‘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.
>
> (Pitcairne 2012, p.62).

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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