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**The Different Lives of Motherless Daughters in Contemporary Scottish
Women's Fiction**

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Abstract

This thesis concerns itself with the narratives of ‘motherless’ daughters in contemporary Scottish women’s fiction, analysing the formation of identity in those with a complicated relationship to their maternal figures. Discussion will centre on three texts by contemporary Scottish women writers that feature young daughters; Jackie Kay’s *The Adoption Papers* (1991), Jenni Fagan’s *The Panopticon* (2012) and Ali Smith’s *How to be Both* (2014). Though the nature of these daughters’ motherlessness varies, from adoption, to location within a care institute, there are many similarities in how these characters adapt to their situations and perceive the world around them, which will be examined with regard to feminist understandings of motherhood within a politicised contemporary setting. The goal of this work is to map the processes by which children experiencing motherlessness understand their situations and learn to find or supplement motherly guidance and support, from within themselves, in artistic pursuits as well as in surrogate mothers. This thesis will make use of the Kristevan concept of the semiotic *chora* to consider the relationship between daughters and their mothers, and consider the roles that choric qualities, such as timelessness and non-verbalism, play in the identity formation of the daughters. Though the title appreciates the different lives of the texts’ daughters, this thesis intends to demonstrate that there are many similarities in how motherless daughters feel and respond when confronted with oppressive power structures, and in how they cope with motherlessness through attempts to access the choric realm.

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Introduction

This thesis concerns itself with the narratives of ‘motherless’ daughters in contemporary Scottish women’s fiction, analysing the formation of identity in those with a complicated relationship to their maternal figures. Discussion will centre on three texts by contemporary Scottish women writers that feature young daughters; Jackie Kay’s *The Adoption Papers* (1991), Jenni Fagan’s *The Panopticon* (2012) and Ali Smith’s *How to be Both* (2014). Though the nature of these daughters’ motherlessness varies, from adoption, to location within a care institute, there are many similarities in how these characters adapt to their situations and perceive the world around them, which will be examined with regard to feminist understandings of motherhood within a politicised contemporary setting. The goal of this work is to map the processes by which children experiencing motherlessness understand their situations and learn to find or supplement motherly guidance and support, from within themselves, in artistic pursuits as well as in surrogate mothers. Though the title appreciates the different lives of the texts’ daughters, this thesis intends to demonstrate that there are many similarities in how motherless daughters feel when confronted with oppressive power structures and in how they cope with motherlessness through attempts to access the choric realm.

E. Ann Kaplan discusses the peculiar position of mothers in previous writing in her work on motherhood in popular culture and melodrama. Rarely a focus unless for criticism and often consigned to the margins, the mother is an ‘absent presence, then. Present but absent’ (Kaplan, 3). This thesis acknowledges this absence and will consider its impact on the lives of the daughters left behind. Motherless children appear time and again in Scottish fiction. J.M Barrie’s *Lost Boys of Peter Pan* take in another child as their surrogate mother; Alan Warner’s *Morvern Callar* has lost both her biological mother and her foster mother; Irvine Welsh’s ‘Mother’ Superior is a heroin dealer. While there are many works of Scottish fiction that would benefit from a deeper exploration of their treatment of mothers and the reasons for their absence, due to a gap in existing criticism this thesis begins this task with an examination of a limited range of texts by Scottish woman authors, and a focus on how this absence impacts the young daughters of these disappearing mothers.

Notably, the motherless children of the works are young; at most, they are in their mid-teens at the beginning of their narratives. *The Panopticon* centres on fifteen-year-old Anais who has been in the care-system since birth. George asserts herself as ‘adolescent’ at the time of her mother’s death, while Francescho’s mother died when they were ‘still small enough’ to climb into her clothes trunk (7; 213). The first section Jackie Kay’s *The Adoption Papers* follows the adopted, unnamed Daughter from her youth as she grows up. These children suffer from their motherlessness to varying degrees and in different ways and this thesis will appreciate their experiences with a complex understanding of racism, mental health issues, drug-use, and gender. ‘Motherlessness’ is a term used broadly to denote the state of separation from a mother figure; while Kay’s Daughter is raised by the loving Adoptive Mother, she still experiences a separation from her biological mother. As this thesis considers the complexity of the role of ‘mother’ to demonstrate that more than one person can function as a mother for one individual means that while the Daughter has a close relationship with her Adoptive Mother, she still struggles to navigate what relation her Birth Mother has to her life and sense of identity. While this thesis will focus on the first section of Kay’s text, relevant poetry in the second section titled ‘Severe Gale 8’ will be called upon when useful to discussion.

A focus on the absence of motherhood in this thesis is justified by the constant return to concerns with maternal heritage in these texts. While for Kay’s Daughter there are some practical reasons for her greater interest in her mother, this thesis understands the stress on maternal relationships to stem from the understanding that mothers represent an alternative familial relationship to those more valued by patriarchal society, namely that of the father. Mothers represent an alternative to the masculine dominance of society, and so provide the child with refuge from the patriarchy that children are exposed to from infancy. This thesis considers the value placed on femininity to be because of its position in opposition to dominant structures of masculinity in a patriarchal society. Femininity is thus valuable as an alternative to the masculine qualities that define the world around the daughters. While fathers do appear in the texts, they are rarely a focus. George’s father retreats into an alcoholic fog while mourning his wife. Anais never raises a query about her paternal origins, though father figures are conjured in the rewritings of her birth story. The Daughter’s adoptive father similarly goes unnamed, and only speaks indirectly

through the Daughter's voice. He does not interact with the adoption agency in the text, nor is he allowed to hold his soon-to-be adopted daughter while she is in hospital, let alone to enter the room in which she is being treated. Despite this, the reader understands the visit to be important to him when 'his face / was one long smile' on the drive home (17). He values the things important to his daughter and is the one who gives her a 'FREE ANGELA DAVIS' button (27). Francescho's father is supportive and loving through his child's identity reformation, so while these men may be positive forces and appear to the reader as good fathers, the text is far more focused on women's voices and constantly returns to questions of maternity.

Having established this interest in maternity, a useful theoretical framework for the exploration of the bond between a mother and child is Julia Kristeva's notion of the 'semiotic *chora*'. Plato first introduces the idea of the *chora* in *Timaeus*, in which it appears as a 'receptacle [...] the nurse of all Becoming' which is itself devoid of all form, existing outside of two essential realms of the universe's creation (Plato, 49a). Timaeus apologises for the intangibility of the concept and can only attempt to explain its function through analogy, such as a piece of gold constantly being reformed (50a). Ultimately, Plato's *chora* is understood as being 'invisible and unshaped, all-receptive' (51a). Kristeva's use of *chora* is still resistant to 'axiomatic form', but now is positioned outwith the human body, existing in a psychological capacity (Kristeva, 94). Kristeva's *chora* is seen as 'a nourishing maternal space', the chaotic space of the subject in the process of being constantly renewed (Schippers, 47). Though indeed resistant to classification, Kristeva articulates the semiotic *chora*:

'Indifferent to language, enigmatic and feminine, this space underlying the written is rhythmic, unfettered, irreducible to its intelligible verbal translation; it is musical, anterior to judgement, but restrained by a single guarantee: syntax' (Kristeva, 29).

This thesis will further explore, define and interpret Kristeva's concept of the *chora* and consider the communication, relationships and expression of the texts' daughters with this theory in mind.

One of the primary concerns to which the semiotic *chora* will be applied is how the daughters grapple with language. Smith in an interview with Tory Young notes that she enjoys 'how close-up to language kids are, at the coalface of language and how things mean. I suppose there's an immediacy, a prenarrated state, in kids, that has gone, disappeared, or has been weakened, by

adulthood' (140). In their youth, the children are chronologically closer to their experience of *chora*, still exploring and becoming accustomed to uses of language. A focus on language highlights a contrast between the children's own crafted identities and those given to them in official documentation, such as care records and adoption applications. This thesis will discuss in which ways these daughters experience the limitations of the written words, how they respond to such difficulties and their use of alternative sources towards creating self-identity. The children's engagement with alternative identities and histories will be explored.

Identity is a key concern for this work, particularly how the daughters craft their own sense of self without maternal guidance. As these protagonists are young when experiencing the loss of their mothers, they must navigate motherlessness during their formative years. Literary and psychological understandings of young minds will be utilised to explore the impact this has on narratives. While there are many kinds of identity identified by psychologists, philosophers, and social scientists, this thesis' use of the term generally prioritises an individual sense of identity and selfhood. Identity is defined within this thesis as a sense of the self as an individual being with unique personal qualities and attributes. Nevertheless, this approach is aware of external influences and pressures upon the self and appreciative of an individual's qualities, beliefs, and heritages. This thesis will trace the pursuits of individual identities as the daughters attempt to replicate their mothers, seek information about maternal lineage, and craft their own versions of their birth stories. The formation of identity in this research project involves how motherless daughters see themselves, how they relate with others, and the development of the subjects' understanding of their relationship with the world around them. This shapes the thesis' three chapters, with the final chapter centring on how the daughters conceive of the world around them; what they consider unjust, and how they respond to these injustices. Considering the wealth of research on identity, it is no great claim to suggest that identity is multiform and the site of much internal struggle, 'not fixed, but rather placed in a continuous state of flux' (Germana 2008; 84). Carole Jones notes that a 'complex self is certainly a contemporary touchstone, and in relation to a prominent strand of postmodernism's promotion of identity as fragmented, multiple, unstable, ungrounded, hybrid and "in process", the fractured and uncertain nature of Scottishness is of fundamental significance' ('Disappearing' 16). Young, motherless Scottish daughters present uniquely challenged perspectives for an exploration of identity. This

thesis, encouraged by understandings of complex identity such as Jones' and Germana's, will observe how these fractured and evolving identities are represented in the narratives of motherless daughters. While Kay's collection may centre on the narrative of an adopted child, it also raises broader questions about identity and creation of the self that is experienced by all young people, and these questions will be asked explicitly within this work. This struggle with self-identity in its relation to motherlessness, gender, and race will be examined with constant reference to the choric realm.

There is a great use of artistic creativity in the creation of the self; particularly, storytelling features heavily in these works. The daughters' use of oral tradition, displays of creativity and personal writing represents the act of writing not only as a therapeutic activity, but as a mode of self-formation. These texts appear themselves to facilitate and encourage the self through creativity. The healing function of creativity is often cited, as Masterson observes that numerous 'artists and writers with a severely impaired sense of self have over-come low self-esteem, depression, and a feeling of abandonment by means of creativity' (Schneiderman, 228). How these artistic pursuits relate to the *chora* will be examined. The value of creativity to the identity formation of these daughters is explored with relation to continuing maternal traditions, and bearing witness to and recovering from trauma.

The mothers of these texts will be considered not only as individual characters, as this thesis will explore preverbal and physical connections with their children and their symbolic and cultural positions. How mothers operate in the abstract and in the daughters' imagination will be considered. Hoping to display a nuanced understanding of adoption, this thesis values all types of motherhood, from surrogate, to adoptive and biological. Where historically motherhood has not always been a choice or a decision for women, it is important to recognise the agency of women as mothers in contemporary texts, while still critiquing the expectations of mothers the daughters hold.

In addition to respecting the complexities of motherhood, this thesis hopes to demonstrate an anti-essentialist approach to gender, embracing transgender and non-binary identities. Unwilling to impose any particular reading of gender on the character of Francescho, this thesis will utilise

gender neutral pronouns ‘they’ and ‘them’ for Francescho, as they never explicitly identify with any particular pronouns within the body of the text. The original reason for their dressing as a man is to benefit from the freedoms offered to men in the fifteenth century, but their own experience of their gender is not expressed. The use of alternative pronouns also hopes to encourage discussion about how to challenge gender binarism, which is a topic of interest in regards to Smith’s novel; even if George herself would correct this pronoun usage to ‘He or she. His or her life’ (181)¹. However, Francescho will still be considered under the bracket of ‘motherless daughters’ so as to not unnecessarily complicate further discussion.

Also to avoid confusion, Kay’s characters will be addressed with the names given to them in the font key for her poetry. ‘Adoptive’ and ‘birth’ serve as descriptors to differentiate, and should not in any way be seen to impose judgement on the importance of either.

Francescho’s narrative not only raises concerns about gender, but highlights issues of location within the texts. Smith’s novel is the most international of the three texts with the two protagonists of her split novel growing up in England and Italy respectively, while the events of Kay and Fagan’s work take place on Scottish soil. There is a sense of movement within these works that almost echoes the dance-like quality of the *chora*, between homes, countries, and imagined locations, and even time, as chronological narratives are denied. Time and the role of Scotland will be noted where pertinent to each text, and their influences on the works explored.

It may also be of use to identify the works within the canon of texts by these prolific authors. *The Adoption Papers* and *The Panopticon* can be considered as ‘first texts’ by Kay and Fagan, which Germana understands to be ‘representing a new sense of beginning for the authors’ (2012; 153). Smith, on the other hand, had written several novels and short story collections before the publication of *How to be Both*, illustrating a development of concerns from earlier work, where spectral elements and a concern with the incompleteness of language resurface. Autobiographical readings of these texts will be avoided, yet as all writers are still working today across a range of

¹ Due to the structure of Smith’s work, page numbers from the author’s edition may not transfer simply to others copies. All page references for *How to Be Both* come from the version in which Camera (George’s narrative) precedes Eyes (Francescho’s narrative).

creative and academic projects, where relevant their other work will be drawn upon to strengthen observations and establish trends of identity representation and recurrent themes.

Ultimately, the goals of this thesis are to explore more attentively how daughters respond to the loss of their mothers in Scottish fiction and to investigate the daughters' attitudes within the works with respect to societal issues, such as sex work, the police force and how people communicate. Through tracing how the daughters respond to the world around them, this thesis will draw conclusions about how they have developed their own sense of morality and identity, and comment on how these ethical codes and existential struggles impact how the reader conceives of the futures of these daughters beyond the conclusions of the texts. All narratives end before the daughters are well into adulthood, certainly before any become mothers or guardians themselves, and readers are left to consider how their futures will unfold. Whether or not these works depict a positive potential for self-guiding young women will be explored through the body of this thesis.

Through explorations of characters' experiences with language, attention to authors' use of time and chronology and a study of daughters' and mothers' political and moral attitudes, this thesis will draw conclusions about whether the lives of motherless daughters in contemporary Scottish women's fiction are really so different from one another after all.

Chapter 1: *Chora*, Language, and Official Histories

This first chapter seeks to begin applying an understanding of Kristeva's semiotic *chora* to the three key texts, beginning with its pre-language nature. Through Kristevan theory, this chapter will highlight issues of communication in these works, such as how motherless children speak with their peers, care-workers, authority figures, and readers. This chapter will illustrate how these difficulties arise, and if there is any way to succeed despite these issues. Language is understood in this dissertation to be a product of patriarchal culture, from which the daughters turn away. Instead, they move towards means of expression that share qualities with the choric realm, a space in which the innate understanding of the maternal allows therapeutic unspoken communication. For the purposes of this thesis, the term 'language' is specifically used to denote the use of English words, though the author acknowledges that language in a broader sense encapsulates those that are largely visual, such as body language and sign language. Words become hurdles to self-knowledge and being to the daughters, demanding classification and dissection of a person's identity rather than an appreciation of the self as a holistic whole. By exploring official uses of language, issues of identity as impacted by external influences will be introduced. This chapter hopes to devote attention to the subtext of the written word in these primary texts, and explore the potential of alternative means of communication and expression, such as silence, physicality, art and *écriture féminine*.

Kristeva's idea of the *chora* has been interpreted in several ways, such as shorthand for the uterus or womb, as a metaphor for the relationship between the mother and child, and as the temporal period in child development that precedes Lacan's notion of the Mirror Stage. Though Kristeva characterises the *chora* as 'feminine', it is not to be thought of wholly as the domain of women. Worthington notes that 'the semiotic as feminine is surely not an essentialist or biological claim, but a metaphorical one' that represents a subversion within dominant culture (119). This thesis understands the value of femininity to derive largely from its subjugated status in a society that celebrates masculine qualities; therefore, what is celebrated as the feminine offers an alternative means of being with oppositional values to the dominant norm. The author takes an anti-essentialist stance on gender, yet while binarism remains an unavoidable aspect of society, and therefore the literature produced by that society, value must be placed on the

productive and comforting aspects of femininity that exist despite pressures of patriarchy. Though this thesis is aware of the artificial construction of concepts such as masculinity and femininity, they are vital to understanding and exploring the societies presented in these works. The *chora* is thus valuable as feminine space of refuge within a culture that celebrates the masculine.

Although Kristeva's declarations about the *chora* raise issues of essentialism and the mother's agency throughout pregnancy that have often led to the dismissal of this topic as a problematic aspect of Kristeva's work, the concept of the *chora* as a nurturing, pre-language and pre-symbolic location within space and time is hugely useful in the study of the motherless children of these texts. This thesis' use of the *chora* as a theoretical framework recognises it as a useful concept to demonstrate the relationship between mother and daughter, seeking to understand the *chora* as an ambiguous space within the psychic realm, open to interpretation due to its difficulty to define. This thesis will attempt to determine where and how in these texts the children benefit from, and are bereft of, the semiotic *chora*. It also believes the *chora* to be accessible even in adulthood by the replication of the *chora*'s qualities such as through dance and visual art. For example, George's summer routine involves a short session of dancing to echo the dance her mother used to do around the living room after a series of aerobic exercises in her daily routine. George vows to 'do the sixties dance for her in her honour' and the reader learns that there is footage of Carol doing this dance with her own mother in 1965 as a small child (22). In this sequence in Smith's novel, there is a sense of maternal tradition that George hopes to continue and recreate alone. The act of physical dancing is a means of reconnecting with her lost mother through the fluid arts of music and movement.

Access to the *chora* is not always as easy as replicating movements, however, when the daughters are apart from their mothers at a very young age. Both Fagan's Anais and Kay's daughter are immediately separated from their mothers, both biological and surrogate, at birth, and taken into state care. Away from the maternal body and the warmth, love, and nourishment it provides, these daughters are denied access to the realm of the semiotic *chora* in the early days and months of their lives. They have been kept apart from any guardian who may provide a body to be undifferentiated from when they were placed under state care, and thus have been denied

the access to the choric realm that most infants experience. Kay's Daughter spends 'four months in a glass cot' after her birth, 'encased like a museum piece' (10; 13). The physical barrier between the Daughter and her mothers, both Birth and Adoptive, prevents the closeness of bodies traditionally seen after birth, and so there are direct obstacles to their formation of this bond to begin with. While many infants are undifferentiated from their mothers until approximately six months of age, these daughters experience a forced removal from the maternal body that may be seen to impact upon their sense of self in their entry into the realm of the symbolic. David J. Linden names this 'touch deprivation', a lack of contact that may in severe cases lead to developmental problems (27). He notes that this has often been witnessed 'in understaffed orphanages or with premature babies isolated in incubators', two locations witnessed within the works of Kay and Fagan (27). While aware that other factors outside of the sensation of touch impact upon a child's health and wellbeing, Linden stresses the importance of physical contact for infants for their mental and physical development. In locations in which the touching the child is withheld, their emotional growth may be inhibited.

However, the very young Daughter believes she must have sensed 'somebody willing [her] to survive' (10). This belief in the power of the psychic realm is relevant to the *chora*. The nature of the *chora* as the site of the subject in process relates to this thesis' understanding of identity as a perpetually evolving and reforming concept. Soderback characterises the maternal as 'a living rhythm to which we must return if we want to nourish a culture of life and change rather than one always already marked by repetition and death' (74). The daughters can find a source of nourishment in through the qualities of the *chora*, and it provides an optimistic sense of potential for the subject. Clare Hanson reflects on Kay's own mother's experience in the autobiographical *Red Dust Road* where the connection between the adoptive mother and the child to be adopted is experienced as a 'ghost pregnancy' (438). The Adoptive Mother similarly shadows the Birth Mother's pregnancy, illustrating her emotional investment in, and attachment to, the Daughter even before her birth.

Motherhood can be considered both 'as institution (motherhood as determined by dominant discourses) and motherhood as practice (the experiences of individual women)' (Rye, 118). Due to the absence of many mothers in these texts, this thesis must consider motherhood as an

institution to gain insight into how mothers function for their daughters in an abstracted sense. Though the mothers of these texts hold different occupations, in different cities and even live in different centuries, yet there is one quality that seems to unite them; their children find comfort and security in their presence. These mothers provide a sense of comfort to their daughters, through emotional support and encouragement. Anais often refers to her adoptive mother as ‘Teresa’ within the narrative of the novel, but in a moment of emotional upheaval after Isla’s suicide, she calls out, crying, ‘I just want my mum’ (Fagan, 269). Faced with grief and loss, Anais turns to the mother for comfort, emotional consolation, and security. The use of the word ‘mum’ implies not only Teresa, but in a larger sense the role she fulfilled for Anais as a maternal caregiver. Francescho, when grieving their mother as a small child, hides within her clothes chest, tying ribbons and thread around their thumb like an umbilical cord in order to get to sleep, marking a choric return to a womb-like space, filled with the scent of their mother. In times of distress, sadness, and pain, daughters can be seen to turn towards the nurturing of their mothers in an attempt to recreate and recapture the security and love they have provided.

Francescho’s hiding in the basket introduces the image of the maternal womb. As previously noted, the *chora* is notably ‘pre-linguistic’, encapsulating a bond that needs no words to be felt and understood, and the bond between the pregnant mother and their unborn children reflects this powerful sense of the *chora*. The Birth Mother, for example, demonstrates her ‘inability to suppress the bond’ she has had with her unborn daughter through her leaking, stretching body, and the Adoptive Mother longs to be pregnant, and this thesis suggests it is not just the physicality of the experience she craves, but the entire experience, including the pre-linguistic emotion of it in which the child is undifferentiated from the mother (Lumsden, 81).

Considering this state, the extent to which these texts are preoccupied with the ambiguity and failures of language warrants more analysis. Words cannot ever wholly encapsulate the emotions of these characters, falling short of articulating the fullness of human experience. Julia Breitbach notes Smith is renowned for paying ‘meticulous attention to how language is a constitutive force, rather than a transparent medium, in the building and shaping of contemporary realities and identities’ in her work, and this attention is highly visible in *How to Be Both* (Breitbach qtd. in Young, 132). George’s narrative begins with a reflection on the meaninglessness of the lyrics to

the popular song 'Let's Twist Again' in which 'the words are pretty bad' (A. Smith, 'How', 4). Deeper within the body of George's narrative, she sends H an annotated list of interesting words, but bemoans the fact that 'I can't mean any of them because right now for me they are just words' (132). This issue of 'meaning' shows that for George emotions cannot be communicated and expressed with these units of communication. In all speech, there is an element of translation and interpretation. This process of translation is seen by Worthington as vital to the daughters' processes of entering selfhood, as interpretation 'is understood as the fundamental activity by which human beings realize their world (as text) and their being-in-the-world as (self-) interpretative subjects' (6). Perhaps the difficulty of expression lies in the inherent gender-bias of the 'man-made' English language that reflects patriarchal biases. If the very tools of communication reflect the oppressive force seen in depictions of government structures, the options that lie before these characters are limited. Where the symbolic realm of signification through language proves difficult, the subject retreats to the semiotic. Bell hooks writes that language 'is a place of struggle. The oppressed struggle in language to read ourselves – to reunite, to reconcile, to renew', and the same struggle is witnessed in the lives of these young daughters (28).

Considering this oppression, Christopher Whyte draws attention to the sense of marginality that occurs when people experience 'exclusion from the dominant discourse of white male "Britishness"' (qtd. in Germana, 6). Kay's Daughter's struggle with language and its history is therefore threefold; she is female, she is Scottish, and she is black, operating in a culture that privileges white, male English language. Her silence in the face of this language that cannot conceive of or explain her experiences is logical. Handling this issue, Maria P. P. Root's 'Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People' states the right for the creation of 'vocabulary to communicate about being multiracial' (12). In this statement, she acknowledges that existing language cannot fully explain the experiences and emotions of people of mixed heritage, and points to the creation of new language in order to aid future communication. Even in the units of words, language must be re-created and flexible in order to allow the expression and identification of its users. Language, as used by institutions, is regulated and inflexible, and so the identities of these daughters suffer. As Audre Lorde states, the 'master's tools will never dismantle the master's house'; the words and means of communication created by patriarchy will have great difficulty

challenging systems of patriarchy (112). Kay cites Lorde as an influence when writing *The Adoption Papers* as Lorde ‘wrote about silence, and the power of silence and the need to speak out and be heard’, and these concerns of the power dynamics of voice and language certainly surface within Kay’s text (Rowell, 277). Michelle Boulous Walker reminds the reader that ‘Kristeva is at her best when she refuses the simple opposition between silence and speech. For her the semiotic is a kind of unquiet silence, a silence that speaks’ (127). In these texts, silence speaks of the failures of man-made language, and the value of nonverbal communication. There is a lot that is communicated in the silence of these texts, deserving of more attention.

When it comes to the expression of feeling, H and George are similarly hindered. When H and George hold hands, ‘all the words drain out of the part of George’s brain where the words are kept’ (100). Their sentences are cut short and they unable to fully command language to express themselves:

‘Or maybe you don’t-.

George doesn’t speak.

Maybe I’m not’-, H says’ (A. Smith, ‘How’ 100)

The gulf between emotion and language makes the articulation of personal feeling and thought more difficult, and it is experienced often through these works. It is notable that this is a queer female relationship that is struggling to express itself, a relationship that has historically been silenced, which is exacerbated further by the exclusion of queer women from language creation. While emotion is difficult for young women to communicate, queer attraction seems near impossible to express.

The inexpressibility of language occurs often in these texts. The Adoptive Mother states that even after rehearsing answers to her daughter’s questions about identity, ‘all the words took off to another planet’ when she is asked, demonstrating the extraordinary distance between feeling and language, even as an adult (21). Anais too experiences this speechless in the face of the judicial system, a highly authoritarian establishment. When asked by the Chairwoman if she has any comment on her case, Anais mentally responds, discussing her own capacity for kindness and imagining an alternate life with a mother and a father in Paris through the interaction (175). She experiences her wordlessness as a painful physical sensation; ‘I’ve so much nothing to say I

can feel my throat closing up. It happens like that sometimes. Once when I was four I stopped speaking for six weeks. They said it was a protest but it wasn't' (175). Anais' recurring experience of speechlessness demonstrates her inability to communicate the depth of her emotion and her sense of outrage at her persecution. When facing potential romantic partners, family or the system of government, words fail these girls. The difficulty of navigating womanhood through man-made language has been well documented and is visible often in these texts. Kay continues with this anxiety of language and draws attention to the ways in which language is used to racially discriminate and attack throughout her work. These issues appear again in *The Adoption Papers*' second section, 'Severe Gale 8', where the narrator of 'Photo in the Locket' illustrates the violence of racial slurs that quiet the voices of women of colour:

'Words chase me like bullets overhead.

Kaffir. Wog. Kaffir. Wog.

Between tight teeth I whisper.' (48)

Figured as deadly bullets, these names have lethal potential.

Sally Blundell's exploration of speechlessness as a result of trauma notes that readers often 'find the restriction of voice in contemporary literature used as a response to – and vehicle for – incidences of terror or trauma' (5). It is of value to note that Blundell sees the silence of trauma victims to not simply indicate the inadequacy of syntax, but to point to the magnitude of the experiences they have lived through; though these events may be sayable, in that the English language has to words to explain what happened, they are unspeakable, as their true feeling cannot be wholly expressed. Ruth Robbins notes that in 'as much as the *chora* 'is' anything, it is a metaphor and a rhetorical device which expresses the idea that meaning may exist in places where it cannot be defined or abstracted' (130). Inexpressible emotion resides in the choric realm, where emotion exists purely and untranslated. It is through access to the *chora* that these emotions are understood; unspoken yet shared. An example of this shared realm comes in Kay's work where the Adoptive Mother notes:

'We're on a wavelength so we are

Right away I know if she's upset.

And vice versa' (34).

Emotional pain in these texts may be unsayable and unspeakable at points, but through the *chora*, this pain can be shared, and so soothed.

The concern with silence that pervades these works arises again in Fagan's novel. Anais comments that she has learnt about 'sub alterns' from Professor True (115). Anais also recalls a documentary she watched about the practice of Sati, 'about Hindu wives getting shoved on the pyre after their husbands died' (86). Gayatri Spivak famously references this practice in her work on subalternity, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* This essay is a landmark in postcolonial studies, handling issues of voice and silence in the face of institutional power, and the inclusion of references to subalternity and Sati recalls the concerns of Spivak's work. Although it is incorrect to consider the term subaltern interchangeable with 'oppressed group' considering its history with colonialism and imperialism, Fagan's protagonist can be seen to engage with ideas that identify that oppressed groups are systematically silenced and not listened to by authorities. These are concerns that permeate the novel through experiences in social care, the police force and at the hands of men. Though those who have experienced abuse from those enabled by social structures may talk, they are not 'speaking' in Spivak's work because their words are not heard because they are not able to produce political, authoritative speech from their position. This is why conversations like those on the island where the girls of the Panopticon share and bond are so vital to their wellbeing; while they may not be being heard by authorities, they are being heard and borne witness to, by each other.

George's experiences of language, however, are not altogether negative. Through her relationship with H, she discovers the potential of recreation and personalisation it holds:

'It is also like H is trying to find a language that will make personal sense to George's ears. No one has ever done this before for George. She has spent her whole life speaking other people's languages' (169-170).

They create a personal language, utilising some Ancient Greek, Latin, and modern popular songs, recrafting existing material for their personal communication; it is unique to them. Kristeva may note that this productive process of linguistic innovation as '*renouvellement*' (Worthington, 115). Kristeva explores the ways in which 'poetic language allows us to return to a presymbolic space-time, one that transcends and threatens language', yet it is paradoxically

language itself that is integral to the creation of poetry (Soderback, 68). Though often language fails, the poetic processes of careful word selection, ordering, deconstruction and other creative techniques allow the poet to exert control over a language that may previously have failed them. Poetry succeeds where linguistics and philosophy fail, in that poetry is in touch with the choric realm; Calvin Bedient understands that when Kristeva speaks of art as a semiotic *chora*, 'she means that art utters what cannot be uttered: instinct' (807). Poetry, as an art-form, according to Kristeva's theory 'is essentially antiformal', and Bedient classifies poetry as 'the *chora*'s guerrilla war against culture' (809). Too, the rhythm of poetry aligns it with the creative, and so writing is thus framed as a return to the pre-symbolic achieved through the use of symbolic language; this is the revolution in poetic language Kristeva speaks of. While Worthington believes that a language created only for women's use would be a counterproductive project in that it would further alienate women from men, the language these young girls create is highly personal and largely unconcerned with being understood or appreciated by others (114). Jane Hoogstraat explains the differences between generalised French and American perspectives on women's transgressive use of language, where the "French" assumption is that official languages are so thoroughly male-dominated that women cannot use such languages to represent female experience. The "American" assumption is that although language may have been historically male-dominated, it has also been used by women and indeed can be used, in variations of existing forms, to represent the experience of women' (28). While the languages that are spoken in these regions and the histories of the nations have influenced doubtlessly influenced perspectives, these two ideals are notable. In relation to them, the Scottish writing analysed in this thesis finds little value in the written word itself, but rather in the physical actions that language illustrates which provide clues to larger signs of emotion felt by characters. Smith's young characters craft their own languages, drawing from antiquity and the present to articulate their experience, interests, and emotion. George and those around also express a great interest in etymology throughout the work. Mrs Rock, the school councillor, even notes George's interest, and tells her about the origin of the word 'mystery' (72). George's interest in the history of language means that words are understood as more than their surface impression, and that words are traced to their hidden roots. Should the written word itself be considered an instrument of patriarchy, Smith's breakdown of words both etymologically and literally explores the power of their components and the hidden language of language itself.

Where language fails, the physical plays an important role in communication and expression. After creating early artwork in childhood, Francescho demonstrates the reaction of their mother to the quality of their art, and how they interpret this reaction:

‘Air came out of her mouth (by which I knew that what I’d done was good) : she nearly dropped the eggs (by which I learned that the making of images is a powerful thing and may if care’s not taken lead to breakage)’ (A. Smith, ‘How’ 212)

The visual has power in these fictions, and often these authors replace written descriptions of a person’s emotional reaction with a depiction of their physical response, requiring the reader to interpret for themselves how the character feels. The semiotic *chora* as a feminine place of comfort may serve as a way of escaping the dominantly masculine social structures and allow a return to more natural and intuitive forms of communication. Bodily responses take the place of verbal replies in Kay’s work, as ‘Kay astutely leaves it to readers to decode her characters’ personalities from the clues provided by their epidermal reactions’ (Arana, 251-252). The nonverbal can be ‘read’ and interpreted by the characters and reader. In Arana’s reading of Kay’s work, the skin becomes a palimpsest on which emotion and experience write themselves, and the bodies of these texts further this line of argument. Significant interactions occur within ‘the psychic space that Kay opens out between her characters’ spirits’, and her work so becomes deeply concerned with the need to understand the authentic inner-self in an environment that often provides aggressive and estranging interpretations of the self (Arana, 254). The body in fiction may be a marker of *écriture feminine*, as for ‘Cixous, a woman's body is a direct source of female speaking’, aligning these texts with female writing (Peake, para. 2). The difficulty of the Daughter’s understanding of her Birth Mother comes from her being ‘faceless’, and therefore her inability to read her intentions and emotions (Kay, 30). Speaking of her Birth Mother, the Daughter writes that

‘Once would be enough,
just to listen to her voice
watch the way she moves her hands
when she talks.’ (30)

Value is placed on body language and orality, which is a more fluid and visual means of communication than the written word. Notably, this thesis has asserted fluidity to be a primary

feature of the *chora*, and so the prioritisation of fluid means of communication and expression can be seen to echo the qualities of the semiotic *chora*.

This requirement for visual information is complicated with the growth of technology, as with the increasing commonality of mobile texting and instantaneous digital communication, new kinds of communication and ways of relating emerge. Texts sent to Anais' mobile telephone appear within the novel mostly surface in the text un-demarcated from the larger body of the text. They appear on new lines in italics:

‘My phone beeps.

Wank me.’ (Fagan, 81)

With this choice of typeface, text appears highly intrusive to Anais' life, and she herself notes Jay's messages as '[m]indgames' (121). Jay's voice within the novel is only ever experienced through a phone, yet provides a pervasive sense of threat as his texts interrupt her conversations, demand her attention, insult, confuse and upset her. The emotional impact of these examples of instantaneous written texts is felt. The relative newness of digital conversations means that the use of texts in fiction has no established uniform way of presentation, as if suggesting that society is not yet sure of how this technology formally relates to everyday lives. That mobile technology allows Anais to receive information instantly without seeing or hearing the sender directly leaves Anais vulnerable to deception as she cannot access clues to meaning in body language or facial expression, and Anais says she feels like 'he's crawling under [her] skin' (199). When Jay demands to see her at a certain location, it's revealed he is not there. With no phone box number to identify his location, or visual to show him still incarcerated, Anais believes she is on her way to him, and not delivering herself to be violently drugged and abused. This aspect of modern technology is threatening, and it becomes apparent that communication through technology is still flawed. Without visual indications of body language and location, the truth can be hidden by distance phone calls and texts. The spoken and written word cannot encapsulate the whole situation, resulting in Anais' further abuse. With rapidly developing means of communication, new ways of exploiting the vulnerable surface. Similarly, Lisa Goliard's existence in *How to be Both* proves concerning to George and Carol when there is little to no online trace of her existence (121). In this case, information gained through technology is thought to be evidentiary of the truth. Society's complicated and continually evolving

relationship with new technologies in fiction would benefit from further exploration, yet within the scope of this thesis, its uses in these texts serves to reinforce the notion that written communication can be deceiving, and not as natural as fluid, physical means of communication. As Carol notes, technology ‘can’t do anything but highlight the metaphysical’ (26).

This chapter has so far demonstrated the gaps in personal use of language through which these daughters fall. Turning attention towards official and legal uses of language, the ways in which these daughters communicate takes on a new, particularly political dimension. At several points within these works, the daughters turn to written text (and the paper which the text is inscribed) for information about their identities and validation of their selfhood and origins. Often this is expressed as a preoccupation with ‘official histories’, which within this thesis will refer to established forms of authority such as published mainstream history textbooks, birth and marriage records and legal documents. Legal documentation plays a particularly pivotal role in Kay’s *The Adoption Papers*, so much so that official documents define the title of the work. The Daughter’s relationship with her Birth Mother in the text is initially established with the sparse information given on official papers. She knows facts, such as height, eye colour and ethnicity, but that these titbits of information are unsatisfactory to the Daughter is clear. These traits belong to a ‘faceless’ person, who ‘wears no particular dress’ (Kay, 30). The Daughter’s image of her Birth Mother is incomplete and her desire to know her mother is one that cannot be fulfilled by the written word alone, highlighting the inability of legal papers to capture the essence of an individual. A full personhood cannot be observed and so the government’s failure to recognise the complexity of the individual is witnessed.

The Daughter associates the written word, and by extension, the very paper that words appear on, with her pursuit of self-knowledge. She waits for a posted letter from her mother and revels in imagining wrapping paper. This interest in paper is reflected in the collection’s title which confirms the importance of documentation to Kay’s characters.

Popp rightly notices that the inclusion of these official papers opens up questions of identity and categorisation. Legal documents ‘deny cultural hybridity’, where the narrow categories allowed in passports and forms cements dominant forms of knowledge and deny others (Popp, 293). The

racial politics of the government cannot go un-noted here, where even teachers employed by councils articulate racist stereotypes to their pupils. Teresa remarks that she considers school as a form of ‘social control’, and the Daughter’s experiences certainly reflect this (85). Children echo the racist language of adults when shouting ‘Sambo’ and ‘Dirty Darkie’ at the Daughter (24). These names seek to racially categorise her, and deny her the choice to define herself in her own terms. Racist notions of identity are pushed onto the Daughter, from her peers, her elders, and the formal paperwork that accompanies existence in contemporary society.

Martin Lloyd comments that ‘colour of paper’ indicates the uniqueness of different countries passport documents, so the Daughter’s desire to see the colour of her mother’s papers, ‘fantasizing the colour’, indicates a desire for paper identity (Popp, 300). Popp notes that the ‘poem, in other words, contains the official papers and the multiple fonts, voices, and colors that exist beyond the circumscribed margins of state-sanctioned documentation’, speaking what cannot be spoken in legal terms, what cannot be uttered (Popp, 303). However, the knowledge of one’s own identity as discovered through legal census is complicated by the white supremacy of government. The type of information requested may change depending on political situations, and as ‘Kathleen Paul observes in *Whitewashing Britain*, the British government responded to the threatening tide of migrating black bodies by repeatedly revising the standards of proper and satisfactory identification’ (Paul qtd. in Popp, 296). The information of her relatives is collected and maintained by a legal body unconcerned with black lives; and they are asking different questions every time. One’s legal identity offers no sense of security when standards repeatedly alter to suit racist regimes and ideals, and so for the Daughter, there is little hope of gaining self-knowledge from governmental records. Gamal Elgezeery notes that ultimately, ‘biological and ethnic identities depend on much fantasizing and imagination’, and so the Daughter’s pursuit of a stable identity through a paper trail seems impossible (134). Like Anais’, the Daughter’s conception of her own identity must be crafted in her mind. In this way, identities are seen to be multifaceted, difficult and resistant to dominant classifications of knowledge, particularly when the constantly changing standards of governmental documentation are considered.

Not solely concerned with man-made records, *The Adoption Papers* also expresses an interest in the science of biology. The cover of Kay’s work in some way correlates biology with identity in

the use of a bright image of human chromosomes (fig. 1). Kay's use of interlacing voices that twist through each other and join in places can be seen to echo the structure of a DNA strand. An interest in biological inheritance is complicated in cases of adoption, as it demands knowledge of parents she has never met, and who may be difficult to find, or be reluctant to be involved in the lives of their biological children. The Daughter's concern with her racial heritage is established when the Adoptive Mother notes 'it matters to her' (24). The poems' interest in genetics does not threaten to destroy the non-biological relationship between the Daughter and her Adoptive Mother though, as examples of their closeness and their similarity often appear and cement the importance and strength of their relationship. Pavlína Hácová writes that 'in Kay's view, identity is not given to the child at birth but is acquired through interaction with the child's environment', citing the Adoptive Mothers statement that 'this umbilical knot business is nonsense' (63; Kay, 23). Clare Hanson writes about epigenetics in her discussion of Kay's *Red Dust Road*, where the modification of gene expression is studied rather than the genetic data in itself, which raises questions of about whether the individual is more influenced by issues of nature, or from how and where they have been nurtured, as epigenetics understands that 'the external environment can get under the skin' (436). Kay's choice of title looks to the papers that were signed by her two mothers making conscious choices, rather than reflecting an interest in blood or heritage; the decision to become a parent is prioritised over the 'chance' of biological parenting. As much as bureaucracy has been framed fairly negatively so far in this thesis, 'adoption papers' as a title recognises the value of the Adoptive Mother's decision to adopt. This value provides agency to those involved in the process of adoption and empowers the individuals' choices. Though Gabriele Griffin notes the chance and randomness of the adoption in that 'the child's adoptive parents want *a child*, not this *specific* child', the fact that 'she would not pick another baby', when the Daughter is ill demonstrates the warm, close connection from early infancy the mother shares with her (Griffin, 118; Kay, 28).

The Daughter demonstrates 'a desire to know the past, to have a history that will explain the present' (Griffin, 123). While the Daughter recognises that a full knowledge of one's familial past and ancestry does not cure all identity issues, yet she cannot suppress the curiosity, the desire to know more about her origins:

'the blood does not bind confusion,

yet I confess to my contradiction

I want to know my blood' (29).

Knowing 'blood' is a synecdoche here for learning of her biological origins, as she 'know what [her] blood looks like' (29). As much as the Daughter voices a desire to know her origins, and can't answer 'the old blood questions' asked by dentists and doctors about the diseases in her family line, ultimately her biological mother is 'too many imaginings to be flesh and blood' (29; 33). The Daughter's relationship with her biology is complicated, just like the twisting of a DNA strand, and the layered, co-existing voices of the sequence.

Smith echoes this interest in DNA through the image of the double helix that George's schooling presents to the novel. Francescho's first line can even be seen to describe the novel's structure, 'Ho this is a mighty twisting thing', and in their admittance that they enjoy 'a twist of yarn, 2 strands twisted together' (189; 202). George's home is even notably in Cambridge, the city of DNA's discovery, and in a song about DNA for school she writes; 'Life not one strand but two' (95). These stories spiral each other, connected in places, as the two protagonists experience the world through each other. Christopher Benfey's New York Times review of the work suggests that *Eyes* may even be a 'fantasy worked up by George and Helena, since it's suspiciously packed with the argot of today: "cause" for "because" and the schoolgirl aside "Just saying."' These two protagonists and their narratives are undeniably connected and complex, like DNA itself. The building blocks of the human body become the very structure of *How to be Both*, placing simultaneously the body and the imagination at the core of its twin protagonists' identity.

Despite the warmth of orality as a fluid means of communication, the Daughter still struggles to track her 'matri-lineage' through verbal communication; her accent misunderstood in Glasgow, her mispronunciation of names and places making her the butt of jokes made by those holding positions of power over her. Her difficulty with official documentation is further complicated by her Scottishness. She and her mother belong to a Scottish speech community, expressing themselves with Scots pronunciations and sentence construction, yet the language of bureaucracy is decidedly English, linguistically more formal and skeptical of Scots' legitimacy. The Birth Mother's voice asks within the text, 'Does she talk broad Glasgow?', aware of the difference between her own Edinburgh voice and that of her child (30). Similarly, Fagan's Anais notices that the night-nurse of the Panopticon, a hugely authorial force, has 'the most proper English

accent ever' (27). The 'propriety' of English beside the use of regional Scots is stark for these daughters: English voices signify that they are gate-keepers of power and information.

Unable to effectively communicate herself to keepers of her official identity, the Daughter speaks less. The Daughter's silence through much of the poems is evident; her anger of people 'misreading' her is voiced in inwardly spoken italics, against the harshness of authoritative texts. Popp notes that the number of times the Daughter is forced to 'look up' her information suggests 'that all authoritative texts, from the dictionary and canonical literary works to passports and birth certificates, define people in exceedingly narrow terms. Such confining margins of definition invariably lead to silence' (Popp, 306). Bureaucracy and official histories pose a direct challenge to knowing oneself and one's family. Once more silence becomes an issue. The Birth Mother is a particularly fascinating figure when considering the complexity of silence in this text. Her speech is never fully attributed to herself, but appears rather a fantasised narrative. Her speech in the poems represents a fictionalised history that brings to mind questions of reality. The Daughter and the Adoptive Mother experience the magic of ventriloquism, giving a voice to an absent figure to help create their own understandings of their situation. The absence of the Birth Mother provides a blank space for the Daughter to create outcomes, as Anais does with her Birthday Game. Whether or not it is productive and conducive to good mental health, silence in these texts is filled with fantasy, affording the opportunity for creative histories to plug gaps.

Von Korff *et al.* understand that in being adopted, a child's identity is complicated, as they 'must decide what it means to be connected to both an adoptive and birth family, and integrate their individual experience into coherent adoptive identity narratives' (Von Korff et al, 123). The consolidation of these families is again complicated by the extent to which these parents are reachable and communicative, as the Daughter's desire to know her biological mother is not returned, and her letter goes unanswered within the work. She is met with silence when she pursues knowledge of her maternal lineage, and is left 'fantasising the colour of her paper / whether she'll underline First Class / or have a large circle over her 'i's' (34).

Official procedures in the process of adoption reveal the protocols and procedures of British bureaucracy that contribute to racist ideals when the Adoptive Mother must assert that she does

not ‘mind the colour’ of her baby before a black child would even be considered as an option by the adoption agency (14). Attitudes to transracial adoption (TRA) in the early nineteen-sixties dehumanise non-white children when the Adoptive Mother laments that ‘she wasn’t even thought of as a baby, / my baby, my baby’ (24). The Adoptive Mother’s experience of adoption is plagued by formalities, from the visitation by the social worker, and the paperwork demanded of her. She experiences anguish at the systems in place: ‘I’m not a mother/ until I’ve signed that piece of paper’ (16). The title ‘mother’ becomes an issue of legal legitimacy, and the law stands between the woman and her daughter. Official documentation becomes a direct challenge to family, and to the formation of a mother-daughter relationship, especially considering the bond already established through their visits, and through their psychic connection noted previously.

The physical marking of her difficult birth, ‘a gash down [her] left cheek’ is made by the forceps that physically extract the baby’s body from the mother (Kay, 10). Elgezeery notes that the forceps themselves are a ‘product of culture’, so the inscription upon the body by this tool foreshadows the conflicts that will be experienced by the Daughter through her life resulting from her TRA (Elgezeery, 127). Janice Galloway and Anne Bevan’s work *Rosengarten* explores the history of forceps, and acknowledges that in classical Greece their use in childbirth was ‘solely destructive’; to void the foetus (30). Though now used to aid mothers in labour, their destructive potential still underlies their use in literature. Elgezeery also interprets the scar as demonstrative of the harsh detachment from her Birth Mother’s body, as if her birth ‘was an act of liquating blood relationships’ (127). The force with which she is removed from the maternal body seems to dictate their relationship as one of violent separation. Barbara Melosh notes that memoirs by both adoptive and birth mothers regularly report ‘stigma written on the body’ (Melosh qtd. in Fox, 282). Indeed, all three speakers in *The Adoption Papers* observe physical evidence of their experience with adoption on the body. The Birth Mother fears her body reveals a history she does not wish to disclose, the ‘leaking blood’ and pulling stitches of the post-partum body as good as having ‘MOTHER GIVES BABY AWAY’ branded on her forehead (Kay, 13;17). This branding echoes a news headline early in the same poem that reads ‘MOTHER DROWNS BABY IN THE CLYDE’, drawing parallels between the act of giving a child up for adoption, and the extreme violence of infanticide, that highlights the severity of the guilt the Birth Mother feels (16). The Adoptive Mother experiences a different anxiety, that her

adoption is an admission of infertility, posited negatively as ‘telling the world your secret failure’ (10). Simone de Beauvoir notes that from ‘infancy woman is repeatedly told that she is made for childbearing, and the splendours of maternity are for ever being sung to her’ (508). Where womanhood has become synonymous with childbearing in culture, infertility feels like a failure to the Adoptive Mother. Griffin sees the individual’s history as being written on the body, and writes that bodies are marked for their ‘non-compliance to with the imaginary norm’, and so social pressures and ideals are shown to be violent (124; 126). Cultural ideals regarding women’s roles within society can be seen to negatively affect inner thoughts and self-worth. The body becomes a loud-mouthed story teller, revealing secrets and anxieties longed to be kept private.

Attempts to limit and control the female body fail repeatedly in *The Adoption Papers*, in the Daughter’s hair that ‘grows out instead of down’, the Birth Mother’s post-partum body that leaks ‘blood to sheets, milk to shirts’, and even the Adoptive Mother’s melting ‘skin like toffee’ in the Daughter’s dreams (27; 13; 22). Bodies in the poems are in excess, proving to be uncontainable within the rigidity of mathematical, permanent information in files. The overflow of women’s bodies is threatening to bureaucracy, as fluidity is not so easily maintained in government census and legal certifications. The Daughter’s search depends on her mother’s existence outwith the narrow parameters established by governmental officials of her height and hair colour. Her personhood lies beyond these arbitrary markers. As Anais asserts, she ‘is not a number or a statistic in a file’ (323).

In terms of boundary, the Daughter’s movement is chastised in a dance lesson in school when she cannot dance as instructed (Kay, 25). Her transgression of the moves is noted by the teacher in terms of her biology; specifically, her blood. As the Daughter is not dancing acceptably, this is seen as a challenge to racial ancestry, and thus to her sense of identity. Though the *chora* is decidedly dance-like, the school teacher considers there to be a correct way to dance particular moves and boundaries are imposed on dancing itself. In the *chora*, however, there seems to be no wrong way in which to move. Dancing in school is no longer about self-expression, but a culturally sanctioned ritual in which rules are imposed on the body. The Daughter’s transgression of these established modes of movement challenges racial assumptions and demonstrates the difficulty of adhering to socially imposed strictures of movement and race. Gabriele Griffin notes

that the teacher's comments doubly alienate the Daughter, from the white people she is surrounded by, and the black people she supposedly does not dance like, as once more a figure of authority alienates and categorises a young person to their detriment (127).

Once vetted by the government and released from hospital, the Adoptive Mother's relationship with her daughter is close, warm and loving. The connections forged between the two women defy any essential connection between blood relatives. Although the recent procedure of 'racial matching' in adoption has become more and more frequent as to save children from feeling alienated from family and their ethnic culture, familial love may be found outwith biological relations (Fox, 258). Identity and belonging are not tangible, on paper or in blood. Family, for the daughter, cannot be affixed to adoption papers, birth certificates or any other textual evidence of existence, but rather is a strong, imperceptible connection with her Adoptive Mother. The Daughter writes:

'a few genes, blood, a birth.
All this bother, certificates, paper.
It is all so long ago. Does it matter?
Now I come from her,
the mother who stole my milk teeth
ate the digestive left for Santa' (20).

The certificates and paper may hold meaning in a bureaucratic context, but little in a practical way against the strength of the connection between the two characters. Elzeery, however, notes that the latter lines suggest a violation of a biological relationship through the notion of stealing teeth, and eating food destined for others, which reframes this question of origin (128-129). The references to traditional parental duties are grounded in fantasy elements such as the tooth fairy and Santa Claus. The Adoptive Mother is framed as the orchestrator of the magic of her childhood, ensuring the Daughter experiences these childhood rites of passage by these acts, as transgressive as they may seem. While acknowledging the negative connotations of the language in these lines, the Daughter and her Adoptive Mother seem to be bonded additionally through social ritual. These lines, and that the two character's racial identities are so different, highlight for Griffin that notion that 'their family is produced, as made up or constructed rather

than “natural” (125). The close relationship between the Daughter and the Adoptive Mother demonstrate the construction of the concept of family, illustrating that it may be found anywhere. Language when wielded by official institutions is a weapon, yet the Daughter does not yield to its reductive understanding of identity. Her hybridity and complexity may never be represented on paper, and the acceptance of this marks an emotional growth. Popp succinctly writes that Kay’s work ‘affirms that the verb to identify is more about connection and love than about affixing one’s identity to a sheet of paper’ (316). In an interview with Rowell, Kay shares that she believes identity to be fluid, and that her own ‘fusion of identities’ has been enriching and a starting point in her writing (268). Fagan similarly notes that Anais is ‘not a fixed being’ in an interview with Lara Touitou, demonstrating an approach to crafting these protagonists that values the flexibility of the self (para 4). A multifaceted identity is understood by Kay and her characters not only as complicated and distressing, but a source of creativity and even comfort.

Given the flaws and failures of official documentation, history itself comes under scrutiny in these texts, as forgotten histories emerge from the abyss to challenge official versions of history. Most obviously is Francescho’s return from the dead, a forgotten artist who operates as a spectre of the past as a bearer of ‘suppressed, historical agencies’ (Derrida qtd. in Levin Sacido-Romero, 95). George discovers early the failures of history through the case of Rosalind Franklin’s discovery of the double helix, which is commonly attributed to Watson and Crick instead: ‘It is the kind of historic fact that opposes the making of true history’ (174). When written and presented by patriarchal white-supremacy, history can be seen to reflect the values of culture, and so voices of the oppressed are suppressed further. Whether or not they are acknowledged, ghosts of the past still haunt the world today, the subversions and transgressions still existing within time that Smith shows influencing events in the present. For example, Carol openly cries at a book that mentions a talented female painter named Edna, whose husband calls her artist’s tools ‘rubbish’ and demands they are put away² (94). Carol’s response to the poor treatment of this artist is emotional, and she is angry at the historical injustice of women’s treatment that denies them their talents. Forgotten histories may come into view, challenging the presumptions made about the past, exposing that artifice with which our sense of history is constructed.

² Presumably this artist is Edna Clarke Hall (1879-1979), who works with watercolours, lithography, etchings, and illustrations. Her other achievements include founding the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children with her husband, again drawing parallels between creativity and a sense of moral justice seen in these texts.

George's claim that history's singular good quality is 'that it tends to be well and truly over' is not as straightforward as it may seem (104).

Anais's existence as a motherless child in the foster-care system means that although she is documented in her behaviour and whereabouts, the truth of her birth origins is mysterious to her. Her original name is '7652.4 – Section 48' because of the unconventional nature of her birth and her time in state care (121). The social workers Anais works with over her lifetime in care have differing beliefs about what knowledge of her family Anais requires in order to mature successfully. One unattributed voice in the novel, presumably echoing social worker statements, suggests

'You have to accept that you will never meet anyone you are related to, or see a picture of them, or hear their voice, or know what their name is, or where they live, or who they are. You have to accept this, so you can be well and whole' (Fagan, 100).

Interactions with social workers are framed as negative experiences, ones that keep Teresa from her work and make Anais feel like a 'specimen' (Fagan, 184). Anais has had thirty-eight social workers assigned to her through her short life and has lived in fifty-one placements (184-185). Even Helen, Anais' social worker throughout the course of the novel is absent and intends to move on from Anais' case, just as she faces court trials for manslaughter; these limbs of government are transient and unhelpful, and do little to provide Anais with any sense of support and caring. The care workers vary in their treatment of the children. Where Angus protests the injustice of Anais' treatment in court and provides emotional encouragement, telling her she is 'not bad in [her] bones' and full of potential, others utilise their position of authority for their own ends (179). At one point, Anais notes that Eric, a care-worker in the Panopticon, 'is on the lamest power trip in the world' when taking time to allow Anais access to tampons (73). Graduates 'are itching for a good specimen', dehumanising the children in their care while prioritising their own sense of importance that 'makes them feel dead professional and important' (184). Of the many social workers Anais has had over her fifteen years of life and her knowledge of others' experience, she is very conscious of their lack of interest in the wellbeing of the children they work with. Referring to tactics of abusive guardians to hide their actions, Anais advises social workers, 'if they have a record of continuous bruises, or bumps, if you visit and they have chocolate smeared all over them – wipe it off. See what is underneath' (184).

Those who are concerned with only surface appearances in these novels are constantly critiqued, and the subtext or hidden information is regularly brought to the surface. Even del Cossa's frescoes were hidden by layers of white-wash for years, and needed to be uncovered in order to reveal the artwork beneath. Should appearances be taken for granted in these works, there is a lot of beauty and truth that will be lost, and suffering that will go unwitnessed.

The care workers at the Panopticon, particularly Angus, demonstrate that the information they keep is open and unguarded, as Anais may request her officially documented history at any time. When Anais' sees her own files being read by Eric she identifies the stages in her own documented life: 'He's reading year five. He's not got tae the good stuff yet, he's still on the phenomenon bit. The psychologist bit. The child-that-cannae-show-love shite.' (73). Anais demonstrates a sense of removal from her own life history, able to classify her most traumatic memories as 'good stuff' and entertaining fiction. When arriving in the Panopticon and recounting her care history to John, Anais admits; 'I've said it so many times it's like reciting a wee bunch of words that didnae mean anything. I could be reciting the ingredients for cornflakes' (58). She is removed from her own past and becomes like any other reader. The version of events recorded in the Panopticon is seemingly just one of many, and her removal from her own life is further worsened by the impersonality of a language that does not have any meaning for her.

Without any evidence of her birth or knowledge of a family, Anais believes herself to be artificially created, 'from a bit of bacteria in a Petri dish. An experiment, created and raised just to see how much, fuck you, a nobody from nowhere can take' (Fagan, 31). Her entire existence seems to her engineered by an unknown project run by faceless people, and her experiences with the police department only exacerbate this anxiety. This concern with her origins and the dehumanising nature of care destroys any concept of selfhood Anais may have, when she writes: 'I dinnae have an identity, just reflex reactions and a disappearing veil between this world and the next' (99). Moved constantly from foster homes and care facilities, Anais has no stability in her surrounding to focus on her sense of self, and instead must constantly adapt and react to the new situations she finds herself in. Her lack of sense of identity may be traced to the failures of the care system to provide stable environments to support the personal development of children.

Anais' sense of self is also often commented on from the perspectives of psychologists within the text. Kristeva understands that the *chora* cannot exist untouched forever, as those who seek refuge there suffer the collapse of their symbolic realm, which can only lead to madness as the world becomes no longer understandable to them. Kristeva links this collapse with schizophrenia, when links between signs and their interpretations are broken and the subject suffers 'the loss of symbolic function' (Worthington, 118). Anais' pregnant birth mother is admitted to the Warrender Institute and leaps from a window shortly after giving birth. She potentially suffered the breakdown of the symbolic during her experience of pregnancy, yet with the lack of information about her, her history of mental health is largely conjecture. Anais as a child is spoken to by a social worker about schizophrenia and Anais even comments on the attractiveness of how the mental condition is presented to her; 'I just thought it sounded cool' (236). Fiona McCulloch notes that 'Anais associates schizophrenia with a creative insight to see beyond the confines of so-called reality thereby allowing her mind to be open to alternative truths rather than fixed doctrines' (129). These alternative ways of seeing offer Anais fresh perceptions of the world around her, rather than contributing to the disintegration of her connection with 'reality'. There is the potential here for the *chora* to be read negatively, as a space in which the ordering principles of the world do not enter. Yet, the ordering of the world around Anais consistently demonstrate that she is relegated to the bottom of the hierarchies, passed over and mistreated so often by those in positions of power. When the social ordering has such little regard for her life, there is little reason Anais should desire to stay in such a reality, and her interest in the semiotic is understandable. When a social worker believes Anais may have borderline personality disorder, she quips that it is 'better than no personality' (99). However, in the eyes of the care system, 'no personality is the correct answer', as the system appears to operate as a means of discipline that desires to create docile citizens from vulnerable youths (99).

In addition to Kristevan theory, Lacan's mirror stage is also useful in understanding the development of these texts' motherless children. When children like Anais are denied the external representation of the body provided by the mother, there is a complication in the child's development of the mental conception of the self as 'I'. The mirror stage establishes the subject as dependent upon the external world for an understanding of oneself.

Anais demonstrates a difficulty with observing her own reflection, beginning about age eight; ‘I looked in the mirror and there was this wee lassie who didnae smile, and when I met her eyes I felt embarrassed and awkward’ (Fagan, 234). This discomfort with her visual self continues into her present day; ‘look in the mirror and meet my own eyes, and quickly look away. It’s funny when you make yourself uncomfortable. I do it all the time’ (Fagan, 24). McCulloch notes that the ‘policeman stares at [Anais] in the rear-view mirror’ when travelling to the Panopticon; the ‘mirror and the gaze function to frame her as an outcast so that she avoids her reflection whenever possible’ (Fagan, 3; McCulloch, 123). Anais is constantly aware of her social position as an outcast, down to the shame she feels of the name ‘Midlothian Social Work Department’ written on the side of their minibus (193). The bus attracts looks from the public, and the girls from the Panopticon are verbally abused by wealthier rowers on their daytrip to a loch, calling them ‘[c]havs’ (211). These harassers are ‘what Teresa would have called – ignorant as fuck’ in their aggression towards those on the social fringes, yet their aggression demonstrates the negative social attitudes towards children in care (211). Though challenged by these prejudiced people, Anais equates ignorance with cruelty to those less privileged, indicating that education on social matters may lead to a better sense of citizenship.

Schneiderman notes that in ‘the absence of strong parent figures, fictional protagonists increasingly resemble Kohut’s “mirror-hungry” personality’, craving attention and acknowledgement (217). When considering Anais with regards to this theory, the attention paid to her comes from largely negative sources; from abusive partners, police and drug-dealers. Due to Anais’ abandonment, Kohut’s research suggests that she ‘has no reason to believe that others will respond with empathy, and therefore becomes withdrawn and depressed’ (Schneiderman, 217). Her emotions are indeed largely internalised when considering that most of her interactions with authority figures are crowded with italicised text, noted inwardly but not verbally expressed, just as Kay’s Daughter responds to authority’s abuses of power. Anais remarks that authority figures ‘are broken and they’re always bullies as well’ (101). In her extensive experience with the police system, Anais has only met *one* nice policeman (118). Anais’ parental absence can be seen to impact her sense of self-worth and so her ability to interact with the world around her in that negligence by the state has depreciated her sense of self-worth.

Considering mirror images, the Daughter is said to look just like her biological father, Olubayo, when the Birth Mother reveals ‘I looked for him in her; / for a second it was as if he was there / in that glass cot looking back through her’ (26). It is not her father the Daughter hopes to find, but her ‘lightning white’ mother (19). The reader learns that her father ‘couldn’t leave Nigeria’, so there is a practical reason this young girl in Glasgow cannot pursue a relationship with him, yet her interest in her paternity is never overtly raised within the narrative of the poems (12). It is her maternal line that the Daughter dwells on; despite the fact she inherits her blackness from her father. While race is undeniably a key issue for the Daughter, there is a greater concern with connecting with her maternal heritage. For daughters, their mothers offer mirrors of self and understanding of the ‘other’ through a shared experience of being female in society. There seems to be a sense of connectedness through gender. Quoting Irigaray, the daughter is the mother’s ‘non-identical double’, mirroring the shared experiences of being a woman in society (Dominguez-Rue, 127).

Similar to Anais’ surprise at her own reflection, the Daughter experiences surprise when faced with her own reflection, stating that she often forgets her skintone:

‘I can see my skin is that colour
but most of the time I forget,
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’ (27).

Reading the self in relation to the nurturing mother is difficult when both daughter and mother have different racial identities. Surrounded by whiteness, the Daughter’s concept of herself is at odds with her physical reality, and her sense of self is confused by not seeing herself visually reflected in those around her. The media she consumes as a child with her friend, however, returns to celebrated black figures; not David Cassidy, Donny Osmond or Starsky and Hutch, but Pearl Bailey and Bessie Smith (23). Music as a creative pursuit is able to replicate the fluid and expressive qualities of the *chora*. The Daughter and her friend dance around the kitchen too,

physically engaging with and enjoying the music. The work of these black women creatives is accessible to the Daughter in nineteen-sixties Scotland, allowing her to identify with them through their music across time and continents. Creative work by black women engages the Daughter more than images of popular white men, again cementing the importance of being able to access work from people who look like her. Kay discusses the relationship between identity and music in an interview, appreciating that musical memories have the ability to ‘give you your identity’ and the ability to allow you to lose yourself: ‘you’re just in the music, and so I like music’s ability to give and to take away and that’s to me the most fascinating thing about it’ (275). Kay states that ‘the beats and the rhythms and the sounds of different kinds of music’ have made it into all her work (276). Musicality in Kay’s work appears both in its patterns of rhythm and structure, and in the Daughter’s personal enjoyment of sound and voice. She may access the choric realm through movement and song, free from oppression of symbolic reality for a short while.

Lacan’s work allows Bessie Smith and Pearl Bailey to be considered as ‘mirrors’ to the Daughter. Lacan’s theory regarding children’s entry into language and the symbolic is reliant upon ‘the recognition of a reflected self-image that is both self and other’ (Lacan qtd. in Bailey, 6). By entering the world of the symbolic and understanding their own reflection, ‘the child is ushered into a futile yet absorbing quest to identify with the estranged image of a unified self’ (Lacan qtd. in Bailey, 6). Lacan understands the quest for a total sense of self to be essentially futile; continuous development and the complexity of identity mean that it is never stable, never knowable. For the children of these fictions, part of the journey into selfhood is the acceptance of the unknown and ever-changing aspects of identity and the self. For these children lacking a visually similar female parental presence, the formation of identity by mirroring is hindered, and perhaps too their early development.

For Kay’s Daughter, one issue is that her Adoptive Mother does not look like her. From the glass cot that she lays in as a child, the poem contains a series of mirrors, both figurative and literal, that highlight the Daughter’s physical difference from her adoptive parents (Fox, 285). A child with parents of mixed races, she reports that ‘Angela Davis is the only female person / I’ve seen (except for a nurse on TV) / who looks like me’ (27). While the absence of black women in her

life and the media to function as mirrors for the Daughter may be seen to complicate her entrance into language, Angela Davis, a prominent American political activist, comes to function as a mirror for the young girl: the Daughter even kisses her Angela Davis poster in what Pamela Fox understands as an 'erotic moment of blurred self/group recognition' (Fox, 285). Attempting to utilise Davis as a mirror, however, is complicated by the other children not knowing who she is, as Griffin notes that 'identification with the unknown' does not allow the same triangulation of identity as with someone recognisable to the other children (121). Being black in a culture of whiteness leads means the Daughter is constantly renegotiating her relation to her environment, alienated from her embodied self.

This chapter has shown many of the failures of language on a communicative level due to its removal from feeling and its existence as a product of patriarchal control. '[O]fficial versions are never true', says Francescho regarding the endorsed portraits of the court, and their statement is echoed in all forms of official documentation and history (A. Smith, 'How' 367). Where linguistics cannot express the range of emotion and the experiences of these children, they manipulate and create in order to compensate. They begin their own patchwork-languages and they deconstruct established modes of communication. Despite the barriers of communication, they still form close emotional bonds with their adoptive families, care communities and friends. Through creativity and imagination, the motherless children of these works are able to carve better channels of communication, and in turn provide themselves with support structures that allow them to more comfortably pursue knowledge of their own identities. As much as language can be seen to hinder these motherless children, the following chapter will attempt to investigate positive examples of what language and literature can afford to these children, and which alternative means of expression and self-investigation are useful to them.

Chapter 2: Time and Realities

As much as the daughters of these texts experience the world around them as unjust, it is valuable to delve further into how these perceptions have formed. This second chapter will attempt to uncover why and in which ways these texts conceive of ‘reality’ with regards to unconventional chronology, memory, and fantasy. Kay’s, Fagan’s and Smith’s unconventional styles of narration present issues to the reader about whether the events depicted are objectively true, imagined, hallucinated, or even dreamt. The chapter will discuss how the children navigate this complex terrain of reality and unreality. Where the previous chapter has demonstrated the failures of language in the symbolic realm to facilitate the expression and self-knowledge of these daughters, this chapter is concerned with the alternative tactics they adopt in order to understand both themselves and the world around them, such as turning to nature, engaging creatively with their memories, and producing art. Discussion of the *chora* so far has centred on its pre-language qualities, and this chapter will proceed to introduce and discuss its sense of timelessness and liminality, where these qualities are witnessed in these texts, and to what ends. Soderback considers the *chora* to be ‘time itself—that which comes into being and passes away, and that in which life is both generated and negated as we are born and die’ (73). When the *chora* is considered as time itself, the use of time and chronology within these works becomes more significant to discussions of motherlessness and identity formation, and this chapter seeks to explore in more detail the complexities of time, memory and reality in these texts. The lack of boundary in the *chora* also facilitates discussion of how these motherless daughters reject binarism in all its forms, and in which ways both liminal and dual identities are embraced.

Conceptions of reality in these texts are complicated by the chronology of events, where a traditionally linear sequence of events is actively refuted. Kristeva introduces the reader to an understanding of time without measured regularity, but instead ‘rhythmic oscillation, alteration, and displacement’ (Soderback, 66). Notably, the *chora* is perceived to be a dance-like realm, as ‘the moving character of the *chora* is crucial’ and its etymology traces back to the Greek word for dance, *chorós* (Soderback, 71). In these texts, rhythmic movement appears often in both form and content, such as in the movement of narration between past and present, Kay’s focus on poetic rhythm and through George’s daily dance ritual for her mother. Through techniques such

as a narrative focus on memories of lost mothers and the demonstration of shared vocal patterns, and scenes such as George's attempts to directly replicate her mother's dance routine, the sense of movement in these texts links the daughters with their mothers. As a choric quality, movement allows the daughters to connect with their mothers.

Considering this realm of timelessness and the flexibility of the *chora*, how these texts acknowledge and manipulate the memories of the daughters is of note. The structures of each work attempt to merge present tense experiences with memories of the past, and so traditional conceptions of memory and time are challenged. For example, in Smith's piece, George's experience of her mother as being both alive and dead causes a crisis in her perception of chronology and reality that is replicated in the ordering of events in the novel. Grammatical tense becomes an issue, and George's thoughts within the narrative often need to be rewritten in order to conform to the present reality of her mother's death. The tense must be regularly updated and corrected from present to past; '(George's mother is a feminist). (Was.)' (93). Anais also finds the written word to represent loss when she notes that Teresa's 'so dead, it's more than a full stop' (Fagan, 88). That the daughters demonstrate a concern with how language and writing influences time and memory is seen at points in each text. Language impacts on how the daughters conceive of their realities, and so the *chora* can be seen to offer a refuge from language's influence, where complex thoughts and emotions need not be translated and rewritten to abide by the rules of English language and grammar.

In Smith's concept of time, any notions of linearity are confronted, and not only within George's section. Smith's entire novel is divided into two sections both entitled 'One'; one following George, and one following Francesco, henceforth referred to as 'Camera' and 'Eyes' respectively, on account of the line drawings that accompany the titles. The order in which these two sections appear in print can vary, dependent on the copy, meaning that different readers encounter the structure of the novel differently; some reading about George and then Francescho, and some reading about Francescho and then George³. That both sections are titled 'One', and that they can be read interchangeably indicates the simultaneousness of their events, and their ability to exist at the same point in time, though Heller McAlpin sees that 'the order in which you

³ It may be of interest here to note that the author of this thesis encountered Camera before Eyes on first reading.

read the sections subtly changes the emphasis' (para 3). The very nature of Smith's form challenges chronology. Time for Smith is not unidirectional and linear, as events in George's life are now coexisting with each other, and with events from the fifteenth century. The two reversible sections of Smith's novel and the experiences of memory illustrated within it pose a direct challenge to notions of linear time, as memory interrupts and disrupts chronology. Time begins to appear as a dimension, rather than a set sequence of events. It appears that the narrative of *Eyes* begins with George's attending the art gallery which occurs towards the conclusion of *Camera*, implying that these two narratives follow on from one another, demonstrating a sense of continuous, linear progression. Smith demonstrates the impossibility of wholly denying linearity in her 2012 work, *Artful*, by quoting Saramago's novel *The Stone Raft*: 'the main problem with writing anything at all is that it's inevitably always linear – one word after another' (32). This however, does not detract from the fact that *How to be Both* is ultimately challenging to traditional perceptions of time, in its reversible structure, the narrative strength/power of memory and Francescho's appearance as a historical spectre.

Kay's text appears at first to be highly linear, the three sections of the titular poems even titled by the years in which the events described occurred, such as 'Part One: 1961-1962' (Kay, 11). However, the polyphony of narratives and the Daughter's voice appearing in the poetry before she has been born all deny the simplicity of chronological storytelling. The Daughter has a recognisable voice before her birth. It is compelling and utilises recognisable English that speaks of experiences from her childhood, rather than of her experiences in the womb, and so any appearance of strict adherence to reality and linear time disintegrates.

Time is not the only concept to be complicated by authorial choices in these three works. Memory too 'becomes problematic when continuity with the past is threatened' and the death of her mother means that George has lost this sense of continuity with her own past (Greene, 295). With this problematic memory, the chronology of Smith's novel is constantly shifting and re-shifting, allowing George's mother to be both alive and dead, seemingly simultaneously. *How to be Both*'s twisting double helix of a structure reimagines time to allow events at different points in history to occur simultaneously so that George can speak to her mother in Italy 'at exactly the same time' as considering the meaninglessness of the lyrics to 'Let's Twist Again' in England in January (5). The narrative announces that a conversation between George and her mother 'is

happening last May' and so the past and present coexist at once (3). The ambiguity of Smith's presented events calls into question whether the remembrance of an event or conversation is strong enough to make it happen again. The realism in the depictions of their interactions and the fluidity with which scenes with Carol blend into the present in which she is dead indicate that perhaps there is no trickery or magic here; what the reader is witnessing is the power of memory to seemingly resurrect the dead.

The conceptions of memory in these texts are deserving of more attention here. As conceptions of memory can only be conceived with the use of metaphor, a popular theory of memory understands it as 'a series of photographs or visual images' (King, 25). Anais even notes the use of her 'imaginary camera', and hangs her mental images in her imaginary gallery, kept in her memory. She demonstrates the desire to use photography as a means of preserving memories, events, and places; 'I wantae photograph them all and hide the photos in a box – then even if they do fry me, someone will open the box one day and find them. Then they will have the memory' (79). Photographs for Anais are evidentiary of the way she sees the world around her. While acknowledging the fallibility of her own mind, she hopes to ensure future generations have records of events and realities from her life. Similarly, George rearranges her physical photographs in her bedroom 'so that there is no chronology', defying a timeline that unquestionably asserts the death of her mother (46). In restructuring the sequence of her memories, including a picture of Carol as a teenager, George is defying a linearity that insists her mother is dead. Teresa too smiles 'like nobody will ever hurt her' in photographs, unaware of the events that will befall her later in her life (80). The photographs come to represent the co-existence of the events and ages they depict, reimagining the shape of time. Turning to the maternal body, Soderback provides an account of time that is 'not simply reduced to a unidirectional line', but operates three-dimensionally, where the dead are still smiling (82). What a pictorial understanding of memory means for our narratives, however, is that in order for them to be communicated on paper, there must be an act of translation from the visual into the verbal. As with almost all attempts at translation, something of the essence of the thing is lost. Kristeva notes the inefficiency of language herself, noting that the 'Word came next to replace emotion as the trot replaces the gallop', slowing feeling by requiring its translation into speech or

writing (Kristeva qtd. in Margaroni, 81). The demonstrated inefficiency of language is once more an issue for these daughters.

Anais' narrative is set in the present, yet it is largely through narrated memories that the reader discovers what has happened in her past, and often these revealed experiences are deeply traumatic. These remembrances fragment the text so that its structure echoes the fragmentation of Anais' life, and her own issues with memory. McCulloch believes Anais' 'uncertain, fragmentary memory and identity is also symptomatic of Scottish literature, with its use of schizophrenic tension and gothic split or dual self that straddles fantasy and realism', where nation may have an influence on how Fagan's conceptions and uses of memory appear within the novel (124). Considering this fallibility of memory, it is imperative to consider Anais' unreliable narration. It becomes most clear that Anais' understanding of events is flawed when she is considered a suspect in the severe assault of PC Dawn Craig, yet has no recollection of what she was doing at the time of the attack, or where the blood on her skirt came from. For the entire duration of the novel, the police officer is in a coma. Though Anais voices conviction that she is innocent, the text reveals instances of Craig abusing her position of authority over Anais that had been reported yet not resolved, perhaps providing Anais with motivation for retaliation. If she wanted justice, it seems she would have to take matters into her own hands. Anais again clarifies that she does not behave aggressively unless in defense; 'PC Craig went tae war with me, not the other way round' (59). These aspects of the text illustrate Anais' unreliability, yet after some time do fragments of memory return to Anais, and she realises it was animal blood found on her, from an attempt to rescue a squirrel hit by traffic (171). Memory is seemingly untrustworthy for Anais, disappearing when her future depends on a coherent recollection of events.

Anais similarly struggles with memory and reality with regards to her own personal history and its lack of witnesses:

'Maybe if there's nobody else that remembers them, then it's like they didnae happen. They're just gone then. If they fried out my memories it'd be like I never existed, cos there isnae a sister or aunty or da who's gonnae say: Oh, remember when Anais broke her ankle? Remember when she cried on her birthday? Remember when she ate a whole cake and was sick at the back of the bus!' (78).

Being remembered by family is a way of securing her history, and she wants someone to bear witness to the events of her life, no matter how mundane, because it proves her existence. Anais struggles with the fragility of memories, and associates forgotten memories as being written out of history. The sharing of memories is vital to their preservation for Anais.

Memories too exist not only within the mind, but can be projected into the space in which a remembered event occurred. For Anais, Scotland as the site of her continued misfortune and abuse becomes a place of memory, that ‘threatens repetition and prevents moving forward into the present’ (King, 27). In her move to Paris, Anais is removing herself from a nation haunted by negative memories. The funeral comes to function as a statement of Anais’ concluded mourning, an honouring of those lost before moving on, literally and emotionally. Memory is a fundamental component of identity, and so her new beginning in France constitutes a decisive split from the memories held in Scotland with Anais, entering into a new identity as Francis.

Another result of the non-linear structure of Anais’ narrative is that readers are challenged by the relationship between memory and reality. Recent research in psychology has begun to challenge the notion that memory is incorruptible, as memories can be recreated, reordered and re-remembered with new information. Memories are thought to be stored within the mind in an unstable state, and every time an event is recalled, it is ‘reshaped and rewritten every time’ (Hall, 2013; para. 2). Greene also notes the creative power of memory in fiction; ‘Memory revises, reorders, refigures, resignifies; it includes or omits, embellishes or represses, decorates or drops, according to imperatives of its own’ (294). Experiences with Carol cannot be recalled unproblematically because human minds are capable of re-constructing and interpreting memories.

Primo Levi states that memories which are often evoked and expressed tend ‘to become fixed in a stereotype’ and even replace the original memories in their new, story-like format (Primo Levi qtd. Nicola King 25). For Anais, the constant reminders and recitation of her traumatic childhood experiences may function to crystallise her memories of Teresa’s murder. In contrast to the safety and fluidity of the *chora*, the destruction of the mother and how state care and police services handle concerns of memory have stagnated Anais. However, it is valuable to return to

the notion of fallible, corruptible and malleable memory with a more positive angle. Given the previous chapter's discussion of the alternative histories and identities that have been erased by official documents and truths, the reader may come to 'a view of the past as ever-changing and open to revision' (Greene, 305). So, 'if the past is a construct, it can be reconstructed', and this includes personal memories of the past (Greene, 306). The emotional impact of a painful memory can be altered 'by adding new information to it or recalling it in a different context' (Hall, 2013; para 6). The content of the memory may remain the same, but the emotions associated with it are altered, changing the ability of the memory to wound, and even utilising memory to heal. With therapeutic approaches to memory such as this, there is potential for Anais to refigure the murder of her mother in her mind to avoid the pain of the memory without denying the reality of what happened. As there can be no objective truth when memory is concerned, Anais and these daughters are free to revise and edit their own pasts.

Considering therapeutic approaches to traumatic memory, J.M. Davies discusses spaces for therapeutic progress and understands the 'importance of being in the moment and out of it at the same time, of allowing for an intensity of psychic experience while sustaining the capacity to reflect on that experience, to balance emotional immediacy with an appreciation of alternative possibility' (Davies qtd. in Lord, 122). Denial of linearity and linear progress for the amelioration of a patient's mental health is hugely important, allowing for both immersion in, and distance from the past. Recovery from traumatic experiences and processing of complex identity issues is not a linear process, and that the events presented in these texts fluctuate through time echoes the processing seen in therapeutic practices. In the fragmented structure of Fagan's novel, Anais' narrative itself may be considered a therapeutic act, facilitating non-linear progress with her traumatic memories and allowing the reader to bear witness to the injustices of institutionalisation.

It is not only memories in these texts that complicate reality. Issues of the real and unreal arise in Kay's poetry, for both the characters within the text and the reader, particularly through her use of dream sequences. Kay's work has two sections which are figured in their titles as 'dreams'; 'The Tweed Hat Dream' that concludes Part One, and 'The Meeting Dream' that concludes Part Three. The events of these dreams are emotionally powerful. For instance, the Adoptive Mother witnesses the kidnapping of her Daughter by the Birth Mother, who leaves behind only her tweed

hat ‘in the cot. That is all’ (19). The Adoptive Mother’s own anxieties about belonging and maternity surface, and the dream is thus shown to have the power to expose concerns that may otherwise be unvoiced. Similarly, ‘The Meeting Dream’ depicts the Daughter finally meeting her Birth Mother, yet the interaction is anticlimactic and does not yield a productive relationship, demonstrating the Daughter’s concerns about her relationship with her birth mother. As concluding poems to these sections, the reader is denied a definitive conclusion to events, and the text becomes more ambiguous. MacDonald understands that the ‘impossibility of one reality is a recurrent motif in a number of late twentieth-century Scottish novels’, and so Kay and Fagan’s work may be understood to follow in the tradition of Scottish literary thought (143).

Not only in the dream poems does this issue of ambiguous fantasy arise, but also when the Adoptive Mother explains to the Daughter that she is adopted. Kay’s young Daughter suffers a crisis of meaning around the Adoptive Mother being ‘real’. While her mother uses the word ‘real’ to mean ‘birth’, or ‘biological’ in her admission, this leads the Daughter to envision the ‘unreal’ mother melting, her corporeal body no longer secure. Dreams have just as much impact on children who cannot distinguish clearly between the imagined and the ‘real’, and so emotional impact of dreams may be just as strong as waking experiences.

For Anais, this line between reality and fantasy is severely blurred. As the novel’s narrator, Anais’ perception is impacted by extreme trauma, heavy drug use and potentially undiagnosed mental psychosis. Fagan’s use of first-person unflinchingly maintains her views and opinions, unfiltered in language or content. Anais experiences disturbed dreaming in *The Panopticon*, where she envisions those around her trapped in glass jars, and bamboo cages. Levin and Nielson state that ‘we dream about what we are emotionally preoccupied by in waking’, and so it is no stretch to claim her nightmares suggest a concern with entrapment (85). This entrapment is not necessarily within glass, but in a wider sense. Anais is facing a spell in John Kay’s juvenile detention centre, has her location physically tagged and lives in a literal panopticon, but these short-term imprisonments are seen as part of a chain. Anais is part of a system that anticipates her incarceration as an adult. The Chairwoman states:

‘It is my opinion, Miss Hendricks, that you are going to reoffend. Once you have done so, you will go into a secure unit. And when you get released from there, you will offend

again and you will go on – to spend your adult life in prison, which is exactly where you belong’ (176)

When a future so oppressive is articulated to a teenager by an adult in a position of authority, it is evident that she is not impartial or professional, but deeply prejudiced. The purpose of secure units and prisons as illustrated in this short quotation is not to rehabilitate or educate its inmates but to contain, denying the opportunity for improvement, change or growth, illustrating that Anais’ dreams render in images the concerns she has about her freedom.

Liminality is not only seen in these texts in the events of dreams but also in the rejection of binarism through use of the supernatural. Soderback also appreciates that the semiotic *chora* offers a kind of ‘neutral’ zone, a third genus outside of the intelligible and the sensible, and understands that ‘its neutrality must not be understood as pure availability or receptivity, but rather as that which refuses dichotomization’ (69). The *chora* thus becomes useful as a refusal of binary thinking, or indeed of any way of thinking that results in fragmented identities.

Considering etymology again, the Greek root of ‘choir’ (*kora*) means ‘territory, the land beyond the city walls’, establishing the very concept of the *chora* as one that is outside of restrictions (Shields, 340). Boundaries are non-existent within the *chora*, as seen in pregnancy and shortly after birth when the infant has not yet achieved any sense of the self as an individual and existing as undifferentiated from the body of their caregiver. Due to this lack of boundary in its nature, the *chora* itself becomes difficult to maintain with a single definition. Rather, it describes within this thesis an abstracted sense of motherly refuge reminiscent of the close bond between mother and child in pregnancy and early infancy due to its lack of linguistic communication and its movement-based expression. Fluidity is the defining characteristic of the choric realm.

Francescho exists almost as a ghost, a presence in the novel that challenges rigid boundaries between life and death, and calls into question all other binary oppositions, such as body and soul, presence and absence, past and present worlds, and traditional concepts of gender as ‘male’ or ‘female’. Germana characterises the spectre as epitomising ‘the grey areas between presence and absence, pleasure and self-annihilation, reality and dream’ (2010; 168). George’s mother consistently challenges the world around her and the categories of existence that are presented within in, and she encourages her children to do the same, constantly asking them to ‘Imagine’ (149). The binary oppositions of being are challenged, and so the hierarchies of each of the

binaries too come under questioning. Hélène Cixous understands that binarism is inherently gendered, and so always resulting in the degradation of one, engendered as feminine and the glorification of another, the masculine (91). In refusing to accept, and become complicit in, the perpetuation of hierarchised binaries established by dominant patriarchal modes, Smith's writing opens up the possibilities of fluid, all-encompassing being, free from oppression. Patriarchal value systems are challenged in this novel, and voices of the historically suppressed and silenced come to the forefront of the reader's attention. The liminal appears in the other texts too, where Kay's Daughter embodies this sense of liminality as 'midnight baby' (12). Smith's text is truly a discussion of 'how to be both', unbridled by the rigidity of binary. Smith's characters are constantly aware of the positives of embodying duality; Francescho's art is so successful because of their artistic ability to make 'things look both close and distant', using gold in their art to 'give out both at once darkness and brightness' (305; 352). Carol notes the 'constant sexual and gender ambiguities running through the whole work' at the Palazzo Schifanoia that demonstrate the denial of binarism in art (111). In an interview for the New York Times, Smith quips 'You can't be one thing without being, in some ways, the other thing. It's about how to reconcile, how to be tolerant of all the possibilities, to recognize how fine it is to be us and to be in the world' (Lyall, 2014; para 23). Being 'both' is a positive, open-minded approach to selfhood, appreciative of liminal spaces and identities.

Smith's use of supernatural elements, such as Francescho's ghostlike return, constitute what Germana sees as a tradition of Scottish woman writers portraying 'the supernatural as an ultimately positive, ennobling force' (2010; 94). Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, is called upon within Smith's *Eyes*. Francescho is experiencing difficulty sleeping due to the psychological presence of memory, and so Barto prescribes a process of forgetting and then re-remembering. Barto notes that with the memories gone, 'you're like before you were born. Just like newborn. Open to everything' (333). In this assertion, Barto cites a period of life in which a person's connection to the *chora* is strongest, highlighting the importance of the choric realm to healing. This openness reflects the absence of boundaries found in the *chora*, where without memory Francescho is able to begin afresh. In being 'open', Francescho is freed not only from the painful memory, but also from social boundaries that close off options to them. Greene also comments that Mnemosyne is 'a creative writer, [...] maker of stories', demonstrating the

creative power of memory and its ability to rewrite history (294). Memory, imagination, and dreams are perhaps not so divided as previously thought.

Anais also has potentially supernatural experiences involving the memories of others. While first fighting Shortie in her early days at the Panopticon, Shortie summons ‘the worst memory she’s got in her head, so she can try to batter’ Anais (90). Anais experiences flashes of Shortie’s abuse at the hands of her grandfather as a child:

‘Shortie’s pupils are black, and I see it, just for a second – her behind a rose bush with her Granda standing over her’ (90).

Whether these ‘wee flashes’ are magically received or created out of a strong sense of empathy even for those Anais is engaged with in physical battle is unclear, yet the visions remind Anais of the very real situations that have brought Shortie to this place in her life (91). Whether real or imagined events, Anais’ access to Shortie’s most traumatic memories reminds the reader of the cycles of abuse that trap vulnerable children. Anais reflects on Shortie, confirming ‘[n]obody should go through that. No-one. Shortie’s alright really’ (91). In appreciating the experiences of others, even those physically threatening her, Anais gains a better understanding of Shortie, which in turn allows them to share a more supportive relationship. The supernatural sharing of traumatic memories facilitates Shortie’s formation of friendships that will provide support in steps towards healing. Anais similarly admits that she ‘can hear other people’s thoughts when [she is] tripping’, and in a sequence on a bus, Anais is privy to the internal thoughts of all the passengers (29; 282). Whether or not these thoughts and visions are imagined or a result of an empathic psychic connection with those around her, Anais continually demonstrates a concern with the emotions of others. Jones understands the solidarity of those in care to undermine individualism, where Anais’ psychic connection with others ‘signifies an occulted interrelationality, covert substitute for the physical and material relations of trust and dependence denied by extreme individualism’ (C. Jones, ‘Femininity’ 396). When value is attributed to Anais’ ability to share and empathise, a culture that focusses on the individual’s independence is shown to be unsatisfying for Jones. The act of sharing memory in this interaction results in empathic, understanding relationship between Anais and Shortie. Memories in Fagan’s work appear fluidly and can even be shared telepathically, to foster productive and more understanding interactions and relationships.

The supernatural is not only utilised in these texts to challenge reality and prejudice, but binarism as well. Francescho del Cossa's narrative in *How To Be Both* is a hugely interesting exploration of gender and art. Without doubt, cultural concerns about the authority of the legal word were different in Renaissance Italy than in contemporary Scotland, and we may note that it is precisely a lack of documentation in Renaissance Italy that allows Francescho the transformation they require. Their emergence in society as a male artist is not threatened by misleading birth certificates, or official identification required at the doors of brothels. The lack of legally documented identity in this era allows for a kind of self-creation in a way perhaps unbeknownst to George's society today. All that is required is that it is 'clearly established in others' eyes as to who [Francescho] has become' (A. Smith, 'How' 218). Francescho's identity formation is still fascinating to this thesis' central concern of identity development with an absent mother. As a child, they wear their deceased mother's clothing, then with their father's instruction, transition into the art world with apparel considered masculine, their own self seemingly created from the ashes of their mother, even choosing their name as it begins with an 'F' as their mother's did (219). Francescho paints identity as something held by mothers, as keepers of secret knowledge; 'Cause nobody knows us : expect our mothers, and they hardly do (and also tend disappointingly to die before they ought' (282). That mothers 'hardly' know their children points to the complexity of identity, figured as almost unknowable by others. The self is a complicated matter, and in Francescho's view, it is only mothers who have a glimpse of who their children really are. The sharing that is facilitated by the choric space may allow the mothers this knowledge of their children, but identity is still a vastly complicated concept within these texts.

Francescho is initially raised by their parents as a girl, but after their mother's death, they begin to pursue a career in professional art. As this practice was all but forbidden to women in this era, it is understandable that Francescho binds their chest and lives as a man. When, centuries later, George and her mother study del Cossa's frescoes they cannot tell which of the figures are male and which are female. In the end, they decide it does not matter; 'Male, female, both, [Carol] says. Beautiful, all of them' (52). Additionally, when Francesco sees George for the first time, they assume George is a boy, only to discover later that they had been mistaken. Gender too, it seems, can be a fluid and impermanent aspect of a self, as observed from within and with-out. Fagan's novel demonstrates the artificial and painful construction of femininity, exposing the

construction of gender (22-23). Her characters toy with their gender presentation, as Tash alternatively draws a moustache on herself, and ‘prefers lassies with a wee bit hair’, enjoying attributes and characteristics presumed traditionally masculine (95). John wears dresses, and Anais names one foster parent ‘Beard’ for her facial hair, and remarks that she likes that the guardian does not care about it. The text displays knowledge of the construction and performativity of gender, and this same attitude is reflected in Smith’s work. Ultimately, Smith informs the reader that biological sex is not a true marker of identity but rather an arbitrary distinction to be made, and that all aspects of identity, even those perceived to be innate or unalterable by contemporary society, are fluid.

In 2005, the Gender Recognition Act came into being in UK law, yet this legal step towards inclusivity of transgender identities can be seen ultimately limiting in its rigid understanding of identity. Fluid identities are too uncontrollable for legal documentation, and so fixed identities are instated (Davis & Funke, 155). Those who identify as non-binary, or have a more fluid sense of their identity, are still not accounted for with this change. In the realm of the legal, gender is still a controlled, limiting marker of identity. Categorisation utilised to better understand people is by no means a negative thing, but categories that force themselves upon people who do not fit those categories is a very different issue that denies individualism and may lead to deep identity issues.

Societal attempts to enforce gender expectations and stereotypes fail in Francescho’s case, and do not encourage them to give up their artistic pursuits. The original motivation for Francescho to live as a man comes from the gender inequality of their cultural climate. As women painters were unheard of outside of nunneries, for Francescho’s talent to be explored and nurtured they must reinvent themselves, ‘since girls got less attention when it came to colours and pictures, which meant the loss of many a good painter out of nothing but blind habit’ (331). Instead, the rigidity of gender roles encourages them in an even greater deviation from traditional gender roles expected of those assigned female at birth, and they bind their chest and live as a man. Extreme societal pressures intended to force individuals into conformity can be seen to fail, as convention and stereotypical gender roles can be subverted. Francescho surmises the difficulty with binary thinking when Barto challenges the truthfulness of their identity, saying ‘the fault is

with your thinking, or with the person who changed your thinking, not with me' (279). Attempts to craft more inclusive legislation can still enforce damaging barriers to identity, raising questions about whether official versions of self within government can ever provide positive arenas for identity formation.

That the works considered in this thesis are written in English is notable when considering the lack of a grammatical gender in contemporary English. While a contemporary English sentence requires little modification to alter the gender of the subject, in other languages the procedure is not so simple, and gender influences sentence structure far more. The English language may have a greater ability to deconstruct gender in the wider sense due to its pre-existing structure that is not reliant of gendered adjectives and nouns as other languages are. Further research into gender deconstruction across language systems may be valuable when applied to Smith's text, exploring how different languages impact and impart identity, such as Italian's ability to reflect Francescho's sense of self and identity. So far it seems that no matter what the language is, visual and musical art is still shown to provide a greater sense of truth than the written word.

As George turns to the art of del Cossa in their grief, Anais too finds some comfort in turning to figures of the past. Anais exists on the fringes of society, and Fagan connects her to a history of outcasts with her choice of epigraphs. An extract from Oscar Wilde, who was a historical literary outcast due to his homosexuality, identifies the protagonist with his queer sexuality and unjust imprisonment,⁴ and a line from a traditional folk song from an era in which the children of slaves were taken from their families in order to be sold evokes notions of painful separation from one's family.⁵ The lyric 'sometimes I feel like a motherless child' equates the loss of cultural heritage, homeland, comfort, and safety experienced by those forced into slavery with the loss of the mother, aligning the figure with these concepts. Mothers can function as symbols here of traditions and emotional warmth. While none of Fagan's characters experience the severity and dehumanising brutality of slavery, Fagan can be seen to attempt to align them with a history of suffering and loss. These choices of intertextuality encourage similarities to be drawn between

⁴ "When liberty comes with hands dabbled in blood it is hard to shake hands with her" – Oscar Wilde'

⁵ "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child" – Traditional US folk song from the 1870s, a time when it was common to take children away from slaves in order to sell them.'

those brutally taken from their families, denied their human rights and abused by systems of power, and the characters of the novel.

While none of the characters in the novels define their own sexualities and avoid categorisation, and with an understanding of the dangers in forcing even fictional people into categories they may not identify with, this thesis will utilise the broad term ‘queer’ to denote relationships and identities that deny heteronormative cultural values. Anais’ relationships with characters of different genders posit her outside dominant cultures of heteronormativity. There is a lack of queer women’s existing narratives from which Anais may find comfort and solidarity in her identity, and already this thesis has witnessed the lack of language to express queer desire as seen between George and H in *How to be Both*. Despite a lack of language to communicate herself, Anais never expresses shame or denies her attraction to women, despite what may be expected in a society that devalues and commodifies women’s sexuality, and particularly queer sexuality. Francescho too experiences enjoyable sexual involvement with women in brothels and the male infidel they meet at the side of the road. While there is still value in fixed sexual identities, these texts remain open to possibilities and unnamed attraction. Sexuality in these works, like identity, is fluid.

Despite the fluidity of identity however, the daughters of these texts still struggle with their maternal origins. Like Kay’s Daughter, Anais receives a letter to help with understanding her birth mother. This occurs at the request of a social worker who considers it a means to help with Anais’ ‘*identity problem*’ (76). However, Mr. Jamieson, the monk who claims to have known her from Warrender mental institute, sends Anais ‘[o]ne winged cat, in pencil - no note’ on a piece of cardboard (Fagan, 4). There is not even any written information for her to cling to, and instead Anais visits the monk for an oral account of her birth night, however inaccurate and magical this account may be. The monk paints her birth mother as a fantastical presence, a ‘cigarillo-smoking Outcast Queen’ who rides a flying cat (245). Anais is touched by the interaction, crying when they part (248). He serves as a reminder that Anais was indeed born, not created in a laboratory, and he instructs Anais that ‘[t]hey dinnae own you’ (248). Anais feels that others want to break her spirit, erase her personality, and place her in oppressive institutions for the rest of her life, so the reminder that she is her own person, and in ownership of herself is deeply encouraging.

However, despite the comfort he provides Anais, she is still haunted by her lost mothers. Carole Jones understands her to be ‘haunted by the spectres of failed liberation figured as her lost mothers’, locating Anais in an ancestry of unsuccessful escape attempts from social imprisonment (‘Femininity’ 388). That these mothers attempt liberation from male institutions is inspiring but their violent ends indicate a great difficulty in escaping patriarchal control. Though acknowledging that some readings of this haunting may interpret the mother as a pathologised figure, Jones asserts that ‘in this novel these mothers represent a radical subversive power and sexual lawlessness that inspire and energize the rebellious and dissident impulses in Anais herself’ (‘Femininity’ 394). Anais often quotes from her lost mother, as Teresa’s teachings are present in the forefront of Anais’ mind. Even without a constant mother’s presence in her life, Anais can still draw inspiration and strength from Teresa’s life from the time they spent together.

With no memories of any biological parents, and after living through the brutal murder of her adoptive mother, Anais is left to create her own origin story. Part of the intrigue of the novel is the degree to which events and perspectives are real, imagined, products of traumatic experience or products of drug use. Anais admits herself that she might be considered altered by her use of hallucinogenics, but states that when she hallucinates, ‘mostly it’s just when [she’s] tripping so [she] mustn’t be totally mental in the head yet’ (29). No matter the origin of her perception, Anais understands the world around her differently from how others may see it, often involving elements of the magical or supernatural. Germana illustrates that the use of the supernatural as a positive force is used time after time by Scottish women writers, where encounters ‘with the supernatural are ultimately not sources of fear or malice, and tend to leave protagonists transformed in some way’ (2010; 94). Most notably is Anais’ relationship with Malcolm, the winged cat statue that guards the grounds of the Panopticon. He links Anais to her mother and the ‘flying cat’ she rode into the Warrender Institute, and Anais herself says the best superpower to possess is the ability to fly, a power that seems to offer a sense of escape from the sense of imprisonment that pervades the novel (232). McCulloch notes the link between Anais’ imagination and Malcolm’s flights – when she is stifled and concerned, Malcolm’s wings do not move, and she dreams of those she knows trapped in glass jars like specimens (129). Imagination is depicted as powerful and magical, offering a sense of escapism from an oppressive environment, but ultimately imagination alone is not enough to save Anais from a slide into the

prison industrial complex where she would suffer the same fate as those trapped in jars.

Imagination is a useful resource in this text, but Anais cannot retreat into it. Rather, it must serve as a strengthening force, and a motivation for action.

Anais is connected with worlds beyond the material and the seen, fully secure in the knowledge that some invisible things are very real: ‘I cannae see jack-shit on the lawn but that doesnae mean they urnay there. I’ve seen plenty of shit other people couldnae see and I knew it was real’ (Fagan, 30). In *Contesting the Gothic*, James Watt argues that the Female Gothic ‘privileges the intuitive power of her heroines during the periods of confinement by offering a grounding for their apparent paranoia’ (Watt qtd. in Dominguez-Rue, 133). The first-person narrative ensures the reader is privy to what she can see, like figures in wide brimmed hats driving off after Teresa’s death (272). Her concerns are validated through supernatural elements, and the arresting first person narration ensures that the reader experiences her supernatural intuition as reality.

Without much material to construct her own ancestry, it is interesting to witness Anais dig further back into a particularly Scottish history for historical mothers when she turns to witches. Simultaneously powerfully defiant and aggressively hunted, Anais particularly identifies with the ‘outcast’ nature of these historical women. Germana notes that the name ‘witch’ signifies ‘the destabilising power of women’s self-determination, and, as a result of such dissidence, her enforced relegation to the peripheries of social spectrum’, qualities Anais certainly possesses (2010; 66). Anais’ awareness of witches of the past ‘is a reminder of the historical plight of women, doubly marginalised within Scotland’s otherness, particularly the queer Scottish gothic female figure of the witch’ (McCulloch, 120). Anais, as a young, queer, marginalised ‘phallic girl’ living in a home that functions as a gothic castle with its forbidden rooms, relates on many levels to the witches of yore, and acknowledges the violent misogyny of witch-hunts that targeted women who thrive outside of patriarchal families (McRobbie qtd. in C. Jones, ‘Femininity’ 385). Upon arriving at the Panopticon she even cites her religious preference as ‘Pagan. Three parts witch, white obviously – well, sort of!’ (17). The novel repeatedly turns to images of the supernatural, and makes several references to Anais’s interest in vampires, a mythical creature that feeds on the life-essence of the living. Anais may relate to fiction about vampires as demonised parasitical creatures when noting that society considers vulnerable

children in care to be a drain on tax resources, as authorities ‘talk to [her] a lot about the taxpayers. The taxpayers hate [her]’ (117). Anais can already hear the thoughts of others and does not like travelling by boat, and when she regularly compares herself to vampires, mythical figures are shown to dominate her thoughts (188). In turning to historical and fictional figures, Anais finds characters to whom she can relate in some way.

Named after Teresa’s favourite writer, Anais is further aligned with a history of female creativity. This thesis believes this writer to be Anaïs Nin, a writer and diarist whose own work is strongly connected with the documentation of personal experience and exploration of memory. Fagan’s text reflects many of the images seen in Nin’s own work, including a focus on an absentee parent and a concern with long-term autobiographical memory (Nalbantian, 117). Nin’s 1961 work *Seduction of the Minotaur* utilises the structure of the labyrinth, ‘which becomes a common and compelling metaphor for the spatialization of time’, and this same image appears again in Smith’s *How to be Both* (Nalbantian, 117-188).

When fantastical, historical figures fail to keep up with the modern world, Anais takes her life’s authorship into her own hands. ‘The Birthday Game’ is a creative activity Anais introduces to the reader from the very beginning of the novel as an important and secretive ritual. On her birthday, Anais creates an imagined birth story and life for herself, hand-selecting new parents, and locations such as ‘an igloo, a castle’, ‘a teepee’, and successful, luxurious trajectories for her lifestyle (Fagan, 32). The Birthday Game and its secrecy allows Anais ownership of her own life narrative, rewriting the official histories of social workers and the police with her unique, highly privatised imaginary one that is free from the input, judgements and prejudices of others. These created histories highlight the discrepancy between Anais’ reality and the freedom and privilege she dreams of. Her fantasies offer a sense of escapism when in dire circumstances and a strengthening resolve that eventually inspires her to act on the dream that she returns to most frequently.

Ultimately, Anais sets out to act on her favourite version of her birth story at the end of the novel. Early in the novel she asserts that the Birthday story set in France is her favourite, so often recited that she is ‘almost beginning to believe it’ (32). Her imagination allows her to pursue a life of her own devising, a hopeful look to the future out of a series of horrifically traumatic

events, just as ‘a bit of imagining’ is needed for Francescho to live as a man and pursue their art (216). Despite the bleakness of their situations, hopefulness for the future is still demonstrated by the girls in care when Isla notes that she hopes to study child psychology, a field associated with aiding children with difficult lives through challenges and providing others with a level of care she has been denied (207). Tash and Isla also reveal they are saving money for a flat together where the twins can visit. Early in Fagan’s novel, Anais asserts that soon she will be ‘sixteen or dead’, indicating a lack of faith in her survival (34). Though Susan A. Lord discusses both the positive and negative attributes of hope, hope is an energising force rather than a comforting force, one that motivates Anais to escape the life she is trapped in. The cumulative trauma of Anais’ short life is extreme, encapsulating loss of loved ones, sexual abuse, and neglect. In reading *The Panopticon*, readers are, in a sense, bearing witness to Anais’ experience in the Scottish care system, the injustices and difficulties of her existence, and offering hope that such a system can undergo reformation and can improve for children of the future. Through the productive use of the imagination, Anais is able to think forward and plan for her new life, demonstrating hope for her future.

Whether or not the reader truly believes she makes the journey and thrives in Paris, Anais’ goal is to leave Scotland, travelling south to France, which is a choice made interesting when regarding Scottish literary traditions. The North often functions as ‘a Gothic space that is particularly prone to the haunting effects of a distorted and abused history’ (Macdonald qtd. in Baker, 148). In leaving Scotland and a future in neglectful and abusive institution to head south, Anais leaves the spectres of her past behind in order to begin anew, with her own, chosen name, ‘Frances’; ‘It’s a nice name, if you look up its origins: It means freedom’ (323). The surname she selects is Jones, the origin of which originally identifies the person as the ‘child of John’: considering that ‘John’ is a slang term for men who frequent sex-workers, this choice of seemingly innocuous name recalls Teresa, and Anais’ unknown paternal origins. With the inclusion of an undisclosed name given by the State, this is Anais’ fourth name, and the first she has had the ability to choose for herself in an act of self-re-creation, even floating a lily for ‘Anais’ on the river Thames in a symbolic funeral with three others for those she has lost; Teresa, Isla and Tash (Fagan, 321). This ritual links Anais with two dead mothers in the text, and so Frances is born from Anais’ ashes. Walker notes that a ‘popular theme of feminist literature

explores women's attempts to give birth to themselves', and that these attempts do not rely on the suppression of the mother, but in recapturing their experience of the mother's body within themselves (161). The other girls of the Panopticon also shirk their 'Christian' names, renaming themselves with their chosen nicknames, like Tash and Shortie, perhaps distancing themselves from names chosen by lost or abusive parents, and taking charge of their own identities (20). Having suffered the loss and theft of her past mothers, Anais' acceptance of a role of mothering herself suggests that she is taking on a role of self-protection, embodying the mother herself. She becomes her own mother, vowing her own protection, safety, and comfort which she has not received from the state.

Anais' proclamation of self-love is a great achievement from a young girl constantly invalidated by those around her. Malabou notes that 'the formation of each identity is a kind of resilience, in other words, a kind of contradictory construction, a synthesis of memory and forgetting, of constitution and effacement of forms' (Malabou qtd. in Hanson, 443). Boris Cyrulnik's concept of resilience is useful here to frame Anais' self-recreation. Cyrulnik understands resilience not to be an innate character trait present in an individual from birth, but 'a capacity that emerges in the context of specific life-experiences', where children can recover, even from severe trauma, providing they have had 'an experience of sustained emotional attachment' (Hanson, 442; 443). His theory points to the love and comfort that has been shared with her by Teresa, Hayley and the girls of the Panopticon in their emotional relationships. For Cyrulnik, it is these relationships that have allowed Anais the experience that allows her to be resilient and empowered her to recreate herself. The experience of emotional attachment is often denied to children in care like Anais, bounced between foster homes and social workers, and an understanding of resiliency highlights the need for sensitive engagement, a key issue in the well-being of young people in care. Cyrulnik's theories suggest that resilience, reformation, and growth are possible when an individual has experienced love, again highlighting the cruelty of systems that deny vulnerable children the emotional tools to help them recover and assimilate into society.

The Daughter experiences this resiliency too, when while terribly unwell in hospital after her traumatic birth, she is kept in a glass cot to recover. It is only the visits and human contact of her adoptive mother that maintain her, and she later says it is the sensation of somebody hoping she

will survive that she senses through the glass that saved her, as she states ‘I must have felt somebody willing me to survive’ (10). The experienced love of the Adoptive Mother provides the Daughter with the strength and resilience to recover, even in early infancy. Anais even imagines being born to a mother who would have loved her so much that she ‘grew strong’, imagining the support and affection of a maternal figure to empower her from childhood (302).

Instead of just restructuring her life only in fantasy, Anais takes steps to create a life for herself she will enjoy based in the future, not her past. She imagines herself to be ‘an ordinary baby’, ‘born on an ordinary day’, no longer needing to cling to images of wealthy parents and designer endorsement in order to cope, but content to ground herself more fully in her environment; ‘a plain ordinary life, the only one I will ever own’ (320; 322). Fagan again draws from literary traditions of the Scottish Gothic, as Germana understands that ‘what qualifies Scottish Gothic is the coming to terms with *the fear of not knowing what one is*’ (2011; 5). Accepting the complexity and mystery of the self is vital to Anais’ new life as Frances, and opens her to the possibilities of how her life may be. In France, Anais asserts that she will ‘go to galleries, and read everything in their libraries, even the manuals, even the papers’, figuring art and the written word as powerful, escapist worlds (323). That Anais can draw strength from these public institutions may prompt the reader to consider issues of accessibility to the masses. These resources are essentially life-giving to Anais, and importantly free to the public to use. In a political climate where a range of public services are in danger of privatisation or closure, Anais reiterates the value they have to vulnerable youths. Of course, this ending to the novel is ambiguous, part of a culture in Scottish writing in which ‘the conception of any one singular interpretation or “reality” is withheld’ yet Jones recognises the final passages of *The Panopticon* as providing a glimmer of hope, as though Anais’ ‘journey is a cruel one, the text’s championing of imagination provides one possible line of flight for the brave dissident’ (MacDonald, 146; C. Jones, ‘Femininity’ 398). The embrace of imagination and the belief in worlds outside the physical allow Anais an escape from the crushing misogyny and cruelty of her life on the margins of Scottish culture. Greene interprets ‘open-endedness’ and a ‘refusal of linearity’ to be characteristic not only of women’s writing, but of feminist fiction (319). As noted above, MacDonald similarly understands that the ‘impossibility of one reality is a recurrent motif in a number of late twentieth-century Scottish novels’, and so these works may be understood to

follow in the tradition of Scottish literary thought (143). These characteristics are found in all three texts and align these works with a Scottish and feminist women's writing culture. Linda Anderson writes that 'women's writing has always existed illegitimately; the official story – the version that passes into history – is the one written by male writers'; these texts provide accounts of adoption and loss from female perspectives that have often been mistreated by society and historians (vii). Smith even illustrates examples of history's erasure of women's stories and achievements, such as through George's learning about Rosalind Franklin, and in doing so the novel cements its own importance; the importance of women's stories, with women as narrators, and women as protagonists. It is vital for Anais to voice her own story when case workers and judges have attempted to write it for her, including predicting how her life will continue. Where Kay's Daughter has others impose racist names and identity traits on her, it is all the more necessary for her to assert herself on her own terms with her own conception of her racial identity.

Despite their anxieties about their identities and futures, the daughters of these texts rarely, if ever, turn to the power of organised religion to soothe their grief over loss or to seek a familial love that is often offered in religious environments. Children of contemporary Britain appear more concerned with political and ethical means of improving their own lives and the lives of others who are disadvantaged or persecuted; supporting imprisoned political activists, protecting vulnerable youths from bullies, acting compassionately with animals, and gaining comfort from voluntary work. Spirituality is experienced not through guided group worship, but in individual acts of compassion and connectedness with nature. George may turn to religious art, and Francescho may paint saints, but their interest rarely turns to a divine spirit or religious leader. The focus is instead on arts beauty and its ability to contain many readings. H's Christmas card demonstrates the strained relationship between art and religion, when she prints 'a picture of a really ugly massive blank concrete wall in the sun' instead of the robin picture the school expected to be made (75). When the response of the school staff is so negative, H states that 'it's Bethlehem' (75). Her use of art raises issues about the realities of the politics of religion and idealistic perspectives of Christianity, and illustrates how young people like George may be disillusioned with organised religious groups.

Anais turns to nature instead of the religious, and demonstrates closeness with the natural world that allows her to look beyond the constructs of the social world; ‘I adore dragonflies. I adore the sea, the moon, the stars’ (88). Even in her relationships with others, her love of the natural appears. Anais characterises Hayley as purely good, praises her for her kindness, and reveals that Hayley is trusted, stating that she is ‘the only person I ever told about [the birthday game]’ (Fagan, 40). McCulloch notes that the original meaning of Hayley’s name is a hay clearing or meadow which ‘signifies Anais’s true love of nature emphasised as a lesbian bond’ (123). Her continually voiced love of nature demonstrates the value she sees in it as a respite from a peopled society that has rejected and neglected her. Anais’ affinity with the natural world is notably in direct opposition to man-made structures, including language.

Also against a culture that prioritises the written word, the Daughter and Adoptive Mother are linked by their speech and orality. Popp notes that they display what Édouard Glissant would call “oraliture” (309). The two women’s voices can be seen to merge when the Adoptive Mother writes ‘I listened to hear her talk, / and when she did I heard my own voice under hers’ (23). The Daughter has picked up the cadences and language of her adoptive parents, and this learned closeness trumps that of biological relationships in her use of the word ‘blood’; ‘Closer than blood. / Thicker than water. Me and my daughter’ (34). Jones notes that the ‘significance of blood is undermined in the consideration of issues of motherhood’ (C Jones, ‘Disappearing’ 97). The Adoptive Mother prioritises the bonds of fidelity over familial ties, again emphasising the strength of their relationship. Kay turns to the voice when she explains her reasoning for utilising poetry for *The Adoption Papers*, rather than as a memoir or a novel; ‘It came to me that I wanted to capture the rhythms of ordinary speech and I wanted to do that in poetry and poetry is a very good and concise way of capturing the rhythms of speech pattern’ (Rowell, 271). Her writing attempts to capture the fluidity and expression of oral communication through creativity and poetry. The importance of orality to Kay’s work is reflected in its dramatisation as part of BBC Radio 3’s series ‘Drama Now’ from August 1990. A radio performance demonstrates the integral importance of the voice to the text that draws further attention to the polyphony that characterises the piece. Francescho, much like the Daughter in her childhood, echoes their mother’s voice, when their father notes that their ‘sentences have her turn of phrase in them’ (337). The children’s very styles of communication are passed down from those who raise them

as they learn, and their interpretations and understandings of the world around them are shaped by their parents. Values and oral patterns learnt from parents are handled with sentimentality, illustrating that authors like Kay place emphasis on the *choice* of raising children, rather than the *chance* of giving birth to them. The Adoptive Mother declares: ‘I have told her stories / wept at her losses, laughed at her pleasures, / she is mine’, figuring verbal sharing as important to the issue of belonging (23). Orality is a relatively fluid means of communication, especially between families with shared dialects. Comparatively, written information seems to hold a destructive, physical power within the text, as communist papers rustle audibly to give themselves away in front of the adoption agent, and the highland phone number of a relative ‘burns’ in a Filofax (15; 31).

The value of orality and cultural sharing surfaces in *The Panopticon* when Anais expresses a desire to work with the elderly that is also considered in terms of oral communication: ‘I’ll volunteer to help some old lady with her shopping, and her cleaning, and if I’m really fucking lucky she’ll take me under her wing and get tae like me and feed me apple pie and gin – and tell me all her stories about the good old days’ (180). She wants to establish relationships with women elders, and would consider herself ‘lucky’ to benefit from oral communication with older generations. In aligning herself with surrogate women relatives, Anais may benefit from the valuable relationships of women’s kinship. To heal and recover from loss, a ‘successful reconnection with the community is of paramount importance’, aiding in finding comfort (Ninroomy, 318). Thus far alienated from the wider community, where prejudice against children in care has denied their acceptance by and integration with the public, Anais, if only implicitly, hopes to form connections with those around her more lasting than the friendships she has known so far. Anais’ motherlessness has placed her in an environment where Anais feels alienated from her community, and so Anais dreams of gaining access to positive engagements with her women elders.

Expression and communication also become a concern through artistry and creativity. The role of art in these works begins to take shape considering failed attempts to communicate depths of emotion with text. In visual art, the viewer and artist can return to a pre-language stage of communication. John Berger’s *Ways of Seeing* discusses the potential of the visual to form its own language of communication: ‘If the new language of images were used differently, it would,

through its use, confer a new kind of power. Within it we could begin to define our experiences more precisely in areas where words are inadequate. (Seeing comes before words.)' (33). Considering this, the visual taps into a choric state, unfettered by the need to translate into words and can be understood in its own right. The ways in which art communicates with the viewer is very different from written information, as 'paintings are silent and still in a sense that information never is' (Berger, 31). The way in which the mind can 'read' art does not need to be filtered through a system of translation, as it operates on a non-verbal level. The power of Francescho's reproduced images compels Carol to travel with her two children to see the original images. The emotionality of art is well documented, as even Francescho notes that it 'is a feeling thing, to be a painter of things' (A. Smith, 'How' 228).

Anais takes comfort in her knowledge of art against those who look down on her; 'I bet I know more about paintings than they do. I dinnae know much, like, but I bet it's more than they do' (114-115). She seems to consider it an alternative, valuable kind of intelligence and emotional knowledge. Her interest in art offers solace from an environment that does not prioritise or even appreciate and encourage creativity, and a visual respite from using limiting language.

How these texts' daughters use and navigate language in their quests for a sense of their own identity is complex and complicated. Ultimately, for the Daughter, her pursuits to meet her Birth Mother are disappointing. She is not written to, and the law cannot provide her with a sense of self-knowledge and contentment. The written word fails her search, but this is not figured by Kay as an absolute negative in the Daughter's life. The Daughter has a beautifully close relationship with her Adoptive Mother, and time and again their bond is articulated in terms of the unseen and the unspoken. Biological relationships are undermined when the reader notes that the Adoptive Mother and her Daughter are '[c]loser than blood' (34). As demonstrated, their voices are united in their accenting, patterns of cadence and vocabulary. Matthew Pateman understands that 'Kay refuses to simplify either herself or her self's relations to history', and her characters reflect this sense of faithfulness to one's own identity by refusing to settle neatly into premade categories of identity and selfhood, in keeping with the *chora's* lack of boundary (65).

In Anais's pursuit of an ideal of her birth mother, she creates the birthday game, an exercise in fantasy and imagination. More successful than her reading of official documentation is the communication with the monk who provides an oral account of her history, however inaccurate and magical it may be. McCulloch notes the potential within the interactions with the monk; when he calls Anais the 'daughter of an Outcast Queen', her position on the social fringe is acknowledged, but within the name is the suggestion that 'she has a power to write her own script and defy social confinement - as the daughter, she can look back through her mother and shape an alternative ending to her life' (Fagan, 254; McCulloch, 130). Writing the self becomes an important concept in these texts, where, drawing from fragments of information and memories of lost mothers, these daughters can reshape and reformulate how they conceive of their histories and themselves.

Often in these texts the unseen and the unspoken are of far greater importance to the self-worth and knowledge of the daughters than any official written information. The nature of the self and existence is so complex and emotional that attempts to categorise and contain elements of the individual prove to be limiting and damaging. The daughters reject efforts to restrict their identities, and attempts from others to impose identities and judgements are not internalised by the daughters; Anais consoles herself against the judgement of authority figures with her own sense of intellect and ethics and the Daughter refuses to allow other children to throw racial slurs at her without retaliation. This chapter has shown that this resilience stems from the support and guidance they have received from their mothers.

A sense of identity must be created by the individual, as attempts to force stereotype or definition on these children from the outside prove to be ineffectual and inhumane.

When the world, its histories and modes of expression have been shaped by and reflect white, patriarchal control, the communication and existence of the Other becomes political. The third chapter of this thesis will further consider the political attitudes of these daughters, by tracing in which ways their mothers and experiences of motherlessness have shaped their responses to injustice.

In their acknowledgement of the failures of language, history, and practices of documentation, these daughters must adapt, challenge, create and deconstruct in order to assert themselves as

individuals. There are few mothers' traditions for them to follow, and so their survival within a world that challenges their race, gender and sexuality is important. There are identities available outside of the norm.

George and Francescho inhabit the same world, their lives overlapping and influencing one another. George invents a life and a voice for Francescho in her projects for school, and Francescho devises a sort of love story for George while observing her in the gallery. The blending of the two sections of Smith's novel demonstrates the impact the dead and the living have upon each other and that they coexist, whether they realise it or not. Linear time fails to account for the supernatural and the imagination's ability to conjure the long dead.

The human body, the daughter's names, memory and the future are all means to write and rewrite the palimpsests of being; these texts demonstrate the remarkable ability of these characters to ultimately look beyond traditional understandings of self into new arenas that allow them to recognise their self-worth, potential, and kindness. Utilising physical, visual and creative means of communication and expression, the daughters are able to create ways of relating with the world around them that succeed where language lets them down.

Chapter 3: Political Daughters

While research notes that contemporary women are socially deterred from participation in politics, there is evidence to suggest that politically active mother can ‘counteract the effects of female socialisation’, encouraging their daughters to participate in electoral and non-electoral political acts (Gidengil, O’Neill, & Young, 335). This chapter will consider how, and in which ways, the daughters of these texts react to perceived injustices, and whether their responses are influenced by their mothers. The stylistic choices of the three authors will be examined, and the political and feminist potential of their writing explored through their portrayals of their daughters. While the contemporary children of these works are largely too young to contribute to traditional modes of political activism such as voting, it is interesting to trace their responses to injustice, their statements on inequality and their politicised personal selves. Nevertheless, their personal choices, attitudes, and beliefs are inherently challenging to established ways of being.

Examples of mothers as directly political are witnessed at several points in these texts. Not only is Carol an influential and successful member of the Subvert group, she also encourages George to refuse the notion of objective truth and to place value on alternative histories and perspectives. Kirsty Gunn characterises Smith as a ‘gravely moral writer’ and her sense of moral obligation becomes apparent through Carol’s tuition, offering moral direction to both her readers and Carol’s daughter (qtd. in Doloughan, 250). Smith notes that Carol ‘is a person who moves through the world responsibly and questioningly and also a political activist in the most playful of forms’, and this thesis argues that George learns from her mother’s example and instruction (S. Smith, para 19). The first line of *Camera* is an invitation to George: ‘Consider this moral conundrum for a moment, George’s mother says to George’ (3). Carol continues to encourage philosophical debate, and the formation of personal morality in her children through asking them to place themselves within the situations of others rather than attempting to instruct them from a removed perspective; ‘*You’re an artist*’ (3). Carol teaches her daughter through these imaginative questioning games the value of the unacknowledged and the subaltern. Benfey even notes that Carol’s surname, Martineau, ‘recalls the 19th-century women’s rights activist Harriet Martineau’, placing George within a history of politically aware and active women (para 5). George later asks herself what it would be like to have died of the plague, to ‘be buried in a pit

full other people's bones, of someone fearful of catching it shovelling you in before you're cold' (140). The moral conundrums that Carol gives to her children encourage empathic engagement with others through history. While often her replies are sarcastic or disparaging of her mother, George is capable of using her imagination to respond empathically to the lives of others. The ambiguity of the authorship of Francescho's narrative may suggest that George has placed herself empathically and creatively within the artist's mind so as to carry a narrative spanning centuries. Influenced by Carol's empathic and curious interest in the worlds of others, Benfey's notion of Eyes being created by George is not impossible. George's mother is a visibly political character within the novel who encourages her daughter with to engage with and question the world around her. Carol's work with the Subvert movement operates as a direct challenge to *adverts*, as she draws direct political parallels with art, and defies the processes of capitalism that rely on the exploitation of the working class.

When Carol reads about a woman painter, Edna, being discouraged from art by her husband, she responds emotionally. George can be seen to echo her mother's responses to the injustice she encounters in her own life. Where her mother wept over Edna being kept from her practicing her talent, George similarly voices her anger at the misogyny of Rosalind Franklin's work with DNA being attributed to Watson and Crick. She writes to H, angry 'that when Watson saw her giving a talk about her research he thought she ought to have been warmer and more frivolous in her lecture about diffraction (!)' (173). George wants to create 'a whole new verse' to the song she and H are writing about DNA in order to document this example of misogyny, and the erasure of women's achievements in history (174). George's responses to issues of inequality can be seen to be influenced by hearing of her mother's own actions against inequality. George voices her anger, and seeks to use creative means to inform others of her discovery, echoing the aims of her mother's Subvert movement. Having known her mother's ways of responding to injustice and inequality, George is better equipped to respond to the injustice she encounters.

The Adoptive Mother in Kay's work is another visibly political mother, as witnessed in her deep involvement in communist politics. Her home is a trove of communist writing, yet when the arrival of the social worker is imminent, she purges her home of tell-tale signs of her political activism. Popp understands that the Adoptive Mother's view that her paraphernalia are 'an

impediment to the adoption process creates an analogy between home and nation.’ (Popp, 313). Political and domestic spheres are demonstrably connected in *The Adoption Papers*’ ‘The Waiting List’, where the bureaucratic visit illustrates that the highly personal act of having a child is entangled with the highly public act of adopting one (Pateman, 69). The belongings that remain out on display are notably conservative, producing an unthreatening picture of political apathy. Popp understands that any extraordinariness is a direct transgression of British identity, and Griffin understands the adoptive parents to be ‘performing ordinariness’ (313; 119). The cultural markers that she allows to remain showcased to look normal include the poetry of Robert Burns and ‘Complete Works of Shelley’, while Paul Robeson’s poster is removed (15). Work by white people is considered less threatening to an environment in which to raise children, as though non-mainstream political perspectives negate a person’s parenting skills. However, when ‘a red ribbon with twenty world peace badges’ is left out that reveals her unconventional politics, the mother is forced to vocally deny or uphold her beliefs, and ‘[b]aby or no baby’, she tells the social worker she would want ‘this baby to live in a nuclear free world’ (15; 16; 16). The sense of commitment to her political and moral beliefs which, since they are considered non-mainstream in the face of direct questioning, may lead to an unfavourable result for her depicts the Adoptive Mother as a principled woman with a keen sense of her own morality. Francescho’s mother is similarly figured as a ‘despiser of cruel things’, as mothers in these texts are framed as empathic, socially aware women who instill a sense of morality in their children (203).

The Daughter wears her support of Angela Davis on a button and becomes visibly political from a young age, where her peers ask who Angela Davis is. The Daughter’s lack of black women in her community is one thing, but the near total absence of black women in media for her to engage with highlights a need for positive examples of black womanhood to function as mirrors for children, an issue that continues to the present day and requires addressing. This lack is not only an issue for black children without mirrors; when white children do not witness positive black role-models in the media, it can perpetuate stigma, intolerance and racism. Elgezeery notes that in wearing this political badge and fighting children who use racial slurs, the Daughter is participating in her own ‘child-suitable activism’ (131). She refuses to internalise the racism she is subjected to from a young age, and fights against the perpetuation of white supremacy, taking

a schoolboy by the '[b]londe hairs' when he continues to use slurs against her (Kay, 24). She is adamant that she will be able to assert her identity on her own terms, and craft 'a sense of self separate from the projections of the teacher' (Griffin, 127). Her parents facilitate her activism, refusing to deny their child's responses to injustice ('No. You tell your little girl to stop calling / my little girl names and I'll tell my little girl / to stop giving your little girl a doing') and allowing her to share her anger about racial failures of the justice system (Kay, 25). Though her parents may be white, they reject their community's racism and encourage the Daughter's exploration of her racial identity. This encouragement allows 'the daughter to stick to her political identity' and resist societal pressures, demonstrating the value of parental support (Elgezeery, 131).

Children without parents or guardians in Fagan's novel face hardship not only because they lack parental support, but because they are living in a system that degrades and villainises them. The use of the Panopticon as a care home for children and young people raises questions regarding the goals of their housing. Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* originally suggests that each cell of the Panopticon is used to house 'a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy'; under which category do the children in care fall under? (200). The original purpose of the Panopticon is to produce the self-monitoring subject for the productivity and safety of the celled, yet Anais is still finding herself in dangerous situations. The young people still take illegal drugs, self-harm, enter off-limits areas and steal food from the kitchen without the immediate intervention of the staff. Their safety and their good behaviour are not assured, nor is a sense of security. Rather, the young people of the Panopticon actively resist the machinations of the home, culminating in a communal act of resistance in the riot at Isla's funeral.

In an interview with Alan Bett, Fagan speaks about the invasiveness of care system protocol for its residents, where if 'you go into a kids' unit people will have read about your entire life before you even get there, complete strangers' (para 5). Privacy is stripped of the young people in care, where even their doors must remain open as they change clothes. It may be considered that the demand for intimate knowledge of young people in care drives them to be secretive about their thoughts, as Anais states she cannot play the Birthday Game in a police cell, where she is under direct surveillance; 'not while there's witnesses around' (3). As their histories are common

knowledge, the young people seem to have little control over how they are seen. Their perceived identities are imposed from the outside, limiting children who have not chosen the circumstances they live in.

Anais is plagued by a hidden force she names ‘the Experiment’, the purpose of which is to test Anais’ resiliency and capacity for suffering. Seemingly born from experiences with care staff that have made Anais feel subhuman, the Experiment is a representation of the paranoia she feels. For Anais, the central watchtower of the home serves as an instrument of the Experiment in their constant surveillance: Foucault writes that ‘the Panopticon was also a laboratory; it could be used as a machine to carry out experiments, to alter behaviour, to train or correct individuals’ (203). Anais understands her purpose in this experiment to be a test subject for a study of human strength and resilience (31). Foucault even explicitly mentions the use of orphans in pedagogical experiments, using them in arguments of secluded education, as though without the concern of parents, the lives of these children as disposable. The experiment seems cruel, as he proposes ‘educating’ children with unrealities and false information, then throwing them into the world to see how they cope. He believes it would save money on discussion and experiment, but at the cost of these children’s lives; their mental and emotional well-being and their educations and potentials (204). Even in this hypothetical experiment, there is no concern for the wellbeing of children in the care of the state, an issue that pervades this novel. Indeed, the Panopticon forms a ‘cruel, ingenious cage’ for Anais, and Dobson and Fisher must ask where ‘are studies by child psychologists investigating how children will react, emotionally and behaviorally, to constant surveillance and control?’ (Dobson & Fisher, 317; Foucault, 205).

To only consider the Panopticon as an architectural structure, however, is overly simplistic, as ‘scholars of surveillance studies have insisted that the Panopticon should be taken not literally but as a metaphor for surveillance of all types, with emphasis on power relationships’ (Dobson & Fisher, 307). The instruments of surveillance change with available technology, and more commonly video recording and geographic information services (GIS) are utilised in order to exert some control over the subject, of which Anais has much experience. As a result of Anais’ issues with the law, she finds her body physically tagged in order to provide a constant monitoring of her location. Instruments of surveillance in the twenty-first century have evolved

from simple architecture, and now the observed can be tracked outside of a single building. There is no easy escape from this incarnation of the panopticon; to have the tag removed from her leg Anais experiences a painful burn in order to allow herself to be undetected by geographical surveillance.

Anais and George both experience a sense of surveillance in their narratives, yet while George ‘inherits’ her anxiety from her mother and shares the concern with H, Anais internalises her fear, seemingly having created The Experiment as an explanation for her situation. When she rids herself of the Experiment, so too does she strip herself of the ability of considering aspects of her new life as unavoidable interferences from the Experiment; she must take responsibility for herself.

George’s mother considered herself to be under surveillance by an unknown observer. George also believes her mother may have been an object of surveillance due to her political work with the Subvert movement. How she conceives of the ‘spies’ is considered through the mythical with the discussion of being monitored or ‘minotaur-ed’. In the twenty-first century, surveillance has been increasingly enabled by technology and dataveillance, where individuals can be entirely alone yet still monitored. George notes that Carol’s phone went missing in the fuss around her death, a fact she considers with suspicion (22). The recurrent mention of the minotaur draws on images from Ancient Greece of near inescapable labyrinths. George’s relation of monitoring and ‘minotauring’ connects surveillance with the sense of being trapped or captured. The images that the mention of the labyrinth conjures are many, but notably, the labyrinth functions as a psychic prison, the very structure of which defies the linearity of time.

Anais even comments on the utilisation of technology and the internet by individuals to broadcast their own lives, putting additional data on the internet than is explicitly required by citizenship. She has no interest in participating in this kind of global internet panopticon: ‘I dinnae get people, like they all want to be watched, to be seen, like all the time’ (34). Anais’ experience of surveillance has illustrated the ugliness of it.

Anais’ existence in the care system brings to the reader’s attention many of the socio-political issues with how the state cares for its vulnerable young people. That the young people of The

Panopticon are at ‘high-risk’ for dangerous situations and criminal activity is made evident within the narrative. In Angus’ reports on Anais, he documents the children’s use of the term ‘Lifer’:

‘The young people who refer to themselves as Lifers do so because they have always been in (care) and/or adopted (with subsequent adoption breakdowns) and they now think they will be in care for the remainder of their upbringing [...] However, the worry is that this term seems to infer a continued institutionalisation after childhood’ (220).

Anais notes the ‘statistical fact’ that most children in state care will find themselves in ‘proper jail’ (8). ‘Some go to the nuthouse. Some just disappear’, and others take up sex work (8). Anais is asked by Pat, ‘You’re not on the game *yet*, are you?’, signalling the inevitability of Anais’ continuation of her mother’s work, as if the same fate is inescapable and only a matter of time, not choice (225, emphasis mine). Teresa similarly tried ‘for a straight life and it didnae happen’ (25). Though no further explanation is given, sex work for those with few other options is seen a sort of entrapment. Hayley, a symbol of goodness to Anais, even appears ‘gaunt and stripping’ in her dream, unhealthy and part of an exploitative industry (162). Racial profiling of a similar sort surfaces in *The Adoption Papers*. When justifiably fighting against abuse from other children on the playground, the Daughter is told by a teacher that in ‘a few years time you’ll be a juvenile delinquent’ (25). Cycles of abuse are unappreciated by adults in these texts who prefer to categorise and demonise children.

The previous chapter illustrated the trajectory that the Chairwoman anticipates for Anais. The Chairwoman demonstrates prejudice towards Anais by speaking of other cases she has not been charged for and that have no relevance to her appearance, using ‘an unproven case to affect’ the current one, which is ‘completely against all protocol’ (174; 173). Despite objections from Angus, the Chairwoman will not be derailed from her biased decision; ‘Her mind’s made up’ (173). Anais believes that the chairwoman has a family member within the police force; a personal relationship that appears to have skewed her professional judgement (178). The Chair dismisses Anais after she asks about this relationship. In a position of power, the Chairwoman prioritises police members above vulnerable children, and personal influences can be seen to impact her work. *The Panopticon* does not limit its critical gaze to the care system, but to any authoritative body that demonstrates its own negligence and corruption. Angus remarks that

Anais is still ‘a kid’ despite all that has been said of her, and children are capable of growing and developing if given fair opportunity and resources (176).

Prejudice extends beyond the confines of the judicial system when the reader sees other groups on the sailing trip hold prejudices against the children, and Anais feels the stares of strangers’, reluctant to be seen in the social-work minibus because ‘[e]veryone stares!’ (92). A campaign is even underway in the area around the Panopticon, demanding the facility move location as neighbours express concern over the corrupting influence of children in care on their own families (63). Foucault notes that ‘[a]lthough it is true that prison punishes delinquency, delinquency is for the most part produced in and by an incarceration which, ultimately, prison perpetuates in its turn’ (301). This continued institutionalisation implies no hope for reformation or repentance for the young people caught in the system. Care is no longer a branch of government concerned with the protection, education, and encouragement of its children, but an appendage of the prison industrial system. Living in a panopticon thus breeds the ‘delinquency’ it may hope to cure. McCulloch understands that Fagan offers a social-political comment concerning social conditioning by ‘focusing upon the care system from the perspective of someone within that system, rather than the Anglocentric hegemonic positioning of those outside of its parameters’ (114). Anais’ first-person narrative position offers the view of the world through her eyes, unfiltered by any disembodied voice, providing a clear example of how unfair treatment impacts children in care.

Smith’s choice of name for the two narrative sections of her novel indicates a similar concern with methods of surveillance in the twenty-first century. Francescho’s section is accompanied by a drawing of human eyes growing like flowers on a stem in a sketch that resembles del Cossa’s painting of Saint Lucy (figs. 2 and 3). Within the narrative, Francescho describes those budding eyes:

‘ and at the end of the stalks
there are flowers that open for
all the world like
eyes’ (191).

Saint Lucy's attributes include her own eyes, removed from her head. Her name, from the Latin for light, also indicates a concern with seeing and being looked at, and indeed, she is the patron saint of the blind. Saint Lucy also plays an important role within Dante's *Inferno* as a messenger of the Virgin Mary, which perhaps echoes in Smith's work the concern with issues of memory and forgetting within Dante's sequence. As a small child, Francescho loves the story Vincenzo sacrificing his eye so he may behold the Virgin Mary, and struggles with the dilemma presented at the end of the tale; like Carol's engaging conundrum, Francescho's mother asks 'What do you think? What should he do?' (247). Concerns with vision permeate the novel as exemplified by Francescho's assertion that 'all we are is eyes' (245). Smith additionally casts doubt on conventional ways of seeing by constantly highlighting the illusory nature of appearance, where characters' genders are misconstrued and frescoes are hidden from the eye for centuries. The nature of being is considered deeper and richer than appearances may suggest. In Palazzo Schifanoia, the 'palace of not being bored', a figure that is particularly captivating to the visitors in del Cossa's work is a half face that looks out over the room (354). These painted eyes are interpreted as belonging to a woman by women viewers, or to a man by men viewer, though Ercole is certain they are 'your eyes, Master Francescho' (354). The mouth of the figure is hidden as if 'there are things that can't be said' (354). The power of Francescho's art has brought people to the palace under the guise of paying their respects to Borse, almost making him 'into the popular man he wanted' to be painted as (355).

Viewing in the modern age is complicated by video technology. George's contemporary section is accompanied by a line drawing not of, say, a personal digital camera, but a CCTV camera; an instrument of surveillance (fig. 4). The novel is concerned with issues of observing and of being observed as acts of viewing dominate the novel. 'Seeing and being seen, Georgie, is very rarely simple', Carol establishes, considering the positives and negatives of being observed and observing (123). Where the gaze is so often understood in terms of power structures and struggles, 'looking' and being looked at can still be positive, transformative experiences; Carol feels 'pert' when feeling watched (123). It can be considered that the act of observing 'raises the dead', in that George's recurrent trips to the gallery and her acts of observing and researching Francescho's work and life resurrects them, allowing them to provide their own narrative. Francescho is connected to George: 'as if a rope attached to the boy is attached to me and has

circled me and cannot be unknotted and where the boy goes I must go', as though her viewing power has bonded Francescho to her (224).

Seeing is entangled with power dynamics in these texts. George comes across a pornographic video on the internet, but becomes deeply upset when she realises the abuse of power shown in the video; the girl in the film 'looked much younger than George. She looked about twelve' and 'as if she'd been drugged', appearing in the video with a much older man (35). It is an obviously exploitative production, and George recognises its abuse. The extremity of the violence these films is witnessed in *The Panopticon*, where Anais becomes a victim of one:

'There was five of them. There was five. There was a webcam. There was five. It's one of those where a lassie looks all fucked up and underage' (294).

George's explanation for re-watching the video is that 'she was doing it in witness, by extension, of all the unfair and wrong things that happen to people all the time' (37). George's viewing of the video becomes a part of her daily routine where the act of 'watching' the video transforms into the act of bearing witness to injustice and acknowledging the truth; that something cruel happened to the girl. Too young to be acting upon her impulse in any grand way, George refuses to forget the injustice and practices her own means of settling some sort of cosmic debt owed to the girl in the yurt, even sitting outdoors in order to protect her younger brother from the video. While still very young, she demonstrates her own strong sense of injustice as her experience with online pornography has a profound impact on her.

Her father gravely misunderstands her ritual, interpreting it as a morbid fascination rather than political observance, and attempts to alleviate George's anger with irrelevant, dismissive claims; 'She was probably very well paid for it' (38). He misinterprets George's concerns entirely, and demonstrates a misunderstanding of dynamics of abuse, alienating his daughter further. George's concern for those abused by the sex industry is replicated when the reader finds Francescho's interactions with the women of the brothel are empathic and warm. Even when considering how the secret of their biology may affect their behaviour, Francescho demonstrates an understanding of the demands placed on women in this sexual economy. Francescho allows the sex workers 'a chance to catch up on [their] sleep', establishing a symbiotic relationship and a kind of friendship (270). The women receive beautiful portraits of themselves that instill in them a sense of self-

worth and confidence. Francescho notes that out of all of the women in the house of pleasure ‘[n]one of them earned anything near her true worth in money : all of them suffered misuse’ (276). They recount that Ginerva dies of ‘blue’ illness, Isotta vanishes, and Agnola ‘was found in the river tied at the hands and feet’ (276; 277). Violence against women in Francesco’s age may be seen as exacerbated by a lack of documentation and police forensic work, but images of this nature are seen in Anais’ present-day Scotland, and George’s girl in the yurt. Sexual abuse against women has only adapted with new technologies, such as the internet, video cameras, and vehicles, exploiting the vulnerable sexually, financially and emotionally. The murder of Teresa is never solved by the twenty-first-century police force and provides no sense of justice or closure, and the body of a girl named Elaine is never found, ‘just her bag at some dump’ (123). Anais will not even report her own gang-rape because she says ‘[n]obody’s gonnae catch those guys, and the polis fucking hate me anyway. What would they do?’ (296-297). Tash’s disappearance is met with little response from police, and even Isla’s precaution of noting car license plates and waiting for her partner’s return is rendered useless as it does not account for when the vehicle is stolen. It is never disclosed within the body of the novel why this crime cannot be solved, yet this thesis suspects that violence against sex workers is not treated as seriously as those in other lines of work due to social stigma and the illegality of soliciting in Scotland. Despite six official complaints against PC Craig, Anais is still left alone with the officer (110). Anais even believed she would die in front of the officer, so the extremity of this institutional violence is seen (107). Lost children are endemic in society, as Anais recounts those she has known who have disappeared, and she states that ‘mostly it’s nobodies’, by which she means children in care (123). Overwhelming the message Anais receives from her experiences with criminal law is that she, children in care and sex workers do not matter to the state. As she begins her travels to France, Anais states that she ‘won’t take any lovers for ten years’ (323). A victim of unprecedented sexual violence and paedophilia, and with strong ties with women in sex work, Anais refuses to be a part of a sexual economy reminiscent of her abuse.

This thesis has already utilised the expression ‘borne witness’, and now this concept is deserving of some more attention. Bearing witness here means to demonstrate that something exists or is true. This term is used in therapeutic spaces to describe what occurs when a victim shares a traumatic experience with an empathic witness who acknowledges their truthfully shared

experience. Tamsin Jones conceptualises bearing witness simply ‘as an alternative form of truth-seeking’ (T. Jones, 140). Her work considers bearing witness to be an act that ‘seeks to speak to the truth of an event while acknowledging the inability to ever fully capture that event in words’ (137). Given the repeated difficulty in expressing emotion for the children of these texts, having someone bear witness to their experience through visual means or listening becomes an important concern. In this context, to bear witness to someone sharing their trauma is to show the victim experiencing pain that the witness is ‘willing to be with them in places that they have inhabited alone, embracing despair while offering hope that their lives can go on and that healing can occur’ (Lord, 127).

In an interview with Simon Smith, Ali Smith speaks about George’s ‘moral engagement’ with exploitative pornography:

‘Her mother is a person who moves through the world responsibly and questioningly and also a political activist in the most playful of forms.

And so, her daughter's inherited both her playfulness and her kind of responsible-ness, and is already, at the age of 15, looking to see what pornography is, and then when she finds out what it really is, working against it in the only way that she can think to, which is as a witness of its horrors, really’ (para 20)

As a witness to this atrocity, George is ensuring she recognises the experience of pain, the suffering and does not allow the experience to be forgotten from history like the suffering of so many others. Smith’s use of the word ‘inherited’ also indicates the shared values between mother and daughter who demonstrate the same outrage and concern at violence against women, highlighting the ability of the mother to negate the socialisation of their daughters and ensure their moral and political engagement.

Jones acknowledges that forced testimonies can be harmful and lead to re-traumatisation, but sees space in other studies for other forms of bearing witness, including the poetic, the literary and the artistic (T. Jones, 147). Francescho often uses the faces of people they know for characters in frescos, thereby preserving their images for others to see, paying homage to their influence in Francescho’s life. Isotta, Agnola and Ginerva, sex workers from the brother Barto and Francescho frequented, are transformed into Graces (311). Francescho tells the reader ‘I

painted my brothers. / I painted the figure of my mother resplendent. / I painted a ram with the look of my father' (307). Alberti, in his guide to artistry, even asks for his face to be painted in the work of the artists his writing has helped, where the act of painting his likeness is reimagined as recognising his influence and work (306). Through artistically rendering his people they survive, 'as if that person is as alive as daylight though in reality that person has not lived or breathed in hundreds of years (343).

H and George attempt to recreate Francesco's language truthfully when working on a school project on their life, debating how best and most honestly to represent the life of the artist. H, however, speaks of the impossibility of an objective truth: 'We make up stuff about real people all the time, H says. Right now you're making stuff up about me. And I'm definitely making up stuff about you' (139). The pursuit of truth in these texts through the representation of experience on paper and in art through bearing witness to suffering, trauma, and difficulty is evident, despite the difficulty of its pursuit and its intangibility. Anais may even echo the concept of the 'truth-teller' from Ancient Greece that Mrs Rock explains to George; 'usually someone with no power, no social status to speak of, who'd take it upon themselves to stand up to the highest authority when the authority was unjust or wrong', even when risking their own life in the process (181). Motherless, Anais experiences a lot of injustice, yet despite her struggles with voicing her opinion through the power dynamics of language, she still makes conscious efforts to demonstrate her outrage at a system that defiles, degrades and allows its 'nobodies' to disappear (123). Jones acknowledges that 'bearing witness is a fundamentally hopeful action in so far as it ceaselessly seeks to speak to the truth of an event while acknowledging the inability to ever fully capture that event in words', and these daughters definitely find themselves struggling to be truthful to themselves and others due to the limits of language they face (T. Jones, 137). Attempts to honestly engage with others and to challenge corrupt authority through valuing the truth are found throughout these novels, despite the seeming impossibility of the task. It appears that when children's lives are not borne witness to by parents, they are in danger of disappearance and abuse. Having no mothers to bear witness to their own lives, they value more the importance of having their experiences seen and shared. With this appreciation of the importance of witnessing other, each daughter bears witness in turn to others' lives.

Anais' attempts to relate compassionately with others are complicated by the environments she finds herself in. Anais' attitudes to violence of all kinds are often at odds with her actions, as she finds herself in positions in which she has to use force to survive, socially and physically. Anais classifies herself as 'a pacifist really, but if you dinnae fight – you'll just get battered' (Fagan, 31). She is wholly devoted to the protection of those who need it, articulating a strong sense of empathy for children: 'I'd take my own life, I mean totally fucking kill myself, before I'd hurt even one hair on a bairn's head' (71). While research suggests those who have experienced childhood abuse may be in danger of becoming a perpetuator of abuse in turn, Anais is adamant that not only will she never commit violence against those she considers innocent, but that she would 'fuck up anyone who abused a kid, or messed with an old person' (174). She will not be a non-protecting bystander while others enact violence on the defenseless. For Anais, to be neutral in the face of oppression is to be complicit.

Anais only selects violence when it is a means of lessening pain for someone else as she takes a protective role, yet ultimately she desires a future in which she is able to retire from spheres of violence; including sex work, the meat industry and physical aggression. Though Anais considers herself to be a pacifist, her actions are reminiscent of just war theory, in which violence is permissible under the correct criteria. Lucinda J. Peach illustrates some of the criteria required to justify going to war, 'the *jus ad bellum*', and Anais' decisions seem to match several. Most notably, she has a just cause when she fights for 'self-defense or defense of others' in order to reestablish some sort of peace (154). Peach's criteria for conduct in war, '*jus ad bello*', establishes that care must be taken to not harm 'noncombatants', and Anais repeatedly reminds the reader she would never harm a person she considers to be an innocent (155). The criteria of a just war are 'vague and general in scope', so their application has given widely differing results, but Anais' choices to engage only with those who have initiated fighting, for the protection of herself and other vulnerable people seems to align her with the use of violence for just causes only (155). Anais' own sense of morality guides her judgment, where she decides for herself when it is important to place herself in harm's way for a greater good. Anais asserts that if she 'never had tae fucking fight again, ever, that would be such a relief' (91). The use of the word 'had' highlights the strong sense of obligation she feels to defend herself and others as though her involvement is not a choice. The quotation from Oscar Wilde that serves as an epigraph for

the novel highlights the difficulty in justifying violence in the name of liberty, so the work's relationship with violence is complicated from the very beginning. For Anais, fighting is a necessary yet unpleasant task, but she considers that to be a bystander to acts of violence and not step in to challenge is to be complicit in the violence. Having experienced situations in which negligence and avoidance of conflict have led to the deaths of the vulnerable in social care, Anais is reluctantly drawn into violence because her internal sense of morality demands cruelty is challenged. Similar to Kay's use of newspaper headlines about the loss of children, Anais comes across one reading '**Nobody Could Prevent Child's Murder**' (183). Anais is enraged at the defeatist attitude towards those in care, and the promotion of the message to 'baby-murderers' that their targets are vulnerable, and this thesis has previously discussed the carelessness of social workers with Anais. The situations in which Anais finds herself as a child in the care system push her against her natural inclination to passivity, and so the damaging effect of governmental care can be seen. Motherlessness alone is a challenge to Anais, as she must emotionally deal with the impact of losing Teresa and having no knowledge of her birth mother, yet the resulting institutionalisation can be seen to further hinder her prospects, and fail to provide her with even a basic level of security.

Anais even excuses herself from other spheres of violence with her vegetarianism. She refuses to participate in the consumption of meat, breaking down the disconnect between butchered animals and food; 'Red meat is just an arm or a leg or a face – without the skin on it' (101). Carol J. Adam's 'The Sexual Politics of Meat' discusses vegetarian ethics regarding Shelley's Frankenstein's Monster, which is remarkably applicable to Anais; 'The Creature's vegetarianism serves to make it a more sympathetic being, one who considers how it exploits others. By including animals within its moral circle, the Creature provides an emblem for what it hoped for and needed – but failed to receive – from human society' (110). Adams reads the Creature's vegetarianism as carrying 'feminist as well as pacifist overtones', other ethical and political codes that Anais too is seen to display, either explicitly or implicitly within the text (117). Anais often attempts to protect others, even hoping to rescue the squirrel hit by traffic. When Anais fantasizes about her life in Paris with a pet dog, it is noticeably not any particular breed she envisions, but a 'rescue-dog', despite earlier admitting that she is scared of dogs (323; 112).

Even in dreams she does not wish to participate in the often cruel business of dog-breeding, but instead support animals in need of a home who have potentially been abused and abandoned.

Emma Dominguez-Rue, in her work on the gothic tradition, believes that the works of such writers as Mary Wollstonecraft and Elizabeth Gaskell that focus on the narratives of mothers and daughters ‘emphasize the circle of powerlessness that evidences the daughter’s inability to escape her mother’s fate, while they hint at the empowering possibilities of female affiliation as a means to avoid that fate’ (126). Fagan’s novel both demonstrates this sense of cyclical violence, and embraces this ‘hint’ of freedom through the power of female solidarity, as Anais is part of a strong female community during her time in the Panopticon. Angus notes that ‘the girls develop unusually strong bonds in here, they are a family’ (Fagan, 297). Though initially new girls in the home are perceived as threatening and violence does indeed take place, as seen above, the sense of support offered by these young women in care who bond over similar experiences of suffering is encouraging; that their suffering is feminised in the realm of sexual abuse only strengthens these bonds as seen in their discussion of rape. In Fagan’s characters’ frank discussion of sexual relationships and sex work, Shortie is revealed to have never had sex before, ‘the only girl I ever met in care who’s a virgin. Fact’ (204). That Shortie is an anomaly highlights the normality of sexual abuse in care, where Anais can characterise her sexual experiences as ‘debatable’ and ‘out-and-out wrong’ (203). In patriarchal stereotypes of women, their relationships with one another ‘can never involve co-operation and solidarity: their unequal position in society results in mutual jealousy, competition for male attention, and identity only in relation to men’ (Dominguez-Rue, 129). The girls may struggle with power dynamics at points, but largely the girls provide what support they can for one another; lending money, sharing drugs and fighting to protect another. During the Panopticon sailing trip, Tash and Isla’s wedding ceremony on the loch’s island is a beautiful example of love between the girls, where they make vows before their friends and nature, ‘before this loch, these clouds, [Shortie] and Anais – and they swans over there’ (209). Baker understands that islands ‘present a way of rethinking the relationship between the individual and the community’, allowing Fagan to create a space of renegotiating relationships and provide space where queer relationships are legitimised with respect to an existing romantic procedure (Baker, 91). Where in the Scottish Gothic the mainland often functions as an area of textual, official knowledge, islands may operate as areas of shared oral

communication, where the girls of the novel can share experiences with one another, and provide each other with a sense of hope. Anais smiles, ‘cos the two of them look so young and happy and it makes me hopeful. I dunno for what, like – just hopeful’ (208). Anais’ experience of boys in care, however does not demonstrate the same level of comradeship, as while John does give Anais money, she more commonly experiences attempts at sexual assault. In this environment, it seems that girls provide each other with the support and encouragement that is not given through state care.

This encouragement becomes all the more valuable when considering that Jones cites that one obstacle to successful mourning after loss is ‘the alienation often experienced toward those who have not lived through the traumatic experience and who therefore cannot begin to understand it’ (T. Jones, 314). Though the girls have not lived through Anais’ trauma with her, many have lived through similar experiences and have undergone similar traumas, and so their company allows Anais to express herself, share and mourn, not only for the dead, but for a childhood that was denied to her.

Relationships with the other young people in care are not always exclusively examples of comradeship, as Anais is vocally queer within Fagan’s novel, recalling past relationships with women, vocalising attraction to women around her and valuing her sexual relationships with other girls through the text. Each daughter demonstrates a draw to women, where George struggles to verbalise queer desire for H, Francesco regularly visits the girls of the brothel and even Kay’s Daughter dances ‘dead old fashioned’ with her best friend from school and kisses her Angela Davis poster. Other examples of queer desire and identity are visible in the texts in Isla and Tash’s highly supportive relationship, Lisa Goliard and Carol’s complicated relationship, and Pat and Pauline, who seem to offer a strange, yet supportive, relationship through gender transition. No text definitively provides a descriptor of sexual identity for their characters, refusing to define the complexity of desire; a choice which echoes the sense of boundlessness in *chora*.

However, both H and Hayley move away from the novels’ protagonists, to Denmark and Singapore respectively. Their empowering and vital relationships with George and Anais are

short-lived, raising questions about how young queer women's relationships are complicated by external influences in contemporary fiction, that are deserving of further research beyond the confines of this research paper.

Queer narrators appear prominently in Kay's *Severe Gale* 8, and Gabriele Griffin notes that there are three poems in this collection that may be said to deal specifically with HIV and AIDS, illustrating the contact of the political and personal (126). Fagan's novel also represents the difficult realities of being HIV positive through the figure of Isla. Isla contracted the virus as a child due to negligent parenting, and passed it on unwittingly to her two children. The cycles of violence and powerlessness seen through sex work and institutionalisation in Fagan's text are also sadly seen in the lives of the two toddlers, who conclude the text in foster care, with HIV.

Content is not the only means by which these authors engage with political subjects. The techniques and styles selected by the authors beyond the manipulation of time are due more attention here, with regards to how their stylistic choices convey the same concerns seen in within the narrative content. Smith states that the 'novel is helplessly social as a construct', and indeed her work seem compelled by ethic concerns, including 'the humane concern for the expression of a range of emotions and marginalized voices, often those of children and adolescents' (Young, 137; 33). Smith's text does indeed engage with a number of ethical and social issues through two focal characters who experience and comment upon the injustices they see. The use of the ghost-figure further links Smith's two historical periods, and invites the reader to draw parallels between them, to witness repetitions in history through the twinned figures of George and Francescho. Jorge Sacido-Romero notes that spectrality in Smith's work is regularly 'used to give shape to that which is repressed in the lifeless world of bourgeois routine, and which returns bearing the promise of healthier interhuman bonds' (94). Francescho's existence in Smith's texts not only 'shapes' George's stifled emotion by offering avenues of creativity and a shared interest with her mother, but shapes the very structure of the novel. The result is a text that embodies the choric qualities of movement, timelessness and a lack of boundaries.

Indeed, even the presentation of much of Francescho's narrative is deviant from standardised literary form, as often the words and sentences pattern pages in a verse-like way. Smith demonstrates through textual experimentation that what the reader may perceive as boundaries to writing are in fact only cultural norms, and that there is a realm of possibility when freed from the expectations and categorisation of simply 'poetry' or 'prose'. *How to Be Both* toys with all manner of dichotomies, and showcasing the creative and emotional value of transcending the rigidity of culturally created limits. Indeed, all three central writers of this thesis are multi-hyphenates; Ali Smith has produced several collections of short stories, lectures, plays, and novels, Jenni Fagan has written both poetry and novels, and Jackie Kay has worked with autobiography, poetry and the novel highly successfully. These writers have worked with differing kinds of form, so are able to successfully blend genres, mesh features to produce semi-hybrid works.

The ambiguity between reality and imagination in all three texts refutes a 'correct' reading, encouraging discussion about the characters and their fates. Gerrard Carruthers suggests that literature 'is often considered at its best when peddling ambiguity, rather than supposed cultural certainty' (Carruthers qtd. in McCulloch, 124). In intelligent uses of structure and chronology, these three texts are literary works that encourage the reader to interrogate their perceptions of reality, and their relation to the political world around them.

Kay's *The Adoption Papers*' final lines return to the Birth Mother, articulating the Daughter's hope for contact by letter to begin deciphering their relationship (Fox, 34). This return to concerns of biological origin is not suggestive that this imagined relationship with the Birth Mother is of utmost importance to the Daughter, as the pair do not share an especially meaningful exchange and 'neither of' them talk about meeting again, illustrating that the Daughters interest in her is largely based on imagination and potential rather than reality (33). The Birth Mother has a new wedding ring, signalling a new, legitimate family within which the Daughter has no place (32). Though the Daughter may struggle with a sense of belonging, her Adoptive Mother is dedicated to providing a safe and warm environment for her child that allows her to explore her concerns with identity in whichever way she desires as she believes 'Curiosity. It's natural. Origins' (34).

Doloughan reminds us that Smith is ‘a writer of fiction rather than a sociologist’, and so her work utilises information and ideas in a rhetorical way, calling for discourse and challenging perspectives, and this statement feels applicable to Fagan and Kay’s work too (248). Fiction may be unable to provide solid answers, despite the instructional title of Smith’s work, but encourages the reader’s own creativity, nurturing their own ability to interpret and recreate themselves and the world around them. The political awareness and empathic characters of the Adoptive Mother, Teresa and Carol and Francescho’s unnamed mother are inspirational to their children, who in turn demonstrate kindness to others and concern about injustice, from saving hurt squirrels to protesting Angela Davis’ imprisonment. Where the previous chapter demonstrated that the daughters gain their resilience from their experiences of love given by mother figures, this chapter has shown that political and ethical actions provided by these mothers inform the moral codes of their daughters. Mothers, even when absent, still provide their daughters with role models shaping the world around them with empathic actions and conscientious resistance to violence.

Conclusion

All of these texts conclude with a sense of ambiguity as no concluding events are distinctly established ‘in reality’. Kay’s final sequence is named as a dream, Anais boards a train from Britain to France but the reader does not see her arrive at her destination, George’s confrontation with Lisa Goliard is never articulated within her narrative and Francescho’s narrative peters out in the same fashion in which it began. Matthew Pateman understands that ‘[e]ndings, like identity, are not just one kind of thing – identity, nationality, belonging, adoption all are unstable, complicated, contradictory things’ (81). The conclusions of these works are representative of the explorations of identity within them - intangible. In an interview with *Granta*, Fagan notes ‘that her novel began with a question regarding whether it was possible for an individual to achieve autonomy, reclaim and liberate themselves from the panopticon state’ (McCulloch, 128). Due to Anais’ unreliability as a narrator, and the ideal situation of her train and the hidden passport, the reader may be in disbelief that she ever escaped and that instead, Anais has responded to her abuse by receding into fantasy. Is this finale a true escape, or a delusion? Has she disappeared just like so many others?

This ambiguity of Anais’ fate is not one to be considered entirely negative. These texts are plagued by misfortune, cruelty and emotional difficulty, yet none gives in entirely to a pessimistic worldview as the reader is offered open-ended finales. Solid conclusions are denied constantly. Francescho cannot recall even their ‘end’ even though the death of their body must have logically occurred, evoking a sense of endlessness and continuity. Francescho neatly surmises the optimism inherent in ambiguity, when they state that ‘in hell there is no mystery because in mystery there is always hope’ (A. Smith, ‘How’ 227). The mysterious endings of these three texts are, in Francescho’s view, inherently optimistic.

Kay’s own work of biography, *Red Dust Road*, has this to say of conclusions: ‘You think adoption is a story which has an end. But the point about it is that it has no end. It keeps changing its ending’ (46). The identities of those who have been adopted are, in Kay’s eyes, continuing, evolving things. Identity is not a solvable riddle, but an ongoing pursuit of self-discovery and self-creation, and a person’s knowledge and understanding of their identity is so

complex as to refute neat summarisation within the pages of a single creative text. Mothers have been seen as ‘keepers’ of identity in these texts, as Anais longs for family to remember her childhood to ensure she exists, and Francescho believes mothers to have some insight into the true selves of their children. When experiencing motherlessness, the daughters of these texts are left to comprehend and create their own identities, drawing from the qualities of the chora, and their memories of their mothers.

Despite the struggles and unclear conclusions, these three texts still put forth a sense of optimism for the future in their political, empathic interactions with the world around them. Through practices such as bearing witness to injustice, abstaining from the meat industry and visibly supporting political prisoners, these daughters are making attempts to better the world around them. Jones understands that *The Panopticon* ‘provides a surprising flutter of hope that what seems like an inescapable misogyny, which adapts to and exploits every freedom that feminism achieves, has cracks through which resistance can be mobilized’ (C. Jones, ‘Femininity’ 398). Despite the seemingly inescapable clutches of institutionalisation, Anais will still ‘learn how to be nice to’ herself (299). Paul Ricoeur reminds the reader that hope is ‘an impulse that opens a system, that breaks the closure of a system; it is a way of reopening what was unduly closed’ (qtd. in T. Jones, 149).

The lives of these motherless daughters may be different in many ways. They live in different cities, with different levels of parental involvement in their lives, and have their own distinct voices. In the loss of their mothers which arises due to a variety of situations such as adoption, death and disappearance, a number of issues of identity are raised. They share similar difficulties with the inexpressiveness of a patriarchal language that denies a voice to queer women’s desire. Again and again these children are silenced by authority that does not listen, and by a language that cannot articulate their emotion. Each text illustrates the importance of being able to find a unique way of communicating and expressing; be it crafting a hybrid language, carving space for non-judgmental sharing of experience with peers, artistic creation, or dance. By utilising fluid means of communication, like orality and the arts, the daughters are able to access the choric realm, escaping a world in which the symbolic rules and erases their narratives. These daughters struggle to navigate themselves in a patriarchal culture, and all of the daughters draw strength

from their productive relationships with their mothers, and are morally guided by the positive examples that their mothers offer.

The examples shown in this thesis have demonstrated the negative responses that occur when society and adults attempt to push identities on children. The daughters reject the racist and classist names and prejudices projected on them by others. Attempts to categorise and name children from the outside result in the children struggling to voice their feelings and thoughts- Identity and conceptions of the self must be created and explored from within. There is value attributed to non-binarism, liminality, and duality, in terms of gender, sexual identity and race. The complexity and fluidity of identity are demonstrated in these texts, and their nuanced presentation challenges the reliability of cultural conceptions and legal categories of personhood. Through consideration of Kristeva's concept of the semiotic *chora*, this thesis has illustrated the value of movement, orality, non-verbal communication, and timelessness to allow the daughters of these texts to explore their identities in a patriarchal society that values stability and consistency. Fagan's, Smith's and Kay's texts all appreciate the importance of the individual's ability to discover and create their own identity, and the detrimental effects of being categorised and labelled by others. Through the *chora*, the daughters of these texts are able to see the value in ways of being that are outside of the mainstream. In turning to the maternal and the choric for guidance and comfort, the daughters demonstrate an appreciation of that which exists as contrary to dominant norms, and are able to reject the restricting binarism that persists in contemporary culture.

Despite their complex relationship with their mothers, the daughters of these texts are politicised through their interactions with these mothers, who encourage them to behave kindly, debate issues of morality with their children, allow them to respond aggressively to racism, and encourage them to question the motivations and prejudices of authority figures. Though often coaching their daughters from beyond the grave, their political activism and senses of moral integrity can be seen to echo the actions of their mothers before them. Kay's Daughter has the most present mother in all three texts in the Adoptive Mother, and she is arguably the most directly politically engaged daughter. While much of this is down to her highly visible status as a black woman in a society that values whiteness, she refuses to internalise the violence of white

supremacy. Supported by her mother who will not defend the racism of children, the Daughter is able to be overtly engaged and in battle with the world around her, seeking the betterment of her treatment, and the treatment of other black women like Angela Davis, and actors who are being denied work on her television.

Whether the writers are calling for a new kind of language, simply highlighting an issue of modern communication or venting their own issues through therapeutic writing may require further focused research, yet these examples nonetheless demonstrate the difficulty of full expression in contemporary Scotland witnessed and documented in fiction by women writers.

The parameters of motherhood also are deserving of more in-depth discussion, and the work of these three women writers offer ample material for further research. What constitutes a mother varies, from adoption, to child birth, even to the kidnapping of children, as seen in Ali Smith's *Like and Kay*'s poem 'The Underground Baby Case'. Motherhood of all origins, and the motivations for pursuing motherhood would provide a strong backdrop against which to explore maternity and daughter narratives in contemporary Scottish fiction.

While motherhood often exists in the peripheries of Scottish fiction, mothers appear to be becoming more common in recent Scottish writings. The return of the maternal to the nation's writing is, however, marred as often depictions of mothers are negative. Laura Hird's Angie in *Born Free*, for example, has an extramarital affair with her employer and verbally assaults her children. The representation of mothers by Scottish women writers is a complex tangle, and while this thesis has noted their marginality, further research is required in order to begin to unravel what representation they do have with regards to nationalism, feminism and race, to better understand Scotland's women in fiction. Though issues of Scottish identity have been briefly noted within this thesis, the importance of nation to contemporary Scottish women's fiction would profit from further research, lies beyond the confines of the present dissertation.

The relationship between mothers and daughters is often considered in terms of competition, which is not a fruitful arena for women's relationships. Though none of the protagonist daughters of these texts have their own children within the texts, this thesis hopes to echo

Irigaray's refusal to position the mother and the daughter as opposites (Walker, 161). Women's roles do not define them so wholly, and the multiplicity of the self as witnessed in this work is testament to the individual's ability to be many things simultaneously. Irigaray 'maintains that the mother-daughter relationship must – and can be – be fundamentally re-imagined, in order to allow new possibilities for women's subjectivity' and further research would aim to create space for the creative and political teamwork between generations of women (Irigaray qtd. in Rye, 119). Where so often feminist visions of the future have focused on images of sisterhood, future research may instead concentrate on the value of intergenerational solidarity and sharing.

Figures

Figure 1: Cover from Jackie Kay's 'The Adoption Papers' (1991)

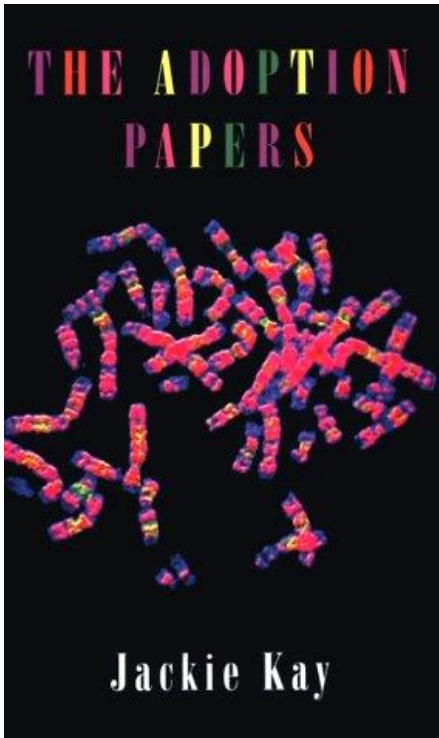


Figure 2: 'Eyes' Section Title Page from Ali Smith's 'How to Be Both' (187)

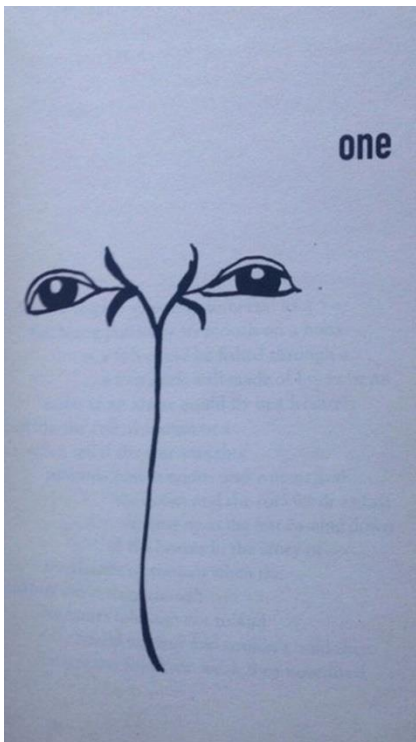
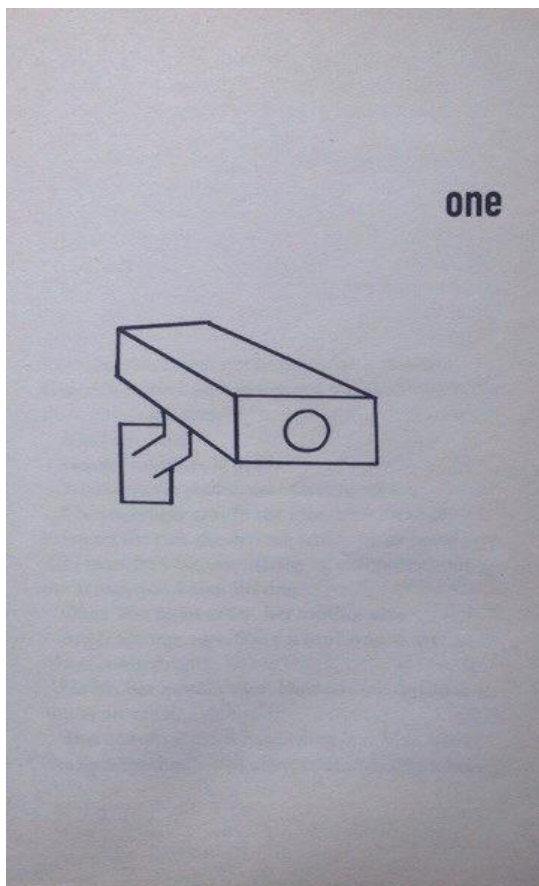


Figure 3: Detail from del Cossa's 'Saint Lucy'



Figure 4: 'Camera' Section Title Page from Ali Smith's 'How to be Both' (1)



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