Azaklı, A., (2024). Hybrid Identities in Adoptive Realms: a Third Space Study on Jackie Kay's "So You Think I am a Mule?" (1984), "Black Bottom" (1991), and "Hottentot Venus" (1998). *Folklor Akademi Dergisi*. Cilt:7, Sayı:2, 854 – 870.

Makale Bilgisi / Article Info

Geliş / Received: 26.05.2024

Kabul / Accepted: 19.08.2024

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

DOI: 10.55666/folklor.1490012

HYBRID IDENTITIES IN ADOPTIVE REALMS: A THIRD SPACE STUDY ON JACKIE KAY'S "SO YOU THINK I AM A MULE?" (1984), "BLACK BOTTOM" (1991), AND "HOTTENTOT VENUS" (1998)

Ayşegül AZAKLI*

Abstract

In a multicultural sphere, adaptation and acculturation are intricate yet inevitable processes for the integration of a hybrid individual into the dominant society. Postcolonial critic Homi Bhabha, in his *Location of Culture* (1994), introduces the notion of a third space, wherein individuals' struggles are elucidated through a wide array of elements, including hybridity, alienation, unhomeliness, ambivalence, in-betweenness, and mimicry. In this respect, this study aims to elucidate how Jackie Kay, an Afro-British poet, navigates her own odyssey within the Scottish context, where she is often perceived as an outsider despite her British upbringing and identity. In this regard, her poems "So You Think I am a Mule?" (1984), "Black Bottom" (1991), and "Hottentot Venus" (1998) are analysed within the framework of third space theory to underline to what extent and why a mixed-race poet creates hybrid personae within postcolonial settings. The seven-year intervals between these works also indicate shifts in Kay's perspective as a Scottish person of colour. These autobiographical poems, featuring autobiographical speaking personae, reflect Kay's evolving thoughts on being a hybrid individual in the white Western world. Viewed through a Hegelian lens, the poems function respectively as thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, highlighting their significance both to one another and to Kay as a hybrid poet whose personae are on a journey to reconcile with their hybrid identities. The poems, which contain cultural components that mirror the sociocultural dynamic of each set, add a deep layer to the analyses concerning acculturation processes. In conclusion, this study aims to bring a new perspective to the cultural study of contemporary British poetry through a dialectical approach to Kay's selected poems in a cultural context. Given the seven-year gap between each poem, the study intends to illustrate how Kay reflects on her hybridity and upbringing as an adopted child through her fictional personae and how the dialectic nature of the three poems involves the personas' evolving attitudes toward hybridity in foreign lands.

Keywords: Jackie Kay, "So You Think I am a Mule?", "Black Bottom", "Hottentot Venus", third space.

* Res. Assist., Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University, Faculty of Science and Letters, Department of English Language and Literature, Ağrı/Türkiye. ayazakli@agri.edu.tr. ORCID: 0000-0002-6820-2384

YABANCI DİYARLARDA MELEZ KİMLİKLER: JACKİE KAY'İN "SO YOU THİNK I AM A MULE?" (1984), "BLACK BOTTOM" (1991) VE "HOTTENTOT VENUS" (1998) ŞİİRLERİ ÜZERİNE BİR ÜÇÜNCÜ UZAM ÇALIŞMASI

Öz

Çok kültürlü bir alanda, bu ortama uyum ve oradaki kültürleşme, melez bir bireyin egemen topluma entegre olması için karmaşık fakat zorunlu süreçlerdir. Postkolonyal eleştirmen Homi Bhabha, *Kültürel Konumlanış* (1994) adlı eserinde bireylerin mücadelelerinin melezlik, yabancılaşma, yersiz yurtsuzluk, kararsızlık, arada kalmışlık ve taklitçilik gibi çeşitli unsurlarla açıklandığı üçüncü bir alan kavramını melez bireylerin bu deneyimlerine açıklık getirme araçlarından biri olarak ortaya atar. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışma, Afro-İskoç bir şair olan Jackie Kay'in, Britanyalı olarak yetiştirilmesine ve bu kimliğine rağmen sıklıkla bir yabancı olarak algılandığı İskoç toplumunda kendi kişisel macerasını toplumu oluşturan safkan bireylerden farklılıkları olmasına rağmen nasıl yönlendirdiğine açıklama getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, "So You Think I am a Mule?" (1984), "Black Bottom" (1991) ve "Hottentot Venus" (1998) şiirleri, melez bir şairin postkolonyal ortamlarda ne ölçüde ve neden melez kişilikler yarattığının altını çizmek için üçüncü uzam teorisi çerçevesinde analiz edilmiştir. Bu eserler arasındaki yedi yıllık aralıklar, görece siyahi bir İskoçyalı olarak Kay'in bakış açısındaki değişimlere de işaret eder. Anlatıcıları otobiyografik bağlamda oluşturulan bu şiirler, Kay'in beyaz Batı dünyasında melez bir birey olmak üzerine zamanla değişen, hatta birbiriyle çelişip yepyeni bir paydada buluşan düşüncelerini yansıtmaktadır. Hegelci bir mercekten bakıldığında, şiirler sırasıyla tez, antitez ve sentez işlevi görerek hem birbirlerinin hem de Kay'in melez bir şair olarak kendinden birer parça ile oluşturulan anlatıcılarıyla uzlaşma yolculuğundaki öneminin altını çizer. Her bir ortamın sosyokültürel dinamiğini yansıtan kültürel bileşenler içeren bu şiirler, kültürleşme süreçlerine ilişkin analizlere derin bir katman eklemektedir. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, Kay'in seçilmiş şiirlerine kültürel bağlamda diyalektik bir yaklaşımla, çağdaş İngiliz şiirinin kültürel incelemesine yeni bir bakış açısı getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Her bir şiir arasındaki yedi yıllık boşluk göz önüne alındığında, çalışma Kay'in melezliğini ve evlat edinilmiş bir çocuk olarak yetiştirilmesini kurgusal kişilikleri aracılığıyla nasıl yansıttığını ve bu üç şiirin diyalektik doğasının, kişiliklerin yad topraklarda melez ve öteki bireyler olmaya karşı değişen tutumlarını nasıl içerdiğini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Jackie Kay, "So You Think I am a Mule?", "Black Bottom", "Hottentot Venus", üçüncü uzam.

Introduction

In today's globalized world, discussions on identity and multiculturalism have assumed tremendous importance, particularly in the context of widespread immigration. Multiculturalism includes and deals with the struggles of an individual when integrating into societies different from their own. Thus, it requires solving problems stemming from being present in a new culture and social atmosphere (Shorten, 2022: 3). With multiculturalism, the acculturation process has acquired significance, too. Simply put, acculturation is the adoption of a second culture other than one's own. In other words, it involves individuals adopting elements of a new culture in addition to their own. In fact, during the process, due to the power differentials, "members of the 'weaker' society are compelled to adopt aspects of the dominant society" (Eller, 2016: 225). Eventually, it tends to create a chaotic situation for individuals from the subculture, as they feel alienated from both their own culture and the dominant one.

The concept of the 'third space', attributed to Homi Bhabha, stands as a cornerstone in comprehending the complexities of cultural adaptation, which has stemmed from multiculturalism. Before delving into this notion, it is essential to address the importance of postcolonialism in literature, as multiculturalism in literary theory is inexorably linked to postcolonialism. Postcolonial criticism, which rejects universalism, emerged in the 1990s after the colonized countries proclaimed independence following the Second World War. It criticizes the dominance of Euro-centric concepts as in the binary oppositions, which assign non-Eurocentric individuals and practice the role of the marginal (Barry, 2017: 160). The postcolonialism theory often endeavours to explore the issues such as the consequences when an individual's thoughts or personal background diverge from the practices imposed on them in realms other than the motherland. Similarly, it looks for an explanation of the situation where the culture consists of white-dominated individuals imposing their ideology on the weaker minority since ethnic and racial minorities tend to be denied (Şafak, 2014: 359). Due to the colonial attitude of the superior culture, the minority is often silenced. Thus, postcolonial literature has aimed to give voice to these silenced individuals' suppressed concerns by the perspective of the colonized, who adhere to their own ethnic identity as a political stance.

The third space notion, popularized by Bhabha, denotes the territory sought by the colonized to establish new surroundings in order to feel secure from external forces. This displacement often arises from racial mixing or living in a foreign land, leading to a detachment from one's original roots. Within this 'third space,' individuals navigate an in-between realm where cultural boundaries blur, challenging traditional notions of identity and belonging. The third space thus signifies a domain where individuals can feign a sense of belonging. With Bhabha's notion of hybridity, cultural dimensions, such as space and time, no longer adhere to singular entities or binary classifications like self/other; instead, they manifest within the Third Space, generating meaning beyond cultural confines (1994: 36).

The concept of the third space contains such facets as hybridity, alienation, unhomeliness, ambivalence, in-betweenness, and mimicry. Hybridity functions as a medium for negotiating the boundaries and binaries that shape multi-identities and cultures. It signifies "the productivity of colonial power" (Bhabha, 1994: 159), as hybridity results from the clash between the dominant and subordinate cultures with the former's victory. It is inevitable in such a case for the sense of alienation to rise since hybridity requires a mixed sense of belonging, resulting in alienation in the given culture. Unhomeliness, closely intertwined with hybridity, arises from a lack of certainty of cultural roots and origins, fostering ambivalent attitudes towards cultural belonging. The mixed borders between the domestic home and the outside world cause this disorienting sentiment of unhomeliness (13). Similarly, mimicry, often characterized as a "blurred copy" of the colonizer (Ashcroft et al., 2007: 125), is inseparable from the previous concepts, as it proceeds from the adoption of a new culture during the acculturation process. It is blurred, unclear in the sense that it attempts to replicate the original without making it exactly the same. In the postcolonial context, mimicry brings along one's own cultural identity, regardless of the extent of success in imitation.

In academia, post-colonial theories, including Homi Bhabha's third space theory, have emerged as important frameworks for understanding cultural dynamics. Thus, Bhabha's

conceptualization of the previously mentioned third space notion encompasses hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence, and unhomeliness, which are essential in exploring the complexities of cultural identity in a globalized world. As Bhabha propounds, the third space is a cultural space for "the negotiation of incommensurable differences [but] creates a tension peculiar to border-line existences" (1994: 218). The idea of the third space is all about this in-between place where communication happens and where people create and share their mixed-up identities during their interactions. When multiple cultures intersect, they give rise to what is termed as the "development of Third Space of enunciation," offering insight into the concept of binary equivalence by "destroying the mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code" (Bhabha, 1994: 37).

The poems selected for analysis in this study contain some events regarding multiculturalism and advocating for the rights of Black individuals. One significant historical allusion in the poems is about the imprisonment of Angela Davis. The poems make allusions to broad socio-political movements such as the Civil Rights Movement with Angela Davis, as well as specific events like Sarah Baartman's reburial in South Africa in 2002, accompanied by an apology from France in the same year. These references highlight the interrelation and significance of identity in multicultural societies as given within the context of the poems.

The concept of the third space can perhaps best be found in the works of Jackie Kay (1961-), a prolific Afro-British author who embodies the complexities of hybrid identities within her literary works. Kay's oeuvre, encompassing poetry and prose, delves into themes of multiculturalism, adoption, and racial identity. Unlike her contemporaries, Kay's emphasis on the diversity of ethnicities in Scotland, particularly through her own Afro-Scottish perspective, offers a unique lens through which to explore these themes. Her debut poetry collection, *The Adoption Papers* (1991) earned her the Scottish Arts Council Book Award and the Saltire Society First Book of the Year Award. Moreover, her *Other Lovers* (1993) won her a Somerset Maugham Award. Additionally, her novel, *Trumpet* (1998) was awarded the Guardian Fiction Prize. In 2011, her autobiographical masterpiece, *Red Dust Road*, won Book of the Year at the Scottish Book Awards (Kay & Tournay-Theodotou, 2014: 83). Her further poetry collections include *Life Mask* (2005), *Darling: New and Selected Poems*, (2007) and *Bantem* (2017). In recognition of her contribution to Scottish literature, Kay was appointed as the Makar, *or* National Poet for Scotland, in 2016 (Scottish Poetry Library, n.d.).

As a prolific poet, Kay yielded several works of literature; however, while Kay's early works such as *Trumpet* and *The Adoption Papers* have mostly been subjected to analysis, her selected poems— "So You Think I am a Mule?" (1984), "Black Bottom" (1991), and "Hottentot Venus" (1998)—remain relatively unexplored within the framework of the third space theory. The present study thus aims to fill this gap by conducting a comparative analysis of Kay's selected poems, examining the manifestation of third space theory within her works. By contextualizing Kay's poetry within the then historical and sociopolitical events and movements, the objective is to show how the third space theory intersects with broader discourses of multiculturalism and social justice. Ultimately, Kay's poetry serves as a rich tapestry of narratives that reflect the diverse and evolving nature of contemporary identity. Through the analysis of the concepts such as alienation, hybridity, and unbelonging, this study aims to explore how Kay's poetry mirrors culture, identity, and belonging in the modern world and to what extent her understanding of identity has changed.

Most of Jackie Kay's literary works are autobiographical, and if not, they contain bits from her own life or experiences. As an Afro-British poet and author, Kay's features as a mixed-race, Scottish-Nigerian woman have profoundly influenced the themes such as alienation, hybridity, and unbelonging. Kay differs from her contemporaries in that she strongly emphasises the theme of black lives and diversity of ethnicities in Scotland. In contrast to female Scottish poets like Kathleen Jamie and the former poet laurate Carol Ann Duffy, who often centre their focus on feminist and LGBTQ rights, Kay's poetry delves into the complexities of racial identity and cultural diversity, shedding light on narratives that are frequently neglected. Despite previous studies predominantly scrutinizing themes of belonging and otherness in Kay's seminal works such as *Trumpet* and *The Adoption Papers*, the selected poems in this study remain unexplored within the framework of third space theory, presenting an opportunity for fresh analysis and interpretation.

In most interviews, Kay has been asked questions regarding her African heritage and the intricacies of her adoption journey by a Scottish couple. In one such interview, she elucidates:

> I've got a complex identity because I'm Scottish and I'm African and I'm adopted and I was brought up in Glasgow by white, working class socialists. My birth father was from Nigeria. My birth mother was from the highlands in Scotland. I don't think you need to go much further than that to get a sense of a mixture or a clash or a fusion of identities; for me that has always been very enriching and it's a starting place in my writing (2014: 268).

The evidence from these lines suggests that the portrayal of alienation, hybridity, and unbelonging in Jackie Kay's poetry is deeply influenced by her own personal experiences as a mixed-race, Scottish-Nigerian woman, allowing for sociocultural reflections of the late-twentieth-century Scotland on her poetry. Much like Kay's personal life and upbringing, the personae in the poems depict how they construct hybrid identities to deal with their dilemmas between two distinctive cultures and social norms. Through a comparative analysis of Kay's selected poems written with a seven-year gap, a notable transformation in her worldview might occur, as her worldview undergoes a transformation, moving away from focusing on her personal struggles with hybridity and alienation towards a more expansive exploration of communal identity and belonging.

The themes of alienation, hybridity, and unbelonging in Jackie Kay's poetry can be understood as manifestations of the tensions and contradictions inherent in the third space, where individuals are subjected to multiple cultural and social frameworks to construct complex and dynamic identities. By applying the framework of third space theory to Kay's poems, it becomes apparent that her work challenges essentialist notions of identity and offers a vision of identity as fluid, contingent, and constantly negotiated within cultural hybridity. For this reason, contextual and autobiographical analyses will be conducted in this study to delve into the third space in each poem respectively.

"So You Think I am a Mule?" (1984)

Jackie Kay first published "So You Think I am a Mule?" in *Feminist Review*. The poem prominently addresses themes of alienation and hybridity, which are evident through the frequent use of specific terms: "pure," "mule," "mulatto," "hybrid," "half-caste," "mixed race," "mixtures," and "mating of a she-ass and a stallion." These words indicate the lines' association with hybridity. Nationality also emerges as a dominant theme, with the persona rejecting a half-Scottish identity and expressing a sense of being African. The emphasis on race is highlighted through the recurrent mentions of the colours "white" (3) and "black" (5). In this poem, the persona reacts strongly to the perceptions and judgments of white Scottish people with a rigid and aggressive tone, and it serves as the thesis of this study.

Like Kay's many other poems, this poem contains autobiographical elements concerning the verbal abuse as a mixed-race British in Scotland. Kay refers to a similar memory in an interview:

> Actually somebody called me a 'black bastard' just the other day in Manchester and that was really shocking. It was so shocking because I hadn't had that kind of abuse for a while. It is always upsetting. You're never ever going to be inured to racial abuse, never. It's just going to hit that button that takes you straight back to childhood. (Kay & Tournay-Theodotou, 2014: 96).

The racial bias Jackie Kay experienced in her childhood is imprinted in her poetry, serving as a personal reflection of the past, an experience that likely isolated her from Scottish society. Her darker skin compared to that of the Scottish folks made her a target for verbal abuse with questions that sought to place her outside the Scottish identity. The poem captures a moment when Kay, or the speaking persona, encounters a white British woman, who symbolizes the British culture imposed on African culture within the British Isles, on the street. Correspondingly, the poem "So You Think I am a Mule?" begins with a question-answer dialogue, wherein the speaking persona faces relentless inquiries about her origins.

"Where do you come from?"

'I'm from Glasgow.'

"Glasgow-?"

'Uh huh. Glasgow.' (lines 1-4)

The opening of the poem is characterized by recurrent questions in the form of dialogue to probe the ethnic origins of the persona. Dialogue serves as a key characteristic of the third space, where cultural experiences are complex and ambivalent. Dialogues reflect the multiplicity of truths about varying cultures, resulting in what Fougère and Moulettes describe as "hybrid cultural representations" (2012: 27). Thus, the dialogue at the outset of the poem delves into the nature of cultural hybridity, with one speaker scrutinizing the origins of the other in a patronising manner, which signifies "the productivity of the colonial power" (Bhabha, 1994: 159). This exchange highlights the persona's hybrid identity, as she is compelled to position herself elsewhere, in a space distinct from that of the old, white lady, who is presented as the embodiment of dominance.

The white lady, dissatisfied with the response she receives, persists in her inquiry regarding the speaker's identity. Even upon learning that the persona's parents are from "Glasgow and Fife" (line 16), she remains unconvinced. She can be interpreted as a representative of colonizing figures, embodying an artificial sophistication derived from her position of dominance. She persists until she hears the narrator's admission of her African origins. The Western, particularly European, canon often operates on binary oppositions to establish hierarchies. When an individual fails to adhere to Western canons of rationality, their actions are often perceived as irrational (Seremani & Clegg, 2015: 2). Similarly, as in a binary opposition, the old lady instinctively views the speaker as the antithesis of British society. Her claims are largely based on the speaker's skin colour, which does not fit neatly into black-white categorizations. Consequently, the speaker is seen as an irrational individual because she strictly advocates her blackness.

The white lady's insistence on the speaker's purity regarding her ethnic roots is further followed by her reference to the narrator as a "mulatto," a term that inadequately encapsulates the cultural hybrid identity depicted in the poem. This usage represents a culmination of offense for the narrator. Feeling the last straw of insult, the narrator ceases to tolerate the white lady and explains the situation:

'Listen. My original father was Nigerian

to help you with your confusion.

But hold on, right there.

If you Dare mutter mulatto,

hover around hybrid,

hobble on half-caste,

and intellectualize on the

'mixed race problem', (lines 28-35)

Parallel to line 28, Kay's biological father is a Nigerian, with whom Kay describes her meeting as "traumatic" (2014: 87) in an interview. Despite traveling across continents to Nigeria to meet him, she finds her father unable to establish the expected bond and is rejected by him (84). This rejection by her Nigerian father may have contributed to Kay's sense of entering a third space. Similarly, in the poem, the father figure for the persona lacks solidity, resembling more of a ghost or myth about whom stories have been told. This mirrors Kay's experience of adoption and the resultant sense of unbelonging, stemming from her hybridity, or as the old white lady labels it, her being a "mulatto." The anger in the poem thus is likely to stem from the feeling of displacement as an adopted child. Kay elaborates on this feeling by stating, "All adopted people are displaced in some ways; […] in the sense that you are no longer with the original family and now with another" (2014: 89). Perhaps Leverette, born to parents of two different cultures like Kay and her personae, best describes the feeling of being a hybrid, oscillating between two cultures:

> Because I see myself as both black and white, I, like many other persons born to parents of different races, sometimes think of myself as moving in the space that unites the two, as traveling from one shore to another given certain contexts, and other times as sailing the river that forms

the meridian between two shores (Leverette, 2006: 79).

In the poem, the obstinacy of the narrator concerning her origins is salient, likely motivated by a desire to dismantle the feeling of being marginalized or "othered" as in Leverette's case. The subsequent emphasis on skin colour and complexion in the poem is unsurprising. The description of the old lady's "beady eyes" (line 37) serves as an indicator of her race, likely with green or blue eyes that are often associated with the image of superior white individuals. When the speaker sarcastically refers to the old lady as the "Great White Mother" (line 41), she highlights the significance of skin colour as a symbol of white superiority over people of colour. Conversely, the speaker adamantly rejects being labelled as "half of this and half of that" (line 44), boldly asserting that she is "purely black" (lines 45-46). Her insistence on blackness can be viewed as both a defence mechanism and a political stance. As Leverette propounds, "many believe that those of mixed race should align themselves with their minority heritage in a show of political solidarity [and that] individuals, even when they may identify personally as mixed race, should be counted as Black" (2009: 440). Taking a similar political stance, Kay's persona asserts that a hybrid individual with Afro-British origins should identify as black.

In rebelling against the current space where she experiences unhomeliness and rejection of her hybrid identity, the narrator acts impulsively and accepts the identity imposed upon her by the "Great White Mother." In so doing, she submits to a form of patriarchy, which manifests itself in disguise of the mother figure in adoptive realms. Furthermore, the characterization of the judgmental lady as old symbolizes the perceived all-knowing or omniscient nature of the West. This evokes the Foucauldian notion of discourse which Edward Said employs to identify orientalism (1979: 3). According to Said, the discourse of the West exerts hegemony over the East, a dynamic reflected in Kay's poem with the old white lady symbolizing the West and the hybrid persona representing the East.

In the poem, Kay, or the speaker, appears unaware of the potential existence of a third space where she could achieve self-realization. Instead, she feels compelled to belong exclusively to either the culture and people she was born into or the one she is claimed to be from. She becomes the victim of "projected fears, anxieties and dominations that do not originate within the oppressed [her]" (Bhabha, 1994: 23). It becomes evident when she says, "I'm black / My blood flows evenly, powerfully" (45-46), indicating a preference for her African origins. Due to the discrimination she has experienced, the speaker feels compelled to choose either her British identity or her African heritage, and she makes an instant decision in favor of the latter. Nonetheless, during her visit to Nigeria, long after the publication of this poem, Kay was considered white by the African community (2014: 96). Similar to Kay being referred to as black in Britain and white in Africa, the persona of the poem is perceived as non-white and non-British, experiencing unhomeliness, ambivalence and thus a lack of belonging.

"[C]olorism reached its negative zenith in blue-vein societies and other groups," with their members "whose veins could be clearly seen beneath their skin, whose hair could be passed through a fine-toothed comb, and whose skin was no darker than a paper" (Leverette, 2009: 436). The persona, fervently advocating her African roots, embraces her "African nose", "lips", and "hair" (51-52) instead of feeling shame for having an appearance outside the norms of Scottish, exhibiting individual rebellion. She instinctively seeks solidarity with other women who share her physical features, and with a smooth transition, she mentions black women likened to the members of the same union:

I'm going to my black sisters,

to women who nourish each other

on belonging ... There's a lot of us

black women struggling to define

just who we are,

where we belong

and if we know no home

we know one thing:

we are black;

we're at home with that.' (57-66)

As seen in the lines above, the transition to feminism is evident, providing a plausible reason for its publication in *Feminist Review*. The persona's focus on the sense of belonging is particularly salient in the above lines as she associates belonging with blackness, specifically with female blackness. The bond formed around skin colour is reflected as a connection so powerful that the persona readily embraces any black woman. It suggests that in a country with a culture vastly different from her own, she feels adopted not only biologically but also socio-culturally, finding solace and connection only through solidarity with people who share her skin colour and physical appearance. Notably, the persona remains unaware of the possibility of a hybrid space where she can realize her Afro-British self. Hence, her feeling is compelled to choose between two identities.

The persona's experience of alienation is intensified by the struggle to accept her hybridity, as she is repeatedly labelled as such by others in humiliating ways. Consequently, she rejects her Scottish identity and feels the necessity to align herself with her African roots. Her headstrong attitude is particularly evident in the poem's conclusion, where she abruptly ends the conversation with the old lady, refusing to allow any further discussion: "Well, that's all very well, but ..." / "'I know it's very well. / No but. Goodbye.'" (lines 67-69). This refusal to allow the white lady to speak back suggests a reversal of roles in the superior-inferior dichotomy. As Foucault also asserts, power and knowledge produce one another, since "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (1977: 27-28). Thus, the narrator engages in a power play to make her own assertions accepted by the old white lady, who stands for the white, Euro-centric world.

Autobiographically, "So You Think I am a Mule?" provides insight into Kay's personal relations with her family roots, particularly concerning her adoption. The persona in the poem is suggested to be an adopted child with adoptive parents from Glasgow and Fife, reflecting Kay's own adoption experience. When juxtaposed with later poems like "Black Bottom" (1991) and "The Hottentot Venus" (1998), "So You Think I am a Mule?" stands out as the earliest written one and thus shows Kay's initial stance as a reluctant sympathizer with her Scottish origins, influenced by the attitude of the old white lady symbolizing Euro-centric predominance over her. By portraying the persona as a representative of the black community, the poem reflects a salvific wish "to save or rescue the black community from white racist accusations of sexual and domestic pathology, through the embrace of conventional bourgeois propriety" (Jenkins, 2002: 973). In light of all the above, viewed through Hegelian terms, this poem can be interpreted as the thesis in the "triplicity" (Hegel, 1910: 46) of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, marking Kay's journey toward understanding and accepting her hybrid identity.

"Black Bottom" (1991)

Hegel's proposition that "the thing contains within it opposite aspects of truth, a truth whose elements are in antithesis to one another" (Hegel, 1910: 117) forms the basis for constructing a thesis and an antithesis. In this study, "the thing" refers to "So You Think I am a Mule?," with its antithesis being "Black Bottom," published seven years later. "Black Bottom" serves as the antithesis in the study in that, unlike Kay's persona in the previous poem, the present persona aligns herself with her Britishness.

"Black Bottom" (1991) delves predominantly into themes of ambivalence and unhomeliness, as well as other concepts that evoke a sense of in-betweenness. "Black Bottom" is one of the poems in *The Adoption Papers*, which is an autobiographical collection based on the pre- and after period of Kay's adoption process. Throughout the poem, the persona is subjected to bullying and verbal abuse through derogatory terms such as "Sambo," "Dirty Darkie," and "Afro," leading her to question her physical appearance in the mirror. Despite feeling Scottish, her African appearance induces ambivalence regarding her mixed nationality. Namely, the persona's exploration of her

identity, torn between feeling Scottish but looking African, indicates ambivalence concerning her sense of belonging. Symbolically, the title dance reflects African aesthetics, with a further emphasis on the persona's struggle with her identity, touching upon adoption and the rights of black people, while maintaining a relatively neutral stance towards racist accusations against her. As such, the poem functions as an antithesis to the previous one, serving as a bridge between the initial and final poems and representing a form of self-acculturation.

When Kay writes about racism and the question of ethnicity in her poetry, her objective might be bringing about change in the treatment of people of colour like herself in Britain. This notion is evidenced by her comments on her upbringing: "I was raised on politics and demonstrations so I have always had, as far back as I can remember, a commitment to change. Writing is very important to me because it helps me to define what I want to change and why" (qtd. in *A Dangerous Knowing: Four Black Women Poets,* 1985: 2). Unlike Kay's persona in "So You Think I am a Mule?", who identifies herself as purely African, the persona in "Black Bottom" questions her ethnic origin. She feels Scottish yet looks African, a conflict emphasized when she looks in the mirror. The internal structure of the poem differs from others with italicized lines representing utterances by the adoptive mother, bold lines denoting those by the biological mother, and standard font attributed to the child persona.

The poem begins with the adoptive mother's thoughts regarding the persona's adoption process. It reveals that the persona was not treated as a baby by the authorities due to her skin colour. The adoptive mother's frustration is expressed through lines such as "to think she wasn't even thought of as a baby, / my baby, my baby" (15-16), conveying her distress at the fact that the child's skin colour was an obstacle in the path of her consideration as a baby. The ambivalence the baby is born into, as perceived by the adoptive mother, might have a bad influence on the child's growing up. Its traces can be seen when a schoolmate calls the persona as "Sambo". She answers with violence, as she knees him in the balls (line 23). After releasing him, he further insults her with the term "Dirty Darkie" (line 28), indicating that his attitude toward her has not changed despite her violent response.

The persona's experience of unbelonging is not restricted only to the relationship with her friends. A female teacher intervenes in the fight between children. She seems to take sides with the white kid as she accuses her of systematic violence: "I see you were fighting yesterday, again. / In a few years time you'll be a juvenile delinquent." (35-36). A teacher's racial approach to the kid might evoke ambivalence even at such a young age. She is believed to be inherently violent as the teacher further refers to her as "Thug. Vandal. Hooligan" (40). The adoptive mother faces pressure from neighbours, most of whom are the mothers of the child's schoolmates. It implies that the child is not aware of her adoption. For that reason, she cannot come to a conclusion regarding the abuse of other kids when they use racist language against her. This provokes the child to respond with violence, a symptom of social victimhood, against those who overtly use racist epithets to humiliate her.

The part where the persona practices the cha-cha and the black bottom dances is of paramount importance since she is expected by the teacher to perform the black bottom flawlessly: "I thought you people had it in your blood." (55-56). This racist utterance of the dance teacher has a profound effect on the child. One more statement the persona could not make sense of was, once again, uttered by the very same teacher: "Darkies are like coal" (line 58). The persona's questioning of the teacher's words is unsurprising when she repeats to herself "What Is In My Blood?" (66). The question holds a significant place in the poem with blood operating in sociocultural space as a tool to create a kind of unhomeliness with ambivalence for the child, since "in ethnic groups, a sense of belonging is created through the symbolism of blood relations and shared history" (Blanton, 2015: 9177). Likewise, there has been a recurring theme in how people conceptualize the role of blood ties in determining one's affiliation with particular social groups or identities (Marcelin, 2012: 255). Thus, when the teacher emphasizes the narrator's blood, she effectively excludes the child's potential to belong to the British communal identity, which weakens the persona's ongoing struggle with identity and belonging in the face of racial prejudice and societal expectations.

The symbolism of the dance choreography in the black bottom reflects the emotions that Jackie Kay aims to convey through the child persona. The moves of the dance, as depicted in Images 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, evoke the imagery of tribal dances in African culture, characterized by free movement of the arms and legs. In contrast to Western dances, where movements are often constrained and limited to a smaller sphere, the black bottom represents a more primitive form of dancing associated with African traditions. Through the black bottom, the speaking persona is depicted as a rebel acting on impulses, akin to the violent actions she takes towards her schoolmates when they call her racist names. The dance serves as a metaphor for the persona's defiance against societal expectations and racial prejudice, highlighting her struggle for acceptance and belonging in a predominantly white society.

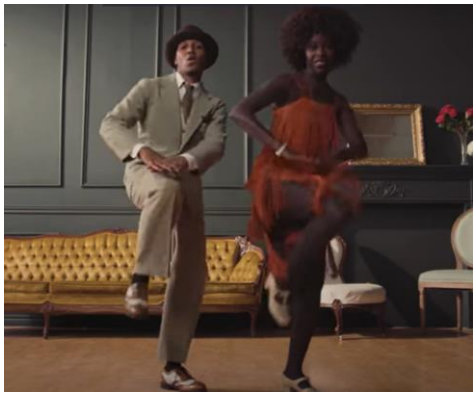

Image 1.1. How to Dance the Black Bottom. (CBC, 2018).

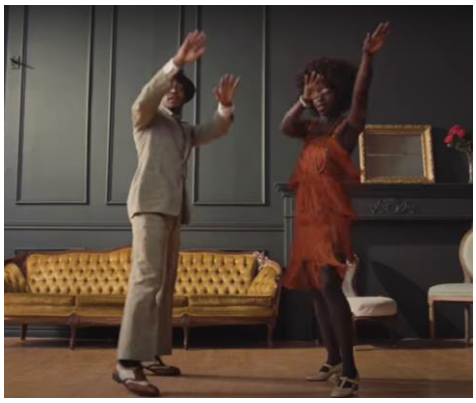

Image 1.2. How to Dance the Black Bottom. (CBC, 2018).

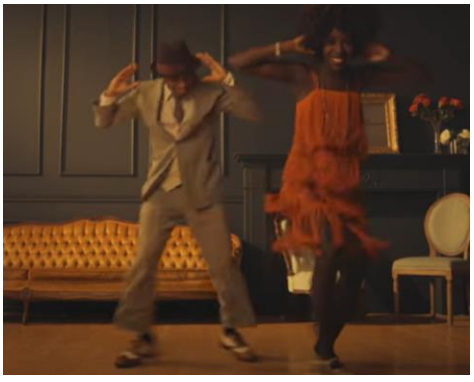

Image 1.3. How to Dance the Black Bottom. (CBC, 2018).

The persona feels that she is different than the others despite the adoptive mother's efforts to comfort her, which ultimately only serves to mask the reality. Consequently, the child's self-questioning remains unresolved. For school shows, the child thinks she can act as white actresses such as Bette Davis, Katherine Hepburn, or Elizabeth Taylor, with sympathy for them, resulting from

being born into white Scottish society and feeling like one of them. However, the teacher dismisses such aspiration, circumscribing her only to dances like the black bottom, which are associated with rebellious and primitive moves attributed to black people. White people's understanding of black people is ingrained in their discourse on which John Brooks elucidates as follows:

> This historical discourse asserted whiteness's supremacy by positing that African-descended people lacked an arc of historical development or by describing Black people as stuck in a state of slaveness, which is to say that historical models of Western development—and their insistence that Blackness represents the antithesis of modernity—are products of modern time consciousness. (Brooks, 2017: 165)

People's celebration and recognition of modern dance shows and actresses are nothing extraordinary. Neither is the child's willingness to be part of the white modern community. However, the white teacher marginalizes the child, despite her upbringing in Scotland and identification with white people. She feels a sense of belonging among them, yet she is not perceived by others as possessing the Scottish communal identity due to her hybrid background with African origins. Consequently, she is deemed incompatible with the modernity of Britain, being the target of the modern time consciousness as articulated by Brooks. Despite her efforts, Kay's persona continues to experience the feeling of unhomeliness and thus struggles to find room for herself in a society that fails to fully embrace her hybrid identity. The cultural ambivalence and unhomeliness the persona experiences signify the "artifice of identity" (Bhabha, 1994: 63), indicating that identity is a constructed concept rather than an inherent one, influenced by both individual and social structures of power and control.

In the poem, when the voice of the biological mother is finally heard, she mentions nothing other than her first encounter with the African biological father, Olubayo. This narrative detail supports the claim that the poem is autobiographical, mirroring Jackie Kay's own family background with her biological parents: a Scottish mother and an African father. The lines spoken by the biological mother "He never saw her. I looked for him in her; / for a second it was as if he was there / in that glass cot looking back through her" (91-93) suggest that the father may not have been aware of the pregnancy, implying that the persona may have been the result of a one-night stand. The brevity of the part uttered by the biological mother corresponds to the limited impact of the biological parents on the child's life. The poem's structure, shifting between the voices of the adoptive and biological mothers with the child in-between, highlights the persona's sense of in-betweenness. She is trapped in between her adoptive mother, representing her Scottish identity, and her biological mother, symbolizing her connection to her African heritage through her relationship with the father.

The poem's fragmented structure in terms of moving from one narrator to another and from one memory of the child to another indicates a kind of ambivalence. As the narrative moves between different perspectives and recollections, the child narrator suffers from the feeling of being lost amidst this ambivalence. In response, she seeks to establish a communal bond with individuals who share her racial identity, akin to "So You Think I am a Mule?". This shift is exemplified by the child's attention turning to Angela Davis, a prominent black activist. By identifying with Davis, the persona seeks connection and solidarity with someone who looks like her and shares her experiences:

On my bedroom wall is a big poster

of Angela Davis who is in prison

right now for nothing at all

except she wouldn't put up with stuff (94-97).

The child's admiration for Angela Davis stems from her status as the only black person on TV, despite her notoriety. In the child's eyes, Davis is a superhero, with a poster on the wall, which she kisses at night. It symbolizes the child's deep admiration and emotional connection to Davis, who serves as a role model and source of inspiration. The mention of their shared skin colour after describing the kisses creates a profound emotional bond between the child and Davis. The similar body colour becomes a source of communal belonging and solidarity, answering the question of what is in their blood: a shared sense of identity and belonging.

so sometimes when I look in the mirror

I give myself a bit of a shock

and say to myself Do you really look like this?

as if I'm somebody else. I wonder if she [Davis] does that. (117-120)

Accepting that her physical appearance is different than those of Scottish people surrounding her is a struggling process for the persona as can be seen in the above part. This struggle reflects her efforts to assert her existence as a Scottish person, though in an identity crisis. By seeking out individuals who resemble her, such as Angela Davis, the persona seeks validation and solidarity regarding her racial identity. To the end of this solidarity, the persona aligns herself with the notorious Angela Davis's cause, even going so far as to wear a bandage with the slogan 'FREE ANGELA DAVIS' (line 132). This symbolic gesture demonstrates the persona's unwavering support for Davis and her commitment to challenging injustices faced by black individuals, despite the public criticisms and accusations.

"Black Bottom", with its title named after a dance associated with Africans, functions as the antithesis in this study, marking the evolution of Jackie Kay's understanding of belonging and hybridity over a seven-year period following the publication of "So You Think I am a Mule?". According to Hegel, "an individual makes its appearance in antithesis to an individual" (1910: 178), and this concept can be applied to poetry, where each poem presents a distinct perspective to the reader. In "So You Think I am a Mule?", Kay's persona embraces her African identity with obstinacy to contradict the white supremacy over her hybrid identity. In contrast, "Black Bottom" contains a persona who suffers from alienation and confusion when confronted with racial othering. Not only the racial bias from her schoolmates and teachers but also her reflection in the mirror causes her alienation from others despite her feeling Scottish. With "So You Think I am a Mule?" as the thesis and "Black Bottom" as the antithesis, the stage is set for synthesis, which will be explored in the following part.

"Hottentot Venus" (1998)

"Hottentot Venus" emerges as the synthesis of this study. Within this poem, the concepts of in-betweenness and mimicry are noteworthy, put forth by the recurrent use of the pronoun "my," the persona's embrace of the English name "Sarah Bateman" instead of "Saartjie Baartman", and her acquisition of English words. In this poem, Jackie Kay and her persona acknowledge their hybrid identity within Scottish culture. Practicing mimicry and acculturation serves as a means of acceptance of multiculturality, with the speaking persona embodying Saartjie Baartman, an exploited historical figure symbolizing people of colour. In this study, the poem serves as a synthesis, "a meditating term" which Hegel elucidates as "the unity directly aware of both, and relating them to one another; and the consciousness of their unity, which it proclaims to consciousness and thereby to itself, is the certainty and assurance of being all truth" (Hegel, 1910: 222-223).

The poem serves as synthesis as Kay embraces her hybrid identity within Scottish culture, symbolized by her portrayal of The Hottentot Venus. With acculturation by means of mimicry, she creates a third space where the effects of in-betweenness are lessened. Positioned between the first and second poems, "Hottentot Venus" creates a brand-new persona with a sense of belonging, neither fully British nor solely African, but rather existing in the melting pot of both cultures.

The poem is based on the real-life experiences of Saartjie Baartman, a South African woman born in 1789 in the Gamtoos River valley, where her cemetery has been since 2002 (Crais & Scully, 2009: 19-178). She was nothing beyond a material for exhibition neither in England nor France due to her abnormal body parts, especially her genitals. As elaborated by Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully, Europeans were interested in her "body, not her history, her location in the order of the natural world, not her thoughts or her feelings" (2009: 164). She was exploited as an object of great curiosity, and the men who brought her to Europe were in the belief that they could make a fortune by exhibiting her to the white Europeans who found the black exotic. "In France", for instance, "she metamorphosed into a tragic heroine and showgirl manqué, a fallen goddess of love, the epitome of the African exotic" (Holmes, 2008: 57, 128). Correspondingly, Kay's Hottentot Venus is pictured as

an exotic woman, summarising her journey from Africa to Europe with the hardships she endured. However, the poem also depicts how the persona creates a third space for herself for she is neither an African nor a British once dislocated from her tribe.

The poem encapsulates the physical exploitation and dehumanization experienced by Saartjie Baartman, whose body parts were exhibited in museums in France and England. In the first stanza, her exotic body is scrutinized as if she were an animal, with her genitals and anus treated as objects of curiosity rather than limbs of a human being. Instead, her body is othered from both herself as a woman and from others, especially white people. In the poem, too, her body parts were exhibited as if in a circus or a zoo, and for that reason, people paid to see her "non-European genitals" (9). The depiction of her being caged further emphasizes her objectification. The white men thought her lips' size were not natural (12) in the sense that they were not as thin as those of white people's. Additionally, the poem alludes to the historical autopsy of black people's anatomy, conducted by French scientist Georges Cuvier. With the intention that the scientific circle could reach detailed information about the black people, Baartman's body parts, like her private parts and brain, were kept in a jar of formaldehyde and shown off in Paris at the Muse´e de l'Homme for a long time. They even had her bones and a plaster copy of her body on display. France owned her skeleton while it was in the museum, but after a big legal fight which started in the 1990s, they finally sent her remains back to South Africa in 2002 (Catanese, 2010: 52).

Baartman's historical tragedy is depicted in a similar vein in the poem. She emphasises the cruelty she experienced while mentioning some kind of a trauma which she recalls through the following lines where she is even sexually harassed with a parasol:

Some things I will never forget

no matter how I am divided up:

the look on a white lady's face

when she poked her parasol into my privates.

Her gloved hands. Her small stone eyes.

Her English squeal of surprise at my size.

My sigh is black. My heart is black.

My walk is black. My hide, my flanks. My secret. (17-24)

The persona vividly describes the European belongings associated with the white woman, including her "gloved hands" and "small stone eyes" (line 21), highlighting the noticeable contrast between the dominant European culture and Baartman's marginalized existence. The persona's depiction of the white woman's English speech as a "squeal" (22) conveys a sense of scorn toward the dominant culture from the perspective of the marginalized. Following this encounter, the persona puts emphasis on her blackness: "My sigh is black. My heart is black. / My walk is black. My hide, my flanks. My secret" (23-24). The highlight of her body colour functions as a way of pride in her multicultural identity.

The persona's journey to self-acculturation begins with her self-isolation or self-discrimination as a black woman. The recurring focus is thus on her identity as a black woman, with emphasis on her dark eyes with black tears. Even her tears are not considered humanlike, as they are referred to as "crocodile tears" (29) by another white man poking her with his cane. Her homeland is now just a dream to her: "My country is a dream now. Or maybe it did not exist." (31), and she begins to accept the feeling of unhomeliness, of unbelonging. It provokes her to adapt herself into the new culture although she had done so without realizing it.

When they called me in, three men in suits,

They asked me in my own bush tongue

if I wanted to be exhibited in this fashion.

I said the English words I'd heard them say often.

Money. Freedom. My Boer keeper smiled. (32-36)

It is indicated in the lines above that the persona's learning English words demonstrates how she creates a space, bringing herself as a non-European woman into the British culture of which she is now a part. Her unconscious utterance of English words indicates the process of acculturation. Kottak comments on acculturation as a "mechanism of cultural change" through which a continuous cultural exchange occurs with the direct contact of groups. This interaction, to some extent can alter the cultures of one or both groups while each group preserves its unique identity. As a result of acculturation, cultures seem to share and combine several elements such as cuisine, music, clothing, tools, technologies, and languages (2018: 35). Baartman's adoption of an English name and her performance of European dance figures are manifestations of this acculturation and mimicry process. However, this imitation is not straightforward; rather, it emerges as "the representation of a difference" (Bhabha, 1994: 122). In other words, mimicry is maintained through disavowal, which means the colonised simultaneously accept and reject the colonizer's ways. This dynamic is reflected in Baartman's cynical tone in the poem. Nonetheless, Baartman is more fortunate than most women left on margins in that "her identity was known, because part of her history could be reconstructed, and because of her unique presence in Western history," […] she is imbued with the status of "a sacral object" (Crais & Scully, 2009: 189).

The final lines of the poem are perhaps the most striking ones: "Now, what name have I got? / Sarah Bateman. Like an English woman. A great actress." (47-48). The transformation of the name "Saartjie Baartman" (42) to "Sarah Bateman" reflects a significant shift in identity. The acceptance of the English name, her renaming herself as "Sarah Bateman" instead of "Saartjie Baartman" demonstrates her creating an identification outside either Britishness or Africanness, and it also hints at the change in Kay's perspective regarding her stance towards her ethnicity and acceptance of multiculturalism. Wilderson III elaborates on the issue of the change in perspective of the black and the white as follows:

> Human value is an effect of perspectivity. What does it mean, then, if perspectivity, as the strategy for value extraction and expression, is most visionary when it is White and most blind when it is Black? […] Blacks, then, void of Presence, cannot embody value, and void of perspectivity, cannot bestow value. Blacks cannot *be. Their mode of being becomes the being of the NO*. (Wilderson III, 2008: 98)

"The Hottentot Venus" thus intermingles the binary oppositions, black and white and yes and no, in order to reconcile and find common ground. The poem does the very same thing, functioning as synthesis. In the poem, Baartman experiences colonial encounters in Britain and France. Such individuals are likely to become imprinted with the characteristics of both cultures through creating a third, hybrid space as pointed out by Bhabha in *Location of Culture* (1994) (Seremani & Clegg, 2015: 5). During the acculturation process, the dominant Western societies are more likely to impose their cultural norms on non-Western societies rather than the other way around. It can be seen in Saartjie Baartman's dramatic monologue, where she is under the influence of the Europeans than vice versa. When applied to Baartman's experience, Bhabha's third space theory suggests that Kay's Baartman is beyond a passive recipient of colonial influence as she actively engages in the negotiation of her identity within colonial encounters. Thus, it can be indicated from the poem that, unlike the previous speakers in "So You Think I am a Mule?" and "Black Bottom", Saartjie Baartman manages to create a third space which

> implies the inscription and possibility of voices which until now have been silenced or remained underground; it means the possibility to conceive science, culture, sexuality, society in a different manner; it means the possibility of new forms of representation, which do not have to pass by the binarism which still characterizes our culture; it means, also, to listen anew and, to other forms of knowledge, […] it means to move beyond the Western canon (De Toro, 1999: 20).

The concept of the third space, as articulated by De Toro, encompasses the idea of challenging existing cultural norms and binaries, including those related to science, culture, sexuality, and society. It allows for the recognition of alternative forms of knowledge and representation that may have been overlooked or suppressed within the Western canon. By moving beyond these constraints, Baartman's story becomes a catalyst for reevaluating and redefining cultural concepts in a more

diverse manner. Moving beyond the Western canon involves questioning and potentially redefining cultural concepts beyond the constraints imposed by existing bodies. De Toro thus criticises the dichotomous perspective that often dominates Western culture, stemming from the dominant or the coloniser's tendency to oversimplify (black) realities. Consequently, Kay creates a Sarah Bateman with her own third space for us readers to recognize the validity and importance of indigenous, local, and other non-dominant knowledge systems. Understanding how complex and multiple identities and cultures can be, ultimately, contributes to a more inclusive and empathetic society.

Conclusion

When Mueller comments on the theme of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis as a "motif of a musical composition" (1958: 413), he suggests that this dialectical process is not only a logical framework but also the result of an aesthetic and dynamic interaction, similar to the development and resolution found in musical structures. This analogy highlights the fluid and evolving nature of ideas, where conflicting elements converge and, in return, produce a harmonious and integrated whole. It is similar to Homi Bhabha's conceptualization of the third space, which is a relatively new, creative sphere, filling the gaps between different cultures, and harmoniously, resulting in a new identity formation for a hybrid individual.

Functioning as the thesis, Jackie Kay's poem "So You Think I am a Mule?" serves as an exploration of the themes related to multicultural identity and hybridity. Simply put, the poem reflects on the racial prejudices against individuals of mixed heritage in Scotland, especially the black, as well as their personal struggle for acceptance. The persona is an adopted individual with parents originally from Scotland while she looks more like an African. The terms such as "mule," "mulatto," and "half-caste" mentioned in the lines imply the tendency to categorize and marginalize those who do not fit into racial binaries established by the Western society, embodied in the white, old lady, who represents the Euro-centric attitudes. Additionally, the poem focuses on alienation and displacement, which is deepened with the theme of adoption. The persona's rejection of a hybrid identity, firmly asserting her black identity, indicates both a defence mechanism and a political stance against the discrimination she has experienced. In brief, "So You Think I am a Mule?" sheds light on the complexities of racial and cultural identities in the Western canon. Through the exploration of such themes in the poem, "So You Think I am a Mule?" functions as a thesis in the poem, which is contradictory to "Black Bottom".

The juxtaposition of Kay's poems "So You Think I am a Mule?" and "Black Bottom" presents an ongoing journey of identity, belonging, and hybridity. In Hegelian terms, "So You Think I am a Mule?" serves as the thesis, presenting a persona who ostensibly asserts her African identity in defiance of white supremacy. On the contrary, "Black Bottom" emerges as the antithesis, with a persona who is overwhelmed with feelings of ambivalence and unhomeliness as she favours her Scottish upbringing over her African look. The themes of adoption, racial prejudice, and cultural belonging prevail in this poem, too. In "Black Bottom," the persona's experiences with racial discrimination and societal expectations highlight how complex identity formation can be. The fragmented structure of the poem, shifting between different narrators, mirrors the persona's sense of disorientation and in-betweenness with her inner conflict, considering the reconciliation of her African appearance with her Scottish identity. The persona's admiration for figures like Angela Davis reflects a longing for racial connection and solidarity since she lacks it within the Scottish community. Despite societal pressures and self-doubt, she identifies with individuals with the same skin colour and experiences as hers. Consequently, "Black Bottom" approaches multicultural identity and belonging from an exact opposite point presented in "So You Think I am a Mule?" as the persona prefers her Scottishness by abandoning a rigid adherence to the African cultural identity which is imposed upon her.

When analysed in continuation with the previously mentioned poems, "Hottentot Venus" elucidates that Kay's understanding of multicultural identity evolves and results in a synthesis that transcends the limitations of traditional binary frameworks. Embodying Hegel's concept of the synthesis as a common ground that unites opposing extremes, the poem serves as a mediator between "So You Think I am a Mule?" and "Black Bottom". With its historical persona Saartjie Baartman,

whose tragic story reveals the exploitation experienced by people of colour, particularly women, within Western society, self-acculturation is at the centre of the poem. Baartman's journey of self-acculturation can be traced in her adaptation to the new environment, although overwhelmed with feelings of displacement and alienation. Her adoption of the English name "Sarah Bateman" and mimicry of English words and attitude symbolize the acceptance of her hybrid identity and assimilation into British culture. Baartman creates a new form of self-expression with her African heritage and adopted British identity in tandem. Thus, instead of polarising existing sociocultural elements, Kay invites readers to move beyond the limitations of the Western canon.

To conclude, in these three autobiographical poems written over a span of seven years, Jackie Kay shows us how the attitudes towards and understanding of multicultural identity can go through changes, especially with her p personae's undergoing a transformation in their attitudes toward Africanness, Britishness, and Afro-Britishness. From a steadfast embrace of African heritage to accepting herself as a British, and finally, to a synthesis of both identities through mimicry and adaptation, Kay's personae's evolution reflects how human experience can evolve, depending on cultural and social constructs. Through her poetry, Kay invites readers to discover the fluidity of identity and complexities of belonging of hybrid individuals. Consequently, she unveils the importance of embracing multiplicity and complexity in the understanding of one's identity formation.

References

ASHCROFT, B. et al. (2007). *Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. (2nd ed.). London and New York: Routledge.

BARRY, P. (2017). *Beginning theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory*. (4th ed.). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

BHABHA, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

BLANTON, R. E. (2015). "Theories of ethnicity and the dynamics of ethnic change in multiethnic societies." *PNAS*, V. 112, N. 30, 9176–9181.

BROOKS, J. (2017). *The Racial Unfamiliar: Illegibility in Black Literature and Culture*. New York: Colombia University Press.

BUFORD, B. et al. (1985). *A Dangerous Knowing: Four Black Women Poets*. Sheba Feminist Pub.

CATANESE, B. W. (2010). "Remembering Saartjie Baartman". *Atlantic Studies*, V. 7, N. 1, 47–62.

CRAIS, C. & SCULLY, P. (2009). *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography*. Princeton University Press.

DE TORO, F. (1999). *Explorations on post-theory: toward a third space*. Vervuert.

ELLER, J. D. (2016). *Cultural Anthropology: Global Forces, Local Lives*. (3rd ed.). London and New York: Routledge.

FOUCAULT, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. (Trans.: Alan Sheridan), New York: Vintage Books.

FOUGÈRE, M., & MOULETTES, A. (2012). "Disclaimers, dichotomies and disappearances in international business textbooks: A postcolonial deconstruction". *Management Learning*, V. 43, N. 1, 5–24.

GWYN, K., & OKAZAWA-REY, M. (2004). *Women's lives: Multicultural perspectives*. McGraw-Hill.

HEGEL, G. W. F. (1910). *The Phenomenology of Mind*. (Trans.: Jean-Baptistin Baille), London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Limited, New York: The Macmillan Company.

HOLMES, R. (2008). *The Hottentot Venus: The Life and Death of Saartjie Baartman: Born 1789-Buried 2002*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

JENKINS, C. M. (2002). "Queering black patriarchy: The salvific wish and masculine possibility in Alice Walker's the Color Purple". *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, V. 48, N. 4, 969-1000.

KAY, J. (1984). "So You Think I am a Mule?" *Feminist Review*, V. 17.

KAY, J. (1991). "Black Bottom". *The Adoption Papers*. Bloodaxe Books.

KAY, J. (1998). "Hottentot Venus". *Off Colour*. Newcastle: Bloodaxe Books.

KAY, J., & TOURNAY-THEODOTOU, P. (2014). "Some Connection with the Place." *Transition*, V. 113, N. 1, 82–101.

KOTTAK, C. P. (2018). *Mirror for Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (11th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

LEVERETTE, T. (2009). "Speaking Up: Mixed Race Identity in Black Communities." *Journal of Black Studies*, V. 39, N. 3, 434–445.

LEVERETTE, T. (2006). "Traveling Identities: Mixed Race Quests and Fran Ross's 'Oreo.'" *African American Review*, V. 40, N. 1,79–91.

MARCELIN, L. H. (2012). "In the Name of the Nation: Blood Symbolism and the Political Habitus of Violence in Haiti". *American Anthropologist*, V. 114, N. 2, 253–66.

MUELLER, G. E. (1958). "The Hegel Legend of 'Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis'." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, V. 19, N. 3, 411–414.

ROWELL, C. H., & KAY, J. (2014). "AN INTERVIEW WITH JACKIE KAY". *Callaloo*, V. 37, N. 2, 268–280.

ŞAFAK, Z. (2014). "An Outlook on Postcolonialism through the Ethos of Orientalism by Edward Said". *Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, V. 6, N. 2, 355-367.

SAID, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

SEREMANI, T. & CLEGG, S. (2016). "Postcolonialism, organization, and management theory: The role of 'epistemological third spaces'." *Journal of Management Inquiry*, V. 25, N. 2, 171–183.

SHORTEN, A. (2022). *Multiculturalism: The Political Theory of Diversity Today.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

WILDERSON III, F.B. (2008). "Biko and the problematic of presence", *Biko Lives!. Contemporary Black History* (Eds: A. Mngxitama, A. Alexander & N.C. Gibson), 95-114, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Internet Sources

CBC. (2018, Dec. 25). *How to Dance the Black Bottom*. [Photograph]. YouTube. Retrieved Apr. 17, 2024, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_iA57YoEoI

SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY. (n.d.). Jackie Kay. Retrieved Feb. 24, 2024, from https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poet/jackie- kay/