kay, *Bessie Smith*, pp. 138-139)

³⁸³ Claeys, p. 103.

³⁸⁴ Butler 1993, p. 275.

³⁸⁵ Claeys, p. 103.

³⁸⁶ Gray.

³⁸⁷ Kay, “Jackie Kay interview”.

³⁸⁸ Kay 1997, p. 9.

This was a revelation for her, because for the first time she found someone with the same skin color:

The shock of not being like everyone else; the shock of my own reflection came with the blues. My own face in the mirror was not the face I had in my head. What was it she reminded me of? Whenever I impersonated her in front of my mirror with my hairbrush microphone, I had a sense of something, at the edge of myself, that I mostly ignored; the first awareness of myself being black. I'd only ever think about it if something reminded me. Bessie Smith always reminded me. I am the same colour as Bessie Smith".³⁸⁹

This is how Kay's process of self discovery begins since, as an adopted child, she grew up with a white family and the only black person who she knew was her brother. She further explains:

The great thing about being adopted was that you could invent your family all the time. You could make them up and invent yourself in the process. At one point, every time I saw Shirley Bassey on the telly singing 'Goldfinger', I was convinced she was my birth mother. Anytime I came across a black person, usually on TV, or in a book, or on a political poster that my father brought home, I tried to work out their relationship to me. I concocted an imaginary black family for myself through images that I had available to me. There were a lot of images in this politically internationalist household. Nelson Mandela, Cassius Clay, Count Basie, Duke Ellington.³⁹⁰

In an interview she told that she has created an 'imaginary Black family' composed by the jazz and blues singers Bessie Smith, Duke Ellington, Count Basie or Sarah Vaughan "in the absence of having Black neighbours or Black friends" (Wachtel) in order to maintain a connection to Black culture.

I did not think that Bessie Smith only belonged to African Americans or that Nelson Mandela belonged to South Africans. I could not think like that because I knew then of no black Scottish heroes that I could claim for my own. I reached out and claimed Bessie. When I was a young girl, Bessie Smith comforted me, told me I was not alone, kept me company. I could imagine her life as I invented my own.³⁹¹

As Gray suggests the creation of an 'imaginary family' can represent the possibility of being 'someone else'. This theme (of being someone else) is present in *Trumpet* when Colman is so shocked by the revelation of his father's secret that he begins to question

³⁸⁹ Kay 1997, pp. 13, 15.

³⁹⁰ Kay 1997, p. 15.

³⁹¹ Kay 1997, p. 15.

his own identity and what could have happened if he had not been adopted, concluding that he could have been someone completely different:

Before 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. Definitely. I mean a William Dunsmore smile would be different from a Colman Moody's smile. All my facial expressions would have been different. I bet even my walk would have been heavier if I'd have been William Dunsmore. Heavy-footed. Maybe a bit lopsided (p. 56).

In the poem 'Pride', Kay imagines an encounter between a black woman and man and evokes an imaginary 'return' to the woman to Africa. What the woman imagines are only vague objects; this to symbolize the oneiric quality of her return to Africa, and in J. Gray's opinion at the same time reflecting Koye Oyedeji's assertion that "for many of a Black generation born in Britain, a knowledge of Africa remains no more than facing The Unexamined River. A rippling river across which you can see Africans on the other side".³⁹² This notion of 'fantasy' Africa opposed to the 'real' Africa is also mentioned by Colman in *Trumpet*:

We never actually got to go to Africa. Joss had built up such a strong imaginary landscape within himself that he said it would affect his music to go to the real Africa. Every Black person has a fantasy Africa, he'd say. Black British people, Black Americans, Black Caribbeans, they all have a fantasy Africa. It's all in the head (p. 34).

In his *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, Gilroy wrote:

Black Britain defines itself crucially as part of diaspora. Its unique cultures draw inspiration from those developed by black populations elsewhere. In particular the culture and politics of black America and the Caribbean have become raw materials for creative processes which redefine what it means to be black, adapting it to distinctively British experiences and meanings. Black culture is actively made and re-made.³⁹³

Ailes suggests that *Trumpet* promotes "imagination as the saving grace not only of adopted people but of all people, since no memory or history is entirely intact. [...] The power of the imagination is strong enough to substitute for physically being in the motherland, and actually visiting Africa would alter Joss's creative power by deconstructing his artistic vision of his origins. Kay relates the power to imagine one's

³⁹² Oyedeji, p. 355.

³⁹³ Gilroy 1987, p. 154.

own past and childhood with the artistic mind: as humans with faulty memories, we are constantly enacting the art of self-creation”.³⁹⁴

In his article “Weaving a Different Kind of Tartan: Musicality, Spectrality, and Kinship in Jackie Kay’s *Trumpet*”, Fong claims that in the Scottish literary tradition the idea of Scottishness is traditionally heteronormative, while in *Trumpet* Kay builds a different notion of Scottishness with the character of Joss and with the structure of the novel. Today “differences of race and class function as cultural imperatives that further complicates the rejection of sex and gender binaries”.³⁹⁵ Since Joss is both transgendered and Afro-Scottish he is subjected to marginalization both for his gender and both for his race. Fong reads “his diasporic, racialized and gendered identity as a queer and postcolonial reconceptualization of Scottishness”.³⁹⁶

In the novel, Scotland is depicted as a place of the past: Torr, where the Moodys have their cottage, “is not the same Torr any more [...] It is a new place, with a new chubb and yale. It is familiar like the way a memory is familiar, and changed each time like a memory too. Utterly changed” (p. 92). It is a place which represents now the past. Millie reflects on the fact that “time feels as if it is on the other side of me now, way over, out across the sea, like another country. I don’t live inside it any more and it doesn’t rule me” (3). The novel stresses how the past still lives on at Torr while outside the world continues: “The past had lived on in those small airless rooms whilst we had been away living our lives. The past had been here all the time, waiting. It was wonderful” (p. 7). Kay notes that Scotland is also an unstable identity: “it is no longer a clear-cut concept with an unambiguous meaning (typically identified with the patriarchal, heterosexual, colonial, unprivileged term in the binary opposite England/Scotland)”.³⁹⁷ Monterrey identifies three chronological stages which present Scotland in the novel:

³⁹⁴ Ailes, pp. 94-95.

³⁹⁵ Calitz, p. 52.

³⁹⁶ Manojlovic.

³⁹⁷ Monterrey, p. 180.

1. For John Moore, Scotland was a “Ghost country” (p. 271) when he arrived at Greenock. The image of Scotland he portrays “is determined by class difference and master-servant relationship, but it is also a country with scope for personal autonomy and success, as he manages to earn a “plausible living” (T 275) as a house painter”.³⁹⁸
2. Joss represents the Scottish diaspora: he leaves Scotland because his mother does not know anything about his gender change). So, Scotland is romanticized by him as a kind of “fantasy Scotland” since “he took black pudding for breakfast, drank malt whisky, and acquired a holiday house on the coast of Fife”.³⁹⁹
3. The last stage is explored through Colman. Although his father kept telling him that he was Scottish, Colman did not feel Scottish nor English. In fact, his perception of racism in London is related not with colour, but with accent.

5.2.1 Last Word

At the end of his life, Joss tries to satisfy Colman’s longing for reality and in a letter, in chapter ‘Last Word’, he writes to him:

You wanted the story of my father, remember? I told you his story could be the story of any black man who came from Africa to Scotland. His story, I told you, was the diaspora. [...] But I’ve changed my mind, not that I’m dying. [...] I am leaving my self to you. Everything I have got. All the letters I have kept hidden. I’ve discovered a strange thing that it is probably only possible to discover when you are dying - so don’t try it! - I’ve discovered that the future is something else entirely. That our worries are too wee (pp. 271, 277).

In the letter Joss tells his son everything he could remember about his father’s origins, “in order to be remembered or forgotten, to be changed or held dear” (p. 277).

It is quite simple: all of this is my past, the sum of my parts; you are my future. I will be your son now in a strange way. You will be my father telling or not telling my story. [...] You will understand or you won’t. You will keep me or lose me. You will hate me or love me. You will change me or hold me dear. [...] remember what you like. I’ve told you everything (p. 277).

The story he tells his son is a small part of a bigger narrative about African Diaspora. Jazz came into being at the end of the 19th century when a boat landed at Greenock,

³⁹⁸ Monterrey, p. 179.

³⁹⁹ Monterrey, p. 179.

carrying John Moore, Joss's father, from the West Indies (p. 250) to Scotland at the turn of the century at the age of six. His father "had persuaded a Scottish captain of a ship to take him back to Scotland and give him some kind of education" (p. 274). When John arrived in Scotland he was employed as a servant by the Duncan-Brae family and at the age of eighteen he "wanted away" and "became apprenticed to a Dundee house painter" (p. 275).

My father came off a boat right enough, right into a broth of dense fog; the local people called it a 'real pea souper'. He had never seen fog before. The air was damp and eerie on his skin and he was freezing. Ghost country. The people and the weather shrouded in uncertainty. Shadow people, he thought, insubstantial, no colour. [...] This new country was a wet ghost, cold fingers searching his cheeks for warmth (p. 271).

Jones observes that "this is an image of a dead country, looking to the immigrant for new life".⁴⁰⁰ On the one hand it is a simple image but which "goes to the heart of imperialism, and how the colonial venture consumed the objectified bodies of the colonized peoples".⁴⁰¹ On the other hand it also refers to John Moore, who "functions as a reference to the constant black presence in Scotland since the early 1500s. [Kay] is pointing to an [early] colonial relationship, an Empire in which Scots were overtly active. The figure of Joss's father reminds us of other individuals who made the trip across the Atlantic, [who] migrated to Britain in the eighteenth century, and were involved in radical politics and dissent".⁴⁰² In her choice of a transatlantic context for *Trumpet*, Kay is creating a black identity which is part of a diaspora created by the slave trade. She agrees with LeRoi Jones when he wrote that "African Americans underwent a 'transmutation from African to American' when they come to the new world, a fact that undermines efforts to reclaim an essential African identity".⁴⁰³

Ortiz considers migration as the main factor of transculturation since "Joss represents a transcultural force, it is significant that his father had a migrant

⁴⁰⁰ C. Jones 2004, p. 13.

⁴⁰¹ C. Jones 2004, p. 13.

⁴⁰² Gilroy 1993, p. 12.

⁴⁰³ C. Jones 2004, p. 14.

biography.⁴⁰⁴ Joss often outlines his father's arrival via ship, which, according to Hartley, "evokes Gilroy's 'chronotope' of the Black Atlantic".⁴⁰⁵ Joss explains that the story of his father can be the story of diaspora (p. 271), of every man who experienced enslavement or was brought from Africa to Scotland. John died when Joss was eleven. Despite the presence of his mother, Joss felt to be alone since the death of his father, and loses his connections to Africa. Stein notes that:

In practicing transculture, Joss loses cultural elements (such as the more conventional, one-to-one relationship between anatomical sex and gender identity) and acquires cultural elements (jazz music and also Scottish and African origins). [...] Joss travels *symbolically* between distinct cultural traditions and in the process reveals interconnected forms of life and art without 'prior existence within the discrete world of any single culture or language'. [...] In the process of his *symbolic* travel - for Joss is not a migrant, does not in fact travel - and of these symbolic crossings, he not only reveals overlapping forms of life and art: Joss, whose very name resonates with the type of music he performs, stitches together distinct patterns and thereby enunciates new melodies, new stories.⁴⁰⁶

The multiplicity of voices through which Joss's identity is created outlines the liminality of the migrant, transgendered main character. Fong insists that in the novel "the transnational and the transgender perpetually haunt one and other".⁴⁰⁷

According to Taylor, what Joss passes to Colman in the letter is "a narrative of one individual's crossing from one culture and space to another. It gives Colman an identity, a heritage of sorts, a connection that he needs at this point in his life".⁴⁰⁸ Monterrey notes that "the unresolved sexuality of a woman, who turned into a male figure of responsibility, cannot be separated from other two unfixing dimensions, that Colman shares with his father: race and nation".⁴⁰⁹ Butler includes race in her discussions about identity formation. She thinks that racial differences are subordinate to sexual differences and outlines how "the social regulation of race emerges not simply as another, fully separable, domain of power from sexual difference or sexuality, but

⁴⁰⁴ Stein, p. 260.

⁴⁰⁵ Hartley, p. 138.

⁴⁰⁶ Stein, pp. 263, 265.

⁴⁰⁷ Aydemir, p. 258.

⁴⁰⁸ J. Taylor, p. 300.

⁴⁰⁹ Monterrey, p. 176.

that its ‘addition’ subverts the monolithic workings of the heterosexual imperative”.⁴¹⁰ Race and sexuality are no “separable axes of power” and operate on each other, they are “embricated in one another, the vehicle for one another”.⁴¹¹ She considers race as an important aspect of identity formation.

5.2.2 Racial Prejudices

In *Trumpet* Kay gives a portrayal of the racial context of the British black, even if she states that race is not the primary point of the novel. Joss, Millie and Colman have to face racist abuse as the latter one claims:

If the jazz world was so ‘anything goes’ as my father claimed, then why didn’t he come clean and spit it out, man? The 1960s were supposed to be cool. Flower people. Big joints. Afghans. Long hair. Peace. Why not a woman playing a fucking trumpet, man, what was wrong with that? (p. 57)

The jazz scene too is not immune to bigotry, and Eckstein noticed that “Joss himself is not aloof of prejudices and exclusions”.⁴¹²

Black people and music; what would the world be without black people and music. Slave songs, work songs, gospel, blues, ragtime, jazz. (‘Rap?’ Colman would say, ‘what about rap?’ ‘No, that just a lot of rubbish,’ his father would say quite seriously. ‘A lot of shite. Rap isn’t music. Rap is crap. Where is the story?’) (p. 190).

This passage stresses how Colman identifies with a different kind of black identity, not the one of Africa, but the one of rap. Rap’s origins are not in blues or jazz. The reference to this music style outlines a kind of generational conflict between father and son. Colman identifies himself in rap, not in jazz or blues. Joss asserts that rap does not include history, but actually it includes different kinds of histories since it emerges during the 1970s in the Afro-American community. Rap musicians are mostly young blacks living in the city. Claeys argues that “without going too deeply into this cultural movement, [...] rap music often contains many references to the problems of inner-city life and the poorer parts of the city, areas which are often used as a way of claiming a

⁴¹⁰ Butler 1993, p. 18.

⁴¹¹ Butler 1993, p. 16.

⁴¹² Eckstein, p. 60.

link between poverty, violence and race”.⁴¹³ Colman is well aware about the kind of associations that his ‘race’ evokes:

I mean practically every black guy my age that I saw on TV had just been arrested for something. Or was accused of mugging. It’s like we only had the one face to them. The same face. The one that was wanted for something. I can tell when I go out and about, fuckers staring at you as if you’ve done something. I’ve been picked up by the police countless times, man, for doing fuck all. Just for being black and being in the wrong place at the wrong time (p. 162).

Men that look exactly like Colman are always in the news. Some top asshole in the police said recently that black guys were more likely to be muggers than white guys. It is quite possible that Edith Moore is somewhere in that small house spying on him, terrified that he has come to mug her (p. 224).

Colman is wondering how he can prove who he is. His head is full of the news. Perhaps they think he’s a criminal. Why else are they all staring at him? (p. 225)

When Millie reflected about her marriage she recalls that her family almost did not come:

I didn't want to believe it of them. I didn't want to believe my own mother could be prejudiced in that way. When I told her I was marrying Joss, she said she had nothing against them, but she didn't want her own daughter. People should keep to their own, she said. It wasn't prejudice, it was common sense, she said. Then she said the word, 'Darky,' I don't want you marrying a 'Darky'. I stopped here before she shamed me further (pp. 26-27).

Gender and racial differences played a great role in the novel, as Millie’s mother’s reaction shows. Millie’s mother demonstrates racial prejudices of the mid-twenty century toward Joss even if she does not consider herself a racist. Edith Moore experienced a similar experience when the homehelp girl, Cathy learned that she was married to a black man:

The new homehelp - a nice girl, Cathy, but asks too many questions - picked up the photograph and said, ‘Oh my! He’s handsome. Who’s he?’ When Edith replied, ‘That was my husband,’ Cathy was shocked. Aye. She might have tried to hide it, but Edith saw it just the same. Shocked at her this auld, auld woman, going out with, no, *married to*, a black man. It was written all over her face. Edith watched her hovering, thinking things (p. 220).

A similar problem occurs after the adoption of Colman when they had to choose a name:

Joss and I nearly divorced when it came to naming Colman. Joss wanted Miles; I wanted Campbell. [...] Joss wanted a jazz or a blues name. What about Jelly Roll, I laughed. Or Howling Wolf, Bird, Muggsy, Fats, Leadbelly. I was bent over double: Pee Wee. Joss

⁴¹³ Claeys, p. 102.

slapped me across my face. 'That's enough,' he said. 'White people always laugh at black names.' I rubbed my cheek. I couldn't believe it. I just gave him a look until I saw the first bloom of shame appear on his. We gave up on names and went to bed. Sex is always better if you argue before (p. 5).

Colman's sense of alienation is closely linked to his adoption that leads him to cynicism and feeling of estrangement. His memories are related to his parents' explanation about the process of his adoption: the agency was really pleased that it found a couple interested in adopting a 'black' boy. Joss is racially a 'zambo'⁴¹⁴ and so is Colman, who has the same skin colour of his father. He remembers an accident that took place when he was young on a bus, when a black man got on and another passenger called him 'an ape'. Millie got very angry: "[The man said] 'No wonder' or something. And the black man who had been called an ape [...] was just sitting with his eyes low, looking at the bus floor. [...] It made me look at my own colour of skin when I got home" (p. 54). Many times Colman is reminded his color and asked if he comes "from Marocco, Trinidad, Tobago, Ghana, Nigeria, Serra Leone, Jamaica" (p. 58). He thinks that "the next fucker that asks me where I come from, I'm going to say, yes, I come from Hawaii, Marocco, Trinidad, or any place they ask. What does it matter anyway?" (p. 58). Because of that he always picks up fight (when he was traveling) with the railman or with other costumers.

It is not easy to travel in this country. Black guys like him. People always think they are going to be wrong or they've done something wrong or they're lying, or about to lie, stealing or about the steal. It's no fucking joke just trying to get about the place with people thinking bad things about you all the time. He knows that they think these things [...] They are wary of him, scared of him, uptight (p. 189).

This extract is taken from the chapter entitled "Travel: London" which deals with Colman's mixed feelings about race and Scottishness. This scene represents the post imperial British site of hybridity, transculturalism and multiculturalism, as Gulcur points out. Kay wants to criticize cultural differences, the one of ethnicity, race, belonging, gender, sexual identity and class. She creates an individual, Joss, which is able to change from being oppressed to be a resistant and oppositional subject. His success is due to his developing survival skills to reorganize himself. Joss's identity is made by race and nationality as well as gender and sexuality. He claims to be both

⁴¹⁴ Monterrey, p. 177.

Black and Scots. On the contrary Colman “didn’t feel Scottish. Didn’t feel English either” (p. 51), even if his father “kept telling [him he] was Scottish” (p. 51). In this sense both his sense of nationality and his ethnicity are liminal because he is in a space between geographical borders, in Koolen’s opinion. Moreover, like his father, he is of mixed race and for this he is in-between racial boundaries (black/white binary opposition). Colman talks about the time when he was seven and his family moved from Glasgow to London:

We moved from London to Glasgow when I was seven. I got rid of my Glasgow accent. Well, almost. Some people claim they can still hear strains of it. My father clung to his. Determined that everyone would know he was Scottish. When I came home with my cockney accent, my father got all cut up. He’d shout, ‘Speak properly!’ Seriously. It was a fucking nightmare moving down here with that accent. [...] London was seething, racist [...] My father kept telling me I was Scottish. Born there. But I didn't feel Scottish. Didn't feel English either. Didn't feel anything. My heart is a fucking stone (pp. 50-51).

He recalls the prejudices the others showed both because of his colour and of his Scottish accent:

When we moved to London I still called an ice-cream a pokey hat when I was with my parents and called it ice-cream with my mates. There were lots of words like that that I used because it cheered them up. I was practically schizophrenic. But now I come to think about it, I wasn’t nearly as schizophrenic as him. Doing what he did in a different league from saying mocket to one person and dirty to another (p. 53).

Colman chooses to get rid of his accent while Joss decided to keep it so everybody could know he was Scottish. They both made a choice according to who they wanted to be, as well as Joss’s choice of gender. When Colman asks his father about his roots, Joss answered that they were related as he was related to the members of his band:

My father always told me he and I were related the way it mattered. He felt that way too about the guys in his bands, that they were all part of some big family. Some were white some black. He said they didn’t belong anywhere but to each other. He said you make up your own bloodline, Colman. Make it up and trace it back. Design your own family tree - what's the matter with you? Haven't you got imagination? (p. 58)

Joss encourages his son to create his own history, since for him biological gender or race are not what define what a person is. The novel encourages “self-invention and the challenge this makes to dominant conceptions of personal norms and fixity”.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁵ C. Jones 2004, p. 5.

Then he tells Colman different stories about his father origins: he was American and came to Scotland because of segregation; then he was a Caribbean who got off a ship from Africa. He says: “Any of these stories might be true, Colman. [...] Which one? I said. Which one is true? Doesn't matter damn, he said. You pick. You pick the one you like best and that one is true” (p. 59).

Moody's first hit song was called “Fantasy Africa” which embody one of the main messages of the novel: “Every black person has a fantasy Africa, he'd say. Black British people, Black Americans, Black Caribbeans, they all have a fantasy Africa. Its all in the head” (p. 34). And even Colman admits that he has no place in Africa:

Colman doesn't feel as if he has history. Doesn't feel comfortable with mates of his that go on and on about Africa. It feels false to him, mates that get dressed up in African gear, wank on about being African with a fucking cockney accent, man. Back to Africa is just as unreal as far as Colman is concerned. He's never been to Africa, so how can he go back? (pp. 190-191)

He feels the need to reinvent his identity within the context of the society in which he lives:

What is this thing with hair? [...] White guys aren't interested in their hair as far as he can see. Black guys keep reinventing themselves through hairstyles. [...] His father liked going to a barber that was good at cutting black hair [...] They'd get done together. An initiation ceremony (p. 183).

Monterrey notes that “whereas John Moore performed the diaspora and Joss romanticized it, Colman, as if he were Kay's mouthpiece, realistically rejects the sentimental idealization of a place long lost for his present generation in favour of a more natural, ordinary attitude to race in Britain. In *Trumpet* Jackie Kay wants to depict Britain as an increasingly non-racist society, not because it has ceased to be racist, but because of the potential social energy of hybridity, of erasing differences and reinventing new orders”.⁴¹⁶

In the novel Kay suggests that we must challenge stereotypes, fixed categories and prejudices, including the notion of Scotland and Scottishness which “need to be regenerated from misleading fantasies and abstractions”.⁴¹⁷ Colman's acceptance of his Scottish identity comes together with the acceptance of the true hybrid identity of his

⁴¹⁶ Monterrey, p. 178.

⁴¹⁷ Monterrey, p. 181.

father, “but his sense of Scottishness remains a matter of experience, largely unspoken, as if searching for a new language, a new starting-point”.⁴¹⁸ This process “culminates when he decides to comfort and protect his mother, an unconventional ending as far as Scottish fiction is concerned”.⁴¹⁹

5.3 The question of names in *Trumpet*

*Nothing on this earth – and in much of the heavens
– exists without a name.*⁴²⁰

Grimaud considered the process of naming as “a deeply social and psychological and linguistic act”.⁴²¹ Names are important not only for those who receive them, but also for society that gives them. There are many practices around the world that societies use to choose names for their members, but despite those differences “the effect is the same: the person who receives a name thereby receives an identity and a place within the society”.⁴²²

This bestowal of name and identity is a kind of symbolic contract between the society and the individual. [...] By giving a name the society confirms the individual's existence and acknowledges its responsibilities toward that person. [...] Through the name, the individual becomes part of the history of the society, and, because of the name, his or her deeds will exist separate from the deeds of others.⁴²³

As regards the psychological field, naming is a process related to emotions since the name/terms we use to address to others people “often serves as a mean of expressing feelings”.⁴²⁴ The linguistic function is relevant too because “names have different stylistic values and normative functions in different languages and within different geographical areas”.⁴²⁵ Personal names are also quite important in literature in the

⁴¹⁸ Monterrey, p. 180.

⁴¹⁹ Monterrey, p. 180.

⁴²⁰ Zawawi, p. xii.

⁴²¹ Grimaud, p. 19.

⁴²² Deluzain.

⁴²³ Deluzain.

⁴²⁴ Windt-Val, p. 278.

⁴²⁵ Windt-Val, p. 278.

author's creation of credible characters. Aristotle outlined this aspect of names in his *Poetics*, part IX:

By the universal I mean how a person of a certain type on occasion speak or act, according to the law of probability or necessity; an it is this universality at which poetry aims in the names she attaches to the personages. [...] the poet first construct the plot on the lines of probability, and then inserts characteristic names.⁴²⁶

In antiquity satirists and comedians did not give personal names to the characters of their tales since there was no need to use them to describe an individual's personality. Only when "the dramas developed into a free form, the names of the characters obtained a far more important role as bearer of meaning and symbols of their identity".⁴²⁷

Realist authors based their writing on depictions of everyday banal activities and experiences from all classes of society, including the lower classes, without any romantic idealization or dramatization. Their aim was to give a faithful representation of reality, and thus, if they wanted to make personal names meaningful and relevant to the features and thematic function of their characters, they also had to make sure that they were in line with the actual use of names during the period of time they were describing. [...] Authors often make use of the strong connection between names and the feeling of personal identity as an element in their thematic structures.⁴²⁸

As Windt-Val observes, there is a close link between a person's given name and his/her sense of identity and self: "it has been stated that the parents' choice of name for their child will have an influence on the development of [his] personality".⁴²⁹ Deluzain suggests that the importance of the link between name and identity is something we can experience in our everyday life, for example when we answer the telephone: "the reason we instinctively choose "I am..." or "This is..." is that we intuitively associate our identity and the identity of the person we are introducing with a name".⁴³⁰

The sense of personal identity and uniqueness that a name gives us is at the heart of why names interest us and why they are important to us as individuals and to our society as a whole. In spite of their importance, though, most people know very little about names and about the effects they have on us and on our children in everyday life. In a very real sense,

⁴²⁶ Aristotle.

⁴²⁷ Windt-Val, p. 279.

⁴²⁸ Windt-Val, p. 282.

⁴²⁹ Windt-Val, p. 273.

⁴³⁰ Deluzain.

we are consumers of names, and we have a need and right to know about the psychological, magical, legal, religious, and ethnic aspects of our names.⁴³¹

It can happen that certain individual or groups of people “feel that the society has failed to live up its part of the bargain, and they sometimes respond by abandoning the name and identity under which they entered into the original contract”.⁴³²

Pet names, nicknames and bynames can reveal a considerable amount about a person’s position among equals and in his or her surroundings in general, and it is just as revealing when a person does not “feel at home” in their own name, but chooses instead to “hide” behind a pet name or use a name that actually does not belong to them.⁴³³

The practice of changing name usually refers “to the legal act by a person of adopting a name different from their name at birth, marriage or adoption. [...] A pseudonym can be regarded as a name adopted to conceal a person's identity, and does not always require legal sanction. Additionally, there are other reasons for informal changes of name that are not done for reasons of concealment, but for personal, social or ideological reasons”.⁴³⁴ Kripke claims that naming is a process that cannot take place in a private sphere but has to have a social character.⁴³⁵ In the novel there are various different practice of name changing:

- use of pseudonym (Big Red McCall)
- after marriage (Millie)
- after adoption (Colman)
- after a change of gender (Josephine/Joss)
- after deportation (John Moore)

In all these different cases, the characters’ change of names represent the definition of their own identities, it is a powerful strategy to reinvent oneself. Oboe argues that “this process of renaming subtends the characters’ willingness to become different, to modify their perception of themselves and of their social position”.⁴³⁶

⁴³¹ Deluzain.

⁴³² Deluzain.

⁴³³ Windt-Val, p. 281.

⁴³⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Name_change

⁴³⁵ Butler 1993, p. 212.

⁴³⁶ Oboe, p. viii.

Jazz as improvisational performance gives to those musicians who plays it the opportunity to reinvent themselves. Such reinvention is emphasized by the process of renaming that is a common practice in the jazz world where many musicians are known by their epithets, which have chooses or given to them. In the novel one of the examples of that is Big Red McCall, a character who adopts many different names, as I already pointed out in chapter 1. He had his proper name but he never answered to it all his life. Since he was a child he was given many nicknames: at three ‘Big Man’, around six ‘Brassneck’, at twelve ‘Poacher’, for a long time ‘Bunk’, until he was nineteen ‘Malki’. The “Red” nickname is due to his bad temper, he did not remember who was the one who gave him the nickname, but he was proud of it: “[It] was his favourite [nickname] because he believed in communism and had a red hot temper” (p. 145). For McCall nicknames were something magic, because “they let people know what they were in for” (p. 145). But if you already have an important name, a name that sounds “too cool for anybody to ever want to change it [such as] Miles Davis. Charlie Mingus. Joss Moody” (p. 146), there is no need to change it. Claeys suggests that “nickname[s] can be liberating, freeing you from the constraints of your proper name”.⁴³⁷ Big Red talks about the impossibility of choosing only one nickname:

Some of those clever bastards would skulk into smokers’ corner and make a nickname up for themselves! Then they’d find some sly way of forcing the nickname to catch alight. But it never did. It always spluttered out like the damp match that it was. The boys who were called David, Peter, Walter and John tried to metamorphosize into Mince, Spider, Peanuts and Crow only to find themselves chucked back onto the slagheap of their dull names (p. 145).

Nicknames can work only if someone chooses them for you. Butler suggests that a nickname appears to be performative, and brings into being what it names: “It seeks to introduce a reality rather than report on an existing one; it accomplishes this introduction through a citation of existing convention”.⁴³⁸ It can seem that giving a nickname cannot leave space for personal development, but Big Red outlines the importance of the ‘magical’ aspect of nicknames describing them as “something you are

⁴³⁷ Claeys, p. 97.

⁴³⁸ Butler 1997.

crowned with”.⁴³⁹ The drummer suggests that on the one hand it is something that someone else imposes on you, on the other hand it is something liberating: “That estrangement or division produced by the mesh of interpellating calls and the ‘I’ who is the site is not only violating, but enabling as well”.⁴⁴⁰ Despite “the workings of interpellation may well be necessary”,⁴⁴¹ Butler suggests that names “are not for that reason mechanical or fully predictable. The power of a name to injure is distinct from the efficacy with which that power is exercised”.⁴⁴²

Another character who is given a nickname is Sophie Stones. Colman calls her ‘The Hack’ (p. 243). Claeys point out that “whether this nickname is liberating to Sophie is highly questionable”.⁴⁴³ In her opinion “Sophie is a very intriguing character, not only because her distortion of Joss’s story exposes her as highly unsympathetic, but more importantly because her identity formation is also very complex”.⁴⁴⁴ As previous discussed, her name is ironic because “Sophie” comes from the Greek and means “knowledge”, but actually she is not clever, and she hides it with fashion and clothes. Hargreaves notes that her name “suggests that wisdom has become hardened and inflexible”.⁴⁴⁵

In the novel the constant name changes undergone by many characters is one of the most important factors which lead to the destabilization of the ‘idea of fixed’. Rose points out that name change has the function to remind the reader that names, according to the Lacanian schema of the symbolic, symbolize and “institute the paternal law by sustaining the phantasmatic integrity of the self as it submits to language and is marked by sexual difference. [...] For Lacan the integral self has no natural boundary or organic telos, but is only symbolically constituted by the law of kinship, which works through

⁴³⁹ Claeys, p. 98.

⁴⁴⁰ Butler 1993, p. 122.

⁴⁴¹ Butler 1997, p. 34.

⁴⁴² Butler 1997, p. 34.

⁴⁴³ Claeys, p. 98.

⁴⁴⁴ Claeys, p. 98.

⁴⁴⁵ Hargreaves, p. 5.

the name as symbolic paternal law that produces versions of bodily integrity”.⁴⁴⁶ An imposed version of bodily integrity is exactly what Joss tries to avoid when he abandons the name Josephine Moore and his feminine life. Joss as a character opposes both closure and naming since he is African *and* Scottish, male *and* female, “a musician whose aesthetic relies on mimicry, improvisation, syncopation, marking the refusal of a regular beat”.⁴⁴⁷ Joss created his own name: he was Josephine Moore and he became Joss Moody. According to Schoene he changes his name and gender to live in what the author has defined as the “proprioceptive mode of hybrid self-authentication”.⁴⁴⁸ So Millie renounce to her original surname Millicent MacFarlane when marries Joss and becomes Millie Moody.

My name is Millie MacFarlane as if I'd just heard it for the first time, as if my own name was miles away from who I am. I say, 'my name is Millicent MacFarlane, but my friends call me Millie'. [...] I have become Millicent Moody. Mrs Moody. Mrs Joss Moody (pp. 13, 28).

Joss is the reason why Millie can say “I have become Millicent Moody” (p. 28) after their wedding.

Colman exhibits a similar instability of self “experienced in the cultural dislocation caused by post colonial hybridity”,⁴⁴⁹ when William Dunsmore becomes Colman Moody. Colman notices that if he had stayed William he would have become “a completely different man” (p. 56).

Before 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. Definitely. I mean a William Dunsmore smile would be different from a Colman Moody's smile. All my facial expressions would have been different. I bet even my walk would have been heavier if I'd have been William Dunsmore. Heavy-footed. Maybe a bit lopsided (p. 56).

Mille and Colman share Joss's surname but they have not made it up. Their acquisition of the name is based on the traditional fact that with the marriage a wife takes his husband name, and the children consequently.

⁴⁴⁶ Rose, p. 144.

⁴⁴⁷ Hargreaves, p. 14.

⁴⁴⁸ Schoene-Harwood, p. 160.

⁴⁴⁹ Rose, p. 144.

What Joss has done appears to be as something strange for the registrar: “One day Josephine Moore just plucked the name Joss Moody out of the sky and called himself this name and encouraged others to do likewise?” (p. 80) As I previous pointed out, for Mr Sharif names are very important because they decide who you will become. Josephine created a new name for her, and with it a new identity. This act has also included his wife and his son.

Through May Hart we get to know other nicknames used to refers to Joss/Josephine: “There is no love like the love you have as girls. [...] As a girl, May Hart would have died for Josie. She loved everything about her. [...] May even loved Josephine Moore’s silence” (p. 251). To notice two thing about names here. First May calls her friend with the diminutive Josie, which show May’s deep affection to her friend. The name ‘Josephine’ is the English form of the French Joséphine, a feminine form of Joseph, which is derived from the Hebrew Yōsēf (God will add, God will increase).⁴⁵⁰ The name ‘Joss’ can be used both for a male and a female. To notice from the previous passage that once Josephine had the surname ‘Moore’ (derived from her father) which later becomes ‘Moody’. The surname “Moore” has many different meanings. Between them I found this explanation: “Possibly derived from *Maurus*, a Roman first name which meant "dark skinned" in Latin, and related to the Old French *More* meaning "Moor"⁴⁵¹ like Berber, a colloquial nickname for a person of dark complexion, often describing someone of North African descent”.⁴⁵² So this surname can carry Joss’s father origins, even if from the story is not clear where he came from. According to May Hart he was from the West Indies; but in the chapter “Last Word” in which Joss’s father tells him presumably the story of his grandfather, he says: “You wanted the story of my father, remember? I told you his story could be the story of any black man who came from Africa to Scotland. His story, I told you, was the diaspora” (p. 271).

⁴⁵⁰ <http://www.babynamewizard.com/baby-name/girl/josephine>

⁴⁵¹ The Moors were the medieval Muslim inhabitants of the Maghreb, Iberian Peninsula, Sicily, and Malta.

⁴⁵² [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moore_\(surname\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moore_(surname))

At one point Colman wonders how Joss took the surname Moody: “I’m going to trace him back to when he was a girl in Greenock, to when he lived under the name of Josephine Moore. Josey. Jose. Joss. But where did he get the Moody? Or was that just Moody blues?” (p. 61). The surname Moody derives from a nickname: “‘the moody,’ i.e. the brave, the bold, the resolute. A common sobriquet in the Hundred Rolls. Mudie is a Scottish form. Moody also frequently hails from over the Border”.⁴⁵³ Moody is one of the most common English surnames and it is thought to have English origins. The earliest attestation of it dates back to 12th century in Devonshire in an early “charter where the name Alwine 'Modig' is mentioned”.⁴⁵⁴ Recent researches suggest that the surname could be spread in Somerset, Wiltshire, Hampshire and in north England. There are also attestation of a similar-sounding surname in ‘Moodie’⁴⁵⁵ in Scotland. Even if the majority of the occurrences of the surname are in Anglo-Saxon areas after 1066, it is difficult to state if the origins of Moody are Anglo-Saxon or Nordic/Viking since “all Germanic countries used the word 'Modig' or 'Mutig' to indicate someone who was bold, impetuous or brave. [...] In the Netherlands, there is a family name 'Mudde' derived from an Scottish immigrant Robert Moodie. There was a significant incidence of the name among early American immigrants from England in the 17th century”.⁴⁵⁶ Colman feels to have to carry the burden of his surname, and he only would like to change it and go back to his previous name to have the chance to start a new life:

A new name and a new job, that’s what he’d like. A new start in life. The thought of carrying the name Moody around with him for the rest of his life is no joke. Maybe he should change back to his original name. What would William Dunsmore do for a living? [...] A doctor? A doctor who would specialize in - what? Plastic surgery? Sex changes? Hormones? Christ. Where is this coming from. Is it coming from him? [...] William Dunsmore. He would do something plain and ordinary with no element of risk in it. [...] Fucking forget William Dunsmore. He won’t fucking come to life (pp. 138-139).

In choosing the name Colman for their son, Millie and Joss pass him a double heritage, both black and Scottish since he is called Colman “after the black jazz

⁴⁵³ <http://forebears.co.uk/surnames/moody>

⁴⁵⁴ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moody_\(surname\)#Fictional](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moody_(surname)#Fictional)

⁴⁵⁵ This variant, ending "ie", has possible Norse/Celtic origins.

⁴⁵⁶ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moody_\(surname\)#Fictional](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moody_(surname)#Fictional)

musician, Coleman Hawkins, but it is spelt in the Celtic form”.⁴⁵⁷ Whitehead points out that at the beginning “Colman [...] rejects both affiliations. He feels criminalised and suspected of wrongdoing in Scotland, while he rejects as ‘unreal’ the notion of an African legacy or history”.⁴⁵⁸ Joss also uses another nickname to refer to his son: “My father said to me when I got back, you need to put on some weight, Cole. He called me Cole when he was being nice. My mother always called me Colman” (p. 61). One of his friends calls him in the same way: “So I went out with my mate Brady who has left nine messages on my machine, man. The first one just said, Fucking hell, Cole. Ring me” (p. 69). Its origins dated back to the Old English surname ‘Col’ (derived from coal), “it originated as a nickname for someone who was coal-black, swarthy, or darkly-complexioned”.⁴⁵⁹

Joss is the son of a man who actually has no real name, no real past. When Joss tells his son in the letter his father’s story, he said:

Someone painted a picture of my father which I have left for you [...] The picture is called Mumbo Jumbo which has made me more angry than anything I can remember. He’s not given a name. Even the name he was given, John Moore, was not his original name. That’s the thing with us: we keep changing names. We’ve all got that in common. We’ve all changed names, you, me, my father. All for different reasons. Maybe one day you’ll understand mine (pp. 275-276).

After he arrived to Scotland he was given a new name. We do not know his original name but we know that the practice of changing name was common among African slaves who arrived in Europe. They were given names by those who buy them or own them, but they were not given a surname to outline they were not similar to the white men. Liseli and Fitzpatrick claims that the practice of renaming is central for creating, suppressing, retaining and reclaiming African identity and memory for people of African descent.⁴⁶⁰

European colonizers attacked and defiled African names and naming systems to suppress and erase African identity – since names not only aid in the construction of identity, but

⁴⁵⁷ Whitehead, p. 158.

⁴⁵⁸ Whitehead, p. 158.

⁴⁵⁹ <http://www.babynamewizard.com/baby-name/boy/cole>

⁴⁶⁰ Liseli and Fitzpatrick, p. ii.

also concretize a people's collective memory by recording the circumstances of their experiences.⁴⁶¹

Windt-Val suggests that “the connection between names and identity does not only affect people. Names and naming also constitute an important part of the work of the building of a nation”.⁴⁶²

John had to suffer the racist appellation ‘Mumbo Jumbo’. The first time it appears was in Thomas Hardy’s *A Pair of Blue Eyes* published in 1873. In 1972 Ishmael Reed wrote a novel entitled *Mumbo Jumbo* about the influences on African diaspora and culture. He also included an explanation of the phrase ‘Mumbo Jumbo’ taken from the *American Heritage Dictionary*. According to it, this appellation probably has its origins in the ‘Mandingo’ name *Maamajomboo*,⁴⁶³ which refers to “magician who makes the troubled spirits of ancestors go away”,⁴⁶⁴ “a masked dancer that took part in religious ceremonies”.⁴⁶⁵ Mungo Park’s travel journal *Travels in the Interior of Africa* (1795) describes ‘Mumbo Jumbo’ as “a character, complete with ‘masquerade habit’, that Mandinka males would dress up in order to resolve domestic disputes”.⁴⁶⁶ According to the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, “Mumbo Jumbo is a noun and is the name of a grotesque idol said to have been worshipped by some tribes. In its figurative sense, Mumbo Jumbo is an object of senseless veneration or a meaningless ritual”.

The *Encyclopædia Britannica Third Edition* (1803) claims that ‘Mumbo Jumbo’ is “a strange bugbear employed by the Pagan Mandingos for the purpose of keeping their women in subjection”. Polygamy is allowed among these people and this can cause many family quarrels and the husband's authority is not sufficient to restore peace among the wives. To restore peace it is called the authority of Mumbo Jumbo, a “strange minister of justice, who is either the husband himself, or some person

⁴⁶¹ Liseli and Fitzpatrick, p. ii.

⁴⁶² Windt-Val, p. 275.

⁴⁶³ Morris, p. 862.

⁴⁶⁴ Reed, p. 7.

⁴⁶⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumbo_jumbo_%28phrase%29#cite_note-3

⁴⁶⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumbo_jumbo_%28phrase%29#cite_note-3

instructed by him, disguised in a sort of masquerade habit, made of the bark of trees, and armed with the rod of public authority”.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumbo_jumbo_%28phrase%29#cite_note-3

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Abstract in italiano

La mia tesi offre un'analisi del romanzo *Trumpet* di Jackie Kay, pubblicato nel 1998. Il testo suscitò molto interesse da parte della critica letteraria tanto da vincere il Guardian Fiction Prize.

Il racconto si sviluppa attorno alla storia di Joss Moody, un trombettista jazz, afro-scozzese e 'transgender' nato donna ma che decide di vivere come un uomo, nascondendo la sua vera identità a quanti lo circondano, fatta eccezione per la moglie Millie, unica a sapere la verità. Questo romanzo, come le altre opere di Kay, riflette l'interesse dell'autrice per le storie in cui gli individui vivono oltre i confini tradizionali di nazione, sesso e razza e sfidano il concetto di identità intesa come categoria fissa ed immutabile. La sensibilità di Kay per queste tematiche deriva dalla sua esperienza diretta poiché, nata da madre inglese e padre nigeriano, fu adottata da una famiglia scozzese alla nascita, e presto cominciò a sperimentare i pregiudizi razziali della società in cui viveva a causa del colore della sua pelle ma anche alla sua omosessualità.

In particolare *Trumpet* esplora i temi dell'amore, del genere, della sessualità, della perdita, della sofferenza, della memoria, il senso di appartenenza ad una casa, ad una cultura. L'inclusione nel romanzo dei temi di identità 'transgender' e dell'adozione interrazziale è utile per esplorare le categorie di genere e in particolare il concetto di 'lesbismo'. L'autrice esplora come l'amore omosessuale possa essere espresso in una società eterosessuale affermandone la diversità. Genere e sessualità sono considerati da Kay concetti instabili, per cui è possibile inserire il concetto di amore lesbico all'interno di una società ancora radicata sulla concezione della sessualità secondo il sistema binario occidentale, basato sulla dicotomia donna/uomo.

Kay intende mostrare come quelle che chiama "persone straordinarie" possono vivere vite ordinarie. *Trumpet* intende essere principalmente una storia d'amore nella quale il lettore si può identificare al punto da considerare Joss un uomo a tutti gli effetti. Il suo desiderio di esplorare quanto potesse essere fluida l'identità mette in discussione in *Trumpet* l'idea che le categorie maschile e femminile siano naturali, e

sostiene piuttosto che siano costruite. Kay realizza che ogni individuo è costituito da una moltitudine di “personalità/identità” diverse e attraverso una narrazione giocata su più punti di vista, costruisce pezzo per pezzo la complessa identità del suo personaggio principale, Joss Moody.

La tesi è divisa in cinque capitoli. Nel primo capitolo ho illustrato brevemente la vita e la carriera letteraria dell'autrice, Jackie Kay, poi ho presentato la storia di Billy Tipton, un famoso trombettista jazz americano sul quale Kay ha basato il suo romanzo e il suo personaggio principale Joss Moody. Per spiegare come Billy Tipton e Joss Moody sono legati ho confrontato *Trumpet* con la biografia *Suits Me: The Double Life of Billy Tipton* scritta da Diane Middlebrook. Dopo di che ho parlato della struttura del romanzo, dei punti di vista e dello stile del linguaggio, interessante per la varietà di stili utilizzati. Nell'ultima parte di questo capitolo ho approfondito la tipologia di narrazione del romanzo, caratterizzata dal racconto della storia da parte di più personaggi, ognuno dei quali da una sua visione dell'accaduto. Di ognuno di essi ho analizzato la reazione alla scoperta del segreto di Joss Moody, dopo la sua morte, partendo da Millie, che deve subire l'assedio dei giornalisti conseguente alla morte del marito, Colman, il figlio scioccato dalla rivelazione e infine Sophie Stones, la giornalista poco etica di cui Colman si invaghisce; quindi sono passata all'analisi dei personaggi che narrano i capitoli intitolati 'People': i primi tre sono narrati da persone che non conoscevano Joss, ma hanno avuto a che fare con lui solo dopo la sua morte, mentre negli ultimi tre sono presentati i punti di vista di alcuni suoi vecchi amici. Infine ho commentato la posizione della madre, Edith Moore la quale è ignara del cambiamento di vita di Joss, e continua a considerarla la sua bambina. A seguito della rivelazione del segreto la maggior parte di essi non considera rilevante sapere se egli fosse uomo o donna, perché lo hanno comunque amato come un marito, un padre e amico, e l'amore che sentivano per lui ha permesso loro di guardare oltre l'apparenza di Joss. Mi sono riferita a Joss / Josephine, alternando l'uso di lui / lei in base al genere che lui / lei presenta al momento del racconto. L'unico personaggio di cui non ho parlato in questo capitolo è proprio Joss, che è una 'presenza assenza' nel

romanzo. Hargreaves suggerisce che la posizione dalla quale egli parla è sempre liminale; la sua è una voce spettrale, che ‘infesta’ il testo, una metafisica della presenza, eppure il suo parlare è anche, letteralmente, una questione di vita o di morte, implicando che ci sia molto, politicamente, in gioco nel suo parlare.

Nel secondo capitolo ho esaminato la complessità del suo personaggio e ho discusso tematiche riguardanti l'identità, il genere e sesso. Ho prima esposto le teorie sull'omosessualità, e ho trattato i concetti di eteronormatività, 'queer' e 'trans-people'. A partire da queste teorie ho analizzato il personaggio di Joss Moody concentrandomi in particolare su come egli costruisce la sua identità e sottolineando il fatto che lui è sempre stato al tempo stesso sia uomo che donna. Kay dà voce alla ‘presenza assenza’ di Joss in due sezioni del romanzo, ma l'autrice non lo descrive attraverso una auto-narrazione, ma lo colloca nella complessità della storia facendolo vivere attraverso i racconti delle persone che hanno avuto a che fare con lui. Ho inoltre analizzato alcune rivelazioni dei personaggi che in realtà durante la loro vita avevano visto in Joss qualcosa che non era del tutto maschile, ma nessuno aveva mai detto nulla a riguardo. In *Trumpet* Kay rappresenta l'identità come qualcosa di non fisso, che cambia continuamente. L'identità di un individuo è definita da molti aspetti diversi, come il sesso, il genere, la nazionalità, la classe e l'etnia, per citarne alcuni. Questo capitolo e il successivo illustrano come "nessuno dei soggetti transgender che ho esaminato nel mio lavoro può essere definitivamente identificato come transessuale o transgender e né può essere letto come omosessuale. Halberstam ricorda che non è possibile definire l'identità di una persona solo attraverso l'utilizzo di un'etichetta. A volte le persone semplicemente vivono in un ‘terzo spazio’, uno spazio in cui ognuno è descritto come un ‘ibrido’.

Nel terzo capitolo mi sono occupata della questione del crossdressing, ovvero travestitismo, in particolare delle pratiche e teorie applicandole a *Trumpet*. Nel romanzo Kay discute questo problema e la difficoltà di calzare identità che non riflettono chi veramente sia l'individuo. Ho individuato e discusso alcune

motivazioni, tra cui ambizione, affermazione di identità, che possono portare un individuo a travestirsi, in particolare riferendomi al caso di Joss Moody. Ho poi parlato di come la costruzione d'identità di Joss e la sua morte abbiano avuto un impatto sulle identità altrui, in particolare su Millie e Colman. Nel romanzo l'autrice sembra voler rappresentare una tipica famiglia basata sulla concezione tradizionale di eteronormatività, ma in realtà Kay mostra come sia insufficiente questo discorso quando c'è la necessità di identificare le persone, di attribuire loro una categoria che rifletta la categorizzazione tradizionale. Kay presenta Joss come un tipico uomo eterosessuale parte di un tipico matrimonio eterosessuale. In realtà il rapporto tra Joss e Millie è diverso da quello di una famiglia tradizionale, ma questo passa inosservato sin dall'inizio del romanzo. Analizzando il 'rituale' del matrimonio in *Trumpet*, ne emerge che questo tipo di rapporto li etichetta automaticamente come "marito" e "moglie". Come sottolinea Knockaert tali identità istituzionalizzate sono 'istituzionalizzate', nel senso che sono diventate parte di pratiche e istituzioni ufficialmente stabiliti, e sono chiaramente strumentali nel perpetuare il discorso eteronormativo. Questo mi ha condotto a discutere quali implicazioni derivino dall'utilizzo di etichette concludendone che questa pratica porta all'emarginazione dei soggetti etichettati secondo categorie che non li rispecchiano. Infatti ognuno di noi definisce la propria identità scegliendo chi vuole essere, e non sono gli altri che attraverso etichette possono decidere l'identità degli individui.

Nel quarto capitolo, ho teorizzato l'importanza della musica jazz nel romanzo come strumento di formazione dell'identità. La ripetizione dei titoli dei capitoli, la narrazione da più punti di vista e il linguaggio del romanzo creano una struttura che rispecchia il ritmo della musica jazz. Il titolo stesso del romanzo fa riferimento allo strumento musicale per eccellenza del mondo jazz, la tromba. Dopo aver delineato varie teorie sulle origini di questo genere, ho individuato nel testo i principali riferimenti musicali presenti concludendo che Joss utilizza la musica come veicolo per definire la sua identità, in quanto nel momento in cui egli suona, non è importante

che sia uomo piuttosto che donna, ma egli semplicemente diviene un musicista jazz, e questa è la sua identità.

Nel quinto capitolo ho illustrato come la musica jazz sia un tramite importante per esplorare le identità legate alla diaspora nel romanzo, poiché associata alle comunità afro-americane, è uno stile che unisce individui provenienti da realtà molto differenti tra loro. Nel romanzo Kay sceglie un jazzista afro-scozzese con lo scopo di inserire la cultura afro-americana nel contesto scozzese. Affermandosi come musicista scozzese che suona jazz, Joss non solo afferma la sua identità di scozzese, ma rappresenta anche la sua intera comunità afro-scozzese. Ho quindi esaminato come Kay costruisce questa l'identità nel romanzo anche attraverso le figure di John e Colman. Colman vive una vita di conflitto con il padre, poiché mentre il padre riconosce la sua eredità Africana, egli la rifiuta. La musica è uno strumento per Joss di negoziazione tra l'essere sia Africano che Scozzese. Colman vede l'Africa come qualcosa di totalmente lontano dal suo mondo. Nonostante questo, il suo vivere in Scozia e poi in Inghilterra come uomo che ha origini africane, presenta conseguenze spiacevoli sia per lui sia per la madre. Infatti fin da piccolo è soggetto a pregiudizi razziali.

Il capitolo "Last Word", lettera scritta da Joss al figlio, sarà il punto di svolta per Colman per l'accettazione sia della sua identità sia della vera identità del padre. Le questioni di identità sono spesso correlate ai nomi, all'attribuzione dei nomi. In *Trumpet* molti personaggi assumono nomi diversi durante le loro vite. In un certo senso l'assunzione di un nuovo nome o soprannome rispecchia una nuova identità. Nel romanzo ho individuato varie ragioni che hanno portato i personaggi a tali cambiamenti: uso di pseudonimi al posto del nome proprio, cambiamento del nome dopo il matrimonio, dopo un'adozione, dopo un cambiamento di genere o sesso o a seguito della deportazione. Ho quindi analizzato questi cambiamenti evidenziando la funzione e i significati dei nomi vecchi o dei nuovi assunti.