Widening the Debate: Aspects of Community in Scottish Drama in the 1980s.

by

Charlie J. A. Fairley

A dissertation submitted to the University of Glasgow in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) by Research in Theatre Studies.

Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies.

September 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Professor Adrienne Scullion and Dr. Katie Gough for their continued support, help and advice throughout the past year, with which I was able to realise how best to structure my research, and then articulate my findings, ideas and arguments on paper.

Thanks also to the staff in the Special Collections Department, University of Glasgow Library, for locating the scripts and documents I requested as part of my research.

Lastly, thanks to Mr. Iain McGlashen, of The McGlashen Charitable Trust for his financial support, which aided me during my studies, and allowed me to incur a little less debt.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation will be a close textual analysis of a set of unexamined, or partially examined Scottish plays written in the 1980s. The main focus of this analysis is the use and treatment of the idea of community within these texts, and how it reflects upon notions of Scottish culture and identity.

In the dissertation arguments are taken from Scottish theatre studies regarding community, and then tested against this set of plays that are largely absent from the critical literature surrounding Scottish drama. During the research process it became apparent that several plays from the 1980s have been left unexamined within Scottish theatre studies. This is perhaps because many scripts from this decade remain unpublished, are published only once or have a limited production history. One aspect of this dissertation is to widen the debate in Scottish theatre studies regarding the use of community in Scottish drama.

Another result of the research is that playwrights discussed in this dissertation use community as a framework to examine the wider Scottish culture. Several plays from the 1980s highlight how the idea of community was being reassessed. This reassessment shows that Scottish playwrights were engaged in one of several cultural debates, occurring within the 1980s on the nature of Scottishness. Community is a dramatic device that allows questions to be asked regarding Scotland in the 1980s.

In the dissertation there are speculations as to why some Scottish plays have been left unexamined. This absence is attributed to economic and cultural factors affecting Scottish theatre in the 1980s. It is one area that needs further research, as this lack of published scripts asks questions about the formation of a Scottish theatre canon.

LIST OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

In Scottish drama in the 1980s there are a number of plays that highlight a fundamental concern with the idea of community. There is an aspect of this drama that examines and questions the nature of community, and how it functions within a wider social context. From my research into Scottish theatre and drama of the 1980s, it is apparent that there is also a significant feature to the portrayal of community within a number of plays that can be attributed to the tension that arises between the individual and the idea of community. It is this conflict that certain Scottish playwrights use to question the structure and operation of different communities.

This dissertation will seek to explore different ideas of community and the individual through a close textual analysis of a collection of plays produced in the 1980s. The first framework for this investigation is the critical literature written within Scottish theatre studies.[1] During my research I read several plays that were either unpublished or had been published once and were now out of print. I realised that due to this lack of readily available scripts, a number of Scottish plays from the 1980s had been largely ignored or unexamined in Scottish theatre studies. This dissertation will set out to test various arguments and assumptions made within Scottish theatre studies

[1] Here as throughout the dissertation, I am using the title 'Scottish theatre studies' as a label or term referring to a collection of critical literature, essays, books and other forms of thought and research concerned with theatre and drama in Scotland. The term does not function to highlight an academic discipline as such, but to acknowledge the material I have used in researching the idea of community in Scottish drama.

regarding community on a number of plays that are either absent or not examined as thoroughly as other texts within the critical literature.

There are several essays and journals from which these arguments for testing will be drawn.[2] Together they point to a drama where community is a vital component. Briefly the idea of community acts as framework in which debates regarding Scottish culture and identity occur. Community can either be a place where there is a sense of shared values and beliefs, or at the other end of the scale, a rigid social structure that is oppressive towards the individual. These are just two examples of some of the arguments that can be construed from the essays and journals that I have read as part of my research. These, along with other ideas occurring in Scottish theatre studies, will be fully explored within this dissertation. Part of this textual analysis will therefore incorporate some aspects of critical literature on Scottish drama regarding community, and demonstrate how these ideas stand when set against a number of unexamined, or partially examined, Scottish plays.

---

[2] These include among others, Alasdair Cameron, *Study Guide to Twentieth-Century Scottish Drama* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, 1990) 154-177. Ksenija Horvat and Barbara Bell, "Sue Glover, Rona Munro, Lara Jane Bunting: Echoes and Open Spaces," *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers* eds. Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000) 65-78. Jan McDonald, 'Scottish Women Dramatists Since 1945," *History of Scottish Women's Writing* eds. Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997) 494-513. Joyce McMillan, "Women Playwrights in Contemporary Scottish Theatre," *Chapman 43-4* ed. Joy Hendry (Edinburgh: Chapman Magazine, Spring 1985) 69-75. Valentina Poggi and Margaret Rose, eds. *A Theatre That Matters: Twentieth-Century Scottish Drama and Theatre*. (Milano: Edizioni Unicopli, 2000). Adrienne Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities: Gender and Community in Scottish Drama," *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature* ed. Christopher Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995) 169-204. Randall Stevenson and Gavin Wallace, eds. *Scottish Theatre Since the Seventies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996).

It is not being suggested that the idea of community is an exclusive feature within Scottish drama from the 1980s. In the historical context I would argue that Scottish plays, in general, focus on the notion of the group rather than the individual, or use the individual as a representation of a certain social grouping. Examining different communities and how they function within, or are affected by, the wider society is one such example. The idea of community becomes a dramaturgical device that acts as a microcosm for the structure, organisation, politics and power relations found in the surrounding social order. In Scottish drama the notion of exploring the internal workings of the group can be seen as partaking in a broader debate regarding aspects of Scottish society and culture.

The second framework in which this investigation of community and the individual is to take place is the time frame of the early 1980s itself. The majority of the texts being discussed were produced in this period. It was a time when Scotland witnessed the failure of the Devolution Referendum of 1979, and it was forecast that this significant event would have dire consequences for Scottish culture, because it was the cultural achievements of the 1970s that had helped to bring about the referendum. It was also the period where a newly elected Conservative Government placed more importance on the economic potentials of the individual, rather than the collective merits of society.

Scottish culture did not so much falter as start to re-examine Scotland's history and identity. Such re-examination and also revisionism became prevalent within Scottish theatre. The plays analysed within this dissertation can be viewed as engaging in a cultural debate about the state of Scotland in the 1980s. Such a discussion runs parallel with other revisionist projects in Scottish history and culture occurring at this time.[3] I would argue that the conflict between community and the individual, in a number of Scottish dramas from this period, is a fundamental element of this wider social discussion. Such tension is reflective of a Scotland that is being questioned, revised and re-examined so as to gain a fuller understanding of the country and its culture.

The dissertation will incorporate three main chapters, or areas of investigation. Briefly these are: family as community; old and new urban communities; and, community and the individual. Such subjects all feature, and sometimes overlap, within the plays being studied here and act as useful markers for assessing the points made above. These areas I consider crucial to both the development and understanding of playwriting in the 1980s.

[3] These revisionist projects occur in such areas as Scottish history, philosophy, literature and theatre in the 1980s. As Cairns Craig states, regarding these projects during this decade, in his "Series Preface" to the Determinations books published by Polygon. ("In place of a few standard conceptions of Scotland's identity that had often been in the past the tokens of thought about the country's culture, a new and vigorous debate was opened up about the nature of Scottish experience, about real social and economic structures of the nation, and about the ways in which the Scottish situation related to that of other similar cultures throughout the world.") Cairns Craig, "Series Preface" in Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull, *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture: Inferiorism and the Intellectuals* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989) vi. It is to such a 'debate' I refer to when I mention the cultural debates occurring in Scotland during the 1980s.

They will each, in turn, be analysed in the dissertation, and will help to ground this investigation.

In this examination I will be discussing the work of a selection of playwrights working in the 1980s, and focussing on one or two texts from each of the dramatists to argue my findings regarding community. The first chapter will discuss Marcella Evaristi's *Commedia* (1982), Alison Watson's *Moving In* (1980) and Iain Heggie's *American Bagpipes* (1988) to explore the concept of family as community. Within the enclosed domestic setting of the home, these plays explore the familial structure as being representative of the wider community outside. The conflict and arguments between the individual members are a debate regarding the nature of and need for family.

Evaristi's *Commedia* explores the notion of the traditional family, which she represents as being suffocating and stifling towards the individual. In the play Evaristi explores the hierarchy that governs the familial structure. Watson, by contrast, views the concept of family as an ideal. Her play, *Moving In* examines the notion of restructuring the familial, so as to regain a sense of community for the individuals within the household. Lastly in this chapter I will analyse Heggie's *American Bagpipes*. This play does not belong to the contextual timeframe of the early 1980s, but the ideas that Heggie explores reflect upon both Evaristi and Watson's dramas. Heggie's comedy is situated near the end of the Thatcherite era, and satirises the idea

of the individual. The play also takes a comedic look at the restructuring of the traditional family, which can be read in the wider context of the Scottish cultural debate occurring in the 1980s.

In chapter two I will explore issues surrounding old and new urban communities. This is the idea that a group of individuals move away from one area, into a newly built community such as a housing estate, and experience profound social problems. In this chapter I will examine three plays, which are, Alan Spence's *Sailmaker* (1982) and *Space Invaders* (1983), and Tom McGrath's *Kora* (1986). The drama within these texts moves outside of the domestic setting, looking at specific communities.

Spence's *Sailmaker* and *Space Invaders* are located in and examine the changing cityscape of Glasgow, and the creation of the new towns outside the city. His work highlights a split between, what I perceive, as the imagined community, and the physical, concrete community situated in the newly built town. McGrath's *Kora* is concerned with fragmentation of community brought about by social problems, which he sees as leading to violence. In the plays he points to the need for inclusiveness of the individual into social groupings. Similarly to *American Bagpipes*, McGrath's *Kora* is set several years after the Conservative Party come to government. He portrays a much bleaker picture of working class urban living than Spence, which can be seen as a direct confrontation to the

condition of council owned housing estates in Scotland during the 1980s. McGrath emphasises both the political and the personal within this drama.

In the last chapter I will explore the concept of community and the individual, and the relationship between the two. This section of the dissertation will encompass the work of Sue Glover, focussing specifically on two of her early plays, *The Seal Wife* (1980) and *An Island in Largo* (1981). Glover's work during the 1980s is blatant in its depiction of isolating a person from his or her community, and shows how the individual instils both fear and danger within the wider social network. I would argue that these plays must be read together as they are similar in theme, that of separation, and Glover explores this idea from a female and then male perspective. This chapter will also discuss the concept that Glover's use of the rural, or open space, acts a metaphor for the expansion of the debate on Scottish culture moving out from Scotland's industrial lowlands.

This dissertation can be viewed as taking a journey through these different concepts, ideas and views of community. In analysing the plays the examination moves from the enclosed domestic setting, to the wider urban communities, and then on to the open and rural spaces in order to explore these different ideas, and to demonstrate that such ideas are reflective of a wider debate on Scottish culture and identity. The analysis of each text will also include a brief discussion regarding its production history, with some

speculations as to why such a play has been overlooked within Scottish theatre criticism.

It must be noted that in this list of Scottish plays, not all of them have been left unexamined. It is true though that four of the texts remain unpublished, two have only been published once, and the majority of them have a very limited production history. I would argue that there is a need to examine, or re-examine, these plays so as to incorporate them into and expand the critical literature surrounding Scottish theatre and its history.

CHAPTER ONE

Family as Community

This chapter will explore the idea of community through the familial structure. A play set within the boundaries of the domestic that focuses on the family, is a theme that is inherent within Scottish drama. One of the most famous examples in Scottish theatre is Ena Lamont Stewart's *Men Should Weep* (1947, 1982), which tells the story of a working class family struggling under economic strain. Stewart's examination of family acts as reference point for many of the ideas explored within the dramas discussed in this chapter, such as the politics and power relations found in the familial structure. Family is imagined as being the site upon which the playwright can demonstrate and question the rules and relations that are embedded within the surrounding community. The concept of the familial structure is repeated in Scottish drama because it offers a "reduced version of society's hegemonic power relations."[4] These 'power relations' are brought into the household and played out between the members of the family. The familial structure can be viewed as a dramaturgical device for examining the socio-political climate within a familiar and personalised setting.

The plays in this chapter are engaged in a debate regarding the nature of the traditional family. All three texts test the organisation of the familial structure, at a time when there was a political climate which promoted

[4] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 171.

conservative family values, but paradoxically promoted ideas of "self-interest" and "aggressive individualism".[5] There is something of a battle between community and the individual within this political ideology, which is reflected in the plays from this chapter. In contrast to this conservatism aimed at the family, the 1980s is a time when such established attitudes were changing in Scotland. Sociologist David McCrone states that by the beginning of the 1990s

> new household types had become the norm. Less than a quarter of households now compromise the 'classical' family of two parents and dependent children.[6]

These plays are situated in a period when old, traditional values were being confronted, and sometimes undermined, by different ideas of what constitutes a family. The dramatic tension comes from a change happening within the familial structure, and how the individual members of the household either adapt or challenge to this shift. In the context of the wider Scottish cultural debate, these plays question such issues as the treatment of the individual within society, the loyalty to a collective ideology, and the re-examination of Scottish culture itself. For these playwrights family is the imagined, but ideal framework, in which to focus on and explore these areas of concern.

The questioning of community, within the socio-political climate of the 1980s, presents itself as an opportunity, with regard to Evaristi's *Commedia*

---

[5] David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Stateless Nation* (London: Routledge, 1992) 171.
[6] David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Nation* 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2001) 22.

and Watson's *Moving In*. It could be argued that both playwrights saw during the early part of this decade that the idea of community could, and should be revised. In *Commedia* Evaristi highlights the problems inherent in the traditional family, which will not tolerate the transgression of, or non-conformity to, its order. Her depiction of the familial structure is a critique on a society, which she sees as being a threat to the identity of the individual. By contrast Watson's *Moving In* is more positive in its outlook. She offers a solution, whereby her characters can reinvent the family unit so as to hold on to the notion of community as an ideal. For both playwrights working the early 1980s, it seems to have been a chance to challenge and change the idea of community within Scotland. The family is a useful framework from which the structure of a wider Scottish society is questioned.

Heggie's *American Bagpipes* can be viewed as following similar themes as that of Evaristi and Watson. The play explores the familial structure through the scenario of a family feud whereby the individual members of the household try to assert their dominance. Produced a few years after the other plays in this chapter, *American Bagpipes* is not so much a critique on Scottish culture, but a black satirical comedy on both the changing attitudes towards family in Scotland, and the wider cultural debate occurring in the 1980s. Heggie's family is in the unfortunate position of being out-of-date and must reorganise itself so as to stay in touch with current trends.

The three plays in this chapter disrupt the structure of the family unit to demonstrate how the reorganisation of the familial reflects upon the different responses regarding the use and need for community. Firstly, such restructuring exposes and questions the pre-established power relations within the family. Secondly it causes a sense of displacement within the individual as to the nature of his or her role in the household. The domestic dramas of Evaristi, Watson and Heggie take on an added value when examined within this context. Evaristi depicts the underlying structure of a family at a moment of change, Watson is concerned with keeping the community together, and Heggie creates a comedy where the attempt to eradicate the familial takes place. If we take Adrienne Scullion's argument, stated earlier, that the structure of the family represents that of society's then these plays demonstrate how Scottish culture and identity were also changing. All three playwrights test the idea of a Scottish community through the questioning of the 'classical' or traditional family, precisely at a time when the power relations and structures of such a unit were shifting.

This chapter will examine such ideas in the work of the three playwrights. Each dramatist treats his or her subject matter differently. *Commedia* is a serious drama about an Italian/Scottish family. Evaristi uses the melodramatic storyline of a love affair to explore the affects a patriarchal family structure and ideology has on the recently widowed Mother, Elena. Watson situates her domestic drama in the 'setting up' process of a new household, where a group of friends move in together. She too uses the

technique of love affair to disrupt the community. Heggie, on the other hand, uses the form of satire to examine the organisation of a Glaswegian working class family. Within this setting he examines the dominance and violence inherent in such a household. His play highlights the irrational and anarchic nature of the traditional family, and ironically proposes that this is the glue, which keeps it together.

1.1: Marcella Evaristi

Identity and the Oppressive Community

Identity can be thought of as being a cultural construct. It is the product of several influencing factors, such as a person's upbringing or placement within the wider society. These features can, in part, determine, but also limit an individual's identity. The factors that feed into this idea of a construct are themselves subject to cultural norms. Identity is therefore not a fixed and stable entity, but changeable and questionable. With this theory comes a sense of freedom, but also uncertainty. These are ideas that can be found in the plays of Evaristi. Her own background, Italian, Jewish and Glaswegian, has informed upon this aspect of her playwriting. Her plays are full of characters, mainly women, suffering from degrees of anxiety and existential angst about their identity and placement within society.

In *Hard To Get* (1980) Jess worries over what her husband's family, friends and business colleagues will think of her. "And the olive had an almond in it. It was nearly in the ashtray before I realised. I hope no one else realised."[7] Such simple mistakes cause Jess untold embarrassment and self-doubt. It is only after her marriage breaks up that she begins to define a new role and identity for herself. Suffering wife turns into artistic career woman. Evaristi uses similar moments in her plays, such as rejection, break-ups, divorces, death to explore the notion of what I have labelled 'uncertain

[7] Marcella Evaristi, *Hard To Get* Unpublished (Scottish Theatre Archive: University of Glasgow Library, STA Gd 77, 1980) 14.

freedom', through her characters. It is within these instances that there is both a realisation and re-negotiation of the roles society deems fit for women to play. For Evaristi's characters pain and anxiety come with a sense of clarity and insight into structures and rules that shape their lives.

Evaristi locates such societal pressure within several institutions: education, religion, marriage and the work place. In her play *Commedia* it is the familial structure that is exposed as the force for conformity. Scullion has argued that a number of Scottish plays "may be directed towards establishing a moment of unity, a recognition of community, in the audience."[8] Evaristi deliberately avoids such a consequence in *Commedia*. She emphasises the anxiety and self-doubt of both Elena and her son, Stefano, so as to expose the contradictions and prejudices inherent in the traditional family. Evaristi creates disunity and disruption in this changing household to demonstrate how the familial structure actually helps Stefano to both oppose and stop any change. Evaristi's family as community is not representative of an ideal state, but as a stifling construct that smothers the individual, where if any sense of unity is achieved, it is usually at the expense of a person's freedom or identity.

Her work also looks at how the structures of community affect gender and identity. She then questions and critiques this process. Evaristi's dramaturgy focuses on details and emphasises these by placing them within

[8] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 170.

tightly controlled, but explosive settings, such as the domestic. In *Hard To Get* the pressure is felt by Jess when she has to cook for a dinner party. She wants the evening to be perfect because otherwise it will undermine her role as wife. This pressure to be recognised, through the eyes of the guests, eventually causes Jess to ruin the dinner. The civility of the evening erupts and turns into a heated argument between Jess and her husband, Luke. Evaristi uses, within the dramatic mode of heightened realism, such incidents to interrogate pre-conceived ideas of community and identity.

Commedia takes place in suburban Glasgow in early 1980 and involves an Italian/Scottish family. The situation surrounding the drama is typical of Evaristi's dramaturgy. Elena inhabits a moment of uncertain freedom, where she can reflect upon her identity. Her double role as wife and mother has decreased due to the death of her husband, and also because her sons are fully grown men both in their thirties. It is this dramatic framework that allows Evaristi to explore and question the structure of the traditional family at a moment of profound change.

What Evaristi keenly demonstrates in *Commedia* is the difference that community means to different people. For Elena's two sons, Stefano and Cesare, it is a static, unchangeable, nostalgic space that they associate with the family home and childhood.

LUCY: Why are you sitting in the dark?
STEFANO: I was pretending I was wee boy again. If I give you my sherbet dab, can I put my hand down your sweater?[9]

Lucy, Stefano's wife, has found him alone in the family home, drinking and being rather morose. Stefano seems to realise the uncertainty in his own future, his father dying, his mother away in Italy, and trouble in his own marriage. Whereas Elena wants to embrace her new sense of freedom, Stefano portrays an almost psychological fear of change. He escapes the problems of his reality by living and staying in the one place where, as a child, life was less complicated and happier.

STEFANO: Honestly, the natural place for children is with their mothers.
LUCY: Even when they're thirty two?[10]

The family home is Stefano's safe haven, which he associates with the security and protection of his mother. Stefano escapes into his ideal world, where he tries to regain a sense of unity in the family by controlling Elena's life, and stopping her relationship with Davide. Evaristi's family confrontations show the dominance and manipulation of Stefano. His self-indulgence leads to a notion of community that is both constrictive and backward looking. This attitude eventually leads to the break-up of his own marriage, but also delimits Elena's new-found freedom.

Commedia demonstrates the clash of two different communities, by examining gender politics. The distinctions between the depiction of the male and female community in Scottish theatre has been examined by

[9] Marcella Evaristi, *Commedia* (Edinburgh: The Salamander Press, 1983) 18.
[10] Evaristi, *Commedia*, 18.

academics such as Adrienne Scullion and Jan McDonald. Briefly, communities of women are seen to portray the ideals of fairness, egalitarianism, and an "assumed and implicit" sense of belonging within a group, all of which leads to a sense of togetherness that is not enforced or constructed, but is seen as a natural state.[11] This concept is especially important to Scottish drama in the 1980s because it was the decade that saw the emergence of women playwrights. By contrast the depiction of the male community is decidedly different, in that it is based on a dominating hierarchy, which is restrictive, exclusive and sometimes aggressive. Scullion analyses this proposition of maleness through the theatrical form of the work place drama. This is a genre that traditionally encapsulates the physical and brutal world of the urban working class male. Through such plays as Roddy McMillan's *The Bevellers* (1973) and John Byrne's *The Slab Boys* (1978). Scullion notes that these

> dramas concentrate on communities of urban men, where the mythology of the 'hardman' is never far distant and the cult of the mother a defining phenomenon".[12]

These groups of men initiate tests that 'score' the individual's acceptability into their community. There is no sense of implicit belonging and any unity usually comes with the mutual ridiculing of a member of the group.

Even though this analysis is garnered from a collection of plays that are located in the world of the urban working class male, Evaristi looks at some

---

[11] Adrienne Scullion, "Contemporary Scottish Women Playwrights" *The Cambridge Companion to Modern British Women Playwrights* eds. Elaine Aston and Janelle Reinelt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 94-118, 102.
[12] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 179.

these ideas within the middle class domesticity of *Commedia.* The dominating hierarchy of the male community is still apparent, but perhaps more subtle and insipid, than extreme and violent. Stefano uses persuasion, manipulation and guilt to try to stop Elena seeing Davide.

> Mamma, try to be reasonable, what's the future in it? You're just going to make yourself a laughing stock and I can't bear it.[13]

The arrival of Davide runs parallel with the entry of the "new boy" in the work place drama.[14] Stefano, Cesare and his wife, Gianna are bonded in their perception of seeing him as threat to the existing status quo of their ideal family, and he must be dejected. Evaristi implies that Elena's sons and daughter-in-law want to stop her relationship with Davide, more for the sake of the family than her own.

> GIANNA: I'm very sorry about all this Mamma, but I have to tell you that I agree with Stefano.
> LUCY: You didn't hear what he said.
> GIANNA: Didn't have to, Lucia. Families close ranks at times like this.[15]

The community they know is fragmenting and they blame Davide for it because he is 'new' and not part of the established structure. The issue that becomes apparent is that the hierarchal structure of the male community acts as a smokescreen. Its togetherness is ultimately based on fear, a fear of change and influence from outside of itself.

Evaristi details the workings of the male community within a domestic setting. What she achieves with this transportation from work place to

---

[13] Evaristi, *Commedia*, 28.
[14] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 179.
[15] Evaristi, *Commedia*, 29.

home, is to swap one Scottish myth of the 'hardman' for another, the mummy's or 'mammy's boy'. For Stefano, Elena is both the link to a happier childhood, and the "totemic embodiment of virtue and rectitude."[16] Stefano places Elena upon a pedestal where he wants her to remain untarnished. The problem is that it is precisely this 'cult of the mother' that is being questioned by the presence of Elena, and of her actions. In Stefano's eyes she is demeaning herself, but also more tellingly his own assumptions about the ideal mother. It is this change in Elena that causes Stefano to fear, because the warmth, protection and stability he got from his mother is being undermined. Stefano then retreats back into his childhood world, sitting alone in the family home drinking, where he is both angry and irrational.

> When you complain, when it's you hurting, you're a little boy lost in a department store surrounded by unrecognisable legs.[17]

Lucy points out the childishness of Stefano's grievances. She succinctly describes him as being able to wave his arms "whilst in the foetal position".[18] Stefano's masculinity is shown as a selfish, child-like need of protection from reality. Underneath the powerful and impenetrable structure of the male community fronted by Stefano, Evaristi highlights its fragile nature. The force of Stefano's masculinity is linked to his fear of being that 'little boy lost in a department store', where he cries out for his 'mammy'.

---

[16] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 196.
[17] Evaristi, *Commedia*, 19.
[18] Evaristi, *Commedia*, 19.

In *Commedia* Evaristi creates a drama that, by focussing on Elena's relationships and the reactions to it, "undercuts the misogynistic mythology of urban Scotland."[19] Within this 'undercutting' though, Evaristi emphasises the internal workings of such a 'mythology', and the difference between the male and female community. She achieves this by using the domestic space as the area for her investigation, a place associated with women. Audrey Bain notes that within Scottish drama, it was Ena Lamont Stewart's *Men Should Weep* that challenged "the prevalent orthodoxy which views the domestic sphere as a depoliticised space."[20] Instead Stewart shows it "as the site of women's concealed, unpaid labour, and as the point of intersection between public and private discourses."[21] Evaristi embraces these notions within her play and, similarly to Stewart, is critical of assumptions concerning the role of women and community. Whereas Stewart's drama details the struggles of Maggie, the mother, in trying to keep her family together, Evaristi places this duty ironically upon Stefano.

In the play, the home, and even the kitchen, is explicitly under the rule of men. The politics and the power that helps to run the 'domestic sphere' are inherently part of the male community. Such control and authority are the building blocks that create and secure Elena's "prison".[22] This is obvious at the opening of the play, where Stefano and Cesare are in the process of

---

[19] Scullion, "Contemporary Scottish Women Playwrights", 108.
[20] Audrey Bain," Loose Canons: Identifying a Women's Tradition in Playwriting" *Scottish Theatre Since the Seventies* eds. Stevenson and Wallace, 138-145, 141.
[21] Bain, 141.
[22] McDonald, 503.

building Elena a "dream kitchen" as a present.[23] They want to keep her in this room because, in their ideal family, the mother belongs in it. The irony of this gift is that Elena lives by herself and has no real need for an extended kitchen. Whereas her sons have moved away, she must remain in her place of 'unpaid labour'. This points to the internal and insipid misogyny at work throughout *Commedia*. The male static community has enlarged itself to incorporate the home. This is also Stefano's attempt to hold onto the childhood home as a safe retreat. His solution to a family break up is to wield more power over it, usually through manipulative means, such as the kitchen. Stefano may believe he is helping his mother, but Elena has to escape to Italy, just to be outside such a sphere of influence.

Evaristi is rather scathing towards the idea of community. She is not keen to show it in a positive light and depicts it as stifling rather than liberating. Her plays are driven by the angst an individual feels when faced with the task of questioning the certainty of his or her identity, and the need to change it. Evaristi does locate different assumptions regarding community as being based on gender. Within *Commedia* community, seen through the familial structure, is construed as a very male preoccupation. Elena's roles as wife and mother have diminished with her husband dying and her sons moving out. Her responsibility towards the family is no longer essential. It is precisely at this moment, when Stefano and Cesare's own 'certainties' are

[23] Evaristi, *Commedia*, 5.

questioned that they use the togetherness of community to subvert Elena's individual tendencies.

In her analysis of the female community, Evaristi is not so committed to the ideas of egalitarianism, shared identities and implicit belonging, which are perhaps more apparent in the plays of other women playwrights, such as Sue Glover and Rona Munro. At the end of *Hard To Get* Anna is appalled at Jess' decision to take her husband, Luke, back after the way he treated her when they were married. Also after her divorce, Jess points out that there was keen interest from other women to see how she would react. Not so much out of a caring nature, more from a curious inclination.

McDonald notes that in Evaristi's *Wedding Belles and Green Grasses* (1981), the characters Rita, Stephanie and Jo "are bonded into sisterhood by blood and marriage but above all by their Catholic upbringing."[24] The word 'into' implies that this sense of community is forced upon the women from when they are children. Their lives are linked through these institutions and their 'natural' togetherness is tested as each of the woman change. Such testing occurs when Stephanie's boyfriend leaves her for Jo, her sister. It is this 'shared' experience that causes a rift in the group and questions their 'bond'. In *Commedia* Elena and Lucy do share an understanding of her relationship with Davide. By contrast though there is Gianna, who sides

[24] McDonald, 501.

with Stefano and Cesare, and their treatment of Elena, as being necessary for the reputation of the family.

Evaristi seems to be wary of both the female and male community. In her treatment of them she questions the assumptions that govern them both. In her work community is a social construct that maintains a power over the individual to conform. Within the wider context of Scottish culture, Evaristi's work challenges what actually constitutes Scottishness. McDonald puts this down to her "dual nationality"[25], where she can gain an inside and outside perspective on what it means to be Scottish.

Commedia is a play that focuses on a family, where the power relations and arguments that occur, are systematic of Evaristi's questioning of certain aspects of Scottish, and Italian, culture and identity. Life in this household has changed, and it is this development, represented by Elena's affair, and her subsequent individuality, that causes the tension. The family has to readjust to a different structure, but Stefano is unwilling to let this happen. This domestic argument is representative of a wider debate regarding old and new, accepted or revised views on Scottish culture and identity. Evaristi is one in a group of Scottish women playwrights

> who, while using and referring to the defining myths and recognisable semiotics of Scottishness, aim to produce a revisionist account of ourselves and our culture.[26]

---

[25] McDonald, 505.
[26] Scullion, "Contemporary Scottish Women Playwrights", 95.

Evaristi tackles this 'revisionist account' by focussing on one the most potent symbols of Scottish theatre, the family. She then exposes the politics that she sees as being inherent in the familial structure. A sense of togetherness or unity is merely a device that stops any transgression above the social construct that is the family.

In both the wider political and cultural contexts, Evaristi's dramas, detailing the lives of individuals struggling with social identity and placement, show the difficulty of a culture dealing with revision and change. Her work exposes assumptions that are manifest within a Scottish culture, such as the dominance of patriarchy, whilst at the same time showing the danger and oppressiveness of stridently holding on to them, so as never to be questioned or adjusted. Her characters' doubts reflect upon the uncertainties that come with exposing the structures in culture. This exposure is a political act that goes to the root of understanding the assumptions and myths that propel that culture. Elena herself is an example of this cultural investigation, and expresses the significance of such a process.

> You taught me every single thing was political. Ces's death, you and me, everything. I didn't understand that before, but now I do.[27]

What Evaristi demonstrates in her drama is that gaining an identity is not a simple matter. It is a struggle that causes immense pain and sacrifice from the individual. In the case of Elena she has to step away from her family to realise this fact.

---

[27] Evaristi, *Commedia*, 38.

In *Commedia* Evaristi deliberately examines the individual within a pre-established, rigid community. For Elena to explore her freedom, and perhaps gain a sense of identity, she has to go to Italy with Davide. She moves away from the stifling community so as live outside it for the first time since she was married. Her family refuses to let her gain any sense of individuality, and follow her over. There is no debate allowed outside the familial structure, Elena is a mother, and she cannot escape this role. Evaristi never gives Elena the opportunity of becoming an individual. Ironically it is a second death within the family, that of Cesare's, which brings Elena back into the community. Her uncertain freedom, transforms into a certain commitment to the family, now as mother, to her remaining son, and daughter-in-law, and grandmother to Cesare's son. Elena is once again trapped, without any change occurring within the familial structure.

As stated above Evaristi picks moments of uncertainty within her characters' lives, where they gain the insight that identity is not fixed, but unstable and open to change. In *Commedia* it is Elena's relationship with Davide, which prompts Stefano and Cesare's urgency. They need to keep their traditional family together because they do not want to challenge their individual identities. In the context of the revision of Scottish culture in the 1980s, Evaristi sets the beginning of her play within in an important year within Scotland's history. It is a month after the failed Devolution Referendum, on Hogmanay 1979. It is ironic because New Year's Eve is a time associated with new beginnings, but this is undermined by the

devolution debacle. It was also a time when Scottish culture was entering its own phase of uncertainty that would later lead to the revisionist projects of the 1980s.[28] Evaristi picks this particularly significant moment to examine Scottish culture through the guise of a domestic drama, and the microcosm of family as community.

For Evaristi national identity is not an easily definable or solid concept, but pervious and open to new influences and interpretations. It is exactly when a nationality is trapped that it can become detrimental to a culture. Cesare is upset and angry that Stefano, who is an actor, has agreed to accept the part on a television soap opera of the racially stereotyped café owner, "Tony the Tally".[29] He sees it as an inferior account of Italian culture, which ridicules his own assumptions about Italy. Cesare's anger reflects upon the wider Scottish cultural debate. Evaristi seems to warn against not challenging the simple stereotypes found within a country's national identity. At a time when Scotland was re-examining its culture, Evaristi highlights the dangers of keeping hold of assumed ideas regarding Scottishness. It is through the actions and attitudes of both Cesare and Stefano that Evaristi demonstrates that a culture, which remains unquestioned, is an unhealthy one.

---

[28] For example see Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull, *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture: Inferiorism and the Intellectuals*. Craig Beveridge and Ronnie Turnbull, *Scotland After Enlightenment: Image and Tradition in Modern Scottish Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1997). Cairns Craig, *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and English Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996). The authors of these books look to re-examine and revise notions of Scottish culture and history.

[29] Evaristi, *Commedia*, 11.

In Evaristi's words, 'every single thing [is] political', lies the broader context of *Commedia*. It is a drama that focuses on the politics of community and the individual. She is keenly aware that a person's politics usually follow his or her own moral order, so can be gleaned from personal attitudes, actions and assumptions. *Commedia* can therefore be read as a political examination of Scotland, through the use of this family, at such a significant moment in the country's history. The play is a debate about what constitutes identity and culture. Stefano relies on notions of tradition and simple stereotypes to back up his arguments. The traditional family where mothers stay at home with the children and fathers go out to work is fundamental to society. Stefano cannot see past this concept or to the individuals that are part of it. Throughout the play his actions and motives are driven by the need to pursue his idea of the family as a stable entity. His political outlook is one of protection and conservatism that places the individual within a rigid community. This is not out of any deep sense of caring, but for his need of security.

> Nomadic life acting, can't drag the nest along with you on a string. [...] You don't mind if I stay the night? Felt like coming home.[30]

Stefano lacks stability in his career so feels he should be able to return to a 'home', and a mother, that will not change. The society around him moves in different directions, but he needs his fixed point, even if this is detrimental to Elena.

---

[30] Evaristi, *Commedia*, 38.

The community fronted by Stefano, which surrounds Elena does not recognise her as a person. Evaristi creates a drama that displays this as a fundamental problem within this family. If the argument continues that familial structure is the "paradigmatic community" within Scottish culture, then this has serious consequences for the state of Scotland.[31] Her revisionist approach highlights a country, where such myths as egalitarianism and fairness are not wholly apparent. Instead her play shows the use of insipid misogyny and steadfast refusal to let go of tradition at a time when the Scottish identity was being examined and questioned.

Evaristi's politics within the play are not used outright to challenge the views espoused by Stefano and Cesare, but to create a "dialectic between pessimism and optimism" within the family.[32] The use of heightened realism allows Evaristi to present this family as a curio to be examined.

> You're like creatures from a time capsule! You're so busy looking to your own good name, that the world, Scotland, Italy, Milwaukee, progresses unnoticed.[33]

Evaristi is therefore not creating a 'slice of life' look at Scottish, or to that matter Italian, culture. Rather she is using the domestic drama genre both to debate the 'public and private discourses' surrounding national identity, and to examine the internal workings of community. Evaristi's plays show the importance of questioning the simple and easy assumptions that are inherent in society and culture. In *Commedia* she explores the assumed qualities of

---

[31] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 171.
[32] Joseph Farrell, "Tallies and Italians: The Italian Impact on Scottish Drama" *A Theatre that Matters* eds. Poggi and Rose, 121-134, 130.
[33] Evaristi, *Commedia*, 30.

community, at a time when the political climate was asking about its purpose within the British state.

Through this textual analysis of *Commedia* it has be shown that Evaristi is questioning the structure and function of family as community. During the 1980s she was one of a number of Scottish dramatists using such material for their plays. Her work is therefore important within the analysis of Scottish culture and identity. It is also necessary in realising and understanding the different ideas, regarding Scottishness that women playwrights brought to Scottish drama in the 1980s.

In Scottish theatre of the 1980s *Commedia* can be viewed as a critical, but perhaps not financial, success, even if the play's initial production had to be withdrawn. *Commedia* was commissioned by the then, newly established Scottish Theatre Company (STC) (1981-1987) to appear at the 1982 Edinburgh International Festival. Due to financial difficulties the production never happened, and instead *Commedia* premiered at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre in that same year. STC later revived and toured the play in 1984. There was some criticism towards the length of the play, and some reviewers were puzzled by the seemingly unnecessary death of Cesare during a bomb explosion in an Italian train station. It is yet another example of Evaristi's dramaturgy, using life-changing moments to question identity. Gianna is placed almost in exactly the same position as Elena is at the beginning of the play. For her though, and also Stefano, this moment causes

the familial bonds to strengthen even tighter, making sure Elena remains the 'Eternal Mother'. Since its initial production though, and subsequent tour, *Commedia* has been rarely performed.

Commedia is also a play that is recognised and examined within Scottish theatre studies, and my analysis uses some of the arguments surrounding it. Evaristi's drama is therefore not as overlooked as other texts within this dissertation. The play has been published, but only once, which is a rare occurrence for Scottish plays produced in the 1980s. *Commedia* is also regarded as being part of the Scottish canon, when in 1994 the 'National Theatre for Scotland Campaign' placed *Commedia* in a list of hundred Scottish plays that could be part of a repertoire.[34]

The point to be made is that *Commedia* is not undiscovered, but a renowned play. It is part of this dissertation because *Commedia* uses certain forms inherent in a Scottish drama tradition, such as the examination of family as community, and the politicisation of the domestic space, to reassess and question Scotland's identity in the 1980s. The play is important because it comes at a time when the Scottish nation was being examined and scrutinised. Through the microcosm of an Italian/Scottish community, Evaristi shows that national identity is a complex question, and to answer it society must not rely on simple and easy assumptions. If this occurs then Scottish culture will remain in a stasis, similar to Stefano, holding on to the

[34] See "The Hot One Hundred" *Theatre Scotland* Vol 2 Issue 8 eds. Mark Fisher, Jane Ellis, Faith Liddell, Ben Twist, Chris Hannan (Edinburgh: Theatre Scotland, Winter 1994) 17-22.

fixed and permanent features that are supposedly Scottish. *Commedia* is an important part in Scottish theatre, and its history. It pinpoints a moment, through the battle between Elena and her family, when the national identity of Scotland was itself being tested.

1.2: Alison Watson

Community as Process

Alison Watson is a contemporary of Evaristi's. Both of these playwrights were working in the early 1980s, and producing plays for the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh. Watson's *Moving In* is also a domestic drama that tackles the issue of community, but reaches a fundamentally different conclusion as to the purpose of this social concept. Whereas Evaristi deliberately causes fragmentation and disruption in *Commedia*, the characters in *Moving In* search for that 'moment of unity'. The play is about two married couples: Kate and Dave, and Maggie and Gordon. Each couple has two children and decide to move in together because they are friends, but also for financial reasons.

> Spread it about that we're all moving out/of the nuclear family situation,/we're into co-operation;/Open the door, we don't know what's in store/nothing ventured nothing win, we're moving in![35]

Throughout the play, though, the characters want to create a household that is built on the qualities of fairness, egalitarianism and democracy. This is seen in their weekly meetings, where every member is allowed the space and time to bring up problems and propose new improvements for the household. Watson restructures the family unit, not so much to question community, but to revise and regain certain attributes she feels are associated with community, such as providing the individual with a sense of 'implicit belonging' in his or her life.

---

[35] Alison Watson, *Moving In* Unpublished (Scottish Theatre Archive: University of Glasgow Library, STA HP 11/1-2, 1980) 7.

Watson was commissioned to write this play by Chris Parr, Artistic Director of the Traverse Theatre, and it was performed from 10 April to 2 May 1980. It was "dictated that it be for a cast of no more than four" because of the financial difficulties that the Traverse and Scottish theatre in general were facing. [36] Commissioning new work in the early 1980s was becoming more problematic, due to a lack of money. David Hutchison notes "Fewer than ten new works were presented in 1982 by our principal theatre companies."[37] He then acknowledges that even less were to be performed in the succeeding year. The word to note is 'principal' and Hutchison makes it clear that he is interested in established theatre companies, and "the extent to which [they] drew on or contributed to the Scottish dramatic tradition in the year concerned [1982]."[38] His article makes the obvious argument that the production of new Scottish plays is essential to the health and continuation of an 'indigenous' repertoire. His call for Scottish theatre companies that avoid new writing to have their funding reviewed, highlights the drastic situation that Scottish playwrights saw themselves in. They found it increasingly difficult to get work produced.

It is ironic then that the one 'principal' theatre to commission new Scottish writing was finding it problematic to do so. In the early 1980s, the Traverse was willing to stage new plays, but the quality of these plays was being questioned, with the threat of a reduction in its funding. Theatre critic Joyce

---

[36] Paul Buchanan, " ' Moving In' at the Traverse", *SSP Newsletter* Vol. 3 No. 9 ed. Charles Hart (Glasgow: Scottish Society of Playwrights, April 1980) 37-38, 37.
[37] David Hutchison, "The Responsibility to New Writing", *Scottish Theatre News* Vol. 6 No. 8 ed. Charles Hart (Glasgow: Scottish Theatre News, March 1983) 10-13, 11.
[38] Hutchison, 10.

McMillan notes that the drama committee of the Scottish Arts Council (SAC) not only declared

> that the Traverse operation was a hopelessly inefficient use of a large slice of its resources, but that the quality of the work was inadequate.[39]

Also Chris Parr's role of Artistic Director was coming to an end and the Traverse was entering a transitional phase before Peter Lichtenfels took over. It could be argued that such facts demonstrate, with Watson's play being a case in point, how a dramatist's work can perhaps be forgotten.

In conjunction with this, *Moving In* was produced at a time when Scottish theatre was entering a phase where it would have readjust to a different political climate. Throughout the 1980s, Scotland had to be managed, through its local authorities, on behalf of the Conservative Government that did not have the majority of the Scottish voting public behind it. This political anomaly was due to the fact that the number of Scottish Conservative MPs being returned to Westminster was falling in each succeeding election. This left the SAC in a difficult position; one that Donald Smith likens to being

> left on a knife edge, managing the arts on behalf of the political administration while caretaking a vital area of political freedom. As the decade proceeded and public expenditure was cut, the knife edge became sharper.[40]

---

[39] Joyce McMillan. *The Traverse Theatre Story: 1963-1988* (London: Methuen Drama, 1988) 90-91.
[40] Donald Smith, "1950-1995" *A History of Scottish Theatre* ed. Bill Findlay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998) 253-308, 289.

The Traverse found this adjustment a demanding process, with relations between it and the SAC reaching a "total impasse" in late 1983.[41] Both the quality of its work and administration was brought into question. This situation at the Traverse, and more broadly Scottish theatre, along with the fact that *Moving In* remains unpublished, gives some indication as to why it has never been studied within a critical context.

Watson does not explore the idea of community through the gender divide, but it is obvious some of her 'attributes' are more in line with the perceptions concerning female communities. In her domestic setting Watson explores issues of wholeness and unity, rather than separation. Her play is more about creating the ideal community through the restructuring of the traditional family, than highlighting any problems within community itself. It seems that for Watson a revision of community is exactly the solution to the reality of the socio-political climate her characters are part of, namely the early 1980s. The play both explores the trials and tribulations of restructuring the concept of family, and examines how the individual undermines the implementation of the perfect community.

Moving In can be viewed as a utopian experiment, where these four friends try to set up the ideal, both financially and emotionally, living situation. They disrupt the traditional familial structure in order to reset and realign the power relations within the framework of their own notion of community.

---

[41] McMillan, *The Traverse Theatre Story*, 90.

Watson, in her dramaturgy, is keen to show the effort it takes for these characters to achieve their ideal state. From the physical labour, where parts of the new house have to be re-built, to the emotional turmoil, exemplified by the arguments within the household, Watson creates a drama that observes these characters in their pursuit of utopia. The two married couples experience many distractions and infighting that threatens to undermine their community. In this way Watson slowly increases the tension, using these episodes, to the moment that ultimately threatens, but paradoxically also saves the social experiment, that is Dave and Maggie's affair. The end result is not complete social cohesion, but reanalysis of community.

Watson highlights the difficultly of reaching the wholeness or unity that she sees as inherent in community, and *Moving In* is an attempt at such a situation. It is not the idyllic and happy end that Watson is concerned with though, and it is unclear whether or not the household will ever achieve their ideal state. This is indicated in one of the child-like stories told by the characters, at the end of the play. It is about Jimmy the Gnome, whose opportunity to enter the 'City of Glass' is beset by Jimmy's refusal to hand over his prized possession to the guardsman.

> ...and thanking the dalek politely for his kind invitation, he turned his back on the glittering city and plodded off. He looked back once at the mysterious windows, but he had no way of telling whether the eyes looked that through them were watching him with envy or with pity..."[42]

[42] Watson, 71.

The fable shows the simplicity of the play's theme. The characters do not want to abandon their ideal community, so invariably they will journey on. The 'envy or pity' of the people behind the windows leaves a sense of ambiguity as to whether their experiment will succeed. Watson disrupts then resets the familial structure, in order to redefine the idea of community. It is the process, or journey, with all the distractions and arguments in seeking this redefinition, that is the main focus of the play. The drama both 'watches' the characters 'plod' along with their experiment, and shows by being together in this different family group, what the individual members learn from each other.

In *Commedia* Evaristi suggests that the problem with community is that it can be oppressive towards the individual. Watson is more optimistic, seeing community as a space for debate and discussion regarding the identity of the members of that group.

KATE: Dave likes it.
MAGGIE: What? The bread or the fact that you make it?
KATE: How do you mean?
MAGGIE: Oh nothing.[43]

Both Kate and Maggie question each other about their roles as mother and wife, and in the process can assess the structure and power relations within their own families. In her exploration of the ideal community Watson re-imagines and creates an alternative familial structure, from which her characters take part in a wider cultural debate regarding identity, family and community. Into in her imagined domestic space, which acts as a testing

[43] Watson, 8.

ground, Watson places these two married couples that together form a different, and theoretical, notion of family.

The play can be seen as the questioning of the individual roles that are found within the traditional family unit, so as to reach a fairer and more equal community. The emphasis is on the characters learning within the construct of a group, where no one person is allowed to dictate the proceedings and cause their overall project to become socially or politically oppressive towards the individual. The discussions and debates within the play point to a narrative that is

> unsettled, the focus of interest being shared amongst a group [...] with narrative attention shifting amongst a group of characters, the plot itself becoming diffuse or fragmented.[44]

Moving In demonstrates these ideas both structurally and thematically. The four characters want to create an egalitarian community, based on democracy and fairness. The narrative is split between them so as to create a shared sense of responsibility to the fulfilment of their experiment. This is expressed in the characters arguments about how the community should work. Watson specifically creates a tight and simple plot, which allows her to emphasise the importance of the only major incident. This is the affair between Maggie and Dave, which acts as a turning point in the play because it threatens the utopian experiment.

The unsettled nature of the narrative is also reflective of the fact that the group never manages to implement its ideal community, due to the constant

[44] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 170.

distractions the characters experience. One such device that Watson uses to emphasise this recurrent problem is the various exploits and interruptions caused by the children.

> MAGGIE: I see – well I didn't start it. What was to prevent you opening the door and ushering the child on his way? Instead of screaming for a woman to come and bail you out?
> DAVE: I happened to be holding up about a hundredweight of carpentry at the time – [45]

The children's playing keeps infringing upon the seriousness of the adults, and their domestic plans. Along with the constant distraction though, Watson seems to make a link between a child's use of 'make believe', and the characters' need for community that undermines the whole process. Their restructuring of the traditional family moves between the child and adult worlds, between chaotic frivolity and seriousness, and in "play and escapism".[46] This is made more obvious by the fact that Dave, Kate, Maggie and Gordon also play childish games, tell stories and sing songs. During the play it becomes apparent that the group's building of the community itself becomes a distraction, and to a degree protection, from dealing with the problems that each member experiences. As Kate states after she finds out about Dave and Maggie's affair.

> Happiness is nice if you can get it – but we've got a real-life mess and I don't believe that walking away from it is the answer.[47]

---

[45] Watson, 25.
[46] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 171.
[47] Watson, 60.

In a sense the group's social experiment turns into a game precisely because the characters do not want to deal with the 'real-life', their community becomes an escape from reality.

Similarly Evaristi uses child-like games and songs within her work. In her plays this 'childishness' is intended to question and heighten the limitations that gender puts on the individual.[48] Her concern is that societal assumptions regarding gender are mediated, through such devices as education and religion, onto children from a young age. For example *Wedding Belles and Green Grasses* traces the lives of three women brought up within a single-sex Catholic education. They cannot find the answers to their prickly questions from the mentors within this institution, so instead they turn to women's magazines. This aspect of Evaristi's dramaturgy points the absurdity of such assumptions because the child-like naivety questions the rules that regulate society. Watson's games are not as interrogating of society. They merely show four adults, who more and more use the simplicity of 'make-believe' as a means to communicate with each other rather than face confrontations and arguments. It is a dramatic device that further demonstrates the characters' needs to escape from reality.

In a sense the characters play at being a family. Their idea of community moves "towards a fantastic, though not idealised, version of its supernatural

[48] See 'The Tin Mags Song' in *Commedia*, 14; and Rita and Stephanie's discussions in the first Act of *Wedding Belles and Green Grasses* Unpublished (Scottish Theatre Archive: University of Glasgow Library, STA Hn 9/6, 1981).

parallel where characters may still assume, their traditional roles."[49] The characters of the new household, even though they try to improve upon the traditional family, ultimately still inhabit the same roles. Kate now has four children to look after instead of two, and Dave and Gordon still go out to work. Maggie is the only one who has more freedom within this new community, as she can continue with her career. She does though display a sense of guilt and envy towards Kate for inhabiting the mother role. The familial structure has ultimately not been altered, and the idea of community remains static because the characters inhabit this game-like reality. It is because of the affair between Maggie and Dave that the characters begin to realise their 'idealised' social experiment is actually a 'fantastic' one.

Initially other characters see the affair as a betrayal of the collectivism and togetherness of the group. Even though their social experiment tried to realign power relations within the household, the family was still "set as an ideal, with disfunctionality manifest as a denial or disavowal of the familial".[50] Such betrayal is surely to break the group apart. For Watson though, this affair is, in a sense, her 'moment of unity'. Similarly to Evaristi, but in a more positive way, Maggie and Dave's actions cause the household to rethink, individually and collectively, what community actually means. The affair is the reality that shatters their alternative, but largely fantastic idea of community. The group realise that they must work harder for their experiment, and abandoning it is not the answer.

---

[49] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 178.
[50] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 171.

> KATE: At first, you see, I had said to myself – "Snap, end of the story. Experiment over – we go our separate ways". Then I thought, "that doesn't solve anything." We'd still feel terrible, knowing we'd failed.[51]

Kate's reasoning speaks for the whole group. The break up of the household is a negative response to what has occurred. She realises that the group must work harder, so as to be able to implement their shared ideals and create the family, and community, that they all want. It is within the suffocating setting of the household that the characters begin to realise the effort it takes to reach the unity and 'implicit belonging' that they seek.

Watson shows reaching community as a difficult process. In *Moving In* she implies that there is a fine line between the fantastic and the ideal. For her, the former can be seen as a device to escape society, but the latter at least tries to change societal structures and attitudes. Watson may not directly challenge and question community in the way that Evaristi does, but it is through her process of reaching this, as she sees it, natural or idealised state, where her revision of community is apparent. Her play indicates through the restructuring of the familial that the idea of community can be improved upon. It is in trying to achieve this improvement that the individual will start to ask questions of the wider society. Like Maggie and Kate's debates on family and motherhood, they start to challenge each other's opinions. Watson perceives community as being both a natural state, where the

[51] Watson, 60.

individual can feel a sense of belonging, but also it is a space for debate and discussion.

In the wider Scottish cultural debate of the 1980s, it might seem that Watson's play does not raise the difficult questions about Scotland's society, that say Glover or Evaristi do. She bypasses any interrogation of community in favour of re-emphasising what she sees as its qualities. It could be argued that her realignment of the familial structure, along with all the issues and concerns that this entails, can itself be construed as being a reassessment on the wider social climate. The main question that the play asks is why do these characters feel the need to move in together, and further, why do they want to escape from established societal trends, namely the traditional family. Perhaps it is because that within society the idea of community is waning, and Watson sees this situation as detrimental to Scottish culture. It is the naturalness of community that Watson seems to suggest is being corroded by the socio-political climate of the early 1980s. Within the domestic space, she re-evaluates the need for community through her own social experiment in the form of restructuring the family unit.

1.3: Iain Heggie

Community, Culture and Civil War

Iain Heggie's *American Bagpipes* was first produced in 1988, several years after both *Moving In* and *Commedia* were performed. The play is a black comedy that deals with several of the same concerns and ideas as that of Evaristi and Watson: identity, the individual within community and the restructuring of the family unit. One of the crucial differences between Evaristi and Watson, and Heggie's approach to Scottish culture lies in the years separating their productions. The early 1980s can be seen as a time of uncertainty for Scotland. Having failed a Devolution Referendum in 1979, the country then entered a socio-political climate, headed by the Conservative Government, that seemed to be indifferent towards Scotland, its culture and identity within a unified Great Britain. This feeling of uncertainty for Scotland's future underlies both Evaristi's *Commedia* and *Moving In* by Watson. Set in a wider social context these plays re-examine and re-value aspects of Scottish culture. Together these two playwrights highlight the problems of, and offer possible solutions to, a Scotland in the early 1980s, a country entering a flux of cultural and political change.

By contrast Heggie's play is set in the latter days of the 1980s, and can be read as a satire on the effects, but also the policies and politics of Thatcherism in Scotland. Heggie's comedy lies in the debate concerning the economic potential of the individual, when set free from the constraints

placed upon him or her by family or community, over any social value or worth that is seen as intrinsic to social groupings. Set within the context of this chapter *American Bagpipes* is also satirical towards aspects of drama in both Scotland and England during the 1980s. As Heggie says himself,

> Play after play, all saying exactly the same things about unemployment or feminism. It begins to feel like received ideas. Moral issues shouldn't BE boring, but they've become boring.[52]

Heggie does ask questions about the changing nature of community, in the late 1980s, through the framework of the family unit, but does so with a heavy sense of irony. He takes a comedic look at using the familial structure as a representation of a wider Scottish culture in crisis.

Watson's social experiment is satirised through the character of Patrick, the son, who preaches for the break up of the family, rather than trying to find a different structure that will emphasise togetherness. Heggie is also keenly aware of the assessment of Scottish culture in the early 1980s, where images and stereotypes such as tartanry and the 'hardman', were seen as embarrassing and damaging to Scotland. It is the cultural process, by which Scotland was seen to change, that Heggie is interested in. He places this development of Scottish culture, from the old to the new representations, within the relationship between the father and son. In a sense Heggie makes it more obvious than Evaristi and Watson that his family is an image of Scotland going through change, but one that is largely ironic and comedic.

---

[52] Mary Brennan, "New Playwright with a Mission to Oust Boredom" *The Herald* (Glasgow: The Herald, January 1987). (Scottish Theatre Archive: University of Glasgow Library, STA WHC 2/62).

A family battle is what forms the action, drama and structure of Heggie's *American Bagpipes*. This is his second full-length play, and it focuses on the reunion of the Nauldies, a Glaswegian family. Sandra, the daughter, who has been living in Fraserburgh, New Jersey, returns to try and coax her mother, Rena, back to the USA and away from Willie, the tyrannical father and husband. Patrick, the estranged son, who has not been heard from in ten years, reappears due to an advert placed in the newspapers by Sandra. The reunion is not a time of celebration and forgiveness, but one that brings back old arguments and antagonisms. The action takes place in one afternoon, and demonstrates the rise and fall of different power factions within the family. At different points certain individuals will have the upper hand, only to be ousted from this position by another person.

The play can be seen as a family civil war, where there is both this jostling for power, but also a questioning of the strength and effectiveness of the familial structure and the roles played within it. Heggie creates a set of characters that are constantly arguing, interrupting and talking over each other so as to gain control. There is a lack of completeness or coherency to the family unit; instead each individual strives to achieve his or her aims within this reunion.

Heggie rose to fame in the British theatre scene with his first full-length play *A Wholly Healthy Glasgow* (1987). Initially in 1985 it had won the

Mobil Playwriting Competition, hosted by the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester. Two years later the theatre produced the play, where it became a commercial and critical success, and received the reputation of being somewhat controversial. This was mainly due to the explicit, but inventive, language Heggie used. The setting of the play did not help to lessen such a reputation since it takes place in a seedy, back street gym in Glasgow, where employees Charley Hood and Donald Dick see members merely as an opportunity for making money and gaining sexual gratification. The play also received notoriety, at least with the English critics, because of its language. Heggie's own take on the rhythms and inventiveness of the urban Glaswegian speech baffled many critics who were not accustomed to hearing it. The optimistic reviews and the play's reputation meant it secured a place at the Edinburgh International Festival in 1987, and later transferred to the Royal Court Theatre, London the following year.

Within the framework of Scottish theatre, both Alasdair Cameron and Adrienne Scullion have argued that *A Wholly Healthy Glasgow* fits into the genre of the male work place drama. It utilises the same features and forms as McMillan's *The Bevellers* and Byrne's *The Slab Boys*. The action takes on the day a new boy enters the work place. He is rather innocent and naïve, which leads to him being victimised by the other male employees. The plays can be seen as a set of initiation tests that introduce the boy to the male community. They demonstrate how a solid and rigid hierarchy demands and attains power over the individual. The boy is not welcomed

into the group and does not belong, until he has passed these work place rituals and ceremonies. Fundamentally the plays are concerned with a hierarchal and tightly-bound male community defending itself against change, by making sure that the individual or new boy does not step out of line, thus jeopardising the status quo.

Some of these ideas are also explored in *American Bagpipes*, but through the familial structure. Here Heggie shifts his focus from the work place to the home, and into another dramatic form that resonates through Scottish theatre in the twentieth century, the domestic drama. It is recognised that Stewart's *Men Should Weep* revised such a genre, from the kitchen comedy, to a means for political and social commentary. Heggie takes the idea of the domestic being a space for 'public and private discourses', and turns into an anarchic war zone, where family members verbally assault each other. His comedy shows what power and hold the idea of family has on the individual. Even being part of such an abusive and violent one as the Nauldies, is preferable to facing life alone.

American Bagpipes also premiered at the Royal Exchange Theatre in February 1988. Heggie was in quite a unique position for a Scottish playwright in this year. His first two plays were produced, in February, by two English theatre companies simultaneously, one in Manchester and the other in London. *American Bagpipes* was itself a commercial and critical success, and later transferred to the Royal Court Theatre in 1989. Despite

such accolades, Cameron, writing in 1990, points out that "so far no Scottish theatre has produced either Heggie's first play or his subsequent venture in Scottish life [*American Bagpipes*]".[53] There is also something of a lack of critical analysis of Heggie's work in the 1980s, especially *American Bagpipes*. As a brief example the collection of essays entitled *Scottish Theatre Since the Seventies* (1996), devotes one sentence to the work of Heggie. The most detailed analysis on his position in Scottish drama is provided by the academics Scullion and Cameron.

For this lack, there is no obvious explanation. Perhaps because his first two plays were produced in England, it seemed that they were not actually contributing to the Scottish theatrical scene in the 1980s. Heggie himself was not fundamentally engaged in the debate north of the border on the nature of Scottish culture or identity because of his location. This is a rather facile logic because another successful and important Scottish playwright, whose work is examined within a Scottish discourse, and who writes for the English stage, is Sharman Macdonald.

Heggie in his presentation of Scottish culture or identity is perhaps not applying the most valuable arguments to the debate that was occurring in the 1980s. His depictions of urban living in Scotland do not have clear political or cultural incentives behind them. This is not to suggest that his work is apolitical, but Heggie consciously layers his politics with a heavy

[53] Cameron, *Study Guide to Twentieth-Century Scottish Drama*, 165.

use of irony and tongue-in-cheek humour, so as to confuse any message, or to satirise the myths and views of Scottish working class life. This includes ideas such as the Scottish work ethic and solidarity in *A Wholly Healthy Glasgow*, to drunkenness, violence and an abusive male dominated hierarchy, in *American Bagpipes*. Heggie therefore does not so much revise these stereotypes or myths within a cultural debate, but relies upon them for comedic purposes.

Perhaps then Heggie's work, in the 1980s, is not saying anything particularly new or different regarding Scottish culture or identity. As noted above *A Wholly Healthy Glasgow* is a repeat of the 1970's genre, the Scottish work place drama. Heggie may use it to explore the political climate of free enterprise in the 1980s, but the depiction of Scottish culture, as represented by this male community, is still one of power, abuse and dominance. Scullion argues this point when she writes that Heggie uses the work place drama, with all of it conventions, as a "source-genre", but does not revise, reassess or question it as a genre.[54] She also makes a valid argument regarding the nature of *A Wholly Healthy Glasgow* that could also apply to *American Bagpipes*.

> An easy way to read Heggie's play is as an immoral tale of seedy characters and lowlife happenings in a grim and debilitating environment. But this sets the play in a world of virtue and moral judgement, allowing the framework of responsibility and humanity it consistently refuses.[55]

[54] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 185.
[55] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 185.

Hence Heggie's first two plays reject the social 'framework' that allows for values and judgements to be made. Instead he depicts communities that are "determinedly amoral" and individuals who do not conform to any ideology, except their own.[56] This sense of relativism appears to distance his early work from any strong social or political critique or commitment. Heggie seems not to question Scottish culture, merely play around with it. Within the revisionist climate of Scotland in the 1980s, Heggie work is perhaps regarded as unnecessary for the debate on Scottishness.

Cameron's description of Heggie's plays as "language-based" also highlights an aspect of his work that is focussed on more than others.[57] It is the inventive swearing and rhythms inherent in the Glaswegian dialogue that is one of the obvious features of *A Wholly Healthy Glasgow*.

> The play got me a reputation for being an angry writer. This, I take it, is a response to the language, as to me the *action* of the play is probably the lightest of anything I've written.[58]

As Heggie admits the emphasis is on the 'patter' of the play and not so much in the situation. He describes his later work such as *An Experienced Woman Gives Advice* (1995) and *King of Scotland* (2000), as "aggressive comedies".[59] By his second play though, Heggie is moving away from both the emphasis on language, and the 'lightness' of substance, towards a more 'aggressive' exploration of ideas. The most obvious of these is the use and relevance of family. *American Bagpipes* is still 'language-based' rather

---

[56] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 185.
[57] Cameron, *Study Guide to Twentieth-Century Scottish Drama*, 165.
[58] Iain Heggie, "Introduction" *Plays: 1* (London: Methuen Publishing Limited, 2003) ix-x, ix.
[59] Heggie, "Introduction", ix.

than driven by action, but Heggie shows the dialogue more as a weapon, than as a comedic 'slanging match'. It is the ideas that Heggie explores in the play that mark it out as defiant shift from his debut.

The description of 'language-based' becomes less relevant with Heggie's *Clyde Nouveau* (1989), which he wrote for the Edinburgh International Festival. Heggie still uses an urban working class Glaswegian dialect, but the play is more action-based and overtly political than previously seen. He makes a direct link between property investors trying to buy up buildings along the River Clyde, at a time when Glasgow was waiting to become the European City of Culture, and the criminal underworld. The play suggests that the rules of capitalism are not so far removed from the practices of organised crime.

American Bagpipes can be described as a transitional play, where Heggie was experimenting with his own dramaturgy to create a more substantive form of drama. Heggie acknowledges this when he writes that the

> fault with the original version of the play was that it was overcomplicated, understructured and its ambitions were in excess of my ability, at the time, to bring it all together.[60]

Even at the ten-year anniversary revival of the play, produced by the Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh, Heggie is still unsure of it.

[60] Heggie, "Introduction", ix.

> *American Bagpipes* is my most troublesome and loved wean. Mark [Thompson, Artistic Director] and the actors are either impressively dumb or laughably brave giving it another birl. I've done some surgery on it. Maybe after Musselburgh I'll do some more.[61]

The play is problematic, precisely because of its theme. It demonstrates a family that lacks both order and structure. For Heggie to emphasise such an idea, he has to create a void where moral responsibilities and judgements do not exist. There can be no framework with which to assess the actions of the characters as either right or wrong.

The idea of the void is apparent at the beginning of the play, when Sandra and Rena enter a room "*stripped of furniture except upright chairs*".[62] It has been removed of most of the markers and signs that point to it being used as a living room. In a sense it is an 'open space' from which the family battle may commence. The one sign that remains, which implies authority, is Willie's police shirt, and it is against his tyranny that most of the verbal barrage is aimed. It is into this void of chaos that the Nauldies enter to begin their battle. As the arguments become more violent, furniture is brought back in. This allows the room to become once again a normal living area, but also acts a metaphorical shield against the chaos of the void. "You're in the road. And that gramophone's in the wrong place. That's where the bureau should be."[63] The furniture adds meaning and structure to the room, and in turn to the family that live in it. The power struggles and

---

[61] Iain Heggie, "Author's Note." Programme. *American Bagpipes*. Brunton Theatre, 6-21 March 1998. Scottish Theatre Archive: University of Glasgow Library, STA PYC 7/9).
[62] Iain Heggie, *American Bagpipes* in *Plays: 1*, 89-198, 91.
[63] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 181.

arguments that ensue within the void have been settled, and Patrick's attempt to break-up the family has failed.

Within the structure of the play itself, Heggie creates a sense of a void. He intentionally writes a narrative that feels stuck and unable to progress. The plot of the play is simple, and consists of Sandra and Patrick trying to disrupt and split up the family. These attempts take place one afternoon in the Nauldie household. The substance of *American Bagpipes* is not so much action-based, but is a collection of arguments and ideas that swirl around and are bandied between family members. It is as if such a day of reckoning is needed, and the family must come together to have a ritualistic fight or 'barny' then return to their lives. It is not being suggested that the play is action-less, but whereas Evaristi uses the events in *Commedia* to demonstrate the continuing power Stefano has over the family, Heggie creates a sporadic-like narrative, within the domestic drama format, exactly to emphasise the different power struggles that are being played out.

> It's the family that's ignoring you. Because we're just not built to be together, are we? We want things we can't give each other.[64]

No one member of the Nauldies is dominant because within this one afternoon, a new familial structure and organisational process is being fought over. Heggie's void is similar to Evaristi and her instant of 'uncertain freedom'. It is a moment where established notions of family, community, society and identity can be both questioned and reorganised.

---

[64] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 175.

Whereas Evaristi uses a drama that displays the pain and anxiety of such a situation, Heggie revels in the absurdness and chaos that such a void creates.

In the history of Scottish theatre, family is repeatedly shown as an ideal. Action against or departure from such an entity is regarded as "a violation of general order, to be depicted as socially uncontainable transgression." [65] Heggie depicts a family that is supposedly far from ideal. In Patrick's eyes it is precisely such a community that drove him away, and he has returned to gain his revenge by disrupting the Nauldies and changing the lives of the individual members forever. He has written a book entitled *Family Atrocities*, where he attributes the problems of his life to that of his family. Patrick believes that the household community limits the potential of the individual.

> PATRICK: There's nothing wrong with me.
> WILLIE: I/
> PATRICK: But there is with you. All of you. That's why you're all going to have to get away from each other.[66]

He argues that only in isolation can a person truly be free. Therefore community, for Patrick, is inhibiting, it is merely a group of individuals that are joined together to manipulate each other. As Patrick himself theorises, "It's needing people that make people liars!"[67] Community is a façade for both self-interest and selfish pursuits. There is no realisation in such a social grouping, only delusion.

---

[65] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasure and Masculine Indignities", 171.
[66] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 168.
[67] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 194.

Patrick's views are an extreme, but ironic notion of community. Heggie makes his character both a subject to, and of, the socio-political climate of the 1980s. Patrick is the harbinger that returns to the Nauldie household to disrupt, but ultimately release his family from the burden of collectivism, and to get the individual members to realise their potential. Patrick's separation is an extreme and ironic look at the restructuring of the family unit. The idea of community is outdated and non-beneficial, instead of the Nauldie's working together, they argue, so the unit must disband. It is telling that for Patrick to try and empower Rena, he takes her to the job centre, or wants her to buy a house. Patrick sees no importance in running a family, and demands Rena to become economically viable and useful to reach her potential. His demand for the break-up of the Nauldies is deepened when he realises that nothing has changed since he left. Willie is still a constable in the police force and Rena is the housewife who looks after him.

Heggie depicts a similar view to family as community that Evaristi portrays in *Commedia*. It is a static, stable and unchangeable entity that guards against reality. Both Heggie and Evaristi show a family in a flux of change, and this event allows the playwrights to expose the underlying power relations that govern such an idea. Whereas Evaristi uses a death to instigate such an exposure, it is the arrival of Patrick that causes the disruption to the Nauldies. Stefano in *Commedia* keeps the familial structure intact because it provides him with comfort and security, and an

escape from reality. In a sense it is a selfish and individual pursuit that stops change. Patrick takes this idea a step further, when he suggests that the concept of family is merely a collection of individuals that feel indifferent towards each other.

> SANDRA: You came home to settle scores, didn't you?
> PATRICK: Oh no. I came home to get you all to change.
> SANDRA: So why don't you get on with it?
> PATRICK: I don't get on with it, Sandra, because though I did reckon on you all being irrelevant to each other I didn't on you not caring a toss about it. You'd rather be irrelevant to each other and drag out your miserable rotten lives together than face the pain of change.[68]

The Nauldies are merely using this ideal tradition, so as not to face either the truth of his or her situation, or to change. Therefore community is not built upon commonality, caring or a shared purpose, but ironically, on an almost complete disregard for other individuals. It is embedded with an ideology of fear and selfishness, but also the need for other people to block out any self-realisation or change.

This is Patrick's argument that he explores within his book. His critical framework is drawn from his own experiences and feelings of family life. He then brings his findings for Sandra, Rena and Willie to read, but also to test his theories. Heggie structures the play in such a way that Act One can be seen as a rivalry between Patrick and Sandra for control of the family. There is no sense of familial belonging or shared commonality; both have their own agenda for the future of Rena and Willie.

---

[68] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 192.

SANDRA: Because getting my mother to go to America is the least you can do.
PATRICK: Oh, it is?
SANDRA: Yes it is! Because half the reason she's stuck it out with him is: she's been waiting for you to come back.[69]

Sandra's plans do not come to fruition because Patrick has his own ideas for the family. Firstly he must topple his father from the dominant position as head of the household. This he tries by merely annoying Willie with petty displays of power. Patrick both wears and keeps Willie's police cap, which is a mark of Willie's authority; he then demands a bath, even though the hot water is Willie's; and he stops his father going to work, which Willie takes as a serious insult because he has never missed a day in his life. Patrick disturbs three Scottish stereotypes that Willie latches onto, namely, the male 'hardman', cheapness, or cautiousness with money and the tough work ethic. These are the superficial markings that cite Willie's dominance and identity.

RENA: The carpet, Sandra.
Pause
SANDRA: Och, the carpet'll be dry.
She throws off her shoes and tries the carpet with her feet.
RENA: Your father's carpet.
SANDRA: It is dry.
RENA: So I hope it's dry.[70]

Willie displays his dominance by placing ownership on everything, and referring to his wife by her role, or giving her a name he has made up. He calls Rena Bridget, and Sandra becomes America. He does not let them have any sense of individual identity because he keeps, and controls them, within a tightly-bound community of his making.

---

[69] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 117-118.
[70] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 91.

Ultimately this is threatened by the arrival of Patrick. Willie's own sense of self and identity is questioned when his son challenges him. In a wider context Patrick's entry into the household marks an examination of the cultural change between old and new Scotland.

WILLIE:	And shut the mouth, you pair. I'm talking. Now/
PATRICK:	Oh, Dad/
WILLIE:	And/
PATRICK:	You/
WILLIE:	You won't be wearing my cap!
PATRICK:	You'll never talk like that to my mother and sister again, OK?[71]

Heggie suggests that what holds together the male community is paradoxically its weakest element. Power is relative and is easily transferred to Patrick, by the symbolic act of wearing his father's police cap. Heggie comically portrays the iconic Scottish 'hardman', who "waded through razor gangs on a daily basis", as being fragile and vulnerable.[72] At the end of the Act, Willie's authority, status and identity has been undermined by Patrick's arrival that he suddenly feels the change, and begins to cry, shouting, "I just want someone to love me!"[73] Patrick has gained control of the family and proceeds to try and reorganise it.

Patrick's test case for his social theories is his family. In a broader context, Heggie is perhaps taking a satirical look at the way Scottish culture and identity were themselves being tested in the late 1970s and 1980s. A time when Scottish symbols, such as tartan, stereotypes, like the drinking 'hardman', and myths of egalitarianism, solidarity and community were

[71] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 141.
[72] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 143.
[73] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 154.

argued over and analysed to understand Scotland's situation. For example Tom Nairn's book *The Break-Up of Britain* (1977) uses Scotland as a testing ground for his theories on nationalism and culture from a Marxist perspective. His analysis does not permit for a healthy view of Scotland, which he sees as being continually invaded by a "vast tartan monster", and his disgust of it is expressed in this rant.

> But it is something else to be with it (e.g.) in a London pub on International night, or in the crowd at the annual Military Tattoo in front of Edinburgh Castle. How intolerably vulgar! What unbearable, crass, mindless philistinism! One knows that *Kitsch* is a large constituent of mass popular culture in every land: but this is ridiculous.[74]

Nairn's dislike of this 'kitsch' is because, in his argument, it represents a wider Scottish culture to the rest of the world, and hence damages Scotland's identity.

During the 1980s academics such Cairns Craig, Craig Beveridge, and Ronald Turnbull, debated that such supposedly inferior elements of Scottish culture, namely, tartanry and Kailyard, were too deeply ingrained within the fabric of Scotland to be simply shouted about. There was no attempt to understand the social significance, value or belief systems that were bound to these symbols and signs of Scottish identity.

> The view that popular consciousness is dominated by tartanry, that the populace is sunk in ignorance and irrationality, accords perfectly with the governing image of Scotland as a dark and backward culture.[75]

---

[74] Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* 2nd edition (London: Verso, 1981) 162.
[75] Beveridge and Turnbull, *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture*, 14.

Beveridge and Turnbull argue that symbols like tartan, are not properly debated within Scottish cultural discourse, but are readily embraced to uphold this 'governing image' of Scotland. They also propose that Nairn uses this 'vulgar kitsch' to represent the whole of Scottish culture. In this he creates a narrow-minded view of Scotland, for the purposes of proving his theories, and paradoxically damages Scottish identity himself. He inferiorises Scottish culture because he fails to analyse the whole picture, boldly resting on the point that Scotland is abnormal because it did not follow the Marxist historical trajectory.

A similar cultural argument occurs within the confines of the Nauldie household, particularly between Patrick and Willie. Patrick comes to test his theories on his family, precisely because it is an example of how debilitating community is for the individual. His rants against such social groupings resemble Nairn's diatribes at Scottish culture. Patrick wants to prove a point, and in doing so creates an idea of community that is wholly negative. As he states, "It's needing people that stops people changing."[76] It is this notion of being stuck and unable to progress that upsets Patrick, and he cites family and community as the cause.

Within the cultural debate Willie, and his family, represents an outdated Scotland. Patrick sees him as being 'sunk in ignorance and irrationality', and a person that upholds, but also moves between certain Scottish

[76] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 195.

stereotypes. Firstly Willie is the dominant and 'hard' working class urban male, a prevalent symbol in Scottish culture. When Patrick usurps his father's authority, Willie's identity becomes yet another easily definable Scottish stereotype. It is the sentimental, morose drinking Scotsman. This is exactly the situation that Patrick has arrived to dissipate. Only after the family reads his book will Rena, Willie and Sandra understand what their lives are like, and separate so as to change them. In the broader context, Patrick is the "educated type" that is disappointed with the outdated Scotland, and blames it for a culture that is 'crass' and stifled by damaging myths and stereotypes.[77] He is going to liberate Scotland by the truth in his book, so the country can begin to progress.

Whereas Evaristi uses the community, and the power relations within it, as a framework for identity, Heggie takes such a concept to examine the process of a changing culture, rather than the culture itself. In both *A Wholly Healthy Glasgow* and *Clyde Nouveau* he is "reconsidering critically the metamorphosis of Glasgow from urban desert to yuppie paradise".[78] It is the 'upgrading' or revising of Scottish culture, localised in a Glasgow setting, that concerns Heggie. In *American Bagpipes* it is Patrick's ideas that signify this change. Coupled with this though is the Americanisations Heggie subtly includes. Willie calls whisky, scotch, and Rena substitutes cop for policeman. The title itself is an oxymoronic statement that suggests

---

[77] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 159.
[78] Alasdair Cameron, "Introduction" *Scot Free: New Scottish Plays* ed. Alasdair Cameron (London: Nick Hern Books 1990) vii-xviii, xvii.

a culture clash within the play. Throughout the comedy Willie and Rena get more annoyed with Sandra's optimism for the USA.

> SANDRA: Aye. In America no one is mean with their hot water.
> RENA: Aye. In America everyone's mean with their hot shite.[79]

Sandra's plot to bring her mother to the USA and to adopt the American ideology fails. This is because Sandra does not dominate the family. Within the hierarchy of such community Patrick has the power, but also the special relationship with his mother, who listens and trusts him. His superiority converts Sandra to his ideology, where she abandons her American life.

Patrick's revision on the idea of family occurs within Act Two of the play, when he proceeds to get his parents to read his book. Willie, the outdated image of Scotland, has acquiesced to his son's authority. Patrick may have overthrown his father's authority, but Willie is happy to resign his post as head of household because his son is now educated, and therefore has the right to lead the family, and the cultural debate. As Willie proudly announces, "If he's educated he can shit all over my carpet, Bridget,"[80] Heggie satirises Patrick as the intellectual that wants to help this community through a process of change, without really understanding it.

This becomes apparent when the facts in his book are refuted. Similarly to Beveridge and Turnbull's critique of Nairn, Patrick has looked to the

[79] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 125.
[80] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 159.

negative aspects of family to create an argument that happens to be untrue. Rena shows this when she reads from *Family Atrocities*.

> '[...] I would take her to the jobcentre to try and encourage her to get work and become independent. Her confidence was so shattered she didn't even have the courage to go up for cleaning work.' Patrick, the problem wasn't confidence. The problem was I'd spent the whole week cleaning up after you and your father.[81]

Patrick's conclusion of community being detrimental to the individual is based on falsehoods. His parents sexless marriage is revealed as a lie; their sleeping in separate rooms is because Willie has too many erections; they both knew about Patrick stealing money from them, so that is why Willie never raised his pocket money, not cause he was mean; and Willie's supposed girlfriend was actually his scalp specialist. Patrick's analysis is wrong, and somewhat dangerous because it is built upon false information and personal prejudice.

In the wider cultural debate Patrick is trying to get rid of aspects of Scottish, albeit Glaswegian, working class life because they are debilitating to Scotland's identity. In *American Bagpipes* Heggie creates a comedy that satirises this process, within the chaos of a family war. Patrick and Willie represent two ideas of Scottish culture, one that is old and based on stereotypes, and the other new and idealistic. Within the male community, this relationship becomes volatile because Patrick threatens Willie's way of life. This is evident when he hits Patrick for messing up his carpet, but perhaps also for disrupting his house. Scullion's analysis of the Scottish

---

[81] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 188.

family as an ideal, underlines Willie's violence. Patrick's 'denial or disavowal of the familial' is unacceptable behaviour and must be curtailed. Patrick's arguments that question the family have been weakened, allowing Willie to reclaim his place as head of the household.

Heggie creates a void, in which he places a family that is in the process of reorganisation. In this battle for dominance Heggie suggests that legitimatising parts of Scottish culture, or even defining it, is not a simple process. Merely seeing elements of it as unnecessary or classifying certain myths and stereotypes as 'vulgar', does not create a debate, but hostility. As Sandra decries when she first reads *Family Atrocities*, "Because he'll be publishing that book over my dead body!"[82] At the end of the play, Heggie creates an image inherent in Scottish culture and identity that refuses to leave. It is the 'tartan monster', that is manifest within Rena and Willie's dance at the end. They are both dressed in tartan outfits and so engrossed in their dancing that Patrick and Sandra leave unnoticed. All the meddling to try and separate and change Willie and Rena has failed. Patrick's disruption of the family, if seen as satire on cultural revisionism, shows that some aspects of Scottish identity refuse to leave.

Within this chapter family has been shown as a framework, from which the idea of community has been questioned. The power relations within the familial structure correspond to the wider social forms that govern a

[82] Heggie, *American Bagpipes*, 162.

person's life. Whereas Watson sees community as an ideal, and focuses her drama on the process to achieve such perfectibility, Evaristi questions that assumption, creating dramas where such idealism is actually dominating and hierarchical. She represents community as not so much a liberating ideology, but a social institution that determines the role and the identity of the individual.

It is precisely the institutional aspect of community that Heggie is interested in. He does not so much question, deconstruct, or revise the notion of community, but uses it as a site that demonstrates the process of change. Whereas both Evaristi and Watson's different responses towards the idea of community, debate on the nature of Scottish culture and identity, a discussion that was prominent in the socio-political climate of the 1980s, Heggie focuses more on the power relations that surround such talks. Community is seen as a structure where different people grapple for the right to legitimatise their ideas. His early comedies satirise, albeit within a rigid confines of the male community, the processes involved in the changing of Scottish identity and culture.

CHAPTER TWO

Old and New Urban Communities

This chapter moves the concept of community outwith the strictly domestic setting, and looks at the wider Scottish urban communities. Similarly to family, the lives of urban dwellers, albeit mainly working-class and situated in Glasgow, feature heavily within Scottish drama. One of the most noted examples of this urban genre is Robert McLeish's *The Gorbals Story* (1946), which "was seen by over a hundred thousand people in six months after its first performance" and subsequently toured to London.[83] In general Scottish plays that form part of the urban drama genre deal with tough political issues such as the economic poverty of the industrialised working classes, inadequate housing conditions, and violence, but, as Cameron has noted, they tend to use sentimentality, a sense of nostalgia for better times, and humour to "sweeten the message."[84] Both Spence in *Sailmaker* and *Space Invaders*, and McGrath in *Kora* explore similar territory to that of previous Scottish urban dramas, but perhaps use more of a philosophical or spiritual outlook, than sentiment to lighten the hard issues in their work.

Spence and McGrath situate their plays within an industrially declining or post-industrial Scotland, and explore the notions of uncertainty and instability that were prevalent in the previous chapter. Instead of focussing

---

[83] Randall Stevenson, "In the Jungle of the Cities" *Scottish Theatre Since the Seventies* eds. Stevenson and Wallace, 100-111, 101.
[84] Cameron, *Study Guide to Twentieth-Century Scottish Drama*, 171.

on the changing nature of the family unit, Spence and McGrath widen their scope over the demolition and rebuilding of parts of Scotland's cities, and the affect this has on people's lives, to examine such themes. The plays in this chapter deal specifically with the physical creation and building of new communities.

Both of these playwrights explore the problems faced when individuals are placed in a new and ready-made community, but one that is largely isolated from the rest of society. This movement demonstrates the difficulties involved in trying to place people together while maintaining a communal living experience. The problem is that individuals are *moved* there, rather than move there, and this causes what Emanuela Rossini calls a " 'situation of displacement' ".[85] In recent Scottish history this could be applied to the demolition of the Glasgow tenements and building of new housing estates and towns outside the city. This 'displacement' leads to individuals experiencing a sense of uncertainty about their identity and place in society.

Spence and McGrath use the demolition and rebuilding process to examine what they perceive to be two different ideas of community, one that is physical, and the other being natural. Their test cases are the housing estates and new towns built in the 1960s and 1970s around the cities of Glasgow and Dundee. Similarly to Watson in the previous chapter, Spence and McGrath look for a wholeness and unity to counteract the feelings of

[85] Emanuela Rossini, "National Identity in Contemporary Scottish Theatre and the Challenge for the Italian Translator" *A Theatre That Matters* eds. Poggi and Rose, 145-155, 148.

dislocation and fragmentation, which are perhaps representative of a changing Scotland in the early 1980s.

Both playwrights explore the difference between the idea of a physical, concrete community such as a housing estate, and that of an imagined one, where humanity is linked by some greater spiritual purpose, or more simply by common decency and regard for each other. Spence emphasises his spiritualism by the use of memory and out-of-body experiences within *Sailmaker* and *Space Invaders*. In *Kora* McGrath's concept of the imagined is examined through his perception of the female community, and built on ideas of fairness, egalitarianism and togetherness. Both playwrights make the point that an individual's surroundings can impede his or her sense of an attachment to community. In the plays being discussed here, Spence and McGrath show that creating a physical community does not necessary mean that a *sense* of community among the inhabitants will occur. In fact, the playwrights are aware that isolation and uncertainty caused by moving people into new, but poorly designed communities is more likely to be the outcome of these social endeavours.

This chapter will explore Spence and McGrath's depiction of urban communities, and the problems faced by these people who live in, and on, the new housing estates and towns situated around Scotland's industrial areas. Both playwrights tackle this 'displacement' differently, but equally Spence and McGrath show that trying to create a sense of community within

a large group of people is a problematic issue. In highlighting the paradox between the concrete and the imagined, both dramatists discuss aspects of community that can be read within the contexts of Scottish drama and culture.

2.1: Alan Spence

The Universal Community

Together Spence's *Sailmaker* and *Space Invaders* can be seen to tell one story within the history of Glasgow's urban redevelopment. The first play is set in Govan during the 1960s, just before the tenements were demolished and the inhabitants re-housed. *Sailmaker* is about Alec, a boy whose mother has just died, leaving him to be brought up by his father, Davie. Davie is the 'sailmaker' of the title, but due to changes, and the subsequent decline of Britain's heavy industries, he finds himself redundant. In creating Davie, Spence uses him as a reference or metaphor for the male working class community at a time when Scotland was under going "de-industrialisation and economic restructuring."[86] The relationship between father and son signifies the cross-over of two different generations at a pivotal time in Scotland's economic transformation from manufacturing to service industries. The play is a look at, but also Alec's remembrance, of a community before it is inexorably changed by the movement of its inhabitants.

Space Invaders can be seen as the concluding part to this story. The play moves to the present day of the early 1980s, and Spence shows the result of the re-housing first mentioned in *Sailmaker*. It could be argued that the character Andrew in *Space Invaders* is either a grown-up Alec, or more

[86] David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: Sociology of a Nation*, 15.

likely his cousin Ian. Andrew and his family live in a nondescript Scottish new town, where they feel isolated from the majority of society. The play revolves around the fact that Andrew believes he has encountered aliens from outer space. He consults a doctor who diagnoses this celestial experience as some sort of psychological trauma caused by Andrew's unemployment and family problems. Spence juxtaposes feelings of instability and dislocation in Andrew's life, with that of an overarching and universal sense of community between humans, as represented by the 'space invaders' and Andrew's out-of-body experience. Whereas *Sailmaker* is more about the remembrance of a specific community, *Space Invaders* is concerned with the loss of a sense of community among people.

Spence is perhaps better known for being a novelist and poet than as a playwright. These two plays are both published, but remain absent from any critical analysis within Scottish theatre studies. Although it must be noted that *Sailmaker* is one text that is read within Scottish secondary education. Both the context surrounding the production of the plays, and Spence's uses of 'stock material' within the content of these dramas are factors that could account for this absence.

Sailmaker and *Space Invaders* were premiered at the Traverse Theatre Club in 1982 and 1983 respectively, at a time when the theatre was going through something of a transitional phase. This was a period when the Traverse, under the Artistic Director Peter Lichtenfels, was experiencing financial

difficulties. The Traverse was still embroiled in arguments with the SAC regarding its funding, and also the quality of the work it produced, which left a question mark hanging over the theatre's future. To alleviate some of this financial strain the Traverse closed its doors in the winter between 1981-82 for five months, and again for four months during 1982-83. These closures meant that the Traverse produced only eight new in-house productions in the years 1982-84.[87]

It was not only finance that was the problem, but the Traverse had to rethink its artistic policy after the departure of Chris Parr, whose time there had coincided and helped to create "a bright cultural renaissance" within Scottish theatre.[88] Joyce McMillan suggests that these factors affected the quality of the Traverse's output, where

> it seemed that the new plays [...] in the early 80's [sic] never generated the challenging, exciting, assumption-jolting atmosphere that genuinely new work should.[89]

She continues that the work was "small-scale, quiet, detailed, personalised, social-observational drama"[90]. Both of Spence's plays fit this description, a description that the Traverse itself would reject a couple of years later with its 1984 triple bill 'Points of Departure' season consisting of short plays by new Scottish playwrights.[91] This shift in the Traverse's output was continued the following year, with the premieres of John Clifford's *Losing*

---

[87] There were five Traverse productions between 1982-83, which Joyce McMillan notes was "the lowest figure ever." During the 1983-84 season the figure was down to three. McMillan, *The Traverse Theatre Story*, 90.
[88] McMillan, *The Traverse Theatre Story*, 88.
[89] McMillan, *The Traverse Theatre Story*, 89.
[90] McMillan, *The Traverse Theatre Story*, 92.
[91] This season included Chris Hannan's *Purity* (1984), Simon Donald's *In Descent* (1984) and Stuart Paterson's *The Clean Sweeps* (1984).

Venice (1985), Peter Arnott's *White Rose* (1985) and Chris Hannan's *Elizabeth Gordon Quinn* (1985), plays that moved away from 'social-observational drama'.

It was this change in the Traverse's artistic direction that allowed the company to regain its reputation as being an important part of both Scottish theatre and culture. Subsequently the critical literature surrounding Scottish drama has tended to focus on the plays being produced by the Traverse from the mid-1980s onwards. Perhaps this is because it was a time when a number of Scottish playwrights were moving away from the dominant urban and realistic depictions of Scotland, and using elements of fantasy, myth, metaphor and symbolism to explore, and widen, the debate concerning Scottish culture. In a sense the Traverse was beginning to engage more fully with the cultural revisionism occurring in Scotland during the 1980s.

It could be argued that the situation at the Traverse in the early 1980s has contributed to, in part, the absence *Sailmaker* and *Space Invaders* from any critical literature. Initially the plays were produced when the Traverse had low audience figures and its artistic direction was under scrutiny. What underlies this fact, though, is that the shift occurring in the Traverse's work in the mid-1980s leaves Spence's urban and 'personalised' depictions of Scottish cultural life looking somewhat out-of-date and out-of-fashion. In a sense *Sailmaker* and *Space Invaders* have been 'missed', or more likely,

sidelined due to both the critical and popular responses the Traverse received for its output and artistic direction in latter half of the 1980s.

Within Scottish theatre studies *Sailmaker* and *Space Invaders* are not viewed as significant in the overall development of Scottish drama in the 1980s. Spence's 'out-of-dateness' can also be attributed to the fact that in both his plays he relies upon traits, characteristics and 'stock material' that Cameron has defined, within his *Study Guide To Twentieth Century Scottish Drama* (1990), as typical of the Scottish play. Firstly there is Spence's use of location, with both plays taking place in or just outside of an urban working-class Glasgow. His dramas also fit securely into the genre of "serio-comic naturalism", and lastly Spence treats his subject matter with "Too much nostalgia [...], and too little analysis."[92] Spence perhaps does not fully engage with, or offer new arguments for, the cultural debate concerning Scotland, but it could also be argued that he is not particularly interested in giving a social critique. Such a view can be seen from his own treatment of community.

Underlying both these plays is "a sense of belonging and displacement", which Rossini has noted as being a feature within Scottish contemporary drama.[93] Spence's characters move between such feelings, which cause family conflicts within the two plays. These arguments are symptomatic of the situation the individuals find themselves in. In the *Sailmaker* it is the

[92] Cameron, *Study Guide to Twentieth-Century Scottish Drama*, 171.
[93] Rossini, 147.

disintegration of a working class Govan community, and in *Space Invaders* it is living in a new, but badly designed and isolated town. Any sense of Spence's politics is aimed at the causes that bring about feelings of 'displacement', such as an individual's surroundings, or a person's place and worth in society.

By contrast Spence equates belonging with the idea of community. One criticism of the early 1980s that could be drawn from these plays is not to undervalue the benefits that a sense community provides for people. This is as far as Spence's politics go because similarly to Watson, he does not directly question the idea of community, but assumes it as being an intrinsic part of human nature. His work is seen more as a poetical and metaphysical examination on the nature of community. As Alec says in *Sailmaker*, "Glasgow made the Clyde, the Clyde made Glasgow./Matter can neither be created nor destroyed."[94] The harsh realities of working class life are perhaps sidestepped by such philosophical and scientific theories, but Spence treats the idea of community as an overarching shared value. This is hinted at when Alec talks about a seashell.

> Ah used to think it was the *actual* sea ye could hear. Whatever sea the shell came from. As if the shell had a memory of the sea right inside it. Naw. No a memory, that's the wrong word. More like an echo. As if it had been caught inside.[95]

It is this 'echo' that forms the crux of Spence's dramaturgy. In a sense Alec's remembrance of his childhood is a realisation that Davie's life is 'caught inside' him. Spence seems to suggest people's lives are echoes that

[94] Alan Spence, *Sailmaker* 2nd edition (Kent: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988) 44.
[95] Spence, *Sailmaker*, 40.

reverberate off, and influence, each other, which causes the 'sharedness' he attributes to the natural community.

Sailmaker can be read as a map of Alec's childhood memories, realising that they have made him who he is. Spence emphasises this idea by making Alec both the narrator of and a character in the drama. The play consists of a series of episodes that seem to drift along without a sense of direction, precisely because Alec is remembering them. Near the end of the play Alec looks through the "Glory Hole" for old and useless items to burn and warm the flat. [96] The 'Glory Hole' is a room or cupboard, where all the old and forgotten belongings of Davie and Alec are stored. This 'hole' represents Alec's unconscious mind and in it he finds an old hymnbook, comics, his toy yacht. These are all links to his past and they are in turn symbolically burned. The physical nature of the items is not important, it is the memory of them and these will continually reverberate throughout Alec's life. As he states to Davie "But part of ye remembers everythin."[97] It is this 'part' which links Alec to a shared human community. This is emphasised by the poem in the play.

> ALEC I thought you wrote it, ye know – made it up yourself.
> DAVIE Och naw. Ah learned it fae *ma* father. Ah wis just passing it on.[98]

Alec's life is portrayed as an echo of his father's and to a certain degree the many lives that have gone before him.

---

[96] Spence, *Sailmaker*, 39.
[97] Spence, *Sailmaker*, 40.
[98] Spence, *Sailmaker*, 39.

During the play there are two different ideas of community that conflict with each other, and are represented by the characters of Alec and Davie, and their relationship. Firstly there is the idea of a static and unchangeable community that Davie inhabits. He is in a similar predicament as to Stefano in *Commedia*, in that his life and surroundings are changing, but differently, Davie is represented as being powerless to make it stop. He signifies a working class male community that is fragmenting and losing its meaning within the wider society. His community is, in a sense, out of date, and this causes Davie to become morose about his life at several moments in the play.

> Work aw yer days an what've ye got tae show for it? Turn roon an kick ye in the teeth. Ah mean, what *have* ye got when ye come right down tae it. Nothin.[99]

Davie realises that his community is disappearing, which is reinforced by the fact of the re-housing projects happening around him. His attitude shows that he is unable to cope with this change, and Davie continually looks back to some sort of 'Golden Age' in the community's past to find a sense of meaning in his life.

Spence, in his depiction of Davie, makes him a character that is aware he somehow does not fit into society. Davie places this feeling of uncertainty on to the fact his profession is sail making, and that he "backed a loser right fae the start."[100] Throughout the play Davie seems to wait for his "Fresh start", realising the inevitability of change, which he associates with the re-

[99] Spence, *Sailmaker*, 21.
[100] Spence, *Sailmaker*, 43.

housing schemes.[101] Underlying this assumption though is the fact that he is also fully aware that once the tenements are demolished, his community will be gone. This is implied when he talks to Alec about his furniture.

> Nobody takes the care any more.
> Nobody's interested in this auld stuff.
> (*He is talking himself into being sad*)[102]

Davie feels that he and his community are both relics of the past that 'nobody is interested in', and will eventually be forgotten.

Both Alec and Davie search for a sense of belonging within the play. Davie stays within the confines of the working class community that he inhabits. Alec looks beyond such a structure because he feels he is not part of, and does not understand, his father's world. This is apparent when Alec questions certain aspects of Davie's life, such as gambling, drinking and sectarianism. Alec searches for a different or new sense of community, firstly in religion and then in education, to bring meaning and belonging to his life. Spence uses Alec as a character that represents the shift and change within the working class community that is portrayed in the play. It is these two different attitudes toward community that cause the arguments between father and son. Neither one of them really understands the other.

Alec's search takes him out of his surrounding community, where he looks for some sort of religious answer. He starts going to different church clubs,

---

[101] Spence, *Sailmaker*, 43.
[102] Spence, *Sailmaker*, 43.

learns all about Christianity and experiences this "glow".[103] When Alec is confronted with the question of "when did the Lord Jesus come into your heart, child?", he soon realises that he has been living a lie, Jesus is not in his heart, and therefore he does not belong to the religious community either.[104] Alec then busies himself at school, and the result of his education will move him outside of his immediate community, but he still feels lost and uncertain about his situation.

> I keep goin back.
> What is it I'm tryin to remember?
> What is it I'm tryin to say?
> There's somethin I've lost. Something I've forgotten.[105]

Throughout the play both characters search for a sense of belonging and it is not until the end that they find it. Spence seems to suggest that both Davie and Alec reach a better understanding of community during their discussion in the last section of the play. Their debate revolves around the idea of remembering, and it is implied that both Davie and Alec are part of wider shared community that is linked by the notion of memory.

Spence's imagined community is based on the relationship between father and son at the end of the play. Davie and Alec's separate search for a community that equates belonging come together at this moment in the drama. They both realise the importance of each other's interpretation of community. Davie realises his surroundings will be demolished, but not forgotten, and that he must acknowledge what lies outside his narrow view

---

[103] Spence, *Sailmaker*, 25.
[104] Spence, *Sailmaker*, 26.
[105] Spence, *Sailmaker*, 39.

of the world. At the same time Alec understands the importance of his past, and that he does not necessarily have to escape from it. This sense of a shared acknowledgement and understanding between father and son is the basis of Spence's idea of an imagined community. He sees it as some sort of metaphysical framework in which sharing, togetherness and understanding are naturally inherent. Similarly to Watson, Spence portrays community as being an ideal. The play ends with the burning of Alec and Davie's possessions, which represents the demolition of Glasgow's tenements, but Spence makes it apparent that the spirit, feeling or sense of community cannot be destroyed.

In *Space Invaders* Spence further explores his idea of the imagined community, but in the different setting of one of Scotland's new towns, hinted at in *Sailmaker*. Spence's main concern is the fact that building a community does not necessarily equate with a sense of community. Any notion of belonging has been lost within the movement of people into the new town. Feelings of dislocation and uncertainty experienced by Andrew and his family are blamed on their surroundings. It is no coincidence that Andrew's out-of-body experience, where he is able reconnect with the wider shared community, happens upon a hill, away from the town centre. It is in this play that Spence fully explores the splitting apart of community into two different categories.

Firstly there is the physical and material community, which is defined by everyday reality, such as an individual's place at work or in the home. Doug, who is an ufologist in the play, describes his first encounter with the new town.

> I got off the bus back at the interchange, right? Had to climb a fence and scramble down a grass slope. Then once I got into the scheme that was me. Totally lost. Talk about a warren! I've been walking round in circles for half an hour. Everything looks the same...[106]

Doug's description indicates, rather ironically, an alien environment due to the way the new town is built. Spence suggests that it is the sameness within these surroundings that causes a sense of dislocation in people. Such a town is built upon notions of uniformity and efficiency, where difference is seen as irrelevant and costly. Any sense of community is rapidly undermined by the construction designs featured in the new town. Spence's material community consists of constraints such as town planning, but also the rules and regulations that govern society. It causes different communities to be isolated from each other and maintains a feeling of 'displacement' within the individual. In the play Jean, Andrew's wife, acknowledges that "we've been here seven year and I hardly know anybody to talk to."[107] Contrasted with this is Spence's notion of a wider, more universal level of community that in a sense transcends the constraints of the new town. This is another example of Spence's shared community in which an individual can experience the feeling of belonging. Jean's husband Andrew has what he believes to be an out-of-body experience caused by an

---

[106] Alan Spence, *Space Invaders* (Edinburgh: The Salamander Press, 1983) 11.
[107] Spence, *Space Invaders*, 6.

alien abduction. These extra terrestrial beings act as the indicators of the universal and give Andrew a message. It is simply "Hello there"[108], a sentiment and greeting which acknowledges the presence of another human being. This wider community is the other side to Rossini's equation, that of 'belonging'.

Whereas in *Sailmaker* both Davie and Alec look for meaning in their lives, whilst around them everything is changing, Andrew wants to regain a sense of belonging in his life. He suffers from a feeling of claustrophobia being stuck within this new town, and displaced from the rest of society. Andrew needs to reconnect with the wider community, and this is apparent when at the end of the play after the aliens have visited him for a second time, his watch, which has stopped, begins to work again. In this play Spence also examines the idea of memory. Andrew, during his visits to the doctor, has to deal with his past, and remember certain parts that he has repressed because this is supposedly the cure for his out-of-body experience. Similarly to the 'Glory Hole' in *Sailmaker*, Andrew reflects upon these memories that are found in his unconscious. Spence suggests that there is bond between individuals that is intrinsically part of human nature, and that connection to the wider community is linked to memory. Andrew has either repressed or forgotten this and must remember it, so as to reconnect once more with Spence's universal framework. Spence attributes Andrew's

[108] Spence, *Space Invaders*, 33.

psychological repression to his surroundings, which impede upon him reaching any sense of belonging.

This conflicting dichotomy that occurs between Spence's two categories of community, and his ideas of the material and natural can be read within the context of Scottish theatre studies. His examination of this separation is linked to the issue of gender, where, in

> communities of women, belonging is assumed and implicit in the simple acknowledgment of sisterhood, not constructed and restricted within the exclusive cabals of masculine structures.[109]

It is this rigidity and structuring that infringes upon Spence's idea of 'implicit acknowledgment' in the shared human community. He never recognises his two categories as a male female divide, but cites the conflict more between individual freedom and the social conditioning of that individual. In *Space Invaders* Andrew has to visit a doctor to find a rational and objective reason for his out-of-body experience. The psychiatrist's therapy is a form of conditioning that tries to fix Andrew so that he can return to a structured society. In both of his plays though Spence creates a set of characters that are lost and search for, or regain, a sense of community that transcends everyday reality, a community that is an ideal, natural and universal, and not constructed.

Even though Spence recognises this split, it is precisely because of the use of the shared human community that these very real issues such gender and politics are sidestepped. His plays point towards the idealism of what a

[109] Adrienne Scullion, "Contemporary Scottish Women Playwrights", 102.

community should be without properly acknowledging what it actually is. Community is also a convenient concept that seems to solve all problems. In *Space Invaders*, which is perhaps a more political play than *Sailmaker*, Spence shows how a feeling of displacement affects Andrew, but by the end his predicament seems to have been solved. As Peter Whitebrook writes, "the play has an awkwardly jolly ending which does not emerge naturally from what has gone before."[110] This idea of a 'jolly ending' acts as a moment of epiphany for the characters, where the social problems that surround them become less important when they are reconnected to this shared community. Spence depicts individuals in search of meaning in their lives, but never properly questions the social and political situation these people want to escape from or change.

In fairness, and as stated above, Spence explores the idea of community in a philosophical or spiritual context. The problem is though that he picks a significant moment in Scottish history for his examination. In emphasising this idea of the universal, Spence weakens his social assessment of Glasgow's demolition and re-housing, and its effects on families and individuals. He places everyday reality in a philosophical and spiritual context, where, for example, the destruction in *Sailmaker* is seen as relative because 'Matter is neither created nor destroyed'. Sarah C. Rutherford questions the importance of philosophy on stage in her essay 'Fantasists and Philosophers'.

---

[110] Peter Whitebrook, "Space Invaders" *Scottish Theatre News* No. 30 ed. Charles Hart (Glasgow: Scottish Theatre News, August 1983). 11-12, 11.

> Aspiring to a higher experience through the power of imagination is all well and good. That's fiction; at its most heightened, it's fantasy. But what business is it of playwrights, creators of the most communal, democratic art, to be aloof?[111]

Spence cannot be accused of being particularly 'aloof', but his plays do suffer from a sense of gaining a 'higher experience' through, and at the expense of, his characters and their everyday realities. In contrast the value of these plays is in Spence's hope for a shared human community, where individuals struggle with the constraints of their surroundings. It is just that this message is 'sweetened' not such by "plentiful helpings of sugar", but rather by his philosophical and spiritual optimism. [112]

In the wider cultural debate, these two plays highlight a period when there is an uncertainty about Scotland's direction in the early 1980s. Images of fire, destruction, rebuilding, isolation show a culture that is dealing with change. Spence does not so much question or scrutinise Scottishness during this period, but shows that there are values to it that are worth keeping, most importantly a sense of community. Spence uses this moment in Scottish history, the movement of Glasgow's urban communities as a metaphor for a changing Scotland. He shows that the disruption of society leads to feelings of displacement and dislocation within the individual. Spence indicates that a person needs to know that he or she is part of a wider community. This is his main argument within the debate on Scotland's future. For Spence

---

[111] Sarah C. Rutherford, "Fantasists and Philosophers" *Scottish Theatre Since the Seventies*, eds. Stevenson and Wallace, 112-124, 112.
[112] Cameron, *Study Guide to Twentieth-Century Scottish Drama*, 171.

community is not a framework in which Scottish culture should be questioned, it should be remembered as being inherently part of that culture.

2.2: Tom McGrath

Political and Natural Communities

In *Kora* McGrath explores similar territory as to that of Spence. The play is set on a council-owned housing estate, named The Skar, located outside Dundee. *Kora* tells the story of a group of residents who decide to set in motion plans to rejuvenate the run-down flats. McGrath examines the affect that bad housing has on individuals, families and the community in general. Similarly to Heggie, McGrath's *Kora* was produced a few years after the other plays in this dissertation. It can be seen as a response to the Conservative Government, and the lack of money available for the maintenance of these council-owned estates.

McGrath is more didactic in his approach than Spence, and his own politics are blatantly obvious within *Kora*. The two writers do share the fact that they both use a sense of philosophy in their work. Rutherford notes though that McGrath's philosophical experiments,

> arise not out of isolation from the world beyond the typewriter but from an extraordinarily strong involvement with it; not from an exclusively cerebral approach but from an unusually visceral one.[113]

This brief assessment pinpoints two aspects to McGrath's work. Firstly there is the experimental side to his work, with plays such as *Animal* (1979) and *1-2-3* (1981). Secondly there is his community-based work such as *Kora* (1986) and *City* (1989). It is not to suggest that these two aspects are

[113] Rutherford, 118.

mutually exclusive. Whereas the former looks at the wider social issues such as violence, terrorism in *1-2-3*, and human evolution and behaviour, with *Animal*, through the theatrical experience, the latter focuses on specific events or places, like a Dundee housing estate in *Kora* or Glasgow and its history in *City*, and tries to empower communities. Unlike Spence most of McGrath plays remain unpublished, but he is recognised as making a significant contribution to Scottish theatre.

McGrath made his name as a playwright in the 1970s at the Traverse Theatre under the directorship of Chris Parr. His first two plays *Laurel and Hardy* (1976) and *The Hardman* (1977), co-written with Jimmy Boyle, were premiered there. It is this second piece that has become synonymous with his name because it is regarded as being part of the 1970's Scottish theatre renaissance. Entering the 1980s McGrath's work starts to move away from his concern with the male psyche. His trilogy *1-2-3* does portray male relationships, but he widens his scope to find other reasons for the problems affecting society, such as a depending on capitalism to alleviate unemployment. McGrath's change of direction in the early 1980s is due to the fact that for a year he was the Writer in Residence at the University of Iowa. The nature of the position

> Freed [him] from immediate pressure to write, he was able to open his mind to whole areas of thought about art and the theatre...[114]

[114] Joyce McMillan. "Tom McGrath: Entering a New Phase" *Scottish Theatre News* Vol. 4 No. 11 ed. Charles Hart (Glasgow: Scottish Society of Playwrights, June 1981) 4-12, 8.

It could be argued that these 'areas of thought' influenced McGrath in exploring more fully one of the prominent themes in his work. For McGrath the disruption, and subsequent break down, of society is a concern within his plays. Such a situation causes resentment between people. He therefore attributes violence not to individual choice, but to social and political circumstances. Social break down is a theme that runs through *Kora*, and McGrath explores this situation from the perspective of the female community.

If the urban working class male is the epitome of Scottish identity in the 1970s, by the 1980s, Scottish drama is trying to rid itself of what Joyce McMillan has deemed " 'the Slab Boys Syndrome' [...] the tendency to focus on urban, working-class life, usually in the West of Scotland."[115] McMillan attributes this moving away to women playwrights such as Sue Glover, Rona Munro and Sharman Macdonald, but it could be argued that male dramatists were trying to do the same. In their plays Iain Heggie and Chris Hannan deconstruct several images that could be described as 'stock material' within Scottish theatre, such as the urban male or 'hardman' and working class solidarity, in order to satirise, but also challenge presumed aspects of Scottish culture. In the case of McGrath's work he does not quite manage cure himself completely of 'Slab Boys Syndrome' because several of plays rely heavily on urbanised life, but he does attempt new and different ways to address Scottish culture.

---

[115] McDonald, 505.

One such piece that does this is *Kora*. The play was produced at the Traverse Theatre on the 2 May 1986, and then became part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival of that same year. It was also performed at the Whitfield Housing Estate in Dundee. The play is based on research that was to be used in a television documentary. It is a political piece that was written for a very specific time and event, to raise awareness to the state of the council housing in Dundee, and possibly Scotland as a whole. The play is documentary in style, and being quite didactic at times, it is obvious to note what McGrath's intentions are, and with whom his sympathies lie.

McGrath is not particularly subtle in his approach, and he takes every opportunity to make clear the link between poor social housing and the disruption and violence embedded in the housing estate. Near the end of the play there is rumour that a Pakistani man has chopped his feet off because he cannot find a job. It is asserted that his mental health has been affected by the living conditions on The Skar. As Kora, of the play's title, concludes, "People do strange, desperate things when the world ignores them."[116] The specificity of the play and McGrath's political limitations within it are perhaps reasons as to why it remains unpublished and has little critical analysis. However it does point to McGrath's 'strong involvement' with the world and to his own assessment of community, which is perhaps more subtle than his politics. *Kora* is a play that mixes McGrath's political and social concerns with that of his philosophical ideas.

---

[116] Tom McGrath, *Kora* Unpublished (Scottish Theatre Archive: University of Glasgow Library, STA Ji 6, 1986) 77.

McGrath, like Spence, sees community as a necessary part of a person's existence. He also recognises it as an ideal state, but one that is perhaps more realistic and reachable than Spence's universal notion. This is obvious from the beginning of the play, when McGrath shows Kora and her friends as a community, one that displays the values of acceptance and understanding. It only when this community becomes politicised that problems begin to occur. In *Kora* McGrath also separates the idea of community. He sees this divide as a question of gender, where Kora's group of friends epitomise notions of sharing and belonging, which McGrath sees as inherently part of the female community. Maleness is attributed to the need for a structure and political agenda within Kora's group in order to fight the local council.

Similarly to Spence, McGrath locates his drama within an isolated new community, yet *Kora* does not consist solely of a family unit, but of individuals having to live alongside each other because of economic circumstances. Kora and her friends become a political force under the guiding hand of Pete and Flo, an architect and student. The sense of belonging in the group is in part due to the displacement the individual feels, but also the instability of the community's surroundings. They are a community that has been forced together, and McGrath is adamant to show who holds power over the group. It is the bureaucratic and political hierarchy in Scotland at that time. The tension that underlies the group occurs because of the conflict between the political and natural aspects

within it. The community is both a socio-political construct and a collection of friends who help and look after each other.

Ina, one of the residents of The Skar, expresses the tension felt within the group when the money awarded to the estate is later withdrawn. In her reaction to Pete, she neatly sums up predicament of the community.

> Ah've listened o'er much tae yae fur ma ain guid. Ah ken yae meant well. But you're as powerless as we ur. Only difference is, when this is aw o'er, you cin get in tae yir car and drive awa.[117]

Pete has another life, but Ina is entirely fixed by both her surroundings and being part of a group that is a socio-political construct. Ina's annoyance at Pete is also due to the fact that her small community, which was based on mutual understanding and friendship, is then hijacked by Pete and Flo, with good intentions, and made political. Pete fails to see that the community is not just a political tool for change, but is also, and perhaps more importantly for Kora and her friends, a place where they are not simply ignored or viewed as powerless, but acknowledged and recognised.

Ina's reaction points to McGrath's separation of community. Similarly to Spence, McGrath's divide can be read within the context of Scottish theatre studies, and more specifically the differences found in the male and female communities. On the one hand there is the political aspect, which has its rules and regulations that must be followed to effect change, and this is how The Skar group must approach the council. The other is a communality

[117] McGrath, *Kora*, 73.

through friendship, understanding and human value. McGrath's use of Kora as the central character places this divide as a question of gender. As Scullion argues, "within the female community the pleasures of sharing are potentially more egalitarian than are the hierarchical structures which connote masculinity."[118] McGrath explores this 'potentiality' through Kora, as she represents 'the female community'.

The problem is that McGrath relies upon a simple stereotype, that of the Mother Earth figure. Kora is a single mother who continually wants to have children and she is not seen outwith this role. Scullion states that within Scottish drama the individual never stands alone, but becomes "most meaningful, most powerful, within a group, in social communion and as a metaphor."[119] McGrath places Kora within the group of her female friends to portray, and perhaps offer, an alternative view regarding the idea of community. Scullion continues to discuss this notion, where she states that

> the whole play, the theatrical event itself, may be directed towards establishing a moment of unity, a recognition of community, in the audience. At these instances culturally prejudiced codes of gender and community interact, 'knitting together' to offer particular points of access and interpretation, preferred readings of the characters and the environments presented.[120]

Kora is a play in search of this 'unity' and McGrath offers glimpses of this, such as Kora's pregnancy at the end of Act One, or Pete's mural to the 'women of the world'. These are examples of McGrath displaying

---

[118] Scullion, "Contemporary Scottish Women Playwrights", 102.
[119] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 170.
[120] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 170.

'recognitions' of the female community, but they do not survive because Kora's loses her baby and Pete's idealism and plans for the housing estate are crushed by the political machinations of the council. Having acknowledged, albeit rather simply, the gendered communities, McGrath hints at a rather crude idea of 'unity' and the 'knitting together' of 'culturally prejudiced codes'. The political or male community, represented by Turpin, the housing officer within the council, and the female or natural symbolised by Kora, sleep together.[121] It is implied in the next scene that she is once again pregnant.

McGrath's 'preferred readings' of the male and female community is a rather problematic area. He never questions or looks beyond his representations of Kora and her friends, or Turpin and Pete. They act as a set of transferable stereotypes or codes that McGrath uses to explore aspects of Scottish culture. *Kora* may be a political play in that McGrath highlights the conditions on The Skar housing estate, but in his representation of community he indicates, but never questions the politics within such a group. Similarly to Spence, McGrath wants to create a wholeness to his idea of community, so subsequently he does not question it.

In *Kora* McGrath tries to unite what he perceives and represents as elements of the male and female aspects of community. Unlike Spence who

[121] Jan McDonald discusses this notion in her essay, "Scottish Women Dramatists Since 1945" and asks the 'Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?' as stipulated by Sherry Ortner. I have simply substituted political for culture, as I think McGrath makes explicit this split in *Kora*.

emphasises the universal at the expense of the material community, McGrath implies that it is the combination of the two, which is most beneficial for the wider Scottish culture. There is the political side, which has the power and authority to implement policies for change, such as rejuvenating The Skar estate, and there is the more natural side, which creates a sense of belonging and acknowledgment for the individual.

McGrath uses the condition of The Skar estate to highlight what can occur when this unity is disrupted, or the two aspects of community are out of balance. It is another example of his interest in the break down of society, which causes a climate of terror, fear and violence. Such a situation is apparent when Kora recounts the time, to Flo, when the postman delivering the residents' giros was late.

> It was a scorching hot day. If there had been any place to riot, they would have started. You could feel an explosion pending. That was frightening.[122]

Any feeling of community among the residents has been lost due to the social situation these people find themselves in. They live on a housing estate that has been ignored, and left to fall apart. Through Kora and her friends, McGrath shows certain values, such as a shared sense of belonging, which he sees as essential for Scottish culture.

Kora is a drama that does not quite know what it is. McGrath's political message is clear and simple, bad housing equals social disruption, leading to violence. His depiction of violence is no longer explored through the male

[122] McGrath, *Kora*, 10.

psyche, such as in *The Hardman* but it is now a wider social concern, as shown by the 'wild dog' imagery in *Kora*. Julie, Kora's friend, tells Flo about how residents on The Skar let their dogs run free, which then become undomesticated, and start to attack people. The Skar, being an isolated and dilapidated housing estate, is imagined as an urban jungle, where people are left to fend for themselves. McGrath's play also questions the nature of community, but does not delve deeper than a male female divide. It seems that he is struggling to decide which side of his play to emphasis, which leads to an ambiguity and unclearness as to the overall idea of the drama.

The three plays above have suggested a feeling of 'displacement' within individuals that are forced into new urban communities, and feel cut off from the rest of society. Spence and McGrath attribute such a sentiment largely to the deprivation and poor maintenance of these communities. There is another side to this 'displacement' that both plays explore, and that is the falseness to these new urban communities. These estates or new towns are built and people have to move in, and are expected to behave and 'get on' in the spirit of community. Here is the physical nature of community, but for Spence and McGrath, it lacks an underlying and more human level to it.

In these plays Spence and McGrath explore the notion of an ideal community. For Spence it is in the realisation and recognition of the universal, and McGrath finds it in the unity of the political and natural.

Neither playwright ever really questions the idea of community. Similarly to Watson in the previous chapter, they show community as an element of Scottish culture that has either been forgotten or damaged, and in need of remembrance or repair. Both Spence and McGrath choose to explore their ideas of community through the changing shape of Scotland's urban communities. In a sense they use the demolition and rebuilding in Scottish cities, and the subsequent moving of people, to reflect their wider concerns on what they see as a growing social problem in the 1980s. This is where the political situation leads to the disruption of community, which creates feelings of displacement within the individual.

Spence and McGrath portray characters that are searching for an idealised sense of community, one that is inclusive and egalitarian. Academics such as Scullion and McDonald, and theatre critic Joyce McMillan, have located such a theme within the work of women playwrights, but also in the dramatisation of female communities on stage. Whereas a male group is seen as an "exclusive club", with its rules and rituals for entry, women are portrayed as providing "a sense of kinship and belonging."[123] Both of these playwrights adhere to this concept of the female in the depiction of their ideal communities. They do not see it as specifically linked to gender, but show the elements in the female community as being an integral and valuable part for the whole of society.

[123] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 198.

Such ideas as social inclusiveness and egalitarianism are prominent within Scottish culture. Sociologist David McCrone identifies one 'Scottish myth' as being that of outright fairness and equality. He writes

> the myth of egalitarianism has at root an asociological, an almost mystical element. It is as if Scots are judged to be egalitarian by dint of racial characteristics, of deep social values.[124]

These three plays display characters searching for a more inclusive community that is, in effect, part of the historical and social foundations of Scotland. This myth is not questioned precisely because it is not based on facts, but is believed as being intricately Scottish. McCrone argues that it has been used to identify Scotland as different from England. He also gives a suggestion as to why this myth is prevalent in these plays.

> The more Scotland lacks control, in economic, social and political terms, over her own affairs, so ideas about this essence hold fast to the imagery of Scotland.[125]

Such a situation could be applied to Scotland in the early 1980s. There had been the failed Devolution Referendum in 1979, and then the Conservative Government coming to power. It was a government that did not seem particularly interested in viewing the Scottish population as a separate or different nation, which resulted in a drop in numbers of Scottish Conservative MPs in subsequent elections throughout the decade. This political situation led to the authors of a document entitled *A Claim of Right for Scotland* (1989), a paper set to begin discussions on Home Rule for

---

[124] McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Stateless Nation*, 90.
[125] McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Stateless Nation*, 120.

Scotland, that the current state of the Union was "a threat to the survival of a distinctive culture in Scotland."[126]

This political climate shows an opportunity, where McCrone's estimations could apply. This 'threat' allows such a myth as egalitarianism to be linked to a Scottish identity. It could be suggested that the playwrights in this chapter assume this to be true. Their plays never really question the fairness of 'Scottish' egalitarianism, but hold onto it as an ideal. Kora wants to stay on The Skar, even though the estate is run-down, because she 'fits in' and belongs there. Both Alec and Andrew find meaning within a universal common humanity. What is being argued is that in these myths, egalitarianism and fairness are inexorably linked to the playwrights' views on community. They are not questioned precisely because they are idealised. The plays show the need for community as an esoteric feeling or sense that is found outwith social reality.

These plays can be read more as responses to, rather than complete examinations of, Scotland's situation in the 1980s. Spence highlights a sense of uncertainty, which can be linked to the concern for Scottish culture in the early 1980s. McGrath locates *Kora* a few years after the Conservative Government has come to power, and he sees certain elements of the Scottish community being lost because of the politics of that decade. As a debate about identity and Scotland's 'distinctive culture' though, these

[126] Owen Dudley Edwards, ed. *A Claim of Right for Scotland* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989) 14.

plays never really come to the table. The playwrights create new or alternative communities not to "re-interpret events in the 'real' and tangible world", but mostly to re-emphasise the need for community.[127] What is largely missing is the tackling of the difficult subjects of politics, gender, culture and identity that came to dominate Scottish drama in this decade. Instead Spence and McGrath make some general observations regarding these themes, but with the main focus of their dramas set on striving to reach a unity and understanding with others, within the framework of community.

[127] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 178.

CHAPTER THREE

Community and the Individual

The previous two chapters have been concerned with the idea of community being either liberating or dominating towards the individual. All the playwrights discussed above place their characters within the structure and framework of community. It is the reaction to such surroundings that causes the conflicts within the drama. These plays can be seen as debates about, or responses to, the nature of Scottish identity and culture that were occurring in the 1980s. One such discussion that was also evident in this decade was between community and the individual. Plays such as Hannan's *Elizabeth Gordon Quinn* and Glover's *The Seal Wife*, show a person's determination to either escape, or rise above the confines of their surroundings. Such individuality also produces fear within the community, and creates tension between these two opposing forces.

This is not to suggest that such a conflict is a particularly new literary or dramatic device first appearing in Scotland in the 1980s. In his book *The Modern Scottish Novel* (1999), Craig argues that this struggle or tension is a repeated narrative structure within Scottish literature. He defines this clash, more as a dialectic between community and individual that has informed

and influenced the modern Scottish novel.[128] In the context of Scottish drama, Scullion argues that playwrights examine the

> the nature and politics of the community, with the moment of inclusion in, or exclusion, from that community as recurrent narrative spine.[129]

The debate between community and the individual is significant within Scottish culture of the 1980s. It was a time when the socio-political climate placed more importance on the role of the individual, than on the collective achievements of society. Such a situation runs counter to myths like egalitarianism that supposedly define a Scottish culture and identity. It could be argued that this political circumstance led to some of the revisionist projects that occurred within Scotland in the 1980s. It was a time to reaffirm what constitutes the Scottish nation.

The community and the individual represent two different voices within the debate on Scottish identity and culture. The first is set within a structured framework, which has its own ideology and ethics. Community can be said to have a right and an authority within the cultural debate. It is a legitimate group that has the moral voice within the political system. The individual, when placed outside of a community, is an exile, who has lost the right to join the debate because he or she is seen as having opposing views to the majority. The individual does not have the power to get his or her voice heard, and stands on the fringes of society, waiting for a chance to speak.

---

[128] See Chapter 1, Cairns Craig, "Fearful Selves: Character, Community, and the Scottish Imagination" *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination*. Edinburgh (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) 37-74. In this chapter Craig discuss the relationship between the fearless individual, and the fearful community.
[129] Scullion, "Contemporary Scottish Women Playwrights", 102.

Within Scottish drama in the 1980s aspects of this debate between community and individual is represented as occurring between the gender-specific communities. It is through such a discussion that Scottish culture can change.

> Such exclusive groupings may find definition in an unsettled negotiation between the 'explicit' and 'formulated' codes of certainty and the 'whispered' and 'impalpable' structures of the disenfranchised.[130]

This argument cites the difference between the male and female community. What is also made apparent is that their debate is continuous, with both groups infringing on each other. It could be argued that such analysis also goes some way to understanding the relationship between community and the individual, where 'certainty' and 'disenfranchisement' highlight the difference between the two. Scullion argues that Scottish drama tends to focus on communities and groups, where the individual is stronger being within such a structure, rather than standing outside one.

It seems that a feeling of inclusion is inherent to Scottish identity. This feeling is based upon the myths of fairness, social equality and egalitarianism that are rooted within the image of Scotland. McCrone's insight into the nature of myths is important for this argument. He states that they are located in the past and used as

> a contemporary and an active force providing, in most instances, a reservoir of legitimation for belief and action.[131]

---

[130] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 198.
[131] McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Stateless Nation*, 90.

Therefore the Scottish myths cited above, 'legitimatise' a cultural identity based on inclusion and collectivism. Such an identity is seen as being socially and politically stronger than one which wants to advocate the virtues of individuality. Within the 1980s Scottish women dramatists, such as Liz Lochhead and Marcella Evaristi, questioned these mythic assumptions of equality, inherent in the idea of community. They found it to be quite a phallocentric and unegalitarian ideology. This is due to the fact that the egalitarian 'Scottish myth' lends itself to both radicalism and conservatism. It can be construed as an evolving characteristic of Scottish identity that must be questioned and challenged, so as to maintain the importance of social equality. At the other end of the political spectrum, it is believed that the 'Scottish myth' is so ingrained within Scotland's culture, an almost deep-seated racial feature, that to interrogate it is somewhat of an irrelevance. This is also a difference that is realised between the first two chapters of this dissertation. The problem with this latter assessment is that the notion egalitarianism falls into the trap of complacency. Scottish identity and culture becomes fixed and static, as Evaristi demonstrates in *Commedia*.

The idea of placing an individual outside of a community, with its own set of beliefs and values, exacerbates this fixedness. Such a group feels threatened because this person represents an illegitimate voice that can 'test' its ideology. The space between the individual and the community acts as a dialectic, where the feelings of 'certainty' and 'disenfranchisement' are

played out within the arguments raised from either side. Both the opposing sides experience a dangerous mixture of sensing a threat, and having the staunch right to stop it.

In Scottish drama in the 1980s the debate between community and the individual demonstrates such an argument at work. For example *The Seal Wife* explores the process whereby identity is defined and legitimatised through the use of authority and power, and is directly influenced by feelings of 'certainty' and 'disenfranchisement'. It is this movement between such emotional aspects, where it

> seems possible to suggest that the understanding of identity in Scottish culture is [...] between the explicit codes of the legitimate and the whispered codes of the illegitimate.[132]

The 'whispered codes' indicate the person or persons who do not have the right to have their arguments raised. An individual placed outside of a community is in such a position. This is not to suggest that his or her voice remains completely unheard. Power is in the fact that being outside means the single person's views are construed as 'illegitimate' and therefore subversive. Scullion notes the 'unsettled negotiation' between the two factions, and it this continual whispering that undermines any sense of a collective identity. From the context of a Scottish cultural debate the individual is the perennial question mark that hangs over the idea of community.

---

[132] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 198.

3.1 Sue Glover

Space and Community

These are some of the ideas that can be found within the plays of Glover. This chapter will explore her work, specifically looking at two of her plays written in the early 1980s. These are *The Seal Wife* and *An Island in Largo*, and both examine the notion of community and the individual. The distinctive feature that separates these plays is the fact that in the former, Glover has a female protagonist, and the in the latter, she uses a male one. The two dramas show some of the differences within the legitimatisation process noted above, precisely because Glover locates gender politics within the dialectic between community and individual. Rona in *The Seal Wife* represents a disenfranchised character, a sort of 'otherness', who does not quite fit into society, and in turn creates a sense of fear and awe in people that meet her. Whereas Alexander Selkirk in *An Island in Largo* is full of arrogance and certainty, and knows he can rise above the petty-mindedness of his community. The actions of these two characters question the social group that they are outside of.

The chapter will explore the notion of community and the individual, with respect to the points made above. Using the plays the concept of the legitimate and illegitimate voice will be explored, and how power and authority continually flow between the two. This movement marks the changing nature of the relationship between community and individual. It

can be viewed as a reflection on the debate regarding identity within Scottish culture during the 1980s.

Glover's work expands and stretches such a discussion by placing her dramas outwith the urban, working class settings that seem to dominate Scottish drama.[133] Instead she sets the majority of her plays from the 1980s within rural areas. Such places act as both literal and metaphorical spaces in which the debate between community and the individual intersect. This is an argument that academics Ksenija Horvat and Barbara Bell make, when they write that Glover's

> conjuring with open spaces is representative of the way in which a female force can transgress beyond the constrictions of a patriarchal norm.[134]

Therefore these rural spaces are a liberating 'force', unhindered by the claustrophobia that is inherent within an urban setting. The female is freer to 'transgress' because she is outwith the view of public, or male, scrutiny. Inherent in this argument though is the idea that Glover displays another aspect to Scottish identity, that of the rural, which Horvat and Bell argue Glover links to the feminine.

It is a revision of a discussion that has been prominent throughout modern Scottish history. Such a debate takes place between the urban and rural, or the highland and lowland areas, so as to locate the 'true heart' or identity of Scotland. Glover's plays may be set within rural locations, but the reminder

---

[133] McDonald, 505.
[134] Horvat and Bell, 67.

of urbanity is never far away. For example in *The Straw Chair* (1988) both Isabel and Rachel talk of Edinburgh whilst living on the island of Hirta (St. Kilda); in *An Island in Largo*, the village of Lower Largo itself seems too claustrophobic for Selkirk after his return from the island of Juan Fernandez; and in *The Seal Wife* Alec lives on a beach in East Fife, to escape the prying eyes of the village inhabitants. Firstly, this juxtaposition demonstrates the differences within the Scottish cultural debate, where the urban and rural infringe upon each other. Secondly, the space between community and the individual, be it, a beach, the sea, a field, represents an open expanse, in which such a dialogue takes place. There is no marked divide between the urban and rural or highland and lowland, only space, which allows for a more fluid and free-flowing conversation regarding ideas about Scottish culture. This is an example of Glover's metaphorical spaces, which is one of the defining aspects of her dramaturgy.

This chapter will also discuss the fate of Glover's play from the 1980s, as an example of the problems that faced women playwrights, when they began to emerge within this decade. Glover's work suffers from the same afflictions as other Scottish dramatists, such as the majority of her plays remain unpublished, and the inclination not to produce a certain drama more than once. This is not to suggest that Glover is unrecognised as a playwright. She is esteemed as being one the most important Scottish playwrights since her arrival into the theatre industry. For example I would argue that both *The Straw Chair* and *Bondagers* (1991), which are both published, are

important plays within Scottish drama, precisely because they show a different side to Scottish culture, one that is outside the urban, industrial male setting. Both these texts explore the idea of the female community.

The Seal Wife and *An Island in Largo*, which are unpublished, and not as well analysed as the previous two plays, are concerned more with the relationship between community and the individual. Both these dramas focus on characters that struggle to find an identity because they are social exiles. As a shift in Glover's dramaturgy, *The Straw Chair* marks a more direct examination of the female community, as an inclusive concept. In it three women, Rachel, Isabel and Oona, all from different social backgrounds, find moments, where their sharing of stories, experiences, and alcohol amounts to a sense of belonging. *The Seal Wife* and *An Island in Largo* are plays where Glover still places the debate, concerning identity, between community and the individual, and male and female. Both these features, the male and the individual outside of a community, are absent in her later work, such as *Bondagers* and *Sacred Hearts* (1994). This is not to suggest that patriarchy has vanished.

> The women of Scottish drama are only occasionally fully empowered and independent of a phallocentric economic order, more often being on the edges of or dependent upon groups of men and patriarchal communities.[135]

Even though the women in these plays feel a sense of unity within the female community, their situation is largely an effect of the male patriarchy imposed upon them. In Glover's earlier plays there is less of a search to feel

[135] Scullion, "Contemporary Scottish Women Playwrights", 103.

a sense of belonging. Both Rona and Selkirk are characters that react against their social surroundings, and argue with people around them. Glover is concerned with maintaining the debate open between community and individual, and male and female.

In *The Seal Wife*, it is Rona's reaction to, and even horror at, the brutality and violence of Alec, her boyfriend, that underlies and drives the conflict between the two. Alec's maleness manifests itself in the illegal killing of seals for his livelihood, which needless to say Rona abhors.[136] The play is based on a folk myth of the seal wife, who came ashore and took a human partner, a seal hunter, and had his child. She then returns to the sea, only to be killed later by the hunter. The play was premiered at the Lyceum Little Theatre, Edinburgh on 23 April 1980, and then produced again at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival of that same year.

Glover is not particularly praiseworthy of the initial production, or her experience of it. In an interview with Margaret Rose and Emanuela Rossini, she is recorded as saying

> *The Seal Wife*, had a very very rough ride, described by one of the cast (male) as 'one of those poetic jobs'. The male director cut it to shreds. There was no way I could fight back – both he and his boss, the artistic director, treated me as invisible.[137]

It is rather insightful and telling that Glover was treated as if she was a character from one of her own plays. Such an experience serves as an

---

[136] The name Rona means Island of Seals.

[137] Margaret Rose and Emanuela Rossini, "in conversation with : John Clifford, Ann Marie Di Mambro, Chris Dolan, Anne Downie, Sue Glover, David Greig, Chris Hannan, Liz Lochhead, Tony Reekie" *A Theatre That Matters* eds. Poggi and Rose, 229-260, 243.

example of the way some women playwrights were treated in the 1980s, but more importantly, that their work was misunderstood, hence 'cut to shreds', and so, badly produced. It is an argument that Joyce McMillan makes in her article for *Chapman 43-4*. She implies that this misunderstanding is itself part of an ongoing debate on the nature of what a drama actually is. As she explains,

> 'the dramatic' – based as it is on classical notions about conflict and the resolution of it – is somehow a masculine one, and hostile to women's work.[138]

In its simplest form, there is a divide between the conflictive nature inherent in the male dramatists' work, and the more conciliatory aspect of the dramas of women playwrights. Such a misunderstanding is therefore due, in part, to this barrier.

Ironically, Glover's dramaturgy such as the use of the open or metaphorical space, allows dialogue to flow unhindered between such opposing sides. Even the themes of *The Seal Wife*, male versus female, the misunderstanding and confusion felt towards Rona, resonate within the theatre culture that McMillan highlights in her article. In a broader context, both Glover's experience and McMillan's article show that the Scottish cultural debate, happening in the 1980s, was not particularly free-flowing or equal. On one level Glover's use of setting, structure and poetics, to explore the notion of community and individual, was a response to such a predicament.

---

[138] McMillan, "Women Playwrights in Contemporary Scottish Theatre", 73.

The Seal Wife is set on a beach, which is situated in the East Neuk of Fife. Out in the sea lies the Isle of May. Islands figure prominently in Glover's plays as they represent places of isolation, cut off from the rest of society. An island is therefore a perfect place to gauge the individual as fully separate from community, and a situation that Glover explores more closely in *An Island in Largo*. Islands are peripheries where the ideas of magic and fantasy have not been eradicated, which creates a place where ancient and modern customs live side by side. As is apparent in *The Straw Chair*, when the minister, Aneas talks to one of the boys living on Hirta, who believes that God created man with scales, and then lost them through sin.

For Glover, an island is out of the gravitational pull from metropolitan society, becoming a form of escape from perceived social values and rules. It is a place where the individual is free to transgress above society, but to also consciously forget about it. Glover implies these ideas when Rona tries to get Alec to give up his livelihood, with their visit to the Isle of May.

> ALEC: That was island talk, moon-talk...
> RONA: Lies!
> ALEC: No – it's different in the moonlight, that's all – on the island – things are different.[139]

This difference between mainland and island is representative of Alec and Rona's relationship, and the wider dialogue between community and the individual. Rona is seen as different, an entity, whose mysteriousness and strangeness is at first seductive and enticing to Alec. She then becomes a threat because of her reluctance to conform to social norms. Her

[139] Sue Glover, *The Seal Wife* Unpublished (Scottish Theatre Archive: University of Glasgow Library, STA Ho 1/1, 1980) 28.

individuality is dangerous, not just for its defiance against the idea of community, but because, like an island, it is out of reach to be changed.

> I became afraid. She grew so far away. I couldn't follow. I loved her because she was so different from the others – more like me. But she was wild, wilder, than I was. I grew afraid.[140]

Alec's fear is representative of that of community's towards the individual. The open or metaphorical space between Rona and them is vast and troublesome, and one they do want to travel across because it could disrupt their sense of collectivism.

Glover creates Rona as the perennial, mythical, and somewhat irrational figure, that raises its head every so often to remind society that it is precisely a social construct. Craig discusses such a concept, when he writes that

> Fear continues to rule the human imagination and every journey into that imagination is a journey back into the terrors of the primitive past.[141]

It is this 'journey' into, what the community believes will be chaos, that it is unwilling to take. Rona represents both the reminder of the past, which society tries to bury, but also the persistent and whispering voice that questions the identity, structure and culture of that society. In the context of Scottish theatre, Glover is on familiar territory as with other of Scotland's playwrights. Academics Ian Brown and Barbara Bell discuss the concept of myth within Scottish drama.[142]

---

[140] Glover, *The Seal Wife*, 73.
[141] Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel*, 42.
[142] Ian Brown and Barbara Bell, "A Duty to History: Contemporary Approaches to History and Cultural Identities in Scottish Theatre" *A Theatre That Matters* eds. Poggi and Rose, 19-40.

Their essay is an exploration of the relationship between myth and history, which is a feature in Glover's own work. Brown and Bell note, as does Cameron, that the majority of Scottish plays use Scotland's history as subject matter. This appropriation of the country's past is not merely written into these plays as dry facts, but it is reshaped and re-imagined. This revisionism can be construed as a methodology, so as both examine and understand contemporary Scotland, using its history. What Brown and Bell add to this particular discourse on Scottish theatre is the role of myth in this rewriting. They argue that history is an "open system" which allows for the act of reinterpretation by historians, and, of course, dramatists.[143] The tools which are used for this rewriting is what they term "mini-myths".[144] These myths are a collection of "closed", but "explanatory cells" that are part of the fabric of history.[145] Their reconfiguration is what shifts and moves the facts of history around. History therefore can both appropriate these 'mini-myths' to create a mythology for a certain culture, but can also, by the re-examination of these myths and their structure, be rewritten, or re-imagined. It is such a concept that Brown and Bell bestow on Scottish dramatists, and one that goes to the root of interrogating Scottish identity. This use of history and myth is another example of a revisionism that was occurring during the cultural debate in the 1980s.

---

[143] Brown and Bell, 23.
[144] Brown and Bell, 23. This is term that Brown and Bell take from the work of C. Levi-Strauss.
[145] Brown and Bell, 23.

Glover is one such playwright, whose work can be read within this concept of myth and history. In *An Island in Largo* the manipulation of history is made more blatant, when Glover depicts Daniel Defoe using Alexander Selkirk's 'adventure' on Juan Fernandez to 'invent', and write his own story of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). Glover, herself, re-imagines the life of the real 'Robinson Crusoe' by bringing Selkirk out of the myths that have built up around him, due to Defoe's book. Similarly in *The Straw Chair*, it is the personal story of the Scottish historical figure, Lady Rachel, wife of James Erskine, Lord Grange, that asks questions of the perceived history of the Jacobite Rebellions in Scotland. Rachel is kidnapped by her husband when she finds out that he is part of the Jacobite faction. She is then placed as a prisoner on Hirta to keep her quiet. Rachel is the illegitimate voice that returns to haunt the mythology of Jacobitism in Scottish culture. In a way she is the metaphorical outsider, or individual, that does not have a place in Scotland's historical framework. Due to this situation Glover is in a position to exploit such a figure to upset pre-conceived ideas regarding Scottish identity.

Glover's work therefore interrogates myth and history to raise questions about contemporary Scotland. Her early work favours the use of the individual as the harbinger of such examination. Within both *The Seal Wife* and *An Island in Largo*, it is the lives of Rona and Selkirk that are used. Glover does not select these myths from McCrone's 'reservoir of legitimation', but picks them precisely because they are illegitimate and

cause disquiet in the collective consciousness of community. Glover's early work sits more comfortably in Scullion's assessment of the 'whispered' and 'explicit' dichotomy she sees as inherent in the understanding of Scottish culture.

The Seal Wife examines this dichotomy in the relationship between Rona and Alec. If Rona is, in some regards a mythical figure, then Alec is metaphor for the male community. His violence and dominance, and his need to maintain his authority as head of the household, are all, arguably, elements inherent in a patriarchy. Within the play itself, Alec considers himself an outsider because of his antagonism towards the local village. He is 'outside' as such, but only in the context that women inhabit his life and surround him. Alec is in fact the only male character in the play, and even the sea "becomes a symbol of aggressive female sexuality."[146] Amidst this though, he knows he holds the authority and power; his is a voice of certainty. Paradoxically though Alec also displays a healthy sense of fear for his surroundings.

> RONA: You're not afraid...of the sea?
> ALEC: Yes, I'm afraid. I love to be near it, on it. But I'm afraid of what it can do. A fisherman's religion is fear.[147]

In this instance the sea is not only a symbol of 'female sexuality', it also represents the dangerous journey out of the ordered world, and into a 'primitive past'. Alec suffers from the duality of fear and awe that reappears in some other of Glover's plays. Isabel's trepidation on her

[146] Horvat and Bell, 68.
[147] Glover, *The Seal Wife*, 16.

arrival to Hirta, in *The Straw Chair*, is a similar mix of emotions. The telling difference is that Isabel works through her fear, for it to become something of an awakening in her self.[148] Alec's dread underlies his whole personality. It is his 'religion' and he uses it, rather than works through it, to dominate the people that surround him.

Alec's fear and awe of the sea is superimposed onto Rona. She is literally the mythical, unknowable figure that emerges from the waves. It is implied in this play that Rona has come across from the Isle of May, a haven for seals, and then appears on the beach. In a sense it is her that has crossed the wide expanse that lies between the individual and community, which can be seen as a reverse of Craig's 'imagined journey' of present to past, or order into chaos. In the context of a Scottish cultural debate, Rona swims the divide to engage in the dialogue. Her first encounter with community, as represented by Alec, is to be shot at by him. This violence continues throughout the play, and can be seen as a weapon that kills the debate between Rona and Alec. It is also an aspect of the fear that Alec uses to maintain his hold.

Violence is a theme that runs through Glover's work. It is one of the fundamental dangers to Scottish culture that she explores through her plays. Within dramas, such as *The Straw Chair* and *Bondagers*, especially because they are historical pieces, Glover shows how violence was, and is, used

[148] "On the island, however, she [Isabel] finds a freedom, an authority, and even an awakened sexuality that escaped her in her uncle's house in Edinburgh." Scullion, "Contemporary Scottish Women Playwrights", 105.

against women. It is inherent in the explicit codes, and certainty of the male community. The male ideology therefore sees it as a legitimate power that can be used to silence the illegitimate voices. Glover sees this mentality as being part of Scottish history and culture.

In context of this exploration of violence, Rona takes on a further mythical role. She becomes something of the eternal sacrifice. Glover is a playwright who being

> preoccupied with the isolation of the 'rare' and the 'special', reiterates her favourite theme of the hounding of the 'strange' by the unexceptional, uncomprehending herd.[149]

Rona is the misunderstood and fragile figure that is driven away by the community, but leaves behind a lasting memory on the collective consciousness. In this instance it is her daughter, Isla, who, Glover seems to suggest, threatens Alec's patriarchy. "Rona warned you. She told you it would be a daughter. An outsider. Another island, she said."[150] For all of Alec's violent attempts, indicated by his killing of the seals, to silence or change Rona, it is his own identity and way of life that is questioned. His reluctance to understand Rona is an indication of the community not engaging in a debate with the individual. Isla, the 'outsider' is now part of the social group, and will have an affect on it. It could also be argued that the community will drive her away as well, or just change her. Through Agnes though, Alec's mother, Isla will be looked after. Agnes now understands that the 'special' quality of the whispered and disenfranchised

[149] McDonald, 498.
[150] Glover, *The Seal Wife*, 76.

is necessary in the formation of community. Isla is the continuation of myth that reappears and causes disruption within a supposedly stable society. She, like Rona, will ultimately lead the community to question their collective beliefs and values.

Glover's work, especially in plays such as *The Seal Wife* and *An Island in Largo*, are about assessing the social codes that determine and fix a culture and its identity, at a given moment. In these two plays it is the appearance, and sometimes reappearance, of the individual that triggers this process within the community. She explores such an idea by focussing on the change within both Rona and Selkirk, and how this marked difference affects the people around them. Glover allows both of these characters time and space apart from their communities. These are moments of transgression, where they bypass social values and beliefs, and experience either a mental, or physical transformation.

In *An Island in Largo* it is Selkirk's reappearance at Lower Largo that causes infighting for his family, precisely because it disrupts their stable and working community. He is the illegitimate voice that questions their collective identity. Selkirk also returns, because of his time in isolation on the island, with a new found religious fervour, which is unorthodox to that of the teachings of the local Presbyterian Kirk. He therefore threatens the wider community, with his attitudes regarding his relationship to God. Similarly to Patrick in *American Bagpipes* and Stefano in *Commedia*,

Selkirk is a man that tries to dominate the people around him. Whereas Glover explores Selkirk's change in a more literal and psychological manner, Rona's transformation is alluded to through the use of metaphor and symbol.

Rona's initial appearance into the community is marked by a transformation from seal to woman. It implies an adaptability to her surroundings that introduces the notion of an unfixed identity, which lurks behind the concreteness of societal roles. McDonald describes this as representing "an image of creative fluidity and dangerous mutability."[151] It allows Glover to transgress, through the use of metaphor, the constricting and fixed notions of women. This 'fluidity' and 'mutability' is also symbolised by Rona escaping the domestic role, to walk within the open spaces, such as the beach or pier. These places are

> representative of that hidden part of a woman's mind where she [Rona] escapes from traditional responsibilities into a creative and personal space.[152]

The internal 'mind' is therefore reflected in the landscape. Entering these places may be viewed as a form of escape into creativity. From the point of view of the community though, Rona's isolation is a place of wildness and danger, where the structures of society dissipate.

---

[151] McDonald, 498.
[152] Horvat and Bell, 68.

This is emphasised by Agnes and her need for domestic security.

> Sometimes, when I'm at the sink with the dishes I hear – very faintly – the geese crying above in the haar. It's a beautiful sound, but sad...when I hear them, [...] I'm thankful for the hot water in the sink, and the fire in the grate.[153]

Rona is caught between such notions of domesticity and nature, but she is not so 'thankful' as Agnes. Her moments of transgression against, or isolation from the community, come at time when she is dealing with another transformation, that of pregnancy. This change can be seen in contrast to that of her initial metamorphosis. Rona's state this time is not considered as being 'dangerous mutability', but a condition that will ultimately fix her identity. Rona therefore symbolises the individual, who for all her 'fluidity' does not fit in, or is not accepted by the community. "You have murdered something, Alec. She fled from something; to save herself".[154] Rona's escape and the subsequent abandonment of her daughter, leads Agnes to question Alec's dominance of the household.

The Seal Wife is part psychological drama and part mythic fable. The play is representative of Glover's concern to expand the Scottish cultural debate, occurring the 1970s and 1980s, from the urban central belt of Scotland, to the more rural areas. McDonald notes that she is one of a few Scottish women dramatists that "do not portray Scottish society as homogeneous".[155] Her work in the 1980s demonstrates the brutality of a society that tries to maintain its wholeness at the expense of the individual. Such a structure is

---

[153] Glover, *The Seal Wife*, 33.
[154] Glover, *The Seal Wife*, 76.
[155] McDonald, 505.

built upon a fear of the unknown. Glover stresses through the use of myth and fable that the unknowable has a habit of returning. As represented by Rona, and her defiance of Alec's patriarchy, it will throw the community into disarray.

Glover's plays in the 1980s can also be viewed as contributing to a debate regarding the use of urban or rural settings to reflect upon Scottish culture. Whereas, for example, McGrath and Evaristi see the urban or household settings as surrounding and 'fixing' the individual, Glover uses the land as a metaphor for the openness, ever-changing and unfixed nature of Scotland's identity. It is precisely the unstructured and 'unwholeness' of Scottishness that Glover explores through her work, and brings to the cultural debate. In the case of *The Straw Chair* she chooses to examine notions of the female community within a rural setting, exactly because the landscape reflects the ideas of openness and egalitarianism that she wants to portray as being part of such communities. Scottish identity for Glover is therefore not fixed, but changing and fluid. Within *The Seal Wife* and *An Island in Largo*, the rural also emphasises the isolation of the individual. The expanse of the land and sea is representative of Rona and Selkirk's journey to seek a sense of their identities. This is apparent in Selkirk's drifting from rural, to sea and then to the cities of Bristol and Plymouth. He goes through many different landscapes, but is unable to settle into any one identity. It is this

"dislocation" felt by Rona and Selkirk that Glover seeks to address within the open spaces of the rural.[156]

The imagery of the vastness of the land, with the isolated individual walking across it, reiterates McDonald's notion of the 'special' or 'strange' causing fear within the communities he or she passes by. This single person is viewed as dangerous, and the unknown territory that he or she has travelled upon adds to the feeling of dread. In this context the individual represents the wildness of the land that infringes upon the structures a community has put in place. In *The Seal Wife* Rona instils in Alec the same fear and awe he projects towards the sea. The individual is representative of an unstructured and changeable nature, precisely such elements that a community wants to force out. Rachel in *The Straw Chair* is expelled from the Edinburgh aristocracy because she is a threat to her husband's life. On their arrival to Hirta, Isabel and Aneas see in Rachel the effects that such expulsion from a community has on the individual. Rachel has moments where wildness and madness take over her personality. These traits are diagnosed from her time on the island. Glover's use of the rural, as place of both freedom and terror, contrasts moments of liberation and isolation to reflect the fluidity and uncertainty of identity.

In the wider context of Scottish culture Glover gives a voice to individuals and communities that are on the fringes of the Scottish community. At a

[156] Horvat and Bell, 67.

time when there is this reanalysis of Scottishness in the 1980s, Glover specifically uses rural areas for her plays. In a sense she is opening up and re-examining parts of the Scottish imagination, represented by the different landscapes that have been left out of the debate. The voices from these areas are the 'whispered' ones that question the pre-conceived ideas of contemporary Scottish identity. Such a notion is apparent in the characters of Rachel and Rona. They represent the idea of how the 'disenfranchised' repeatedly return, in some way, to infringe upon the Scottish imagination, and thus, reassess its sense of identity. Glover uses the idea of rural settings as a means to unlocking and stimulating parts of the Scottish psyche.

This notion of 'opening up' or 'unlocking' can be seen as a critical interrogation of Scottish culture. Glover's use of history and the retelling of old myths and forgotten stories deepen such an investigation. These are all elements that can be found in *The Seal Wife*, and which Glover carries on into *An Island in Largo*. This play is not as critically acclaimed, or academically debated within Scottish theatre studies as her other work. It is perhaps not particularly interrogative of Scottish culture, but Glover does pursue certain ideas, which reappear in *The Straw Chair*. *An Island in Largo* is the re-imagining and retelling of the personal history of Alexander Selkirk, formerly Selcraig, between the years of 1691 to 1721, whose story has been somewhat forgotten due his association with the more famous literary legend, Robinson Crusoe. The play also explores the affect that exile from a community has on the individual.

Both these ideas are later explored in *The Straw Chair*. Glover tells the part of the personal history of Lady Rachel where she is abandoned on Hirta. Tellingly the differences in the two plays mark the dichotomy in Glover's attitude towards the male and female experience. She shows that Selkirk's own story may be misconstrued, but the tale of his island exile is worth writing down, which then makes him part of history. In contrast, the final image of Rachel writing an imaginary letter because she has no paper or ink, shows that the "tale of a forgotten woman exists only as an ephemeral oral story not as a written document."[157] Also Glover uses the reason for their island exiles to explore the situation of male and female in society. Selkirk's isolation on Juan Fernandez is self-imposed. His belief that he is above authority drives him into self-exile, rather than listen to his superior in the Royal Navy, Captain Stradling. Rachel's time on the Hirta is forced upon her, and she becomes an image for the dominance and brutality that a patriarchy uses upon women.

It is this difference between Glover's depictions of the male and female that marks out *An Island in Largo* worth studying. As noted above, it deals with similar notions of community and the individual, as does *The Seal Wife*. Glover's staging of the play emphasises quite explicitly the expanse between the isolation and belonging.

> Glover's invention shifts theatrically both in place and time, intercutting scenes ironically to convey the differences between the stay-at-home family and the rebellious Selkirk.[158]

---

[157] Scullion, "Contemporary Scottish Women Playwrights", 106.
[158] Brown and Bell, 32.

In the first Act, Selkirk has two designated areas, island and home, which he moves between creating a sense of these 'differences'. The play is also worth some attention because of Glover's focus on a male protagonist, which is a rarity in her work. Whereas the myth of the seal wife acts as a metaphor for the fluidity of female identity, it is the history of Defoe's literary creation, Crusoe, which will trap and fix Selkirk's existence. Glover seems to suggest, with such an idea, that male identity is less able to change. Selkirk's tragedy is in part to do with his inability to cope when he returns from Juan Fernandez and, as the title of the play speculates, he remains stuck on the island.

An Island in Largo premiered at the Byre Theatre, St. Andrews, under the 'Scottish Tourist Board's Showcase Banner', on 1 October 1981. These two facts have perhaps led to the play being overlooked. The Byre Theatre is outside the main theatrical heartland of Scotland. At the time its output was viewed as safe and unchallenging; a situation that came from the Byre's reliance on fifty percent of its box office takings. It was in a situation where it had to perhaps pick more mainstream plays. *An Island in Largo* itself only ran for two weeks and the tourism label adds confusion to both the reasons for producing it, and purpose of the drama. Bob Bridges argues in *Scottish Theatre News* that, it

> was adventurous of the Byre to put on a new play, though to use a local writer and local theme might seen as an attempt to limit the risk.[159]

[159] Bob Bridges, "Byre Season" *Scottish Theatre News* Vol. 5 No. 5 ed. Charles Hart (Glasgow: Scottish Society of Playwrights, December 1981) 21-23, 22.

The Artistic Director, Adrian Reynolds, acknowledges that the Byre has to "hold onto an audience" [160], and Glover states herself that Reynolds wanted her to develop the idea of the Selkirk story.[161] So the 'safeness' of a Fife writer, creating a drama about a historical figure from Fife, seems to be a prominent reason for producing the play. The subject matter will appeal to the surrounding audience, and reveal to any tourists the true identity of the famous Robinson Crusoe.

Bridges attitude towards the play would be justified if the play were simply a retelling of Selkirk's history. Typically though, Glover uses the historical material as a framework, from which she delves into the differing psychologies of community and the individual. She even admits in the programme notes for the production that she did not adhere completely to historical sources.[162] The labels of 'safe' or 'local' are therefore rather limiting for the play. Theatre critic Mary Brennan argues in her reaction to Bridges' review that the criticism of "playing safe" is not heard when Edinburgh or Glasgow dramatists both write about and are produced within these two cities.[163]

---

[160] Bob Bridges, "Missing the London Train", *Scottish Theatre News* Vol. 5 No. 1 ed. Charles Hart (Glasgow: Scottish Society of Playwrights, August 1981) 23-26, 24.
[161] Charles Hart, "Sue Glover: An Island in Largo" *Scottish Theatre News* Vol. 5 No. 3 ed. Charles Hart (Glasgow: Scottish Society of Playwrights, October 1981) 28-29.
[162] Sue Glover, "Author's Note." Programme. *An Island In Largo*. Byre Theatre, 1-17 October 1981. (Scottish Theatre Archive: University of Glasgow Library, STA Ff 8/8a).
[163] Mary Brennan, "The Byre: Another View" *Scottish Theatre News* Vol. 5 No. 7 ed. Charles Hart (Glasgow: Scottish Society of Playwrights, February, 1982) 24-27, 26.

There is a sense that Glover is attempting "to do too much" with *An Island in Largo*.[164] Many of the ideas she investigates, such as the fictionalisation of history and social bigotry, are handled with more control and subtly within *The Straw Chair*. It is Glover's attempt to present the epic nature of Selkirk's life that causes her some problems. For example, after his return to Lower Largo, Glover includes several moments from Selkirk's life before his death. It is the pace by which she goes through these facts that causes the focus of the play to slip. The notion of isolation and change, which are examined through her subtle characterisations of Rona, Isabel and Rachel, are somewhat lost in Selkirk, by trying to include most of his adult life into the play. The majority of Glover's other dramas use a much smaller timeframe (the longest being a year) so the events in the narrative do not cloud over her use of metaphor and characterisation. *An Island in Largo* is perhaps not Glover's most distinguished work, but it does highlight certain ideas that Glover investigates in her later plays, and when read and compared with *The Seal Wife*, it does continue the debate regarding community and the individual.

Selkirk's isolation from the inhabitants of Lower Largo, and more specifically his family, is emphasised in the play's opening scene. Selkirk is on his island, talking to himself. The action then moves over to the village, and into the past, where the beginning of family prayers is heard. Selkirk's absence from this morning service, and his location on the stage, indicates

[164] Brennan, "The Byre: Another View", 26.

the idea of him being an 'island in Largo'. It also implies Selkirk's distance from the local church community, and more importantly his disrespect for the authority of the Kirk. At the time the play is set this has serious implications for both Selkirk and his family. The Elders of the local Kirk both instigated the laws of the Church upon the surrounding parish, and provided suitable punishment for those that transgressed such laws. They would discipline the offender at the Kirk in front of the rest of the community. Hence Selkirk's behaviour brings shame and humiliation for his family.

Selkirk also marks himself as individual by changing his name from Selcraig, which also makes his family a "laughing stock".[165] As an individual, Selkirk initially does not inspire fear within the local community. Unlike Rona, Selkirk has been brought up within the village, and does not arrive from outside of it. The locals know his ways and think him nothing more than an arrogant and troublesome young man. He is a character that triumphs in the certainty of his new identity and authority, enjoys arguing, and causing conflicts with the hierarchies that govern the community, such as the Kirk. Selkirk's individuality is therefore of his own making, and is seen as selfish and egoistical.

[165] Sue Glover, *An Island in Largo* Unpublished (Scottish Theatre Archive: University of Glasgow Library, STA Hn 11/8, 1981) 8.

EUPHAN: He's different from the others.
JOCK: Sandy's treated different, that's all. Sandy's spoiled. You ruin him. The others all had notions – until we knocked it out of them.[166]

Selkirk creates his own identity, not satisfied with the one his family gives him. He wants a more worthwhile existence, so escapes the constraints of Lower Largo's closed community by joining the Royal Navy. The sea represents the lack of structure that Selkirk seems to crave in his life.

Glover's depiction of the relationship between community and individual in this opening part of the play is quite different to that of *The Seal Wife*. Selkirk is not deemed 'special' or 'rare', or driven away by the fearful inhabitants of Lower Largo. It is stated that Selkirk has a gift for seeing visions of the future, due because he is a seventh son of a seventh son. His father, Jock, though, is sceptical of this talent, and it merely gives Selkirk more arrogance and disrespect for authority.

Neither Selkirk nor his actions lead the community to question itself, or realign its structure. He does cause disruption within his family, but this does not bring a change, it is merely an inconvenience they all must suffer until Selkirk leaves again. It is simply the case that Selkirk and his family do not understand each other, as shown by Selkirk's argument with his brother, John.

[166] Glover, *An Island in Largo*, 6.

> And you call me daft! I ran away to sea for a few years, because I always wanted to, because I'd thought of nothing else. But you! – you maroon yourself for ever and cry in the one house with the one wife…because you think: why not![167]

It is this incompatibility that causes the tension within the family. Selkirk is merely a redundant part that does not belong in the domestic sphere. Similarly he feels an indifference towards his family and the community, seeing them as impediments to his success.

Selkirk's carefully constructed identity, along with his departure, means he abandons his roots. The time period of the play falls in line with a fundamental moment in Scotland's history; the Union of Parliaments, in 1707. Glover creates, in Selkirk, a character that is representative of an idea that is a strong talking point within Scottish culture. It is the notion that after Scotland and England were unified, Scottish people, who wanted to advance in this new state, took on a dual identity. They became both Scottish and British. Historian T. M. Devine argues that the former was maintained because of, or in response to, anti-Scottish feelings post-Union, and that the latter was seen as a political commitment to the progress and welfare of the new British state.[168] Glover demonstrates such a duality as a psychological trait within Selkirk, as seen in his responses to both the surrounding community and his own individuality.

It is not being suggested that this reason for social advancement within the new British state is why Selkirk changes his name, or constructs a new

---

[167] Glover, *An Island in Largo*, 20.
[168] T. M Devine, *The Scottish Nation: 1700-2000* (London: Penguin Books, 2000) 30.

identity. What is being argued is that Glover's depiction of Selkirk, as a man who is happy to rid himself of his parochial surroundings, acts a metaphor for this supposed duality, attributed to the Union, within the Scottish psyche. It could be argued that Glover is re-emphasising the idea of the 'Caledonian Antisyzgy'. This is the argument that there is a unique and essential trait within the Scottish nation and its people. Both suffer from a split personality due to the advent of the Union, and the creation of this dual identity. The advocators of such an idea found justification in certain Scottish classical literary texts, most notably James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886).

Scullion argues that describing Scotland as a "schizoid nation" is obviously rather limiting, but crucially misconstrues Scottish culture.[169] She states that the "Scottish imagination is not a symptom of psychosis but a sophisticated engagement with the fantastic".[170] This is true of Glover's work, where the majority of her characters encounter some element of the 'fantastic' that is outside their immediate understanding. Rona's affect on Alec is such an example, where she disturbs his way of life. The tragedy is both theirs, Alec's violent reaction to Rona's 'otherness' is the reason she leaves. *An Island in Largo* is therefore not merely a play regarding the psychological trauma suffered by Selkirk on his return from exile. Glover's use of the duality within Selkirk investigates the relationship between

[169] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 201.
[170] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 201

community and the individual. His despair can be seen as an 'engagement' with, and understanding of, his island experience, but within the confined structure of Lower Largo. Selkirk's journey between community and isolation, between village and island can be viewed as the "crossing and recrossing between states of being, interacting with the shady, the hidden, the unknown and the fantastic".[171] It is this 'crossing and recrossing' within the play that constitutes Selkirk's encounter with the 'unknown' and 'fantastic'. He has literally crossed over from one state to another, and travelled into Craig's notion of the 'primitive past' and returned to tell his story. Glover emphasises this journey through the affect of duality upon Selkirk's psychological state.

An Island in Largo is similar to *The Seal Wife*, in that both plays surmise that behind fixed and constructed notions of identity, lurks the unknown and hidden. Whereas this interaction is explored in the relationship between Alec and Rona, in *An Island in Largo* Glover moves her focus directly onto the character of Selkirk, and his journey from certainty to anguish, as a representation of this duality. Glover re-imagines the life of this historical figure, and in the process asks questions on the nature of identity in contemporary Scotland. She implies that it is the understanding of, and interaction between, community and the individual that is necessary in the formation of identity. Exclusivity to either is dangerous because it leads to a static community, or the isolation of the individual. Selkirk's girlfriend,

[171] Scullion, "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities", 202.

Sophia, comments in the play, "There's an ocean now between him and Largo. An every time you speak you make it deeper."[172] She highlights the misunderstanding between Selkirk and the community, which eventually drives him away. This incomprehension is also internalised by Selkirk and becomes part of his psyche. His duality leads him to question his own self because he does not know what is happening to him. The assuredness and self-confidence of a man that returns as a hero and legend, gives way to anguish and instability, leaving Selkirk entering unfamiliar territory.

Glover depicts Selkirk's internal journey through his own adventures and travels. His departure from Lower Largo is a transgression of community. Selkirk's imagination is stretched out by his travels. The sea acts as a metaphor for his consciousness, where Selkirk must confront his own constructed identity. It is only once outside of community, and on his own island, can he truly engage with the unknown. As stated above Glover depicts the character of Selkirk as creating his own identity because he believes himself to be above the surrounding community. The values and beliefs of the Lower Largo inhabitants are a limit to Selkirk's progress. He turns his back on his family name and business to become a self-made, independent man.

It is only during his isolation when faced with the unknown and the hidden that he begins to realise the security and comfort community provides.

[172] Glover, *An Island in Largo*, 69.

Within the programme note Glover states this as one point where she differs from the local sources. It is said that Selkirk's exile made him into a "devout, God-fearing man", but Glover prefers to believe that his "praying and reading aloud preserved his speech and sanity and reminded him of people."[173] This is the start of Selkirk's interaction between community and the individual, and demonstrates his duality. His constructed identity is slowly being eroded by his time on the island, which is representative of the unknown and the fantastic.

Glover also emphasises this duality in the first Act, by splitting the narrative between Lower Largo and Juan Fernandez. This dramatic device highlights the difference within Selkirk's personality, and shows the incompatibility between him and his family. In the first Act Selkirk is situated both at home and on the island, so there is a suggestion that within the character of Selkirk, the notions of both community and the individual are manifest. Glover's narrative indicates explicitly the 'crossing and recrossing' that Selkirk experiences, between the known and unknown, in trying to comprehend his own identity.

It is because of this journey that Selkirk changes, in the eyes of Lower Largo's community, from being simply an annoyance to a true outsider. Ironically, it is when Selkirk is at his most vulnerable that he inspires fear among the village. The community could understand and even manage his

[173] Glover, "Author's Note".

arrogance and rebelliousness because it was seen as a false construct. It is the realisation, though, that Selkirk has sailed across the expanse of his own imagination, and returned less stable and less certain of who he is. It is his instability that indicates to the community the fluid nature of identity. Selkirk is a manifestation of the 'other' that lurks behind the social construct. He has relearned an idea of identity that has long been repressed within the collective consciousness of the community. This is why the people of Lower Largo fear him, because he returns a fragile, less certain man, not stronger.

Selkirk's behaviour also indicates the duality inherent in his mental state, where he is 'playing out' the relationship between community and the individual within his own self. Glover in the first Act shows the physical expanse Selkirk travels over, as a metaphor for the opening out of his imagination. In the second Act, she focuses on his internal struggle, where his movements are seen as the need for escape from his mental instability, caused by his dual identity. He either shuns social events, instead preferring the openness of the countryside, or frequents bustling cities, so as to immerse himself in the noise of other people.

The arrogance and certainty, which were features of his previous constructed identity, have waned, leaving him unsettled and unsure as to who he is.

FRANK: He isn't fit for the sea.
FRANCES: He isn't fit for the land![174]

This situation or dilemma runs throughout the play, and Selkirk is, in a sense, between community and the individual. It is within the openness of the sea and the isolation of the island where Selkirk engages with the fantastic, but on his return this debate has to be internalised in his own mind. This is because once inside the confines of community, he does not have the same freedom he achieved on the island. His 'otherness', now must engage with the surrounding community.

Selkirk, on his initial return tries to regain his old sense of a constructed identity. He is the prodigal son coming back to his home. Glover emphasises this idea by placing the Selcraig family within the church, and in walks Selkirk, disrupting the sermon as is typical of him. It is soon apparent though that the old Selkirk has gone, and it is this other Selkirk that the inhabitants of Lower Largo cannot comprehend. It is this misunderstanding between community and the individual that is 'played out' within Selkirk's mental state, which is represented by his duality. Such a concept is apparent in the second Act because after his return, Selkirk never settles. He moves between country and city, community and the individual, in a determination both to escape, but also to find a definition to his life. Selkirk's mental state becomes worse because he realises he cannot settle anywhere, and that the debate, caused by his dual identity occurring in his mind, constantly undermines any sense of structure in his life. It is apparent from the title of

[174] Glover, *An Island in Largo*, 109.

the play that Selkirk never escapes from his experience of exile on Juan Fernandez. In his mind he is continually crossing back and forth from island to home, past to present and individual to community. This is an aspect of his latent duality, and it is the engagement between these two identities that causes the unsettlement in his life.

Whereas Glover's female characters, such as Rona and Isabel, find this fluidity of identity a liberating, but sometimes painful experience, Selkirk simply cannot cope with such instability. This emphasises the argument that maleness is defined through notions of rigid and unchangeable hierarchies. Such a claim is true to a degree, but if Selkirk represents within his duality the relationship between community and the individual, then Glover shows that a constructed identity will always be undermined by this 'other' identity. It is not so much Selkirk's inability, rather his realisation, of the instability of human nature that gives way to anguish.

> Voices! What made me long for Largo Sands – and Largo voices! What made me think I needed salt and linen and nails, and shoes and knives – and people!...I fear I will grow mad here. Run mad – and wade in there amongst those voices, screaming at them, like them![175]

This speech indicates Selkirk's state of mind after his return. He is between isolation, 'screaming at them' or belonging, by becoming 'like them', and this instability brings on his fear and madness. The voices indicate the continuing debate, regarding identity that is occurring both in and around Selkirk and the community. Such a discussion, along with Selkirk's sense of unsettlement, can be seen within the wider context of Scottish culture.

---

[175] Glover, *An Island in Largo*, 71.

An Island in Largo can be read as the retelling of the history and life of Alexander Selkirk. It is perhaps more importantly a play about a man in search of an identity, an idea, which resonates within Scottish culture of the 1980s. This was a time when Scotland was going through a period of revision and redefinition. Due to the socio-political climate of the time, there was sense of opening up and re-examining Scottish history, culture and identity. Within this play, Glover points to both the dangers and the requirements of such an investigation. The different locations and Selkirk's island exile and return to Lower Largo, are all aspects which Glover uses to show that the debate on Scottish identity has to remain both open, and never become limited to one area.

It is this openness that is a defining aspect of Glover's work. Her plays from the 1980s show that a culture, which is closed off, tightly structured and limited, is oppressive towards the individual. The use of space, journeys, history and myth are all features of Glover's dramaturgy, which look to broaden the debate on Scottish identity. Her plays bring other experiences and questions into the 'Scottish' discussion. Within *An Island in Largo* the adventures and fate of the historical figure Selkirk asks questions of contemporary Scottish identity. Glover does not use Selkirk to directly confront the stereotypes or generalisations that go into describing Scotland and its culture. She creates in Selkirk, a character who acts as a site, upon which, Scullion's notion of the unsettled negotiation between 'whispered' and 'explicit' codes intersect. It is exactly Selkirk's

engagement with, and contemplation of, the fantastic and hidden that Glover investigates with regards to Scottish identity.

Importantly her work from the 1980s can be read as an analysis of the relationship between community and the individual, that reflects upon the revisionism that was occurring within Scotland during that decade. The notion of a collective identity, which is upheld by certain beliefs and values, is undermined due to the presence of a single person that stands outside such a construct. Plays such as *The Seal Wife* and *The Straw Chair* demonstrate the violence that is used in rejecting the people who do not conform, or threaten the social order. Glover is concerned with what is 'missed out' or rejected within the formation of identity. She sees such a process as the continual debate between community and the individual, the past and present, the certified and the illegitimate, and the loud and quiet. Glover's work in the 1980s is concerned with the legitimatisation of what constitutes Scottishness. Her plays show her broadening and deepening the idea of a Scottish identity.

Glover's work itself can be seen as asking questions of Scottish drama in the 1980s. She tackles issues, such as the isolation of women in Scottish society, that had been either glossed over or left out of the "Scottish, male, working-class experience" of the previous decade.[176] Glover is one of a collection of Scottish women playwrights that steps outside the "orthodoxy

[176] Smith, 276.

in taste created by the great male-dominated plays of the 1970s".[177] Some of the characteristics of this 'orthodoxy' can be construed from Cameron's analysis of the 'Scottish play'. As previously stated, he maintains that the dominant form of Scotland's drama is 'serio-comic naturalism', driven by "sentiment of one kind or another", which uses a dialogue that relies on

> repartee, quick-fire street language, swift come-backs from characters who talk to each other and listen and reply and upstage.[178]

These are elements that are absent from Glover's work. Her plays use a language that relies more on the poetics of metaphor and symbolism, to explore Scottish culture. *The Seal Wife* and *An Island in Largo* are not particularly sentimental or filled with humour either, but are sharp and painful explorations of isolation, loss of belonging and instability of identity. These elements to Glover's work allow her to examine Scottish culture outwith this 'orthodoxy'.

In fairness Cameron states that the characteristics he suggests are "highly speculative"[179], and in his 'Introduction' to *Scot-Free* he writes that

> They also perhaps describe more readily plays which were written before 1980, plays which betrayed an often uncritical nostalgia for croft and craft, took little account of the role of women in Scottish life and concentrated on sectarian violence, football and party politics, ignoring all the while the existence of a Scotland furth of Glasgow.[180]

It is interesting to note Cameron's distinctions between pre and post-1980. His analysis hints that the 1980s was a time when Scottish playwrights

---

[177] Bain, 139.
[178] Cameron, *Study Guide to Twentieth-Century Scottish Drama*, 173.
[179] Cameron, *Study Guide to Twentieth-Century Scottish Drama* 171.
[180] Cameron, "Introduction", xi.

concentrated on other aspects of Scotland's culture, or re-examined its perennial images. Glover's work is precisely about taking a critical look at Scotland by highlighting the hidden and ignored issues, which runs parallel with her need to expand the debate on Scottishness 'furth' of Glasgow. Glover's exploration of Scotland's culture and identity also reflects upon the notion of the canon within Scottish theatre. McDonald states that when discussing the work of women playwrights it is "important, albeit quite difficult, to avoid creating an alternative 'canon'".[181] It is not particularly clear as to the reason why it is important. Perhaps it is because women dramatists should be included into the 'main' canon, or it is simply that the whole canonisation process is a contested area because it creates a set of values, from which other writers and plays are examined. McDonald hints at the latter, and such an idea is in keeping with Glover's work.

A collection of plays speaks about, and to, the culture of a country. The idea of creating a canon is therefore inexorably linked to the formation of identity. As seen, Glover is wary of such a process, her plays explore the relationship between community and the individual, as a way of looking at the nature of culture. She shows how the notion of a collective and concrete identity is continually undermined by the fluidity of the non-conformist. It is not to suggest that Glover is against a Scottish canon as such, more that she is concerned with both the processes involved in its creation, and the picture it reflects of Scotland's identity and culture.

---

[181] McDonald, 494.

As McDonald notes there is the idea of an 'alternative' that is placed outside of the canon, which raises questions on the nature of Scottish drama. It is a rather limiting opinion of Glover's work, but her plays do fall into such a category. Her emergence in the 1980s does question McMillan's 'Slab Boys Syndrome'. This is the idea that Scottish playwrights and directors, perhaps due to the influence of the 1970s, or because of financial needs chose to produce and write plays there were " 'fast-moving', 'action-packed', energetic, and above all in no way sloppy or cissy."[182]

Structurally and thematically, Glover's work is an 'alternative' to this cultural phenomenon. Her plays could be described as poetic-naturalism, where her narrative flows between moments of violence and beauty. She writes in a slow, languid pace, where a number of her main protagonists are more concerned with reaching a mutual understanding and conciliation with the community, than cause outright confrontations. Through her imagery, metaphors and different settings, she stretches out the Scottish imagination from the enclosed urban centres. These are some of the 'alternative' ideas that Glover brings to the table, at a time when Scotland was re-examining its culture and identity. Glover's work offers up different views and stories that have gone into 'creating' the image of contemporary Scotland.

Along with the other writers in this dissertation, Glover uses the idea of community as a framework for her exploration into Scottish identity and

[182] McMillan, "Women Playwrights in Contemporary Scottish Theatre", 72.

culture. She expands her debate by placing the individual outside. Glover does not want to offer any conclusions from this discussion between the two. More importantly it is the process and 'construction' of culture that interests her. Her work shows that while certain communities have the authority or power to push forth their beliefs and values, at the expense of others, the alternative, whispered, illegitimate is never far away to disrupt and undermine such a process.

CONCLUSION

Community is both a recurrent feature and theme within Scottish drama. The structure of the Scottish community, or communities, along with its codes, practices and power relations has been discussed and debated within Scottish theatre studies. In this body of critical literature arguments are made as to the nature of the Scottish community, and how the idea of community itself can reflect aspects of Scotland's culture, such as an individual's identity or placement within the wider society. The main trigger for researching and then writing this dissertation was that I wanted to test some the assumptions found within the critical literature surrounding Scottish theatre. In a sense the textual analyses above are attempt to widen the debate regarding community in Scottish drama. Through my research I realised that several plays had been left unexamined, and that the critical literature discussing the idea of community, is founded upon a collection of more recognisable texts within Scottish theatre. This dissertation both reaffirms, and hopefully adds, to the arguments and points raised regarding community in Scottish drama.

The plays analysed above are used, firstly, to engage with the debate about community in Scottish theatre studies, and secondly to ground such a discussion within the social, political and cultural context of Scotland in the 1980s. Due to the fact that the majority of these texts remain unexamined, means that through analysis they can test the various arguments about the

role of community in Scottish drama. In conjunction with this testing though is the notion of using the critical literature to reach a better understanding of these plays, both in Scottish theatre and its history, and in debates regarding Scotland's culture and sense of identity. One of the aims in this dissertation is to examine, revise and expand upon the idea of community in the dramatic and cultural contexts, by using several plays that are largely absent from Scottish theatre studies.

The plays discussed in this dissertation can be read within the existing critical literature regarding the Scottish community or communities. The main points that these texts bring to this debate though are different responses to Scottish culture in the 1980s. For example I would argue that the majority of these texts reflect a sense of uncertainty felt in Scotland during the early part of the decade. This is apparent in Evaristi's use of the individual and his or her battle to gain some form of identity, or Spence and McGrath's images depicting destruction, decay and violence, indicating their concerns for Scottish society. The playwrights' different responses to Scotland's culture are explored and debated through the framework of community.

I would further argue that the plays featured in this dissertation mark a shift in the idea of community, and show how this shift affects established perceptions concerning Scotland's cultural identity. Such a change is represented by the relationship between the individual and community.

Each playwright creates a situation whereby a person is confronted by the fact that the community that surrounds him or her is either altering shape or disappearing altogether. I would argue that this shift is realised in the broader socio-political context surrounding Scotland in the 1980s, which led to the revision of Scottish culture and history. Examination of community is fundamentally tied to the changing shape of Scottish society. In Scottish theatre though this change in the idea of community can also be linked, I would further argue, to the emergence of women playwrights, such as Evaristi and Glover, during the 1980s. These plays mark a period of time where the idea of community, as a representation of Scottish culture, was being contested over.

One such consequence of this debate occurring between these playwrights is the varied attitudes towards the role of community. Each dramatist approaches the idea of community differently, and in doing so highlights the problems, but also sometimes the benefits, they see within a wider Scottish society. Community is portrayed as both liberating and oppressive towards the individual, and is viewed as either an ideal worth striving for, or a social construct in need of restructure. All the plays, with perhaps the exception of *Commedia* and *American Bagpipes*, explore a divide or split within the workings of community. This separation is examined through notions of gender and politics. What is apparent within these plays is the idea that ironically the structure of a community infringes upon the actual sense of feeling part of a community. The characters in the texts move between

moments of belonging and uncertainty, to indicate how social structures influence an individual's sense of identity and purpose. In these plays community is represented as being both a natural and political state.

I decided to examine both the cultural aspects of community, and its use in Scottish drama, within three different, but related areas. This dissertation can be viewed as a journey starting in the claustrophobic setting of the family home, it then moves out to the wider urban communities, and ends with the open spaces found in the rural parts of Scotland. By separating the plays into these three areas I am able to examine different communities and the structure each one conforms to. There is the close-knit family in Evaristi's *Commedia* where manipulation and oppression are inherent forces within community, or the fear and vulnerability caused by the arrival of the individual, Selkirk that holds together the villagers in Glover's *An Island in Largo.* The three different areas each act as a framework in which the arguments regarding community are debated and discussed. The characters and the settings they inhabit are the site on which each of the playwrights focuses his or her examination of Scottish culture.

In dividing the dissertation into three areas this allows the debate to move around and show how community works in different sections of Scottish society. Where the idea of community might be detrimental, or in need of change in the domestic settings of Evaristi and Watson, it is both positive and beneficial to the characters in Spence and McGrath's urban dramas. In

this debate that underlies the journey from domestic to rural, each of the playwrights demonstrate that a person's perceptions of community are influenced by his or her social situation. Elena in *Commedia* finds community oppressive exactly because of the rigidity and closeness of her family, set in the enclosure of the home, where her every move is scrutinised. In *The Seal Wife* it is the openness and wildness of the rural surroundings that causes community to become protective and wary of strangers. The different attitudes towards the idea of community explored in these three areas show to some degree the debate regarding Scottish culture in the 1980s.

I would argue that these plays help to expand upon the arguments found in Scottish theatre studies regarding community, and its relationship to culture and identity. This is because the playwrights discussed above focus on communities that are in the process of change. Due to this aspect of their plays each dramatist explores the structure of community, and looks at different ways to represent elements of Scottish culture on stage. The texts move between moments of belonging, fear and isolation, and in doing so highlight different aspects of community. The main focus in chapter one in this dissertation is the restructuring of the traditional family, and how this change reflects upon Scottish culture. All three plays explore and question the hierarchy and organisation that holds together the familial structure. Evaristi, Watson and Heggie show the family as the 'paradigmatic community' at a time when the family was beginning to change shape.

In chapter two the debate moves outside of the claustrophobia of the domestic, and into the larger urban communities. Spence's *Sailmaker* and *Space Invaders*, when read together, depict a working class community changing. This is emphasised by Spence's use of setting, where the destruction of Glasgow's tenements gives way to the creation of the new towns outside the city. McGrath too situates his drama on a new housing estate on the outskirts of Dundee. Both playwrights explore the urban working class community in a post-industrial Scotland. These plays add to one of the dominant genres in Scottish theatre, the urban drama, where the lives of city inhabitants are set against the political and economical situation that surrounds them. Spence and McGrath are similar to each other in their depictions of the working class community. One of main themes of these plays is the creation of new towns and housing estates that Spence and McGrath show as being isolated from the rest of society. Their dramas examine the idea of community as divided between the political and the natural. For both playwrights community is both a construct and a sense or feeling.

In the last chapter the discussion moves once again, out into the rural and incorporates Glover's *The Seal Wife* and *An Island in Largo*. These two plays explore the relationship between community and the individual. In the context of Scottish theatre studies Glover's ideas in these texts contribute to the debate regarding representations of male and female communities on stage. However Glover's use of the individual is also a

point of interest in her early work, largely because such a feature is absent from her later plays. Inhabitants of Glover's community view the person standing outside of them as being a threat. The individual is viewed as dangerous because he or she questions the fundamental structure of the community by not conforming to it. Glover's use of the stranger is to show that community is not stable and rigid, but fragile and fluid, and open to change and influence. In these plays it is apparent that Glover's concern is the resistance between community and individual. The villagers in these two plays cannot cope with change, and instead hold on to their concept of community. The journey the individual travels to meet with such a group acts a metaphor for the distance between the two. Glover's plays indicate the dangers of a culture that resists against change and new influences, at a time when aspects of Scottishness were debated and examined.

In the dissertation I speculate over why some of these plays have been left unexamined. I cite various economic, political and cultural factors that were occurring in Scottish theatre during the 1980s. This is an area of my research that needs further study, and one that I hope to develop at some later date. There were also not enough words or time to examine other arguments that I wanted to include, and would have shifted the emphasis of my dissertation away from the textual analyses. I therefore decided to discuss briefly the information I had studied surrounding the productions of these plays, so as to give some indication as to why they may have been unexamined. I hope that I have illuminated on some valuable suggestions as

to this cause, but I am fully aware that these speculations do not go far enough. It must be further noted that the plays in the dissertation are only a selection of the texts I read. There are several more that could be examined and discussed within Scottish theatre studies.

By researching and writing this dissertation I wanted to explore the idea of community in Scottish theatre. I hope by completing this work I have added some interesting arguments to the critical literature regarding Scottish drama. The plays analysed highlight a period of time when Scottish culture was being questioned and examined. The dramatists mentioned in this dissertation use the framework of community to engage in this debate. Similarly I have examined the different representations of community in these plays to test various arguments within Scottish theatre studies. I hope the findings in this dissertation help to widen the debate regarding the idea of community in Scottish drama, and to some extent in Scottish culture during the 1980s.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Scottish History and Culture

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Rise of Nationalism*. 2nd Edition. London: Verso, 1991.

Bell, Eleanor. *Questioning Scotland: Literature, Nationalism, Postmodernism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Bell, Eleanor, and Gavin Miller. Eds. *Scotland in Theory: Reflections on Culture & Literature*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2004.

Beveridge, Craig, and Ronald Turnbull. *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture: Inferiorism and the Intellectuals*. Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989.

Beveridge, Craig and Ronnie Turnbull. *Scotland After Enlightenment: Image and Tradition in Modern Scottish Culture*. Edinburgh: Polygon, 1997.

Craig, Cairns. *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and English Culture*. Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996.

Craig, Cairns. *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.

Crawford, Robert. *Devolving English Literature*. 2nd Edition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2002.

Devine, T. M. *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2000.

Edwards, Owen Dudley. *A Claim of Right for Scotland*. Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989.

Gardiner, Michael. *The Cultural Roots of Devolution*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2004.

Gardiner, Michael. *Modern Scottish Culture*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2005.

Harvie, Christopher. *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics:1707 to the Present*. 4th Edition. London: Routledge, 2004.

McCrone, David. *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Stateless Nation*. London: Routledge, 1992.

McCrone, David. *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Nation.* 2nd Edition. London: Routledge, 2001.

Nairn, Tom. *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism.* 2nd Edition. London: Verso, 1981.

Pittock, Murray G. H. *Scottish Nationality.* Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.

Scottish Theatre

Cameron, Alasdair. "How Popular is Popular?: Some Thoughts on the Definition of Scottish Theatrical Traditions." *Chapman 46.* Ed. Joy Hendry. Blackford: Chapman Magazine, Winter 1986-87. 31-34.

Cameron, Alasdair. *Study Guide to Twentieth-Century Scottish Drama.* Glasgow: University of Glasgow, Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, 1990.

Cameron, Alasdair, and Adrienne Scullion. Eds. *Scottish Popular Theatre and Entertainment: Historical and Critical Approaches to Theatre and Film in Scotland.* Glasgow: Glasgow University Library, 1996.

Coveny, Michael. *The Citz: 21 Years of the Glasgow Citizens Theatre.* London: Nick Hern Books, 1990.

Craig, Cairns, and Randall Stevenson. Eds. *Twentieth-Century Scottish Drama.* Edinburgh: Canongate Classic, 2001.

Findlay, Bill. Ed. *A History of Scottish Theatre.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.

Fisher, Mark, and Jane Ellis, Faith Liddell, John McGroaty, Benjamin Twist, Chris Hannan, Adrian Harris. Eds. *Theatre Scotland Magazine.* Edinburgh: Theatre Scotland, 1992-1995.

Hart, Charles. Ed. *SSP Newsletter.* Glasgow: Scottish Society of Playwrights, January 1980-February 1981.

Hart, Charles. Ed. *Scottish Theatre News.* Glasgow: Scottish Society of Playwrights/Scottish Theatre News, 1981-1986.

Hendry, Joy. Ed. *Chapman 43-4.* Edinburgh: Chapman Magazine, Spring 1986.

Hendry, Joy. Ed. "Towards a National Theatre: Edited Highlights from a Recent AdCAS [Advisory Council for the Arts in Scotland] Conference." *Chapman 49*. Ed. Joy Hendry. Blackford: Chapman Magazine, Summer 1987. 68-75.

Horvat, Ksenija, and Barbara Bell. "Sue Glover, Rona Munro, Lara Jane Bunting: Echoes and Open Spaces." *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers*. Eds. Aileen Christianson, and Alison Lumsden. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000. 65-78.

Hutchison, David. *The Modern Scottish Theatre*. Glasgow: The Molendinar Press, 1977.

Hutchison, David. "Images of Scottish Theatre from 1900 to the Present Day." *Image and Identity: Theatre and Cinema in Scotland and Quebec*. Ed. Ian Lockerbie. Stirling: The John Grierson Archive, and University of Stirling, 1988.

MacLennan, Elizabeth. *The Moon Belongs to Everyone: Making Theatre with 7:84*. London: Methuen London, 1990.

McDonald, Jan. "Scottish Women Dramatists Since 1945." *History of Scottish Women's Writing*. Eds. Douglas Gifford, and Dorothy McMillan. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997. 494-513.

McGrath, John. *A Good Night Out: Popular Theatre: Audience, Class and Form*. London: Eyre Methuen Ltd, 1981.

McGrath, John. *The Bone Won't Break: On Theatre and Hope in Hard Times*. London: Methuen Drama, 1990.

McGrath, Tom. "Blowing The Chances (Impressions of a Playwright's Year...)." *Chapman 49*. Ed. Joy Hendry Blackford: Chapman Magazine, Winter 1986-87. 60-66.

McMillan, Joyce. *The Traverse Theatre Story 1963-1988*. London: Methuen Drama, 1988.

Poggi, Valentina, and Margaret Rose. Eds. *A Theatre That Matters: Twentieth-Century Scottish Drama and Theatre*. Milano: Edizioni Unicopli, 2000.

Scullion, Adrienne. "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities: Gender and Community in Scottish Drama." *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*. Ed. Christopher Whyte. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995. 169-204.

Scullion, Adrienne. "Contemporary Scottish Women Playwrights." *The Cambridge Companion to Modern British Women Playwrights*. Eds. Elaine Aston, and Janelle Reinelt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 94-118.

Scullion, Adrienne. "Glasgow Unity Theatre: The Necessary Contradictions of Scottish Political Theatre." *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (2002): 215-252.

Stevenson, Randall, and Gavin Wallace. Eds. *Scottish Theatre Since the Seventies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

Triesman, Susan C. "Sharman Macdonald: The Generation of Identity." *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers*. Ed. Aileen Christianson, and Alison Lumsden. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000. 53-64.

Scottish Plays (Published)

Byrne, John. *The Slab Boys Trilogy*. London: Penguin Books, 1987.

Cameron, Alasdair. Ed. *Scot-Free: New Scottish Plays*. London: Nick Hern Books, 1990.

Donald, Simon. *Prickly Heat* in *First Run: New Plays by New Writers*. Ed. Kate Harwood. London: Nick Hern Books, 1989. 1-38.

Evaristi, Marcella. *Commedia*. Edinburgh: The Salamander Press, 1983.

Glover, Sue. *Bondagers & The Straw Chair*. London: Methuen Drama, 1997.

Heggie, Iain. *American Bagpipes and other Plays*. London: Penguin Books, 1989.

Heggie, Iain. *Plays: 1*. London: Methuen Publishing Limited, 2003.

McGrath, John. *Two Plays for the Eighties: Blood Red Roses* and *Swings and Roundabouts*. Edinburgh and Aberdeen: 7:84 Publications [and] Aberdeen People's Press Ltd, 1981.

McGrath, John. *Six-Pack: Plays for Scotland*. Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996.

Macdonald, Sharman. *When I was a Girl, I Used to Scream and Shout* with *When We Were Women* and *The Brave*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1990.

Munro, Rona. *The Piper's Cave* in *Plays by Women: Volume Five*. Ed. Mary Remnant. London: Methuen Paperback, 1986. 109-144.

Spence, Alan. *Space Invaders*. Edinburgh: The Salamander Press, 1983.

Spence, Alan. *Sailmaker*. 2nd Edition. Kent: Hodder and Stoughton Educational, 1988.

Scottish Plays (Unpublished)[1]

Arnott, Peter. *White Rose*. STA SAC 60; STA ZJI 12/3-4, 1985.
The Death of Elias Swaney. STA Jg 8/6, 1985.

Byrne, John. *Cara Coco*. STA 2Jh 4/7, 1981.

Czerkawska, Catherine Lucy. *Heroes and Others*. STA Jb 4/6; STA Jb 5/1, 1982.

Dallmeyer, Andrew. *The Boys in the Backroom*. STA SAC 102, 1982.
The Opium Eater. STA Jo 5/7, 1984.

Di Mambro, Anne Marie. *Hocus Pocus*. STA SAC 117, 1986.

Donald, Simon. *In Descent*. STA SAC 54, 1984.

Evaristi, Marcella. *Hard To Get*. STA Gd 77; STA Hn 9/2-3, 1980.
Wedding Belles and Green Grasses. STA Hn 9/6, 1981.
Terrestrial Extras. STA SAC 40, 1985.
The Hat. STA Js 3/5, 1988.*[2]

Glover, Sue. *The Seal Wife*. STA Ho 1/1; STA Gq 13; STA Jc 2/4, 1980.
The Bubble Boy. STA Jc 2/1-3; STA TP 38/3, 1981.
An Island In Largo. STA Hn 11/8, 1981.
The Benjamin. STA Jx 76/4, 1983.*

Hannan, Chris. *Purity*. STA SAC 58, 1984.
Klimkov: The Life of a Tsarist Agent. STA SAC 55, 1984.
The Orphans Comedy. STA 2Jh 7/10, 1986.

Hayes, Catherine. *Not Waving*. STA SAC 96, 1982.

---

[1] All the unpublished plays can be found in the Scottish Theatre Archive, Special Collections: University of Glasgow Library.
[2] Plays marked with * are radio plays.

Heggie, Iain. *Clyde Nouveau*. STA SAC 122, 1989.

Hughes, Dusty. *Heaven and Hell* STA Ho 4/3, 1981.

McGrath, Tom. *Animal*. STA Hp 1/4, 1979.
1-2-3. STA Jn 10/7; STA Jq 3/12-1, 1981.[3]
Pals. STA Hp 1/6, 1984.
Kora. STA Ji 6, 1986.
City. 1989.[4]

Paterson, Stuart. *The Chimney Sweeps*. STA SAC 59, 1984.

Pownall, David. *The Hot Hello*. STA Hp 6/3, 198-.

Spence, Alan. *The Palace*. STA SAC 105, 1981.

Watson, Alison. *Moving In*. STA Kw 8/5; STA Hp 11/1-2, 1980.

Wilcox, Michael, *78 Revolutions*. STA Hp 11/7, 1984.

Miscellaneous

Brennan, Mary. "New Playwright with a Mission to Oust Boredom." *The Herald*. Glasgow: The Herald, January 1987. Scottish Theatre Archive: University of Glasgow library, STA WHC 2/62.

Glover, Sue. "Author's Note." Programme. *An Island in Largo*. Byre Theatre, 1-17 October 1981. Scottish Theatre Archive: University of Glasgow Library, STA Ff 8/8a.

Heggie, Iain. "Author's Note." Programme. *American Bagpipes*. Brunton Theatre, 6-21 March 1998. Scottish Theatre Archive: University of Glasgow Library, STA PYC 7/9.

Programme. *Kora*. Traverse Theatre, 2-25 May 1986. Scottish Theatre Archive: University of Glasgow Library, STA Fi 5/2b.

---

[3] This is a trilogy that contains the plays *Who Are You Anyway?, Very Important Business* and *Moondog*.

[4] At the time of reading Tom McGrath's *City* (1989) there was a box of articles, photographs, letters and different versions of the script attached to the production that had been sent in by TAG (Theatre-About-Glasgow) Company. Staff at the Scottish Theatre Archive had not yet catalogued the contents of the box, so I do not have any reference numbers for McGrath's *City*.