Original Scientific Paper
UDC: 821.111.09-31 Кеј Џ.
305-055.1/.2
DOI: 10.5937/zrffp55-60984

PARENTAL ROLE MODELS AND GENDER NORMS SUBVERSION: THE CASE OF JACKIE KAY'S *TRUMPET*

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Received: August 21, 2025
Accepted: September 25, 2025

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Keywords:
Jackie Kay;
gender identity;
gender binary;
transgender;
non-binary gender;
gender fluidity.

Abstract. The article discusses the complexity of gender identity in Jackie Kay's novel *Trumpet* (1998). The theoretical framework provides a brief overview of the social construction of gender based on the gender binary, which categorizes gender as either male or female, on the basis of the sex assigned at birth. The concepts of transgender and non-binary gender identities are introduced and problematized in the first segment of the research, drawing on the critical insights of Stryker, Butler, Wittig, Foucault, Althusser, and others. The authors examine the position of marginalized individuals whose gender is neither female nor male, but both, and inspect how such individuals, who represent non-binary gender or gender fluidity, are treated in contemporary society. The article explores Jackie Kay's critical stances on gender identity, compulsory heterosexuality, gender inequality, and oppression. It also argues that subversion of gender norms can be accomplished through the combined impact of parental role models and art, in particular jazz music.

Introduction: Disrupting Gender Norms— Transgender and Non-Binary Gender Identities

Susan Stryker claims in *Transgender History* (2008, p. 1) that transgender individuals "move away from the gender they were assigned at birth […] [and] cross over (*trans-*) the boundaries constructed by their culture to define and contain that gender." She postulates that these individuals feel whole only when they split from their "birth-assigned gender," since they feel that they belong to another gender. Stryker thus opposes the view that gender identity is predetermined by our biology (2008, p. 4) and argues that people who distance themselves from their gender assigned at birth suffer serious societal consequences (p. 6). In addition, being transsexual herself, she confesses that transgender individuals are severely marginalized by society, and for this reason she compares herself to Frankenstein's monster, abandoned and excluded from the social order (Stryker, 2004, p. 213). Recent research supports this position, noting that individuals that resist the female-male gender binary eventually face institutional discrimination (Richards et al., 2016, p. 95). Preceding Stryker's proclamations, Judith Butler (1993, p. 8) argued that the social exclusion of individuals who disrupt normative gender roles is solely a product of culture. As a result, contemporary social institutions, grounded in the gender binary, consequently erase the presence of individuals who deviate from prescribed gender norms.

Both Butler and Stryker demonstrate that modern culture perceives sex as equivalent to gender, with the two terms used "interchangeably in everyday speech," even though sex is biological and gender is culturally constructed (Stryker, 2008, pp. 7–8). Butler (2004, p. 143) rejects the legitimacy of dividing "human bodies into male and female sexes," arguing that such divisions serve the "economic needs of heterosexuality" and internalize the institution of heterosexuality. Similarly, Monique Wittig (2002, p. 27) asserts that the "straight mind" interprets "history, social reality, culture, language" through its subjective lenses, universalizing "its production of concepts into general laws which claim to hold true for all societies, all epochs, all individuals". The straight mind reveals its oppressive character under the guise of dominant ideology and culture. Wittig (2002, pp. 27, 28) claims that

concepts such as "the exchange of women, the difference between the sexes, the symbolic order, the Unconscious, [and] Desire," along with "Culture and History," are perceived in conformity with heterosexuality; its straight principles are thus placed into a "political dogma" that insists upon distinction between the sexes. For this reason, only one gender identity is internalized and socially acceptable—that which revolves around the straight mind, whereas all other identities present a threat to the system. Wittig (2002, as cited in Butler, 2004, p. 26) argues that the "overthrow of compulsory heterosexuality will initiate a true humanism of the person freed from the shackles of sex." Similarly, Butler (2004, p. 180) contends that "Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived", further challenging the idea of a fixed gender identity.

Stryker (2008, p. 13) claims that a person's gender identity is best depicted as "how one feels about being referred to by a particular pronoun," implying that language is also used as a social tool to propagate gender norms. Gender norms internalize two distinct gender roles—adequate behavior and activities, feminine or masculine, prescribed to members of a specific gender (Stryker, 2008, p. 12). According to Stryker, modern culture exerts control over individuals by forcing them to submit to "only two genders, one of which is subject to greater social control than the other, with both genders being based on genital sex." Additionally, individuals who do not conform to the gender norms which dictate how people move, gesture, and behave (Lorber, 1994, p. 23) are treated as lesser human beings. Lois Althusser (1971, p. 176) claims that an individual is "always-already a subject" even before birth, expected to perform the prescribed gender role imposed by ideology from the very start. He proposes that ideology functions with the aim of giving identity to an individual through a process called interpellation, transforming them into subjects (Althusser, 1971, p. 174). However, transgender individuals move away from the originally "assigned gender position" and gender roles, thereby defying the gender institution based on "gender norms and expectations" (Stryker, 2008, p. 19).

Individuals who express gender nonconformity—such as transgender persons, whose gender identity differs from the gender "socially assigned to them on the basis of their biological sex," bisexual, lesbian, gay, and others—are all victims of homophobia (Morrow & Messinger, 2006, pp. 7, 8). Homophobic attitudes are also directed towards individuals who are non-binary or genderqueer, who do not perceive themselves as transgender, as they see themselves as neither male nor female, but as both or a combination of the two—and towards those who are gender-fluid, "whose gender identities shift over time" (Bosson et al., 2019, p. 36). Today, there is a wide range of gender identities that disrupt the imposed gender dichotomy; for this reason, social institutions need to reconstruct gender norms and change the perception of what is considered "normal" and "unnatural" (Sullivan, 2003, p. 84).

Audre Lorde (1984, p. 120) criticizes gendered society by declaring that she has always been encouraged, by both the system and ideology, to isolate one aspect of herself and present it as a meaningful whole, "eclipsing or denying the other parts of self". However, she reveals that the only way for her to experience the "full concentration of energy" is to integrate all parts of who she truly is, openly, by rejecting "externally imposed definitions." By emphasizing that there are both female and male parts within her being, neither of which she is willing to discard, she affirms non-binary and fluid gender identity (Lorde, 1982, p. 1).

Lorde (1982, 1984) advocates for an identity which gives a deep feeling of fulfilment to an individual—two parts of an identity, male and female, where one is unable to exist without the other. The term *androgyny* refers to a person who might be "both masculine and feminine, both assertive and yielding, both instrumental and expressive" (Bem, 1974, p. 155). It stems from ancient Greek—*andro* (male) and *gyne* (female)—and represents "a condition under which the characteristics of the sexes and the human impulses expressed by men and women are not rigidly assigned" (Heilbrun, 1974, p. 143). According to Heilbrun (1974, p. 4), "[a]ndrogyny suggests a spirit of reconciliation between the sexes," and through a combination of feminine and masculine characteristics, it establishes equality between them.

In her novel *Trumpet*, Jackie Kay affirms that the true gender identity of an individual is non-binary and fluid, representing a combination of both female and male aspects that constantly evolve.

Subversion of Gender Identity Through Music in Jackie Kay's Trumpet

Kay portrays an individual's gender identity which does not recognize the gender binary. She depicts an unlimited and unrestrained identity, free from imposed gender norms—a gender identity that is multi-layered and fluid. Kay demonstrates how an individual can freely express their gender identity through music while subverting social norms based on the gender binary, compulsory heterosexuality, and gender oppression.

Music has always been a means by which an individual conveys feelings and manifests a sense of identity. Although music represents a "metaphor for identity," it also reveals a self that "can only be imagined as a particular organization of social, physical, and material forces" (Frith, 1996, p. 109). Despite the fact that identity is "shaped by the people," Frith (1996, p. 110) claims that a musical performance "reflects the people while creating an experience—a musical experience, [and] an aesthetic experience," which we can only comprehend by "taking on both a subjective and a collective identity". Moreover, and importantly, Frith asserts that musical performance does not allow for a division between genders and identities (1996, p. 109).

Frith's equating of music with identity illustrates the variability of identity; similar to identity, the rhythm of music changes and presents its many layers by telling different stories. Frith insists that identity is mobile, as is music, and not established in advance—rather, it is a process formed through space and time. González (2007, p. 91) validly asserts that Frith's definition of music represents the "liberating nature of identities," which are independent of any social constraints; identities that trespass all gender boundaries and resist definitions. Jeannette King (2001, p. 106) claims that music sets an individual loose from "the binary oppositions that insist on our difference one from another." Furthermore, she postulates that music does not rely on language that is culturally constructed and utilized as a social tool, so it is "gender-free" (King, 2001, p. 107).

Jazz, as a music genre, stands out among other genres, as it frees an individual from gender labels, cultural norms, and social regulations, representing an "unconventional construction of identity based on the fusion of elements from different traditions" (González, 2007, p. 88). In a similar vein, Barry Ulanov (1955, p. 3) argues that "the cortex of jazz consists of several layers, alternately hard and soft, complex in structure"; therefore, jazz is multi-layered, as identity is, and for this reason, it can faithfully represent one's non-binary identity, consisting of different parts combined in diverse ways, and gender fluidity, whose parts constantly change. Jazz subverts social norms and liberates an individual from the imposed gender norms and roles. Despite the fact that jazz has been restrictive to female musicians from its beginnings (Eckstein, 2006, p. 51), in her novel, Kay demonstrates that female individuals can also make their way through the jazz scene and skilfully present their complex gender identity.

Joss Moody as a Parental Role Model vs. State Regulation of the Gender Binary and Gender Performativity

The novel *Trumpet* (1998) draws attention to transgender individuals who cross the boundaries of socially imposed gender norms. These individuals resist various forms of social oppression present in the system and offer new possibilities. They form their own gender identity by expressing nonconformity to the social construction of gender.

The novel's plot was inspired by the true story of Billy Lee Tipton, a white pianist and saxophonist born in Oklahoma City in 1914 as Dorothy Lucile Tipton (Eckstein, 2006, p. 55). In spite of trying to break onto the Kansas City jazz scene, Tipton realized that her chances of succeeding as a woman were scarce. So, at the age of 19, Billy decided to cross-dress as a man, which ultimately brought her—now him—and his trio some success in the 1950s. Tipton married five times and adopted three male children. Only after Tipton's death in 1989 was it revealed that he was anatomically female, which shocked the public, as his wives and children also denied knowing his secret.

Diane Middlebrook (1998, p. 101) claims that Tipton dressed as a man in order to pursue a jazz career (1998), and King similarly argues that Tipton's motivation for changing gender identity was solely professional. The fact that Kay shifts the setting of *Trumpet* from the 1930s to the 1960s challenges the idea that Moody's (Tipton's) motives for the identity shift were merely professional, as the 1960s saw much more public tolerance towards the world of entertainment (King, 2001, p. 102). Nonetheless, Kay attempts to present identity as "unstable, constantly subject to transformation, and to demonstrate gender oppression" (González, 2007, p. 90). Kay admits in one of her interviews (Jaggi & Dyer, 1999, p. 53) that the publicity surrounding Tipton's death and the fact that "it was discovered that he was a woman" greatly inspired her to write the novel.

Trumpet depicts the life of Joss Moody, born Josephine Moody, a biracial jazz trumpeter of African descent who lives most of her life as a man, even though she is anatomically female. The most misleading interpretation of the novel is defining Joss as "two completely different people—a woman and a man" (Homans, 2020, p. 29). Hence, Joss Moody's gender identity combines both the female and male genders—or, in other words, Joss is "both a man and a girl" (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 6). The novel begins after Joss's death, opening with a shocking revelation of his secret, along with curiosity and astonishment from the public.

The story unfolds through a series of narratives, constantly overlapping while leaving the main character absent. There are varied first-person narrative voices, including Joss's grieving wife, Millicent, called Millie, who knew the truth about his transgender identity; Joss's adopted son, Colman, who feels deeply deceived after discovering his father's biological sex at the funeral parlor; and the deceitful tabloid journalist Sophie Stone, who plots to sensationalize Joss's story with Colman's help. Third-person narratives include those of the doctor, undertaker, and death registrar, whose official roles enable Kay to "contrast state regulation of binary gender" (Homans, 2020, p. 127), and of Edith Moore, Joss's estranged mother, who knew Joss only as a girl. There are also Joss's various friends and acquaintances: Big Red McCall, who played the drums with Joss; May Hart, Joss's school friend who was in love with Joss; and Maggie, who worked as a housekeeper for the Moodys. Different narratives point to the "fluidity and the vulnerability of an identity" (Gonneaud, 2020, p. 2), revealing the complexity of gender identity. The only time Joss directly addresses the readers is through a final letter addressed to his son. Despite his absence, Joss Moody dominates the novel, through the letter and the chapter "Music," which offer a glimpse into his consciousness (Eckstein, 2006, p. 56).

Metaphorically, the novel brings to the surface the aesthetic elements of jazz. During his lifetime, Joss Moody was "Britain's legendary trumpet player" (Kay, 2011, p. 6); however, the moment he dies and the shocking revelation about his true gender identity, which does not correspond to his biological sex, comes to light, he loses his fame and becomes "an outsider as his gender variance has been

disclosed to the public" (Richardson, 2012, p. 363). What is more, the power of the state and media intrudes upon his family's private grief and takes liberties by "(mis)-naming everything which is not in accordance with normative genders and the heterosexual family" (Richardson, 2012, p. 363). Joss falls out of the public eye, and from a renowned icon becomes a "figure of revulsion" (Richardson, 2012, p. 365).

Journalist Sophie Stones represents "the voice of the dominant society that relegated Joss back into the world of the dead" (Richardson, 2012, p. 365). Very quickly Joss loses his title of Great Britain's legend and is misnamed as "the Transvestite Trumpet Player" (Kay, 2011, p. 125). Sophie cunningly takes advantage of Colman by exploiting his sorrow and confusion, coming up with "her own versions of Joss's motives for passing" as a man (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 10). Both Sophie and Colman, by relying on their logic, strive to reduce Joss's identity to a number of possibilities which would "maintain the legitimacy of a heterosexual norm that relies on keeping the presence of anatomically differentiated bodies" (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 11). Sophie seduces Colman, who finds her attractive, and the two become "avatars of normative sexuality," based on "heterosexual norm opposed to the other heterosexuality of Joss and Millie" (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 11). With these circumstances in mind, Wittig (2002, p. 20) may be right to claim that heterosexuality is the tool of the system by which the "difference between the sexes" and female gender oppression are legitimized.

When Colman discovers that his father was anatomically female, "his own sense of manhood" becomes undermined as he experiences uncertainty over "gender categories," making him an easy target for Sophie's exploitation (Richardson, 2012, p. 361). His primary reaction to the "unveiling of his father's body goes with the grain of the institutionalized assertion that a female body must match with a feminine gender identity," indicating that, at the beginning of the novel, he stands with the institution along with Sophie (Gonneaud, 2020, p. 3). However, by the end of the novel, Colman has overcome his transphobia: by reliving his memories of Joss, he is overwhelmed with love and empathy towards his father and begins to re-identify with him, eventually accepting his "gender complexity and, in turn, his own" (Koolen, 2010, p. 71).

Previously, throughout the novel, Colman is emotionally shattered by his father's secret and denounces his mother for not telling him the truth. He isolates himself from his friends and continually questions, "[w]hy couldn't he tell his own son?" (Kay, 2011, p. 55). Colman wants to "[f]ind out about his father's real life" (Kay, 2011, p. 190) and decides to break into the family home, where he discovers a letter from his father marked "To be opened after my death" (p. 193). Colman assumes the letter contains "a list of excuses and reasons" (Kay, 2011, p. 65) for his father's secrecy and expects to learn about the true cause of Joss's transition or, perhaps, about his life navigating two genders. However, he postpones opening the letter until the very end of the novel, when we discover that it contains information of a completely different nature.

As an adopted son of African descent, Colman "equates the destabilizing effects of his adoption with those of his father's gender" (Homans, 2020, p. 131), asserting that Joss's gender "has made us all unreal" (Kay, 2011, p. 60). He recalls his father telling him that his birth origin does not matter and, according to Homans (2020, p. 133), "we can observe Colman's rejection of Joss's philosophy of self-reliance and self-creation concerning gender and racial identity." Joss encourages his adopted son to experience the same process of gender self-creation which he himself underwent and to disregard his birth parents as a stepping stone for inventing his own identity. Joss teaches his son a lesson about gender identity by indirectly inspiring him to recreate his own, which aligns with Butler's claim that "gender is in no way a stable identity," but rather "an identity tenuously constituted in time" (Butler, 1988, p. 519). Colman must resist institutional regulation based on the binary gender system and compulsory heterosexuality, viewing his identity from this new, multi-layered perspective. Homans (2020, p. 132) argues that sex and gender identity coincide with racial and national identity in the novel; this forces Colman having to rediscover various parts of his complex identity. To help him do that, Joss encourages Colman to invent his own story using his imagination (Kay, 2011, p. 59).

Retrospectively, Colman realizes that his father was talking about gender "without roots in an originating body" (Homans, 2020, p. 134). Similarly, Frith (1996, p. 109) claims that "identity is mobile, a process not a thing, a becoming not a being, it is shaped by people, it is a story, and it has a life of its own." Joss's identity directly challenges the social construction of gender that insists on a binary model and the connection between biological sex and gender identity. Initially, however, Colman misunderstands his father's lesson, reversing his statement to "[m]ake it up and trace it back" (Kay, 2011, p. 58). He visits Greenock, Joss's birthplace, "to reaffirm his belief not only in original biological gender but also in ethnic/national origins" (Homans, 2020, p. 134). After meeting Edith, Joss's mother, who uncannily recognizes him, Colman rediscovers the truth about his father. He holds an old photograph of Josephine at age seven and carries it "gently, making sure he will not damage it" (Kay, 2011, p. 242). He looks at the photograph and discovers that there is no stable truth to gender (Homans, 2020, p. 135). He drops "the defensive, rigidly masculine pose" that previously filled his angry thoughts about Joss and inspired his collaboration with Sophie Stone, allowing himself to feel sorrow, tenderness, and love (Homans, 2020, p. 134). By the end of the novel, Colman accepts both the feminine and masculine parts of Joss's identity, thereby embracing his own sexual and gender ambiguity, realizing that "there was no essence—either of gender or of racial/national origin—to pursue" (Park, 2006, p. 140), only the freedom to create.

Colman eventually decides to read Joss's letter, discovering that it tells "the story of any black man who came from Africa to Scotland" (Kay, 2011, p. 271). Joss recounts the story of the African Diaspora and his own father, John Moore,

who arrived in Scotland as a six-year-old child migrant without parents. In the letter, Joss reveals that his father's name "was not his original name" (p. 276) and concludes: "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" (p. 276). The reason Joss changed his name from Josephine Moore to Joss is quite evident; however, many other characters in the novel also have more than just one name. Colman Moody's birth name was William Dunsmore, Colman's first girlfriend Melanie's real name is Ruth, and Malcolm McCall, Joss's former bandmate, has been known by various names, such as Big Man and Big Red McCall. These characters' multiple names highlight the idea that "not one identity is stable and simple" (Gonneaud, 2020, p. 6)—identities are complex and layered, each layer bearing a distinct name.

Joss's wife Millie, crushed by sorrow at her husband's death, experiences fragmented memories of their love story. She remembers the moment when she and Joss first met while giving blood in 1955, and how she made the first move as she was immediately drawn to him. They courted for three months, during which Millie longed for intimacy, but only after Joss witnessed Millie's emotional reaction to the "liberating force of the music he loves in the club" did he reveal himself to her in his bedroom by unwrapping the bandages over his breasts (Eckstein, 2006, p. 59). While watching Joss's early performance in Glasgow, Millie describes: "[S]omething in me go soft, give in"; when she looked at Joss, she felt he was staring at her, "[h]e's seen it all happening. He looks right through me" (Kay, 2011, p. 18). Eckstein (2006, p. 59) asserts that this "transcending thrust of music beyond essentialising categories' bonds Millie and Joss together, and ultimately their communion in music is followed by their first sexual communion." As Butler suggests, music, especially jazz in this context, serves as a "metaphor of being" and "a model of identity formation" based on performance, in contrast to the social construction of gender that assumes sex reflects gender (Eckstein, 2006, p. 51).

When Joss's secret is exposed to the public, Millie's feelings and perceptions of her husband remain completely the same. She suffers because she cannot see Colman, who feels deeply deceived because of their secret. Millie confesses that she never viewed Joss's biological sex as a secret, having forgotten about it after a while, which points to the fact that "'the truth of the body' was irrelevant to their lives and identities as a married couple" (Gonneaud, 2020, p. 3). Millie thus introduces another truth of gender—the non-binary or fluid gender identity—which opposes the essentialist definition of identity.

Millie recalls, "I watch Joss walk up the street, hands in his pockets. He has a slow deliberate walk, like he's practised it" (Kay, 2011, p. 15). Joss's masculinity is derived from "copying other black male jazz artists," suggesting that male gender identity is not "restricted to the born-male individual" (Richardson, 2012, p. 371). In other words, gender identity is socially performed, based on repetitive actions, not assigned at birth (Butler, 1988). Everyone who meets Joss is struck by his

smooth demeanor; his "black masculinity is studied, copied, and performed to perfection" (Richardson, 2012, p. 371). The only thing Millie acknowledges Joss is unable to give her is a child; but "He can do everything else. Walk like a man, talk like a man, dress like a man, blow his horn like a man" (Kay, 2011, p. 37). Millie reveals that "the biologically female body of her husband is irrelevant to his gendered identity," further demonstrating that his identity merely replicates the "social expectations of masculinity" (Gonneaud, 2020, p. 4).

After experiencing a big volte-face, Colman arrives in Torr to mourn with his mother. As Millie watches him approach, she observes: "He moved so like his father" (Kay, 2011, p. 278). The fact that Millie recognizes Joss in her son illustrates that Colman has inherited his masculinity from Joss (Homans, 2020, 138). Colman admits that he was his "father's disciple" (Kay, 2011, p. 62), desiring his approval "as a man," and ultimately acknowledges that he "fucking worshipped him" (p. 49). Thus, Colman's acknowledgement that he looked up to his father reveals that "both gender and lineage are stories" (Gonneaud, 2020, p. 138), as Colman adopted his male gender identity from his father, who was female anatomically. Moreover, this revelation aligns with the claim that gender identity is performative (Butler, 1988, p. 527), "instituted through a stylized repetition of acts" (Butler, 1988, p. 519).

Bandages play an important symbolic role in the novel, as they relate to Joss's biological sex, which the doctor and funeral director, as advocates for gender essentialism, understand to be indicative of Joss's gender identity. After Joss's death, the bandages "seem part of his body" (Homans, 2020, p. 129). Millie admits that she keeps them in her underwear drawer: "[T]hey lie in there curled and sleeping like a small harmless animal while [t]hey smell of him still" (Kay, 2011, p. 239). From the moment they got married, Millie started routinely helping Joss dress, wrapping the bandages "round and round, tight," without "thinking much" about it (p. 238). Despite this routine wrapping, Millie confesses that Joss's breasts "didn't exist. Not really" (p. 240).

Doctor Krishnamurty remembers seeing "the bandage lying curled on the bed like a snake" (Kay, 2011, p. 44) when she comes for Joss's body in Moody's house. When she starts removing the bandages to inspect Joss's body closely, it feels like she is removing skin—"each wrapping of bandage that she peeled off felt unmistakably like a layer of skin" (Kay, 2011, p. 43); this refers to different layers of identity. The gesture of removing the bandages that cover Joss's breasts resembles a snake's action of "shedding and replacing a skin" (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 3). Stryker (2008, p. 10) confirms that people shape their bodies according to cultural practices, since it is impossible for a person to modify their body without being judged by society and culture. At first, Dr. Krishnamurty thinks that the breasts are not real (Kay, 2011, p. 43), that they are "male breasts"; only then does she realize that they are "too big" (p. 44). She takes her red pen, the one she regards as "her emergency red pen", crosses out "male," and writes "female" (p. 44).

The doctor represents "the appointed upholders of the state, who are required to affirm sex as monolithically Male or Female" (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 7).

Foucault (1980, p. 5) poses the question: "Do we truly need a true sex?", and if we do, what it would be. He contends that "sex is placed by power in a binary system: licit and illicit, permitted and forbidden," and that power—society—imposes an "order for sex" as a "form of intelligibility," which also operates as both a law and a norm (Foucault, 1978, p. 83). As she corrects and signs Joss's death certificate, Dr. Krishnamurty announces the beginning of a crisis with her emergency red pen, which reveals "the State's desire to regulate and control sex. … Hence, as Joss's body and his death certificates are passed to registrar and to the funeral director, the state re-inscribes, by overwriting, Joss's self-fashioned masculinity" (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 7). Hargreaves further claims that they overwrite "by erasure," with the material presence of Joss's body evidently representing a crisis, as the state insists upon "the relation between anatomical sex and gender." By inspecting Joss's body and clothes, their concept of gender identity becomes shaken. Foucault (1980, p. 5) accentuates that state regulation insists upon sexual identity, where the presence of elements of the opposite sex in a person is regarded as "simply illusory". Butler (2004, p. 48) contends that gender norms are "produced by the very laws" which require that the sex assigned at birth correspond to the person's gender identity. In addition, she postulates that this naming of a person as she or he "is at once the setting of a boundary and the repeated inculcation of a norm" (Butler, 1993, p. 8).

However, Hargreaves (2003, p. 15) claims that, while the doctor's red pencil indicates her professional status, her childish handwriting signifies that medicine, "supported by juridical systems, lacks the maturity to tolerate and withstand forms of self-determined difference". This author further insists that Joss is the person who resists naming in every possible way; he is both "African and Scottish, male and female, a musician whose aesthetic relies on mimicry" while refusing a regular beat.

Jazz: Negation of the Gender Binary

Music plays a crucial role in *Trumpet*, as it is "potentially gender-free; especially jazz, which requires improvisation, the abandoning of scripts and precedents, the ability to construct variations on given melodies, rather than being tramlined by agreed roles and forms" (King, 2001, p. 107). Eckstein (2006, p. 51) argues that some voices restrict jazz to mostly male, Black musicians; however, Billy Tipton, or the novel's Joss Moody, greatly defy the social boundaries of both gender and race. In the novel, Kay (2011, p. 57) poses the question: "Why not a woman playing a fucking trumpet man, what's wrong with that?", thereby criticizing women's oppression in society. Jazz is used in the novel as "a mode of being," "an

improvisational mode of protean, fluid, and flexible dispositions toward reality, suspicious of either/or viewpoints, dogmatic pronouncements, or supremacist ideologies" (West 1993, as cited in Eckstein, 2006, p. 55); as such, it pushes back the boundaries of "blackness," "maleness," "femaleness," or "whiteness." This viewpoint is already manifested in the fact that Kay moves jazz from an African American setting to Scotland and London, positioning its social functionality beyond national contexts (Eckstein, 2006, p. 58). Moreover, jazz is used by Kay as a linguistic "instrument" able to express a more fluid gender identity, which is "encapsulated by the figurative image of the trumpet" (Amideo, 2018, p. 15). Theo van Leeuwen (2012, p. 319) states that "music can also be subversive and challenge power," much like jazz, which was composed by African slaves who fought for freedom on American plantations. For this reason, jazz favors "a performative approach to the social and biological constraints of gender and race," placing great emphasis on "performance and self-creation over essence and determinism" (Eckstein, 2006, p. 51). The origin of jazz is linked with the African diaspora and its cultural tradition, where both "language and identity [are perceived] as performance, fluid"; thus, their language and identity oppose Western discourse, which revolves around "official historiography and its essentialist notions of identity" (Amideo, 2018, p. 17).

Kay uses "the language of music" (Amideo, 2018, p. 18) to subvert the symbolic order upon which society and language are largely based. The idea that jazz subverts essentialism and the male/female dichotomy through performance is clearly visible in the central chapter entitled "Music," where Joss completely submerges himself in a musical performance. By stripping himself of all layers, Joss miraculously lifts himself from this world, transcending all social constraints based on gender norms, as well as racial and gender oppression. We witness Joss's solo performance "in which past, present and the future are conflated," when he observes his own birth and death "while the music takes over his identity, takes it apart, and eventually pieces him together again" (Eckstein, 2006, p. 59). Kay (2011, p. 134) is emphatic: "He is the music. The blood dreaming". She insists that "The music is his blood" (p. 135), thereby replacing the rigid feature of blood relations which defines "our family and origin, our race and gender" with "the performative fluidity of identity formation in the moment of musical creation" (Eckstein, 2006, p. 59). Joss completely loses himself to music during his performance and experiences a blissful moment of identity transcendence (Eckstein, 2006, p. 60).

Through repetition and inversion, Kay emphasizes the transformation of Joss's gender identity, as suggested by the constant shift of pronouns, from female to male and back again (Amideo, 2018, p. 23). Joss is stripped of all identity labels constructed by society, and through music he enjoys "the freedom of expression" and gender fluidity (Amideo, 2018, p. 25). There is no absolute truth behind the numerous masks that constitute one's identity (González, 2007, p. 91), but rather a complex process of identity construction that resists definition. The trumpet is

a symbol on its own: it has a concave end and combines "the masculine and the feminine in its form," as Joss is both a woman and a man (Monterrey, 2000, p. 92).

Music "renders all phases of identity simultaneous, leaving nothing behind," and since music is in Joss's blood (Kay, 2011, p. 135), it rejects "both social and biological distinctions of age and gender" (Homans, 2020, p. 130). Kristeva's semiotic is present in music as "the semiotic interrupts, subverts and undermines the symbolic"; connected with "musical, rhythmic sound" (Kristeva, 2011, pp. 26, 31), it defies "all tight divisions between masculine and feminine" (Kristeva, 2008, p. 164). Kay (2011, p. 135) specifies: "It is liberating. To be a girl. To be a man", with the female and male blissfully united. Sophie Stones wrongly assumes that music is "a red herring" (Kay, 2011, p. 127) in the story of Joss's life—in truth, it is the very element of Joss's existence (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 13) that helps him subvert the socially imposed gender binary. Music enables Joss to transcend all social norms, all the world, and Kay reveals to us how he achieves this with his trumpet.

Joss unwraps himself during his musical performance, and he is "with no body" (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 13), implying that his gender fluidity rejects the notion of the body. According to Frith (1996, p. 109), identity is mobile like music, not something given in advance, but rather a process which gradually and freely unfolds; identity and music both contain "performance and story." Kay draws a parallel between identity and music while pointing out that identity is burdened with different "racialised and gendered attributes" imposed by society (Amideo, 2018, p. 18). Because of this, identity needs freedom to flourish on its own in the same way that music does. Kay negates "binary oppositions that insist on our difference one from another" (King, 2001, p. 106) and offers music as a way of subverting one's enforced gender identity. A person does not need to be "somebody coming from something"—it is better to be "nobody" (Kay, 2011, p. 135). That way, one is able to resist the social construction of gender and create one's identity. As Butler (1993, p. 8) argues, by naming somebody something, we set a boundary and repeat an established norm. Kay illustrates how each person possesses both sexes and how one can blissfully unite both the female and male parts of self:

> "He is a girl. A man. Everything, nothing. He is sickness, health.
> The sun. The moon. Black, white.
> Nothing weighs him down. Not the past or the future.
> He hangs on to the high C and then he lets go. Screams. Lets it go." (Kay, 2011, p. 36)

Kay offers a solution for constructing one's identity while resisting all social norms based on the gender dichotomy, as well as women's and racial oppression, an identity that magnificently unifies both female and aspects parts into one.

Concluding Remarks

In *Trumpet* by Jackie Kay, gender identity is depicted as an unstable category, formed through time and repetitive acts (Butler, 1988, 2004). This challenges the theory of essentialism, which postulates that gender is assigned at birth and, as such, is impossible to change. Instead, gender identity in the novel is represented as independent from one's biological sex, either female or male, allowing individuals the freedom to construct their own gender identity. The author uses music as a novel means of communication and a tool for subverting imposed gender norms, enabling individuals to use their imagination and change their perception of gender identities. In this way, an individual can disrupt the social construction of gender based on the binary system and explore more possibilities.

Furthermore, the novel addresses gender inequality and oppression, outcomes of the gender binary that insists on two distinct and separate genders, each containing its respective characteristics, either feminine or masculine. Kay introduces the non-binary gender, or gender fluidity, which resists the binary system of genders, gender oppression, and compulsory heterosexuality. She advocates for equality by combining feminine and masculine elements into one.

Joss Moody expresses gender identity through musical performance that tells a story and is prone to change. Music becomes a metaphor for identity, as identity goes through different stages of development, with each stage telling a particular story that is continuously in a stage of change. We witness Colman's self-transformation, from a masculine misogynist to someone who accepts his father's non-binary identity and ultimately embraces his own feminine characteristics. He learns from his father that he needs to embrace both sides of his identity, feminine and masculine, and reconcile them into one. In this way, he combats gender oppression and urges for equality.

Kay critiques a culture which marginalizes individuals who do not conform to the either/or category of gender and, as a result, treats them as less human. Furthermore, as a result of the separation of gender into two distinct and opposing categories, gender inequality and oppression come to the surface. Kay presents the consequences of this binary through Joss's son's resentment, as he struggles to accept his father's gender fluidity, as well as through state representatives who insist on defining two visibly specific genders. Therefore, Kay advocates for the liberty of every individual to form their gender identity and disrupt socially imposed, dichotomy-based gender norms. She calls for the reconstruction of gender identity established by the system and offers a universal language that relates to the semiotic and recognize no divisions at all. She presents the non-binary gender identity, which resists the separation between women and men, or feminine and masculine characteristics, and offers a blissful union of the two. Through the concept of non-binary gender and gender fluidity, Kay achieves equality while defying oppression.

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Родитељски узори и субверзија родних норми: читање романа *Труба* Џеки Кеј

Резиме

Чланак разматра сложеност родног идентитета у роману Џеки Кеј *Труба* (1998). Теоријски оквир садржи кратак преглед друштвене конструкције рода засноване на родној бинарности која раздваја род у две различите категорије, мушки и женски, на основу пола додељеног при рођењу. Концепт трансродног и небинарног родног идентитета уводи се и проблематизује у првом сегменту истраживања, уз позивање на критичке увиде Стрејкерове, Батлерове, Витигове, Фукоа, Алтисера и других. Ауторке рада испитују положај маргинализованих појединаца са родом који није ни женски ни мушки, већ представља њихово прожимање, и испитују како се ове особе, које се данас категоришу као примери небинарног рода или родне флуидности, третирају у савременом друштву. Чланак истражује критичке ставове Џеки Кеј о родном идентитету, наметнутој хетеросексуалности, родној неједнакости и друштвеном угњетавању. Такође проблематизује идеју романа да се субверзија родних норми може постићи комбинованим утицајем родитељских узора, као и уметничких (посебно из домена џез музике) и родитељских узора.

Кључне речи: Џеки Кеј; родни идентитет; родна бинарност; трансродност; небинарни род; флуидност рода.