# Eloise Coveny

---Artist's Statement---

A practice-led researcher of critical theory, Eloise's artistic practice combines the uses of documentary mediums that record image and sound to explore ontologies and poetics of time. These temporal nuances emerge from uncanny forces that she seeks to activate as she produces, collects and curates artefacts—in the form of objects, images and sounds—to compose spatial allegories. These installations work to speak across tensions at play to kindle personal narratives that in turn deconstruct 'official' narratives of history. Here Eloise draws on technology and the literary/art works of Walter Benjamin, Martin Heidegger, Mariana Castillo Deball and Patrick Keiller.

The theme 'Rise and Fall' reflects those transitional spaces throughout Glasgow city that are sites of construction, destruction, decay or stasis. These artworks aim to privilege voices that have been lost through official histories and the oppressive course of history for the working class. Walter Benjamin's text "Destructive Character" presents us with a series of traits belonging to the essential destroyer of things, and thus a restorer of open space allowing new paths to form that lead us through the rubble.

*'The destructive character sees nothing permanent. But for this very reason he/she sees ways everywhere. Where others encounter walls or mountains, there, too, he/she sees a way.'*
(Benjamin)

**e\|sharp**

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# Rise and Fall

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# Contributors

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**Lucien Carrier** *is a PhD Candidate in law at the University of Glasgow. Having won the award for best student in his LLM (law masters degree), also at the University of Glasgow (2014-2015), his current research is interested in re-linking equality and emancipation in the context of sexual minorities.*

**Maria-Ioana Marchidanu** *is a Comparative Literature MLitt postgraduate student, originally from Romania. Following her undergraduate interest in Scottish Literature and Existentialism, she is presently developing her research from a contrasting perspective that explores the philosophical movement within the Western and Eastern European literary landscapes.*

**Effie Samara** *is a playwright and researcher at the University of Glasgow exploring exilic consciousness in tragedy. Her latest play* Lesbos *is due to open in London in March 2018.*

**Heather Wells** *is an MPhil candidate in Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow. Her research interests are in early Scottish drama, specifically of the seventeenth century, with her Masters project seeking to establish to what extent Scottish drama of the period is similar to that of English Restoration comedy.*

# Editors' Introduction

In Volume 1 of 2017's issue, *eSharp* travelled through varied crests and troughs in the fields of literature, media, politics, philosophy, and human rights. From the psychedelic highs of marijuana-use in the Vietnam war, to the sinking hopes of asylum seekers in an increasingly hostile contemporary Britain, the journey has so far been both surprising and fascinating. In Volume 2, we bring six fresh voices to the conversation.

In Ingrid Bols' article on Anton Arensky, a Russian composer well-regarded in his lifetime, but critically dismissed after death, we find resonances with Gemma Elliott's study of author Dorothy Richardson from Volume 1. The fickle nature of fame led both, under very different circumstances, to fall from favour. With Arensky, however, his personal rise and fall are merely the framework from which Bols seeks to draw out his place within broader themes. In particular, she argues from compositional evidence that nationalist and cosmopolitan discourses, often characterized in opposition with one other in the context of late-imperial Russia, were in fact entwined.

From the music of a nineteenth century Russia struggling to find its national identity in the face of its western neighbours, we move to seventeenth-century Scotland, and the difficulty of its playwrights in forging distinctive theatre against the more highly developed traditions of its English contemporaries. By arguing for the acknowledgment of Scottish Restoration drama as both important in its historical context, and worthy of scholarly consideration today, Heather Wells works to raise it from the shadows of its better-known, and better-respected, English counterparts.

Staying with theatre, but moving from Restoration Britain to contemporary Malawi, Amy Bonsall provides a fascinating insight into the political and social power of performance. Campaigners for women's rights, which are enshrined in law, but violated in practice, have turned to the medium of touring theatre to present, and also to embody, key messages. An all-female cast challenges gendered expectations by their very roles as actors, and more so in their portrayal of men, whilst the messages of their plays highlights injustices and means for their amelioration in ways accessible to rural women.

The disjunction between legal rights and lived equality are brought to the fore again by Lucien Carrier in his article on gay rights movements, and the shortcomings of struggles for emancipation that are based on identity politics, which see oppressive lines of division further entrenched. The paper argues for a reorientation of the struggles for substantive change in a direction that will shake the very foundations of the current structures of power, rather than seeking acceptance within them.

Returning to the theatre, we find that for Effie Samara, as for Bonsall, performance is a powerful tool. In this case, it becomes a means to disturb the exclusionary discursive barriers of the contemporary West, that fail to give space to the exile. Drawing on Derridean thought, Samara offers a challenging, poetic reimagining of the exilic state through its narration, using scenes from her own play, *Lesbos*, to demonstrate the application of theory within dramatic practice.

A philosophical approach again takes centre stage in Maria Marchidanu's study of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped*, which is considered through the lens of existentialist thought. Marchidanu demonstrates how the Scottish author embraced and explored notions of the self and the nature of freedom through his work, and points to the way in which Stevenson's approach strongly reflects the existentialist movement that developed in continental Europe.

The papers of this second volume of Rise and Fall have grappled extensively with the intricacies and undulations of movements, from the social and political to those within the arts. They have traced the changes that societies the world over have undergone, the struggles and obstacles of the past that have defined the contemporary state of affairs, and also the inextricable links that tie the international, political and artistic, spheres in which humanity moves. We are grateful to all the authors for their intellectual contributions to this stimulating theme, and for their hard work in preparing their manuscripts. We would also like to thank the peer reviewers, whose thorough and constructive comments aided both authors and editors immensely.

Clare Brown and Rebecca Whiting, on behalf of the *eSharp* editorial board

# Anton Arensky and the Rise of Musical Nationalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Russia

Ingrid Bols (University of Glasgow)

*Anton Arensky (1861- 1906) was one of a new generation of Russian composers following the famous Mighty Handful of Balakirev, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin and Cui. He entered the newly-founded Conservatoire of St Petersburg, to study piano and composition, in 1879. In the class of Rimski-Korsakov, he became a very talented student. As soon as he graduated, he achieved the honour of a direct nomination to professorship in the Conservatoire of Moscow. There he taught counterpoint and harmony, with Scriabin and Rachmaninov among his students.*

*His successful life, and posthumous lack of fame, formed a violent rise and fall. Most later commentators consider him as a composer without a distinctive style. However, his work can be viewed in a different light. Arensky was born during the core period of musical nationalism. This movement, whether in central and northern Europe or in Russia, rose in reaction to the imperialism of German style. Music could no longer be considered an* ars gratia artis *concept, but became the flagship of national demands. In Russia, Glinka (1804-1857), the 'Father of Russian Music', considered the nation as 'creator' and the composer as an 'arranger', and argued that Russian music should be distinct from Western canons. Arensky belonged to this rising trend through his position at the very heart of Russian institutions, his integration of Russian folklore, such as tunes, literature and legends, and his use of Orthodox music. His compositions drew on many different sources, including the ancient epic songs Bylins, Orthodox Requiem, Obikhod prayers and imperial anthems.*

*In his work, Arensky combined Russian music with a more cosmopolitan Western composition style. He showed that in music Russian nationalism and cosmopolitanism can cohabite without major antagonism.*

**Keywords**: music, Russia, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, 19th century

## Introduction

This study aims to show the balance between nationalistic trends and cosmopolitan practices in nineteenth-century music through the example of the composer Anton Arensky. This case also highlights the correlation between the hesitant nationalist policies of the late Russian Empire and its practices in composition. Arensky was born in Novgorod in 1861. As a student of piano and composition in the Conservatoire of St Petersburg and later a teacher at the Conservatoire of Moscow, Anton Arensky was at the core of nineteenth-century Russian musical society. His composition style oscillated between Romantic Western standards and more historically Russian trends.

The relationship between Russia and Western Europe had in part defined aspects of Russian culture. From the eighteenth-century Westernizing reforms of Peter the Great, whether or not to follow Western trends became a major question in the debate on 'the nature of Russian identity' and 'a recurrent source of dispute in intellectual circles' (Helmers 2014, p.5). The

Russian government was looking to Western models of society and 'even when rejecting these models Russians were influenced by them' (Weeks 2008, p.12). Both cosmopolitanism and nationalism cohabited in late imperial Russia, more as a vague blend than as two distinct separate poles. Musical societies were also involved in this debate. Theories of musical composition were considered as directly sourced from Western Europe, while a strong interest in local folk music was growing in intellectual circles.

The late nineteenth century's unstable political context, in which most Russian musical institutions were founded and gained recognition, was the result of contradictory imperial policies. Tsar Alexander II's 'Great Reforms' of the 1860s were intended to modernize Russia through the abolition of serfdom and the reformation of the army, judicial system, local elective structures and censorship. A trend of modernization was rising across the main cities and 'some form of civil society was beginning to emerge' (Thatcher 2005, p.64). However, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Russian Empire was struggling to maintain its western border. The Empire faced successive political crises such as the military disaster of the Crimean War from 1853 to 1856, the 'January Uprising' of Poland in 1863, the 'April Uprising' of Bulgaria in 1876 and the Russo-Turkish War which started in 1877. To maintain political stability, late imperial Russia leaned on concepts of nationalism and the russification of the western frontier (Weeks 2008, p.1). The assassination of Tsar Alexander II in March 1881 by the revolutionary organization Naradnaya Volya stopped the progressive social improvements of the Great Reforms. Alexander II's successors, Alexander III and the last Tsar, Nicholas II, increased repression and strengthened autocracy as a reaction to the murder (Weeks 2008, p.4-5). Nationalism was a way to maintain the Russian Imperial State, which was on the edge of collapsing. However, the gap between a multi-ethnic continent-sized empire and the vision of Russian unity was growing dangerously wider.

In the political sphere, 'no strict legal definition of any nationality – whether "Russian" or "non-Russian" – existed during the imperial period' (Weeks 2008, p.8). Nationalism and questions around the vague concept of Russianness were not restricted to the political and social spheres but also impregnated the arts, particularly music. The concept of musical nationalism arose from a need for artistic independence in Central and Eastern Europe 'where the dominance of Austro-German instrumental music and Italian opera was felt as a threat to home-grown musical creativity' (Burkholder et al. 2005, p.682). The Austro-German school of composition remained one of the most influential movements and provoked reactions of either genuine passion or complete rejection among Slavonic composers.[1] Music was no longer an *ars gratia artis* concept but an emblem of national demands. This musical movement accompanied a genuine need for independence in Eastern Europe. In Russia, Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857), who is considered to be the 'Father of Russian Music', instituted a philosophy according to which 'the nation must be considered as creator and the composer rather as "arranger" of the popular contribution' (Montagu-Nathan 1917, p. 234).

Following this musical awakening, the Conservatoires of St Petersburg and Moscow were founded by the brothers Rubinstein: Anton founded the Conservatoire of St Petersburg in 1862, and Nikolai founded the Conservatoire of Moscow in 1866. Anton Rubinstein, who

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[1] For example we can find some anti-Germanism in the letters written by Modest Mussorgsky (Richard Taruskin 2008, 38).

studied in Berlin, applied German models within the St Petersburg Conservatoire, which led to criticism from his contemporaries (Barlett 2006, p.99). In order to stand against the academism of this conservatoire, Mily Balakirev founded the famous group of musicians known as The Mighty Handful with Alexander Borodin, Cesar Cui, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Modest Mussorgsky. Since many of them taught at the Conservatoire of St Petersburg it paradoxically became the school famed for national style and harmonies inspired by folk music. The institution thus developed a reputation for being nationalistic, while the Conservatoire of Moscow was considered to be more cosmopolitan. However, I argue that the oft-referenced account of opposition between nationalism and cosmopolitanism in Russian music is not completely accurate. As in the political sphere, cosmopolitanism and nationalism cohabited in music, and both were integrated in late nineteenth-century composition style. For example, by combining folk-inspired melodies with his Western Romantic style of composition, Tchaikovsky blurred the line between national music and foreign input.

Russianness, and the relevance of this concept, has been investigated extensively in the works of famous composers of the time such as Tchaikovsky, Rimski-Korsakov and Mussorgsky, for example in *Russian Music and Nationalism from Glinka to Stalin* (Frolova-Walker 2007), *Non-Nationalists and Other Nationalists* (Taruskin 2011), *Mussorgsky and his Circle: a Russian Musical Adventure* (Walsh 2013) and *In Search of "Russianness": Russian National Idioms in Alekandr Glazunov's Sonata No.1 for Piano, op.74* (Panayotova 2012). However, background personalities such as Arensky have often been neglected. Even though they were less implicated in stylistic debates, discrete composers such as Arensky were a representation of the general aesthetic response to nationalism. Even if no political definition of Russian nationality existed at that time, two determining factors were considered as defining the Russian nation: language and religion (Weeks 2008, p.8). In music, Russian language and Orthodox Church music were some of the bases of the russification of the Western composition style. Firstly, I will examine the life of Anton Arensky and his connections to late-imperial Russian musical institutions. Secondly, I will focus on his work and on how he integrated Russian language and prosody, as well as Orthodox music, into his work.

**Youth in St Petersburg and Career in Moscow**

Arensky was born in 1861 in Novgorod on the banks of the Lake Ilmen. At a young age he moved to St Petersburg to receive a musical education in the Conservatoire that had been founded in 1862 by Anton Rubinstein. The city of St Petersburg was erected following the legendary vision of Peter the Great, who wanted the city to function as a window towards Western Europe. According to writer Nikolai Gogol, St Petersburg was 'something of a Euro-American colony: a large mixture of foreign cultures with a bit of the national [Russian] spirit' (Gogol 1836, cited in Nivat 1988, p.14).[2] Arensky studied there between 1879 and 1882 with Rimsky-Korsakov, who taught him composition, harmony, counterpoint and instrumentation. Arensky was noticed for his genuine talent, and he produced a large part of his first opuses during the courses, while the teacher was busy correcting his classmates' exercises. He spent his musical youth in the famous society of Rimsky-Korsakov, whose meetings featured

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[2] 'Quelque chose d'une colonie européano-américaine: tant il y a peu de caractère national et beaucoup d'amalgame étranger'. Translated by author.

Alexander Glazunov, Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov, Anatoly Lyadov and Felix Blumenfeld. The latter, a pianist and composer, remained a close colleague of Arensky's. Thomas de Hartmann, Arensky's student, remembered having seen the two friends talking during one of his Sunday harmony lessons in 1896 in Moscow (de Hartmann 1956, p.9).

During the meetings of the musical societies organized by Rimsky-Korsakov, Balakirev or Mitrofan Belayev, composers shared their idea of composing a new strain of national music inspired by folk traditions with chosen students including Arensky. These students formed what André Lischke called the 'intermediary generation' (2012, p.92). They studied in the newly-founded conservatoires, in contrast with their professors, who were often privately trained and had other occupations. For example, Rimsky-Korsakov had a military career and Borodin was a great scientist. Either way, both the Mighty Handful and the first cohort of students at the conservatoire shared a strong interest in Russian folklore, following Glinka's ambition to form a strong and independent Russian music.

In 1882, Arensky graduated with a Gold Medal in piano and composition. Tchaikovsky awarded him the highest grade for his harmony exam. The cantata *Erlking* Arensky composed impressed the jury, and Stasov wrote to Rimsky-Korsakov to congratulate his student (Rimsky-Korsakov 1970, p.224). Just after completing his studies in St Petersburg, Arensky became a teacher in the Conservatoire of Moscow at the early age of twenty-one.

The Conservatoire of Moscow was founded in 1866 by Nikolai Rubinstein. The institution had a different mind-set from that of St Petersburg, as it was closer to Western-European compositional techniques. In 1889, Arensky was appointed to teach classes in composition, harmony and instrumentation. He personally met Tchaikovsky for the first time in 1883, and the two became colleagues in the fields of harmony and composition. The famous Tchaikovsky became the mentor of the young teacher. Both had followed the same path from the city on the banks of the Baltic Sea to the landlocked capital. Arensky's accomplished *Quartet for Violin, Viola and two Cellos* based on themes from the Orthodox requiem, written as an homage to Tchaikovsky after his death, epitomized their strong relationship.

Despite some harsh comments, Tchaikovsky always tried to programme Arensky's works in concert. For example, in his letter of 25th September 1885, Tchaikovsky advised Arensky to stop using odd rhythms such as in his *Suite n°1* for orchestra (Wehrmeyer 2001, p.89). At this stage Rimsky-Korsakov also continued to encourage his former student. He conducted the *Scherzo* of the *Suite* op. 7 on the 21st November 1887 following correspondence with Tchaikovsky. In his letter of 30th October 1887, Tchaikovsky asked his colleague to perform a work by Arensky because he needed motivation as he was in 'a state of depression and dismay' (Lischke 1996, p.86). Tchaikovsky added 'where there is a space for all Russian composers, there shall be one for Arensky' (Lischke 1996, p.89). The master thought that this performance would please his young colleague who had 'much respect and affection' for Rimsky-Korsakov (Rimsky-Korsakov 1970, p.227). Later, Rimsky-Korsakov conducted the *Second Symphony* on the 19th December 1898, the *Piano Concerto* and the Overture of *Nal and Damaiati* in 1899. However, Rimsky-Korsakov did not support Arensky's later works, as he thought they were overly influenced by Tchaikovsky and Rubinstein. His sharp comment on the *Suite* op. 33 illustrated his position against Romantic academism (Rimsky-Korsakov 1970, p.225).

In the Conservatoire of Moscow, Arensky taught Serguei Rachmaninov, Nikolai Medtner, Alexander Gretchaninov, Thomas de Hartmann and Alexander Scriabin, among

others. He is mostly remembered because of his strong antipathy towards Alexander Scriabin, refusing to award him a Gold Medal at graduation. This severe portrait can be contrasted, however, with the experiences of other, less well-known students such as Thomas de Hartmann. At the age of eleven, de Hartmann chose to become Arensky's pupil and remained under his tutelage until his master's death in 1906 (de Hartmann 1956, p.9).

During his musical life, Arensky was confronted with differing compositional trends. Even if the Conservatoire of St Petersburg claimed to be more Russian than Moscow's, both were transmitting musical knowledge based on Western traditions. Ideas about musical nationalism, such as integrating folk music, church music and Russian traditions, received more support in private circles such as Belayev, Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov's meetings (Lischke 2012, p.16). These societies had been debating throughout the second half of the nineteenth century on how Russian the music they were writing should sound. Arensky, immersed in this milieu, never proclaimed his own vision of nationalism. Arensky took part in the movement but in a more discreet way than the members of The Mighty Handful and even Tchaikovsky.

**Russian Language as Inspiration**

Following Glinka's operas, the Russian language became the basis of a new conception of music and Arensky followed this trend. Due to the variety of communities it included, the Russian Empire was de facto a multilingual entity. However, 'centralisation and "homogenisation" in modern industrial society would seem to demand a state that defends one culture and one language' (Weeks 2008, p.9). In this respect, use of the Russian language was known and used even in non-Russian speaking areas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In music, use of the Russian language was often a way to strengthen a sense of national belonging for the composers. Arensky used one of the most famous figures of his time – writer Alexander Pushkin – to anchor his work in a Russian context. He wrote *Dream* op. 17 no. 3, *Antchar* op. 14 and the romance *I Saw Death* op. 27 no. 6 based on Pushkin's poems, but the most significant example remains *The Bakhchisaray Fountain* op. 46 which was written for the 100th anniversary of the writer's birth. The connection between literature and music rose significantly when composers were looking for stories to include in their music. Glinka initiated this movement with his opera *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. He was followed by Tchaikovsky and his *Eugene Oneguin* and *The Queen of Spades*, Mussorgsky and his *Boris Godunov*, Dargomyisky and his *Rusalka* and later Rachmaninov and his *Miserly Knight*. Arensky enriched this trend with his ballet *Egyptian Nights* and his cantata *The Bakhchisaray Fountain* based on Pushkin's short stories.

Arensky was also inspired by the performing arts, which were popular in Russia at the time. He used works from the playwright Ostrovsky in his *Hymn for Arts* for solo voices, choir and orchestra, and the libretto of *A Dream on the Volga* was based on the play *Voyvode*. Arensky also worked with the writing of more recent authors. For instance, his *Three Melodramas* op. 68, are based on prose poems by Ivan Turgenev, and *Two Romances* op. 21 and 'I was waiting for you', part of the *Eight Romances for Voice and Piano* op. 60, are based on poems by Alexei Apoukhtin. This poet was popular among Russian composers in general, especially in Tchaikovsky's work. Lines by the Russian poet Afanassi Fet were also frequently arranged by Arensky, for example in his romances *Autumn* op. 27 no. 2, *In the Peace and Sadness of the*

*Mysterious Night*' op. 28 no. 1, and the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth movements of his op. 60. Stylistically speaking, these opuses belong to the Romantic movement. Arensky balanced this European trend with Russian language and poetry. Even his opera *Rafael* on the famous Italian Renaissance painter was written entirely in Russian.

Moreover, Arensky used the rhythm of the Russian language to write instrumental music, such as the *Fantasy on Epic Russian Songs by I.T. Ryabinin* for piano and orchestra op. 48. Arensky composed this piece with his own transcription of songs he had heard from the bard Ivan Trofimovich Ryabinin. The Ryabinin family had a strong storytelling tradition from the eighteenth century onwards in the north of Russia (Zemtsovski 2001, p.51). Trofim Grigoryevich Ryabinin (1801-1885) was famously recorded by Modest Mussorgsky in 1871. His repertoire included more than six thousand lines of *starina* (old songs) and *byliny* (epic songs) (Chadwick & Chadwick 1936, p.248). The rediscovery of this musical storytelling tradition is attributed to P.N. Ribnikov (1831-1885) who recorded twenty-four of T.G. Ryabinin's *byliny* in 1860. Arensky took melodies from Ivan Trofimovich Ryabinin – son of Trofim – to compose his *Fantasy*.

*Byliny* are traditional epic poems which tell the adventures of ancient heroes from feudal Russia. These songs belong to storytelling folklore and are recited by bards. The oldest written testaments of these *byliny* date from the seventeenth century. The *byliny*'s melodies follow the words and the narration, and sound like recitations. The structure of these songs is flexible: each storyteller can personalize rhythms and vary the melody while the beginnings and endings of phrases remain fixed (Chadwick & Chadwick 1936, p.250). Ivan Trofimovitch Riabinin performed some of his *byliny* in Moscow and St Petersburg in 1894. Y. I. Blok recorded his melodies in Moscow with a phonograph and Arensky transcribed them (Zemtsovski 2001, p.51). His transcriptions were then published in Evgeni Liacki's article 'Skazitel' I. T. Rjabinin i ego byliny' in *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* in 1894.

Arensky integrated some of the rhythms of these *byliny* and blended the Western Romantic style with Russian national musical tradition in his compositions. He thus advocated a balanced approach to musical nationalism.


**Orthodox Music as an Underlying Stylistic Signature**
While teaching in the Conservatoire of Moscow, Anton Arensky was an active member of Russian Orthodox choral institutions and he integrated this centuries-old tradition in his own compositions. As Vera Shevzov explains, the 'social and political climate in Russia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries precipitated Orthodoxy's own confrontation with "modernism"'(2004, p.5). The Great Reforms of the 1860s, with the abolition of serfdom in 1861, were creating new living conditions for the peasantry. Between 1861 and the All-Russian Church Council in 1917, the Orthodox Church reformed and developed its institutions. The number of chapels doubled between 1861 and 1917 (Shevzov 2004, p.95) and 13,000 new parish and cemetery churches were built (Shevzov 2004, p.56). With this major development, the Orthodox faith cemented late-imperial Russian identity. As Theodore Weeks states, 'on a practical level, to the end of the imperial period, religion remained possibly the single most determining factor for the imperial government's definition of the nation' (2008, p.8). Liturgical music was part of the daily life of Russian people and this music was tightly controlled by the Orthodox authorities through the Imperial Chapel. In 1850, Lvov, director of the Imperial

Chapel, banned any new, unauthorized songs in the Divine Liturgy, the Orthodox mass. The Imperial Chapel held the monopoly on church music and no secular composer was allowed to publish any religious works in Russia (Dunlop 2013, p.1). As the Russian Orthodox Church began on a path towards modernization towards the end of the nineteenth century, rules for liturgical music began to be less and less strict. During these times, Balakirev became director of the Imperial Chapel in 1883 with Rimsky-Korsakov as assistant (Anger 1998, p.58). Both Rimsky-Korsakov and Balakirev were members of secular society and this illustrated the growing interactions between secular and church music.

Arensky found his place in the centuries-old tradition of Orthodox music when he became the director of the Imperial Chapel on the 30th March 1895. In addition to his position as Chapel master, he was a committee member of the Synod Institute for Church Music from 1889 to 1893 (Shrock 2009, p.515). Between 1888 and 1895 he was also the director of the Russian Choral Society, founded in 1878 by Karl Albrecht. Earlier, during his career at the Conservatoire of Moscow, Arensky had taught singing and choral ensemble courses. He gained a deep knowledge of vocal texture and mastered the style of Orthodox Church music through this experience.

When Balakirev resigned from his position as the Director of the Imperial Chapel on 20th December 1894, the Imperial Ministry of Music offered the job to his assistant Rimsky-Korsakov. But the last years of Balakirev's 'reign' were darkened by his violent conflicts with Rimsky-Korsakov, who refused to be his successor. Arensky took on the leadership of the Chapel at this time as the student of Rimsky-Korsakov. Administratively, his tenure was not the most efficient and his disinterest in managing the structure ended in the general decline of the Chapel (Dunlop 2013, p.45). Although he was not as committed to the job as the position required, partly because he was often away for his tours as a concert pianist and to cure his tuberculosis, he nevertheless wrote *Four Sacred Chorals from St John Chrysostome's Liturgy* op. 40 in 1897. Arensky's predecessors Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov had also written for this liturgy, the former a whole service, the latter only a song, *Our Father* (The Lord's Prayer). Arensky composed four songs: *Cherubins Hymn*, *We Sing for You*, *Our Father*, and *Pray the Lord*. The third song, *Our Father,* is based on the Lord's Prayer, a common prayer in all Christian churches, though Arensky composed a traditional version of it. He took the verses and musical phrases from official versions, such as the *Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* by Porfiry Bajancky of 1872. The natural pauses between sentences are translated into rests and the overall ascending or descending shape of the melody is followed by Arensky. He thus guarantees that the audience recognizes and understands his piece. These processes are proof of Arensky's knowledge of Church music, and of the experience he gained at the Imperial Chapel. Even if Arensky did not write many traditional choir pieces, his music remains strongly inspired by the style of Orthodox songs. He wrote four sets of ten pieces for vocal ensembles, and some of them appear to have been influenced by the style of Orthodox music. The typical homorhythmic texture and the short phrases can be recognized in his *Two Vocal a capella Quartets* op. 55.

Arensky uses direct quotations from the Orthodox Requiem in his *Quartet for Violin, Viola and Two Cellos*. This piece was dedicated to Tchaikovsky and written at his death, a source of great sadness for Arensky who had lost his mentor and friend. The citation is from the *znamenny* chant tradition which was first harmonized during the sixteenth century (Lischke

2006, p.41). The first fourteen bars of the first movement of Arensky's *Quartet* include a significant integration of reciting tones used for chanting verses and prayers in Orthodox services. Reciting tones are part of the technique of singing the Russian holy chant *Obikhod*. The phrases are constituted by four successive episodes: the intonation (or introduction), the reciting tones, the preparatory note and the cadence (Drillock [n.d.], p. 2-3). This representative structure gives a typically recognizable style to this piece.

Arensky also referenced the responsorial structure of Orthodox chanting in the first movement of his *Quartet for Violin, Viola and Two Cellos*. In some parts of the Orthodox Divine Liturgy, as in some other Christian services, the priest and the audience follow a question-response framework. At several significant moments, as if to imitate this dialogue with instruments, Arensky reduced the texture of the quartet to a single instrument, with the others joining together simultaneously as respondents. With its strong dynamics the dense line of the second cello suggests the balance between the loud voice of the priest, and the other instruments the smoother answer of the crowd. Through this process, Arensky presents a subtle reinterpretation of the Orthodox choral tradition in a string quartet with two cellos.

**Conclusion**

Language and religion were the two determining factors of the nineteenth-century definition of the Russian nation, and Arensky integrated features of both the Russian language and Orthodox Church music in his compositions. Through his training in St Petersburg, his teaching at the Conservatoire of Moscow, and his leading role in the Imperial Chapel, Arensky gathered existing folk and church tunes. His integration of Russian folklore, such as the ancient epic *byliny*, the Orthodox Requiem and *Obikhod* prayers give his music a diffuse feeling of Russianness. Arensky developed no unique concept or philosophy but adapted and followed the compositional trends of his time. In this respect he remains a significant witness of the standard teaching practices in nineteenth-century Russian conservatoires. He was certainly not a leader of the nationalist movement in music but his contribution to the russification of art and music is interesting. He was part of Ruth Helmers' 'grey area of musical practice that existed between the explicitly formulated ideals of nationalism and cosmopolitanism' (2014, p.3). The work of Anton Arensky shows that in music Russian nationalism and cosmopolitanism can cohabit without major antagonism. With Richard Taruskin's reformation of musicological analysis on Russian music history, Russian music for today's researchers is 'no longer judged exclusively in terms of its national character' (Maes 2006, p.10). It is probably time for a complete re-evaluation of Arensky's music, misjudged for its lack of obvious Russianness, which becomes a questionable criticism given the evidence shown in this paper to the contrary.

For Weeks, 'any effort to make the Russian Empire into a national Russian state was doomed to failure' and led to the Revolution of 1917 (2008, p.1-2). The ideal of a 'pure' school of Russian composition was also rapidly abandoned. However, the concept of integrating local features into the dominant European music style did not stop with the end of the Russian Empire. Musical nationalism continued to echo in the works of Sergei Prokofiev, Alexander Scriabin, Igor Stravinsky and Dimitri Shostakovich in Soviet Russia. Arensky died of tuberculosis in a Finnish sanatorium in 1906, just after the Revolution of 1905 which started to crack the Russian Empire. Arensky's work remained a sample of the forms musical nationalism could take in the last years of Imperial Russia.

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# Chingalire Women's Travelling Theatre: Touring with Trousers

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*This paper is an initial investigation into the establishment of the Chingalire Women's Travelling Theatre (CWTT) in Malawi, and its impact on the group and their local community. The paper touches on issues of gender inequality in Malawi by showing how the theatre company challenges the commonly accepted cultural and gender hegemonies through theatre performance. Malawi has an ancient drumming, ritual and dance culture. Since colonial times drama has joined the ranks of performative expression of both the urban and rural populations. Historically the expatriate community or, post-independence, the male population and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have largely dominated drama. Inspired by hearing the voices of women in drama on the radio, ten mothers formed the Chingalire Women's Travelling Theatre in July 2016. The purpose of the company is to travel through rural areas of Malawi using theatre to explore issues such as gender-based violence, the environment and the importance of education to the rural community; discussions with those communities form part of the enterprise. The rehearsals and performances give voice to the experiences and opinions of women who might otherwise remain silent. The group decided to play male characters themselves, wearing trousers as a signifier. Women were prevented from wearing trousers by law until 1994, and in 2012 there were BBC reports from Blantyre that women were still being beaten for dressing in trousers. There is therefore personal risk inherent in this undertaking. Using interviews with the founding members of the company and with the chief of Chingalire village, Ben Mankhamba, this article seeks to contextualize the achievement of this female-led project, to analyze some of the work they have already undertaken and to offer insights as to what the theatre company might achieve in the future and what impact their work might have.*

*Keywords:* theatre, Malawi, women, arts activism, performance

## Introduction

Since the wearing of trousers was adopted by women during the 1850 feminist protest of Mrs Amelia Bloomer (Holt Sawyer 1987, p.6), women in trousers have remained a symbol of feminist uprising.[1] In 1965 Hastings Banda, the Life President of Malawi, enshrined in law a dress code banning Malawian women from wearing trousers. While this ban was lifted in 1994, the image of a Malawian woman wearing trousers arguably reflects the rise of women's rights within the country. The development of women's rights in Malawi is characterized by incremental changes and occasional surges of progress or regression, with the exception of one apparent great advancement: in 1995, after the end of Banda's one party state, rights for women were enshrined within a new Malawian Constitution. Nevertheless, in practice even this had a

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[1] My grateful thanks to Ben Mankhamba, Chief of Chingalire village, who provided much of the source material for this paper. To all of the members of the CWTT who kindly agreed to be interviewed for the purposes of this paper, their spokeswoman, Jane Mphatso, and finally to Ms Flossy Ephraim, an undergraduate and member of the village community who kindly conducted the interview on my behalf.

limited impact on the daily lives of many Malawian women due to the continued negative attitude towards women's rights and freedoms, both in traditional laws and the male-dominated culture. As recently as 2012 Malawian women wearing trousers were the focus of violent attacks by male members of the public opposing the rights and freedoms of women. This reflects that while Malawian women are protected by law, they are often still vulnerable in practice.

The disparity between the legislated rights and the lived reality of many Malawian women and girls lit the touchpaper that led ten women from the rural Chingalire Village to establish the Chingalire Women's Travelling Theatre (CWTT) in the summer of 2016. The donning of trousers as costume is a central part of the visual aesthetic and performance strategy of the theatre company. Through an analysis of one of their scripted narratives I argue that, by being involved in the management of a theatre company and through the creative enterprise that theatre-making involves, the women of the group have found a collective freedom through which they can challenge the accepted hegemony. A contextual background will explore the rise of women's rights, set against the continued struggle for these rights to be realized countrywide. A brief summary of the travelling theatre tradition in Malawi and the rationale as to why the group of women from Chingalire Village decided to engage with this form of theatre will contextualize the enterprise. Exploration of the aims of the project and the possible impacts of the work will show how theatre can offer a non-combative mechanism for community dialogue which gives agency to the actors, in this case exclusively women, that is safe and controlled. Trousers play a significant role within the story of the women and the theatre company. I argue that, whilst clothing choice has long been used as a mechanism for the oppression of women in Malawi, the donning of trousers as costume has been a liberating experience for the group and one that has, ironically, given them a public platform for interrogating and publicizing their ideas through the communal spectatorship of their stories, or theatre.

**Malawi's Women**

Modern Malawi, famous for Lake Malawi and its soaring plateaus, borders Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania in southern Africa. As John McCracken (2012, p.4) states, these borders are 'an artificial construct' imposed during British imperialism. Inspired by Dr David Livingstone, from 1850 onwards missionaries flocked to the country. Colonized by the British in 1891, it would not become an independent country until 1964 under the Presidency and subsequent dictatorship of Hastings Kamuzu Banda (Crosby 1980, p.15; Kamlongera 1984, p.2). During the time of Banda, Malawi's people, but particularly its women, were highly oppressed. The one party state forced everyone to belong to the Malawian Congress Party; membership for girls and women required them to take part in regular traditional dance rehearsals and performances throughout the year, at the state's pleasure (Gilman 2004, p.38). For the performances they wore compulsory head wraps and blouses with full-length skirts depicting large images of Banda (Gilman 2004, p.39). He policed 'the moral integrity of woman': indeed, he tellingly described the female population of Malawi as 'my women' (Gilman 2004, p.39–40). He introduced a strict dress code that was even incorporated within the Constitution, banning women from wearing trousers because they highlighted the erogenous areas of the female body – 'the shape of their thighs and buttocks'. Lower than knee length

skirts were acceptable but as Gilman observes, 'the uniform worn by party women exemplified this dress code: women were covered from head to ankle' (2004, p.39–40).

Banda lost power in 1994 when Malawi held her first democratic elections. It seemed as though women's rights would continue to rise when the newly drafted constitution of 1995 asserted that men and women would have equal rights (White 2009). Yet, even though the election of Joyce Banda in 2012 (incumbent until 2014) made Malawi the second country in Africa to have a female president, Malawian women still battle against gender inequality. Ingrained issues such as widespread poverty, poor infrastructure and long-established patriarchal cultural practices have meant that in reality the rise of women's rights has been at best patchy, slow and focused largely within the urban educated parts of the country (*Malawi - Worldbank page*, n.d.). Seodi White (2009), a leading human rights lawyer in Malawi, isolated the continued struggle of women in Malawi into four detailed key areas, which I summarize:

1. The 'Feminization of Poverty', which she asserted is a gendered problem as households led by women constitute the most poor; their access to education, resources, health care and opportunities for work are limited while at the same time they have more dependents than male-led households. White states that 'women remain poor and observers of development rather than change agents' (2009).
2. 'Violence Against Women', according to White, is a significant and a common problem. In the home this includes wife beating, sexual assault and defilement of girls. The law in Malawi does not currently recognize rape within marriage. In the community, rural women can face blame if their daughters are unmarried and pregnant. Poverty forces women into prostitution and places them at great risk of sexual assault and rape. From a young age girls are at risk of sexual harassment at school.
3. White suggests the prevalence of 'HIV/AIDS' heightens the factors previously mentioned because of general poor consideration of women's reproductive health needs and continued poor education. In general, women lack the agency necessary to assert their needs.
4. The final area identified is concerned with 'The Law and Women's Rights'. White describes the symbiotic relationship between constitutional rights and statutory and customary laws: customary laws can leave women at the mercy of discrimination in areas relating to divorce, property and inheritance which in turn leaves them vulnerable to poverty. She maintains that these customary practices must be amended to align them with the legal protection purportedly offered to women under Malawian constitutional law.

This disparity between national protection and local vulnerability was acutely highlighted in January 2012 when President Bingu wa Mutharika made a statement supporting the nation's women: 'You are free to wear what you want. Women who want to wear trousers should do so, as you will be protected from thugs, vendors and terrorists' (*Malawian Women Protest Over 'Trouser Attacks'*, 2012). This statement was made in response to vicious, violent attacks against Malawian women in Blantyre. Women wearing trousers were attacked by street vendors, stripped of their clothes and beaten. At the subsequent protests against the attacks one woman stated: 'Trousers and mini-skirts for most women in Malawi are a symbol for our hard-won

freedom from the one-party dictatorship to the multiparty era' (Unnamed woman, cited in *Malawian Women Protest Over 'Trouser Attacks',* 2012). In theory, law protects the women of Malawi, but in practice, they remain extremely vulnerable. So how might women from a rural village near Lilongwe hope to improve the rights of women against these seemingly insurmountable issues? They turned to theatre.

**Theatre in Malawi: impact, legacy and inspiration**
Performance and ritual have long been a feature of Malawian cultural expression, as Patience Gibbs explains:

> In the Malawian context, traditional festivals and religious ceremonies are held in celebration of natural phenomena such as the life cycle and seasonal changes or of historical and legendary events. Social activities for entertainment or community control may also call for festivals and religious or ritual ceremony. Particular ceremonies and rites are performed at childbirth, child naming, marriage, initiation at physical and social maturity and death (1980, p.5).

These performances and rituals retained their significance throughout the missionary and colonial periods and were transferred down through the generations. Performance in Malawi serves a societal purpose as well as being a living record of Malawian performance history (Gibbs 1980, p.6). Theatre, in the Western understanding of the term, was brought to the country by the early missionaries and later by the colonial administration. It served a variety of functions: it was entertainment in the form of expatriate drama clubs and school productions, education in the form of didactic performances and later Theatre for Development[2] as examined by Christopher Kamlongera (1984). As a way to popularize literary theatre in Africa, some universities established travelling theatre companies (Kerr 1995, p.133–5). In Malawi, from 1970, the University of Malawi's Chancellor College was the home of the English department where the University Travelling Theatre (UTT) was based. The company toured plays throughout Malawi largely to educated and elite audiences, initially performing in English before recognizing that they might have a greater impact rurally if they were to perform in the vernacular (Kerr 1982, p.34). From 1971 the UTT was led by James Gibbs. Mufunanji Magalasi describes how Gibbs encouraged his students to 'tap material from Malawian folk tales, legends and myths' after the students were unable to find texts that they found relevant. As a result of this he began to write his own plays for the students to perform (Magalasi 2012, p.25). An indigenous and foreign 'fusion' style of drama developed as a result of the work of Gibbs and his university colleagues (Gibbs 1980, p.vii). The tradition of touring and travelling productions became firmly established within the Malawian theatre landscape. It is therefore unsurprising that the women of Chingalire Village opted to use this type of performance as a model for

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[2] According to Kamlongera: 'Theatre for Development is being developed as one way of helping the masses in the developing world to come to terms with their environment and the onus of improving their lot culturally, educationally, politically, economically and socially' (Kamlongera 2005, p. 435).

devising and disseminating their own plays. Radio plays too have long played a pivotal role in the development and communication of drama in Malawi. 'Theatre for the Air', for example, broadcast plays in English during the late 1970s and early 1980s (Kamlongera 1984, p.341; Magalasi 2012, p.52, 136) and the importance of radio drama to the women will become clear.

**Chingalire Women's Travelling Theatre**
The rural Chingalire village lies to the west of the capital of Malawi, Lilongwe, within the Nsaru area. As part of his vision for developing the village and looking forward to securing its sustainability, village chief Ben Mankhamba has encouraged educational enterprise among his community. He has established the Chingalire Rural Growth Centre as a non-governmental organization (NGO) with a view to 'developing my village into a model and resource centre' for the benefit of not only his own village, but those that surround it as well (*Chingalire Rural Growth Centre*, n.d.). Mankhamba's enterprise has gained considerable support from the women of the village. The CWTT was formed by village women ranging in age from their mid-20s to early 50s. Additionally, all were mothers with considerable caring and domestic responsibilities and all were members of the village's Women's Club (Ben Mankhamba, personal communication, 10 February 2017). The founders of the group had great admiration for the women who performed in the dramas that they listened to on the radio. These dramas were didactic and message-based, which inspired the group to form a similar theatre company of their own (Mankhamba, personal communication, 10 February 2017). Having heard about the group's incorporation and being impressed by both their initiative and their creativity, Mankhamba arranged for theatre director Mr Frank Mbewe, of Bantu Theatre Arts, to visit the village to work with the group, equipping them with the performance skills needed to develop the company and supporting them in realizing their ambition.

The objectives of the company state that the plays should travel to rural Malawi so that theatre performances created and performed by women can inform these communities about health, culture, education, agriculture, religion, human rights and especially gender based violence. In our correspondence the group emphasized the need for greater agency for women, stating that when CWTT performs plays about issues relating to women they inspire a positive response from their audiences: 'many women will learn to stand up on their own and not just depend on the men'. Significantly, addressing and reducing incidences of violence perpetrated by men against women is a recurring theme within the stated aims and outcomes of CWTT (Mankhamba, personal communication, 10 February 2017). This correlates with the second key area of struggle for Malawian women as identified by White (2009) and it highlights how normalized domestic violence against women is in contemporary Malawi. Crucially, as well as creating plays, the group includes non-combative, post-performance, communal discussions about the issues explored within the dramas. In so doing they hope to teach other women about the issues raised so that they will in turn teach others. CWTT hope that, eventually, whole communities will benefit from this enterprise and be better informed about the issues that directly affect them. If the community is informed, then they can evoke effective change at a local level. If women are driving this change collectively using a public performance as a touchstone, then perhaps positive change stands a better chance of successful adoption by their audiences. Perhaps the public-facing, community-based nature of theatre can place the audience

in the position of becoming change makers (Mankhamba, personal communication, 10 February 2017).

**Performance**

To date the group has created two productions; both are based around the concerns that are significant to the women of the theatre group. The first production, *Chitetezo Mbaula* (Prevention Cooking Stove), promotes the use of stoves that are safer and more environmentally friendly than the traditional rural cooking methods. The drama plays out over five scenes and I will explore the scene synopsis in more detail below. The second production, *Payere Payere* (Enough is Enough), contextualizes and examines the courage of a village woman who, having endured a long and abusive marriage, decides to leave her husband (Mankhamba, personal communication, 11 February 2017). In Malawi it is common for the narrative of a play to be written down, but for the dialogue to be improvised or devised through rehearsal and in performance. This style of performance offers distinct advantages for groups such as the CWTT. Not all members need be literate to contribute to the performance and performers can articulate the drama using their own words, meaning each performance might be similar but not identical. It is a flexible method of creating plays; the cost of rehearsal is reduced because few resources are needed. Having a simple breakdown of the narrative in written form provides records of the performance and opens up the possibility of dialogue with other agencies that might be interested in the performances. These plays are rehearsed and performed in Chichewa (the dominant Malawian language) because the women do not speak English. This is significant when one considers that English is the language of administration in Malawi and most larger theatre companies perform in English, or a Chichewa-English and other vernacular language mix.

*Chitetezo Mbaula*
**Scene 1: Mr Mphatso's house**
Mr Mphatso is arguing with his wife about the time she spends making the Chitetezo Mbaula (from clay) at the Women's Club rather than attending to his daily sexual needs, which he claims is the only reason he married her. A neighbour intervenes and tries to convince Mr Mphatso of the importance of her attending the Women's Club because of the education she receives there, which allows her to take better care of her family.

**Scene 2: Chief Chinkukyu's house**
The whole village is gathered together to hear an environmental expert inform them about issues such as the importance of nature, tree planting and why using the Chitetezo Mbaula rather than traditional charcoal open fires is important to improve safety. Traditional Chewa songs and dances are performed.

**Scene 3: The Women's Club**
Chief Chinkukyu has instructed all of the men in the village to encourage their wives to attend the Women's Club. However, Mr Mphatso finds the women while they are at work making the stoves and he shouts at them for corrupting his wife.

**Scene 4: Mphatso's place of work**
Thugs attack Mr Mphatso while he is at work as a guard; friends take him home.

**Scene 5: A private hospital**
The Government hospitals have no medicine at night and so he is admitted to a Private Hospital. His wife is able to pay for his transport and medicine because of money she has saved making the Chitetezo Mbaula (plot synopsis from Mankhamba, personal communication, 22 February 2017).

Within *Chitetezo Mbaula* three of White's four key areas are clearly evident. Daily sexual relations as an expectation within marriage implies the lack of autonomy the wife has over her own body. Similarly, the necessity of the community member's intervention highlights that her personal protestations are not enough for her to be 'allowed' to attend to her own interests. The impact of poverty and poor basic infrastructure is also highlighted by the lack of medical provision for those who have scant economic resources. The structure of the drama is as significant as the content. The husband's dominance over his wife is established immediately, as is the communal nature of Malawian rural life, in the form of the neighbour's intervention. In the second scene the village chief is seen endorsing the women's right to engage in social enterprise through the manufacture of their Chitetezo Mbaula. The inclusion of the chief serves a dual purpose: CWTT uses established cultural conventions to assure the audience that the play's message is endorsed by a chief but, additionally, that they as performers are also endorsed by their chief in their enterprise. This may act as a cultural safety feature: as the performers are wearing trousers as costumes, they could be vulnerable to assault both physical and verbal. Scene four illustrates the reversal of power within the marriage as, once physically injured, the husband is dependent upon his home and his wife – she finds herself in the position where she could become an oppressor. The reveal at the end of the play is significant for two reasons. Firstly, the denouement highlights how unusual and unexpected it is for rural women to have independent access to their own finances. Secondly the wife's decision and ability to pay for her husband's medical treatment highlights how women can use their resources to improve the family's wellbeing. Further, she rejects the role of oppressor, unlike her husband at the start of the play.

The production also serves an economic function. The women do not charge the audience for their performances as this might prohibit many from attending. The women of Chingalire village do in fact make the stoves that are a central part of the narrative; the touring element of the production therefore offers the women an opportunity to expand their business and promote safer cooking practices (Mankhamba, personal communication, 11 February 2017). Cooking can be a significant hazard in a Malawian domestic setting, especially for children below the age of eight years; the majority of paediatric injuries in the country are burns and scalds related to open charcoal cooking fires (Bane, 2016, p. 58). By encouraging local enterprise, the women are acting as agents of change to improve their own health and that of their children.

**Impact**

When asked about their work in July 2016 the group stressed the importance of the freedom that the illusion of theatre offered them: theatre is non-combative, the plot and the narrative are fictitious. However, this theatrical freedom can create its own reality. Jane Plastow (2015) describes embodied performance as being the way actors take space. This is highly relevant to this paper, specifically in relation to how the women perform when playing male characters. The women take the roles of male characters themselves and 'do it exactly as the men do in real life. We cannot show a man's part while in a […] dress' (Mankhamba, personal communication, 10 February 2017). The spectacle of performance allows these women to behave in ways they feel unable to under usual circumstances; they stated that being free to behave as men, protected by the veil of theatrical characterization, made them very happy. Entering and inhabiting the performance space wearing trousers gives them the ability to embody their character's physicalization, particularly male characters. Mankhamba explains that the women can 'stretch or spread their legs on stage without worrying about showing their private parts'. He further highlights that 'normally women don't spread their legs when seated but if they are on stage they can do it and if someone asks them why they were doing that they just say they were acting' (Mankhamba, personal communication, 10 February 2017). Through the development of their own practice and performance aesthetic, the women of CWTT are able to interrogate situations similar to those in real life in which they have been the oppressed party; this is an important example of their increased empowerment and agency. The group itself, not an external organization, led and set down the aims and scope of the work. While they may be vulnerable members of society in their daily lives, the protection that the recognized encounter of public theatrical performance brings them evidently allows them to not only 'take' the space but to own it, using it to undermine the traditional gender codes of rural Malawian communities. It is particularly significant that this is an exclusively female group as there are cultural 'rules' as to how men and women may engage with each other on stage, particularly in relation to the performance of intimacy. Erogenous zones such as the breasts and buttocks should not be touched in public, and that includes within theatre production. Actresses risk damaging their personal reputation if they do not act within these parameters.

The theatre industry in Malawi is largely (but not exclusively) male dominated and engaging women in leadership roles in theatre production and the development of theatre practice is essential in expanding work that will engage female audiences. Mankhamba states that, in his experiences of rural theatre audiences, '[the] female audience is shy to attend such performances because the actors make fun of women' (personal communication, 10 February 2017). CWTT's work may have important implications for their audiences as the communities will see women who are in control of the drama, as far as is possible in a country where the censorship of drama is still controlled by government. Consequently, even in rural areas these women are becoming agents of change. Strikingly, the audiences do not always realize that CWTT hails from the same area of Malawi as them. This provokes questions, often relating to the cast's personal lives, such as whether they are married and whether their husbands approve of what they are undertaking. (Mankhamba, personal communication, 11 February 2017). These questions highlight how unusual the theatre company is and how the communities can struggle to accept women as autonomous individuals in their own right. Others question costume choice: 'Whose trousers are those you were wearing on stage?' They assume that the

women cannot be wearing their own trousers. The wider Chingalire village community has been positive about the work of the theatre group. Indeed, increasing numbers of women have expressed an interest in becoming members of the company.

**Conclusions**

Despite increased legislative rights for women in Malawi in 1995, the lived experience of Malawian women highlights that such rights have diminished through a lack of implementation and ingrained cultural norms. The process of managing and running a theatre group has given the women a newly-found improved socio-economic status within the village and thereby reignited the local debate about women's rights. Creating and performing their own plays and utilizing the established performance methods used in Malawian theatre practice has given the women of the group, all but two of whom have only a primary level education, an opportunity to explore a creative and productive outlet; this has improved their confidence personally and their professional standing within the community. It has provided them with a chance to develop their expertise and, perhaps more importantly, to be *seen* to develop an expertise by the community. The freedom that performance offers the members of CWTT is vital for giving them agency as women. Through the act of donning trousers as costume within performance and by embodying the roles of male and female characters, the group's women have discovered a renewed zeal to challenge their status within their local community. The women wear trousers to play men and in so doing interrogate the role of the male, the oppressor, for an audience that contains men. CWTT thereby put themselves at the interface of cultural development. The bravery of this act cannot be overstated: CWTT's work is an act of grassroots resistance challenging the subjugation of rural women in Malawi through costume choice, performance and economic independence.

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# Rising Above Identity Politics: Sexual Minorities and the Limits of Modern Recognition

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*If the raison d'être of social movements is to bring about (social) change, then it follows that the success of such movements must be gauged against the changes they have brought about. Gay movements in the West have often relied on a strategy based on identity politics, that is to say the movements have framed political claims for social change through the affirmation of a previously marginalized identity. Put differently, strategies based on identity politics are used by minorities to demand acceptance into society through the normative revaluation of the social value attached to their group's defining identity category; a claim is made so that a given group is seen more positively by other groups in society. The legal recognition of a group's identity is an important part of this legitimizing process, hence the focus of gay movements on equal rights. The strategy of demanding the social and legal recognition of sexual minorities though the affirmation of a gay identity, far from fostering emancipation, has entrenched and masked relations of domination within Western society. I will firstly argue that movements that have focused on achieving equal rights have not led to sufficient substantive change, by showing that equal rights have not brought emancipatory change to sexual minorities and have, on the contrary, reinforced structures producing exclusion. Still, while gay movements have failed to bring about substantive social change through the strategies they have used thus far, it can nevertheless be argued that activists should not entirely abandon strategies based on identity politics or even the very concept of identity, as some Queer theorists have suggested. In the second part of this paper, I will defend the idea that both identity and processes of recognition are strategically useful to advance emancipatory claims but that they have, until now, been MI conceptualized. I will show that within the paradigm of modernity, both have become regulatory tools; tools conducive to the retention of present (and oppressive) social structures. Thus, to reinvigorate emancipatory change, I argue for a new understanding of both concepts. This requires us to reorient our goals towards the contestation of current power relations, instead of seeking unconditional acceptance within society.*

## Introduction

The emergence of a gay social movement in the West is often attributed to the Stonewall Riots of 1969 (Schiller, 1984).[1] After another unjustified police raid at a famous gay bar in downtown New York, drag queens, gays, and other sexual 'deviants' revolted against the institutional repression of their sexual identity. By taking to the streets, they affirmed their difference to the world and demanded respect for who they were. Strategies such as this, which are based on identity politics, are still prevalent, albeit contested, within gay movements throughout the West. Social movements represent an alliance of loosely bound individuals who primarily agitate for social change (Stammers 2009, p.131-139). When talking about a gay movement, I

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[1] I would like to particularly thank Dr. Anderson for his constant help and support.

thus refer to a collective affiliation that is united both by a common interest – improving the social status of gay people - and a subjective feeling of belonging – a shared (sexual) identity.

The question of strategy is central to any social movement. How to bring about change? From the 1970s onwards, gay movements have relied on a strategy based on the concept of identity politics. As a strategy, this is more than an exclusive political alliance based on identity categories – such as race, gender or sexual orientation. Social change is sought through the *affirmation* of a group's identity. In other words, the acceptance of gay people within society through a strategy based on identity politics implies a demand for the normative revaluation of their previously marginalized sexual identity. The famous slogan 'Gay is OK' or the recourse to Gay Pride marches are good examples of a strategy that considers that the acceptance of individuals requires the recognition of their identity. Gay movements in Europe have used various strategies, particularly when framing legal claims. For example, the argument for the decriminalization of homosexuality before the European Court of Human Rights in the 1980s (Dudgeon v. UK 1981; Norris v. Ireland 1988) was one that rested on the legal concept of privacy; the freedom for adults to engage in consensual sex behind closed doors. Social stigma could still be attached to homosexuality: freedom was not granted out of respect for gay identity, but out of a universal principle to which every human is entitled. In this example, social change was brought about without resorting to arguments about identity. A strategy based on identity politics, for the purpose of this essay, is understood as a medium for change based on the normative affirmation of a collective identity with the aim of achieving acceptance within society.

The strategy of demanding the social and legal recognition of sexual minorities though the affirmation of a gay identity, far from fostering emancipation, entrenched and masked relations of domination within Western society. What if, while equal in law, sexual minorities remain oppressed? This question relates to the issue of whether a strategy of identity politics is able to foster *substantive* (or transformative) change, that is, a change profound enough to extensively restructure a given system (Cornell 1993). Thus, although equal legal rights constitute an objective change, one may wonder whether they can restructure our current social system.

The first part of this essay will briefly summarize two relevant critiques that relate to intersectionality and the normative dimension of identities. In the second part I will argue against abandoning a strategy of recognition of identities and call instead for a reconceptualization of the concepts of identity and recognition, and an understanding of them as tools for social contestation as opposed to tools for mere acceptance through legal and non-transformative social change. To conclude, I will link my observations to Boaventura de Sousa Santos' analysis of the paradigm of modernity and ask whether social contestation should be brought against that very paradigm in order to achieve transformative change.

**I – An exclusive inclusion: the failure of identity politics**
To a certain degree gay movements in Western Europe have succeeded in achieving equal rights for sexual minorities. Although such changes must be acknowledged, the benefits they have brought should not conceal remaining social relations of domination and exclusion. This section will briefly expose two major issues that strategies based on identity politics have either left unaddressed or have even exacerbated. The first relates to a certain lack of intersectional

awareness while the second involves the perpetuation of oppressive and reductive sexual categories. The intention of this section is to establish the shortcomings of a strategy based on the *acceptance* of difference through the affirmation of sexual identities and the lack of structural change as a result.

Intersectional studies have been a fashionable field of research in feminist and anti-racist academia for the past twenty years. In short, it represents the idea that our multiple identities intersect, and so do the privileges and injustices associated with them. The result is not a mere addition or subtraction of advantages and disadvantages which would follow a linear thread. The resulting oppression can be exponential (powell 2014, p.151). For example, a black lesbian can face prejudices on three distinct accounts: because of her race, her gender and her sexuality. A strategy based on identity politics seems to overlook these issues by ignoring factors other than sexual identity. The *raison d'être* of gay movements is to change the situation for gay people in society solely by demanding the acceptance of their sexual identity. Such a strategy implies that the gender, race or social status of gay people is irrelevant since only their sexual orientation matters. Therefore, gay rights movements which adopt a strategy based on identity politics accept the compartmentalization of individual identities and disregard the impact other prejudices may have on gay people's lived experiences. The consequences of such a lack of intersectional awareness are far-reaching.

Politically, it suggests that when the struggle for sexual rights is over, then the 'job is done'. There can be sympathy towards other minorities, but it remains a secondary purpose: the demand for change is thus not far-ranging enough. A strategy centred on identity politics is focused on removing hindrances to political participation based solely on sexual orientation (Fraser & Honneth 2003). This implies that when those hindrances to political participation are removed, sexual orientation is no longer considered a source of prejudicial treatment. According to this logic, a black lesbian would now only face prejudicial treatment related to her gender and her race. This is problematic on two counts. Firstly, because it leaves to other movements the duty of addressing other forms of exclusion – which constitutes in itself a refusal to engage with the structural causes of exclusion. Secondly, it removes incentives for the privileged members within a given group to act in the interests of the marginalized. If sexual orientation no longer binds different groups demanding social change under the common experience of a sexuality-based prejudice, then once prejudice against sexual orientation is removed a white gay man becomes a member of the most privileged group in Western society: white men. That man could then perfectly assert his dominance against other minorities and militate for their further oppression. The examples of 'Gays with Trump', or the appeal of the far-right party 'Front National' to the gay electorate in France (Chrisafis 2017) demonstrate that the lack of intersectional awareness in gay movements has led to – or at least left unaddressed - the marginalization of others, particularly Muslims. For example, in the Netherlands, the portrayal of Islam as a threat to gay rights is an argument used to justify Islamophobia among sexual minorities (Jong 2015). The fragmentation of struggles for social emancipation implies estrangement between different movements and different communities.

For the individual, the compartmentalization of identities means the sometimes difficult balancing of the different social values attached to one's constituent identities. In a very interesting article, Renee McCoy (2012) surveyed a sample of American black men who identified as gay and asked them about what it meant for them to be black gay men. The results

showed that not only did they identify with 'traditional cultural beliefs of American society about gender' (2012, p.204), but also that they are far from 'removed from identification with traditional role designations' (2012, p.209). McCoy argues that during the interviews these individuals were attempting the difficult exercise of balancing and making compatible traditionally antagonistic social values attached to their respective identities. This demand for *normalcy* is striking; the interviewees seem to seek integration within existing structures, structures which define their relation to gender, masculinity and sexuality; they also renounce the opportunity of contesting them. A plausible interpretation of this trend could be that the individual is defined by a sum of, sometimes contradictory, characteristics that are articulated separately depending on the social value attached to them. The tricky point then is to articulate them in a way where they will be compatible: a traditionally masculine man, who happens to be attracted to other men, and who is also black.[2] When identity is fragmented in this way, there will always be marginalization precisely because there will always be identities and characteristics that clash with one another. For example, if gayness is considered to be compatible with traditional masculinity, without altering the meaning of either masculinity or gayness, then camp gay men remain necessarily somewhat excluded. The addition of letters to LGBTIQA+ is symptomatic of this endless attempt. It shows that a strategy based on a politics of identity where identity is understood as fragmented cannot, structurally, bring about substantive, transformative change. It may bring about *less* inequality but the underlying issues will never be resolved.

As we have seen, the lack of intersectional awareness in gay movements has consequences at the levels of political action and individual perception. The uncritical upholding of the fragmentation of the individual into a sum of separate identities showcases a clear refusal to engage with social structures, that is, with the sources of power producing the current social organization.

I will now show that the affirmation of a gay identity by gay movements has led to a de-radicalization of demands for change and has, instead of asserting difference, fostered indifference. Acceptance is often associated with tolerance (see Boswell 1980 pp.3-61). It is commonly held that a just society *tolerates* difference, and tolerance may be based upon the basis of religion, humanity or any other universal principle (see Todorov 2008, pp.31-46). The acceptance of gay people in society is concomitant with demands for a tolerant society. The recognition of an 'international day against homophobia, transphobia and biphobia', for example, is systematically followed by repeated appeals to tolerance. And yet, such a concept is not necessarily free from oppressive tendencies. This trend can be understood as it concerns other forms of social oppression. Ratna Kapur, basing her analysis on colonial India, explains that tolerance is a cause of concern 'as it becomes a device for social and political control rather than empowering the groups being tolerated' (2010, p.42). She argues it was used to deny 'full legal equality to the natives while also managing their claims for greater recognition and empowerment'. Thus, difference remains 'threatening or toxic' (2010, p.42). From a feminist

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[2] This echoes some definitions of race, for example '[it is] first and foremost an unequal relationship between social aggregates, characterized by dominant and subordinate forms of social interaction, and reinforced by the intricate patterns of public discourse, power ownership and privilege within the economic, social and political institutions of society' see Marable 1995, p.186.

perspective, Wendy Brown adds that tolerance becomes a compromise, allowing for tolerated subjects to be included in society, while remaining defined and subordinated by their perceived and repulsive difference (2006, p.28). Both arguments highlight two problems that come with tolerance: firstly, that tolerance is about accommodation and secondly, that it implies the acceptance of an established relation of domination. A tolerant society is one where the mob *refrains* from acting in accordance with the status quo of the present structures of domination. A sexually deviant subject is accepted into society solely because others refrain from excluding them. Not only is the concept of tolerance slightly contradictory vis-à-vis politics of affirmation, it also precludes substantive social transformation by focusing on managing unrest. Since the daily experience of sexual minorities will be somewhat improved, objectively, thanks to tolerance, then a form of de-radicalization necessarily follows. Accommodation removes the incentive for rebellion. The Stonewall riots, for example, would probably never have happened had the police been tolerant of gay people. Even though gay people would have suffered less at the time, without those riots, perhaps there would have never been an organized gay movement, and thus change would have never occurred. De-radicalization is a necessary consequence of tolerance, and without a certain form of radicalism there can be no change. Here emerges the second problem. If tolerance precludes substantive social transformation, then tolerance entrenches current social relations. There can be minor alterations, which would translate into less (or less direct) oppression. But fundamentally, relations of domination would stay unchanged: the dominant faction will keep their dominant position, as will the dominated. In colonial India, tolerated Indians were given a better status in terms of their relations with the British, but they remained fundamentally dominated. Similarly, a gay subject may gain a better social status thanks to tolerance but, *in fine*, they will still be considered a more-or-less negative deviation from the heterosexual norm. Thus, at once, tolerance prevents real change and reinforces relations of domination.

One might argue that tolerance is not necessary for a politics of acceptance. But identities themselves form a statement about what we deem, both individually and as a society, important. That is the normative side of an identity: it does not neutrally define us. Hence, the affirmation of a gay identity represents a normative,[3] and thus potentially oppressive, statement. Inquiring into such a statement means asking how our understanding of gayness, our desires or even our idea of happiness are constructed. This is to over-simplify the complexity involved in the process of identity-formation (see Bellah *et al.* 1985) but there is also another level of analysis where gay identities are inclined to conform to 'heteronormativity' (about heteronormativity, see Warner 1991). In this respect, Sara Ahmed eloquently analyzed the 1996 TV show 'If these walls could talk' (2010 p.109-110). The series starts with an aging lesbian couple in the 1960s. One of the women dies in hospital and the surviving partner is dismissed as merely a 'friend'. In the 1990s, another lesbian couple is trying to procreate and form a family, signifying, according to Ahmed, how their happiness is linked to heteronormativity, to reproduction and integration. She claims that the recognition of sexual minorities involves 'compliance with the terms on which happiness is constructed' (Ahmed 2010, p.110). Ahmed makes a very important point by introducing a notion of control. By taking the example of a popular TV show, she highlights that the equality and freedom that sexual minorities are fighting for is itself derived

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[3] Normative in this context should be understood as 'ideology' see Gavin Anderson 2008, p.133.

from a normative set of values, and is thus far from neutral. Gay subjects are subtly pushed to understanding their emancipation in terms of mirroring heterosexual norms. From this perspective, sexual minorities are not accepted based on their difference but on the contrary, based on their compliance with certain social values. Therefore, pursuing equal rights without remaining critical of the reasons why equal rights are being pursued is indicative of a refusal to seek transformative change: acceptance is a result of the normative transformation of sexual minorities and not of social structures. It could be argued that this trend is unproblematic. After all, if sexual minorities get to be happy, why should we inquire into the genesis of such happiness? The issue lies with the fact that if, normatively, sexual deviances and heterosexuality are conflated (to the benefit of the latter) then what is the point of identifying as gay? It is not uncommon nowadays to hear gay activists praise this indifference towards sexual orientation as a sign of social progress (Stone 2016). But such indifference is extremely problematic because it necessarily entails that deviant sexualities become apolitical. Judith Butler explains that an objective difference has no value besides the subjective understanding that this difference is meaningful (1990, p.149). She takes the example of gender and wonders why sex divides humanity in two instead of, say, eye colour (Butler 1990, p.149). According to Butler, to give subjective value to any difference always entails a political choice.

For sexual minorities, indifference means that sexual orientation is no longer attached to a political value: sexual orientation becomes an objective difference that is no longer of relevance. Thus indifference implies that the terms on which sexual orientation is constructed – which are, as we have seen, constructed in relation to, and to the benefit of, a dominant heteronormativity - become undisputable since they are made apolitical. This is why, for example, feminist scholars have contested the essentialization of gender binaries by politicizing the male/female divide (Hunter 2013, p.13-30). Indifference removes the grounds for social contestation and, thereby, it actively promotes the *status quo*. The uncritical affirmation of an identity which fully mirrors dominant sexual patterns results in the negation of meaningful differences and, therefore, results in renouncing social change. As mentioned above, meaningful change is where the systematized distribution of social roles and attributes is profoundly altered. So far, while the changes brought about by gay movements are important, they are merely *corrective* in that they tend to simply result in (at best) a better version of the current system. They do not sufficiently question the validity of the system itself. Such questioning is necessary in order to produce significantly different outcomes.

This section has highlighted two major issues that demonstrate the failure of gay movements to achieve substantive, transformative change. The legal recognition of sexual minorities through the obtaining of certain equal rights has led to their partial acceptance within society. However, such acceptance simultaneously implies renouncing the aim of radically transforming society: change was acceptable only to the extent that social structures, those mechanisms producing exclusion, remained untouched. This explains how some gay associations can openly militate against the integration of other groups and how racism and misogyny can still be prevalent within a gay community. The lines defining exclusion have indeed been displaced, and as a result sexual minorities, to a greater extent, are not excluded on the basis of their sexual orientation *per se*; but those very lines, and the production thereof, still apply, albeit differently. Gay movements failed to bring emancipatory change precisely because they failed to meaningfully contest oppressive social structures. This result cannot be acceptable

for those insisting on being progressive. The next section will address ways in which to move forward.

## II – Contesting Modernity: a renewed recognition of sexual identity?

As the previous section argued, gay movements in the West have not brought about substantive social change. To a certain extent, gay rights movements even precluded further transformative change through enabling an attitude of indifference. From a strategic point of view, then, what can progressive activists do? In this section, I will show that despite these issues, entirely doing away with the concepts of identity and recognition would be a mistake since both can prove useful in creating much-needed momentum. I will use different theoretical frameworks to explain that activists should focus on *processes* as opposed to *outcomes* in order to avoid the potential for oppression inherent to a strategy built on the concept of identity politics. I will argue that such processes involve prioritizing the contestation of structures and thus political struggle over acceptance within society. Finally, I will consider the value of applying Santos' broader critique of modernity to the context of the recognition of sexual minorities, as it seems to both help us understand the difficulties which the identity-based approach encounters, and also sketch the beginnings of an alternative approach to gay activism.

The first part of this essay considered the notion of a gay identity as inherently oppressive or, at the very least, unable to bring about substantive change. From the 1990s onwards, an important and eclectic intellectual movement branded under the umbrella term of Queer theory elected to reject the concept of a gay identity. As a strand of post-structuralism,[4] Queer theory defies definition, not least because Queer theorists themselves are often in deep disagreement about both the nature and the goal of their loosely affiliated movement (Morgan 2001, p.208-225). Put in the simplest terms, Queer theorists have demonstrated, using deconstructive methods, the socio-historical contingency of sexual norms. Queer theorists have, more often than not, remained extremely critical of sexual identities, perceiving them as a tool for social control (Stychin 2005, p.90-109). They suggest moving beyond identities in order to promote the idea of a Queer subject – who is unstable and indefinable. This summary does not do justice to the complexity of Queer theory. Although theoretically extremely rich, particularly in its understandings of processes of identification, Queer theory failed to generate momentum. It did not create or sustain a radical wave capable of influencing mainstream politics beyond intellectual circles. Queer theory has been unable to seriously challenge the conceptual ubiquity of identities within social movements. In a particularly stark example, the overall focus of Western gay movements in recent years has been to achieve the legal recognition of gay marriage, and this has been despite over twenty years of criticism from Queer theorists. In France in 2013, in the UK in 2014 and in the U.S. in 2015, gay movements have overwhelmingly sought and celebrated the legalization of same-sex unions.

Critical activists are then faced with a serious issue: Queer theorists may have developed relevant theories, but these cannot take hold in mainstream movements. On the other hand, the concepts of identity and recognition, central to a strategy based on identity politics, may be seriously flawed but are capable of creating momentum within our societies; it seems we cannot

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[4] A constructivist philosophical movement which emerged in France in the 1960s in reaction to structuralism, see Jacques Derrida 1972.

imagine or produce social change without them. If the inherent problem with a strategy based on identity politics is that it entrenches a different while perhaps gentler form of oppression, the question to be asked is whether a non-oppressive identity is possible. Put differently, is the potential for oppression within a strategy of identity politics structural or contingent? If it is structural, then a politics of emancipation would necessarily have to abandon the conceptual use of identities and look for other ways to generate momentum. If, however, it is merely contingent, then the issue is to find ways to produce non-oppressive identities. This second approach entails thinking about identities differently. My intention is not to revolutionize identity scholarship within this short paper. My aim is far more modest: I merely wish to open doors that might lead, eventually, to new answers. I suggest that approaching a non-oppressive gay identity requires rethinking the focus of gay rights movements in two consequential ways: from outcomes to processes and thus from acceptance to contestation.

When I talk about refocusing gay movements towards processes as opposed to outcomes, I simply suggest putting the 'how' before the 'result'. If a group is trying to further a result, it means that this group has already defined the terms under which they want to live. It means that they accept, uncritically, the way in which their result has been produced. The oppression that derives from a gay identity, as discussed in the previous section, stems from this primacy of the result. What do gay movements want to achieve? They want acceptance and inclusion. They want their gay identity to be valued and respected. Structural oppression appears because individuals need to comply with rigid parameters – they need to fit within the knowable identity they are labelled (and labelled themselves) with – and because the power relations that have produced those circumstances are unaltered.[5] Simply put, gay movements cannot move away from an unsatisfactory point A if, in order to get to B, every characteristic of A remains unaltered. If processes are given primacy, however, it means that outcomes remain unknown. Nobody can tell what will be the end point of gay movements. All that can be known are ways to achieve a less oppressive result, and that is by contesting the sources of power that have produced current injustices. The 'how' implies reclaiming those sources of power and producing different, less oppressive situations. Perhaps identities will eventually disappear and thus there will be no need for inclusion because there will be no differentiation. This ignorance as to the outcome is not a proof of some theoretical lacunae but is, on the contrary, indication of a collective process of thought which evidences a real move from A to B. As put by Daniel Tyradellis, an ignorance conscious of itself is a precondition of the act of thinking (2012, p.8-9). What would be the point of thinking collectively if the answers were known before the act of thinking? Focusing on processes has the potential for producing non-oppressive outcomes because it does not impose a given framework – since that new framework is construed collectively – and especially because it can confront the very reasons/structures that led to oppression in the first place.

A refocus on processes will obviously have deep consequences for what we understand as identity. Queer critiques can potentially coexist with this reworked concept of a gay identity. The momentum generated by the idea of a gay identity and the strategy of affirming such an identity can work if we redefine the goals of such a strategy. If our attention is drawn back to processes, then the gay identity we are referring to is not a pre-existing one to be accepted by

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[5] See generally Michel Foucault 1995.

society but is one that will be *formed* in that very process. Thus, while refusing to deny the strategic importance of a gay identity for social change, activists can substantially diminish its oppressive potential by reconceptualizing identities as an always-becoming. In this respect, the work of Elisabeth Grosz is particularly relevant. A critical feminist, she developed a Nietzschean-inspired theory of the subject where she refuses to understand subjecthood as a permanent or stable state, but rather as a never ending process. She argues that (2005, p.167-168):

> [I]t may be time for feminists to seek instead what I understand as a politics of the imperceptible, which has its effects through actions, but which actions can never be clearly defined with an individual, group, or organization. Such a politics does not seek visibility and recognition as its goals; rather it seeks actions, effects, consequences, forces which generate transformation without directing that transformation to other subjects who acknowledge its force.

Grosz uses the need for a flexible understanding of identity in order to bring the debate from the individual to the collective: she transforms an inner struggle into a political one and thus she highlights the need to rethink and challenge the world we live in. It is not really the 'I' or even the 'us' that counts. The struggle she is referring to concerns the world and its powers (Grosz 2005, p.194). A very interesting aspect of Grosz's reasoning is that she shows how Queer ideas of a 'different subject' are not necessarily contrary to a politics of identities. She makes it very clear that goals are second to means and that through engagement, what she refers to as 'actions', other becomings are made possible. So, when we think about gay movements, affirming a gay identity is not in itself problematic provided it is understood not as a set of defined characteristics that inherently and ontologically differentiate a group or an individual from others, but as a means of action directed against social and political ordering. Put differently, a gay identity is not something that is directly defined, for example based on sexual orientation, it is a constant (re-)creation through political contestation.

So far, I have discussed an alternative to the binary opposition between a strategy of affirming a gay identity and Queer theory, since they are both lacking. I hold that an alternative can be achieved if activists re-centre their attention to processes instead of outcomes. In doing so, I have characterized the importance of *contestation* when reconceptualizing a gay identity and have shown how ignoring outcomes is actually key to non-oppressive change. At this point, an obvious question comes to mind: if contestation is necessary to the processes in question, and if such processes are themselves necessary for a non-oppressive and transformative change, then what should such contestation be directed against? 'Structures' or even 'systems' are quite vague terms. Here I will discuss the need for contestation to occur at the level which informs both our institutional arrangements and our perception of these: the paradigmatic level.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2002) offers a very workable understanding of the mechanisms of the paradigm of modernity and also outlines a strong critique that can prove helpful for any movement seeking transformative change. It is important to understand the logic of modernity if one is to contextualize this debate. According to Santos, modernity is a system of thought, a paradigm that has dominated European thinking since the end of the *Renaissance*. Santos identifies modernity as resting on a dynamic between the two pillars of regulation and emancipation, the tension of which draws a line that we refer to as progress (2002, p.5-25).

Emancipation is supposedly driven by expectations, i.e. desires for social change (2002, p.9), while society is afterwards stabilized with the establishment of new regulations (2002, p.10). The issue is that most contemporary emancipatory movements are themselves regulatory, hence, despite apparent change there is a lack of real transformation (Santos 2010, p.225-242). Efforts for transformative change must therefore engage with the paradigm of modernity, in order to rectify it or surpass it. This analysis of modernity should be appreciated for its schematic value. It fits rather neatly with the description of gay movements I have given above: while a strategy based on identity politics seems to foster a certain emancipation of sexual minorities, it only replicates a different form of control and regulation. If Santos' account of modernity is accepted, then activists focusing on processes must find ways to contest these dynamics of regulation. If they do not, they will stay within that cycle and produce different forms of control. In the last chapter of *Toward a New Legal Common Sense*, Santos outlines potential counter-hegemonic strategies. He tries to 'unfold the signs of the reconstruction of the tension between social regulation and social emancipation, as well as the role of law in such a reconstruction' (2002, p.494), and by doing so he calls for an open research agenda (2002, p.495). What he means here is that any such reconstruction requires the contestation of what is presented as 'realism', whose systems of thought define themselves as pragmatic and discard divergence as idealism. When thinking about gay movements, activists consider themselves to be engaged in emancipatory processes when, in fact, they are considered to be idealists. This can be taken as a sign that they are engaged with something new and, perhaps, transformative.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, this short paper has shown that despite its failure to bring substantive change to the situation of gay people in the West, a strategy based on identity politics is still relevant in today's struggles. The affirmation of a defined identity risks reproducing the very oppressive tendencies that gay movements are trying to depart from. However, if identities are conceived differently, and if gay movements shift their focus towards processes as opposed to outcomes – thus towards contestation as opposed to acceptance – then it is possible to recombine an efficient strategy with a sounder theoretical background. I suggest that contestation should take place in reference to the paradigm of modernity, since it informs both our social organization and our perception of it. In so doing, I draw attention to the similarities of Santos' analysis of modernity and the problems we have encountered throughout our discussion of a gay identity-based struggle for recognition. The rise and fall of a strategy for emancipation based on identity politics within gay movements may be followed by a rebirth of its conceptual usefulness, provided activists accept some uncertainty and contest the limiting paradigm of 'realism' that imposed itself as un-falsifiable truth. The social emancipation of sexual minorities is indistinguishable from a wide-scale critique of institutional arrangements and consequently transformative change can only emerge if new doors are opened and old ways left behind.

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# Exilic Consciousness and Meta-Cosmopolitanism: Rise and Fall of Barriers

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*Faced with a reordering of geopolitical landscapes, Western discourse, after an eighty-year hiatus since World War II, promises to raise new barriers, inaugurating a model of exclusivist, purificatory discourse. Consequently, current representations of non-belonging subsist under the assault of grand narratives which only serve to foreclose the very thinking of exilic representations in polemical and radical form.*

*My paper theorises the raising of barriers as an adherence to master discourses which perpetually seek to discipline, regulate and neutralise exile in a 'well-trodden, pathologized aesthetic' (Baal 2015). As a researcher and playwright I will be considering how the effect of dominant narratives impacts upon our capacity to imagine and dramatize new mythico-metaphysical terrains and readdress cosmopolitanism. Given that any truth must first be allowed into speakability by the schemes of linguistic and political permissiveness, I will be asking, as a woman dramatist and researcher, how it might be possible through narrating this marginalized existence, to cause the barrier to fall, and to what extent the project of cosmopolitanism has been undermined by the structured layering of orders and ideologies. Drawing on deconstructive approaches, and principally on the philosophy of Jacques Derrida and his work on sovereignty, womanhood and Cosmopolitanism, I consider how embedded discourses constitutive of subject-formation lead to historically sanitized notions of nationhood and identity.*

*Progressing from Derrida's position on exteriority and exile as conditions of possibility (Derrida 1998), I conclude that the drama of exile compels us to rise above the barrier and re-theorise foreignness and citizenship by revealing a space of meta-cosmopolitanism; a space of energising movement and privileging the signifier of anarchy over event.*

*Keywords:* Deconstruction, Derrida, theatre of exile, Khora

> *...ein Besuchsrecht, welches allen Menschen zusteht, sich zur Gesellschaft anzubieten, vermöge des Rechts des gemeinschaftlichen Besitzes der Oberfläche der Erde, auf der, als Kugelfläche, sie sich nicht ins Unendliche zerstreuen können, sondern endlich sich doch neben einander dulden zu müssen, ursprünglich aber niemand an einem Orte der Erde zu sein mehr Recht hat, als der andere.*

> *A right that all men have, founded upon that of the common ownership of the surface of the earth, which, on account of its spherical form obliges them to suffer others to subsist contiguous to them, because they cannot disperse themselves to an indefinite distance, and because originally one has not a greater right to a country than another.*

(Kant 1795. *Perpetual Peace.* Author's translation)

It is only four summers before the dawn of the eighteenth century, and the world is ripe for Kant's enlightened debate on global movement and every citizen's unquestionable right to reap the common benefits of our '*Kugelfläche',* our spherical world. It is again Kant who, three years

later in 1798, in the *Metaphysics of Morals,* inaugurates the 'rational being endowed with freedom' (Kant 1799, 7:285), proceeding in the *Anthropology* to determine the universality of character as belonging to a person who 'relies on principles that are valid for everyone' (Kant 1798, 7:293). Kant's rational man, the deracinated, Cartesian, abstracted being, has since provided the foundations for liberal and neoliberal prototypes in social science by relativizing our epistemic agency (our ability to know things) to our own standpoint. The Kantian man finds himself at the centre of the universe where he, as the knowing subject, can be bound by norm-governed activity only to the extent that the highest order of norms has its source, ultimately, in him. Kant's philosophy subsumes the particular within the universal and reduces qualities to quantities with the result of raising the barrier of exclusionary sovereignty and national territorialism. By disabling internal differences, Kant's cosmopolitanism has predicated human consciousness on territorial space which is sovereign and institutionally circumscribed. In his famous 1784 essay *An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment"* Kant repeatedly decrees that the idea of human 'maturity' be set as a necessary condition for proper engagement in a public realm in order to safeguard institutionally established freedoms: 'Laziness and cowardice are the reasons why such a large part of mankind gladly remain minors all their lives […] the overwhelming majority of mankind – among them the entire fair sex – should consider the step to maturity, not only as hard, but as extremely dangerous' (Kant, 1784:1). What is evident in this passage is that Kant successfully applies the veneer of cosmopolitanism as a condition of universal goodness while justifying a regime of exceptionalism reserved for 'mature' individuals along with all the prejudicial exclusions that this state of exceptionalism promotes and entails.

The purpose of this paper is to argue the case for meta-cosmopolitanism as an imagined, dramatized and differential striving towards a democracy-to-come in the midst of all the 'homogenizing hegemonies' of the post-Kantian project (Derrida 2004, p.158). I will argue for a commitment to a certain opening, a mythico-metaphysical terrain that keeps the dialectic open and promises to overcome the blockades of fossilized historical necessity. To apprehend it, I will examine the aesthetics of dramatic textuality witnessed in my own practice as a dramatist as a metaphysics of structural exteriority, as 'the absolute indigestibility […] the element excluded from the system, yet endowing the system with the quasi-transcendental function which assures the system's space of possibility' (Gasché 1995, p.189). As a dramatist, I write exile and my methodological temptation is precisely to reassess the limits of the transcendental motif by radicalizing the dramaturgical boundary of that which is outside or underneath, the un-thought or the excluded; that which, in its deferred function, organizes the ground to which it does not belong. As a starting point, Sophocles' Antigone serves to demonstrate that politically and ontologically, the female protagonist must find it impossible to overcome the barrier. Yet, she provides the ballast, the difficulty and the unwieldiness of the woman in both ontological and territorial exile; the element of inadmissibility to the system, an instant or instance which 'precisely *because* of its indigestibility can play a fundamental role *in* the system' (Derrida 1974, p.151). In the Classical dramatic canon Antigone is an insurgent. She renews her revolutionary significance by reminding us that, despite her insurgency, her womanhood prevents her from exercising her civic rights in statehood. A bride of Hades before surrendering to matrimonial delights, Antigone underwrites the trans-categorical condition of possibility of the system itself, to which she will always be exterior. Both Gasché and Derrida position this

'exteriority' within Antigone's asymmetry to convention (Gasché 1994, p.188). Antigone carries the stain of Oedipus' exile: exile from sovereign space, exile from citizenship and from normative womanhood. As a proto-feminist paradigm, Antigone also consolidates what I term *exilic consciousness in drama:* an urging, a pressure exercised by the exterior (a voice of what is linguistically and culturally designed as exiled) against centric discourse. It is imperative that in this time of provocation, Antigone supplies the conditions of possibility for encapsulating the paradox of the female condition. Speaking in a foreign language, forced onto foreign territory and ostracized from civic fraternities, Antigone sets the foundation for transforming her own singularity into the 'system's first moment' (Gasché 1994, p.193). Exilic consciousness for the female is still legally problematic. The 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, around which much of individual states' approaches are based, is founded with men as its principal beneficiaries. Individual states equally benefit from linking citizenship and statehood criteria to earning potential which, structurally, also favours men.

Against this background, my own play, *Lesbos,* commissioned in 2016, was born to me primarily as a site, and subsequently a character, of exile. The dramaturgy of this piece is based on character emplotment inversing itself against essentialist anticipation, against the 'normal and normalizing narratives' (Gasché 1986, p.188) of what is expected of the female body as a universal quality of its supposed essence. The play explores the gendered impacts of exile against the essentialist position that the female body's duty is accomplished in nature, not in civilization. Patriarchal privilege assigns a place to the feminine which is always complementary and supplementary to civilization, if not entirely exterior to it. My initial decision to deploy two women as protagonists was founded in the desire to debunk this essentialist exteriority. Structurally, the gendered representation provides both theme and form to the narrative. Dramaturgically, each exchange is designed to counter an expectation of 'normal womanhood', thematically and aesthetically. Each woman is meticulously constructed to take great pleasure in her anarchic choices, counter to notions of victimhood, injury and nostalgia. In the course of their first encounter, we are shocked to discover a veiled Sarah defending 'Europeanness' against Maria's rather obtuse romantic belief in Communism. Sarah is the vocal, brave one. Maria recedes as Sarah advances away from nostalgia and loss.


**SARAH** Where were you born, Maria?

**MARIA** What?

**SARAH** Where? Here? Right? Look where I'm pointing.

*Maria does.*

**SARAH** Born here, Maria. *On* this island? Under this sun? And what do you get for it?

*Maria is perplexed. She doesn't agree but sees an argument*

**SARAH** Us. Thousands. Millions of unwanted peoples.  Foreign things claim priority over your own. I see them. I smell them: trampling all over your *right* to be here before we come and take over your schools and your health service.

> **MARIA** This isn't what the Left was about you know-
>
> **SARAH** I am talking about civilisation.
>
> *Silence*
>
> *Maria scratches her tattooed arm, exposing the fading ink of a hammer and sickle design.*
>
> **MARIA** Still, we was talking about this tattoo-
>
> **SARAH** No, we were talking about Europe and values. Which *I* embrace.
>
> (*Lesbos* Act I Sc 3)

The two characters are also constructed to foreground the structural dis-analogy between cosmopolitanism and the narratives (colonial and others) of impurity.[1] Traditionally termed, cosmopolitanism, understood as a voluntary act, is the self-affirmation of the romantic exile. Kings and queens, pop-stars and internet tycoons exile themselves as a matter of course in order to affirm their status, portability and interestingly adaptable linguistics. They are cosmopolitans. They can go where they like, when they like, as opposed to the migrant (a linguistically negative category that has been widely used in political polemics) who, in principle, exercises the same right of freedom of movement. The unbalance occurs when the latter category (the migrant) finds herself unable to erase the linguistically and culturally constructed stain of her 'origin and skin tone, rebelliously staining the purity of the imperial quest' (Said 1994, p.16). Undergirding the imbalance of essentialist expectation (the woman's primary duty to fulfil her 'essence' which is principally her reproductive function), the two principal characters in *Lesbos* are women preoccupied with what I previously referred to as Gasché's 'non-normal and non-normalisable things'.[2] One of them discovers a plague, the other is an engineer; one of them sleeps with a gun under her pillow; the other is veiled; the veiled woman incites nationalism; the other woman will retreat and then respond; the veiled woman initiates an enquiry about sex; the other woman will retreat and then reciprocate; the veiled woman will betray and follow her calling towards scientific excellence; the other woman will kill and follow her calling towards political revolution.

*Lesbos* proposes to disquiet our ordered sense of exile by inserting the concept of meta-cosmopolitanism into the dramatic equation. To do this, I follow a deconstructive approach where the imagined space of a democracy-to-come, Derrida's '*à venir'*, is textualized in dramatic form using the metaphysics of time and space. Direct dialogue provides the linear model in *Lesbos* with the Cantos functioning as a conscious ordering of the spatial aesthetics of the text against clock time. Spatial aesthetics engages the notion that art is political, by vexing our very perception of how a text or work of art functions *in a given space* and lending political ballast to the concept of space as a construct of class and gender consciousness (see Papastergiadis 2010). On the other hand, imagined temporalities challenge imperialist rhetoric and the discourses of colonialism which are always formed to justify domination of one group

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[1] Colonial narratives of territorial entitlement entail a corresponding narrative of exclusion and racial purity, which combine to constrict the colonized spatially and discursively (see Said 1996; Harvey 2009).

[2] I use Gasché's term 'normalisable' (derived from Derrida) with a degree of poetic license to indicate a departure from the lure of sovereign discourse, an anti-foundationalist proposal.

over another. In *Lesbos,* this typology of domineering rhetoric lends itself to a rupture: the multi-directionality of narrative time is aimed at structurally undermining the colonial project and its rigid layering of orders and ideologies. In the excerpt that follows, the two protagonists engage in an interplay between principles.

**SARAH** You a nurse?

**MARIA** Yea.

*Sarah's eyes politely travel to Maria's tattoo.*

**SARAH** And a tattooed lady?

**MARIA** Ex-dreamer.

**SARAH** ex-…?

**MARIA** Yes, like a dreamer before but now… not really, not the time for this shit, you know what I mean?

**SARAH** Oooohhh…

**MARIA** Sorry, I hope this don't offend you.

**SARAH** No, please….Let me look.

*Sarah studies the tattoo*

**MARIA** Ex-communist.

**SARAH** This…?

**MARIA** Sickle.

**SARAH** Oh…and this…?

**MARIA** Hammer.

**SARAH** *is shocked*

**MARIA** Harmless

**SARAH** Harmless hammer…?

**MARIA** Harmless hammer. I know. That's before. *EX*-communist. Now…just dreaming of some weirdness of what it could have been if it hadn't all turned out bad…oh, fuck it, I can't think about this anymore.

(*Lesbos* Act I Sc 3)

Furthermore, the use of Cantos energizes a forward motion of the narrative. The Cantos are situated in the future in Melbourne, Australia, where Maria, as a Greek citizen, is 'now' seeking political asylum. Their futural action has a powerful deconstructive effect as it carries the retentive into the present. In exile however, temporalizing is a supplementary device. What matters above all is the *where*, not the *when* or the *what*. At every stage of writing the dialogue

I could not help myself drawing a parallel with Derrida's *Glas*, where the syntactic text, the writing itself, plays second fiddle to the use of space and textual absence as the principal means of signification. That is to say, that the syntactic text itself is made dormant or, more precisely, becomes a latent undercurrent of the spatial elements of the play. This has a further anaesthetic effect in terms of the reader's approach to the text. Whereas in a textual space (the reader's own space for receiving and perceiving the text) the reader still engages primarily with the syntactic text, within the spatial text (the reader's perception of the aesthetics of space within which the text is acted) the reader is invited to read the 'linguistic holes', which are silent. She who finds herself out of her naturally inscribed space, symbolically the Syrian, the veiled woman, will not be denied cosmopolitanism, the Kantian 'suffering of the other'; she is indeed welcomed, duly arrested, registered, offered a mattress in a container. Sarah Al-Asari, the physicist from Damascus, will find the courage to escape the horizon of historical truth: she will overcome the universally inscribed label of 'migrant', she will enter into an intimate relationship with the foreigner from Lesbos and finally decide to forego the intimacy for the sake of her science thereby demarcating her own space in civic subjecthood and developing exilic consciousness in action rather than in victimhood.

What follows is a section of dialogue between the two protagonists. The anarchic potential of the Syrian engineer's invitation to Maria to remember 'when she lost herself in something bigger' sparks the outpouring of canonical language anti-immunizing against its own pathogen. Maria confesses to arson. And then it gets worse: they debunk the masculinity of the Divine.


**SARAH** When was the last time you lost yourself in something bigger?

**MARIA** In 2004. After the demonstration. After I'd doused that fascist prick's car in petrol and watched it go up like a faulty firework.

**SARAH** God may not forgive you Maria.

**MARIA** Hear, this: I doused the engine first. The Mercedes sign. Poured liquid all over it and then the leather seats. Bright red leather seats for the fat arsed protector of the working classes. And I watched the flames encircle the motherfucker like it was the Second Coming.

**SARAH** *Whispers some prayer in Arabic*

**MARIA** Don't pray for me. God will stop loving you if She heard you.

**SARAH** She?

**MARIA** Yea. Mother used to say "God's got to be a woman. Who else can make it so we're be born between shit and piss alive?"

**SARAH** *stops praying. She takes a sugary confection and places it in Maria's mouth.*

(*Lesbos* Act I Sc 9)

Negative representations of exile derive from language capturing its object in ways to fit the political and geographical aims of nationalistic entities. Our linguistic modalities are sharpened to give public expression to these entities' evidential presence. I therefore argue that meta-cosmopolitanism is a call to mobilize dramatic textuality in reverse motion towards the effacement of the negativity of exile, one which is constructible and – as Derrida would have it – deconstructible in language. Cosmopolitanism has sustained a regime of staining human movement, subject to grave epistemological corruption and to all the vagaries of history, power, society, bourgeois morality and politics. Enlightenment ideals are the pegs on which conformism's barriers hang their bourgeois credentials, their exclusionary medals, the orders of their empires, their stately violence, their self-congratulatory discourses of majesty and humanity. Cosmopolitanism as the ontic representation of Homo Erectus' most noble intention to share the earth's 'spherical shape', ultimately acknowledges that he must *suffer* the Other because he knows that, in spite of his absolutism, interdependency is the vital condition of his remaining erect. To interrogate this tumescent rigidity, I will now discuss how the dramatization of Derrida's approach to Platonic philosophy mobilizes textuality towards a practice of deconstructive interrogation, thereby questioning abstract, absolutist, dogmatic thinking.

In the *Timaeus,* Plato appoints the textual semiotics of the *khōra* as ranging from habitation and place to country and national space. The *khōra* is an important innovation in Plato's middle metaphysics. It represents a 'third kind': an enduring substratum, neutral and amenable in its temporality. Progressing on Plato's observations in the *Timaeus*, Derrida appoints the *khōra* as an all-encompassing event because it 'comes before everything' and designates 'the call for a thinking of the event to come, of the democracy to come' (Derrida 2004, p.xiv). The discursive distance between habitation and national space is a woman's longest journey. In Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, King Theseus offers citizenship and succour to Oedipus, King of Thebes, eagerly looking forward to death at Colonus. Antigone's exile is not going to be resolved on the horizontal plane of the ties of citizenship and statehood. She will be exiled, and in exile she will mark a territory of revolt, building on structural exteriority to expose the system's annulations, the flaws of conventionally accepted authority. Developing the interpretation of the Platonic *khōra* in terms of theatrical space and textual dramaturgy, I had to take into account the *khōra* as both a metaphysical proposition and a temporal extension. The ecology of land and soil and the searing temperatures of the Eastern Mediterranean are fecund. This is where the protagonists in *Lesbos* come together and this is where they must endure the ills of exile and neoliberal cosmopolitanism. It gives the dramatist an ecosphere of Western-style character and *khōric* non-character, but, more importantly, it provides the gestational interval bearing the seeds of what comes *after* a national space has been excommunicated, emptied of meaning and exhausted. In its essence *khōric* emplacement *is* an interval. It is the physicality which you open to allow a temporal extension for things to take place *in.*

The *khōra* is a third form, neither a paradigmatic and eternal being nor a sensible copy of these beings. The limitations of the *khōric* 'kind' testify to the *khōra's* indigestibility. It is where we remain, in perpetual motion. The privilege of the *khōra* is that it can escape the coordinate of commonality nevertheless participating in the intelligible. The *khōra* qua receptacle exceeds creation: it refuses to be assimilated immediately into the dualistic Platonic schema: it is 'a spacing from "before" the world, the cosmos, or the globe, from "before" any

chronophenomenology, any revelation, any "as such" and any "as if," any anthropotheological dogmatism or historicity' as reinterpreted by Derrida in *Rogues* (Derrida 2005, xiv). The noun itself, gendered female in Greek, designates a matrix, an opening, a womb-like environment, an *arché* or origin. In metaphysics the notion of the primordial is conventionally linked to presence and thus manifests an irregular kind of temporality. In *Speech and Phenomena* (1967), Derrida notes that the difference constitutive of the self-presence of the living present reintroduces as trace the impurity of spatial depth; that is to say, a non-identity into self-presence. The trace is the intimate relation of the living present with its outside, the openness upon exteriority in general, upon the sphere of what is not one's own. To apprehend that which eludes the logic of assimilation, Derrida mobilizes the strategy of deferral, his innovative tactic of installing temporality into the syntagmatic of the sign. Contrary to the oppositional definitions of Saussure and Levi-Strauss, Derrida proposes that the field of narrative must not only bring out the chronological sequence of events but more essentially the chronology of their representation, a tenet which signals the liberation of textuality from the interpretative constraints imposed by traditional regimes of meaning and signification.

This endeavour is inherently problematic in the translation of the *khōra* from the metaphysical to the sensible. I purposely positioned the two women in *Lesbos* at the farthest point to the east which separates Greek from Turkish national waters, defined as the off-shore zone which is extended from the 'straight baseline' or the coastline into the sea.[3] The textual metonymy of the sea as a site of ever shifting territory is what drew me to the decision. The Aegean's positioning as a site of perpetual confrontation between East and West, mythologized in Homer's *Iliad* is today the site of reception of over one million arrivals from the East, gives the dramatist ample licence to imagine a maritime barrier or, more suitably, a bridge between two points. In *Glas,* Derrida writes the *khōra* as metaphysical deferral in textuality. He proposes a copulative moment between the father of German Idealism and the vagabond of French literature, former rent-boy, enlightened, misunderstood, maid's son, playwright and poet Jean Genet. The reflections between the columns and the contrasts between them (the French word 'glas' meaning 'death knell') thus form a mobile discourse within the text, replete with fecund gaps, penetrated and penetrating.

*Glas* follows Derrida's program of writing that provokes the very limits of language. And it is only when language is tested that meta-cosmopolitanism as an unconditional injunction of hospitality towards an *arrival* is enacted. A genuine affirmation of what in a dramatic encounter is open to the arrival of the Other bears all the allure of wantonness: the arrival or the *arrivant* (the one who is arriving) is untranslatable because she appears before textuality, 'un-languaged', because she is polyglot, affirming the licentiousness of the intellect's wonderings and the randomness of human beginnings. Maria, the nurse, does not *want* the arrival. But she is brought to know that she cannot but bring the gestation to term. The womb will contract. The arrival must arrive. Inhabitation of our spherical world *must*, in Kant's words, 'suffer' the Other (Kant 1795, p.214), and in suffering the Other, the protagonist lets go of the security, the certainty and the indictment of sameness. The copulative activity that follows between the veiled *arrivant* and the heavily tattooed nurse from Lesbos contaminates the trace and elevates

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[3] 'Straight baseline' as termed in article 8 of the Montego Bay Convention, is the line which is 'formed by joining the very end sea bound points' (UNCLS 1994).

it above epistemic certainty, above the sensible into the sphere of the incommunicable. The aesthetics of the textual space privileges a certain spatio-temporal register where the accent is now placed on the use of space as the primary signifying process – the process capable of the transmission of what is otherwise inexpressible: the politics within the polis. The question of spatial aesthetics is extensively visited by Derrida in '*Parergon*', the introductory chapter in *The Truth in Painting*, where he effectively positions Kant's *Third Critique* as a resolution between mind and nature, 'internal and external phenomena, the inside and the outside etc.' (Derrida 1987, p.5). Whereas a full discussion on aesthetics is beyond the remit of this paper, *Lesbos,* as a dramatic text, continually vexes the borders of *aesthesis* as a subjectively perceived idea of what is pleasurable within its given spatial environs. In that sense, the play text exercises its aesthetic influence, the very idea of its apartness from the world, its own intensity and affect on individuals. However, I will agree with Derrida that whereas this affect remains resolutely subjective, the beautiful, the intense and the spatially aesthetic are also to be found in the political, 'in the outside, in the object and independent of its existence' (Derrida 1987, p.13).

**Outside the *Khōra***

National space is jurisdictionally circumscribed. Laws are made and remade to identify the precise limits of what is legitimately interior and accepted by the polis and what will be deemed foreign and exterior. The question therefore arises as to how we demarcate exteriority. How do we set the limits of exilic consciousness and mobilize the need for meta-cosmopolitanism? In tragic dramaturgy, democracy subsumes commitments of the individual to the collective in a particularly heightened manner. Athenian democracy privileges horizontal relationships of citizenship. In democracy's institutional function, 'fraternity', as also argued by Derrida at length in *Politics of Friendship*, is instituted and remains central to the ideology of modern Western politics as a trace, continuation and relation to ancient political theory. Cosmopolitanism in that sense affirms the horizontality of the signifier as a concept of fraternity, *not* sisterhood. And women are content to be complicit with the phallus under the fraternity banner of Enlightenment revolutionary politics. In this all-embracing shift in political rhetoric, and against the claim of fraternity, sisterhood raises its head, but timidly. Sisterhood begins to learn to speak, and Antigone's voice fails in the symmetry of citizenship versus blood bond. Her sister Ismene will not support her determination. I insist on Antigone's paradigm as a foundational instance of structural exteriority.

Citizenship conceptions are moulded on the norm of the universalized male enshrining man's economic primacy over the female's domestic concerns. As King Oedipus walks towards his death in Colonus, he is assured closure, the recognizable relief and respite from life's unchosen travails, an honour bestowed on him by Theseus, king of Athens. His male body, the body politic of the king and warrior, is promised reprieve, but the pact between men excludes the female body. Antigone, whose fate is one of perpetual mourning in exteriority, an existence only recognizable in vertical blood ties, is ultimately denied the 'pact' of horizontal civic redress. The *khōric* element in this context is the very *atopia,* the very 'a-locality', which makes philosophy possible, a space in which language does not merely obey an epistemological function of reproducing the sensible world. It is the very condition which opens the world to systematic interrogation and transformation. In the excerpt that follows Maria receives an item in the post. She begins to realize that the 'innocent' rhetoric of assimilative practice carries

within it an incalculable threat: that of total immunity to the world. The twisted logic expressed in the 'letter' demonstrates what language could do if only left to its epistemological function, the dry, assimilative, 'copycat' paradigm propagated by hegemonic discourses. Therein lies the immunity to the Other and the extent to which our own refusal to welcome the *arrivant* breaches our civic and moral duty to the world.

> *Maria sitting next to a huge pile of unopened letters.*
>
> *Spotlight on MARIA. She opens the first one*
>
> **MARIA "**Dear Maria, I'm watching them lying in their containers. All infected; and this excellent operation of making Greece great again. Keeping them safely sealed. I'm watching this: the power of your convictions. And I'm thinking: I'm with you. Solidarity. Love. The Olympic Games. Technology. Starbucks. Smoothies. Tofu. All the things that unite the civilised world. Openness, global outlook, a free-for-all economy, a love of Shakespeare, vicarage values. I'm sorry, I'm getting a little carried away but you're all over SKY and I can't help it.  I'm single. 42 years old. Blue eyes, brown hair. Steady job. Own a BMW. Love dogs (not a cat person, sorry!).
>
> It's not funny, Maria. We need those containers. I'm with you Maria. I love you. God is on our side.
>
> Yours sincerely,
>
> NOT a citizen of the world"
>
> *Maria slowly places her face on the floor and begins a slow, lingering lament*
>
> (*Lesbos* Act II Sc 5)

Venkat Rao poignantly remarks that 'Justice and ethics for Derrida are acts undertaken in the "night" of non-knowledge by means of a leap over knowledge […] decisively opposed to the machine and the calculable' (2009, p.305). I will progress this position and argue that the transcendental principle of a given structure can never be immune to its other, to citizenship of the world, the empirical, the historical, the ontic, the contingent. Meta-cosmopolitanism is necessitated by this very concept of the quasi-transcendental as excess; excess which affirms that the set of conditions of possibility of any given structure or system is always and unavoidably contaminated by the threat of its own failure.

I would like to expand on language and the 'language-ing'[4] of exile as a legitimization of exile's un-governability, its unwieldiness in being controlled. This language-ing has helped to establish an officially sanctioned ostracism which will happily invent such terminology as migrants versus expats, exiles versus cosmopolitans. It is also a forced consensus whereby performing exile is predicated on the acceptability of injury. Women's exile, because and on account of its non-horizontal civic ties, is particularly vulnerable to depictions of injury and voyeurism ranging from visual symbols to acoustics and the mythologies of veiled womanhood.

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[4] I use language in its verbal function to indicate the unanimous approval, conscious and subconscious, of a concept, idea or politics which has been absorbed by and assimilated into accepted linguistic structures. For a full analysis of this concept see Alison Phipps' *Learning the Arts of Linguistic Survival* (2006).

So how is national space languaged, and can it be remade or at least reimagined in the first instance? Can the world as world be begun at the most radical level possible, that on which the ontic itself comes into being (Leonard 2010, p.341)?

National space is little more than linguistically and discursively constructed space. In *Structure Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,* Derrida admits to the unlikelihood of escaping the metaphysical grip that ties humanity to the persistent enquiry into the ultimate nature of mind and being: 'there is no sense in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to shake metaphysics. We have no language – no syntax and no lexicon – which is foreign to this history' (Derrida 1977: 280). However, unlike metaphysicians from Plato to Husserl and beyond have been arguing for, Derrida invites us to attest to an opening in interiorizing the metaphysical margin, the exterior, that is, in creating exteriority's own spatially inward temporality. Likewise, I would argue that any text that challenges institutional space by creating its own temporal structure facilitates a sustained mediation, a bridging between an accepted order and a renewed perception of the world.

Exile's new provocations of the last two years demonstrate that our unending appeal to truth-values or truth-conditions is nothing more than a symptom of devotion to the outworn logocentric paradigm that ensures the presence and maintenance of barriers under the guise of economic necessity or principles of national security, or even outright ethnic purity. I hope to have shown why a progression towards meta-cosmopolitanism is now urgent and necessary, and how a close reading of the narrative of the structural exterior can provide its own conditions of possibility. On the margins of thinking, language must endure the loss of its epistemological superiority and its familiar resonances. Yet, the thematization of the margin simply requires the openness to play. On Derrida's reading, language, in its function as an autonomous power, lacks a centre. It is rather defined by the free play of substitutions and differences; a dangerous dissemination without centrality, or a plurality of elusive signs that refuse to be encapsulated under an all-encompassing totality. In that respect, to eliminate the barrier, the recalcitrance, the impasse, we must use language against itself. We must expose language's un-truth of its own realist-truths, which only serve as linguistic legitimization to its Apollonian surface of calm, its walled-off impregnability. Dramaturgy cannot cause a barrier to fall. It can, however, as dramatists from Sophocles to Brecht have demonstrated, imagine the fall of the barrier and inaugurate *play*; it can speak a resounding 'yes' as a mark of inaugural affirmation to demolishing the wall. The presence of the Other requires that this affirmation is performed; it requires the acceptance that a threshold will be breached and the Other will enter. This is the pre-performative and transcendental condition of all possibility, the 'yes' that comes before speech, before all possible dialogue, all interlocution; the 'yes' that carries the risk of wantonness, unpredictability and what I earlier referred to as the incalculability of the arrival. The affirmation remains the condition of possibility, and the possibility of the present moment accomplishing this deferral, and thus carrying with it a trace of itself as it disappears into the past and opens onto its future. All voices are heard in time: the polyglot, the silent, the foreign, the cacophonous and the adulterated. They all must suffer and revel in the deferral of any final word they may have otherwise uttered. They all exist as traces, retaining the past, its signs, its sins and its musicality, and extending as pretentions into the future, always remaining to come. To capture this temporality of anticipation, Derrida warns that it 'must have the structure of a promise and thus the memory of that which carries the future, the to-come, here and now'

(Derrida 2004, p.85-86). The notion of promise performs the function of an offer by the exterior 'without which the system could not come into its own' (Gasché 1994, p.191). The permanent futurality of the promise underwrites its impossibility as a permanent opening-to-come (*à-venir*) and ensures that the unconditional demand for this pure polity is 'ineffaceable and transcends the possible' (Derrida 2004, p.86).

Cosmopolitanism is failing us in its own finiteness. The decidability of its institutional mission, its imperialist inheritance and its noble potential have been deflowered by its refusal to consider an opening, the condition of divisibility of its sovereignty, Kant's '*sich doch neben einander dulden zu müssen*' (Kant 1795, p 214).[5] For the barrier to fall – and our time will be dark and limited on this planet if it does not – cosmopolitanism must subsist under an unconditional injunction, always ahead of us, always imagined, always a promise which we must stand ready to fulfil.

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[5] 'man's duty to tolerate one another'.

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# The Body – An Existentialist Instrument in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped*

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*The focus of this article is a philosophical analysis of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel Kidnapped (1886), that explores the collective and individual dichotomies that arise from socio-political and psychological conflicts. The alternation between growth and tolerance (rise), and degradation and psychological inhibition (fall) within the novel, reflects not only contrasting identities within communities, but also a circularity within which one's identity is explored and challenged.*

*The article explores the rise and fall of Scottish identity, as well as of masculine innocence, through an existentialist deconstruction of the text's protagonist, David Balfour. By engaging with the individual self, the paper considers the fall of socio-political propaganda as a necessity for the rise of freedom of thought and expression. The article focuses upon this dichotomy through the lens of the body as an instrument for understanding existentialist thought.*

*Thus, the article engages with the theme of rise and fall from the perspective of individual identity, as a means of reaching towards freedom of thought, and also as a reflection of collective identity and socio-political marginalization.*

*Keywords*: existentialism, the body, social misrepresentation, duality, freedom through isolation

## Introduction

When considering the antithetical concepts of rise and fall in relation to both the inner (individual) and social (collective) self, existentialism confronts psychological and moral transgressions within a social setting. Existentialism as a philosophical and literary movement, through themes like estrangement and duality, and the degradation and misrepresentation of singular and plural identities, captures the fall not only of one's role within the wider community, but also of collective traditions, expressivity and freedom. The rise and return to one's inner identity are expressed through an existentialist exploration of self-fragmentation and through the philosophical evocation of freedom. While social marginalization leads to a sense of alienation and existentialist angst, physical isolation becomes the means to explore and reach individual expression, thought and freedom. This paper will explore the rise and fall of individual identity through the encompassment of existentialist concepts within Scottish literature and culture. The research and analysis is conducted by a close engagement with Robert Louis Stevenson's novel, *Kidnapped* (1886). The dialogue between existentialism and the Scottish text has been chosen not only to convey the philosophical elements of Stevenson's themes and character representation, but also to demonstrate Scotland's cultural participation in wider European movements of thought. Furthermore, this article explores the liberation (rise) of David Balfour's identity through the

understanding of physical isolation and collective marginalization. If the fall of the protagonist's social status represents a means to achieve political enhancement, then, similarly, the degradation of his authority symbolized through physical imprisonment outlines the existentialist encounter with the inner self. This contributes to the development of the protagonist's socio-political individuality and freedom of mind when faced with the realization of collective oppression. Through the fall of his socio-political role and expectations, David Balfour liberates his identity and allows for spiritual and rational realization. Thus, through the existentialist concepts of estrangement, duality, fragmentation, angst, and freedom, Robert Louis Stevenson's novel reflects the fall and rise of both individual identity and collective ideology, capturing the importance of self-liberation for socio-political and cultural deconstruction, as well as for individual expressivity, honesty, morality and compassion.

## Concepts and Terminology

The literary world is a reflection of human complexity and spiritual freedom beyond social masks and material limitations. When looking at identity through the lens of existentialism, concepts such as angst and estrangement are central in the exploration of both the individual's emotional and social dimensions. This article will engage with the philosophical concepts of the existentialist movement by drawing on Søren Kierkegaard's, Jean-Paul Sartre's, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's understandings of freedom of self. Angst and estrangement are defined as modes of alienation that form part of one's encounter with oneself beyond social and material dimensions (Crowell 2012, p.3-21). Within Scottish literature, the complexity of the individual self constitutes not only a thematic element, but also an instrument for the illustration of socio-political and cultural contexts. This article will explore dimensions of the protagonist of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* (1886) with reference to existentialist modes of thought. The text will be compared briefly to Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song* (1932) and Muriel Spark's *Memento Mori* (1959) with the purpose of comparing Stevenson's work with existential themes in other Scottish novels, but also due to the three texts' significance both within the Scottish and international literary landscapes. *Kidnapped's* main character, David Balfour, is forced to deconstruct his emotional and social identity with the purpose of transcending the political and cultural ideologies of the people around him. Nathan A. Scott (1978, p.224) writes: 'What, indeed, does it mean for a human being to be human? What is the distinctively *human* component in humankind? How does a man properly go about discovering and reverencing and preserving his humanity? What *is* "the human"?'. These questions represent the starting point for the research of this article with regard to analysis of the protagonist's identity. Scott (1978, p.224) claims that these issues 'constitute the great burden for reflection in our time. And what is innovative in existentialism, as a tradition of modern thought, is precisely the immediacy and straightforwardness with which it addresses this kind of issue'. By considering these questions when analyzing David Balfour, this article will examine the manner in which existentialist concepts are illustrated and, furthermore, how they constitute portals into the text's thematic concerns. The novel reflects the inner complexity of the protagonist, while also capturing the way his identity is influenced by socio-political issues and, thus, reveals the fact that

thematic approaches within late nineteenth century Scottish literature mirror concepts defined by existentialism.

By focusing upon the protagonist, the article will look at the type of existentialist elements that appear and develop within the novel. From existentialism itself, it will examine five concepts (estrangement, angst, freedom, and the contrast between the individual in solitude and amongst others), as well as their representation within the text. The article will focus upon the concept of estrangement as the sense of 'alienation from the world' (Cooper 2012, p.32). David E. Cooper (2012, p.32) writes: 'It is only when we are relating to the world in an unsatisfactory way […] that the world is experienced as alien'. In contrast, this article's analysis of the character's existentialist angst will be based upon the tension between the protagonist's inner and social identities, and between his pursuit of freedom and his psychological imprisonment. When looking at the concept of angst, Cooper (2012, p.41) adds: 'For the mood of *Angst* […] it is at once an intimation of our individual freedom and an explanation of why we typically behave as if we are not free'. The article will explore the protagonist's existentialist freedom as a pursuit of individuality beyond social limitations and ideologies.

The existentialist contrast between the protagonist's identity in isolation and within the community will be examined based upon the emotional and intellectual changes that occur when shifting from one space to the other. This research will similarly consider the interdependent relationship between freedom and boundaries within the text. The approach to these issues will be based upon Cooper's statement (2012, p.46): 'for me to have a proper appreciation of my own freedom as a rational being, I must recognize a like freedom in others'. The key existentialist idea of the 'Other' will be outlined in the article as referring to the outer world, as well as in reference to developments of the character's inner identity. Cooper (2012, p.46) adds that 'in order to live authentically – in full awareness, that is, of my freedom – I must honor the freedom of others and work with them to foster a communion of human beings living in recognition of their reciprocal freedom'. Based upon these definitions and clarifications, this article will deconstruct the five aforementioned existentialist concepts in relation to the protagonist within Robert Louis Stevenson's text. Consequently, it will examine the presence of existentialist themes in the novel with the purpose of demonstrating the complexity of the individual character, as well as of the socio-political and cultural landscape in which he developed and, thus, reflected the changing movements of thought concerning the human condition within Scottish literature.

**Article**
The body represents the means to connect the individual with the outer world, as well as to separate oneself from others. While physical identity can represent both social status and economic wealth, one's psychological features can be subordinate to collective and political ideology. The reflection of the inner self within the outer world is conveyed within existentialism in terms of bodily, as well as mental freedom. In *Kidnapped*, David Balfour's body and physical situation reflect his identity and inner conflicts, which, this article argues, can be examined according to existentialist themes. By looking at his identity through physical imprisonment or isolation, the young character

can be understood in terms of both his estrangement from the community and the angst determined by society's values and expectations. Consequently, an act of killing illustrates detachment through an imprisonment away not only from others, but also from the protagonist's own socio-political limitations. Indeed, ending another's life allows Balfour to engage with his own identity, while also understanding human equality and the necessity for survival. The novel also captures physical exhaustion, on the one hand, as the mirror of one's negative characteristics and, on the other, as the connection between different characters. Similarly, the act of sleeping emphasizes not only the protagonist's engagement with the self, but also the aesthetic quality of the novel.

When reflecting upon the body in relation to existentialist thought, Merleau-Ponty (1962, p.150) writes: 'But I am not in front of my body, I am in it, or rather I am it. […] The body is to be compared, not to a physical object, but rather to a work of art'. Within Stevenson's novel, the body becomes the instrument for self-liberation, as well as the bridge between the characters, the literary art, and the reader's reflection upon identity. As opposed to the characters in Muriel Spark's *Memento Mori* (1959) whose bodies symbolize the passing of time and, implicitly, the distance between different generations within society, Stevenson's protagonist engages with his body for the purpose of self-discovery.

The construction of the character's imprisonment upon oppositions (body and mind, inner and social identity, angst and the desire for freedom) emphasizes, on the one hand, the relationship between one's material and emotional existence and, on the other, the desire to understand and overcome this contrast through self-exploration within a confined space. One of the means through which the novel uses the body to reveal the concept of angst is Balfour's physical imprisonment on board the *Covenant*. The protagonist's corporeal vulnerability illustrates the contrast between pain and fear, while also acting as a portal towards a self-understanding developed through an alienation from collective ideology and socio-political oppression. Through his declaration: 'so sick and hurt was I in body, and my mind so much confounded' (Stevenson 2001, p.45), Balfour not only confesses his physical isolation, but also emphasizes the nature of the confined, injured body as a trigger for mental imprisonment. Physical captivity reflects the young man's anxiety resulting from his existential alienation from the community and from the familiarity and comfort of his everyday life. When looking at the importance of the familiar in Stevenson's work, Liz Farr (2006, p.42) writes:

> Familiarity is crucial to this psychological model of life-writing, because […] he is less interested in the public records of a man's achievements than to conduct more intimate encounters.

However, Balfour's physical discomforts and loss of physical freedom become his guide towards his inner self and towards the understanding of the necessity to project this identity in the outer world. Søren Kierkegaard (1941, p.313) writes: 'Existence involves a tremendous contradiction. […] All existential problems are passionate problems, for when existence is interpenetrated with reflection it generates passion'. Balfour claims: 'With the clear perception of my plight, there fell upon me a blackness of despair, a horror of remorse at my own folly, and a passion of anger at my

uncle, that once more bereft me of my senses' (Stevenson 2001, p.2). The reflection upon his inner fragmentation, anxiety and fear marks the foundation of the character's self-understanding and existentialist development through the acceptance of his errors and his desire to overcome them. Similar to Kierkegaard's statement, Balfour's journey requires contradiction and imprisonment before he can reach awareness and freedom from social expectations and material values. Thus, by becoming physically and existentially imprisoned, Stevenson's protagonist is socially isolated and, consequently, forced to explore and accept his inexperience, as well as the consequences of his emotional naivety. In addition, the character is morally dependent upon the experience of angst in order to escape his previously imprisoned condition that has been moulded by other characters' expectations regarding Balfour's emotional identity and ethical values. The relationship between the young man and Mr Campbell reveals the minister's influence upon the protagonist's socio-political perspectives with regard to the Jacobite community, yet this viewpoint is altered through Balfour's friendship with Alan Breck.

If fear and anxiety are necessary existential elements for the protagonist's self-development and inner exploration, then, similarly, freedom represents Balfour's spiritual and social means to reveal his identity to the outer world. This liberation is achieved through the killing of his kidnappers. Consequently, in Stevenson's novel, the character's pursuit of freedom depends upon estrangement from others. When reflecting upon the identity of the Other, Jean-Paul Sartre (1957, p.271) writes that 'the death of my possibilities causes me to experience the Other's freedom. This death is realized only at the heart of that freedom; I am inaccessible to myself and yet myself, thrown, abandoned at the heart of the Other's freedom'. For Balfour, the understanding of the contrast between his physical imprisonment and the possibility to escape this condition leads him to the exploration of alienation as the means to achieve freedom. Sartre (1957, p.355) adds that 'the *body which is suffered* serves as a nucleus, as matter for the alienating means which surpass it. The body is this *Illness* which escapes me toward new characteristics which I establish as limits and empty schemata of organization'. In *Kidnapped,* the captive body is, on the one hand, the representation of Balfour's spiritual imprisonment and, on the other, the instrument with which his freedom and mental independence are achieved. Similarly, by choosing to kill others for his own wellbeing, the protagonist understands the complexity of moral existence and the equality of human life beyond the desire for revenge. He confesses: 'I […] might have shot him, too, only at the touch of him (and him alive) my whole flesh misgave me, and I could no more pull the trigger than I could have flown.' (Stevenson 2001, p.67) This statement conveys not only the body as a reflection of the character's psychological hesitation, but also outlines Balfour's dependence upon others and his consideration of the importance of an ethical life (which reflects existential freedom) over a decadent, physical liberation. In contrast, the allusion to existentialist thought as a literary technique within the scene is further demonstrated through the protagonist's choice to survive and escape captivity. When threatened with death himself, Balfour claims: 'either my courage came again, or I grew so much afraid as came to the same thing.' (Stevenson 2001, p.8) This statement illustrates the man's ultimate choice to survive when faced with death and his reconsideration of physical and mental liberation in connection to mortality, while also capturing his estrangement

from others in order to remain alive. The freedom of the body becomes the means through which the character acknowledges the value and equality of human beings, but also the desire and need to survive above self-sacrifice. Consequently, Balfour's existentialist pursuit of freedom allows him to examine the contrast between moral values of equality and the wish to survive, as well as to understand the reflection of his inner identity and emotions through the body.

Despite his freedom from the ideological influence of others on board the *Covenant,* the protagonist experiences another existentialist dimension, estrangement, through his physical isolation on the island. If the storm that separates him from the rest of the crew symbolizes the alienation of the individual from the community then, similarly, the island becomes the setting for self-exploration beyond socio-political influence. Balfour's declaration: 'if hope had not buoyed me up, I must have cast myself down and given up. […] I came to the bay at last, more dead than alive' (Stevenson 2001, p.89) not only illustrates his desire to live, but also marks a pivotal point in the protagonist's encounter with his physical and emotional boundaries, as well as with his identity beyond a familiar setting. However, the estrangement through the body does not reflect the young man's ability or desire to psychologically separate himself from society. This aspect is emphasized through the character's statement: 'I had become in no way used to the horrid solitude […], but still looked round me on all sides (like a man hunted), between fear and hope that I might see some human creature coming.' (Stevenson 2001, p.91) Indeed, the comparison 'like a man hunted' suggests Balfour's identity imprisoned by the past, by others' influence and their ideological domination over the protagonist's liberated reason. In addition, the adjective 'hunted' emphasizes his inability to escape social ideologies and, consequently, to explore his self in isolation. Contrastingly, by stating that the possibility of an encounter with another 'human creature' generates both 'fear and hope', the protagonist reveals his pursuit of existentialist estrangement, as well as his desire to simultaneously maintain his place within the community. Being afraid marks the beginning of the young man's self-exploration and development beyond the outer, familiar world. When considering the human condition, Albert Camus (2005, p.67) writes: 'I am choosing solely men who aim only to expend themselves […]. I want to speak only of a world in which thoughts like lives are devoid of future. Everything that makes man work and get excited utilizes hope'. Thus, one of the existentialist dimensions of Balfour's character is mirrored, on the one hand, through his physical estrangement on the island and, on the other, through his pursuit of choice as a result of this experience.

As opposed to the protagonist who is forced into physical isolation by family deceit, the character of the chieftain Cluny encounters physical isolation due to political shifts of power. Despite his physical isolation, the leader sustains both his connection with the community and his authority amongst its members. This aspect is illustrated in Balfour's observation: 'When he was angered, which was often enough, he gave his commands and breathed threats of punishment like any king; and his gillies trembled and crouched away from him like children before a hasty father.' (Stevenson 2001, p.153) Unlike the protagonist's estrangement, Cluny's physical alienation from others is a result of socio-political oppression that reinforces his authority as chieftain and his inner strength. What is more, by continuing to seek his council, the members of his clan demonstrate

their loyalty not to political power and deceit, but to patriotism and truth. When discussing the contrast between truth and ignorance captured by Nietzsche, Christa Davis Acampora and Keith Ansell Pearson (2011, p.55) write: 'Pursuit of untruth provides a measure of perceptible freedom, a sense of bravery, a touch of lightness that makes it possible to be joyful, to take delight in life'. Contrastingly, Cluny represents social integrity through his commitment to both his community and to the values of justice and equality. Furthermore, the contrast between the clan leader and Balfour underlines the opposition between an identity based upon existentialist and moral freedom and one encountering a liberation of reason and action through existential alienation from social influence. Therefore, the two male characters explore the continuity of the self in search of freedom through isolation (David Balfour) and the human who maintains an estrangement in order not to compromise his moral and spiritual values and identity (the chieftain Cluny).

Another means through which the body becomes an existentialist instrument is the examination of the protagonist's identity through fatigue and illness. Having explored his identity through estrangement and liberation, Balfour begins his journey back to society by experiencing angst and the desire for moral freedom. He claims that 'without […] the consequent sense of liberty and lightness, I could not have walked at all. […] and there was nothing in […] our affairs to hearten me for much exertion, […] and with divided hearts among the travellers.' (Stevenson 2001, p.159) The protagonist acknowledges the importance of physical freedom for both physical and psychological strength, while also recognizing the value of a community constructed upon morality instead of the inner fragmentation ('divided hearts') generated by a lack of social equality. Additionally, the construction 'divided hearts' emphasizes both the character's attachment to his friendship with Alan Breck and the angst generated by previous ideological division. Similarly, this opposition illustrates the complexity within each individual character and, implicitly, the aesthetic development of the two men's existentialist relationship in a natural setting, encountering self-liberation in the remote Scottish landscape.

When analyzing Kierkegaard's existentialist ideas, Louis Mackey (1972, p.5) writes: 'He defines what he calls the "aesthetic", as a dimension of existence […]. If we could discover what human nature is, then we could catch ourselves in our immediacy, and we would understand what Kierkegaard means by aesthetic.' The elements that deconstruct the connection between the two male characters according to existentialism are illustrated not only through their emotional sympathy, but also through their reactions towards each other in extreme physical situations. Consequently, in *Kidnapped,* the body reflects the human condition stripped of social conventions and determined instead by discomfort and lack of familiarity through pain and tiredness. If the aesthetic nature of the protagonist's identity is drawn upon his inner struggle in a natural background, then, similarly, the recognition of his negative emotions outlines the relationship between the self and the world. Indeed, this relationship is illustrated not as harmonious or romanticized, but as developed upon compromise, anxiety, forgiveness and remorse. Therefore, physical exhaustion represents another dimension of David Balfour's identity through its exploration of extreme inner emotions triggered by corporeal discomfort which, in return, causes a clash between the protagonist's and Alan Breck's psyche. However, through the obtained

existential freedom, Balfour revaluates his social role and his interdependent relationship with Breck beyond their flaws and psychological impediments. By emphasizing the intricacy of this friendship, the novel uses the concepts of quarrel and friendship with the purpose of emphasizing the existentialist contrast between the self in isolation and the self within the outer world. These conditions of interaction provide, similar to the condition of corporeal discomfort, an existential alienation from the familiar and from collective ideology, allowing the protagonist to liberate his identity without social inhibition, as well as with uninfluenced contemplation and physical transgression.

Apart from connecting the inner self with the outer community, the body represents the means to capture the balance between reality and the protagonist's subconscious reflections. This balance is illustrated through the importance of sleep throughout the novel. If the feeling of tiredness acts as a trigger of negative emotions such as anger, then, similarly, the act of sleeping becomes the frontier between the escape from physical pain and the vulnerability of the character and his freedom. Balfour's claim: 'The last time I woke I seemed to come back from farther away' (Stevenson 2001, p.146) implies his alienation not only from others, but also from his own lucidity in order to discover his identity through existential reflection. He adds: 'My head was nearly turned with fear and shame; and at what I saw, when I looked out around me on the moor, my heart was like dying in my body' (Stevenson 2001, p.18). Contrastingly, the act of awakening from sleep outlines the return to socio-political danger. What is more, the opposition between the safety of sleep and the angst of reality further reinforces the fragmentation of the protagonist's identity through others' desires for authority and power. For David Balfour, sleep becomes both an act of detachment from himself and a return to his desires and unconfessed emotions. Consequently, the act of unconscious reflection emphasizes an exploration of the protagonist's existentialist dimension through the self engaged in the act of sleeping, as well as through the distinction from the fear and torment of reality.

By studying the relationship between Stevenson's works and his beliefs regarding the purpose of writing, Glenda Norquay (2007, p.75) states:

> The transformative experiences offered by the romance genre and the habits of different reading stages […] led him further into exploration of perhaps the most problematic literary issue of all for him: what constitutes and what is the value of reading pleasure.

The use of sleep within the novel creates a familiarity between the protagonist and the reader both through the depiction of similar experiences and through its ability to engage the reader in different worlds and, thus, bring him closer to his inner self. Thus, the act of sleeping becomes an instrument for self-understanding and exploration of the depths of one's spirit and mind. In addition, the protagonist's condition mirrors his philosophical quest, while also echoing the reader's exploration of the literary microcosm of existential freedom.

In conclusion, the body is the existentialist instrument through which David Balfour discovers his identity and, simultaneously, understands the influence of the wider community upon its integrity and freedom. Unlike Long Rob of the Mill in Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song*

(1932), who separates himself from others through his values and morality, the young protagonist in Stevenson's novel uses physicality to understand his spiritual identity beyond expectations and outer ideologies. Indeed, the fragmented self represents a recurrent theme in Stevenson's works. When considering the *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), Harriet Hustis (2009) writes: 'the narrative logic and impetus of the text seem to promote separation, delineation, and, ultimately, distinction – an either/or dynamic'. Similarly, Balfour's alienation from others, as well as from himself, reflects the existentialist angst and estrangement generated by self-deceit and untruth. Additionally, James Wilson (1983, p.90) claims that Stevenson's 'Travel writing […] allowed him to explore both inner and outer worlds of experience'. If *Kidnapped* outlines a journey of existentialist self-discovery, by exploring his inner self beyond the outer community, the protagonist discovers his existential freedom through his humanity beyond anger and anxiety, and through the pursuit of an uncompromised identity constructed upon aesthetic and emotional significance and truth.

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# 'A New Toot out of an Old Horn': Re-evaluating the Relevance of Seventeenth-century Scottish Drama

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*While the 1660s saw the rebirth of English theatre, in Scotland it was virtually non-existent, with only a few plays written for the London stage or private reading. Scholars of early drama often neglect detailed study of these plays due to a perceived lack of quality, and the absence of a Scottish theatre tradition with which to link them. Attention is rarely given to details of plot, characterization or themes. Through analysis of three plays, this paper will show the importance of these details as evidence of how Scottish drama engaged with, or broke from, English theatre traditions.*

*Examining the comic plot and characters of William Clark's* Marciano; or the Discovery *(1663), some of the features, such as farce and the restoration of order, will be highlighted to show how they are directly inspired by English Restoration theatre.* Tarugo's Wiles; or the coffee-house *by Thomas St Serf (1668) also draws inspiration from English drama tradition, however, this paper focuses on the unusual style of the Prologue and the not entirely successful coffee-house scene as an attempt to provide something new for theatre — the prologue itself referring to the play as 'A New Toot out of an Old Horn'. Finally, Archibald Pitcairne's 1691* The Assembly *is used as an example of a uniquely Scottish Restoration drama, borrowing features from the English tradition and combining them in a Scottish setting with Scots dialogue.*

*Contrary to current scholarly consensus, this article shows that theatre in Scotland contributed to both literary and theatrical traditions, and thereby aims to raise seventeenth century Scottish drama from the shadow of English theatre.*

*Keywords:* Scottish drama, Restoration comedy, seventeenth-century theatre culture

1660 saw the return of the Stuart monarchy across what we now refer to as the United Kingdom, and brought the re-opening of the theatres in England, which had been closed during the Commonwealth period (1649-1660). This Restoration period brought about growth and development in British theatre tradition. Edward A. Langhans emphasises its importance as 'a period of reinvention and transition from the old to the modern theatre' (2008, p.4) which produced playwrights such as John Dryden, William Wycherley and Aphra Behn, all of whom still have works recognised and performed today. Yet while Restoration drama is a significant part of British literary tradition, it is also rooted primarily in England. In Scotland, the restoration of the monarchy and the stage had little impact, partly because there was no professional theatre in Scotland to revive after the Commonwealth period. There are two reasons scholars often give for this, the first being that after the Union of Crowns in 1603, King James VI of Scotland and I of England moved his Court from Edinburgh to London. Scotland suddenly lost its hub for creative activity (Jackson 2003, p.16-17) and with no court culture to finance it, there was a drop in demand for pageantry and performance. Secondly, the Presbyterian church (and its opposition to such creative expression) was very influential in Scotland both before and after the Restoration. Its disdain of drama and playwrights

restricted theater [sic] and other public entertainments in Scotland to a significant degree; at least in terms of repertoire and – as far as may be deduced – personnel, such theater as existed was an extension of the London stage (Scullion 1997, p.105).

Scotland's playwrights in the seventeenth century did not expect their plays to be produced and performed in Scotland. Instead, some plays were circulated in manuscript form as closet drama, where plays were read in private homes, either collectively or individually, rather than produced by theatre companies. Plays that were written for the stage were often intended for English audiences, as it was the London stage where dramatists could find their success (Tobin 1974, p.105). In a period when Scottish literary production fell, considered by modern critics as an indication of poor quality and little relevance, the Scottish plays which did arise from the seventeenth century prove that despite a lack of established and professional Scottish theatre, the playwrights sought to create work both relevant to their time and engaged with English theatrical tradition and the performance traditions of Scotland from before the seventeenth century.

Although Scotland was not the prime place for playwriting in the seventeenth century, this did not dissuade several writers from creating their own dramas. There are three known plays existing from this period in Scotland; this paper will consider the influence of English theatre tradition upon the drama of the Scottish seventeenth-century by comparing these with contemporary English Restoration comedy. William Clark's *Marciano; or The Discovery* was performed in Edinburgh in 1663, and *Tarugo's Wiles; or the coffeehouse* by Thomas St. Serf became the first Scottish play to have a London premiere in 1667, followed by a Scottish performance in 1668. These Scottish performances of both plays, and the fact that St Serf returned to Scotland to manage a theatre company in 1668, show that despite similarities between Scottish and English seventeenth-century drama, Scottish playwrights did not have an entirely English focus. The third play, Archibald Pitcairne's *The Assembly*, was written in 1692 but was not performed in his lifetime, nor was it published until 1702. Tobin states that 'the pieces known to have been performed in Scotland during the 1600s are without exception didactic' (1968, p.47). As both *Marciano* and *Tarugo's Wiles* were performed in Scotland during this period, Tobin groups them with the school and university plays which were common in Scotland and were intended for moral instruction (Mill 1969), rather than entertainment. Scholars often conclude that due to a lack of Scottish theatre tradition before and during the seventeenth century, these playwrights sought to imitate their English counterparts, normally unsuccessfully (Scullion 1997; Tobin 1974, 1986). In comparison with the English Restoration comedies, scholars generally agree that the plots of the Scottish plays are clumsier: they are hard to follow, contain plot holes and weak resolutions, and the characters are at times less developed. Additionally, no Scottish plays from the seventeenth century have been revived for stage beyond their first performance, unlike many English plays from this period. While no-one would argue that the Scottish plays of the seventeenth century were works of genius, a lack of detailed research has confined them to single paragraphs in journal articles and books which focus on the supposed superiority of contemporaneous English plays. Nevertheless, these plays should not be brushed aside without considering exactly how the Scottish playwrights used English theatre tradition to inform their writing, and whether they brought anything new to theatrical tradition in seventeenth-century Britain.

*Marciano* is a tragi-comedy with two very distinct plots, both drawing inspiration from Restoration drama features. One of the play's strengths is the way in which speech reflects a character's personality (Tobin 1974, p.12). The best example of this is found in the character of Manduco, the overbearing tutor of Becabunga, a young gentleman in pursuit of a wife. He arrives at the home of Chrysolina and Marionetta (two sisters in whom Becabunga and his friend Pantaloni have shown an interest) attempting to describe his student positively:

> **Manduco**: I will assure you, Ladies, he is an adolescent of eximious candour and egregious integrity […] But for your further satisfaction, I shall, *paucissimis*, insinuate you to the method of his education. — *Primo*, then when he came under my gubernation, which was about the year of his age, *Anno Domini*, (let me see) *millesimo, sexcentesimo, quadragesimo sexto,* it being a then Leap-year; he was, *inquam,* a very perverse youth, vitiate in his behaviour, knowing nothing but what he had learned amongst the *ancilla's* (what d'you call 'em) Chambermaids.
>
> (Clark 1871, p.9).

His speech is peppered with unnecessary Latin; his translation of the word 'ancilla' for the girls' benefit emphasises his self-importance and desire to show off. Because the other characters in this play are relatively plain-speaking, his sentence structure and phrasing are over-complicated, and while Manduco believes this highlights his intelligence, Clark uses it to create a comic character. At one point in the same scene, Manduco arrives with Becabunga to introduce him to Marionetta, intending to help him win her over. However, his words merely cause confusion. At the front door, he asks the servant:

> **Manduco**: […] But heark you, is [Marionetta] occupyed?
>
> **Boy**: How sir?
>
> **Man**: Profane Fellow — I mean is she not busie — that is to say, at leisure?
>
> (Clark 1871, p.14).

This exchange establishes that Manduco's turn of phrase is unfamiliar to those with less education. Further, he often tries to draw attention to his learning without considering the consequence — in this case, time wasted trying to explain himself. The audience therefore sees him as petty and ridiculous. This is further highlighted by attempts to prompt Becabunga's speech:

> **Manduco**: As before, nam caelum non animum mutat.
>
> **Becabunga**: As before, nam cealos non animus mutat.
>
> **Man**: You are wrong — Say — I did long vehemently to see you — as one in child bed.
>
> **Bec**: I did long vehemently to see you in child-bed.
>
> **Man**: A meer brutum animall!
>
> *Manduco retires in a rage Becabunga followes him.*
>
> **Bec**: What's the matter, Sir, did I not say very well now.

(Clark 1871, p.15).

Manduco becomes frustrated with Becabunga's Latin errors and inability to pay the correct compliment, despite the fault being largely Manduco's. The use of Latin instead of English adds nothing to the exchange, while the image of a woman in labour is hardly the language of courtship. The audience's esteem for Manduco is lowered due to his general ridiculousness. Becabunga is an effective foil to his tutor as his occasional dim-wittedness only adds to Manduco's annoyance. Becabunga's ignorance of making a mistake during this exchange is a comical addition to the scene, allowing the audience to see more of Manduco's character as he transitions from pompous to angry in seconds.

Clark's use of language to reflect character is found in much of the English theatre tradition. Yet the few known Scottish plays from before this period tend to focus more on the moral of the story and less on character development and dialogue: in Sir David Lindsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* (c.1552), for example, characters personify virtues and vices rather than following a character arc. This implies that Clark's technique for character development stems from a knowledge of English theatre and what was expected of English plays. An English example of this method of character development is found in Ben Jonson's *Epicene* (1609), which was the first play to be performed when the theatres reopened in 1660 (Campbell 2008, p.xv). The play centres on the foil of noise-hating Morose, who wishes to marry and produce a child to disinherit his nephew, Sir Dauphine Eugenie. He marries Epicene, a young woman who is softly spoken, but the moment she marries him she suddenly finds her voice and makes his life miserable. At the end of the play, it is revealed that Epicene is actually a young man and that the whole marriage has been a scheme by Dauphine to humiliate his uncle and prevent him from producing another heir. Morose is established as a ridiculous character before the audience even meets him. In Act 1, Dauphine's friends, Truewit and Clerimont, discuss Morose's ailment:

> **Truewit**: [Dauphine is] Sick o' the uncle, is he? I met that stiff piece of formality, his uncle, yesterday, with a huge turban of nightcaps on his head, buckled over his ears […] But is the disease so ridiculous in him as it is made? […]
>
> **Clerimont**: He cannot endure a costermonger; he swoons if he hear one.
>
> **Truewit**: Methinks a smith would be ominous.

(Jonson 2008, p.127).

Truewit and Clerimont then discuss a number of pranks Clerimont has played on the old man. Not only does this influence how the audience perceives Morose, but the dialogue establishes Truewit and Clerimont as intelligent young men who enjoy making mischief. It is therefore unsurprising that they do everything they can to disrupt Morose's marriage to Epicene to protect their friend Dauphine's inheritance. Morose's speech is used to reflect his personality in a slightly different way. As he has already been portrayed as comical, he strikes a less impressive figure than he may have otherwise done when he appears in Act 2. Despite being unable to stand noise, he has no problem hearing his own voice and speaks for a full thirty-five lines before anyone else can reply. During this lengthy speech and throughout the many more in the play, he instructs those around him to answer with signs and signals rather than words.

While this might have suggested Morose's authority, the previous scenes have established him as a fool and his words serve only to highlight his self-importance. As the play continues and Epicene gains more control over the old man, his speeches shorten and he becomes less self-assured. Reaching breaking point, he accepts his nephew's offer of information that would provide a marriage annulment. This is the last time he speaks, for when Dauphine reveals that Epicene is actually male and has been planted there by Dauphine himself, he sends Morose away without giving him opportunity to say anything. Jonson's use of dialogue and silence serves to highlight the change in Morose from self-confident and arrogant to humiliated. Jonson's characters' personalities are reflected through both their speech and their names in this play; this is only one of numerous examples in English dramatic tradition up until this point. Clark's use of the same method to reveal his characters' personalities in *Marciano* indicates his engagement with English theatre.

Another way in which the Scottish playwrights engage with English Restoration theatre is in the portrayal of the Restoration itself. In English theatre of the time, '1660 is portrayed as turning the world the right way up and restoring property to those whose natural superiority entitles them to possess it' (Owen 2008, p.127). In *Epicene,* the restoration of property is portrayed through Dauphine remaining as his uncle's sole heir, despite Morose's best efforts to prevent this by producing a son. In *The Amorous Prince* (1671), written by English playwright Aphra Behn, the world is symbolically returned to normality through correct marriages. Each person is restored to their original lover, despite relationships being at risk of third party interference or broken by misunderstandings. The restoration of order can be seen in both *Marciano* and *Tarugo's Wiles. Tarugo's Wiles* features two main couples, Sophronia and Patricio, and Liviana and Horatio. Sophronia refuses to marry Patricio while he keeps his sister, Liviana, locked away from the world to preserve her chastity and reputation. In a bid to make Patricio see sense, Sophronia enlists the help of Horatio, a distant relative, and his friend Tarugo, to help Liviana escape and marry Horatio. Unaware of this plot, Patricio arranges for his sister to marry Roderigo, a young knight of his acquaintance. Sophronia stages a distraction for Roderigo and Patricio in order that Horatio and Tarugo can carry out their escape plan. The conclusion sees Horatio and Liviana married as originally intended, and Sophronia preparing for her own wedding, thus restoring the natural balance which was upset by Patricio's behaviour.

A noteworthy way of restoring order in *Tarugo's Wiles* is through the marriages of the servants. Once the main couples have resolved their issues, their servants approach them with a surprising request:

**Alberto**: My noble Knights and Honourable Ladies, when all your Solemnities are over, I hope you have so much natural compassion as to think there be other mouths that cannot always chew fodder.

**Patricio**: What do you mean?

**Alb**: Ee'n that *Domingo, Locura, Stanlia* and I, may clip one another in a Matrimonial way.

**Sophronia**: Because you are so discreet in not seeking it till our Nuptials be past, your desires shall be granted.

(St Serf 1668, p.54).

There is little to indicate romance among the servants before now, other than a subtle aside spoken by Locura slightly before Sophronia's plan is revealed: 'yet I could wish *Alberto* were here to defend me' (St Serf 1668, p.52). Yet the marriages of the servants do hold some significance if we consider Aparna Dharwadker's point that '[t]he Restoration is a period in which a variety of theoretical, polemical and rhetorical discourses not only *acknowledge* but actively *underscore* the importance of social categories in cultural production' (2008, p140). Through commending the servants for first seeking permission to marry and their subtlety in waiting until their social superiors are settled, the play reinforces the class structure it represents. *Marciano* is far more political in its restoration of order: the usurped Duke of Florence is returned to his rightful place, thus restoring the original ruling authority. Additionally, his general, Marciano, marries the Lady Arabella with whom he was imprisoned and sentenced to death before their escape. Marionetta and Chrysolina choose not to marry Becabunga and Pantaloni, for although they are socially well-matched and desirable, they realise they are not in love. Instead the play ends with them being courted by two lower class gentlemen, Cassio and Leonardo. Despite this being less socially acceptable, the play portrays these matches as correct because they are paired for love and not position.

The use of dialogue to reflect character personality is a feature of drama that has its roots in English theatre tradition. However, seventeenth-century Scottish plays draw from both Scottish and English dramatic tradition when it comes to the use of farce. Examples of farce in early Scottish drama include Lindsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estatis* (c.1552) and the anonymous *Philotus* (158-). A detailed exploration of farce in these plays cannot be carried out in this paper, but it will suffice to say that by recognising its presence in early Scottish theatre, we see that farce would not have been an entirely alien concept to the Scottish playwrights of the Restoration. That being said, farce is a hugely important aspect of English Restoration comedy, and there are many famous scenes and ideas which are realised through the use of farce. The best of these is perhaps William Wycherley's china scene in *The Country Wife* (1675), in which Horner and Lady Fidget pretend to be looking at his china collection in his bedroom when in fact engaging in extramarital sex while her husband, Sir Jaspar Fidget, stands unaware in the next room. The farcical humour of this scene is found through Horner pretending that he is a eunuch in order to be alone in the company of married women without raising their husbands' suspicions. Sir Fidget is completely trusting of Horner, who claims he is going to stop Lady Fidget ruining his china collection, and oblivious to the double entendre that drips from their conversation:

**Sir Jaspar**: Wife! My Lady Fidget! Wife! He is coming into you the back way!

*SIR JASPAR calls through the door to his wife; she answers from within*

**Lady Fidget**: Let him come, and welcome, which way he will.

**Sir Jaspar**: He'll catch you, and use you roughly, and be too strong for you.

> **Lady Fidget**: Don't trouble yourself, let him if he can.

> (Wycherley 1973, p.91).

Sir Jaspar's trusting nature results in his wife and friend abusing his trust almost before his very eyes, and his ignorance makes him a comic figure.

The contrast between unsuspecting comic character and fully informed audience is also found in *Tarugo's Wiles*. As part of the plan to marry Liviana to Horatio, Tarugo disguises himself as a knight named Don Crisanto who gains accommodation with Patricio. He claims to have a deathly allergy to women meaning that whenever he and Patricio are together, Liviana cannot be present for fear of Don Crisanto's health; this provides the perfect distraction when Horatio and Liviana need to be together. When their cover is almost blown on two occasions, Tarugo must act quickly to maintain Patricio's ignorance. On discovering Liviana's miniature of Horatio in her room, Patricio is furious and does not believe Liviana's fabricated story that she found the picture while out walking and is looking for the rightful owner. Tarugo (as Don Crisanto) takes details from Liviana's story and elaborates his own to make it appear she was telling the truth. He feigns having lost the picture his sister gave him of her lover in order that he could identify him when they met:

> **Tarugo**: […] By all that's sacred 'tis lost: O how shall I acquit my self to my Sister?

> *He searches his Pocket misses the Picture.*

> **Patricio**: If you Sister was so passionately in love with him, how came she to part with the Picture?

> **Tar**: That's a just exception which I must tell you flow'd from her self, who (not trusting to any other) she prevail'd with me to undertake this Voyage and try whether the opinion of the World, as to his Vertues, and his own person compar'd with the Picture, be every way consistent. But now having lost it, I may be satisfi'd of the one but scarce the other.

> **Pat**: Sure you remember his name?

> **Tar**: That I cannot forget, for he bears the name and Title of D. Horatio De St. Christophel.

> **Pat**: Now I begin to be convinc'd of the injury I did to Liviana, and her Maid. *Aside.*

> (St Serf 1668, p.35).

Tarugo's lie gives Liviana's story enough credibility to convince her brother she was telling the truth. However, that someone as generally suspicious as Patricio should blindly accept the dubious tales Tarugo give him paints him as a fool; he should be able to tell something is amiss, even if he cannot identify exactly what. This is what makes him the laughing stock, and when the truth is revealed at the end of the play, Patricio's realisation that he has been deceived forces him to admit his error and change his ways.

In terms of farce, *The Assembly* does not quite fit the mould. It is unique among the Scottish plays of the period because it is set in Edinburgh and written in Scots. There is less focus on farce; instead the comedy is derived from the ironies presented within the play, the use of satire and in what the characters say rather than simply their actions. One example of

this irony is that of the unmarried Rachel, pious daughter of a Presbyterian widow, who is concerned over her two cousins' immoral behaviour despite being six months pregnant herself. Comic irony is shown in a scene where two young men, Will and Frank, wish to marry Rachel's cousins, Laura and Violetta, but not being Presbyterian themselves, must disguise themselves as Presbyterian lay ministers to gain an invitation into the girls' aunt's house. They attempt to make small talk:

> **Old Lady**: […] O but it's a sade world, Mr Samuel.
>
> **Will**: An abdominal, Curst, unjust, malicious, ill-natured world.
>
> **Lady**: A praying-Sensorious, soul-seducing, worldlie World. A Gospel-renouncing, Minister-Mocking, filthie, Sabbath-breaking world. A Malignant, back-slyding, Covenant-braking, parents-disobeying World.
>
> [Enter Maid]
>
> **Maid**: There's a poor man, Madam, says he lost his means by the west cuntrie rable.
>
> **Lady**: Came you to tell me that, you baggag? Beat him doune stairs — But, Mr Samuel, It's a troublesome, beggarlie, officious world. Vaine, gaudie, prayer-slighting and reformatne-overturneing world!
>
> **Will**: [aside] Now I cane say no more. She's rune me out of breath.
>
> <div align="right">(Pitcairne 2012, p.62).</div>

The lady's zeal for her faith and her conviction that the world is in ruin is no match for Will in his disguise as a lay preacher named Samuel. He becomes breathless even attempting to keep up. This is comical in itself, but the added comedy comes from the irony of the Old Lady: she laments the ruined world, yet rather than attempting to improve the world with some Christian compassion, she orders her maid to beat a beggar because he is probably an Episcopalian curate. There is even dramatic irony in her complaint that ministers are being mocked and parents disobeyed, as her daughter is unmarried and pregnant while her nieces are courting the non-Presbyterians impersonating ministers at that very moment (MacQueen 2012, p.197). Although less farcical than *Tarugo's Wiles*, *The Assembly* has its share of features which are also found within English Restoration comedy.

These similarities between the Scottish seventeenth-century plays and English Restoration comedy show that Scottish writers engaged with English theatre culture to some extent and understood the common features that led to success. This would have been especially important for *Tarugo's Wiles*; as the first Scottish play to premiere in London, it was probably written with an English audience in mind and needed to appeal to them enough to be produced. As mentioned previously, the Scottish plays were not as successful as the English plays of the period. The plots are complicated and there is not always a clear indication of how they translate from the page to the stage. Scholars attribute this to the inexperience of Scottish playwrights in drama performance and production (Findlay 1997, p.78). Despite these flaws, consideration should be made of the ways these plays deviate from the theatre culture around them. These deviations are deserving of attention as they suggest innovation and a desire to revive Scottish theatre on the part of the playwrights, rather than mere imitation of English plays.

Thomas St. Serf wrote *Tarugo's Wiles* as an embellished translation of the Spanish play *No Puede Ser* by Agustín Moreto (1661) which is why the two plots are strikingly similar. The addition of the prologue and the coffeehouse scene of Act 3 are, however, entirely his own creation, suggesting an attempt to establish the play as partly his own work rather than a direct translation. The prologue is one of the most successful parts of the play as it carries out its function in an original way. Prologues and epilogues were more common in the Restoration period of theatre than any other and often added a new perspective on the play, especially when they were spoken by one of the main characters. They were also used to promote the play and implore favour from the audience (Solomon, 2013). The prologue of *Tarugo's Wiles* is used to warm the English audience to a foreign play with a Spanish origin and a Scottish writer. St. Serf's prologue is original and inventive: the few lines of verse which commonly make a Restoration prologue are preceded by a conversation between one of the actors, a gentleman and a servant of St. Serf. They discuss the merits of comedy and of the play the audience are about to see:

> **Gent**: The Plot must be new, the Language easie, the Fancies intelligible, and the Comical part so delicately enterwoven, that both laughter and delight may each of them enjoy their portions.
>
> **Servant**: I have heard my Master say, that since the restauration of the Stage, he has seen all you have said represented to perfection, and yet blown upon with disdain.
>
> **Gent**: That's only by the young sucking fry of Wits; But tell me, has your Masters Play the qualifications I told you of.
>
> **Servant**: Not one of them, for the Plot is like all others of the time, viz. A new Toot out of an old Horn [...].
>
> (St. Serf 1668, p.[vi]).

The servant recognises that the play will not be groundbreakingly original but his reference to the play as 'A new Toot out of an old Horn' indicates that St. Serf is adding his own dimensions to standard Restoration drama. The conversational style of the prologue provides opportunity for humour, such as the servant's insistence that there will be no poem to open the play; he claims that he will deliver it 'by way of Harangue' but is interrupted by a real poet and 'Friend to the Author' who tells him off before delivering the standard prologue in verse. The poem itself highlights the fact that St. Serf is not from England:

> **Poet:** [...] Since 'tis a Stranger that presents the Play:
> Stranger to our Language, Learning and Ryme;
> He sayes, to Wit too; and 'tis his first time.
>
> (St. Serf 1668, p.[vii]).

As well as discussing the merits of a good comedy, the prologue is engaging, humorous and clever in its consideration of the play's otherness (Scullion 1997). St. Serf's choice to present the prologue in an unusual format innovates both the play and theatre culture. The traditional poem shows his awareness of English Restoration play structure, although it explicitly addresses the newness of the author to the language and theatrical writing. This once again

ensures that the audience is aware that this play will not be a traditional English play, the writer himself not being English.

Despite the prologue's success at giving *Tarugo's Wiles* a touch of St. Serf's own flair, his second attempt, the addition of a scene entirely in a coffeehouse, is less successful. In the scene, Tarugo is sitting in the coffeehouse when word reaches him that soldiers seeking his arrest are on their way. With the help of the owner, he switches clothes with a server and fools the soldiers into thinking he works there. This is the only plot point within a scene that fills the entire third act: after evading arrest, Tarugo leaves the coffeehouse yet the scene continues, despite being unrelated to the rest of the play. The coffeehouse hosts people of various social standing and learning, making way for discussions of art, philosophy, religion and even the health benefits of coffee before 'limping to a conclusion' when a fight breaks out (Scullion 1997, p.109). The prologue is original and inventive, but this scene damages the plot's continuity. Its snippets of cultural conversations show that St. Serf wishes to engage with the real London outside of the play, but these references are jarring in a Spanish setting. That being said, while the scene is not essential to *Tarugo's Wiles* as a whole, it provides insight into the playwright's effort to renew the story and make it relevant to the English audience, despite its Scottish author and Spanish setting.

Unlike Thomas St Serf, William Clark does not make such drastic breaks from traditional form in *Marciano*. While there are some gaps in the plot, this play is characterised by a very coherent structure, and a style reminiscent of English Restoration drama. However, one notable difference between this play and English Restoration drama is the absence of both a prologue and an epilogue. The play opens with the action of Act 1; similarly, Arabella simply delivers a short speech in rhyme at the end of the final scene, rather than a full epilogue. Although a minor detail, it is interesting that the play most closely resembling its English contemporaries lacks an important Restoration feature. Whether this was an intentional omission, or whether there was a prologue that is now missing, is open to questioning.

Archibald Pitcairne's *The Assembly* has uniquely Scottish aspects, despite taking its form from English theatre. Not only is it written in Scots and set in Edinburgh, but Terence Tobin believes that '[t]he Scottish satire, while within the frame of the English tradition, is not as much an imitation of specific comedies which appeared in London as it is an exposé of particular people and events' (Tobin 1972, p.9). Pitcairne based his characters on well-known Presbyterian individuals in Scotland who would have been recognisable to those who came across the play in its original form. Its mocking of Scottish Presbyterianism, the use of Scots and the Edinburgh setting highlights that it was not intended for an English audience. As with *Marciano*, there are two distinct plots which rarely interact, yet they 'fall into place with the realisation that the play is built, not simply on the love-story or the actions of the Comitie [sic], but more generally, on the state of Scotland in 1691' (MacQueen 2012, p.lviii). Pitcairne is more intent on social commentary than on providing a thrilling plot and focuses on the characters' language for the humour (Reid 1984, p.16). In Act 1 Scene 2, Rachel and Wordie, the family minister and father of her unborn child, discuss Wordie's teaching of the Bible to Rachel with her mother, who is oblivious to the double entendre when she talks about Wordie tiring too quickly:

**Old Ladie**: Blessed be God, Mes James, quho sent you to my house. Great wes the scarcitie of family exercise we Laboured under. But I hop shortly my daughter shall understand it, and practise it as weale […] Sitt doune, Mes James.

**Rachel**: No, Madam, he exercises best standing. It's more convenient, I thynke.

**Old Ladie**: But it is wearisome for Mes James.

**Wordie**: No, Madam, I'le give o'r in tyme.

**Old Ladie**: I know such is the frailtie of her nature that she will wearie first.

**Rachel**: Indeed no, Madam. Mes James can tell I Love it very weall. I could hear him about the 3 things considerable 24 hours, but much exercise maks him dry, mother, and then he's ei'ne forced to give o're, God knows sooner then I wished, many a tyme.

(Pitcairne 2012, p.13).

The conversation resembles that of the china scene in *The Country Wife* as the Old Lady remains ignorant of the real meaning. Unlike the scene in Wycherley's play when added humour stems from the fact that the Doctor is hidden in the corner observing the whole conversation between Sir Jaspar and his wife, *The Assembly* relies mostly on the use of the language for its humour. This is unlike other Scottish and English Restoration plays which use the actions of characters to embellish the humour of the speech.

The lack of court funding and a professional theatre tradition to build from, as well as religious opposition, made seventeenth-century Scotland an infertile environment for the cultivation of theatre. Scottish playwrights therefore set their sights on England, finding inspiration from its strong theatre culture and, in the case of *Tarugo's Wiles,* a receptive audience. There is so little information about these plays and playwrights that we can only speculate on their motives and inspirations. Yet while these plays engage with English theatre culture, they remain innovative. The treatment of prologues and epilogues, or focus on language rather than plot to create comedy, are prime examples. However, the fact that *Marciano* was performed in Scotland, *The Assembly* was written with a Scottish setting and subject matter, and Thomas St Serf returned to Scotland and tried to establish a professional theatre, shows that all three dramatists did not focus entirely on England. Instead they tried to revive theatre culture in Scotland at a difficult time. Although these plays may be inferior to English Restoration comedy and were produced at a time when theatre had stagnated in Scotland, they should not be overlooked. The plays are so under-researched that there remain many different lenses through which they can be read and studied. These plays could provide unique insights into the political, moral and religious climate in Scotland as the nation was moving ever closer to the 1707 Union.

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[1] *The Phanaticks* is an alternative title for *The Assembly* used by John MacQueen in this critical edition.

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