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Re-Imagining Scotland: Scottish Women's Cultural Leadership in the Theatre Sector 2011-2021

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Abstract

This thesis investigates women's cultural leadership in the Scottish theatre sector in the period of 2011-2021. Focusing especially on the 2014 Scottish independence referendum and the 2016 'Brexit' referendum, this work argues that women used theatre as a space to re-imagine Scotland, and that looking at the work they produced in this time can provide fresh insight into both gender and national identity in contemporary Scotland. Taking Benedict Anderson's theory of the imagined community as a theoretical starting point, this research argues that cultural activity provides women with space to insert themselves into Scotland's cultural narrative, and in turn shape the imagining of Scotland as a nation. This thesis places existing research into gender and national identity in conversation with thirteen original interviews with female leaders from the Scottish cultural sector. In doing so, it advocates for an intersectional approach to the study of women's contributions to the Scottish cultural sector which allow for nuance that previous studies have not provided.

I begin with an introduction and literature review, before focusing on the issue of gender inequality within the Scottish cultural sector. In this discussion, I focus on key issues identified by women I interviewed, highlighting how women's experiences are shaped by their race, class, and age as well as their gender, and that often these different inequalities are interacting and intersecting. This chapter argues that understanding the diversity of experiences amongst different women is crucial to fully comprehending gender inequality. It also problematises the idea that the success of a small group of women who progress to leadership can be seen as evidence of wider progress in terms of gender inequality within the sector. Building on this, the next chapter looks at power dynamics within the networks and communities that comprise the Scottish cultural sector – in particular focusing on how women leaders navigate a theatre industry in which they are simultaneously disadvantaged and in a position of power. The final chapter turns its attention to how women's creative work can be understood as a form of cultural leadership, and how analysis of that creative work can produce new knowledge of how women are imagining Scotland as a nation. This chapter takes Rona Munro's The James Plays (2014), Annie George's The Bridge/Home is Not the Place/Fragments of Home (2014-2017) and Frances Poet's Adam (2017) as case studies and argues that women used their creative work during the period of 2011-2021 to imagine Scotland as a nation that could be egalitarian and open, whilst also highlighting the ways in which the realities of life in Scotland at that time often did not live up to this imagined potential.

Ultimately, this thesis demonstrates the key role that women are playing in the cultural sector in Scotland, and specifically in the theatre industry. It shows that in a decade of political and cultural upheaval, women used their cultural activity to both critique and celebrate Scotland, to understand Scotland's past and present, and to imagine potential futures.

Contents

Table of Contents

Abstract........2
Contents........3
Acknowledgements........5
Author's Declaration........7
Chapter One: Introduction........8
Research Questions........10
Research Design........11
Defining Key Terms........14
Contextualising Women's Leadership: Scotland 2011-2021........19
Indyref........19
Brexit........22
Where are the Women?........24
Intersectionality........26
Critiques of Intersectionality........30
Methodology: Approaching Intersectionality in the Interview Process........34
Thesis Structure........42
Chapter Two: Gender, Culture and National Identity........46
The Imagined Community........46
The Limited Community........47
The Sovereign Community........48
The Imagined Community........50
The Imagined Community in Theatre Scholarship........54
Scottish National Identity........62
Gender and National Identity........65
Conclusion........70
Chapter Three: Gender Inequality in the Scottish Cultural Sector........72
'#MeToo' - Sexual Harassment and Abuse........73
'There are a lot of handmaidens in Scottish theatre': The Visibility and Value of Women's Work.........75
Programming and Platforming Women........79
Administrative Work........84
Creative Learning and Youth Theatre........88
'I have to go home and look after this little person': Motherhood.........94
'The M Word' - The Impact of Aging........107
'They only allow one Black person or Brown person through' - Racial Inequality in the Scottish cultural sector........113
'We were never encouraged to speak up' - The Unspoken Dimension of Class........126

Conclusion **137**

Chapter Four: Power, Networks and Community ***140***

'Working with people begets more work': Networking **141**

'It's a family, but only because families are also sort of shit': Community **154**

'I'm not a gatekeeper, I'm a fangirl': Leadership **167**

Identity Politics in Leadership 172

Conclusion **178**

Chapter Five: Establishing Scotland: Identity and Belonging in Scottish Women's Playwrighting ***180***

History and the Imagined Community **181**

History in Scottish Theatre **185**

'You know the problem with you lot? You've fuck all except attitude' - The James Plays **193**

Contemporary Scots Language 196

Scotland and England 199

Queen Joan and Meg 201

'Someone was ripping away my identity' - International Relations **210**

'Put on a Tartan Sari and Batter Your Pakora': Migrant Narratives **215**

Conclusion **239**

Chapter Six: Conclusion ***240***

Summary of Key Arguments **241**

Future Possibilities **248**

Bibliography ***253***

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This thesis is dedicated, in loving memory, to Harry and Frances Hart who I know would be very proud and to Margot Traynor, who would be very glad that I've finally written the bloody thing.

Author’s Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Katie Hart

Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis investigates women's cultural leadership in the Scottish theatre sector in the period of 2011-2021. Focusing especially on the 2014 Scottish independence referendum and the 2016 'Brexit' referendum, this work argues that women used theatre as a space to re-imagine Scotland, and that looking at the work they produced in this time can provide fresh insight into both gender and national identity in contemporary Scotland. This research argues that cultural activity provides women with space to insert themselves into Scotland's cultural narrative, and in turn shape the imagining of Scotland as a nation. It also places existing research into gender and national identity in conversation with thirteen original interviews with female leaders from the Scottish cultural sector. In doing so, I demonstrate that women have made significant contributions as leaders within the cultural sector, and that focusing on women's cultural leadership produces new knowledge of both women's national identity and their experiences of gender inequality.

When thinking of ways to begin this thesis, I found myself returning to September 2016 when, having accepted a place on a master's degree programme in London, I became the first person in my family to move out of Glasgow. I regretted the decision almost immediately, experiencing a level of homesickness that felt as intense as grief and which made me both mentally and physically unwell. I pined for Scotland. I talked about home constantly. My classmates called me 'Scottish Katie'; my workmates simply called me 'Scotland'. I found myself, for the first time, considering my Scottish-ness and in doing so became somewhat of a caricature. My accent became broader, I stubbornly said 'aye' instead of 'yes', no matter how many times I was corrected. I decorated my bedroom in tartan and pictures of Scotland. I inhaled books set in Scotland and for the first time in my life became an avid viewer of the Glasgow-based soap opera *River City*. My playlists on Spotify morphed into a collection of The Proclaimers, Deacon Blue, Paulo Nutini and Del Amitri. In desperate times, I turned to the Red-Hot Chilli Pipers. On Burns Night, I forced my friends to participate in a Burns Supper, despite their varying levels of disgust at the thought of having to eat haggis. I had

never considered myself a nationalist, nor had I really thought much about being Scottish when almost everyone around me was also Scottish, but suddenly it felt central to my personal identity. Looking back now, I am mostly struck by how important cultural activity was to me in that period, and how it became central to my sense of national identity.

It is this relationship between cultural activity and national identity that was the impetus for this research. As I will discuss in the next chapter, there is an existing body of literature that supports the idea that these two concepts inform, and are informed, by one another. In short, to quote scholar Jen Harvie, national identities are 'neither biologically or territorially given; rather, they are creatively produced or staged'[1]. This research focuses on the period of 2011-2021, a decade in which there has been significant moments of what Nadine Holdsworth terms 'rupture'[2] - moments in which the very fabric of the nation's political life felt like it had been disrupted - including two referenda which raised significant questions about the very nature of what it meant to be Scottish, British, and European. As a committed feminist, I was particularly interested in the implications of this relationship between national identity and cultural activity for Scottish women. I suspected that looking at the cultural work that women produced could provide fresh insight into how they had experienced these moments of rupture, and that understanding these experiences could offer new perspective on the relationship between gender and national identity for Scottish women.

The decision to focus on theatre specifically is driven by a desire to understand the role that theatre plays in the creation and representation of national identities. This idea is developed in *Theatre & Nation,* where Nadine Holdsworth describes theatre as

> Offer[ing] the chance to explore national histories, behaviours, events, and preoccupations in a creative, communal realm that opens up potential for reflection and debate. But it is more than this. Arguably, theatre is deeply implicated in constructing the nation through the imaginative realm and provides a site where the nation can be put under the microscope[3].

[1] Jen Harvie, *Staging the UK,* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 3
[2] Nadine Holdsworth, *Theatre & Nation,* (Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), p. 7
[3] Nadine Holdsworth, 2010, p. 6

Holdsworth's statement encapsulates the potential for theatre to not just reflect on or discuss events, but to actively participate in creating and shaping the very fabric of a nation. Holdsworth's work provoked me to consider how – in moments like referenda where nations were in a clear process of re-invention – theatre could play an integral role in that process. Building on this, I am specifically interested in the cultural leadership as a means for women to creating narratives for a nation, and how this leadership might function in these moments of rupture.

Research Questions

I initially set out on this research with the following set of research questions:

- What was the relationship between Scottish women's theatrical and political activity between 2011 and 2021?
- How has women's creative work responded to – and been informed by – major political events such as Brexit and indyref?
- How can women's theatrical activity produce new knowledge of the relationship between gender and national identity in contemporary Scotland?

Over the course of my initial research and preparation for fieldwork, I became aware of a lack of existing work about women's cultural leadership in Scotland. There was existing work on Scottish female playwrights and their work – which I will draw from in later chapters – as well as a body of work about gender inequality which forms the foundation of the third chapter of this thesis, but research into how and where women were leading within the sector was lacking. When I began to make a list of potential interviewees, I was struck by the number of women holding positions of seniority within the creative sector, and the lack of acknowledgement of this leadership seemed like an oversight. With this in mind, I added three further research questions:

- How have women led within the Scottish cultural sector during the period of 2011-2021?
- What are the key issues facing women in the cultural sector in Scotland?
- How did female leaders use cultural activity as a means of imagining Scotland in this period? What kind of Scotland did they imagine?

This final question was inspired by the work of Benedict Anderson, whose theory that nations are 'imagined communities' has provided a theoretical underpinning

for my own thinking on national identity. I will discuss Anderson's work in greater detail in the next chapter, but the idea that nations are 'imagined' implies that they can be re-imagined.

Research Design

In order to address these research questions, I will draw on existing theoretical work on cultural activity, gender and national identity with performance analysis, textual analysis, and qualitative research in the form a series of interviews with female leaders in the Scottish cultural sector. As detailed further below, the interviews discussed in this project took place between May and August 2020 during the covid-19 pandemic. In the months leading up to this, I made a list of women who had held or currently held positions of leadership within the theatre industry. The criteria for a 'position of leadership' was not limited just to Artistic Director, but also acknowledged the role that directors, producers, playwrights, and creative learning practitioners play as leaders within the industry. In short, I defined leadership roles as roles that involved creating opportunities for other people to participate– either professionally or non-professionally – in the arts, and roles which involved shaping the direction of the theatre industry. I contacted a total of forty-five women across a wide variety of roles within the Scottish cultural sector. I have based my categorisation of these roles on how women self-identified on their public social media profiles or websites, or how they were listed on their organizations' websites. The spread of roles was as follows:

- Artistic Directors (7)
- Producer (5)
- Journalist (2)
- Consultant (1)
- Actor (4)
- Playwright (10)
- Creative Learning practitioner (3)
- Manager (1)
- Theatre Maker (1)
- Executive Producer (1)
- CEO (2)
- Chief Executive (2)
- Creative Director (1)
- Associate Director (2)
- Board Member (3)
- Creative Producer (1)

As is typical of workers within the creative industries, many of the women I spoke to have a number of different skills and work across several roles, so these categorisations are somewhat reductive. I am also conscious that job titles, when listed like this, perhaps do not give much sense of the reality of what these roles involve. Titles like 'Chief Executive', for example, can vary hugely based on the scale of an organisation, and require different skills based on the type of work that organisation carries out. I have tried, when discussing women I eventually interviewed, to provide a more expansive explanation of both their current and past roles.

The interviews carried out as part of this project are a rich resource to draw from in my consideration of Scottish women's cultural leadership. The small sample size means that the observations made in these interviews cannot be taken as evidence of wider trends within the cultural sector, nor can they be generalised as indicative of the experience of all female leaders. However, they remain useful to me because they offer insight into the lived experiences of a select group at a specific – and, as I will discuss in the next section, significant- moment in time. That lived experience provides nuance to some of the existing studies and assumptions about women's role in the cultural sector, and I use it in this thesis as a means of enhancing my analysis of existing research and my chosen performance case studies.

Of the women I contacted, thirteen agreed to participate in an interview:

Alyson Orr: Producer, actor and singer based in Glasgow.

Annie George: Writer, producer and theatre-maker who has been working in Scotland for over thirty years.

Christine Hamilton: Arts manager and administrator with over forty years of experience in her field. Hamilton also served as Chair of the Touring Network for four years and, until her retirement in 2020, was director of Christine Hamilton Consulting which specialised in cultural and creative industries policy research.

Frances Poet: Playwright and former Literary Manager at the National Theatre of Scotland.

Ishbel McFarlane: Theatre maker and writer based in Glasgow. Ishbel described her work as 'campaigning theatre focused on social justice, feminism, place and language'[4].

Jean Cameron: An independent, freelance creative producer, director, and facilitator. Cameron is a board member at the National Theatre of Scotland, was Project Director for the Paisley UK City of Culture Bid (2015-2018) and became Executive Producer of The Edinburgh International Culture Summit in October 2021.

Jemima Levick: At the time of our interview, Levick was Artistic Director and Chief Executive of Stellar Quines. She has since moved to a new role as Artistic Director of Play, A Pie and a Pint at the Oran Mor, Glasgow. Levick also works as a director.

Julia Hughes (pseudonym): Creative Director and Chief Executive of a major arts organisation in Scotland.

LJ Findlay-Walsh: Artistic Director of Take Me Somewhere Festival, Senior Performance Curator at Tramway, Glasgow and former Producer and Programmer at The Arches.

Mahri Reilly: Creative Producer and Artistic Lead at Scottish Youth Theatre.

Rosie Priest (they/them): At the time of our interview, Rosie was Creative Learning Associate at Stellar Quines. They have since left the organisation to complete their PhD at the University of Stirling in collaboration with the National Galleries of Scotland.

Tashi Gore: Theatre-maker, producer, and facilitator. Gore is currently Associate Director (Engage) of Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre. Gore is also co-Artistic Director of Glass Performance and co-founded Junction 25, an award-winning performance company for young people.

Zinnie Harris: Playwright, director and Associate Director at The Lyceum, Edinburgh. Harris is also a Professor of Playwriting and Screenwriting at the University of St Andrews.

The combination of these interviews, explored in relation to existing critical work, and my analysis of a selection of performance material allows for me to offer a multi-faceted insight into the Scottish cultural sector.

[4] Ishbel McFarlane, Interview, 10th August 2020

The decision to include performance and textual analysis in this research was one that came later in the process, as I began to evaluate the interview material alongside my research questions. The conversations I had with women about their leadership within the cultural sector led me to question how the creative work they produce can itself be considered a form of leadership. In the fifth chapter of this thesis, I will use several performance case studies to argue that the stories told by female playwrights during the Indyref and Brexit referenda were a form of imagining and re-imagining versions of Scotland, and that these imaginings are key to understanding women's experiences of national identity. Not only do playwrights, directors and other theatre makers have the potential to lead in the cultural sector through their working practices, the work they produce also 'leads' in its own way, becoming part of the wider fabric of the Scottish theatrical tradition which, as I will demonstrate in the coming chapters, in turn shapes Scotland's cultural identity. The stories that women tell - and where, when, and how they tell them - are therefore crucial to their cultural leadership. As such, I felt that the inclusion of performance and textual analysis in this thesis was essential to developing a rich and more nuanced understanding of women's cultural leadership in Scotland.

Defining Key Terms

In terms of definitions, my use of both 'woman' and 'Scottish' are to be understood in the most inclusive sense. 'Woman' includes anyone who self-identifies as such. Similarly, 'Scottish' is not defined by birthplace or genealogy, but rather is a label which anyone living in Scotland can choose to use. Many of the women I interviewed for this project were not born in Scotland but have lived and worked in Scotland for almost their entire career. If these women were happy to be identified as Scottish, then I was comfortable using their experiences in this project. This inclusive approach is in line with wider discourses around Scottish identity in the context of Indyref and Brexit. I will return to this inclusive definition of Scottish throughout the coming chapters in my discussion of belonging and migration, but, in short, in recent years the Scottish Government have placed an emphasis on 'civic nationalism' which prioritises an individual's desire to identify as Scottish over their birthplace or ethnicity[5]. This

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[5] See Nathalie Duclos, 'The SNP's Conception of Scottish Society and Citizenship, 2007-2014', *French Journal of British Studies,* 21:1, 2016, pp 1-16

conceptualisation of Scottish nationalism makes space for narratives of multiculturalism to sit alongside nationalist rhetoric; however, as I will demonstrate in later chapters, this rhetoric is not always reflected in the lived experiences of migrants.

My understanding of 'national identity' is best summarised by sociologist Anthony D. Smith's definition as involving

> the continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the identification of individuals with that pattern and heritage and with its cultural elements[6].

This definition encapsulates the variety of elements that contribute to one's experience of national identity, but its emphasis on the cultural creation of these identities is particularly useful in my work on cultural leadership. National identity, crucially, should be understood as distinct from nationalism, which is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as 'advocacy of or support for the interests of other nations, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations' and 'advocacy or support for national independence or self-determination'[7]. Nationalism is an ideology, whereas some form of national identity – as it is employed in this research – is experienced even by those who would actively distance themselves from a nationalist stance. That being said, in the literature review and the chapters that follow I will draw on several texts which refer to nationalism rather than national identity. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, there is some overlap between national identity and nationalism, and there are elements of nationalist discourse which are useful to understanding how national identity operates, and how it is utilised in service of nationalist projects. Secondly, in the ten-year period which is the focus of this research, Scotland has been governed by a nationalist party and has experienced a referendum on national independence. Nationalism, therefore, has been the backdrop of Scottish political life during this time. Whilst not everyone in Scotland identifies as a nationalist, they have all been living amid a nationalist movement which will shape their understanding of Scotland.

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[6] Anthony D Smith, *Nationalism. Theory. Ideology. History.* (Cambridge, Polity, 2001), p. 18.

[7] OED Online, 'nationalism, n', Oxford University Press, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/125289?redirectedFrom=nationalism#eid [Accessed 29/05/2022]

In locating this project's intervention, I first wish to explain my use of the term 'cultural sector'. This research has a distinct focus on theatre. My interviewees are theatre makers and the creative case studies in my final chapter are plays. However, I use the terms 'cultural sector' and 'creative sector' throughout this thesis when discussing women's leadership. This is partly because there are wider implications of my findings for the entire cultural sector, not just the theatre industry. But it also reflects the interdisciplinary nature of cultural work and cultural leadership more broadly. Many of the women I spoke to have a career history which has involved working across the cultural sector in theatre, music, dance, museums, and galleries. Some were currently working on projects which involved working with visual artists, musicians, or filmmakers. As such, when I refer to the 'cultural sector', I do so to acknowledge that the lines between different disciplines are often blurred.

The term 'cultural leadership' is defined in simple terms by the British Council as 'the act of leading the cultural sector'[8]. It is a straightforward description of what, ultimately, proves to be a complex undertaking. They describe this cultural leadership as being practised in two different ways. The first is identified as 'competently managing' organisations, overseeing the legal and financial aspects of the work as well as making sure they have a 'well-organised staff'[9]. The second type of cultural leadership is described as 'leading the culture itself – making work, productions and projects which show different ways of thinking, feeling, and experiencing the world – bringing dynamism to the economy and wider society'[10]. This element of the British Council's definition reinforces that whilst a leader may be the person leading an organisation, they may also be the person creating thought-provoking work. Some will do both things simultaneously; it is also possible to 'lead' from positions that are not explicitly defined as leadership roles. This corresponds to my own decision to interview women who did not hold explicit leadership positions within formal organisational structures but who were in roles that had the power to influence other individuals and shape the sector. The final part of the British Council definition – 'bringing

[8] British Council, 'What is Cultural Leadership?', https://creativeconomy.britishcouncil.org/media/uploads/files/Cultural_Leadership_2.pdf [Accessed 30/05/2022]
[9] ibid
[10] ibid

dynamism to the economy and wider society' – points, albeit in vague terms, to the wider impact that cultural activity is presumed to have both practically in terms of the economy, and on the lives of those who encounter it.

The most prominent organisation working specifically on cultural leadership in the UK is Clore Leadership, who aim 'to inspire and equip leaders to have a positive impact on society through great leadership of culture'[11]. Clore Leadership is a registered charity supported by a combination of private donations and public funding. It was initiated by Dame Vivien Duffield and the Clore Duffield Foundation – a grant making charity with a focus on cultural learning[12]. Since it was founded in 2003, Clore Leadership have provided resources and opportunities for cultural leaders, most notably through the Clore Fellowship – a development programme for cultural leaders which 'enrich and transform cultural practice and engagement by developing leadership potential, acumen, and skills'[13]. Clore Leadership do not provide a specific definition for cultural leadership, but the topics covered in the online resources they produce paint a vivid picture of the type of skills they presume contemporary cultural leadership requires. They currently offer online support in areas such as 'leading with values', 'well-being', 'governance', 'inclusive cultures', 'crisis management' and 'digital transformation'[14]. The criteria for involvement in the Clore Fellowship further emphasises the diverse range of skills cultural leaders are expected to draw on:

> We are looking for leaders who are dynamic, strategic and collaborative, who possess a high degree of intellectual curiosity, creativity, integrity and emotional intelligence. You will be entrepreneurial and driven to make a difference in our organisation, community of practice, sector and/or society through culture[15].

These criteria also point toward some underlying assumptions about cultural leadership on an ideological level. The emphasis on being entrepreneurial, as well as the need to be dynamic and strategic, hint at the increasingly neoliberal

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[11] Clore Leadership, 'About Us: Our Story', https://www.cloreleadership.org/about-us/our-story [Accessed 30/05/2022]

[12] Clore Duffield Foundation, 'About the Foundation', https://www.cloreduffield.org.uk/about-the-foundation [Accessed 22/08/2022]

[13] Clore Leadership, 'Programmes: Clore Fellowship', https://www.cloreleadership.org/programmes/clore-fellowship/about [Accessed 30/05/2022]

[14] Clore Leadership, 'Cultural Leadership', https://www.cloreleadership.org/cultural-leadership [Accessed 30/05/2022]

[15] Clore Leadership, 'Programmes: Clore Fellowship', https://www.cloreleadership.org/programmes/clore-fellowship/about [Accessed 30/05/2022]

conditions under which leaders are expected to produce work. These neoliberal working conditions were a recurring theme in my conversations with women about their experiences of the cultural sector. Like the British Council definition, the criteria put forward by Clore Leadership reflect that cultural leaders are responsible for both the practical running of an organisation and leading creativity, as well as contributing to wider societal change. Both the British Council definition and the Clore Fellowship criteria act as a springboard for my own thinking on cultural leadership, and over the coming chapters I will draw on both these and the definitions put forward by my interviewees to ground my own thinking about cultural leadership.

As I will explore in later chapters, aspects of the definitions offered by the British council and Clore Leadership recurred across my interviews. The women had practical expectations of leadership, highlighting the importance of having a ‘vision’ for the organisation, being organised, and having good communication skills. But they also linked this to more ideological leadership reflected in the calls for ‘authenticity’, inclusivity, and ‘belief and conviction’. The need for leaders to ‘address systemic barriers’ and offer opportunities to others is something that was mentioned by several interviewees, and I will return to this idea in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four, I will expand on the idea put forward in interviews that leaders are responsible for ‘putting pieces together’ and ‘creating networks’. I will also consider the importance of leaders being ‘aware of their power’. Leaders’ ability to engage in debate, and to ‘get people talking’ will be clear in my discussion of women’s creative work in Chapter Five.

The multi-faceted nature of cultural leadership necessitates a multi-faceted approach to this research. The existing work being done by Clore Leadership focuses predominantly on leadership in an organisational context, but the themes both they and the British Council identify in cultural leadership, alongside those raised by the women I interviewed, point towards an understanding of cultural leadership as also partly expressed through the creative work that a leader creates and facilitates. Accordingly, the chapters in this thesis will explore cultural leadership on an organisational, individual, and creative level.

Contextualising Women's Leadership: Scotland 2011-2021

My decision to focus specifically on the Brexit and Indyref referenda is based on the idea that referenda are moments of direct democracy where an individual's influence on the political direction of their country or community is particularly clear[16]. The 'Indyref' and 'Brexit' referenda are specifically of interest because of their direct link to questions of nationhood and national identity. As voters questioned the future of the country, the debates around this issue drew into focus questions of nationhood and national identity that are often implicit. These discussions made visible the variety of, often competing, conceptualisations of what it meant to be British or Scottish, and shone a light on some of the key narratives around these identities.

Indyref

If I were to attempt to begin with a lengthy summary of the debate around Scottish independence, it would necessitate retelling a history almost as long as that of Scotland itself. Throughout the Middle Ages, the relationship between Scotland and England was defined by the battle for Scottish independence. Not even the formal union between the nations in 1707, nor the subsequent creation of the United Kingdom in 1800, put an end to the question of Scotland's self-governance. In relation to this project, the most logical starting point for a discussion of Scottish independence is the 2011 election victory of the Scottish National Party (SNP). Having governed as a minority government since 2007, the SNP's success in the 2011 election gave them a majority, and a mandate to act on their campaign promise of holding a referendum. In March 2013, then First Minister Alex Salmond announced that the vote would take place on 19th September 2014. 2014 would mark 700 years since the Battle of Bannockburn, and coincided with Glasgow hosting the Commonwealth Games, and the Ryder Cup being held at the Gleneagles Hotel[17]. The two main campaign groups – *Yes Scotland* and *Better Together* – launched in 2012, and for the two years preceding the vote these opposing campaign groups were a constant feature of political life in Scotland.

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[16] For a fuller discussion of the significance of referenda and direct democracy, see Laurence Morel and Matt Qvortrup (eds), *The Routledge Handbook to Referendums and Direct Democracy,* (Oxford and New York, Routledge, 2018).

[17] The Battle of Bannockburn (1314) was a significant battle in which Robert I's Scottish soldiers were victorious over the English army. For more information see: https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Bannockburn [Accessed 01/11/2022]

Yes Scotland was primarily organised by members of the Scottish National Party, the Scottish Socialist Party, and the Scottish Greens. The *Better Together* campaign was the work of Scottish Labour, the Scottish Liberal Democrats, and the Scottish Conservatives. That being said, there were members of these parties who expressed support for independence, most notably the Labour for Independence group who collaborated with *Yes Scotland*.

The women I interviewed spoke enthusiastically about their experiences of indyref. Christine Hamilton described the months leading up to the vote as 'the most exciting time of [her] entire life':

> And having lived through the very tail end of the sixties, I can't believe I'm saying this that six years ago really was the best summer of my life in many ways. And I think that one of the things that made it so amazing was the way in which theatre and the arts in general responded to that debate[18].

Hamilton cited the work commissioned and programmed by NTS during the year leading up to the referendum as a key part of the artistic response to the debate, including Rona Munro's *The James Plays* trilogy which are a focus of the fifth chapter of this thesis. Hamilton's sentiments were echoed by Jean Cameron:

> How exciting to be alive during indyref and the creative engagement…just like totally amazing…I thought we were so gallus during indyref, how we were hosting the Commonwealth Games in August with all those connotations and then indyref the next month. And somehow, in terms of identity, I think we nailed it[19].

The experience of hosting the Commonwealth Games at a time in which Scotland was considering its place within the union is something I will return to in my discussion of Annie George's play *The Bridge* but, again, Cameron articulates the positive engagement that many of the women I spoke to experienced with indyref.

Jemima Levick offered a somewhat different perspective, and discussed the fear and anxiety she saw in colleagues and friends in the lead up to the vote:

> I remember people being quite frightened and anxious about [it]. I remember the day of the vote, [a member of staff] came back [from voting] and she just burst into tears and she said I don't know if I've made the right decision. You know I really remember feeling the pressure of that moment of getting right and it was a real door opening moment[20].

[18] Christine Hamilton, Interview, 29th May 2020
[19] Jean Cameron, Interview, 3rd July 2020
[20] Jemima Levick, Interview, 8th July 2020

Levick went on to talk about how Dundee – where she was working as Artistic Director of new writing theatre Dundee Rep - had, overall, been a 'Yes' city where support for independence was strong. She noted that the organisation felt 'unsteady and uncertain' and that it was 'quite divided within' the staff because

> there's lots of people there with their 'Yes' badges and there was a few people with 'No' badges [and] it wasn't ever, it didn't feel like a fight, but it was…certainly very present and we were well aware of it and kind of tiptoeing around each other, waiting to see what might happen[21].

It feels necessary at this stage to locate my own position within this political context. In 2014, with naïve optimism that the fact we had got to the stage of holding a referendum may be enough to force necessary change within the United Kingdom, I was part of the 55% of Scots who voted No to Independence. If a second referendum were to take place I would certainly vote differently, but I share this because while I was in the majority nationwide, I felt like I was in a minority within the creative sector. I have distinct memories of sitting in a class for my degree in Theatre Studies whilst a senior member of staff lamented the 'idiots' who had voted No and 'ruined it for the rest of us.' The assumption was obvious; that 'we' collectively had voted Yes, and the 'idiots' were not in the room.

As will be clear both in the conversations with women and in the examples of work that I will share throughout this thesis, the assumption made by that staff member reflected the overwhelming support for the Yes movement within the Scottish cultural sector. There were a few notable exceptions to this, with Christine Hamilton pointing out that Scottish theatre figurehead David McLennan, who died shortly before the referendum, had been against the idea of independence[22]. Nonetheless, many prominent voices in Scottish theatre – including David Greig, Alan Bissett, Alan Cumming, David Hayman, Elaine C. Smith, and Liz Lochhead- were vocally in favour of Scottish independence[23]. My perception at the time was that the sector was generally leaning in favour of independence, and the conversations I had with my interviewees reflect this support. Similarly, none of the women I spoke to expressed any support for Brexit,

[21] Ibid.

[22] Christine Hamilton, Interview, 29th May 2020

[23] National Collective, '50 Artists and Creatives Who Support Scottish Independence', *National Collective,* 30th August 2012 http://www.nationalcollective.com/2012/08/30/50-artists-creatives-who-support-scottish-independence/ [Accessed 13/10/2022]

which is again generally reflective of a wider trend of *Remain* support within the cultural sector in Scotland and in the UK more generally.

The outcome of the 2014 independence referendum fell in favour of remaining in the United Kingdom. However, this was by no means the end of debates around Scotland's position within the union. In recent years – especially in the aftermath of Brexit – the campaign for a second referendum has gained increasing momentum. In January 2020, the Scottish Parliament voted in favour of a second referendum, but then Prime Minister Boris Johnson dismissed the idea, arguing that a second vote should not take place for 'a generation'[24]. Despite this, Nicola Sturgeon has publicly stated her desire for a second referendum to take place in 2023[25].

Brexit

Whilst there had been groups within the UK who had been opposed to EU membership since the 1970s, the issue was brought to the forefront of political life in 2013, when then Prime Minister David Cameron pledged that if the Conservative Party were re-elected, they would hold a referendum on the subject. Following their election with a 12-seat majority, Cameron's Conservative government announced a vote to be held in June 2016. Like Indyref, there were two main campaign groups formed in the months leading up to the vote. The *Britain Stronger in Europe* campaign, which was colloquially referred to as the *Remain* campaign, was led by Chief Executive Will Straw who was a member of the Labour party, but the Chair of the campaign was Conservative Lord Stuart Rose. Members of SNP, Labour, Liberal Democrats and Conservatives all expressed support for *Remain* at points over the course of campaigning. The *Vote Leave* campaign – often simply referred to as the *Leave* campaign – featured a selection of cross-party members from the Labour and Conservative, as well as the right-of-centre UK Independence party.

[24] Chris Green, 'Scottish Parliament backs indyref2 this year – but is swiftly rebuffed' *iNews,* January 29th 2020 https://inews.co.uk/news/scotland/scottish-parliament-independence-indyref2-vote-rebuffed-391767 [Accessed 13/10/2022]
[25] Alistair Grant, 'Interview: Nicola Sturgeon on ferries fiasco and an Independence referéndum next year', *The Scotsman,* 17th April 2022, https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/interview-nicola-sturgeon-on-ferries-fiasco-and-an-independence-referendum-next-year-3656870 [Accessed 13/10/2022]

In stark contrast to their narration of their indyref experiences, my conversations with women about their memories of Brexit were characterised by feelings of shock, sadness, and disappointment. Jean Cameron described feeling as though someone was 'ripping away her identity'.

> I studied languages all my life. I've been working as a European, living as a European, all my life. And someone was telling me I wasn't an EU citizen. It was bloody awful[26].

Both Jemima Levick and LJ Findlay-Walsh recalled not believing Brexit would happen and feeling surprised by the result. Findlay-Walsh described a 'feeling of anger, of wanting to act, but of course feeling that kind of like futility' of knowing that there was nothing to do be done[27]. Zinnie Harris and I discussed her play *Meet Me at Dawn* (2017) which she wrote in the months after the referendum and which she described as 'chiming with a kind of collective grief and loss' that people were experiencing in relation to Brexit[28]. Notably, Rosie Priest remarked that they found Brexit 'terrifying', and this was partly shaped by a feeling that

> it happened at a moment in time when everything seems a lot more frantic difficult and the identity, which, you know, I, I sort of linked to, of being British or being European is being eroded to being, to being white effectively. Yeah. It's sort of gone hand in hand with this sort of this horrible, radical right wing[29].

It is worth noting that Donald Trump's presidency – which began in 2016 – was mentioned several times by women I interviewed, and the 'horrible, radical right wing' that Priest references includes the wider concern about both the increasing right-wing faction of the UK political sphere, but also in a wider global context. Whilst the US is not a focus of this thesis, it was clear throughout the interviews that the right-wing nature of Trump's leadership was a concern in terms of the wider ramifications for global politics.

These two referenda provide the contextual background for my thinking on national identity and gender for contemporary Scottish women. My research joins an existing body of work on both national identity and gender in Scottish theatre, and I will explore more of this work in my literature review. Firstly, though, I would like to engage directly with two studies which have been particularly

[26] Jean Cameron, Interview, 3rd July 2020
[27] LJ Findlay-Walsh, Interview, 24th August 2020
[28] Zinnie Harris, Interview, 29th June 2020
[29] Rosie Priest, Interview, 27th August 2020

influential to my project and to existing discussions of women in Scottish Theatre to date: Christine Hamilton's *Where are the Women?* reports.

Where are the Women?

As I will explore further below, this project adopts an intersectional approach to its conception of leadership. This is in part a response to the nature and limited scope of existing studies into women's contribution to Scottish culture. The two biggest existing studies are the *Where are the Women?* reports by Christine Hamilton. The first was published in 2016, the latter in 2020. These studies have been key to my own understanding of gender inequality in the sector but have also demonstrated gaps in existing research which my work attempts to address. I spoke to Hamilton about the motivation behind the reports and she explained that her intention had been to create a record of gender inequality that had not previously existed:

> I just couldn't believe that Creative Scotland didn't publish information of this sort in any way, shape, or form. I'm not talking about aggregated information and nor did they gather it particularly in a way that could be published. It just really astonished me[30].

Supported by a team of volunteers, Hamilton set about trying to create a record of how many women were working in the industry. She gathered information about the shows produced by twenty-four theatre companies who were receiving Creative Scotland funding in the 2014/15 season and began to count the number of women involved in each production, including the following roles: Artistic Director, director (of each production), assistant director, playwright (living or dead and included those who 'devised' a show), translator/adaptor, designer (including set, costume, and lightning designer), assistant designer, musical director (including sound design), choreographer (including movement and fight direction) and performers (including musicians)[31].

This analysis found that Scottish publicly funded theatres were dominated by men. Just 39% of roles across all categories went to women, with women making up 46% of performers, 47% of directors and 39% of playwrights showcased

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[30] Christine Hamilton, Interview, 29th May 2020

[31] Christine Hamilton, *Where are the Women? Analysis of Creative Roles by Gender in Scottish Theatre 2014/15,* (Edinburgh, Christine Hamilton Consulting, 2016), p. 6

in this season[32]. Women were found to make up the majority of assistant directors and choreographers and were least represented in set and lighting design and in musical direction/sound design[33]. In terms of leadership, 38% of theatre companies had women in artistic leadership roles, and four out of the twenty-four companies were led solely by women[34]. It also revealed that the six companies in receipt of the highest levels of state funding were led solely by men, with another being jointly led by a man and woman, and just one being solely led by a woman[35].For the 2020 *Where are the Women?* report, Hamilton used the same methodology, this time supported by research assistant Fraser White. This time, their findings revealed that there had been significant areas of improvement in terms of gender equality within the Scottish theatre sector. The overall number of women in creative roles had risen from 39% to 48%, and women made up the majority of Artistic Directors, performers and set and costume designers[36]. However, inequality persisted in the six highest funded theatres, with five out of six being led entirely by men[37].

These reports provided essential background information for my own research and offered useful context for thinking about women's leadership in the Scottish cultural sector insofar as they provide a snapshot of the gender balance in the Scottish theatre sector. They did, however, reveal two key gaps that I wanted my own work to address in order to understand the key issues women face in the sector, and to acknowledge their role as cultural leaders. The first of which is that there were a number of roles that were not included in Hamilton's study, including administrative and creative learning/education roles. I will return to these roles in Chapter Three, where I will offer a fuller discussion of why acknowledging the work of administrative and creative learning workers is key to better understanding of the role that women are playing as cultural leaders in Scotland. The second gap in Hamilton's work is that it fails to address the

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[32] Christine Hamilton, 2016, p. 9
[33] ibid
[34] Christine Hamilton, 2016, p. 11
[35] Ibid. The six highest funded organisations were Citizens' Theatre, Dundee Rep, Royal Lyceum Theatre, The National Theatre of Scotland, Traverse Theatre, Tron Theatre. Of these, Citizens' Theatre, Royal Lyceum, The Tron and NTS were led solely by men. The Traverse Theatre was led solely by a woman - Orla O'Loughlin.
[36] Christine Hamilton, *Where are the Women? Part 2: Analysis of Creative Roles by Gender in Scottish Theatre 2019/20,* (Edinburgh, Christine Hamilton Consulting, 2020), p.5
[37] Christine Hamilton, 2020, p. 28

intersectional nature of women's positioning within the culture sector. In the introduction to both reports, Hamilton acknowledges that the methodology required her to make assumptions about a person's gender based on their given name, and that this may have led to some being miscategorised[38]. Furthermore, she states that

> This survey deals with gender alone. There are of course other 'protected characteristics' important in the arts, including artists with a disability, Black, Asian and minority ethnic artists, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender artists and older artists. Many of them are women too. This report does not attempt to identify those who face 'double-discrimination' and does not look at intersectionality[39].

Hamilton's work, therefore, is only telling a part of the story. Discussions about gender inequality that fail to consider how these and other characteristics intersect can only take us so far in understanding the experiences of women in the Scottish theatre industry. As I will demonstrate, a narrow approach to inequality that treats women as a homogenous group does not account for the different experiences of women in the industry, nor does it consider the power imbalances between different groups of women.

Intersectionality

With this in mind, I will now focus on how intersectionality has informed the design and practice of this project's research acts, beginning with a brief history of the concept and its development. The term 'intersectionality' was first coined by feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in an essay entitled *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*:

> Consider an analogy to traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination.[40]

[38] Christine Hamilton, 2020, p. 8

[39] Christine Hamilton, 2020, p. 9

[40] Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics', *University of Chicago Legal Forum,* Volume 1989, Issue 1, 1989, pp 139-167, p.149

In this work, Crenshaw develops the term to argue that Black women are disadvantaged on the basis of both race and gender within the US legal system, and that this reflects a wider issue wherein '[the] focus on the most privileged group members marginalizes those who are multiply burdened and obscures claims that cannot be understood as resulting from discrete sources of discrimination'[41].

As such, Crenshaw's analysis revealed how existing understandings of anti-discrimination legislation viewed racial discrimination and sex discrimination as separate issues which meant that Black women's experiences, which could be shaped by both forms of inequality, were often overlooked. Moreover, Crenshaw highlighted the ways in which whiteness is centred and viewed as the default in sex discrimination cases. In particular, she noted that white women who make claims of sexual discrimination don't need to specify their race because it is simply assumed 'that but for gender, they would not have been disadvantaged'[42]. Crenshaw argued that 'the view of discrimination that is derived from this grounding takes race privilege as a given' and in turn this positions Black women as outliers whose experiences are not 'pure' discrimination like that of white women but 'hybrid' and, in some ways, lesser[43]. Crenshaw illustrated this with the case study 'Moore v Hughes Helicopter, Inc'. In this case, 'the plaintiff alleged that the employer, Hughes Helicopter, practiced race and gender discrimination in promotions[44]. The district refused to allow Moore to act as the representative on behalf of the group of female staff lodging the complaint against their employer because 'Moore had never claimed […] that she was discriminated against as a female, *but only* as a Black female …This raised serious doubts as to Moore's ability to adequately represent white female employees'[45]. Crenshaw argued that not only does this case demonstrate the limitations of anti-discrimination legislation that fails to consider the interactions of race and gender, but it also implies that 'discrimination against Black females is something less than discrimination against females'[46].

[41] Crenshaw, 1989, p.140
[42] Crenshaw, 1989, p. 144
[43] ibid
[44] Crenshaw, 1989, p. 143.
[45] Crenshaw, 1989, p. 144. Emphasis original.
[46] ibid

Crenshaw also highlighted, in a later essay entitled *Mapping the Margins*, that Black women, and indeed women of colour more generally, are often 'situated within at least two subordinated groups that frequently pursue conflicting political agendas'[47]. Crenshaw illustrates this by discussing how antiracist strategies are often built around the experiences of men, but it also applies to the ways in which feminist movements often centre the experiences of white women [48]. This is often described as 'white feminism', a term used to critique the ways in which mainstream feminist movements have often reproduced the conditions of white supremacy, centring white experiences to the detriment of women of colour[49]. This is summarised by Crenshaw as

> the failure of feminism to interrogate race means that the resistance strategies of feminism will often replicate and reinforce the subordination of people of colour, and the failure of antiracism to interrogate patriarchy means that antiracism will frequently reproduce the subordination of women.[50]

This leaves women of colour disadvantaged because not only do they fall victim to both misogyny and racism, but they also face discrimination within the feminist and antiracist movements that are meant to protect them. This is why it is vital to consider the experiences of women of colour as linked to, but ultimately distinct from, white women and men of colour.

The idea of intersectionality wasn't necessarily new, indeed Crenshaw herself draws on Sojourner Truth's 1851 speech 'Ain't I A Woman?', in which she argued that her experience as a Black woman was not being represented in the debate around women's suffrage[51]. But Kathy Davis credits Crenshaw with providing a:

> short-hand term for a more comprehensive and complex perspective on identity – one which would take into account the ways in which individuals are invariably multiply positioned through differences in gender, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national belonging and more[52].

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[47] Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color, *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, No 6, July 1991, pp 1241-1299, p. 1252

[48] ibid

[49] See Dreama G. Moon and Michelle A. Holling, 'White Supremacy in Heels: (White) Feminism, White Supremacy, and Discursive Violence', *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies,* 17:2, June 2020, pp 253-260.

[50] Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1252

[51] Crenshaw, 1989, p. 153

[52] Kathy Davis, 'Intersectionality as Critical Methodology' in *Writing Academic Texts Differently: Intersectional Feminist Methodologies and the Playful Art of Writing,* ed. Nina Lykke (London and New York, Routledge, 2014), pp 17-29, p. 17.

The term intersectionality is now used widely both in academic and popular discourse about gender inequality. It is still used to talk about the relationship between racial injustice and gender discrimination, but as Davis points out, has also been used to discuss the relationship between different forms of inequality more generally, and I will employ the term throughout this thesis to refer to a broad range of intersecting inequalities acknowledged by my interview subjects, or which became apparent through later analysis of interview transcripts.

My decision to employ an intersectional methodology in this research is driven by the understanding that there is no singular version of 'womanhood' which can be neatly packaged as the definitive 'female' experience. In order to best interrogate the role that women play as cultural leaders in Scotland, it seems essential to me to consider how women's personal identities and circumstances might impact their professional lives, and how those who are from already marginalised communities might find it particularly challenging to forge a career in the arts. My logic here is perhaps best summarised by Kathryn Russell in her article 'Feminist Dialectics and Marxist Theory', in which she states that 'a real-life person is not, for example, a woman on Monday, a member of the working class on Tuesday, and a woman of African descent on Wednesday' and it is therefore essential to 'read these categories simultaneously'[53]. The opportunity to consider the simultaneity of different forms of inequality is one of four benefits of an intersectional methodology according to feminist philosopher Anna Carastathis. The other three are complexity, irreducibility, and inclusivity[54]. In terms of complexity, Carastathis argues that monistic approaches, otherwise known as single-axis or non-intersectional approaches, to oppression are 'reductive' because they treat oppressions as 'simplistic unitary categories' rather than overlapping and interacting concepts[55]. Intersectional methodology allows for the complexity of these oppressions to be more fully explored. Carastathis claims that acknowledging the simultaneity and complexity of inequality through an intersectional methodology contributes to an 'irreducibility benefit'. In other words, a methodology which considers different forms of inequality as overlapping

[53] Kathryn Russell, 'Feminist Dialectics and Marxist Theory', *Radical Philosophy Review,* 10:1, 2007, pp 33-54, p. 47

[54] Anna Carastathis, 'The Concept of Intersectionality in Feminist Theory', *Philosophy Compass,* 9:5, 2014, pp 304-314, p. 307

[55] Carastathis, 2014, p.308

and concurrent allows for an analysis in which no one form of inequality is prioritised over another. Finally, Carastathis advocates for an intersectional methodology on the basis of inclusivity, this is to say that

> Intersectionality can act as a corrective against the white solipsism, heteronormativity, elitism, and ableism of dominant power and hegemonic feminist theory by making social locations and experiences visible that are occluded in essentialist and exclusionary constructions of the category 'women'[56].

This pursuit of inclusivity is key to my own application of intersectionality within this research. Whilst the advantages of intersectionality in terms of simultaneity, complexity and irreducibility are also clear, inclusivity is central to my research design. I have attempted to make this research as inclusive as possible both in terms of how I approached the interviews and in terms of my analysis of the different issues facing Scottish women in the cultural sector.

Critiques of Intersectionality

However, in the years since Crenshaw first employed the term 'intersectionality', there have been several criticisms of the theory and I want now to take a moment to address some of these in relation to my own project. Kathy Davis has argued that the term 'intersectionality' is inaccessible and has been co-opted by – often white – academics to the extent that 'intersectionality has been transformed into a product of the neoliberal academy rather than the helpmeet for social justice it was meant to be'[57]. There have been accusations that the term is 'elitist and inaccessible' to the groups, such as working-class women, that it is intended to represent[58]. In contrast, others have argued that the term has been overly simplified in order to make it *more* accessible to a wider audience. Nina Lykke describes this as a 'black-boxing effect' wherein 'concepts turn into rhetorical devices, something that people refer to without reflecting on the implications and contexts'[59]. I can acknowledge elements of truth in all these arguments. In recent years I have been struck by the prominence of the term

[56] Carastathis, 2014, p. 304

[57] Kathy Davis, 'Who owns intersectionality? Some reflections on feminist debates on how theories travel', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 27:2, 2020, pp 113-127, p. 113.

[58] Chitra Nagarajan, 'Enough Talk about Intersectionality. Let's Get on With It', *Open Democracy,* 24th February 2014, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/enough-talk-about-intersectionality-lets-get-on-with-it/ , [Accessed 21/04/2021]

[59] Nina Lykke, 'Intersectional Analysis: Black Box or Useful Critical Feminist Thinking Technology?' in *Framing Intersectionality: Debates on a Multi-Faceted Concept,* eds. Helma Lutz, Maria Teresa Herrera Vivar and Linda Supik (Surrey and Vermont, Ashgate, 2011), pp 207-220, p. 210.

‘intersectionality’ in political discussions on social media. The fact that social media platforms have character limits lends itself to short, attention-grabbing statements more than nuanced discussion. This can lead to both an oversimplification of certain concepts, and a disconnect between popular rhetoric on social media and the actions of those participating in these discussions. However, when I consider the way that women I interviewed approached intersectionality, they often did so without invoking the actual term. When women did use the term, they did so both in relation to organisational structures – Jemima Levick spoke at length about how Stellar Quines were prioritising intersectionality in their work – and in relation to their personal identity – Mahri Reilly described ‘her intersections’ of class and gender and how these had impacted her career. But many of the women I spoke to discussed issues and dynamics that I would view as intersectional inequality (including issues related to childcare costs and unpaid work) without referring to the specific concept. This suggested to me two things. Firstly, that while the term may be viewed as reductive, for some it is a shorthand for talking about a wide range of nuanced issues and that this was useful in a conversation in which both parties understood the term. Secondly, that focusing too closely on critiques of how the term is invoked is less useful to my own research than focusing on the issues identified by my interviewees. That is to say that whilst I understand the importance of analysing the ways in which concepts are simplified or sanitised by popular usage, my interest in this instance is primarily on the issues my interviewees identified, rather than on the terminology they used to discuss such issues.

Crenshaw’s work focuses primarily on the intersection between race and gender, specifically looking at the experience of Black women. However, as Jennifer Nash argues, this can lead to a mindset where ‘differences between black women, including class and sexuality, are obscured in the service of presenting ‘black women’ as a category opposed to both ‘whites’ and ‘black men’[60]. These limitations are also highlighted by Dorthe Staunæs and Dorte Marie Søndergaard who caution that ‘the ‘classical’ version of [intersectionality] may nurture a tendency for deterministic thinking and even cause the researcher to overlook

[60] Jennifer Nash, ‘Rethinking Intersectionality’, *Feminist Review,* 89, 2008, pp. 1-15, p. 8-9.

exceptions and ruptures in the social order under scrutiny'[61], whilst Nina Lykke describes the potential for the metaphor to be 'too crude and static a tool'[62]. Lykke, amongst others, instead suggests an approach that considers the 'construction of subjectivities in discourses that weave together narratives of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, age, and so on'[63]. This weaving together complicates the relationship between these individual narratives, showing them to be intrinsically linked and mutually constitutive. In the words of Lykke, 'the different categorisations are seen as mutually pervading and interpenetrating each other without any possibility of separating them out analytically'[64]. In the interviews that have informed this project, the most obvious intersections that came up in conversation were race, gender, and class. Much like Lykke, I am inclined to view these intersections as inherently connected, as it was obvious to me throughout the interview process that the issues of the gender, race and class inequalities were inextricably linked to each other and to other forms of inequality, but often in ways too complex and nuanced to be illustrated by Crenshaw's original metaphor.

In thinking about intersectionality in the context of this research, I am also drawn to the work of Chandra T. Mohanty, who focuses on the dominance of white, middle-class voices in feminist discourses. In *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,* Mohanty challenges 'the assumption of women as an already constituted and coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location', arguing that this 'implies a notion of gender or sexual difference or even patriarchy which can be applied universally and cross-culturally'[65]. Mohanty focuses particularly on the misconceptions around 'the average third world woman'. She argues that the average third world woman is viewed as leading a 'truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and 'being third world' (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, religious, domesticated, family-

[61] Dorthe Staunæs and Dorte Marie Søndergaard, 'Intersectionality: A Theoretical Adjustment' in *Theories and Methodologies in Postgraduate Feminist Research: Researching Differently,* eds. Rosemarie Buikema, Gabrielle Griffin, and Nina Lykke (London and New York, Routledge, 2011), pp 45-60, p.49.

[62]Nina Lykke, *Feminist Studies: A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing,* (London and New York, Routledge, 2010) p.73

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Chandra T. Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', *Feminist Review,* No. 30, Autumn 1988, pp 61-88, p. 64

orientated, victimised etc)'[66]. This, Mohanty explains, contrasts with 'the (implicit) self-representation of western women as educated, modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities, and the 'freedom' to make their own decisions'.[67] These misconceptions contribute to a sense of white, western women as the leaders of feminist debate, whilst othering women who are deemed as falling outside that category. This is problematic both because it is rooted in colonial notions of Western superiority and because it presents an overly simplistic picture of women as a collective, homogenous group for whom a 'one size fits all' approach to equality can be applied. Not only can this lead to a sense of the 'fight' being won when even a small number of privileged women are successful, it also fails to consider that sometimes the success of one group of women can, as Crenshaw highlighted, actively be at the expense of another. Understanding the nuanced power dynamics like this between groups of women is a key part of this research, and one that I will return to in later chapters in my discussion of women's leadership. In her analysis of Mohanty's work, Lykke discusses how the 'the political goals of feminist 'we' were set up against the background of what were, in fact, white middle class feminists' own interests'[68]. Thinking about intersectionality within the context of the cultural sector in Scotland, I am therefore interested in how the collective feminist 'we' has been invoked, and how the success of white, middle-class women has been taken as evidence of collective feminist progress. This is particularly relevant to the discussions about 'community' which form a significant part of my fourth chapter.

I must acknowledge the limitations of my own work regarding intersectionality. Most of the women who participated in this project were white and there were several factors that I believe contributed to this imbalance. Firstly, the Scottish theatre industry is overwhelmingly white, particularly in the kind of leadership roles that this research has focused on[69]. This ultimately limited the number of women of colour who might be interviewed about their personal experiences of leadership roles in the Scottish cultural sector. It is worth

[66] ibid.

[67] Mohanty, 1988, p. 65

[68] Nina Lykke, 2010, p. 53

[69] The latest data gathered by Creative Scotland on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in their regularly funded organisations reported that less than 1% of these organisations had a Black or Minority Ethnic Artistic Director or Chief Executive, and less than 5% had a Black or Minority Ethnic Chair. Creative Scotland, *Creative Scotland Mainstreaming Report 2017-2019,* (Edinburgh, Creative Scotland, 2019), p. 24.

noting that this is an imbalance that many within the industry are actively working to counteract, and if this research had happened even two or three years later that picture may have looked very different. I was also limited by the practical constraints of a doctoral project. With only three years of funding and only myself to carry out interviews, transcribe and write up the thesis, I had to constrain myself to just a few months of interviewing so as to be able to complete the project on schedule. This was exacerbated by the fact that I was doing these interviews during initial months of the COVID 19 pandemic and the associated lockdowns. I will discuss this in greater detail later, but this added another layer of complexity to asking people to participate in interviews as they were under additional pressures and strain due to the circumstances. Finally, there was also an element of self-selection involved in this process. I contacted many women – both white women and women of colour - who either did not reply or who were not interested in participating for a variety of reasons. While many of these factors were out of my control, I acknowledge that the lack of racial diversity is a limitation of this research. That being said, the lack of racial diversity amongst interviewees does not mean that race went undiscussed in my interviews. There were several moments within the interview process where racial equity and the dominance of white voices within the Scottish theatre were discussed by women, not just in conversations about the industry, but also in relation to their own whiteness. I believe that these conversations were influenced by the socio-political context in which they took place, so I now want to turn my attention to both the interview process and that context.

Methodology: Approaching Intersectionality in the Interview Process

The interviews took the form of a one-to-one video call and were split into three sections. The first section of each interview focused on the individual's career path, their personal experience as a woman in their chosen field, and any wider observations surrounding gender inequality within the cultural sector. The second section focused on the interviewee's experiences of major political events such as Scottish devolution, the independence referendum, and the Brexit referendum. These conversations focused mainly on their experiences in the creative industries at this time but also incorporated their personal opinions and experiences of these events. In the final section of the interview, I asked the

women for their thoughts about the future of theatre in Scotland, and for their definitions of both cultural leadership and Scottish theatre.

The interviews were heavily influenced by the fact that they took place during a summer of great cultural and political upheaval. It was a time of uncertainty for the cultural and creative industries in Scotland, as we adjusted to life amid the global COVID-19 outbreak. Theatres and performance venues closed in late March 2020 and as the interviews were taking place there was no clear sense of when they would be able to reopen. Many of the women I spoke to had been unemployed since that moment, a handful had been furloughed by their workplaces, while others juggled working from home alongside caring responsibilities. Naturally, I found that the women I spoke to had great fears about what the future would hold for both themselves individually and the industry as a whole. Alongside the turmoil of the pandemic, we also saw growing civil unrest and racial tensions in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd at the hands of police officers in Minnesota. In the weeks following Floyd's death, demonstrations broke out across the US and beyond as the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement gained momentum. While the demonstrations in Scotland were comparatively small, the impact of the discourse surrounding them could be felt in the interviews. Some participants mentioned Floyd and the BLM protests directly, while others referred more vaguely to the situation. The upcoming US presidential elections, and its potential to further exacerbate these tensions, also seemed to weigh heavily on the minds of the women I spoke with. I felt that I could hear the echoes of the wider discourse around race influencing the conversations I was having over the course of the summer. This manifested in small ways – one interviewee described someone as 'slaving away' on work, before quickly correcting herself, 'not going to use that word anymore'[70] – and in a much more explicit acknowledgement of the failure within Scotland to address racial inequalities in the arts and beyond. Both the pandemic and the discussions around racial justice added a growing sense of urgency to discussions around precarity and inequality in the industry, as it became clear that job losses and venue closures were inevitable, and that those were already in the most vulnerable position as freelance and temporary staff had the most to lose. As I asked the

[70] Ishbel McFarlane, Interview, 10th August 2020.

women to share their thoughts on these issues there was a sense that they were reflecting not just on past experiences, but also on future possibilities.

When I was initially planning these interviews, I had imagined meeting women in their workplaces, or in my own office at the University of Glasgow. I was meeting to discuss their professional careers and practice, so it made sense for these conversations to take place in a professional context. However, the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily changed almost everything about working life and, as most people moved to working from home, the line between private and professional environments blurred. This, naturally, came with its own set of problems. We were all grappling with new technology as we adjusted to a working life that was almost entirely digital, and with that came frustration over insufficient Wi-Fi connections and the struggles of adapting to living and working during a time of crisis. But it also brought with it an unexpected level of intimacy. Rather than meeting in offices, I was conducting these conversations from my sister's childhood bedroom, which I had hastily converted into a home office. The women I spoke to were calling from their kitchens, back gardens and living rooms. We complimented each other's décor and lamented the challenges of working from home together. One woman noticed that the orchid I had on my bookshelf was dying and talked me through the best way to nurse it back to health. Another recommended some books to me by simply carrying the laptop over to her bookshelf for me to have a look. Several of the interviews were interrupted by children, who rode past the camera on scooters or who interrupted to ask for snacks. I will discuss the impact of caring responsibilities in greater detail in a later chapter, but I share these examples for now to illustrate some of the ways in which the online nature of these conversations changed the experience for both myself and those being interviewed. Moreover, they also added a sense of awareness of my own role within the conversations. Perhaps it was the fact that I was working from home, or perhaps it was because the layout of the video call meant that I was quite literally staring at myself as I carried out this research, but I felt acutely aware of my role as interviewer and of the ways in which I was shaping and influencing these conversations.

When thinking about my role as an interviewer, I am drawn to Donna Haraway's discussion of 'situated knowledges'[71]. In *Symians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature,* Haraway deconstructs ideas around objectivity, arguing that the notion of objectivity as the ability to see from a completely neutral standpoint is an illusion or 'god trick'.[72] Haraway discusses objectivity through what she describes as 'the much maligned sensory system in feminist discourse: vision', focusing on 'the embodied nature of all vision' and refuting the existence of an objective gaze that is able to 'leap out of the marked body and into the conquering gaze from nowhere. This is the gaze that…makes the unmarked category claim to be seen and not be seen to represent while escaping representation'[73]. Haraway argues that 'this gaze signifies the unmarked positions of Man and White' and therefore has 'been used to signify a perverse capacity-honed to perfection in the history of science tied to militarism, capitalism, colonialism, and male supremacy – to distance the knowing subject from everybody and everything'[74]. This distance, Haraway makes clear, does not actually exist. Everyone's vision is, in some way, affected by their personal circumstances and lived experiences. Haraway instead suggests a feminist objectivity that is 'about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object'[75]. This 'situated knowledge' requires researchers to reflect on their own position within the research, thinking about how the socio-political context of their research and their personal circumstances might shape their understanding. With a particular focus on what this means in the context of feminist research, Haraway states that:

> There is no single feminist standpoint because our maps require too many dimensions for that metaphor to ground our visions. But the feminist standpoint theorists' goal of an epistemology and politics of engaged, accountable positioning remains eminently potent. The goal is better accounts of the world, that is, 'science'. Above all, rational knowledge does not pretend to disengagement: to be from everywhere and so nowhere, to be free from interpretation from being represented to be fully self-contained or fully formalisable[76].

[71] Donna Haraway, *Symians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature,* (London and New York, Routledge, 1991), p. 181
[72] Haraway, 1991, p. 189
[73] Haraway, 1991, p. 188
[74] ibid
[75] Haraway, 1991, p. 190
[76] Haraway, 1991, p. 196

Rather than focusing on striving for an impossibly objective, 'bird's eye view' approach to this research, I will use Haraway's feminist reading of objectivity as 'partial, situated knowledge' to ground my understanding of my own role as a researcher, and to think about how my own identity influences how I interpret and understand the issues discussed in the interviews.

I am a white, able bodied, middle class, university educated, native Glaswegian. Some of these things were obvious to the interviewees, given that they could see me, and they were aware that these interviews were forming part of my doctoral thesis. Others became clear in conversation. The general small talk before the interview formally began often involved talking about where both myself and the interviewee were 'from'. For the women who were from outside Glasgow, I usually identified myself as Glaswegian but for those who were more familiar with the area, I would explain that I lived with my parents in Bearsden, a small town north of Glasgow where I have lived for almost all my life. The simple act of locating myself within this part of the country, which is known as an affluent area, has connotations in terms of my social class that I was conscious of, especially when our conversations moved to talking about privilege and social inequalities. I was very aware that these identity markers perhaps have shaped the interviewees' perception of me and their responses to my questions, but more importantly, I was conscious that these aspects of my identity, as well as other factors that were less visible to the women, shape my approach as a researcher. I am, to an extent, limited by my lived experiences. My understanding of racial discrimination, for example, comes from reading, watching, and listening to the stories of other people, but will always be shaped by my whiteness.

However, as Kathy Davis cautions, there is more to intersectional methodology than simply 'providing a researcher's identities, e.g., 'as a white, middle class, heterosexual woman, I…' because 'aside from highlighting the *fact* of multiple identities, such a list does not do much work and may, ironically, even end up becoming an excuse for *not* doing the necessary analysis of situating one's self'[77]. Davis suggests that a more effective strategy for intersectional research would 'not entail a list of identity categories, but rather involve developing a

[77] Kathy Davis, 2014, p. 22

narrative about how your specific location shapes or influences you'[78]. To take the example of race, Davis explains that 'one of the common features of whiteness turns out to be never having to think of one's self as having a race. It also means feeling at home in certain kinds of public spaces and endangered or at risk in others'[79]. My whiteness means that it is possible for me to go to any theatre in Scotland and see actors on stage that look like me and tell stories that are familiar and relevant to me. As a native Glaswegian, no one has ever questioned my right to call myself Scottish, or my ability to do research about Scottish identity. My middle-class background means that I had parents who could afford me to go to the theatre regularly as a child, and to attend after-school theatre classes, which introduced me to the arts and inspired my choice of course at university. It means I can still afford to access performances, and to continue my education. My university education not only gives me a theoretical grounding and vocabulary with which to discuss the ideas at the heart of this research, but it also gives me access to a network of academics and practitioners with whom to develop these ideas. This education also gives me credentials that mean other people believe that I have a knowledge of the subject, something which those who do not have a degree can find harder to prove.

These identity categories are not simply buzzwords that I list off as a caveat for any bias or gaps in this research, they are key to my 'situated knowledge'. They also potentially impact on how I am perceived by interviewees as 'belonging' within the Scottish arts sector. I approached these interviews perceiving myself as an 'outsider' or 'stranger' as I do not consider myself as being a part of the Scottish theatre industry. My professional experience consists solely of teaching and directing for various youth theatres across Glasgow, which is a part of the sector that generally feels quite detached from some of the more visible and high-profile roles within the industry. With the exception of one of the women – who I had met briefly at an event a few months prior to her interview – all the women who volunteered to participate in this project were people who I did not know and had never met. However, despite my perception of myself as an outsider, the intersections I have listed above – my whiteness, my middle-class background, my university education – might contribute to how I am perceived by the women I

[78] ibid
[79] ibid

interviewed as belonging within this industry. Sara Ahmed discusses the figure of 'the stranger' in her book *Strange Encounters*, arguing that strangers are not just

> *any-body* that we have failed to recognise but *some-body* that we have already recognised *as* a stranger, as a 'body out of place'. Hence, the stranger is some-body we know as not knowing, rather than some-body we simply do not know[80].

I will return to Ahmed's arguments around strangers and belonging in later chapters of this thesis, but I would like to focus momentarily on her definition of stranger regarding my role as an interviewer in this project. At the core of this definition is the idea of the stranger as not someone unrecognisable but as someone recognised as standing out within a community. Ahmed furthers this by arguing that recognising strangers and those who do not belong is key to the 'demarcation and enforcement of the boundaries' of a community[81]. The acknowledgement of a strange 'them' is a crucial to the creation of an 'us'. This leads me to question the ways in which I was viewed as 'fitting in' with the women I interviewed. It is significant to me that, as Ahmed highlights, a stranger does not self-identify as such, but is labelled as 'out of place' by others. My own perception of myself as an unknown outsider has little significance so long as others do not view me as an outsider. Ultimately, there are plenty of women within Scottish theatre who look like me, speak like me, and come from similar backgrounds to mine. While I might not have been known to these women personally, these similarities between myself and others within the industry locate me as 'at home' within the industry in a way that might have been less possible for someone who does not share my privileges. This disconnect between how I view myself and how I am perceived by others is important for me to consider, particularly given that one of the central themes of a later chapter of this thesis is the importance of people in positions of power and influence to acknowledge that power and be aware of their role within a hierarchy. While I may have viewed myself as an outsider, I ultimately had privilege and power that shaped these interviews and positioned me as 'belonging' even in ways that I could not see.

As I have established, considering the ways in which my research is impacted by intersections in my own identity and in those of the women I

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[80] Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied others in post-coloniality,* (London and New York, Routledge, 2000), p. 55.
[81] Ahmed, 2000, p. 21.

interviewed is a vital part of committing to an intersectional approach to this project. The question, then, is how to begin to address the potential barriers to an intersectional analysis within this research, and how to tackle any gaps in my own vision. The existing research into gender inequality in Scottish theatre may give the impression of women as a homogenous group, and while this provides a useful springboard for thinking about inequality, it is not painting the full picture. Hamilton's question – 'where are the women?' – is a useful one, but in thinking about how to build on the findings of that research, I am inspired by Mari Matsuda's provocation to 'ask the other question'. Matsuda states that when studying oppression, we come to 'learn, finally and most importantly, that all forms of subordination are interlocking and mutually reinforcing'.[82] Because of this, Matsuda explains that

> the way I try to understand the interconnection of all forms of subordination is through a method I call 'ask the other question'. When I see something that looks racist, I ask, 'where is the patriarchy in this?' When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, 'where is the heterosexism in this?' When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, 'where are the class interests in this?'[83]

I find this a useful tool for thinking about gender inequality because it highlights the inextricable links between different forms of inequality. In my discussions with interviewees about their experiences of working in Scottish theatre it was very clear that any issues of inequality linked to their gender were always working alongside other factors. For example, as will be explored further in later chapters of this thesis, the experience of motherhood for the women was shaped by several factors including marital status, financial precarity and geographic location. Motherhood is often talked about as a gender inequality issue, but in asking the other questions on this issue, it is clear that focusing on gender alone is an overly simplistic approach. It is clear in all aspects of this project and in the discussions that took place in the interviews, that the answer to the question of 'where are the women?' is entirely dependent on asking several other questions, not as separate issues running parallel to that of gender inequality, but as interwoven threads tying all of these experiences together.

[82] Mari J. Matsuda, 'Beside my Sister, Facing the Enemy: Legal Theory Out of Coalition', *Stanford Law Review,* 43:6, July 1991, pp 1183-1192, p. 1189.
[83] ibid

Thesis Structure

This thesis is split into six chapters. Having given a brief outline of the key arguments in this introduction, I will move on in chapter two to give a more in-depth discussion of the existing literature in the field. I will focus initially on Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Community*. This text has been central to my thinking about national identity because it centres on the idea that nations are 'imagined', and therefore, I argue, can be re-imagined. In order to further contextualise this, I will demonstrate the influence that Anderson's work has had on theatre scholars writing about the relationship between performance and national identity. I will then provide critical context for my work on Scottish national identity, drawing on the work of David McCrone to explore how Scotland's political history has influenced the experience of national identity for Scottish people. Finally, I will consider the relationship between gender and national identity, using the work of Nira Yuval Davis and Cynthia Enloe as a starting point from which to consider how gender functions within the nation, and how cultural activity may provide opportunities for insight into women's experience of and active role in constituting national identity.

The third chapter of the thesis is entitled *Gender Inequality in the Scottish Cultural Sector*. This begins with a focus on issues of sexual harassment and abuse. This subject was not raised directly by interviewees but that nonetheless remains a significant issue for women across the sector and therefore offers an important context for understanding their work and contribution as potential leaders, insofar as it describes the significant hierarchies and gendered power structures which continue to shape the sector. From there, I move on to consider issues that interviewees identified as key to understanding their experiences of inequality within the sector, or which become apparent through analysis of how my interviewees' experiences overlap. The first of these is the visibility and value of women's work. I apply this lens both to women's creative work and to their work in roles that are often underacknowledged because they are not perceived as equally creative, or creative at all – namely administrative work and creative learning. The second issue that emerged within the interviews was motherhood. I look at the ways in which women's working lives are changed by parenting, but also consider how the 'problem' of motherhood has become somewhat of a self-fulfilling prophecy, and question how motherhood can be better accommodated

in the workplace. In my discussions of visibility, value, and motherhood it becomes clear that these dimensions of women's experience are influenced by intersectional inequalities, and so the latter half of the chapter focuses on the intersections of age, race, and class as a means of better understanding how these factors shape women's experiences. As a whole, this chapter highlights the limitations of current discourses on gender equality which treat women as a homogenous group. In focusing on this intersectional approach, I seek to complicate simplistic narratives around female success in the Scottish cultural sector. The achievements and leadership of a small group of – often white, middle-class women- are often taken as evidence of gender equality within the sector. This chapter will demonstrate that when we focus on intersectionality within women's experiences, we can better understand how women are impacted by patriarchal structures which often discriminate on the basis of several identity markers in addition to gender. This chapter also makes an intervention into discourse around gender inequality in Scotland by highlighting that when women are disadvantaged within the cultural sector, they are also excluded from contributing to Scotland's cultural narrative. As I will demonstrate throughout this thesis, cultural activity plays a crucial role in establishing and maintaining national identities, and that activity forms part of a wider fabric of Scottish culture. It is therefore vital that this narrative is shaped by a diverse group that represent Scotland, rather than being dominated by white, male voices. This chapter focuses on the key issues that form barriers to women taking those prominent, leadership roles in the industry and, as a result, limit their ability to shape Scotland's cultural narrative.

In chapter four - *Power, Networks and Community for Women in the Scottish Cultural Sector* - I further complicate those discourses on gender equality by considering how women can contribute to the marginalisation of other women. I do this by first considering the role of networks and communities in the cultural sector in Scotland. Networking was a feature of a number of conversations I had with women about career progression in the cultural sector, and I seek to establish how the reliance on both formal and informal networks can lead to the marginalisation of women from underrepresented communities. The role of networking also relates to the tendency amongst women I interviewed to refer to the cultural sector as a 'community'. Here, I draw on Sara Ahmed to consider how

the creation of this 'community' necessitates the exclusion of others who are not viewed as being 'in' the community. My interest in networks and communities is motivated by a desire to better understand how leadership functions within the cultural sector. The rhetoric around community can give a false sense of non-hierarchical working, and it is therefore important to scrutinise how leaders function within this context. The latter sections of the chapter therefore focus on the role that women play as leaders in the cultural sector. I argue that looking at female leaders, a group who hold power but who are also disadvantaged by the patriarchal structures established in chapter three, provides fresh insight into intersectional inequality. It does this by considering how power functions within the sector, the importance of self-awareness amongst leaders, and how women can uphold inequality within the sector.

The fifth chapter, *Establishing Scotland: Identity and Belonging in Scottish Women's Playwrighting,* turns attention to women's creative work and the role that this plays in their cultural leadership. This chapter is structured around a reading of three performance case studies: Rona Munro's *The James Plays* trilogy (2014), Annie George's *The Bridge/Home is Not the Place* (2014/2017) and Frances Poet's *Adam* (2017). Using these case studies, I argue that cultural activity provided a platform for women to creatively process Indyref and Brexit, and a space to imagine a future for Scotland. In each of these examples, themes of home and belonging are prominent. In Munro's work, she foregrounds women's narratives in a revisionist history play which explores a period of Scottish history which was characterised by power struggles over Scottish governance. I discuss the significance of staging this work in the months leading up to indyref and locate the work within a wider tradition of history plays in Scottish theatre. Annie George's *The Bridge/Home is Not the Place* and Frances Poet's *Adam* foreground migrant experiences and allow for an exploration of multiculturalism in Scotland. These works problematise simplistic narratives of Scotland as an open, egalitarian nation which welcomes migrants, an intervention which is particularly vital in the aftermath of the 2016 Brexit referendum. This chapter argues that women use creative engagement with Scotland's past and present in order to reimagine what it means to be Scottish, and the role that women can play in Scotland's future.

In the concluding chapter, I reflect on the key findings of this thesis. In doing so, I locate the ideas that have emerged in the preceding chapters within the wider field of research into gender and national identity, identifying the contribution that this work has made to understanding the role that women play as cultural leaders in Scotland. I also identify how this work might be further developed and the significance it could have in relation to women's broader experiences of working in the cultural sector. My hope is that this research will provide fresh insight into women's contributions to the Scottish cultural sector and produce new knowledge about how women's creative work might be read in relation to their national identity.

Chapter Two: Gender, Culture and National Identity

This thesis seeks to explore the relationship between culture, national identity, and gender identity for women in the Scottish cultural sector, with a focus on how this relationship manifests in relationship to women's theatrical activity. In order to understand how these concepts interact, this chapter focuses on the collection of existing literature which has provided the critical framework for this thesis. I will begin with a discussion of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, outlining Anderson's definition of the nation as well as focusing on his concept of 'simultaneity' in relation to cultural activity. I will then move to consider how Anderson's theories might be viewed through an intersectional lens, asking how the imagining of a community is shaped by lived experience. Here, I also consider how competing ideologies within the nation may work against a sense of simultaneity. I then consider the influence of Anderson's work on theatre scholarship, and the ways in which the notion of the imagined community has been invoked as a means of understanding the relationship between performance and nationalism. Moving on, I focus on the work of David McCrone, whose writing on Scottish national identity has formed the basis of my own understanding of the specific and often complex relationship between Scotland's 'stateless' nature and its distinct cultural identity. Finally, I look at the dimension of gender, considering how gender and national identity interact. Here, I draw on the work of Cynthia Enloe and Nira Yuval-Davis to consider the power dynamics that shape women's relationship to both gender and nation.

The Imagined Community

In 1983, Benedict Anderson published *Imagined Communities*: *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*[84]. In this text, he notes that that 'nation, nationality, nationalism…have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyse'[85]. In light of this, Anderson proposes that the nation can be defined as an 'imagined community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'[86].

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[84] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (Revised Edition)*, (London, Verso Books, 2006).
[85] Anderson, 2006, p.3.
[86] Anderson, 2006, p.6.

As I will discuss below, the phrase ‘imagined community’ has since been adopted and developed by a number of theatre and performance scholars, including Jen Harvie and Steve Blandford, whose work I will discuss in greater detail momentarily. Theatre scholars’ use of the phrase usually focuses on the ‘imagined’ nature of the community. In order fully to understand Anderson’s work, and its relevance to the study of nations, it is vital to also consider both the ‘limited’ and ‘sovereign’ nature of how he conceives nation-as-community.

The Limited Community

Anderson describes the nation as ‘limited’ because

> even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself conterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all members of the human race will join their nation[87].

These ‘boundaries’ between nations take many forms, but Anderson focuses on the role that languages play in the formation of national identities. Anderson argues that language has been a key force in the creation of the imagined community for numerous reasons. Firstly, he locates the rise of the imagined community within the context of the decline of Latin. He argues that because Latin had previously been the primary language of the Roman Empire, an empire which had spanned several nations, it had kept countries who were otherwise separate connected through language. However, as people within these countries began to communicate in their distinct and unique languages, the connections between such countries weakened. In particular, Anderson proposes that the invention of the printing press gave a ‘new fixity’ to languages and vernaculars that had previously only been spoken dialects [88]. He argues that the ability to distribute books, newspapers and other documents in these languages also allowed for members of a nation to become ‘aware of the hundreds of thousands, even millions of people in their particular language-field, and at the same time that *only those* hundreds of thousands, or millions, so belonged’[89]. In this way, language functions both as a connection between individuals within a nation and

[87] Anderson, 2006, p.7.
[88] Anderson, 2006, p.44
[89] ibid

as a boundary between different nations. However, whilst acknowledging such boundaries, Anderson also presents national identity as 'elastic' and flexible because 'from the start the nation was conceived in language, not in blood' and so 'one could be 'invited' into the imagined community[90]. Thus, even today the most insular of nations accept the principle of *naturalisation*'[91]. The limited nature of the imagined community will be considered in full in the fifth chapter of this thesis, when I will consider Scotland's approach to multiculturalism and the ways in which the image of Scotland as open and accepting has been key to the Scottish Government's response to both indyref and Brexit. In that chapter, I will focus largely on the work of feminist and postcolonial scholar Sara Ahmed, who problematizes notions of multiculturalism and argues that it is a concept that is used to reinforce the boundaries of nation rather than broaden them.

The Sovereign Community

The second element of Anderson's theory of the 'imagined community' is sovereignty. Anderson does not offer a direct definition of what the term sovereignty means in his work, however he positions sovereignty as oppositional to both the monarchy and the dominance of religion. The first part of his discussion of sovereignty is linked to the monarchy. He argues that '[the nation] is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm'[92]. Anderson claims that the traditional power structures in which the monarchy ruled, and power was passed down hereditary lines made borders 'porous and indistinct, and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another' because the power was centralised to specific families rather than the government of a specific territory. He argues that this focus on monarchy meant that it was easier for 'premodern empires and kingdoms [to be] able to sustain their rule over immensely heterogenous and often not even contiguous populations', particularly given that members of monarchies from different countries often married each other, keeping all the control limited to a small group [93]. Anderson identifies the seventeenth century as the turning point in which the 'automatic legitimacy of sacral monarchy began its slow decline in

[90] Anderson, 2006, p.145
[91] ibid
[92] Anderson, 2006, p.7.
[93] Anderson, 2006, p. 19

Western Europe'[94]. The decline of the power and influence of the monarchy and the rise of elected governments meant that the leadership of a country was then dictated by whatever the citizens of a country voted on. In terms of sovereignty, this gave individuals the ability to choose a government which contributed to the sense of an imagined community because it gave a sense of shared ideologies and goals for the nation, in turn allowing for nations to express a distinct identity and to establish themselves as independent imagined communities.

The second part of Anderson's argument regarding sovereignty is concerned with the pluralism of religious thought. Anderson claims that the idea of the nation came 'to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living *pluralism* of such religions'[95]. Anderson claims that religious texts were often written in 'sacred' languages which made them difficult to translate as well as difficult to distribute. This led to separation between different religious communities who were unable to understand each other's religious texts. The invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century began to undo some of this separation as it became easier for texts to be disseminated across different nations and there was exposure to different languages and religions. This, in turn, led to a greater understanding of the numerous different religions that were co-existing world-wide, undermining the singularity of such religions. Anderson claims that this destabilized these religious communities leaving them 'fragmented, pluralized, and territorialized'.[96] Anderson describes the decline of both religious and dynastic hierarchies as central to the rise of nationalism because 'the search was on, so to speak, for a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together' and so the imagined community of the nation became a new way of experiencing these connections[97]. Within my own research, I will consider sovereignty in the context of self-governance in Scotland, as this has relevance to discussions surrounding devolution and independence in Scotland. I am interested in how the lingering questions regarding Scottish sovereignty have permeated all aspects of political and cultural life in Scotland,

[94] Anderson, 2006, p.21.
[95] Anderson, 2006, p.7.
[96] Anderson, 2006, p.19.
[97] Anderson, 2006, p.36.

and how contemporary Scottish identities have been shaped in particular by the question of Scottish independence.

The Imagined Community

Before I begin to look at how Anderson's work has been invoked by others, I want to briefly acknowledge how the imagined community is discussed in its original context, paying close attention to an aspect of his work which is frequently underacknowledged – namely, the discussion of simultaneity. I will return to this concept in Chapter Five, where I will discuss this concept in relation to how shared history is used as a means of connecting members of a nation not just to each other, but to their nation's historic inhabitants. For now, I will focus on how the concept of simultaneity relates to the relationship between cultural activity and national identity.

In theorizing simultaneity, Anderson quotes Walter Benjamin's definition of Messianic time - 'a simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present'- and argues that such simultaneity of past, present, and future is key to creating a sense of community amongst those within the nation, connecting them to their current neighbours within the imagined community as well as to their ancestors[98]. In relation to his arguments about the importance of the printing press, Anderson argues that print capitalism provided a vital resource for such simultaneity to be experienced by individual members of the nation, using both the novel and newspaper as examples of shared cultural activity. For example, Anderson considers a novel entitled *Noil Me Tangere,* by the 'father of Filipino nationalism', José Rizal, quoting its opening paragraphs which describe a dinner party being held by a prominent member of society, and details how the news of this dinner party spreads through the community in Manila[99]. Anderson notes that Rizal moves from a fictional dinner party being discussed by 'hundreds of unnamed people, who do not know each other, in quite different parts of Manila' to describing the location of the dinner party as 'a house on Anloague Street' which lacks a street number and so is described to the reader in order that it 'may still be recognised'[100]. From this image, he argues the intention is for this house to be

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[98] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London, Fontana,1973), p.265 in Anderson, 2006, p.24
[99] Anderson, 2006, p.26
[100] Rizal, 1978, p.1 in Anderson, 2006, p.27

51recognized by Rizal's assumed audience – a Filipino reader – and that in addressing them directly Rizal creates a 'casual progression of this house from the 'interior' time of the novel to the 'exterior' time of the [Manila] reader's everyday life'[101]. In doing so, Anderson claims that Rizal 'gives a hypnotic confirmation of the solidity of a single community'[102]. Thus, readers have a sense of not just their relationship to the characters within the novel but also to the other readers who are also recognising their country within the text. In addressing the reader in such a way, Rizal creates a community amongst the readers and encourages a sense of belonging to both the fictional world of the novel and the reality of Filipino culture. Anderson extends this argument through discussion of the role that newspapers play in creating a sense of simultaneity. He describes newspapers as novelistic, noting they are essentially 'one day bestsellers'[103]. The disposable nature of the newspaper is key to its importance as the fact that its contents will be outdated the next day leads to an 'extraordinary mass ceremony: the almost precisely simultaneous consumption' of the newspaper[104]. Anderson argues that while the act of reading a newspaper is a solitary, private act, the reader is aware of the millions of other people who are reading the same newspaper on the same day and can even see 'replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbours'[105].

Considering these arguments alongside my own research, Anderson's views on the importance of newspapers and novels to the imagining of the community provide a useful framework for considering the role that theatre can play in such imagining. Much like the novel and newspaper, theatre provides an audience with the opportunity to engage with stories and characters both familiar and unfamiliar, offering opportunities for identification with those onstage but also with fellow audience members. Whilst watching a show is often a silent act that can appear solitary, there is an awareness of the other audience members sharing in the same performance[106]. Shared moments of laughter and applause, for

[101] Anderson, 2006, p.27
[102] ibid
[103] Anderson, 2006, p.35
[104] Anderson, 2006, p.36
[105] ibid
[106] This is, of course, not a universal truth of all theatregoing. I am referring here to the so-called 'theatre contract' between audience and performer which is discussed – and critiqued – in greater detail by Kirsty Sedgman in 'The Theatre Contract' in *The Reasonable Audience: Theatre Etiquette, Behaviour Policing, and the Live Performance Experience,* (Manchester, Palgrave MacMillan, 2018) pp 11-22

example, can create a sense of community between audience members, even though this community will often never acknowledge each other. Beyond the immediate community of the audience sharing in the same performance, there is also a sense of connection to the other audiences who might have witnessed a previous performance and to those who will witness it in the future. Whilst audience relationships differ depending on individual circumstances and the style of show - the audience experience in an intimate one-on-one performance undoubtedly differs from that of watching, for example, a West End musical - I would argue that theatre in many ways provides a strong example of the kind of simultaneity Anderson sees as vital to the imagined community of the nation. As such, looking at case studies from theatre can provide insight not just into how social and political circumstances are represented, but also how they are shaped through shared cultural experiences.

This concept of simultaneity does, however, reveal some of the gaps in Anderson's work and some of the issues that the idea of the imagined community fails to address. In their book *Theorizing Nationalism,* Graham Day and Andrew Thompson offer a critique of Anderson's theory of the imagined community. They note that 'Anderson is singularly quiet on the issue of how the imagined community of the nation extended to include members across different social classes, across the gulf in literacy, standards of life, habits and customs'[107]. In essence, Day and Thompson are advocating for an intersectional approach to the theory of the imagined community, acknowledging the impact of different lived experiences on how a person relates to the nation and questioning how this might impact the collective imagining of the nation. Day and Thompson argue that even within 'highly literate contemporary populations' the variety of published sources and 'the difference in their content is enough to make us question' the extent to which it can be possible for all members of a nation to be imagining a cohesive community[108]. To use Anderson's example of the newspaper as a means through which an individual can feel a sense of simultaneity with other members of the imagined community, Day and Thompson's arguments lead me to consider the

[107] Graham Day and Andrew Thompson, *Theorizing Nationalism* (Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2004) p.92
[108] ibid

ways in which different versions of the community can be imagined within that act.

Anderson describes newspapers as ‘one day bestsellers’ and describes the ‘mass ceremony’ of its communal consumption[109]. Crucially, Anderson refers to the newspaper reader as ‘observing replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbours’ resulting in a continual reassurance of the existence of the imagined community[110]. However, if I am reading my newspaper of choice surrounded by neighbours, the likelihood is that I am not seeing exact replicas of my newspaper being consumed. In the UK, there are a number of print newspapers in circulation as well as countless online sources where one can consume their daily dose of local, national, and global news. Not one of these is a neutral source, with each having a team of writers who bring their own ideologies, biases, and experiences to their work. They also have editorial teams who make decisions about which stories are platformed, and the amount of space given to different issues. An individual who is reading the newspaper and imagining a nation of likeminded community members is perhaps not imagining that they also share this community with a collection of people from whom their own interpretation of events differs significantly. For example, in the approach to both indyref and Brexit, different newspapers took different stances, and often published contradictory information, platformed opposing viewpoints and predicted different results[111]. A person imagining the future of the UK based on their reading of the *Daily Mail*, was almost certainly getting a different picture than the individual reading *The Guardian*.

This is perhaps a pedantic approach to Anderson’s theory, and it could be argued that the content of the newspaper is not what is crucial to the imagined community, but rather the ceremonial element of this shared moment is what matters. This argument, however, fails to consider the association of the newspaper with wider political ideologies. Again, the newspaper is not simply a neutral source of information and purchasing and reading a particular newspaper is often regarded as a symbol of allegiance to a particular viewpoint, especially

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[109] Benedict Anderson, 2006, p.36

[110] ibid

[111] For a full analysis of how different press outlets approached the key issues in the Brexit campaign see David A. L Levy, Billur Aslan, and Diego Bironzo, *UK Press Coverage of the EU Referendum,* [Online Report] https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-11/UK_Press_Coverage_of_the_%20EU_Referendum.pdf [Accessed 02/11/2022]

during general elections when newspapers often endorse specific candidates and political parties. My intention here is not to disagree with the central tenet of Anderson's work – that shared experiences and cultural activity are central to an individual's sense of belonging to a nation, however disparate the members of that nation may be. Rather, like Day and Thompson, I am interested in what more can be learned about this imagined community by considering the ways in which our experience of that community is shaped by lived experiences. Day and Thompson specifically discuss social class, but naturally I am inclined to broaden this critique to consider how gender shapes our experience of the imagined community. Specifically, I am interested in how women articulate their imagined community through their cultural activity, and how they critique patriarchal notions of nationhood in doing so.

The Imagined Community in Theatre Scholarship

In *Staging the UK*, Jen Harvie builds on Anderson's concept of the 'imagined community' when she states that the 'imagined' nature of national identities means that they are 'staged, culturally produced, dynamic'[112].This expanded definition of the imagined community has been central to my own research as a starting point for considering the material circumstances of the process of 'imagining' a national community. Harvie argues that cultural activities play a crucial role in the imagining of the nation, and that theatre in particular has the potential not just to reflect the political and social climate within a country but also to contribute to 'social improvement or decline'[113].Harvie also argues that within Anderson's theory of the imagined community there is an implication that the process is 'largely or even entirely volitional - that we each have individual agency to pursue the creative practices we want in order to produce the national identities we want'[114].However, Harvie also centres her analysis of performance on a 'materialist understanding of artistic practice', acknowledging that while the process of *imagining* a nation might be a volitional one, the material constraints on the act of performance-making limit the opportunities for individuals to have their imagining represented on stage[115]. Harvie's materialist analysis focuses largely on the financial constraints of performance making in neoliberal

[112] Jen Harvie, 2005, p. 3
[113] ibid
[114] Jen Harvie, 2005, p. 16
[115] Jen Harvie, 2005, p. 5

economies, particularly in the context of large-scale events such as the Edinburgh International Festivals.

Whilst Harvie's research is useful in providing a framework to consider the material implications of performance making, her analysis of the limitations on performance making overlooks the ways in which social identities can also function as barriers to the 'volitional' act of imagining the nation. Harvie focuses her argument on barriers such as 'limited time and finance, built theatre spaces that are finite in their adaptability, and things such as government policies and promoters' categories that may encourage or impose certain practices and inhibit or censor others' rather than specifically on factors such as gender, race, and social class[116]. Her focus in *Staging the UK* is primarily on the ways in which performance making is impacted by the economic and political context in which it is created. Using the arts policy of the New Labour government as a case study, Harvie analyses how governments and their arts policies impact on the experience of performance making. She argues that the prioritisation of what New Labour labelled the 'creative industries' led to commercialisation of the arts which simultaneously raised their profile and importance within the UK whilst also commodifying arts practices in a way that prioritised profit over creativity and experimentation. While Harvie's arguments are compelling, notably she does not extend this analysis to look at the ways in which this system specifically disadvantages artists from ethnic minorities, artists who are disabled, queer, female or who may identify as any intersection of these identities. When art is treated as a commodity, the perceived risk of investing in those from minority groups can act as a barrier to funding and opportunities for artists. My research will address this limitation in Harvie's analysis by considering the material implications that gender has on theatre in Scotland and the structural inequalities that often prioritises male perspectives. I will also look particularly at woman who also belong to other disadvantaged groups, looking at how the intersectionality of these inequalities can impact on their ability to work in the Scottish theatre industry.

Beyond Harvie's work, Benedict Anderson features prominently in Nadine Holdsworth's *Theatre & Nation*. Published as part of the '*Theatre &'* series edited

[116] Jen Harvie 2005, p. 16

by Harvie and Dan Reballato, *Theatre & Nation* is a short but rigorous text in which Holdsworth argues that theatre plays a crucial role in the formulation of national identities. More specifically, Holdsworth focuses on the theatre as a space for 'imagining' the nation and argues that 'theatre is deeply implicated in constructing the nation through the imaginative realm and provides a site where the nation can be put under the microscope'[117]. In her critique of Anderson's work, Holdsworth cautions that while the imagined community is a useful concept for understanding the influence of national identity on the individual, it is vital to remain conscious of the fact that while the nation might be an 'imagined community' it is also a 'political and social reality'[118]. There are political and social implications of the ways in which a nation is imagined, and there are also political and social limitations on whose imagining of the nation is prioritised. It is crucial, then, when considering Anderson's work to view the imagining of the nation as a political and social act with material consequences, shaped by material and political contexts. In the context of my research, I am particularly interested in the disparity between the imagined version of a nation and the political and social reality. In the recent history of Scotland there has been an increased commitment to an ideology of equality, with the Scottish government positioning Scotland as an egalitarian and welcoming space where people of all genders, sexualities and races are made welcome. At the 2018 SNP Party Conference, for instance, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon addressed members of her party and criticized the 'chaos and incompetence of Westminster', arguing that 'an independent Scotland, just as Scotland is now, will be a beacon for progressive values – equality, opportunity, diversity and fairness'[119]. This is just one example of several verbal commitments to equality that the First Minister has made in recent years[120]. The promise of this rhetoric is important; however, it is not always reflected in the lived experiences of the Scottish people. For example, despite

[117] Nadine Holdsworth, 2010. p.6.
[118] Nadine Holdsworth, 2010. p.21.
[119] Nicola Sturgeon in Kevin Schofield, 'Nicola Sturgeon: SNP offer 'optimism and hope' in Brexit Britain', *Politics Home*, 9th October 2018, <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/constitution/scottish-parliament/news/98900/nicola-sturgeon-snp-offer-optimism-and-hope> [Accessed 7/02/2019]
[120] For example, Nicola Sturgeon became the first serving first minster or prime minister to march as part of Pride when she led the 2018 Glasgow Pride March and called on the Scottish people to 'champion equality and fairness at all times'. See Mikhaila Freil, 'Glasgow Pride 2018: Nicola Sturgeon leads thousands of Scots in bid to 'champion equality and fairness', *The Scottish Sun,* 14th July 2018, https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/news/2929953/glasgow-pride-2018-march-pictures/ [Accessed 7/02/2019]

the First Minister's public commitments to gender equality[121], a 2017 report commissioned by Engender entitled *Sex and Power* revealed that despite constituting 52% of the Scottish population, women were underrepresented in leadership positions in the workplace. They made up only 35% of MSPs, 26% of university principals, and 20% of museum and gallery directors - there were no women working as CEOs of FTSE 100 companies or as the editors of major newspapers[122]. Within the context of this gender inequality in Scotland, I am interested in how theatre makers and theatre workers navigate working within the very patriarchal system that they seek to challenge. As part of this, I also consider the ways in which the theatre sector might be reinforcing and challenging inequality simultaneously, and how this complicates the experiences of female leaders within the sector.

Holdsworth focuses on the role of theatre in moments of 'rupture, crisis or conflict', arguing that this is when the theatre and nation most significantly intersect.[123] She roots her analysis of this intersection in 'moments of social breakdown and urban unrest', specifically a series of anti-police riots that took place in France in 2005[124]. These riots broke out in response to the death of two teenagers - Zyed Benna and Bouna Traoré - who were electrocuted after climbing into an electrical substation whilst on the run from police. The riots began in a suburb of Paris 'densely populated with African and Arab communities' before spreading across Paris and beyond[125]. Holdsworth argues that the 'riots demonstrated the alienation felt by many immigrant communities living in France' and uses Mohamed Rouabhi's *Vive Le France!* - a play created in response to the riots as an example of work that engages with moments of crisis and centres underrepresented voices[126]. Rouabhi's play 'offered a coruscating assault on the politics of immigration, the legacy of colonialism and the failure of France to extend its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to all its

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[121] Nicola Sturgeon has advocated for gender equality since becoming First Minister in 2014. In February 2019 she was recognised by the UN for her work to combat gender inequality. She has spoken about the importance of addressing issues regarding domestic abuse and violence against women as part of tackling gender inequality, a cause she has championed by setting up the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG). More information about the NACWG can be found here: <https://onescotland.org/equality-themes/advisory-council-women-girls/> [Accessed 7/02/2019]

[122] Engender, *Sex and Power in Scotland 2017,* (Edinburgh, Engender, 2017), p.1.

[123] Holdsworth, 2010. p.7.

[124] Holdsworth, 2010. p.42

[125] Holdsworth, 2010, p.46

[126] Holdsworth, 2010, p.47

national citizens'[127]. Holdsworth's analysis of Rouabhi's work focuses on the ways in which the piece engages with the racial politics of the riots, confronting the audience with 'the nation's most awkward truths', namely issues surrounding the treatment of immigrants in the country[128].This positions theatre as a space in which nations can be critiqued and challenged, and where dialogue can take place.

Whilst the recent history of Scotland has not included moments of violent unrest such as these, it has been a tumultuous political period. Within the timeframe of this research – 2011-2021 - Scotland has seen multiple referenda, a racial injustice movement and a pandemic. Whilst these moments may not be moments of 'crisis' in the same sense as riots, they are moments of change, uncertainty and, at times, conflict which brought individuals together in acts of public demonstration and protest. They are also moments where Scottish people were being invited to imagine alternative futures for their country, and where such imaginings gained political traction. It is these moments that I think are most interesting in relation to how theatre and nation intersect because they offer insight into the potential for ideas of the nation to be employed in service of a political narrative and they demonstrate the potential for theatre to provide opportunities for imagining alternative futures for a country. Holdsworth's approach to theatre's role in the construction of national identity inspires my own both in terms of focusing on specific flashpoints in a nation's political history to better understand the relationship between theatre and nation, and in terms of using performance case studies as a means of exploring those flashpoints. With this in mind, the fifth chapter of this thesis will present analyses of three performances which interact directly with questions of nationhood and belonging.

Both Holdsworth and Harvie demonstrate the implications of cultural activity for national identity, and in the context of my own research the specific implications of this relationship for *small* nations holds particular significance. In the introduction to his edited collection *Theatre and Performance in Small Nations*, Steve Blandford references Benedict Anderson and argues that the power of the 'imagined community' is perhaps more visible in small nations where a

[127] Holdsworth, 2010, p.47-8
[128] Holdsworth, 2010, p.50

‘sense of constant re-invention is perhaps of particular interest and likely to be more transparent and dynamic than in larger, more stable contexts’.[129] A sense of ‘re-invention’ in Scotland has arguably been most obvious in moments such as the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, and in the years of campaigning that preceded it - a literal change in the governance of the country being seen as an opportunity to reinvent how that government and, in turn, Scotland would function. Re-invention has also been an important element of the campaign for Scottish independence, offering an opportunity for Scots to once again imagine alternative futures for their country.

In the subsequent chapters of *Theatre and Performance in Small Nations,* numerous international scholars offer perspectives on the role that theatre plays in the culture of small nations including Australia, New Zealand, and Wales and on how national identities are formed, changed, and challenged through performance. Blandford frames these international perspectives by arguing that ‘small nationhood [is] defined at least partly by power relationships’ and that such power relationships can have a great impact on the culture in both the small and large nations [130]. In Scotland, the relationship with neighbouring England has been a significant element of political and cultural discourse, and in recent years this has been highlighted in discussions regarding Scottish devolution and independence. Whilst an independent Scotland would, of course, be independent from all parts of the United Kingdom, the focus of much of the discussion at the time was on the perceived dominance of English interests in Westminster. Indeed, this debate has been reignited in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum, leading to Scottish MPs walking out of parliament in protest at the lack of attention paid to Scottish interests[131]. Beyond Scotland, the impact of power relationships internationally is demonstrated in the chapters of *Theatre and Performance in Small Nations.* Teresa Marrero’s chapter on Latin@/Hispanic theatre in America, specifically Texas, explores how the stereotypes of Hispanic people perpetuated by Hollywood depictions hinder the ability of Hispanic/Latin@ theatre artists to

[129] Steve Blandford, ‘Introduction’, Steve Blandford (ed), *Theatre and Performance in Small Nations*, (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2013), p.5.
[130] Blandford in Blandford, 2013, p.4.
[131] Andrew Learmonth, ‘Drama and chaos at Westminster as SNP walk out of Commons’, *The National*, 13th June 2018, <https://www.thenational.scot/news/16288220.drama-and-chaos-at-westminster-as-snp-walk-out-of-commons/>, [Accessed 8/02/2019]

have 'viability as creators of cultural value'[132]. Marrero argues that Hispanic/Latina@ theatre remains 'under the radar' in Texas due to a lack of critical discourse surrounding the work, even though there are a multitude of venues and theatre companies. Marrero claims this leaves Hispanic/Latin@ work in a state of 'relative invisibility'[133]. I am interested in Marrero's argument not just in the case of the visibility of Scottish theatre in the rest of the UK, but also in how cultural hierarchies within the nation can affect the visibility of women's work. This has implications for my own work in terms of thinking about how women's work is rendered invisible by several factors in Scottish theatre, including a lack of critical space afforded to their work.

In the context of this project, the two most relevant chapters of *Theatre and Performance in Small Nations* are Ian Brown's 'Processes and Interactive Events: Theatre and Scottish Devolution' and Steve Blandford's 'Theatre and Performance in Devolved Wales'. There is significant overlap in the arguments put forward by both Brown and Blandford and so I will discuss these chapters together. I do so with an acute awareness of the dangers of undermining the distinct cultures of Scotland and Wales by failing to acknowledge the differences between the two small nations. My intention is not to present Scotland and Wales as merely interchangeable but there are significant areas of comparison between the two countries. Both are small nations within the United Kingdom with a recent history of devolution, both have distinct cultural and national identities separate from their role within the UK - including cultural activity in minority languages. Furthermore, the overlap in the arguments made by Brown and Blandford suggests that there are shared challenges and experiences of making work in both Scotland and Wales. In their respective chapters, Brown and Blandford both refer to the ways in which political events influence theatrical activity and, conversely, how theatre can influence political activity. Brown focuses particularly on the relationship between theatre and devolution, arguing that the '1999 re-establishment of the Scottish parliament changed 'Scotland' and theatre reflected that… theatre, in common with other art forms, had an interactive impact on

[132] Teresa Marrero, 'Under the Radar: Latin@/Hispanic Theatre in North Texas' in Steve Blandford (ed), *Theatre and Performance in Small Nations*, (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2013), p.143
[133] Marrero in Blandford, 2013, p. 154

devolution'[134]. Brown claims that devolution 'triggered a radical revision of thinking about what Scotland, its societies, communities and identities were and could be' and theatre provided space for this revision to take place and for a new future to be imagined [135]. Similarly, Blandford observes that while 'the use of theatre and performance as a means of exploring national identity was a strong preoccupation of artists in Wales well before the impetus for devolution had been given new momentum', the discourse surrounding public funding of the Arts in the wake of devolution drew attention to public perceptions regarding the role of theatre in devolved Wales[136]. Specifically, Blandford argues that the funding of a Welsh language national theatre - Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru - was a 'clear statement of priorities by the Welsh Assembly Government', namely a renewed focus on showcasing and developing the Welsh language[137]. Blandford also focuses on the specific influence of theatre in small nations, claiming that within smaller nations 'artists and politicians are in closest touch and where dialogue feels at least possible, that a strong theatre and performance culture, a potential source of democratic engagement and questioning, can survive'[138].

Both Brown and Blandford's arguments are useful for my research as I consider the intersection between political and cultural activity for women in contemporary Scotland. Their arguments regarding the potential for theatre to provide a space for engaging with political events support my own research, however, I also wish to further these arguments by considering how the importance of theatre as a space for 'democratic engagement and questioning' is amplified for minority groups who do not necessarily see themselves reflected in both government and other elements of public life. Specifically, this project is concerned with the impact of this on Scottish women, however, within this there are women who are further marginalised due, for example, to their race, class, or sexuality.

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[134] Ian Brown, 'Processes and Interactive Events: Theatre and Scottish Devolution', in Steve Blandford (ed) *Theatre and Performance in Small Nations,* (Bristol and Chicago, Intellect, 2013), p.35

[135] Brown in Blandford, 2013, p.39

[136] Steve Blandford, 'Theatre and Performance in Devolved Wales' in Steve Blandford (ed) *Theatre and Performance in Small Nations* (Bristol and Chicago, Intellect, 2013) p.54

[137] Blandford in Blandford, 2013, p.64

[138] Blandford in Blandford, 2013, p.69

Scottish National Identity

Theatre and Performance in Small Nations draws attention to some of the ways in which an exploration of the relationship between culture, gender and national identity in a Scottish context can have wider significance for understanding these concepts more generally. The power relationships that Blandford describes as central to small nations are particularly clear in Scotland due to its place within the United Kingdom and the continued renegotiations of this relationship. The relationship between Scottish national identity and the country's position within the United Kingdom has been a central tenet of the work of David McCrone, whose writing on Scottish national identity has been key to my own understanding of the subject.

In his 1991 book *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Stateless Nation*, McCrone argues that considering Scotland's position as a 'stateless' nation with no devolved parliament was key to understanding the experiences and identities of Scottish people. He stated that 'it is indubitably clear that Scotland survived the Union of 1707 as a separate 'civil society' and as a nation, and that, if anything, its sense of difference and identity has grown rather than diminished'[139]. The disconnect between Scotland's distinct culture and its lack of political autonomy, McCrone argues, can 'provide the specifically British example of these fissiparous tendencies which signal the radical remaking of political orders everywhere'[140]. This book predates Scottish devolution, a moment which could be considered a 'radical remaking' of the political order of the United Kingdom in which Scotland's political autonomy increased with the establishment of the Scottish Parliament. In light of this, the second edition of McCrone's book was published in 2001 with a new title – *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Nation*. In the introduction to this edition, McCrone reflects on how things have changed since the publication of the original text:

> First of all, and significantly, the title has altered. It is no longer the sociology of a 'stateless nation'. Recovering its parliament, albeit a devolved one, after almost 300 years of union means that Scotland is no longer stateless. To be sure, it never was, for it had retained and developed considerable institutional autonomy within the British Union such as that it was always semi-detached in what was constitutionally a unitary state.

[139] David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Stateless Nation,* (London, Routledge, 1991), p.4
[140] ibid

> Scotland was – and remains – of course, stateless in the sense that it is not formally independent[141].

Here, McCrone demonstrates the complex relationship between the formal, legislative processes through which nationhood is defined, and the more fluid and nuanced elements of national identity that persist despite, or because of, those legislative manoeuvres. This relationship is of particular interest in the case of Scotland during the period of this research because the legislative processes through which nation is defined have been at the forefront of political life during Brexit and, especially, indyref. As I discussed in the introduction, I am not interested in the nationalist movement associated with Scottish independence, but rather I seek in this thesis to understand the ways in which national identity has functioned in Scotland within the context of ongoing debates around Scotland's status within the UK. In particular, the fact that indyref ended in a 'No' vote raises questions about how Scottish people reconcile their national identity with their seeming desire to remain 'stateless'. It is certainly not the case that all those who voted 'no' do not identify as having a Scottish identity, and as McCrone highlights Scotland's cultural distinctiveness has not yet been hindered by its position within the union, and as such I am led to question exactly how and why the relationship between culture and national identity has come to be so important in Scotland.

McCrone argues that 'the two dominant modes for understanding Scotland have been the historical and the cultural, both focusing on Scotland as 'past''[142]. He dedicates a chapter of *Understanding Scotland* to cultural iconography, focusing specifically on the images and icons associated with Scotland. This includes tartan, and 'kailyardism', a term used to refer to the celebration of 'Scottish rural quaintness'[143]. The arguments put forward in this chapter are expanded upon in *Scotland the Brand: The Making of Scottish History,* in which McCrone, Angela Morris and Richard Kiely analyse the Scottish heritage industry. In *Scotland the Brand,* McCrone et al argue that heritage, which they define as 'a panoply of material and symbolic inheritances', is a modern construct and one

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[141] David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Nation* (Second Edition) (London, Routledge, 2001), p.1
[142] David McCrone, 2001, p. 31
[143] David McCrone, 2001, p. 136

that 'has only a tenuous connection to actual events, to history'[144]. The text is structured around four key themes related to heritage: 'its commodification, its consumption, the politics in which it has become embedded, and the ideological, that is to say the part it plays in the debate about post-modernism'[145]. Of these themes, it is the political implications of heritage that are of most significance to my own research. In *Scotland the Brand,* the political implications are discussed in terms of both history and Scotland's 'stateless' nature with McCrone et al asking whether 'heritage allows us to break the linear time-chain between past, present and future?'[146]. This question becomes pertinent to my own research in chapter five, when I consider how historical works of fiction allow members of an imagined community to feel connected to the former and future residents of their nation. When put into conversation with the concept of simultaneity, this breaking of the linear time chain is key to my understanding of the important role that is placed on history in the formation of the imagined community. McCrone et al argue that the lack of political definition of Scotland as a nation has led to a reliance on cultural distinctiveness. As such, the abundance of historical landmarks, icons and images in Scotland is argued to be directly linked to its lack of political recognition as a nation-state. In particular, McCrone et al suggest that the inability for Scotland to be defined as a nation within the political framework led to a 'cultural backwater of deformed nationalism' wherein symbols of 'Scottishness' are replicated globally as representative of Scotland regardless of how far removed they are from the reality of life in the country[147]. This raises questions again about how cultural activity might represent, and mis-represent, the realities of belonging to a nation.

The unique context of national identity in Scotland – and how it relates to Scottish cultural activity – is a central theme of Trish Reid's *Theatre & Scotland.* She draws on McCrone in her arguments about the role of heritage and history in the Scottish theatrical tradition, sharing his concern about how the abundance of historical imagery in Scotland has led to a 'distorted and stunted' Scottish culture[148]. In particular, Reid notes the romanticised versions of Scottish rural life

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[144] David McCrone, Angela Morris and Richard Kiely, *Scotland the Brand: The Making of Scottish Heritage,* (Edinburgh, Polygon, 1995), p. 1.
[145] David McCrone et al, 1995, p. 26
[146] David McCrone et al, 1995, p. 27
[147] David McCrone et al, 1995 p. 63
[148] Trish Reid, *Theatre and Scotland* (Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2013) p. 7

that have dominated cultural representations of Scotland's past. Here, she draws on Tom Nairn's critique of the 'vast tartan monster' to refer to the 'popular and sentimental discourses of 'Scottishness', particularly kailyard and tartanry'[149]. Kailyard refers to the 'school of Scottish fiction [which] emerged in the late nineteenth century, but the term is currently used to describe any sentimentalised and sanitised representation of Scottish life – particularly rural life'[150]. Tartanry, naturally, refers to the fabric which has come to represent Scotland both domestically and internationally, and which is tied closely to Scotland's military history. Both kailyard and tartanry can be seen as examples of the 'distorted' Scottish culture insofar as they rely heavily on stereotyped notions of Scottishness that are 'far removed' from the realities of Scotland[151]. However, Reid also argues that whilst these romanticised versions of Scottish life have historically been common in theatre, since the 1970s 'fewer Scottish history plays can be located so easily within traditions of kailyard or tartanry'[152]. Instead, Reid cites several examples – including *The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black, Black Oil* – of plays which have 'utilised historical material with the express aim of holding up a mirror to contemporary Scotland'[153]. The potential for history plays to produce new understandings of Scotland's contemporary circumstances is a central theme of my fifth chapter, and I will return to both Reid and McCrone within this context.

Gender and National Identity

Gender is not a central focus of either *Theatre & Scotland* or McCrone's work, but both Reid and McCrone draw attention to the ways in which Scottish heritage has been dominated by representations of masculinity. *Scotland the Brand* highlights the gender inequities in the leadership of the heritage industry. In a chapter focusing on the work of the National Trust for Scotland, McCrone et al observe that the trust's leadership is dominated by men: 'male patricians run it; females service it. Of its army of volunteers, 95 percent are women, who also serve as secretaries on the paid staff'[154]. Whilst the National Trust of Scotland is not an institution that I feature in my own work, this dynamic wherein men lead

[149] ibid
[150] ibid
[151] ibid
[152] Trish Reid, 2013, p. 9
[153] Trish Reid, 2013, p. 10
[154] David McCrone et al, 1995, p. 102

and women 'service' has wider relevance within the cultural sector and is echoed in my own research into leadership which I discuss in greater detail in chapters three and four. Both *Scotland the Brand* and *Understanding Scotland* trace the history of Scottish iconographies, recognising the dominance of masculinity in Scottish heritage. The arguments in these texts are best summarised in *Understanding Scotland,* where McCrone notes that the process of attempting to define the 'essential character' of the Scottish people, 'required that the contradictions and paradoxes be smoothed out so that national identities were clear cut and paramount'[155]. As a result, he argues:

> These identities were gendered, relegating women to walk on parts, and to their role as keepers of the moral and family values of the nation (Boden, 2000). It is, then, no coincidence that those identities diagnosed as archetypically Scottish by friend and foe alike – the Kailyard, tartanry and Clydesidism – have little place for women. There is no analogous 'lass o'pairts'; the image of tartanry is a male-military image (and kilts were not a female form of dress); and the Clydeside icon was a skilled, male worker who was man enough to care for his womenfolk[156].

This dominance of masculinity within the key 'tropes' of Scottish culture raises questions as to how women's cultural and national identities are shaped by their understanding of these iconographies as masculine, and how cultural activity might provide opportunities for intervention. Trish Reid echoes McCrone's critique of the dominance of masculinity in Scottish culture, but she draws on Tom Maguire to argue that 'Scottish female dramatists…have helped 'reveal new dimensions to Scotland as an imaginative space', making significant contributions to extending not only the subject matter and settings of Scottish drama, but its formal dimensions'[157]. In Chapter Five, I will discuss women's engagement with history and the ways in which they use both original history plays and adaptations of canonical texts to subvert traditional understandings of gender and national identity, and a key part of this is engaging with traditionally masculine histories from a female perspective.

McCrone focuses specifically on the relationship between gender and Scottish identity, but their work forms part of a wider discourse on women's

[155] David McCrone, 2001, p. 142
[156] ibid
[157] Trish Reid, p. 72

relationship to the nation. In *Theorizing Nationalism,* Day and Thomson state that 'one of nationalism's most powerful assertions is that identification with the nation and loyalty to its claims overrides all other commitments on the part of the individual'[158]. In practice, this means that commitment to the nation is therefore expected to take precedent over all other forms of individual identification including, but not limited to, gender, class, race, and sexuality. This is complicated by the fact that often the nation not only ignores issues related to these other identity groupings but can also directly exacerbate them. In the case of women, Day and Thompson write that

> Nationalist movements rarely, if ever, take women's situation as their point of departure. On the contrary, nationalism often suppresses women's concerns, or puts them aside until the 'more important' issue of the nation's fate is decided[159].

The ways in which nationalist projects suppress, or indeed erase, women's concerns are discussed further by Cynthia Enloe. Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* provides a feminist analysis of global politics. In a chapter dedicated to the relationship between nationalism and masculinity, she discusses a number of examples of constitutional change and conflict, including in Scotland. She states that:

> All of these stories, past, present, and those hinting the future, are typically told as if gender were irrelevant. What matters, so these conventional narratives go, is which people think of themselves as Scottish - or Icelandic, Catalan, Chechen or Okinawan - and what they do with the feelings this nurtures. The storytellers often craft their tales - of humiliation, mobilization, struggle, victory, and defeat - as if nationalism were experienced identically by women and men, and as if women and men played identical roles in defining and critiquing nationalist goals[160].

Two ideas emerge in this statement. Firstly, that gender is treated as irrelevant in nationalist projects, a perspective which aligns with the work of McCrone and with that of Nira Yuval Davis, who I will discuss momentarily. Secondly, Enloe highlights the intentionality involved in this process. These stories are 'crafted', they do not simply emerge organically. As someone interested in the role of culture in the formation of national identities, the 'crafting' required in these narratives can be read alongside Harvie's 'staged and culturally produced'

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[158] Graham Day and Andrew Thompson, 2004, p. 109

[159] Graham Day and Andrew Thompson, 2004, p. 108

[160] Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Second Edition) (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California, 2014), p. 100

identities as a means through which to understand how dominant narratives about the nation are created.

This crafting, staging and culturally producing is intrinsically linked to questions of who holds power within a nation, whose voices are heard and whose stories are told. Enloe addresses this power dynamic in the introduction to *Bananas, Beaches and Bases:*

> Conducting a feminist gender analysis requires investigating *power*: what forms does power take? Who wields it? How are some gendered wieldings of power camouflaged so they do not even look like power?[161]

In this case, Enloe is discussing power in relation to femininity and masculinity, and the ways in which divisions based on gender can contribute to the marginalisation of women. However, crucially, she cautions against an overly simplistic approach to such power dynamics. She begins by listing several 'types' of women – 'the chambermaid', 'the schoolteacher', 'the film star', 'the prostitute' etc – and refers to these women as 'dancing an intricate international minuet'.[162] Whilst she states that these 'dancers' do not have control over the tune to which they are dancing, she argues that:

> Even a woman who is victimized is not mindless. It is crucial to this feminist-informed investigation into unequal international relations that we not create a false (and lazy) dichotomy between the allegedly 'mindless victim' and the allegedly 'empowered actor'. Women who are pushed to the far margin of any power system to continue to assess and strategize even with the minimal resources they have available[163].

This provides a helpful provocation for my own research because it encourages an approach to the gendered dynamics of power in which women's agency is a central focus. In chapter three of this thesis, I will discuss the issue of gender inequality, focusing on the ways in which women's voices have been marginalised within the Scottish cultural sector. This chapter will focus largely on the power dynamics between men and women, but in the following chapter I will move to consider how women function as leaders within the sector, and how their leadership can contribute to excluding other female voices. This is an analysis that has so far been absent from conversations about women's experiences in the cultural sector in Scotland. To move away from the false dichotomies that Enloe cautions against,

[161] Cynthia Enloe, 2014, p. 32
[162] Cynthia Enloe, 2014, p. 31
[163] ibid

it is vital to acknowledge that women are operating within a power system. This means they can be complicit in exclusionary practices that disadvantage other women, especially those who are marginalized in other ways due to their race or class.

The relationship between gender and power is also a focus of Nira Yuval-Davis's *Gender and Nation.* In this text, Yuval-Davis highlights how women have been used as representatives of the nation even when their perspectives are otherwise ignored in nationalist discourses. Yuval-Davis notes how women have been used as symbolic figures – the concept of the 'motherland', or 'mother tongue' for example – and how their bodily autonomy has been impacted by 'different national projects' which have 'called on, sometimes bribed, or sometimes even forced [women] to have more, or fewer children'.[164] In terms of culture, she quotes James Donald – author of *Race, Culture and Differences* - as saying that 'a nation does not express itself through its culture, it is culture that produces 'the nation''[165]. In light of this, she argues that 'women are often constructed as the cultural symbols of the collectivity, of its boundaries, as carriers of the collectivity's 'honour' and its intergenerational reproducers of culture'[166]. Despite the figure of the woman being invoked in these circumstances, women's ability to actually influence the cultures in which they are located is often limited. Yuval-Davis argues that

> Rather than being a fixed and homogenous body of tradition and custom, therefore, 'cultural stuff' needs to be described as a rich resource, usually full of internal contradictions, which is used selectively by different social agents in various social projects within specific power relations and political discourse in and outside the collectivity. Gender, class, membership in a collectivity, stage in life cycle, ability – all affect the access and availability of these resources and the specific positionings in which they are used[167].

Yuval-Davis makes clear that the construction of culture and national identities is directly related to the wider power dynamics within the nation, and that representation does not necessarily equate to power. This is an important intervention because, as will be clear in chapter three when I consider existing studies into the number of women working in the cultural sector, there are roles

[164] Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation,* (London, Sage, 1997), p. 22
[165] James Donald in Nira Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 66
[166] Nira Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 67
[167] Nira Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 43

and spaces in which women are equally or indeed over-represented. Whilst this is sometimes used as supposed evidence of gender parity and of improvements in women's position within the sector, it does not necessarily equate to women having greater power or influence.

Conclusion

Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Community* has had significant influence not just on my own thinking about national identity, but on the work of other theatre scholars such as Jen Harvie, Steve Blandford, and Nadine Holdsworth. These works have allowed me to consider how national identities are culturally produced, how theatre might act as a space for identities to be explored and challenged. Blandford's work contributes to my understanding of how Scotland's status as a small nation affects its relationship to the rest of the UK and how theatre might provide a space for political dialogue. David McCrone offers further insight into how the specifics of Scotland's 'stateless' nation makes the cultural activity within the country particularly significant to the imagining of a national community. Finally, the work which focuses on the relationship between gender and national identity raises important questions about power, and the ways in which narratives are crafted to reflect the wider power dynamics within a nation.

In the coming chapters, I will build on the important work that has already been done in this field. My research offers fresh insight into the relationship between gender, national identity, and culture for Scottish women by considering the role that women play as cultural leaders. This allows me to examine the contribution that women make to the cultural production of the nation and the power dynamics that this cultural producing involves (both between men and women and within groups of women). My research scrutinizes the relationship between culture and national identity for women in relation to two referenda which brought Scottish identity to the forefront of the country's political life. These referenda, and women's cultural responses to them, to borrow from Blandford, put issues related to national identity under the microscope and therefore offer a new perspective on the question of how contemporary Scottish identity is experienced by women, and how that identity informs and is informed by their cultural activity. As I move into chapter three, I will now begin to consider

the relationship between gender and cultural activity as it relates to inequality within the cultural sector, establishing some of the key issues that women face in their careers and how these issues are exacerbated by intersecting inequalities such as race, class, and age.

Chapter Three: Gender Inequality in the Scottish Cultural Sector

'You know, I have been banging on about all of this since the 1980s', was Christine Hamilton's response when I asked her about the issue of gender inequality in the Scottish cultural sector[168]. Hamilton – an arts administrator and cultural policy consultant with over forty years' experience - was the first of my thirteen interviews. The thought that she and many others had been discussing this subject since before I was born gave me a slight feeling of dread that perhaps everything worth saying had already been said. However, as my conversation with Hamilton continued, she said something that resonated throughout the rest of the interviews: 'I'm tired of the sound of my own voice. I'm tired of raising this issue. I'm tired of it not being taken seriously'[169]. In the coming months, as I listened to women narrate their experiences of gender inequality, I realised that the fact that these conversations had been taking place for so long was, in part, what necessitated this project. The tiredness and frustration that Hamilton expressed was understandable when I listened to women discuss the barriers they have faced, many of them the same barriers that Hamilton and her peers were discussing in the 1980s. That is not to say that there has not been any progress on the issue. As this chapter will demonstrate, the number of women working and leading in the cultural sector is increasing. However, significant areas of inequality remain. The inequalities discussed in this chapter have particular significance because of the role that cultural activity plays in shaping national identities and, especially, in shaping cultural narratives about Scotland. As I discuss inequality in this chapter, I do so with an acute awareness that those who are excluded from the cultural sector are also prevented from contributing to that narrative. Gender inequality within the cultural sector therefore has wider implications for Scottish national identity, and understanding who creates Scotland's cultural narrative, and who is excluded, is key to analysing the relationship between culture and national identity in Scotland.

This chapter will analyse the key dynamics of inequality that were identified by the women I interviewed. To critically contextualise the anecdotal evidence gathered in interviews, this chapter will also draw on a number of existing studies which capture a broader picture of the state of gender equality in

[168] Christine Hamilton, Interview, 29th May 2020.
[169] ibid

the UK cultural sector. This includes work by different individuals and organisations including Victoria Sadler, Purple Seven Analytics, Waking the Feminists, David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker. I will begin by discussing the issue of visibility, focusing on how work undertaken by women is often overlooked in the media and in research about the cultural sector, particularly in the case of female dominated administrative roles such as marketing. I will then move on to discuss the issue of motherhood, exploring the different experiences narrated by the mothers I interviewed and arguing that inequalities related to motherhood are exacerbated by precarity and are intrinsically linked to social class and marital status. Further to this, the second half of this chapter will focus on the intersectional inequalities that women face while trying to progress their careers in the Scottish cultural sector. This section will focus specifically on the intersections of class, age, and race; however, the complexity of these multi-faceted categories requires a level of overlap with other intersections.

'#MeToo' – Sexual Harassment and Abuse

Before I begin to explore the issues identified in the interviews, I want to briefly discuss a concern that was notably absent from my conversations: sexual harassment and abuse. This research took place in the context of the #MeToo movement[170]. The dominance of conversations about harassment and abuse in public, in private and through professional 'whisper networks' in recent years meant that I was somewhat surprised that they did not form a greater part of the conversations I had with women. When I asked women if they ever felt their gender had negatively impacted their career, I braced myself to hear stories of abuse and harassment. However, the only responses that mentioned abuse and harassment were those who were explicitly telling me that they had never experienced such behaviour. In sharing this, my intention is not to claim that the prevalence of these issues has in any way been exaggerated or misrepresented in other writing on gender inequality in the cultural sector. In 2018, *The Stage* carried out a survey which found that a third of all theatre professionals in the UK had experienced sexual harassment, with a further 43% reporting that they had

[170] For a more expansive explanation of this movement and its impact see Gita Chandra and Irma Erlingsdóttir (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of the Politics of the #MeToo Movement* (London, Routledge, 2021) and M. Cristina Alcalde and Paula-Irene Villa (eds) *#MeToo and Beyond: Perspectives on a Global Movement* (Kentucky, The University Press of Kentucky, 2022)

been bullied in the workplace[171]. Of that number, 67% said they had not reported the bullying or harassment, and on the occasions where the victim had reported it, only one in five cases resulted in any action being taken[172]. In reality, given the complex nature of reporting harassment in the workplace, it is likely that these figures are much higher. Indeed, there is a possibility that any number of the women I spoke to had experiences they chose not to disclose during our interview.

Nonetheless, the issue of harassment remains significant because it illustrates two of the larger dynamics revealed through the interview process. Firstly, the relative absence of conversations about abuse in the interviews could be seen as demonstrative of the relationship between privilege and abuse. Harassment and abuse can and does happen to women from all walks of life, regardless of their social class, race, or any other privilege. However, considering the specific power dynamics at play in workplace harassment, where perpetrators often utilise workplace hierarchies to conceal abuse and where problems within the bureaucracy of the complaints processes can often discourage victims from reporting their abusers, women who are already marginalised in other ways are particularly at risk[173]. Looking at this through an intersectional lens, I am conscious that the lack of discussion around harassment and abuse within these conversations could be reflective of the privilege that the women I spoke to hold in terms of race, class, and other identity markers. There is, therefore, much to be learned about harassment and abuse by what is *not* said in these conversations, and who is able to narrate their experiences in the industry without talking about experiences of harassment and abuse. Secondly, while this thesis will not deal extensively with the issue of sexual harassment, the discussions around power dynamics and inequality more generally are inextricably linked to the issue of workplace harassment or abuse. Harassment and abuse do not happen in a vacuum, and the working conditions within the cultural sector exacerbate these issues, making women more vulnerable. In the coming chapters, as I unpack the notions of power, leadership, and community within this industry, I do so with an

[171] Press Association, 'A third of theatre workers have been sexually harassed, says poll', *The Guardian,* 25th January 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/jan/25/theatre-workers-sexual-harassment-bullying-stage-report [Accessed 18/06/2021]

[172] ibid

[173] See Sara Ahmed, *Complaint!* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2021).

acute awareness of how these issues intersect and often directly lead to the harassment and abuse of women in the wider field of the arts and cultural sector.

'There are a lot of handmaidens in Scottish theatre'[174]: The Visibility and Value of Women's Work.

The question of women's visibility within the Scottish cultural sector is a multifaceted issue and the concept of visibility is intrinsically linked to discourses concerning value. As I discuss the visibility of women's work, I am thinking both about the literal visibility of that work – how often and where it is staged – and of the ways in which women's labour is underacknowledged and undervalued. Whilst these issues are somewhat distinct from one another, there is significant overlap between the two concepts. When I talk about 'value', I am referring partly to the financial 'value' of this work – how well women are paid, the budgets allocated to their productions – which in turn links to visibility through the programming, marketing, and audience responses to women's work. I am also referring to the value placed on women's work in terms of the perceived quality or importance of this work. The link between this type of 'value' and visibility is made clear later in this chapter in my focus on creative learning but it typically manifests in a lack of acknowledgement of the labour that women do in roles that are generally less visible than, for example, the work of writers, directors, and Artistic Directors.

The work in this section is part of a wider conversation about the relationship between gender and visibility in the workplace. The term 'gendered labour' is sometimes used to discuss the additional domestic and emotional labour associated with women[175], but is also used to denote the different experiences of men and women in the workplace and is closely linked to gender inequality[176]. In

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[174] Christine Hamilton, Interview, 29th May 2020

[175] See Dan Woodman and Julia Cook 'The new gendered labour of synchronisation: Temporal labour in the new world of work', *Journal of Sociology,* 55:4, October 2019, pp 762-777 and Jo Armstrong, Sylvia Walby and Sofia Strid, 'The gendered division of labour: how can we assess the quality of employment and care policy from a gender equality perspective?', *The Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, 17:3, October 2009, pp 263-275.

[176] See Joan Acker 'Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organisations', *Gender and Society,* 4:2, 1990, pp 139-158 and Rosemary Crompton, 'Gender Inequality and the Gendered Division of Labour' in Jude Browne (ed) *The Future of Gender* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp 228-249.

particular, scholars have noted the wage gap between men and women[177], the lack of women in leadership positions[178], and the dominance of men in certain fields[179]. These issues apply within the cultural sector despite the fact that women are, as argued by Angela McRobbie, 'attracted to careers in creative work' due to the perceived difference from 'conventional careers'[180]. These perceived differences are often rooted in the notion that the cultural industries are 'open', 'diverse', and 'Bohemian'[181]. Banks and Hesmondhalgh argue that the 'pervasive presentation as intrinsically leisure-like, pleasurable and *fun*' is key to the industry's appeal[182], but also makes it 'difficult to voice or identify' problems 'because creative industry labour is presented and assumed…to be an *intrinsically* progressive form of work'[183]. However, despite this image, Bridget Conor et al note that 'inequalities remain a depressingly persistent feature of most fields' within the cultural sector[184]. The question of how women's work is made visible and valued within these fields is key to further understanding these inequalities.

In the introduction to their edited collection *Revealing and Concealing Gender Issues of Visibility in Organisations*, Patricia Lewis and Ruth Simpson emphasise the increasing focus on visibility in gender research and differentiate between 'surface' and 'deep' conceptualisations of visibility. They consider 'surface' level to be literature focused on 'states of exclusion and difference arising from a numerical imbalance', whilst the 'deep' perspective focuses on the processes of 'maintaining power through invisibility and the struggles around the

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[177] See Duncan Brown, 'Gender Pay Gaps, the UK Experience: How Do We Close Them, How Do We Bring Research into Practice', *Compensation and Benefit Review,* 51:4, September 2019, pp 144-161 and Monica Costa Dias, Robert Joyce, and Francesca Parodi, 'The Gender Pay Gap in the UK: Children and Experience in Work', *Oxford Review of Economic Policy,* 36:4, 2020, pp 855-881

[178] See Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation: New Edition,* (New York, Basic Books, 2008), Jose Carbajal, 'Women and Work: Ascending to Leadership Positions', *Journal of Human Behaviour in the Social Environment,* 28:1, 2018, pp 12-27 and Fiona Dodd, 'Women Leaders in the Creative Industries: A Basis Study', *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship,* 4:2, June 2012, pp 153-178

[179] See Yvonne Corcoran-Nantes and Ken Roberts, 'We've Got One of Those: The Peripheral Status of Women in Male Dominated Industries', *Gender, Work and Organisation,* 2:1, January 1995, pp 21-33 and Kim Allen, 'What do You Need to Make it in This Industry? Balls!' in Daniel Ashton and Caitriona Noonan (eds) *Cultural Work and Higher Education* (Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMllan,2013), pp 232-253.

[180] Angela McRobbie in Stephanie Taylor, 'Negotiating Oppositions and Uncertainties: Gendered Conflicts in Creative Identity Work', *Feminism and Psychology,* 21:3, 2010, pp 354-371, p. 356

[181]ibid

[182] Mark Banks and David Hesmondhalgh, 'Looking for Work in Creative Industries Policy', *International Journal of Cultural Policy,* 15:4, 2009, pp 415-430, p. 418

[183] Banks and Hesmondhalgh, 2009, p. 416

[184] Bridget Conor, Rosalind Gill, and Stephanie Taylor, 'Gender and Creative Labour: Introduction', *The Sociological Review,* 63 :1, 2015, pp 1-22, p. 6

norm'[185]. Whilst I am conscious of the value judgement that may be perceived in the terms 'surface' and 'deep', they provide a useful lens through which to consider the existing literature on gender and visibility in the workplace. The 'surface' level analysis that Lewis and Simpson describe provides vital insight into the division of labour within the cultural sector. For example, in 'Gender and Creative Labour', Conor et al note the dominance of women in 'wardrobe, hairdressing and make-up roles in film and television' and the dramatic underrepresentation of women working as 'screenwriter, cinematographer and director' roles[186]. This 'surface level' analysis is one of many that I will share in this chapter, and the act of drawing attention to 'numerical imbalance' within the sector provides important awareness of where women's labour is concentrated and how this links to the value placed on that work. But the type of analysis that Lewis and Simpson term as 'deep' provides additional insight into the relationship between visibility and value, and how this relationship is shaped by patriarchal assumptions about labour and power.

This relationship was discussed by Lisa K. Fletcher in *Disappearing Acts: Gender, Power, and Relational Practice at Work,* in which Fletcher focused on how the work of female design engineers was "disappeared" because of the ways in which workplaces are shaped by a 'masculine bias'[187]. She focuses particularly on women's relational practice within the workplace, arguing that the female engineers interviewed for this study were often skilled at collaborative and supportive working styles that the current conceptions of what it meant to be a 'good' design engineer did not value[188]. She argued that because design engineering was an individualistic and competitive working environment, the kind of relational practice in which women demonstrated expertise – supporting colleagues, teamwork, and mentoring, for example – were not valued[189]. She argued that this was embedded in the language used to describe work and noted that

> for example, the engineers had no way to describe the output of relational activity as an achievement in its own right because outcomes embedded in

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[185] Patricia Lewis and Ruth Simpson, 'Introduction' in Lewis and Simpson (eds) *Revealing and Concealing Gender: Issues of Visibility in Organizations,* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 2
[186] Conor et al, 2015, p. 7
[187] Joyce K. Fletcher, *Disappearing Acts: Gender, Power, and Relational Practice at Work,* (Cambridge and London, MIT Press, 1999), p. 3
[188] ibid
[189] Joyce K. Fletcher, 1999

> people, such as confidence, skills or knowledge, do not fit the conventional definition of outcome as something tangible, measurable and quantifiable[190].

Here, Fletcher provides an example of what Lewis and Simpson term 'deep analysis', focusing on the struggle that female engineers faced against 'the norm' within design engineering, rather than on the numerical imbalances between male and female engineers. In doing so, Fletcher demonstrates the link between visibility and value for female design engineers. The inability to quantify the types of relational practice in which the women Fletcher interviewed demonstrated skill led to the work being devalued and, in turn, 'disappeared' entirely. Fletcher's analysis focuses specifically on design engineering and the individualistic approach to working is far removed from the image of the 'cool, creative and egalitarian' cultural industries in which collaborative work is common and expected[191]. But the dynamic she presents in which women's work is rendered invisible by the power mechanisms within the workplace has significance within the cultural sector, as will be clear in my discussions.

The most blatant examples of women's labour being rendered invisible involve men receiving praise or credit for the work of women. *The Stage* 100 list in 2021 saw David Greig and Mike Griffiths listed as one of the top 100 exceptional members of the theatre industry for their role in programming *Lament for Sheku Bayoh* at the Lyceum theatre. Neither the playwright- Hannah Lavery - nor any of the female cast and creative team were listed within the top 100[192]. The disparity in visibility is clear here but takes on particular significance given that Hannah Lavery is a woman of colour who wrote *Lament for Sheku Bayoh* as a response to Bayoh's murder at the hands of the police. It was performed by a cast of women of colour and had an all-female creative team. This production was staged at the Lyceum within the context of the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests and focused largely on both the overt and covert ways that racism permeates both policing and society more generally. In failing to acknowledge the labour of the women of colour involved in this production both on and offstage, and instead choosing to

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[190] Joyce K. Fletcher, 1999, p. 106

[191] Rosalind Gill, 'Cool, Creative and Egalitarian? Exploring Gender in Project-Based New Media Work in Euro', *Information, Communication and Society,* 5:1, 2002, pp 70-89.

[192] The Stage, 'Stage 100: Bringing theatre back – on stage and online (part 1)', *The Stage,* 7th January 2021, < https://www.thestage.co.uk/features/the-stage-100-2021-bringing-theatre-back-part-1>, [Accessed 20/07/2021]

praise two white men for having given this production a platform, *The Stage* perpetuated the dominance of white voices which is key to how structural racism functions and sustains itself. That being said, the problem of visibility is often far less obvious than in this example. In this discussion, I will begin by looking at how venues and programmers often favour men's work over that of women, offering them bigger stages and greater opportunity for exposure. I will then discuss how administrative roles are overlooked and often seen as less valuable than creative work, and how this intersects with gender inequality because of the dominance of women in these roles. Finally, I will explore how creative learning and youth theatre work – two areas within the theatre landscape that are predominated by women -are often viewed as a 'side-line' within the sector, and how this both devalues women's work and demonstrates the disparity between the rhetoric of cultural policy and the realities of working in the industry[193].

Programming and Platforming Women

The disparity in how men and women's work is programmed by venues has been demonstrated in a number of studies that focus on the cultural industries in both the UK and Ireland. For example, arts and culture writer Victoria Sadler publishes an annual review of the gender balance in the programs of London's major theatres on her blog. In 2019, Sadler looked at eight theatres – Almeida Theatre, Bush Theatre, Donmar Warehouse, Hampstead Theatre, National Theatre, the Old Vic, Royal Court Theatre, and the Young Vic – and counted the number of times that female playwrights were featured. She found that only Royal Court, Hampstead, Bush, and the Young Vic had women represented at 50% or over, and Young Vic was criticised for the fact that five of the nine plays written by women were staged in their 'tiny side studio'[194]. The other theatres fell short in their representation of women, with Almeida, Donmar Warehouse, and the Old Vic each only presenting one play written by a woman. The National presented just five, in a programme of twenty plays[195]. Sadler's research demonstrates clearly that the women buying tickets for London's top theatres are not seeing themselves reflected on stage.

[193] Rosie Priest, Interview, 27th August 2020

[194] Victoria Sadler, *2019 in Review: The Chasm for Female Playwrights Widens,* 14th October 2019, https://whatvictorialikes.co.uk/2019/10/01/2019-in-review-the-chasm-for-female-playwrights-widens/, [Accessed 18/03/2020].

[195] ibid

This dynamic is explored further in a study entitled 'Gender in Theatre' which was carried out by Purple Seven Analytics based on audience data from 2012-2015. They carried out this research as part of their launch of their 'Audience Profiler' tool, which was designed to help theatres collect data about their audiences. They 'collected data from the programmes of over 6,000 plays across 159 UK venues' alongside data gathered by their Audience Profiler tool to analyse the gender balance in British theatre [196]. The study found that 'female audiences account for 65% of ticket revenue, but only 39% of actors, 36% of directors and 28% of writers'[197]. They offered two potential rationalisations for this disparity. The first was that 'men make better theatre, and any gender imbalance on a venue's programme arises as a natural consequence of selecting work of the best quality'[198]. They tested this hypothesis by looking at 835 reviews from the *Guardian* and the *Telegraph* to 'investigate whether plays written and directed by men receive higher ratings'[199]. In doing so, they found that 'reviewers rate plays by authors of each gender mostly equally – plays written by women get 3.41 stars; plays by men receive 3.44'[200]. This difference is negligible and does not suggest any real disparity in the quality of work made by women compared to men. Their second potential justification is that 'audiences distrust the work of females and are less likely to pay for it'[201]. To consider this proposition, they looked at the ticket sales of 1,500 shows and found that shows directed by men 'tended to sell more tickets over the course of their run, and also generate more revenue'[202]. However, upon looking at this data in relation to the size of the venue, they found that

> male directors tended to be given bigger stages, with tickets being sold at higher prices…when looking at the percentage of seats a performance managed to sell, the gap narrows and female directors slightly surpass males, with an average 53% of capacity sold out compared to male directors' 51%[203].

This suggests that the issue is not a gap in ability but a gap in opportunity. It can become a somewhat vicious cycle in which men are consistently given bigger

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[196] Purple Seven, *Gender in Theatre: Based on trends 2012-2015,* (London, Purple Seven, 2015), p.3.
[197] Purple Seven, 2015, p.2.
[198] Purple Seven, 2015, p.3
[199] Purple Seven, 2015, p.5.
[200] ibid
[201] Purple Seven, 2015, p.3.
[202] Purple Seven, 2015, p.7.
[203] ibid

platforms so then are seen as the only options for such platforms, when in fact the evidence put forward by Purple Seven would suggest that there are no legitimate reasons why women would not be able to fill bigger venues, earn equal revenue and create work that would be favourably reviewed, particularly when considered alongside Purple Seven's finding that women make up the majority of audiences (the aforementioned 65% of ticket revenue).

The disparity in how women and men are programmed, and the impact this has on female artists, was clear in the #WakingtheFeminists movement. In 2015, the Irish National Theatre – the Abbey Theatre - launched a season entitled 'Waking the Nation' which was intended to mark 'the centenary of the Easter Rising and the proclamation of the Irish Republic – powerful political events that would culminate in Ireland's partition and the independence of the South from Britain'.[204] The significance of this season as a marker of these events made the lack of female representation particularly frustrating for Irish women. Emer O'Toole noted that 'ninety percent of plays were written by men. Female directors did not fare much better: eighty percent of the plays were directed by men'[205]. The one play written by a woman, as Carole Quigley explained, was Ali White's *Me, Mollser* which was described as 'a specially commissioned monologue to introduce *The Plough and the Stars* by Sean O'Casey to a younger audience'[206]. This monologue spent three months touring schools which, as Quigley pointed out, meant that 'the commemorative season would not present any writing by women in the theatre itself', which has obvious implications on the visibility of the work within the season.[207]. Furthermore, the optics of the only work written by a woman being a monologue used to 'introduce' a play by a man further contributes to a sense that women's work was undervalued by the leadership at the Abbey Theatre.

This was exacerbated by Artistic Director Fiach Mac Conghail's reaction to complaints about the programming. Responding from his personal Twitter

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[204] Emer O'Toole, 'Waking the Feminists: Re-imagining the Space of the National Theatre in the Era of the Celtic Phoenix', *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory*, 28:2, June 2017, pp 134-152, p134
[205] Emer O'Toole, 2017, p.135
[206] Abbey Theatre in Carole Quigley, '#WakingTheFeminists', in Eamonn Jordan and Eric Weitz (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance* (Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2018), pp 85-91, p. 85
[207] ibid

account, Mac Conghail stated that 'all my new play choices are based on the quality of the play, form, and theme. It's my call and I'm pleased with the plays I picked for #WTN' and followed this by saying that 'I don't and haven't programmed plays or productions on a gender basis. I took decisions based on who I admired and wanted to work with'[208]. This latter quote raises important questions about the role that an Artistic Director's personal preferences and relationships play in exacerbating inequality within the sector, and I will explore that notion in greater detail in the next chapter. But what is clear in both tweets is Mac Conghail's lack of understanding of the wider implications of his programming decisions, and of how women felt about being excluded from a momentous season at their national theatre. In a now deleted tweet, Mac Conghail responded to anger about the lack of gender parity by saying 'them's the breaks', implying that this was something women should simply accept[209].

Women disagreed. Set designer and arts manager Lian Bell tweeted about the programme using the hashtag #WakingtheFeminists to 'contest the Abbey's slogan, and within days it went viral'[210]. This led to what Brian Singleton termed a 'tidal wave of anger from women working in theatre',[211] with the hashtag quickly gaining traction and the support of major figures such as Meryl Streep[212]. In response, the Abbey Theatre apologised and offered to host a public meeting about gender inequality in Irish Theatre. This became the fastest selling event in the theatre's history, with five hundred tickets sold in less than ten minutes. The meeting took place on November 12th 2015 and was 'chaired by Senator Ivana Bacik and theatre producer Sarah Durcan'[213]. The meeting featured thirty women from a wide variety of roles within the Irish theatre industry[214], and each was given ninety seconds to share their experiences[215]. The responses led to Arts Council Ireland funding a group of researchers to create a report on the gender imbalance in Irish theatre.

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[208] Carole Quigley, 2018, p. 86
[209] Emer O'Toole, 2017, p. 136
[210] Brian Singleton, 'The Political Trajectories of Contemporary Irish Performance', *Theatre Journal,* 68:3, September 2016, pp 473-481, p. 480
[211] Ibid.
[212] Emer O'Toole, 2017, p. 136
[213] Carole Quigley, 2018, p. 87
[214] ibid.
[215] Emer O'Toole, 2017, p. 137

The resulting study, *Gender Counts: An Analysis of Gender in Irish Theatre 2006-2015,* was published in 2017. The results mirror those of the other reports I have discussed, finding that, in general, women are underrepresented in the industry, making up only 37% of directors and 28% of authors. They note that to 'achieve parity in all roles, women face a gap of between 8 and 41 percentage points'[216]. The report also breaks down the gender balance of different companies in relation to the amount of funding they receive. They compared the amount of Arts Council funding that each organisation received in the 2006-2015 period and the number of women they hired and found 'an inverse relationship between levels of funding and female representation. In other words, the higher funded the organisation, the lower the female representation across all roles in the organisation'[217]. They found that the Abbey Theatre, which had received the most money (57% of all funding), had an overall female representation of just 33%[218]. The second highest funded organisation was the Gate theatre, who received 8% of the total funding and had just 32% female representation[219]. In total, the top five funded organisations had the lowest percentage of women employees. In contrast, the highest levels of female representation were recorded at the Ark, Rough Magic Theatre Company, and Dublin Fringe Festival, each of which received 5% or less of the Arts Council funding[220]. None of the organisations achieved more than 50% female representation. These figures demonstrate the need for funding bodies such as Arts Council Ireland to hold larger organisations more accountable for gender equality and to offer more financial support to companies where women are more prominent. Not only will this increase the visibility of women's work by making sure that the largest and best funded organisations are platforming women, but it also ensures that women's work is valued both in the financial sense – i.e., that the Arts council sees it as a worthwhile financial investment – and in the sense that it demonstrates the merit of the work – i.e., this work is worthy of large platform.

Whilst the studies I have discussed here are not dealing directly with inequality in a Scottish context, they have implications for Scotland because they

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[216] Dr Brenda Donohue, Dr Ciara O'Dowd, Dr Tanya Dean, Ciara Murphy, Kathleen Cawley and Kate Harris, *Gender Counts: An analysis of gender in Irish theatre,* (Dublin, Waking the Feminists, 2017), p. 25.
[217] Donohue et al, 2017, p. 32
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid.

draw attention to the layered nature of inequality within the cultural sector. The original Waking the Feminists campaign demonstrates the significance of cultural activity to a collective sense of national identity, as is clear in the anger that women felt about being excluded from a season which held such significance for the nation. Within this context, failing to include women's voices has implications for the value that is placed on those voices in the construction of the nation's cultural narratives. The tensions around women's involvement in this season demonstrate that the question of platforming women's work is not just to do with ensuring they get opportunities for work and for professional exposure, but also that their perspectives and experiences are equally represented. This certainly has implications beyond Ireland, as do the findings of the subsequent report, *Gender Counts*. The relationship between funding and gender highlighted in this report raises the question of how large organisations and funding bodies uphold gender inequality and shows the relationship between financial value and 'value' in the sense of the respect given to a piece of work. Ultimately, I will demonstrate throughout this chapter and the next that financial barriers to working in the cultural sector are key to gender inequality, and so looking closely at how funding is allocated and who receives the most is central to our understanding of how women's voices are marginalised.

Administrative Work

While these studies have focused on making women's work visible within the context of staging and promoting women as playwrights and directors, there are other roles within the cultural sector where women's work is rendered invisible. Throughout her career, Christine Hamilton has worked in administrative roles for some of the most prominent arts organisations in Scotland, including 7:84 Theatre Company and the Scottish Arts Council. In our conversation about her career, she stated that 'there are a lot of handmaidens in Scottish theatre - production assistants, assistant directors, and people working in administrative and marketing roles'[221]. The jobs that Hamilton mentions are ones which have traditionally been dominated by women, a dynamic discussed by Hesmondhalgh and Baker, who describe the dominance of one gender in a particular role as 'sexual work segregation', observing that

[221] Christine Hamilton, Interview, 29th May 2020

> Public relations and marketing are now mostly female tasks…Jobs consisting of the coordination and facilitation of production are also markedly 'female' whereas creative jobs which are considered more prestigious (directors) and technical ones (camera operators, editing, sound technicians…) are occupied in majority by men[222].

Hesmondhalgh and Baker argue that sexual work segregation should be a key focus of feminists in the cultural industries for four reasons. Firstly, this segregation contributes to inequality because 'occupations carried out by women rather than men tend to be paid less'[223]. Secondly, it limits 'the autonomy, freedom and recognition awarded to individual women and men' because when an individual has a skillset that better suits an occupation that is traditionally seen as being 'for' a different gender, they are less likely to pursue a career in that field[224]. They also argue that this lack of freedom on an individual level 'limits creative flourishing' by keeping talented individuals from pursuing these careers and in turn limiting the collective creativity within the sector that could 'serve the common good'. Finally, they argue that the gendered segregation 'draws upon, and in turn contributes to, social stereotypes' which contributes to embedding such stereotypes within society[225].

The two findings of this study that are most useful in my thinking about the visibility and value of women's work are the disparity in financial renumeration, and the importance of, to quote Hesmondhalgh and Baker, not 'throwing the baby out with the bath water'[226]. The wage gap between men and women's work in general is well documented[227], and the creative industries is no exception[228]. This wage gap is present both in the traditional sense – jobs where women dominate are less likely to be highly paid- and in the disparity in large scale creative opportunities such as those discussed in the Waking the Feminist and Purple Seven

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[222] David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker, 'Sex, Gender and Work Segregation in the Cultural Industries', *The Sociological Review,* 63:1, 2015, pp 23-36, p. 28

[223] Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2015, p. 25

[224] ibid

[225] ibid

[226] Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2015, p.34

[227] See Office for National Statistics, 'Gender Pay Gap in the UK: 2021', 26th October 2021, https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/genderpaygapintheuk/2021#main-points [Accessed 29/11/2021] and Sebawit G. Bishu and Mohamad G. Alkadry 'A Systemic Review of the Gender Pay Gap and Factors That Predict It', *Administration and Society,* 49:1, March 2016, pp 65-104.

[228] See Bridget Conor, *Gender and Creativity: Progress on the Precipice*' (Paris, UNESCO, 2021)

studies[229]. The concept of 'not throwing the baby out with the bathwater' relates to the kneejerk urge to criticize stereotypes around women's work. Hesmondhalgh and Baker found that their interviewees of all genders saw women as having strong communication and caring skills that made them particularly suited to certain roles within the creative industries. Whilst Hesmondhalgh and Baker mentioned their concerns about how such assumptions can contribute to embedding gender stereotypes within society, they also argued that 'it would be a mistake to argue too strongly against the high evaluation of such skills by women. Rather, we need to argue for a greater respect for such qualities, in both women and men'[230]. This is a useful reminder for, and challenge to, my thinking about gendered roles within the cultural industries. It raises the question of how we ensure that women and men have access to opportunity, without contributing to negative connotations attached to certain roles that presents them as somehow lesser than others. This is a problem that I will return to in my discussion of creative learning and youth theatre work, but also applies more generally to the types of administrative roles in which women dominate.

Hamilton's comparison of marketing and other administrative roles to that of 'handmaidens' is supported by the fact that they are largely overlooked even in discussions that focus specifically on inequality within the sector. Hamilton's own *Where are the Women?* reports exclude some of these roles, focusing predominantly on creative and technical positions. I am conscious of representing 'creative' and 'administrative' roles as distinct categories because doing so undermines the creativity involved in much of the administrative work that is required in the cultural sector. That being said, in terms of thinking about how women's work is rendered invisible within the industry, the distinction that many make between 'creative' and 'administrative' is worth noting in relation to the value that is placed on different types of work. Townley at al describe such a distinction as creating a binary of 'creative' and the 'humdrum', which they say is too simplistic as it fails to 'recognize the material manifestation of immaterial goods' which is central to creative work and reinforces 'essentializing dualisms' which position creative and administrative or managerial work as 'antithetical'[231].

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[229] ibid

[230] Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2015, p.34

[231] Barbara Townley, Nic Beech and Alan McKinlay, 'Managing in the Creative Industries: Managing the Motley Crew', *Human Relations,* 62:7,2009, pp 939-962, p. 942-943

In an industry where much of the focus is on the success of a performance, it is perhaps understandable that playwrights, directors, and actors find themselves in the metaphorical spotlight when it comes to discussions about working in the cultural sector.

However, the focus on narrowly defined, more publicly visible creative roles can lead to tensions. In my conversation with Julia Hughes - Creative Director and Chief Executive of a major arts organisation - she described feeling worried about the future of arts marketing – the area of the sector where her career began - and gave an example of the ways in which such tensions can manifest:

> I had a bit of a barny… it was a male playwright who was kind of doing some of that… "well, why have they got like 12 people in their development team?" and I was like, this is not the fault of those people who are generally young women who are working really hard so that your show can go on, that it can reach its widest audience…they'll usually not be getting overtime. They'll be working loads extra hours for hardly any money. Their starting salaries are still terrible. And if you read any of the stuff that came out of #MeToo, all those surveys, who was it that was getting abused and sexually harassed in theatres? It was young people, young women working in marketing and development roles, and they were getting sexually harassed by bloody donors and senior board members and all that stuff, I was just like, don't be blaming them. Don't be going after people who are relatively powerless, who are making up a work force, that's doing a really valuable job[232].

This anecdote demonstrates how a feeling of scarcity within the industry can exacerbate tensions, leading to a desire to 'prove' importance by diminishing the work of others. The question 'why have they got like 12 people in their development team?' suggests that the presence of this development team is taking something – funding, opportunities, resources - away from other workers within the industry who this individual perceives as more deserving. Such discussions were particularly common during the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic. As theatres closed and difficult decisions were being made about which jobs would be saved, there was a heightened awareness of how theatres were staffed and where budgets were allocated. For example, Ambassador Theatre Group – one of the biggest employers in UK theatre – laid off 1,200 casual staff in the summer of

[232] Julia Hughes, Interview, 24th August 2020

2020[233]. In Scotland, Traverse theatre entered redundancy consultations in July 2020, with a statement saying that redundancies would include 'a number of our team in customer-facing and technical roles, with the likelihood that almost a third of our staff will be made redundant'[234]. They stated that this decision had been made to allow them to preserve the jobs of a 'small core grouping, who are tasked with creating opportunities for our organisation to come back stronger to oversee delivery across our work in engagement, talent development and creativity'[235]. The decisions made in the wake of COVID are largely reflective of the lack of government support and contingency plans to allow venues to retain staff while they were unable to open[236]. The decision to cut front of house staff, for example, is perhaps the most logical option in a time when audiences are not allowed in the building. However, these job cuts do, to an extent, represent the hierarchy within the industry in terms of what jobs are seen as indispensable. Given that women, and in particular marginalised women, are more likely to find themselves in the sorts of positions that Hamilton describes as 'handmaidens' or Hughes identifies as being the source of disdain from others in the industry, they are particularly vulnerable to such job cuts.

Creative Learning and Youth Theatre

When selecting interviewees for this project, I wanted to make space for creative learning professionals as I felt that much like administrative roles, this was a part of the sector that previous studies had overlooked. The absence of creative learning in prior literature about the cultural industries reflected what practitioner Rosie Priest terms the 'sidelining' of such work within the sector. This 'sidelining' manifests in several ways and a simple way of illustrating this is to

[233] Lanre Bakare, 'Ambassador Theatre Group to lay off 1,200 casual staff in UK', *The Guardian,* 30th July 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2020/jul/30/ambassador-theatre-group-to-lay-off-1200-casual-staff-in-uk-coronavirus [Accessed 17/07/2021]

[234] Sir John Elvidge and Linda Crooks, *A Statement from the Traverse Theatre,* 17th July 2020, www.traverse.co.uk/news/a-statement-from-the-traverse-theatre/ [Accessed 17/07/2021]

[235] Ibid

[236] Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the cultural industries campaigned for greater support for venues and artists. Both the Scottish and UK governments provided some support through the furlough scheme and through arts recovery funds (see: https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/culture-recovery-board and https://www.gov.scot/news/supporting-flagship-cultural-venues/). However, many artists found themselves without adequate support because they were not eligible for funds for self-employed people, but also not in secure employment to receive furlough. For more information see: Felice Southwell, 'Freelance but not on furlough payment – the Croydon musician caught in criteria trap', *East London Lines,* 24th June 2020, https://www.eastlondonlines.co.uk/2020/06/freelance-but-not-on-furlough-payment-the-croydon-musician-caught-in-criteria-trap/ [Accessed 10/10/2021]

look at the space that is afforded to creative learning in an organisation's website or marketing materials. Most venues will include creative learning on their website, usually in a specific section separated from its core creative programme – for example, NTS labels this section 'get involved', the Lyceum calls it 'take part'. It is rare to see productions that result from creative learning projects listed in an organisation's main programme of events. The invitation to 'get involved' only extends so far, with creative learning so often positioned as an addition to an organisation's creative activity rather than central to it. Similarly, the Ambassador Theatre Group's thirty-nine-page programme for the 2021/22 season – which was sent to all members of their mailing list – dedicated a single page at the back of the programme to their creative learning project. This page is largely taken up with pictures of smiling children and advertises that their 'creative learning specialists are on hand to show you the ropes' if you're interested in learning more about working in theatre.[237] They advertise 'career insights', 'Q&A with industry professionals' and 'masterclasses'. This framing implies a hierarchy wherein creative learning is positioned as merely a stepping-stone to a 'real' theatre career rather than as a potential site of independent creative practice for both participants and creative learning professionals.

Rosie Priest, who at the time of our conversation was Creative Learning Associate at Stellar Quines, raised key questions about the purpose of the cultural sector, and how the rhetoric of cultural policy and the realities of working in the industry might differ:

> creative learning is often like a side-line...organisations exist and, and creative learning lives in its own bubble. I don't think that's necessarily an effective way of doing creative learning. When you look at, not to talk about cultural policy, but if you look at cultural policy and the reason that the arts are given money it's to have impacts and they talk about transformation and impact and individual changes, but also societal changes. And a lot of the work that creative learning does is all about that. But often we're the most underfunded and underutilized segment of an organisation, you know, like I have a tiny amount of funding compared to the amount that productions get, and I think the most important bit is actually interrogating that and making... and integrating it, like, why are we doing these things?[238]

[237] Ambassador Theatre Group, 'Celebrate the Return of Creative Learning', *Edinburgh Playhouse: What's On,* September 2021.
[238] Rosie Priest, Interview, 27th August 2020

The question of why cultural activity matters is complex, and it is vital to preserve the ability of theatre-makers to make work for reasons other than community impact or societal change. However, regardless of whether this should be the case, Priest is correct that a significant aspect of arts funding in the UK focuses on the transformative power of cultural activity and its importance to communities. For example, as well as stating the financial value of the cultural sector in Scotland, Creative Scotland argue that creativity matters because of the potential social and cultural value of creative work. They state that creativity 'has the power to transform us, to take us away from the everyday and to enjoy being alive'[239]. They also claim that 'creativity makes the society we live in better' because 'it inspires co-operation, collaboration, empathy and understanding. It brings people together and opens our minds to cultural diversity and social inclusion'[240]. Such rhetoric demonstrates the focus on the power of creative work not just to entertain or to contribute to the economy, but to play a fundamental role in bettering society. This positioning is also reflected in the application criteria for their Open Fund – available to both individuals and organisations in Scotland to fund creative work. In the application form for the Open Fund for organisations, there is a section dedicated to the 'impact' of the proposed project. This includes impact on the organisation itself, but also asks applicants to consider the 'benefit for others, now and into the future'. Specifically, applicants are asked to consider 'who else will benefit from your project or activity?', 'how will this project or activity promote equality or diversity?' and 'how will you make this project or activity accessible and inclusive?'[241]. It is clear in these questions that those applying for the Open Fund are expected to impact others with their work and to contribute towards the bettering of society. And yet, as Priest explains, the very people who are most likely to be doing this work are the ones whose work is then 'side-lined' in favour of other aspects of an organisation's output. This suggests that women are leading within a part of the sector that provides valuable and transformative cultural activity, but which is not necessarily respected or valued.

[239] Creative Scotland, Creativity Matters, Cultural Value, https://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/creativitymatters/cultural-value [Accessed 10/10/2021]

[240] Creative Scotland, Creativity Matters, Social Value, https://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/creativitymatters/social-value [Accessed 10/10/2021]

[241] Creative Scotland, Open Fund for Organisations: Sustaining Creative Development 2020/21 Application Form, https://www.creativescotland.com/funding/funding-programmes/open-fund [Accessed 28/10/2021]

I was also interested in hearing from members of the sector whose careers had been focused on work in youth theatres. My reasons for this were partly personal as I have been working in youth theatres for almost a decade and believe they are a vital part of the cultural sector in Scotland. Additionally, it is a part of the sector where many women work and which, like creative learning, is often overlooked in critical literature or wider discussions about the industry as a whole[242]. I sought out Mahri Reilly, who is the Creative Producer at Scottish Youth Theatre (SYT). In preparation for our conversation, I had been researching the work of SYT and found that they saw 'artivism' as a key part of their artistic practice. In interview, Reilly defined this as 'where art and activism meet':

> it's the connection between a young person realizing their potential and being able to address the barriers that they're facing so that they then can create the work that's true to them… it's a kind of tricky one because even our board are questioning the artivism, you know, they're like, no, I'm not sure of it. This is a bit of a dirty word, and it has all these connotations to it and you're out smashing windows and stuff, but we've really seen a change in the way we approach our work[243].

Despite the anxieties around the term 'activism' that Reilly describes, the concept of 'artivism' seemed central to the work that she and the staff at SYT were doing. Reilly elaborated on what this concept looked like in practice and how it impacted on the young people who are members of SYT:

> we offer wellbeing sessions, counselling work, that's embedded, all the people that we work with get the opportunity to have a therapeutic work, it's free. Everything that we do in a national program is free at the point of delivery, travel and accommodation is all covered. We have open conversations around any barriers that they might have. We've been working on a project for artists of colour and lead artists of colour as well to address the lack of representation in the Scottish theatre sector[244].

This holistic approach and the focus on diversity and inclusion describes the kind of environment that many of the country's most prominent organisations and

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[242] There is a body of literature that focuses on youth theatres specifically, often emphasising the impact of such work. See, for example, Jenny Hughes and Karen Wilson, 'Playing a part: the impact of youth theatre on young people's personal and social development', *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance,* 9:1, 2004, pp 52-72 or the *Youth Theatre Journal,* which focuses on the practical and theoretical developments in theatre and performance involving youth (https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/uytj20/current). However, this work is separate from wider discourses about theatre, and as such furthers the idea that youth theatre is somehow distinct from other forms of theatre.

[243] Mahri Reilly, Interview, 28th July 2020

[244] ibid

venues are under pressure to achieve. The activism around #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter coupled with the changing relationship to work during the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increased focus on how organisations look after those that they work with, and how they tackle inequality within their own practice. For example, Equity – the union for creative practitioners in the UK – has several active campaigns related to working conditions in the cultural sector. This includes their 'Manifesto for Casting' which advocates for more accessibility and diversity within the casting process, their 'Safe Spaces' campaign which focuses on abuse and harassment, and their 'Performance for All' campaign which advocates for 'fully inclusive representation and access for all practitioners and audiences'[245].

Scottish Youth Theatre are, in many ways, ahead of the curve in this respect. There are some key differences between running a youth theatre and running, for example, a large-scale venue but there are certainly ways in which SYT's approach to their work could be applied more broadly across the sector. Their focus on well-being and diversity within their work and their commitment to affordability are all ideas that could be implemented in venues and companies of any scale. Reilly, and the wider SYT leadership, have expertise and knowledge about how to implement such measures but the 'side-lining' of youth theatres and creative learning can present a barrier to sharing resources and good practice. If a youth theatre is viewed as somewhat siloed from the work of 'real' theatre, it can be more difficult to share knowledge between youth theatres and other parts of the sector. This leads to that knowledge becoming siloed, making it more difficult for women's leadership to be recognised.

This is an example of the dynamic that both Fletcher and Hesmondhalgh and Baker discussed wherein valuing the skills involved in certain types of work more highly is sometimes more important in terms of gender equality than asking why so many women work in a particular area. This dynamic was discussed more fully in my conversation with theatre maker Tashi Gore, who shared an experience from a conference:

[245] Equity UK, 'Campaigns', https://www.equity.org.uk/getting-involved/campaigns/?Page=1 [Accessed 05/10/2022]

> There was a panel, and everyone was saying, oh, you know, there aren't enough…women in director, like directorship positions across Scotland and all the big theatres, basically all the big companies. They were basically talking about how there aren't enough women in theatre. That was like what they were saying. It was really interesting. Cause someone put their hand up in the audience of women who is like older than me. I think she was probably in her fifties. And she said, you know, I've been working in theatre the whole of my career, and there are loads of women that work in theatre. Like there are probably more women that work in theatre than men, it's just that we all choose to work in grassroots. Maybe in more of the grassroots communities or we work in community theatre, we work in educational theatre. We work with young people…but it's just that you guys don't necessarily see that. You're all talking about, oh, it's the playwrights and the, you know, it's the playwrights and…the director, the CEO positions, and things, you know, things like that. That's what you see. That's what you're saying is theatre, so, but that's not representative of the whole industry[246].

Gore's account of this interaction summarises the core of my ideas about making women's work visible within the cultural industries. The notion that women 'all just choose to work in grassroots' is overly simplistic because it emphasises individualised agency without acknowledging the wider socio-political context in which women are making such a choice. As I have already demonstrated, there are numerous systemic barriers in place that prevent women from having full access to opportunities within the cultural sector. The lack of women in CEO or Artistic Director positions in Scotland is not simply due to women 'choosing' not to apply for these roles. Moreover, even the choices women might make – the choice to work part-time, or to take jobs in certain parts of the sector – are often driven by external factors such as childcare costs that reflect wider gender inequalities in society.

That being said, as the woman who Gore quoted points out, the issue is perhaps less about the perceived lack of women in the sector, and more to do with the narrow focus on specific types of work. It is vital that major venues and organisations continue to commit themselves to programming more diverse work from both women and other marginalised groups, but it is equally vital that women's work in other parts of the sector be recognised. This means making sure that these roles are adequately financed and that they are as visible within the sector as the more public-facing work that has traditionally been dominated by

[246] Tashi Gore, Interview, 18th August 2020

men. The conversations I have had with women about the issue of visibility and value have led me to the conclusion that a commitment to making women's work visible and to recognising their contribution to the cultural industries in Scotland is not necessarily about the number of plays written by women that are staged in a given year, but rather about a fundamental shift in our perceptions of the cultural industries. As part of that shift, it is crucial that visibility is not tokenistic, and this is where the relationship between value and visibility becomes most important. Visibility on its own will not necessarily service structural change. That visibility can be insincere, used to demonstrate an organisation's 'progressiveness', even if nothing changes in the working practices of that organisation. The increased visibility of women's work is key, but only when coupled with that work being valued and respected as key to Scotland's cultural sector.

'I have to go home and look after this little person'[247]: Motherhood.

The question of how motherhood can impact a woman's career was one that recurred through many of the interviews I carried out for this research. It was also one of the areas where women's answers varied most significantly. Existing research into the impact of motherhood on women's careers in the cultural sector demonstrates the ways in which women are disproportionately impacted by the additional responsibilities associated with parenting. A 2016 study by Culture Action Europe found that 56% percent of women considered parenting a 'disadvantage' compared to just 15% of men[248]. This difference is perhaps because women continue to 'carry out an overall average of 60%' of unpaid domestic labour in the UK, including cooking, childcare and housework, and therefore feel the burden of parenting on a practical, day to day level[249]. The difference in domestic responsibilities is not a problem confined just to the cultural industries, with a study published by HM Government in 2019 finding that 'differences in labour market participation between women and men are the biggest single driver of the gender pay gap, at 40%. Of those who are economically inactive due to caring for

[247] Jemima Levick, Interview, 8th July 2020
[248] Sandrine Pujar, *Gender Inequalities in the Cultural Sector,* (Brussels, Culture Action Europe, 2016) p 4.
[249] Office for National Statistics, 'Women shoulder the responsibility of 'unpaid work', 10th November 2016<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/womenshouldertheresponsibilityofunpaidwork/2016-11-10> [Accessed 30/11/2019]

their home or family, around 90% are women'[250]. However, 'the long and irregular work hours and absences dedicated to creation, production, networking, promotion, and performance in creative careers' exacerbates the problem of balancing parenting alongside work[251].

In Stellar Quines' *Calm Down Dear!* survey, which focused on the factors that influenced gender equality in the Scottish theatre industry, participants listed 'the impact on a career of pregnancy and childcare' as the second most popular answer, following the difficulty in navigating existing power networks which participants identified as disadvantaging women, working class people and Scottish theatre makers which is an issue I will return to in the next chapter[252]. Women often find themselves having to take career breaks in order to raise children and can find it difficult to return to the industry when their children have grown. One of the interview participants in Stellar Quines' study commented that:

> There are deep psychological shifts that happen when you have a child – it defines you – and trying to work becomes almost impossible at times. Then once they (the children) are older you realise that you are light years away from getting your career on track. The journey to reconnect is long and I don't think there is a mechanism for it[253].

Flexible and part-time working hours are therefore essential in enabling women to remain in the industry. However, working part-time is not always financially viable, and is also not always possible for actors, directors, and playwrights whose working schedules vary significantly from those working in more administrative roles. Furthermore, flexible working can further exacerbate gender inequality. In the introduction to 'Flexible Working Outcomes for Gender Equality & Worker's Well-Being', a special edition of the *Social Indicators Research* journal, Chung and van der Lippe summarise some of the main inequalities in flexible working. They argue that 'due to our society's pre-existing views on gender roles and the gender normative views we have towards men and women's roles and responsibilities, flexible working can potentially traditionalise gender roles in the labour market and the household'[254]. This assertion was supported by an earlier study by Lott

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[250] HM Government, *Gender Equality at Every Stage: A Roadmap for Change,* (London, HM Government, 2019), p. 8.
[251] Culture Action Europe, 2016, p. 27.
[252] Stellar Quines, 2012, p. 31.
[253] Stellar Quines, *Calm Down Dear: Stellar Quines Theatre Company and Gender in Scottish Theatre,* (Edinburgh, Stellar Quines, 2012) p. 26.
[254] Heejung Chung and Tanja van der Lippe, 'Flexible Working, Work-Life Balance, and Gender Equality: Introduction', *Social indicators Research,* 151:2, 2020, pp 365-381, p. 366

and Chung which found that men are expected to use flexible working as a means to increase their productivity and are rewarded for this through financial gains, but women are more likely to use flexible working to 'meet their family demands'[255]. While flexible working may indeed be key to allowing women to stay in the industry after having children, it also further entrenches inequality because of the gendered expectations around domestic labour.

Diane Miller discusses the impact of flexible working within the context of Joan Acker's work on gendered organisations. Acker argues that at the very core of organisational structures there are gender biases which position men as the default worker, which means that workplaces are built around the needs of men. Acker describes organisations as 'gendered', which she defines as meaning that

> Advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine. Gender is not an addition to ongoing processes, conceived as gender neutral. Rather it is integral to those processes…[256]

Acker argues that within these gendered organisations, the image of the 'ideal worker' is built on characteristics most associated with masculinity. Within this, she notes that 'women's bodies…are suspect, stigmatized and used as grounds for control and exclusion'[257]. Miller relates this to the structure of artistic careers, explaining that 'in many cultural fields…work is organised around project-based arrangements that alternate between periods of little or no work and periods of intense work'[258]. This can include 14-hour workdays, long periods of unemployment, and working in the evening and at the weekend[259]. These circumstances can present problems for all workers but are particularly challenging for those taking care of children. Acker argues that flexible working might reduce 'work-family conflict and thus benefit women'[260] but Miller demonstrates that the kind of 'flexible working' seen in the cultural industries is

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[255] Yvonne Lott and Heejung Chung, 'Gender Discrepancies in the Outcomes of Schedule Control on Overtime Hours and Income in Germany', *European Sociological Review,* 32:6, 2016, pp 752-765, p. 762
[256] Joan Acker, 1990, p. 146
[257] Joan Acker, 1990, p. 152
[258] Diana L. Miller, 'Gender and the Artistic Archetype: Understanding Gender Inequality in Artistic Careers, *Sociology Compass,* 10:2, February 2016, pp 119-131, p. 122
[259] ibid
[260] Joan Acker in Diana L. Miller, 2016, p. 122

‘no easier to combine with social-reproductive responsibilities than a standard, full time job’[261].

Christine Hamilton was the oldest of the women I spoke to, and she reflected on changes she had observed in how mothers were treated within the industry:

> in the last few years…more and more mothers or pregnant women or women have been taking maternity leave. Lu Kemp at Perth, Orla did it at the Traverse…Jackie Wylie, of course, at the National Theatre, I think also Jemima Levick did it at Stellar Quines in the past. So, that was unheard of back in the day that people would have children and still come back to work[262].

Frances Poet echoed this sentiment, reflecting on how many women, in her experience of the Scottish sector, had to sacrifice their career to be able to have a family:

> I felt things shifting a bit. And I did... you know, people who have kids my age and older are jealous…Oh, we didn't have creches, we didn't have the expectation that, of course you bring the kid into the room. And I think people did do a lot of that work. You know, they did work in that way, but they had to find their way of working. I don't know. There were lots of women, you know, Murieann Kelly, who heads up Theatre Gu Leòr, put her career on hold for the kids. You know, I know a number of women who have had to find their own way through doing it. Actresses who just lost ten years and then emerged and nobody knew who they were. They were at the top of their game when they disappeared[263].

It is, of course, encouraging to think that progress has been made. Seeing high profile women such as NTS Artistic Director Jackie Wylie taking maternity leave is important in encouraging others within the industry, and these women may serve as role models for other women to know that it is possible both to be a mother and have a career. The opportunities for childcare in the workplace that Poet describes would have seemed unimaginable at one stage, and this demonstrates a positive change in workplace cultures. However, whilst the progress that has been made is encouraging and the example set by these high-profile women demonstrate the possibilities for mothers in the sector, there is still disparity in the support provided across the sector. Taking maternity leave as a full time, salaried employee of an organisation such as NTS or the Traverse comes with

[261] Diana L. Miller, 2016, p. 122

[262] Christine Hamilton, Interview, 29th May 2020

[263] Frances Poet, Interview, 10th June 2020

financial security and support mechanisms that are not available to freelance and contract workers.

Access to maternity leave and pay was a focus of my conversation with theatre maker Tashi Gore. Gore was heavily pregnant with her second child at the time of our conversation, so it was natural that our conversation quite quickly turned to motherhood and the implications for one's career:

> I think it's really hard as a woman to have children, to go on maternity leave. And essentially to take that time out of your career, especially as a freelancer. When I had my first little girl, I was, you know, I ran my own organisation and I was a freelancer and actually, I just felt like I couldn't take the time out and so I went back to work after three months because I had to write an RFO application because no one else is going to do that for my organisation.[264] And there was absolutely no support around that, even though, you know, we were relatively successful organisation. I think as a freelancer having children is just, you know, it's really precarious. So, I think where I felt the most inadequacy has been since I've become a mother, probably.[265]

Gore raises several relevant points. For the self-employed and freelancers, the simple fact is often that if they are not at work there is no one else to do the work for them. Missing opportunities such as the Regular Funding offered by Creative Scotland has long term implications that could completely alter the trajectory of an artist's career, and this can make it difficult to take maternity leave as it could mean sacrificing such opportunities. Furthermore, given that a freelancer's workload is often built on taking on multiple one-off projects, stepping away from work from extended periods of time can make it difficult to re-join the industry if they have not been able to maintain relationships with organisations and artists with whom they normally work. This can put additional pressure on younger freelancers or those who are new to either their area of practice or geographical area and who have perhaps not been able to solidify professional relationships and build a reputation. Taking a step back from a freelance career at that early stage can mean having to rebuild relationships from scratch.

Freelancers can take career breaks for several reasons, but those taking career breaks associated with motherhood face particular challenges. Arun et al

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[264] An RFO application refers to Creative Scotland's Regular Funded Organisations. Similar to Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations, RFOs receive long term funding support. For more information see: https://www.creativescotland.com/funding/funding-programmes/regular-funding.

[265] Tashi Gore, Interview, 18th August 2020

illustrate some of these challenges in their study of working mothers in Queensland, Australia. They offer three examples of how career breaks alter the career trajectory of mothers. Firstly, they argue that 'women who take career breaks interrupt their accumulation of human capital'[266]. Here, Arun et al borrow Gary Becker's definition of 'human capital' as the skills and knowledge that a person holds which bring value to their working lives but take time to develop and maintain[267]. When women take career breaks to have children, they lose human capital because the skills they use during that break do not translate to the workplace in the way that career breaks to, for example, obtain a degree or other qualification that would directly benefit one's career[268]. Secondly, they also discuss how mothers are disadvantaged because some women may face an 'income penalty' after a career break if they are unable or unwilling to return to the same type of job[269]. If a woman desires more flexibility or reduced hours after giving birth, she may find it hard to have these needs accommodated in the role she had previously held and may have to seek a lower paid job instead. Finally, Arun et al note that mothers can face discrimination from employers who might 'discriminate against those who interrupt careers for family related reasons'[270]. This, as Arun et al suggest, could be that employers assume that mothers are 'more likely to take time off work to look after sick children or to deal with other domestic emergencies'[271]. There could also be the assumption that women will want multiple children, and therefore multiple career breaks, which might also contribute to employers' reluctance to hire women after they have had a child.

This dynamic was also discussed by Tamsyn Dent in her study of maternal stigma in the creative industries. Dent had interviewed several mothers who had worked in the sector, and one shared an anecdote in which a male producer talked about women working their way up in their career and then 'they fuck off and have kids', which he claimed put people off helping women progress in the workplace because 'why encourage people to do that if they are just going to drop

[266] Shoba V. Arun, Thankom G. Arun, and Vani K. Borooah, 'The effect of career breaks on the working lives of women', *Feminist Economics,* 10:1, 2004, pp 65-84, p. 80
[267] See Gary Becker, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with Special Reference to Education, (Third Edition),* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1993)
[268] Arun et al, 2004, p. 80
[269] ibid
[270] ibid
[271] Arun et al, 2004, p. 66

out?'[272]. As Dent rightly argues, there is a stigma placed on women who 'drop out' of the industry either permanently or temporarily to have a family, both in terms of 'internal self-judgement' or external judgment from both male and female colleagues, but this criticism is 'never placed on the structural conditions of both creative work and parenting, which make managing work and care problematic if not impossible'[273]. What Dent demonstrates is the ways in which systemic issues that result from the 'gendered organisations' described by Acker can be treated as natural occurring problems rather than deliberate structural or organisational decisions. This is something I will discuss in greater detail momentarily.

The idea of internal self-judgement put forward by Dent was also clear in Gore's comment about feeling 'inadequacy' in her career after having children, which reflects the ways in which women's relationship to work can change after having children. This was somewhat echoed in my conversation with Jemima Levick. Levick gave birth to her first child during her time as joint Artistic Director at Dundee Rep. She described feeling throughout the pregnancy that her career didn't need to change and that she would just 'come back and still be exactly the same'.[274] But when she went back to work, she quickly realised that it was not going to be that simple:

> And I remember thinking, oh no, I have to just go home because I have to go home and look after this little person. And Dominic doesn't have to worry about that. Do you know what I mean? And I sort of suddenly started to go, oh, this is why women step back and they disappear because they start caring, you know, and I suppose it sort of became clear to me the things that women are juggling.[275]

Levick was in the position of sharing her AD role with a man – Dominic Hill – which gave her a direct comparison as to how much her working life was changing and the opportunities she might be missing out on, but regardless of the specific working conditions, Levick illustrates how the domestic labour associated with parenting can change women's relationship to work. Furthermore, Levick went on to discuss the support she receives from her husband – who she described as her

[272] Tamsyn Dent, 'The Operation of Maternal Stigma in the Creative and Cultural Industries' in Susan Liddy and Anne O'Brien (eds), *Media Work, Mothers and Motherhood: Negotiating the International Audio-visual Industry* (London, Routledge, 2021), pp 129-144, p. 138-39
[273] Tamsyn Dent, 2021, p. 140
[274] Jemima Levick, Interview, 8th July 2020
[275] ibid

‘house husband’ who takes the ‘lead role in the caring responsibility’[276]. This is unusual, as Levick herself stated, and meant that Levick had more support at home than many other women experience[277]. The fact that Levick still felt that her working patterns changed despite the support she had at home demonstrates the extent to which motherhood can shape a women’s career even in circumstances where they have significant practical support.

The precarity that Gore describes in freelance work also makes it difficult to prepare financially for maternity leave. In my conversation with one of the interviewees, we discussed the lack of maternity pay for freelancers:

> I've always been on statutory maternity leave pay, which is like 500 pounds a month. Yeah, and…that's not enough to live on. I know that you're meant to save up and I did save up for my own, you know, to top that up, but it is hard to make a living anyway, as a freelancer so... that in itself is for me massive. At one point I was thinking we should have a fund, like Creative Scotland should just have a fund that women can apply to, to top up that statutory maternity pay for the women who are freelancers[278].

The interviewee mentioned that she had intended to take this proposal to Creative Scotland but that it had ‘fallen off [her] list of things to do because [she has] so many things to do’[279]. The idea of a fund to ‘top up’ statutory maternity pay has the potential to make a material difference to the lives of pregnant freelancers. However, when change is driven by precariously employed individuals, rather than by funding councils such as Creative Scotland or organisations in receipt of regular funding who might wield the greatest structural power, there are considerable barriers that prevent such ideas being realised. As a busy, working mother it is understandable that the interviewee would struggle to see her plan for a maternity pay fund through to actualisation. As the interviewee talked about putting this issue back on her ‘to do list’, I could sense a level of disappointment or even guilt for having not been able to take this plan any further.

Whilst individuals can have a great deal of influence and power within the industry, for one person to feel responsibility for improving the working conditions of women across the sector is unrealistic and unfair. This feeling of responsibility

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[276] Jemima Levick, Interview, 8th July 2020

[277] See Alison Andrew, Oriana Bandiera, Monica Costa Dias and Camille Landais, *The Careers and Time Use of Mothers and Fathers* (London, Institute of Fiscal Studies, 2021).

[278] Anonymous, Interview, 2020

[279] ibid

can be read as an example of how neoliberal ideologies of individualism have come to permeate the cultural sector. Jen Harvie's *Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism* offers extensive analysis of how the move toward neoliberalism has impacted the working conditions of artists. Harvie argues that artists have been increasingly required to function as 'artrepreneurs' who are 'marked by independence and the ability to take initiative, take risks, self-start, think laterally, problem solve, innovate ideas and practices, be productive, effect impact and realize or at least stimulate financial profits'[280]. Harvie concedes that in many ways these are qualities that are 'socially valuable and highly desirable' but points out that this focus on artrepreneurism 'prioritizes self-interest and individualism' as well as obliging artists to 'relentlessly pursue productivity, permanent growth and profit'[281]. Alongside these issues, the focus on artists ability to 'problem solve' and 'innovate' often ignores the forms of systemic inequality and precarity associated with a career in the cultural sector. There is an existing body of work which looks at the ways in which women, and specifically mothers, are especially vulnerable within these neoliberal working conditions[282]. As the interviewee narrated her regret at not being able to advocate for a maternity fund, she evidenced the ways in which neoliberal, individualist ideology can make individuals feel the burden of attempting to tackle problems within the sector that are largely beyond their control.

In contrast to the stories of precarity and feelings of inadequacy, there were a few women who identified having children as being a positive force within their career. Frances Poet began her career as a script reader and dramaturg, before serving as the associate director at Hampstead Theatre and then as literary manager at the National Theatre of Scotland. She told me that she was initially intimidated by the prospect of becoming a playwright because she was 'working with amazing people' and she was worried about how attempting to branch into playwriting might affect her reputation as a literary manager because:

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[280] Jen Harvie, *Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism,* (Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2013) p. 62

[281] Jen Harvie, 2013, p. 62-63

[282] See Tamsyn Dent, 'Devalued Women, Valued Men: Motherhood, Class and Neoliberal Feminism in the Creative Media Industries', *Media, Culture and Society,* 42:4, 2020, p. 537-553, Rosalind Gill and Shani Orgad, 'The Amazing Bounce-Backable Women: Resilience and the Psychological Turn in Neoliberalism', *Sociological Research Online,* 23:2, 2018, pp 477-495, Christina Scharff, 'Gender and Neoliberalism: Young Women as Ideal Neoliberal Subjects' in Simon Springer, Kean Birch and Julie MacLeavy (eds) *The Handbook of Neoliberalism* (New York and London, Routledge, 2016) pp 217-226.

> it's kind of hard to kind of retain your credibility as someone who has good comments and could be helpful and can shape first class playwrights…if you're making all the mistakes in work you're sharing with the world[283].

Poet felt that she would have struggled to take the steps towards pursuing her career as a writer were it not for the 'sort of career break that came with kids that allowed [her] to sort of feel arrogant enough'[284]. Certainly, Poet demonstrates that for all the risks associated with a career break, there is potential that the opportunity to reinvent oneself in that time away from working can allow women to explore new ground or diversify their skillset. However, the ability to do this is largely dependent on financial security and childcare support, something that Poet acknowledged in her comments:

> at the beginning [parenting] afforded me to write without needing to earn…I didn't have to do it because we were…ha, check your privilege, Frances, because we were privileged to exist on my husband's salary at that stage and it was a legitimate choice for me to be a primary carer. That, I mean, that just isn't true for so many aspiring writers. And that meant that I had a day where I only had to serve the children and when they were napping or when I was walking them, I could let my creative brain flourish. If we were in a position where I hadn't been able to afford to do that when half of my day or most of my day was spent doing a bread-and-butter job to earn and then I came home and had two hours of dealing with the children and then they were put to bed. I don't think you'd have any more energy or headspace left around that[285].

While she joked about 'checking her privilege', Poet makes an important observation about how experiences of motherhood are shaped by class and financial status. This dynamic has been explored previously[286], and is exacerbated by the precarity within the cultural sector[287]. The ability to view maternity leave as an opportunity to let her 'creative brain flourish' was made possible because of her financial security. Even if Creative Scotland were able to implement the kind of maternity fund that Gore suggested, it would still be difficult for many to have the kind of financial freedom that Poet describes. I will explore the intersection of class and gender in greater detail later in this chapter, but within

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[283] Frances Poet, Interview, 10th June 2020.
[284] ibid
[285] Ibid
[286] See Jo Armstrong, 'Class and Gender at the Intersection: Working-Class Women's Dispositions Towards Employment and Motherhood' in Yvette Taylor (ed) *Classed Intersections: Spaces, Selves, Knowledges*, (London and New York, Routledge, 2016), pp 235-254, Val Gillies, *Marginalised Mothers: Exploring Working Class Experiences* (London, Routledge, 2007), and Imogen Tyler, 'Chav Mum Scum Mum: Class Disgust in Contemporary Britain', *Feminist Media Studies,* 8:1, 2008, pp 17-34.
[287] See Tamsyn Dent, *Feeling Devalued: The Creative Industries, Motherhood, Gender and Class Inequality,* Doctoral Thesis, 2017, Bournemouth University.

the specific context of motherhood the financial security that mothers such as Poet describe is key to their ability to remain in the industry.

Zinnie Harris was reluctant to discuss the impact of motherhood on her career. Early on in her interview, during a discussion about being labelled as a 'female playwright', she lamented the fact that she felt others tried to define her as a mother: 'I mean, you know, the number of times I've done an interview where the first question is, how do you manage working life and small children, you know?'[288]. As I looked down at the selection of questions I had prepared to ask her, I was tempted to score 'how has motherhood impacted your career?' from the list. However, as her interview continued, she illustrated the difficulties in juggling childcare and working. I interviewed Harris in the early days of the first COVID-19 lockdown, and Harris's sister had moved in with her so that they could support each other with childcare and home-schooling. On the day I spoke to Harris, she was responsible for her young nephew, who was watching TV in an adjoining room. Mid-way through our interview, Harris became distracted by the sound of *SpongeBob SquarePants* and stopped our conversation to close the door. Around halfway through our discussion, her nephew joined the interview to request an oatcake. Harris seamlessly transitioned from discussing how her work had thematically responded to the Brexit referendum, to discussing oatcakes, to talking about how her writing practice had shifted during the pandemic. In many ways, our conversation was the perfect demonstration of how women juggle domestic labour with their work commitments, as well as illustrating how the COVID-19 pandemic had blurred the lines between home and work.

Given the obvious impact that childcare was having on her work at the time, it would have been almost impossible to ignore the question of how women's careers are changed by having children. I presented Harris with the statistic from Culture Action Europe that 56% of women viewed parenting as a disadvantage.[289] Harris responded that:

> I don't know that even that was my experience. I think I found the kind of discipline of paying for other people to look after my children, very focusing. So, I think I became much more efficient, you know, when I had three days a week to write, I was probably getting more done than I was getting done when I had five days a week. So, it really… It was quite good

[288] Zinnie Harris, Interview, 29th June 2020
[289] Pujar, 2016, p. 4

> training in terms of, you know, you've got a certain period of time when you have to roll your sleeves up and kind of get on with it.[290]

This once again ties into the conversations around financial privilege that came up in my conversations with other women about maternity pay. Harris demonstrates the financial burdens that occur even after maternity leave. Despite government subsidies, many still find the cost of childcare impossible to cover.[291] The 'discipline' that Harris speaks about is only achieved if the time when your children are in childcare is for writing, rather than for working to be able to afford said childcare. Much like Frances Poet's comment about having time for her 'creative brain to flourish', Harris's ability to roll her sleeves up and get on with it was rooted in her financial stability and privilege. Nonetheless, Harris provides a useful counterargument to some of the dominant assumptions about the impact of motherhood on a woman's career:

> But also, I think there are ways in which you can look at motherhood and, you know, it was a disadvantage, that the cost of childcare, or the fact that you have to take time out or all that kind of stuff, which I never did…but also I think we have to sort of understand that, you know, it's one part, if you're lucky enough of being a woman, and if we're writing about women's experiences and we're saying we need to be celebrating female stories, then we need to be being mothers if we want to, or we can, you know, so I think it in a way. It's so enriching. That's all I think, you know, to compartmentalize it as a problem. I think is too un-nuanced.[292]

Having children is not a part of the female story for every woman, and many women write powerful stories about mothers and motherhood without being mothers themselves. However, Harris's statement that compartmentalising motherhood as a problem is 'too un-nuanced' is a useful reminder of how many of the issues related to motherhood – including financial precarity and time away from their career - are not simply natural occurrences. Rather, they reflect working conditions in an industry where the needs of women who have children are not readily accommodated.

I am conscious that in many ways the narrative that 'women have to take a step back when they have children' can become somewhat of a self-fulfilling

[290] Zinnie Harris, Interview, 29th June 2020

[291] See Christine Farquharson, *Complicated, Costly and Constantly Changing: The Childcare System in England,* Institute for Fiscal Studies, 13th September 2021, https://ifs.org.uk/publications/15612 [Accessed 9/12/2021] and Megan Jarvie, Sam Shorto and Hannah Parlett, *Childcare Survey 2021: Report*, (London, Coram, 2021)

[292] Zinnie Harris, Interview, 29th June 2020

prophecy which absolves employers of the need to change their workplace culture. This self-fulfilling prophecy is particularly frustrating when you consider the relatively small steps that can be taken on an organisational level which can have a significant impact on mothers. Zinnie Harris discussed how, when she was directing at RCS shortly after giving birth, she was able to bring her nine-week-old and two-year-old to rehearsals[293]. Frances Poet, who had previously discussed the importance of creches and the ability to bring your child to work, talked about how her experience of working with Orla O'Loughlin changed her expectations of how her needs as a mother could be accommodated:

> I filled in the application for the Traverse 50 in hospital, having had [my daughter], I had to stay in the hospital for a week. I had my laptop on one side of me, the baby on the other, and I completed the application. So, my entire year, you know, I was successful on the Traverse 50, the entire year was dictated by being a parent…and Orla was the Artistic Director. She made it very clear that they would support me in all ways on that. And every workshop I went to, I had a baby on my boob, mostly for all those workshops. So, I had a slightly different attitude because of that, because of the Traverse, the way that landed. So, when I was asked to do this bit of work for NTS, I was less apologetic about just bringing Elizabeth.[294][295]

What emerges from this story is both how relatively modest organisational policies - such as welcoming infant children into rehearsals and meetings - can make a significant difference to women and the vital role that leaders play in adapting their organisation to be more inclusive of the needs of mothers. While it is crucial to balance making bringing your children to work an *option* rather than an expectation placed on mothers, both Harris and Poet's experiences show that it is possible for women's needs in the workplace to be accommodated, and that rather than viewing motherhood as an inevitable disruption, leaders can choose to work with women to make their workplace more accessible.

The 'self-fulfilling prophecy' of motherhood as a problem can also mask structural inequalities and the underlying assumptions and beliefs that sustain them. In her study of gender inequality in the cultural industries, Rosalind Gill – a sociologist and feminist cultural theorist – synthesises the findings of several

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[293] ibid

[294] Frances Poet, Interview, 10th June 2020

[295] Traverse 50 was a script writing competition to celebrate 50 years of Traverse Theatre in 2012. 50 new playwrights were chosen to be attached to the venue for a year, culminating in a festival of new writing. For more information see: https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2012/12/fifty-playwrights-help-traverse-theatre-celebrate-its-50th-anniversary/.

studies concerning inequality across the creative industries to argue that women are adversely affected by the workplace cultures prevalent within the arts. Gill cautions against placing too much emphasis on the problems of motherhood for women in the industry. She writes that:

> The significance of parenting is not in dispute, nor is the difficulty of combining caring for children with work, like that in the CCI,[296] which is precarious, demanding and does not fit neatly into the "normal" working day. However, the constant reiteration of mothering as "the issue" is problematic, reinforcing rather than challenging the idea that children are women's responsibility.[297]

The focus on 'mothering' rather than parenting reinforces patriarchal assumptions about the division of domestic labour that lead to the unequal burden of childcare responsibilities being placed on women. Gill also argues that the focus on mothering as the main reason for women's lack of representation in the creative industries ignores the fact that 'large numbers of women – almost certainly the majority – working in these fields do not have children yet are still under-represented in positions of seniority and power'.[298] So, whilst issues surrounding motherhood are undoubtedly important to many women, there are other barriers to progress within the industry which must be considered.

The issues of both visibility and motherhood, as I have demonstrated, are intrinsically linked to the wider question of how different forms of inequality intersect. While some issues within the industry may be experienced by all women, these experiences will be shaped by the individual circumstances of those women. There are numerous potential intersections in a person's identity, however there were three that were mentioned most regularly by the interviewees: the intersections of age, race, and class.

'The M Word'[299] – The Impact of Aging

Women's experiences of aging while working in the cultural sector reflects some of the broader issues faced by women more generally as they get older, and

[296] Gill uses the abbreviation CCI to refer to the cultural and creative industries.
[297] Rosalind Gill, 'Unspeakable Inequalities: Post Feminism, Entrepreneurial Subjectivity, and the Repudiation of Sexism among Cultural Workers', *Social Politics,* 21:4, 2014, pp 509-528, p.510
[298] Gill, 2014, p. 511
[299] Julia Hughes, Interview, 25th August 2020

there is a wider body of work about these issues[300]. However, there are some factors that are more specific to the working conditions of the cultural sector, including pressure around physical appearance for performers, as well as a lack of roles for older women. This was one of the issues mentioned by participants in the *Calm Down Dear!* study. Although this was not an area of focus in the final report, they refer to age and gender stereotypes as the 'double whammy' facing women[301]. A study carried out by Robert Fleck and Andrew Hanssen of casting trends in the US film industry, found that

> for both male and female actors, 40 is a critical age, among male actors, 40 represents the midpoint of their careers — about half of the leading film roles for men go to actors over 40. For women, 40 is a sunset year. When a female actor reaches 40, she loses access to about three-quarters of the leading film roles for women[302].

The findings of this study reflect a trend within the film industry that sees youthful attractiveness as key to a female actor's performance in ways that are not required of men[303]. Martha Lauzen – executive director of the Centre for the Study of Women in Television and Film – discussed how 'the tendency to feature younger female characters in films emphasizes the value of their youth and appearance at the expense of allowing females to age into positions of personal and professional power'[304].

The relationship between age and power for female actors was further discussed by the participants in Raisborough et al's study of ageism in the UK cultural sector. Raisborough et al worked with RepresentAge, an English organisation that focuses on 'tackling the invisibility of older women actors' in the cultural industries[305]. For this study, they held a focus group with the four actors rehearsing for the play 'My Turn Now' and used this group to explore the

[300] For a summary of women's experiences of ageism see Evelyn R. Rosenthal, 'Women and Varieties of Ageism', *Journal of Women and Ageing,* 2:2, 1990, pp 1-6.
[301] Stellar Quines, 2012, p. 5.
[302] Fleck and Hanssen in Jeff Guo, 'Why the age of 40 is so important in Hollywood', *The Washington Post,* 19th September 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/09/19/these-charts-reveal-how-bad-the-film-industrys-sexism-is [Accessed 7/10/2021]
[303]David Oliver, 'Ageism still lurks in Hollywood, according to analysis of female film characters', *USA Today,* 13th April 2021, https://eu.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/movies/2021/04/13/women-film-study-highlights-ageism-concerns-hollywood/7201257002/ [Accessed 7/10/2021]
[304] Martha Lauzen in Oliver, 2021.
[305] Jayne Raisborough, Susan Watkins, Rachel Connor, and Natalie Pitimson, 'Reduced to Curtain Twitchers? Age, Ageism and the Careers of Four Women Actors', *Journal of Women and Aging,* 34:2 pp 1-12, p.2

impact of aging on women's careers[306]. Much like Fleck and Hanssen, Raisborough et al note the disparity in opportunities for male and female actors as they age[307], and the emphasis on women's physical appearance[308]. In terms of the women's relationship to power, one of the participants – Greta – linked the lack of parts for older women to the failure to acknowledge women hold positions of power within society. She noted, for example, her female dentist and optician and other women in 'very superior positions, positions of power' but stated that such women were 'not well represented in drama'[309]. Another participant, Esther, extended this to add that ageism also prevented female actors from progressing to 'equivalent positions of power within the creative industries'[310]. She stated that:

> So, when I am at my most capable, at my most intelligent with you know, thirty, forty years of experience doing things, erm the doors get closed by deep, deep terror that people feel sometime when they look at us because we are not beholden[311].

What is clear in Esther's statement is both that older women are denied power because of the lack of opportunities for older female actors, and that any perceived power held by younger women within the sector is built on the idea that they are 'beholden' to the men who grant them opportunities based on misogynist ideals of how women should look and behave. While these women may look, or indeed feel, powerful, this power is only possible within the confines of a patriarchal industry that assigns value to narrow, normative standards of physical appearance. As I will demonstrate in this section, there are specific flashpoints over the course of a woman's career where the relationship between age and professional power is particularly clear. I have already raised the issue of physical appearance, but this is not the primary lens through which I have sought to understand the changing status of women as they age. Based on the conversations I had with interviewees, I will focus on how power and age intersect for young women, and for women experiencing the menopause in order to illustrate how women of a variety of ages are negatively impacted by ageist attitudes within the cultural sector.

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[306] Raisborough et al, 2021, p. 4.
[307] Raisborough et al, 2021, p. 3
[308] ibid
[309] Raisborough et al, 2021, p. 6
[310] ibid
[311] ibid

Beyond the experiences of actors, I was interested to hear how ageing had impacted the careers of women in both creative and administrative leadership roles within the cultural industries. Julia Hughes was working as the Creative Director of a major arts organisation at the time of our interview. She had extensive experience in arts marketing and had worked with some of the most prominent theatres and companies in the country. Despite this, I was intrigued that she mentioned struggling with confidence in her professional life. When I asked her to elaborate on this, she credited it partly to her class identity, which I will return to later in this chapter, but also discussed how aging had changed her perception of herself:

> It's the M word. It's the menopause. Cause when I started talking quite openly through the menopause and I was speaking to a very successful female colleague of mine and just sort of explaining how it was affecting me and stuff. And she went, Oh my God, that's terrible. That's just exactly when you should be moving into like very senior leadership positions, your confidence disappears. You're like going through this massive sort of thing. So, it's really unfair when you go. But that has to have an impact somewhere along the line, you know, and you're seeing quite a few people leaving politics and all that sort of stuff because you just have to try really hard[312].

The menopause is a natural part of aging for most women, and it usually begins at some point between the ages of 45 and 55 years of age[313]. While many of the side effects are physical, the mental toll of the menopause is also well documented[314]. The symptoms of the menopause vary significantly but physical side effects often include hot flushes, headaches, joint pain, and difficulty sleeping. The mental side effects can include problems with memory and concentration, increased anxiety, and low moods[315]. As this interviewee noted, for many women the menopause begins at a critical time in their career, where they are often most able to be taking full advantage of opportunities for promotion or other professional advancement. Instead, women may find that both the physical and mental side effects of menopause lead to them taking a step back. Hughes's references 'speaking openly' about her experience, which is important because it is often seen as something of a 'taboo' subject. This can make it difficult for women to get support for menopausal symptoms in the workplace.

[312] Julia Hughes, Interview, 24th August 2020

[313] NHS, 'Menopause', https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/ [Accessed 02/07/2021].

[314] For further insight into the link between mental health and the menopause see 'Menopause and Mental Health', *Harvard Women's Health Watch,* (2020).

[315] NHS, Menopause Symptoms, https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/symptoms/, [Accessed 30/09/2021]

There are parallels here to the difficulty that women face getting support during pregnancy and the lack of understanding of how conditions like endometriosis can impact women's working lives. Fenton and Panay noted the lack of training for management in the impact of the menopause on women[316], whilst Kopenhager and Guidozzi highlight women's reluctance to disclose that the menopause causes them to take sick leave or require flexible or reduced working hours[317]. It is clear that women's embodied reality is side-lined throughout their career, and Hughes's comments on the effect of the menopause are just one example of this. For women such as Hughes to speak openly about their experiences of the menopause is vital in changing workplace cultures and allowing other women to feel comfortable discussing how the menopause effects them at work.

The conversation with Julia Hughes illustrated some of the problems that women may face as they age, but there are also harmful attitudes towards younger women within the industry. In my conversation with LJ Findlay-Walsh, we discussed her time as producer and programmer at the Arches, a venue that during Walsh's tenure was predominantly run by women:

> I do remember a misogynist comment that apparently came from a, you know, relatively well-known male within the theatre industry who said, "Oh yeah, the Arches, that's run by Girls Aloud, isn't it?" which I thought was so cutting[318].

While Findlay-Walsh describes this comment as misogyny, it also reflects ageist judgements in dismissing the women through comparison to younger women in an unrelated field. Findlay-Walsh worked at the Arches during Jackie Wylie's time as Artistic Director. When she was appointed to the role, Wylie was twenty-eight and the youngest Artistic Director of a major Scottish arts venue[319]. Findlay-Walsh was the same age when she joined the team[320]. For someone to compare them to a band with whom they share no comparison other than being young women is a

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[316] See Anna Fenton and Nick Panay, 'Menopause and the Workplace', *Climacteric,* 17:4, 2014, pp 317-318, p 317

[317] See T. Kopenhager and F. Guidozzi, 'Working Women and the Menopause', *Climacteric,* 18:3, 2015, pp 372-375, p. 373

[318] LJ Findlay-Walsh, Interview, 25th August 2020

[319] Kirstin Innes, 'Overarching drive – Jackie Wylie new Artistic Director of the Arches', *The List,* 17th July 2008, https://www.list.co.uk/article/10120-overarching-drive-jackie-wylie-new-artistic-director-of-the-arches/ , [Accessed 04/07/2021]

[320] David Pollock, 'LJ Findlay-Walsh: 'Work that shakes the foundations excites me'', *The Stage,* 13th June 2019, https://www.thestage.co.uk/features/lj-findlay-walsh-work-that-shakes-the-foundations-excites-me, [Accessed 04/07/2021]

form of misogyny that specifically targets their youth. Furthermore, misogyny within the music industry is a topic that has been the focus of both academic and media scrutiny[321], and girl bands face particular challenges. They are often overlooked for awards[322], face body-shaming and scrutiny over their personal lives[323] and, indeed, even the term 'girl group' has been argued to be infantilizing and sexist[324]. In the comparison between Findlay-Walsh and her colleagues and Girls Aloud, this infantilising and sexist attitude is clear.

In their interviews for *BRICKWORK*, a biography of The Arches in which they discussed the successes and failures of the venue during their tenure, both Findlay-Walsh and Wylie talked about how their youth shaped their work. When discussing her appointment as Artistic Director, Wylie remarked

> I was so young! This is another amazing thing about The Arches – only at The Arches would there be a twenty-eight-year-old Artistic Director, and now at the age of forty [and as Artistic Director of the National Theatre of Scotland], I'm like 'Oh my god!' It was actually completely insane and totally wonderful. But also so fascinating to be forged in the fires of The Arches and having that experience of working in that environment[325].

Findlay-Walsh described The Arches as 'driven by youth' and she offered examples of the ways in which this could be somewhat problematic for both artists and the team at the venue:

> It was driven by our labour in terms of youth within the arts team, but I wonder how that economy was sort of built onto artists as well – at what point should The Arches have grown up and started paying people properly? Because originally it was almost like, what can we make happen on nothing. So, Andy was like, 'Yeah I've got nothing, we've all got nothing, we're just here, we're just doing our thing!' And then we got so successful that actually there was a duty of care to really value knowledge and people getting older and that sort of thing[326].

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[321] See Catherine Strong and Sarah Raine (eds), *Towards Gender Equality in the Music Industry,* (London, Bloomsbury, 2019).

[322] See Georgia Aspinall, 'All of the Times British Girl Bands were Snubbed at the Brits in Favour of Men', *Grazia,* 12th May 2021, https://graziadaily.co.uk/life/in-the-news/british-girl-bands-little-mix-brit-awards-acceptance-speech-spice-girls-aloud/ [Accessed 12/10/2021]

[323] See Michael Cragg, 'If you don't like it, sod off!: Little Mix on Piers Morgan, body shaming and Simon Cowell', *The Guardian,* 5th January 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/music/2019/jan/05/little-mix-on-piers-morgan-body-shaming-and-simon-cowell [Accessed 12/10/2021] and Liz Jones, 'Why stick-thin Girls Aloud make me so angry', *MailOnline*, 15th March 2010, https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-1257927/Girls-Aloud-Britains-successful-girl-band--suddenly-skinniest-too.html [Accessed 12/10/2021]

[324] Jennifer Keishin Armstrong, 'Is Girl Group a Sexist Term?', *Billboard,* 14th July 2017, https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/pop/7866050/girl-group-term-sexist [Accessed 12/10/2021]

[325] Jackie Wylie in David Bratchpiece and Kirstin Innes, *BRICKWORK: A Biography of The Arches* (Edinburgh, Salamander Street, 2021) p. 138

[326] LJ Findlay-Walsh in David Bratchpiece and Kirstin Innes, 2021, p. 130

I will discuss the issue of unpaid labour in more detail later, in my discussion of the intersection between class and gender. For now, I note Findlay-Walsh's question of 'at what point should The Arches have grown up and started paying people properly?'. In this moment, Findlay-Walsh illustrates the assumption within the creative sector that youth is in some way associated with lower rates of pay and working conditions that older, more experienced artists would not be expected to tolerate. While much of what I have already discussed in terms of the impact of age on women's careers within the sector has focused on aesthetic changes in women's bodies and medical issues relating to the menopause, issues which do not necessarily impact young women to the same extent as older women Findlay-Walsh shows how younger women are expected to tolerate working practices that are often exploitative [327]. Of course, artists of all genders experience such exploitation, but the 'double whammy' that *Calm Down Dear survey* participants described - and evident in the description of Findlay-Walsh and Wylie as 'Girls Aloud'- exemplifies how the dual inequality of age and gender-related discrimination impacts young women within the cultural sector.

'They only allow one Black person or Brown person through'[328] - Racial Inequality in the Scottish Cultural Sector

The interviews took place over a summer when racial injustice was the focus of a great deal of public debate, following the murder of George Floyd and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) campaign. It is unsurprising that these debates extended to the cultural industries, with individuals and organisations questioning the lack of racial diversity in Scottish theatres. This included criticism of the Edinburgh International Festivals (EIF) for their lack of diversity. A campaign for better representation at the Festivals began when Rosie Priest tweeted

> I DID SOME COUNTING. Out of 120 artists listed @edintfest 2020, 74 white men, 35 white women, 5 women of colour (although this is generous because they don't actually list them by name, just group), 5 men of colour and 1 non-binary person. That's 62% white guys. No thanks[329].

[327] There are, of course, a minority of women who experience menopausal symptoms earlier than the average woman, and the aesthetic standards placed on women can negatively impact young women's body image.

[328] Annie George, Interview, 19th August 2020

[329] @rosieabeast (Rosie Priest), 'I DID SOME COUNTING […]' [Tweet], 4th August 2020, https://twitter.com/rosieabeast/status/1290681421502328833?s=20 [Accessed 19/10/2021]

Priest's tweet inspired a petition which demanded that EIF host an open forum to discuss ways of working more representatively, and to take tangible steps towards making their programme more diverse. The petition proposed that if EIF failed to do this, the funding given to the festivals should be redistributed to other arts organisations[330]. In response, the EIF issued a formal apology, and the Scottish Government issued a statement saying that EIF should ensure future programmes were more diverse[331]. Several cultural institutions – including Creative Scotland and National Theatre of Scotland – released statements in the wake of the BLM protests to show their support for the movement and commit to changing their working practices so as to improve diversity in the Scottish cultural sector[332].

Aside from the global context I have already discussed, the conversations around race in these interviews must also be understood in the specific context of race in Scotland. I will discuss this more fully in Chapter Five, where I will focus on themes of race and migration in the work of Annie George and Frances Poet, but for now it is important to establish that Scotland has its own distinct narrative in relation to race, separate from that in the rest of the UK. This narrative is perhaps best summarised by Neil Davidson, Minna Liinpää, Maureen McBride and Satnam Vardee in their edited collection *No Problem Here: Understanding Racism in Scotland*. This collection brings together academics and activists to discuss the issue of racism in a Scottish context, seeking to 'debate on a subject that has been shut down for too long'[333]. In the introduction, Davidson establishes the need for this debate, arguing that:

> In contrast to England, there has been relatively little public discussion about the historical or contemporaneous structuring power of racism in Scotland. Over many decades this silence has come to be interpreted as an indication of its absence by much of the Scottish elite, including its political

[330] Anonymous, 'Better Representation at the Edinburgh International Festival', Change.org https://www.change.org/p/edinburgh-international-festival-better-representation-at-the-edinburgh-international-festival [Accessed 19/10/2021]
[331] Brian Ferguson, 'Edinburgh International Festival ordered to improve diversity in its programming', *The Scotsman,* 3rd October 2020, https://www.scotsman.com/whats-on/arts-and-entertainment/edinburgh-international-festival-ordered-improve-diversity-its-programming-2991572 [Accessed 19/10/2021]
[332] Carol Young, 'Scotland's response to George Floyd and Black Lives Matter: One Year On', *CRER: Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights,* 25th May 2021, https://www.crer.scot/post/scotland-s-response-to-george-floyd-and-black-lives-matter-one-year-on [Accessed 19/10/2021]
[333] Neil Davidson Minna Liinpää, Maureen McBride and Satnam Virdee (eds) *No Problem Here: Understanding Racism in Scotland* (Edinburgh, Luath Press Ltd, 2018)

parties, helping to consolidate a now powerful myth that there is 'no problem here'[334].

Davidson argues that this myth has been further perpetuated by the fact that political elites such as the First Minister and other, particularly pro-independence, MSPs have created a new sense of Scottish politics wherein 'the dominant story that has been forged…[is] that the Scots are in some sense different to the English – more egalitarian' and, crucially, more welcoming to migrants:

> the regular public statements made by successive First Ministers welcoming increased migration in contrast to the increasingly shrill pronouncements emanating from party leaders in Westminster seem only to have further reinforced the myth that Scotland does not have a serious racism problem[335].

Whilst Davidson acknowledges the power of inclusive rhetoric, he challenges the notion that this rhetoric from political leaders is reflective of the lived experiences of minority groups in Scotland. Throughout *No Problem Here*, Scotland's past and present issues with racism are brought to the forefront. As I consider the discussions I had about race with this predominantly white group of women, Davidson et al's work is a useful provocation to think beyond Scotland's positive narrative about diversity and migration, and to consider the ways in which lived experiences might differ from this narrative.

In the conversations I had in the summer of 2020 there was a clear sense of urgency to discussions about racial equity and a desire for decisive action from those in positions of leadership. Jemima Levick was Artistic Director of Stellar Quines at the time of our interview, and she spoke about how the organisation were focusing on centring intersectionality in their work:

> What I worry is those intersectional voices are still not represented. So, there is no, there are no black women running those organisations…You know, there's another step now, which is about cross cutting through that. And I kind of feel that's really where we're, Stellar Quines, are moving in terms of developing those with those women's marginalised voices.[336]

[334] Neil Davidson, 'Introduction' in Davidson et al, *No Problem Here: Understanding Racism in Scotland* (Edinburgh, Luath Press Ltd, 2018), pp 9-12, p. 9
[335] ibid
[336] Jemima Levick, Interview, 8th July 2020.

One of the justifications given for the lack of racial diversity in Scottish theatre is that Scotland is not a particularly diverse country. The latest census found that 'Scotland's population was 96% white', with 2.7% identifying as Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British, just over 1% identifying as African Caribbean or Black, and just under 1% identifying as mixed, multiple or another ethnicity[337]. It could therefore be argued that the dominance of white voices in the cultural industries is simply a natural side effect of the ethnic composition of Scotland's population. While this might contextualise the smaller number of artists of colour who are programmed by venues or are given funding by Creative Scotland, it does not wholly explain why so few of the artists of colour who are working in Scotland are promoted to senior positions within the industry. This concern was raised by Levick in our conversation about intersectional voices:

> So, you know why isn't Natalie Ibu, who's one of the only women of Scottish women of colour running an organization, up here? Why is she down south? Like fucking get her back! Get her in one of those buildings![338]

Natalie Ibu, who is Scottish, has spent most of her working life in England. Ibu is an award-winning director and has served as Creative Producer for In Good Company – the creative and business development programme for theatre makers and companies in the Midlands – and as Artistic Director and CEO of touring company tiata fahodzi. In August 2020, she became Artistic Director and joint CEO of Newcastle's Northern Stage theatre, where she oversees a diverse range of digital and live performance, as well as focusing on community outreach and making Northern Stage's work affordable and accessible for local people[339].

Ibu is a useful example of the kind of talent that Scottish theatre could feasibly be attracting. This raises questions about the conditions within Scotland that may be driving talent like Ibu away. Scotland has long faced a 'brain drain' in various industries, with young people leaving the country in search of better opportunities for work.[340] In the cultural industries, this has been exacerbated by

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[337]Scotland's Census, Ethnicity, Scotland's Census, https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/census-results/at-a-glance/ethnicity/ [Accessed 07/07/2021]

[338] Jemima Levick, 2020

[339] For more information on Ibu's work at Northern Stage see Rosemary Waugh, 'Natalie Ibu: I think the sector has been too seduced by the idea of new and young and sexy', *Exeunt Magazine,* 25th February 2021, http://exeuntmagazine.com/features/natalie-ibu/ [Accessed 09/10/2022]

[340] For further examples of 'brain drain', see Rebecca McDonald, *The Great British Brain Drain: Movement of Students and Graduates To and From Glasgow,* Centre for Cities, January 2019.

the number of drama schools, theatres and agencies in London which means many young creatives find themselves drawn there and to other major cities in England and beyond. Scotland is a relatively small country, and as such the creative industry is much smaller than its counterpart in England and in other larger countries. Furthermore, most of the theatres and professional companies in Scotland are based in major cities and, for the most part, concentrated within the central belt. Despite the work of The Touring Network – who focus on bringing live performances to the Highlands and Islands –[341] and Creative Scotland's Touring Fund, the logistical difficulties and financial costs of touring productions make this an unstable part of the arts economy[342]. However, to blame the lack of artists of colour in leadership positions in Scottish theatre purely on a 'brain drain' would absolve the people in positions of power within the industry of responsibility to do more to nurture, attract and retain a diversity of talent.

When I spoke to theatre maker Annie George about her experience of being a woman of colour in the Scottish theatre industry, it became clear that her race was intrinsic to her experiences of Scottish theatre and that she had faced numerous barriers throughout her career. At the start of our conversation, I commented on the variety of work she had undertaken throughout her time in the industry, to which she responded:

> I'm a writer and theatre maker and I perform when I have to, I direct when I can, I self-produce practically all the time because I can't find a producer. I've been working in Scottish theatre since 1991, actually it's 30 years next year. I started writing in 2006. I started off as an actor and I became an actor/producer in order to create opportunities for me to act. I was lucky enough to find a company with writers who would write for me or adapt characters for me at the time[343].

While many artists self-produce in order to provide more opportunities for work, the implication of George's statement was that her need to self-produce was linked to the fact that she is a woman of colour, and therefore limited in opportunity not just by her gender but by her race. In our conversation, George illustrated how the concepts of intersectionality that I discussed in the introduction to this thesis are reflected in the experiences of women in the cultural sector. Finding a company who were willing to write and adapt for her

[341] See https://thetouringnetwork.com/
[342] See https://www.creativescotland.com/funding/funding-programmes/targeted-funding/touring-fund
[343] Annie George, Interview, 19th August 2020.

was not just important because she is a woman, but because her status as a woman of colour doubly disadvantages her in the casting process due to the lack of parts written specifically for women of colour[344]. George's experiences illustrate Mohanty and Lykke's argument that viewing women as a homogenous group is insufficient and usually prioritises the experiences of white, middle-class women.

As my conversation with George continued, she commented on the role that critics and 'mainstream leaders' play in excluding people of colour from the industry:

> And I think…one of the problems with the Scottish critics is that they've all been doing this job for 30 years and they are the ones and I think, in an unofficial capacity, I think they feel that they have a duty to be the cheerleaders of Scottish theatre, but their estimation of Scottish theatre is the elite, the mainstream players...You know, the critics…and the mainstream, they'll only allow one black person or Brown person through[345].

The power that critics have in the cultural sector to influence audiences and create a 'buzz' around a performance undoubtedly impacts audiences, venues, and artists alike. There are a number of longstanding theatre critics within the Scottish cultural sector, including some high-profile women. Joyce McMillan, for example, has been a theatre critic in Scotland for over twenty years[346], and has worked for *The Guardian, Scotland on Sunday* and *The Scotsman* as well as writing for other publications on a freelance basis. In 2016, McMillan published *Theatre in Scotland: A Field of Dreams*, a book of her reviews and articles that serves as a 'panoramic history of modern Scottish theatre'[347]. Alongside McMillan, critics such as Mark Brown, Mary Brennan, Mark Fisher, Thom Dibdin and Neil Cooper have spent decades writing about and championing Scottish theatre. At the time of writing, there are no critics of colour employed on a fixed basis by any newspaper in Scotland, and very few whose work appears on a freelance basis.

Whilst George positions these critics as proponents of the mainstream, and as people with significant power within the industry, this is not the only possible

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[344] The disadvantages faced by women of colour in the casting process has been highlighted by several theatre practitioners and was one of the focuses of Theatre of Black Women theatre company (1982-1988). For a discussion of their work and of other Black female-led theatre companies see Nicola Abram, *Black British Women's Theatre: Intersectionality, Archives and Aesthetics* (Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2020)
[345] Annie George, 2020
[346] Joyce McMillan, LinkedIn Profile, LinkedIn, https://uk.linkedin.com/in/joyce-mcmillan-337902a [Accessed 10/10/2021]
[347] Joyce McMillan, *Theatre in Scotland: A Field of Dreams,* (London, Nick Hern Books, 2016)

interpretation of the role of the critic within the cultural sector. To take Joyce McMillan as an example, her aforementioned book demonstrates the wide scope of her career as a critic. The first article featured in the book – entitled 'Let All the World Be Our Stage, first published on 3rd January 1982 – begins with the statement 'I sometimes think it would do Scottish theatre no harm if theatres were knocked flat, and companies consigned to school halls, car parks and any other space that offered itself'[348]. This statement demonstrates McMillan's passion for theatre that extends beyond the walls of the country's most prominent venues. Indeed, throughout her career, McMillan has garnered a reputation as not only a forensic and passionate theatre critic, but as a champion of the art form itself. In his foreword to *Theatre in Scotland: A Field of Dreams*, Philip Howard commends McMillan's 'unblemished record in never having failed to spot a new play', as well as her 'footfall across the whole country' which provides a 'national portrait' of Scottish theatre in her writing[349]. Mary Brennan, who has spent thirty years as a dance and theatre critic in Scotland, has a similar reputation. Her work as a dance critic has been praised for contributing 'significantly to the profile, development and discourse of dance in Scotland internationally'[350]. She has worked closely with Scottish Ballet but is also passionate about work made for children and young people, and advocates for the 'pioneering work' done by venues such as Platform in Easterhouse[351]. While George criticises the idea of the critic in Scotland feeling a need to 'champion' Scottish theatre, there is a counter argument in which the work that critics have done in championing Scottish theatre has been key to the growth of the industry, and to the reputation of Scottish work internationally.

Duška Radosavljević's *Theatre Criticism: Changing Landscapes* brings together a group of popular and academic theatre critics to discuss the 'rapidly changing' forms of theatre criticism from a global perspective[352]. None of the

[348] Joyce McMillan, 2016, p. 11
[349] Philip Howard in Joyce McMillan,2016, p. 6-7
[350] Phil Miller, 'Herald Critic Mary Brennan Given Prestigious National Dance Award', *The Herald,* 20th February 2018, https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-herald-1130/20180220/281681140355395 [Accessed 20/10/2021]
[351] Russell Leadbetter, 'Critic Mary Brennan: I have been lucky. There is no other word for it', *The Herald,* 24th June 2019, https://www.heraldscotland.com/life_style/arts_ents/17725224.critic-mary-brennan-lucky-no-word/ [Accessed 20/10/2021]
[352] Duška Radosavljević (ed) *Theatre Critcism: Changing Landscapes,* (London and New York, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016)

chapters in this edited collection focus specifically on the relationship between theatre criticism and racial inequality, and that in itself is perhaps illustrative of the dynamic that George is discussing. However, there are observations within this collection that are pertinent to discussions about the role that critics play in the Scottish cultural sector. In her comments, George characterises the critic as a gatekeeper, that is, as someone with power or influence over which artists are included or centred within the story of Scottish theatre. In his analysis of how the representation of critics in fiction reflects beliefs about real-life critics, Mark Fisher describes critics as 'self-reliant lone wolves, obsessive enthusiasts for the form, with a propensity to over analyse'[353]. This description hardly paints the picture of the critic as the powerful force that George portrays; in contrast, Fisher portrays the critic as somewhat of an outsider, and as more of a fan than a gatekeeper. As I will argue in the next chapter, the relationship between fan and gatekeeper is complicated, and it is hard for gatekeepers to see the power they hold. In this case, while Fisher sees himself as 'lone wolf', there is no denying that he has been given a significant platform in publications including *The Scotsman, The Guardian, and The Independent* throughout his career. My instinct is that the truth of a critic's role in Scottish theatre lies somewhere in between Fisher and George's estimation.

I am, however, conscious of presenting too optimistic a picture of Scottish arts criticism, and of dismissing George's statement as hyperbole. In 2018, Jess Brough founded Fringe of Colour (FoC). Initially, FoC was a spreadsheet which documented the work being presented by people of colour at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. This grew to include a free ticket scheme for people of colour to attend shows made by performers of colour in 2019[354]. When the COVID-19 pandemic led to the cancellation of both the 2020 and 2021 Edinburgh Festivals, FoC moved online and provided a platform for filmmakers of colour to showcase their work[355]. Each iteration of FoC has also made space for people of colour to write reviews of performances in the FoC programme and to write other articles about racial

[353] Mark Fisher, 'Do They Mean Me? A Survey of Fictional Theatre Critics' in Duška Radosavljević (ed) *Theatre Criticism: Changing Landscapes,* (London and New York, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016) pp 155-169, p. 159.
[354] Deborah Chu, 'The Hot 100 2019: #2 Jess Brough (Fringe of Colour)', *The List,* 1 November 2019, https://www.list.co.uk/article/112305-the-hot-100-2019-2-jess-brough-fringe-of-colour/ [Accessed 16/12/2021]
[355] See https://www.fringeofcolour.co.uk/ [Accessed 16/12/2021]

inequality in theatre more generally. Each element of FoC's work is designed to counter the dominance of white, middle-class performers, audience members and critics at the Edinburgh Fringe. For an initiative like FoC to have to exist suggests a problem with representation of people of colour in mainstream critical spaces. Furthermore, performance maker Selina Thompson has spoken about the 'white gaze' in theatre, and how performing as a Black woman to an audience made up predominantly – or exclusively – of white people can feel objectifying and othering[356]. In an essay for *Five Dials,* Thompson quotes Lyn Gardner as saying that 'what the culture reviews establishes what the culture values'[357]. Thompson amends this to write 'who reviews the culture, how they review it, whether they are paid to review it and how much, who reads it, who is assumed as their audience, who is listened to and who is dismissed, is what defines culture'[358].

With this in mind, a useful parallel to my conversation with George is the discourse surrounding and sustained by the Critics' Award for Theatre in Scotland (CATS). CATS is the annual award organised by critics to celebrate the achievements of Scottish theatre[359]. Awards are given for best male and female performance, best company, best director, best playwright, best music and sound, and best designer. The CATS Whiskers award is given to an individual or group whose contribution to Scottish theatre is not adequately reflected in any of the other categories[360]. The panel of judges for this award are all described as 'leading theatre critics'[361]. Looking at the list of critics who have served on the panel over the last eighteen years shows that all these judges are white, and only 40% are women. Furthermore, whilst the CATS awards say that they have a non-discriminatory policy for selecting new judges, critics are only able to join the panel for the CATS by invitation from an existing panel member[362]. Considering

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[356] Selina Thompson in Sarah Gorman, 'You Can Say Much More Interesting Things about a Scar, Than You Can Say About A Wound: Interview with Selina Thompson', *ReadingAsAWoman,* 15th August 2017, https://readingasawoman.wordpress.com/2017/08/15/you-can-say-much-more-interesting-things-about-a-scar-than-you-can-about-a-wound-interview-with-selina-thompson/ [Accessed 16/12/2021]
[357] Lyn Gardner in Selina Thompson, 'Five Gazes: Selina Thompson is Not Impressed by Your Diversity Trends, *Five Dials,* 14th March 2018, https://fivedials.com/art/five-gazes-selina-thompson/ [Accessed 16/12/2021]
[358] Selina Thompson, 2018.
[359] CATS, 'About the CATS', https://criticsawards.theatrescotland.com/about-the-cats/ [Accessed 6/10/2021]
[360] CATS, 'Winners by Category', https://criticsawards.theatrescotland.com/winners-by-category/ [Accessed 20/10/2021]
[361] CATS, 'The Critics', https://criticsawards.theatrescotland.com/the-critics/ [Accessed 20/10/2021]
[362] CATS, About the CATS.

this dynamic in terms of George's claims that critics focus too much on the mainstream, this example illustrates the ways in which power to create exposure and 'buzz' around work is preserved in the hands of a small group within the sector. This invite-only approach is a model of selection that perpetuates inequality by keeping the power to select new members in the hands of a disproportionately white, male group. This is problematic not just because an 'invite only' approach is subjective and risks friendships and networks taking precedence over suitability for the role, but also because a predominantly white group is perhaps not a group who are going to fully understand the experience of marginalised theatre makers, nor necessarily advocate for them.

George went on to further discuss how mainstream leadership hindered diversity through programming:

> This is where diversity has gone wrong because it's reliant on the mainstream. Leaders, Artistic Directors who do the programming. And I think that's a really fundamental problem because it makes the assumption that they are the most important, the most knowledgeable. And I know they're not, because they know absolutely, you know, nothing about diversity for a start[363].

As I argued in my discussion of creative learning and youth theatres, in order for women's leadership to be fully acknowledged, it is vital that we consider all aspects of work within the sector as essential elements of the Scottish theatre ecology. This applies both to work that falls outwith the mainstream in terms of being experimental or avant-garde, and marginalised parts of the sector where work is ignored or excluded. George's statement illustrates that broadening the terms of what is viewed as essential to the cultural sector is crucial to the representation of women of colour. This means not only looking to programme women of colour in mainstage productions in popular venues or organisation, but valuing community based or smaller scale work as vital to the wider theatre industry. The challenge for leaders within the sector is to look outwith the existing narrow focus to find the important work that is currently being done on the margins of the cultural sector.

[363] Annie George, Interview, 19th August 2020

The limitations of a focus on the mainstream were also raised by Rosie Priest, who discussed their time working for a major festival, and their experience of challenging the lack of diversity in their programme:

> We were talking about sexism, and I said, well, we need to, we don't have enough women in the program this year and we don't have any work by Black artists or people of colour. Um, the Artistic Director said, 'yeah, but where is it, Rosie?' And I was like, I don't know, I'm the administrator. I get paid 15,000 pounds a year. You get paid 45,000 pounds a year. It's not my job to do your job[364].

Priest's story exemplifies George's idea that often leadership within organisations are not the most knowledgeable when it comes to work outwith their immediate frame of reference. They also demonstrate the importance of having leaders who are proactive in seeking out new work and work that is being made by a diverse range of artists. As George stated, many don't know where to begin when it comes to diversifying their practice. When Priest's boss asked them 'where is it?' they sought to justify their narrow focus by implying that the kind of work Priest was discussing simply did not exist. When leaders within the industry have this approach, it can make the lack of diversity within the sector somewhat of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

This dynamic was explored by Brook, O'Brien, and Taylor in 'Inequality Talk', an analysis of how senior men in the cultural industries narrated their own career paths. What Brook et al discovered was that many of the men they encountered viewed inequality as somewhat inevitable and something that 'they, as individuals had little power or capacity' to change[365]. As a result, Brook et al argued that

> workers adopt the language of openness and faith in talent and creativity to explain their and others' success, a powerful 'myth of inclusivity' that leaves structural inequalities not only unchallenged, but also reinforces and replicates them[366].

They illustrated this by demonstrating that many of the men they spoke to were open about the inequalities within their sector and the dominance of white men

[364] Rosie Priest, Interview, 27th August 2020

[365] Orian Brook, Dave O'Brien and Mark Taylor, 'Inequality Talk: How discourses by senior men reinforce exclusions from creative occupations', *European Journal of Cultural* Studies, 24:2, December 2019, pp 498-513, p. 500

[366] Brook, O'Brien, and Taylor, 2019, p. 501

in leadership positions[367], but that the pervasive belief in the importance of 'talent' and 'luck' within the industry meant that men were often unable – and, perhaps, unwilling – to acknowledge the role that structural inequality plays within the sector[368]. For example, Brook et al spoke to 'James', 'a white middle-class, professional, household and [who] had attended a fee-paying school followed by an undergraduate degree at one of England's most prestigious universities'[369]. James had worked as an arts manager for many years before moving to a leadership role within an arts organisation. In his interview, he discussed knowing very little about the art form his organisation focused on:

> I thought I would apply for that job and use my ignorance of it as the, sort of, central plank of my application. You know, if I can, through a position of ignorance, talk about [the art form] effectively, then perhaps we can persuade other people who are ignorant about it to understand it. Somehow, that worked[370].

James's willingness to admit his own ignorance, and his ability to use that as a tactic in an interview, demonstrates how white, middle-class men within the cultural sector can use lack of experience as an advantage, where others may find it a barrier. Consider James's statement against, for example, the earlier quote from Annie George where she narrated her career path. George foregrounded her experience, staking a claim for her knowledge and skill in many areas of the cultural sector, whilst also highlighting how her identity as a woman of colour has shaped her career. As I listened, it seemed perhaps that George felt a need to prove herself, her experience, and her qualifications in a way that men like James did not. This ties into the wider trend within the UK that was identified in an independent review carried out in 2017. *Race in the Workplace: The McGregor Smith Review* was commissioned by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and found that 'BME groups are more likely to be overqualified than White ethnic groups' and that they found it more difficult to access promotion[371]. The report also found that BME women in particular were 'taking jobs well below their skill level'[372].

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[367] ibid
[368] The inability and unwillingness to acknowledge structural inequality is also a central theme in Dave O'Brien, Daniel Laurison, Andrew Miles, and Sam Freidman's 'Are the Creative Industries Meritocratic? An Analysis of the 2014 British Labour Force Survey', *Cultural Trends,* 25:2, 2016, pp 116-131
[369] Brook, O'Brien, and Taylor, 2019, p. 509
[370] ibid
[371] Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith, *Race in the Workplace: The McGregor Smith Review* (London, Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy, 2007) p. 6
[372] McGregor Smith, 2007, p. 50

When James was asked about gender inequality, he responded:

> Almost everyone who works in [my artform] is a woman, anyway. So, at least we don't discriminate too badly against women generally, although, having said that, there is still, I think, a disproportionate ... All the big famous [leaders] are boys, and women do all the real work, and the men do the showy bits on the top . . . I suspect we are not the worst offender of any industry in the world, as far as that goes.[373]

Here, James demonstrates some of the limitations of leaders who fail to take responsibility for diversifying the industry. James is, himself, in a position of power where he could put women in the jobs that have traditionally been the 'showy bits on top', however, he narrates this as if it is simply a naturally occurring phenomenon that women are not in these roles. Furthermore, his comments that 'we don't discriminate too badly' and that 'we are not the worst offender' demonstrate how easy it is for individuals to focus on the relative success of the industry – or their individual organisation- in comparison to fields with less gender parity, without focusing on the work that still needs to be done. To return to Priest, the question their boss posed – 'where is it?' – demonstrates how individuals with the agency to make the industry more diverse and accessible can perpetuate the idea that this inequality is naturally occurring. As Priest said, the responsibility to find that work lay at the feet of their boss, but much like the participants in 'Inequality Talk', this individual was reluctant to accept their influence and ability to contribute to structural changes.

What is clear in the examples I have shared in this section is that often such inequality pervades despite the rhetoric of inclusion within the sector, and that the disparity in representation is often treated as an inevitable and blameless part of working in the cultural industries and that this happens implicitly more than often that it is stated explicitly. The disparity between rhetoric and action in the cultural industries will be a focus of the next chapter of this thesis as I begin to problematise notions of 'community' within the sector. For now, I turn my attention to social class, and to the ways in which class inequality disadvantages women in the cultural sector.

[373] ibid

'We were never encouraged to speak up'[374] - The Unspoken Dimension of Class

Social class was a topic that largely came up unprompted, and it was clear that it was a significant element of some of the interviewees' experience both within the industry and in other aspects of their lives. Indeed, Jean Cameron stated that:

> I wasn't really strongly identifying with what being a woman meant, in terms of how I have, negotiated my personal or my professional world, because I think growing up in Paisley, I had a very, very, very strong sense of class identity and my faith identity…they were the places where I perceived my fights[375].

Cameron's comments were a stark reminder to me, as a middle-class white woman, of the privilege of only having to consider gender inequality, and it highlights the fact that for many women their gender is only a small part of the discrimination that they may face. This is particularly significant because of the dominance of middle-class women within Scottish theatre, because the success of middle-class women is often used as 'evidence' of the lack of gender discrimination within the industry in the sense that individual success stories are often used as a counterargument to claims of gender inequality. One interviewee discussed how her organisation were seeking to be more mindful of this dominance:

> you know we talk a lot about with our staff team about being an advocate and being an ally. And it's like, actually, I kind of go great, David [Greig]. That's great that you've got Zinnie and Wils making so much work for you. They're both white middle class, middle aged, Oxford educated women, like come on. You can do better than that.[376]

Acknowledging that the success of white, middle class white women does not always translate into wider progress that benefits marginalised women is vital to an intersectional analysis of gender inequality. Within the existing body of work on how class inequality manifests within the cultural industries[377], I have been

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[374] Julia Hughes, Interview, 19th August 2020

[375] Jean Cameron, Interview, 19th August 2020.

[376] Interview Participant, 2020. Zinnie Harris is an Associate Director of the Lyceum Theatre, where David Greig is Artistic Director. Wils Wilson is an Associate Artist at the same venue.

[377] Such as Liz Tomlin, 'Why We Still Need To Talk About Class', *Studies in Theatre and Performance,* 40:3, 2020, pp 251-264, Sam Friedman, Dave O'Brien and Daniel Laurison, 'Like Skydiving without a Parachute: How Class Origins Shapes Occupational Trajectories in British Acting', *Sociology,* 51:5, 2017, pp. 992-1010,

particularly drawn to the work of Dave O'Brien, who I have cited earlier in this thesis and who - alongside a number of collaborators - has published several comprehensive studies of inequality within the UK cultural industries. I am drawn to O'Brien's work because of the approach of combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. This allows for both the 'big picture' data to be considered alongside the personal, anecdotal evidence from those working within the sector. In doing so, they make space for the individual experience which of is key to understanding more about how intersectional inequalities interact and compound one another.

In an article entitled 'Are the creative industries meritocratic?' O'Brien, with Daniel Laurison, Andrew Miles, and Sam Friedman, analysed the 2014 British Labour Force Survey to argue that class inequalities were entrenched in the creative and cultural industries (CCIs). Using the survey's data, they found that there was a 'significant under-representation of people from working class origins in creative occupations'[378]. They argued that despite the inclusive rhetoric and the perception of the CCIs as 'open and meritocratic', people from working class backgrounds were still 'significantly under-represented'[379]. They found that 'while 34.7% of the UK population aged 23-69 had a parent employed in a routine or semi-routine working class occupation, the figure among those working in the CCIs is only 18%'[380]. As a result, O'Brien et al argued that the CCIs 'skew towards those from privileged backgrounds', a direct contradiction to the narratives of openness and inclusivity that are perpetuated within the sector[381]. In addition, a key finding of this study was that even when working class individuals were employed in creative occupations, they faced a 'class ceiling'. This class ceiling, they found, meant that working class people were earning 'on average £157/week or over £8100 less per year than demographically similar people (working the same number of hours) from privileged backgrounds'[382]. O'Brien et al link this disparity in earning to the relationship between class and education, noting that the difference in pay levels may be related to different 'education levels and working

Joslin McKinney and Liz Tomlin, 'Introduction to Special Issue: Artist Development: Class Diversity and Exclusion', *Studies in Theatre and Performance,* 40:3, 2020, pp 231-241, Dave O'Brien, 'Class and the Problem of Inequality in Theatre', *Studies in Theatre and Performance,* 40:3, 2020, pp 242-250

[378] O'Brien et al, p. 123.

[379] O'Brien et al, p. 117

[380] O'Brien et al, p. 123

[381] ibid

[382] O'Brien et al, 2016, p. 126

context' which rather than justifying the gap highlights how class divides in education create long term inequalities within the creative industries[383].

A subsequent study by O'Brien, Friedman and Laurison focused on how class identity shapes the careers of British actors. Using survey data from the 2013 BBC Great British Class Survey alongside forty-seven qualitative interviews, they found that working class actors are disadvantaged on the grounds of economic, cultural, and social capital[384]. These terms are useful to my own thinking about the intersections of class and gender because they illustrate the multi-faceted nature of class inequality. It was clear in my discussions with working class women working in Scotland that their experiences were not just shaped by the economic disadvantages associated with their class identity, but by the less overt cultural and social capital that O'Brien, Friedman and Laurison discuss. The different forms of capital were first defined by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who was primarily interested in the impact of different forms of capital in an educational setting. He argued that 'it is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world'[385] without looking beyond economic theory to consider that

> capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as *economic capital,* which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as *cultural capital,* which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as *social capital,* made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility[386].

Bourdieu further divides cultural capital into three categories: embodied, objectified, and institutionalised. For their study of arts education, O'Brien et al focus on embodied and institutional cultural capital. They define institutional cultural capital as 'revolv[ing], in particular, around attendance at the 'Big 4' London drama schools or Oxford and Cambridge universities. All actors recognised the value of this particular 'route in''[387]. This impacted working class actors as

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[383] ibid
[384] Friedman et al, 2017, p. 1006.
[385] Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital' in John G Richardson (ed) *Handbook of Theory and Research* (Conneticut, Greenwood Press, 1986), pp 241-258, p. 242
[386] Bourdieu in Richardson, 1986, p. 243
[387] Friedman et al, 2017, p. 1002.

they are less likely to have the resources required to attend such institutions, and although 'around half' of the working-class actors had attended drama schools, 'these were generally the less prestigious institutions outside London'[388]. Embodied cultural capital referred to the 'sense that embodied markers – of speech, accent, mannerisms, and dress – set these actors apart, differentiating them as outsiders'[389].

In their analysis, O'Brien, Friedman and Laurison split 'cultural capital' into two concepts – 'institutional cultural capital' and 'embodied cultural capital'. Institutional cultural capital 'revolved, in particular, around attendance at the 'Big 4' London drama schools or Oxford and Cambridge universities. All actors recognised the value of this particular 'route in''[390]. This impacted working class actors as they are less likely to have the resources required to attend such institutions, and although 'around half' of the working-class actors had attended drama schools, 'these were generally the less prestigious institutions outside London'[391]. Embodied cultural capital referred to the 'sense that embodied markers – of speech, accent, mannerisms, and dress – set these actors apart, differentiating them as outsiders'[392].

Social capital, in Bourdieu's work, is defined as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition'[393]. In simple terms, social capital refers to the ability to draw on personal networks. This is a common thread in discussions about working in the creative sector and was the focus of a study carried out by O'Brien and Mark Taylor. They conducted an online survey in 2019 in which they asked participants to rate several different factors in order of their importance to progressing within the creative industries. Mirroring the comments about the problems of 'power networks' raised by both by my own interviewees and participants in Stellar Quines' study – a topic which I will focus on in Chapter Four - 43% of participants rated it 'essential to know the

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388 ibid
389 Friedman et al, 2017, p. 1003.
390 Friedman et al, 2017, p. 1002.
391 ibid
392 Friedman et al, 2017, p. 1003.
393 Bourdieu in Richardson, 1986, p. 248

right people' to get ahead in the industry[394]. That being said, O'Brien and Taylor's respondents described the creative sector as 'more or less fair, with hard work being the most important thing for getting ahead, and the least important things being religion, gender, ethnicity and class'[395]. As such, the survey respondents rarely acknowledged the impact that inequality can play in career progression, and even those who acknowledged that such inequalities exist 'may believe that success is overwhelmingly determined by talent, and that the most talented people happen to disproportionately come from privileged backgrounds'[396]. However, Taylor and O'Brien also point out that

> this account is complicated by asking who, exactly, thinks that these are the most and least important things, respectively. The people in our survey data who are least likely to say that the process of getting ahead reflects more general social reproduction are highly paid, non-disabled white men.[397]

All the studies I have discussed so far provide useful critical context for my conversations with women about how their class identity shapes their experience of working in the cultural sector. As I move on to further discuss class dynamics, the key takeaway from these studies is the fact that the impact of class is multifaceted and that understanding how the different forms of capital manifest is key to recognising the complexity of class inequality. I will look at social capital in chapter four, but for now I will focus on economic and cultural capital as a means of understanding the ways in which class identity shaped the career progression of some of the women I interviewed.

One of the problems that was mentioned in the interviews was the reliance on working for free in order to get opportunities in the sector. The problematic nature of unpaid roles and the concept of working 'for exposure' has been the subject of many conversations in the cultural industries in recent years[398]. Because

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[394] Taylor and O'Brien, 2019, p. 37

[395] ibid.

[396] Taylor and O'Brien, 2019. p.31.

[397] Taylor and O'Brien, 2019, p.44

[398] See Abby Young Powell, 'Creative Careers: Is it ever worth working for 'exposure'?', *The Guardian,* 9th July 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/jul/09/creative-careers-is-it-ever-worth-working-for-exposure [Accessed 11/10/2021] and Dave O'Brien, 'There is a False Sense of Solidarity in the Creative Industry and it's Down to Unpaid Work', *It's Nice That,* 3rd December 2020, https://www.itsnicethat.com/features/dave-obrien-social-solidarity-in-the-creative-industry-conscious-creativity-031220 [Accessed 11/10/2021]

of this, I was somewhat surprised by the nonchalant way in which LJ Findlay-Walsh described her career beginning with unpaid work at The Arches:

> I went to the National Review of Live Art one year by mistake. I didn't know anything about it. It was in the Arches at the time. And I think it was at that point that I was like, okay, I know what I want to do, I thought I wanted to work in a gallery and actually once I saw that. I just phoned the Arches and said, I'll work for nothing. So that's what I did[399].

She explained this decision further in *BRICKWORK*, explaining that she had been in Glasgow shopping and walked into the building to find the aftermath of a Franko B performance. She said that 'all that was left was a chair and a pool of blood…and it was so confronting, so beautiful and so confounding' that she 'couldn't get it out of [her] head for ages'[400]. Findlay-Walsh was freshly graduated from art school when she began working voluntarily at the Arches. This is a common experience amongst young creatives and working for free is often regarded as 'an inevitable first step on the way to future, paid, employment'[401]. The dominance of unpaid labour in the cultural industries has led to a sector which is subsidised significantly by unpaid workers,[402] and where freelancers are particularly exploited for free labour[403].

In their study of unpaid labour within the cultural and creative industries, Brook, O'Brien and Taylor carried out a survey of 2497 cultural industry workers and interviewed a further 237. They argued that while 'working for free [was] endemic across [their] survey sample' regardless of factors such as race, class or age, the impact of unpaid labour within the context of precarity had particular implications for working class professionals[404]. They found a significant difference in how middle class and working-class interviewees and respondents narrated their experience of unpaid work. Middle class workers described a 'sense of autonomy

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[399] LJ Findlay-Walsh, Interview, 25th August 2020.
[400] L-J Findlay-Walsh in David Bratchpiece and Kirstin Innes, 2021, p. 109
[401] Orian Brook, Dave O'Brien and Mark Taylor, 'There's No Way That You Get Paid to Do the Arts: Unpaid Labour Across the Cultural and Creative Life Course', *Sociological Research Online,* 25:1, February 2020, pp 1-18, p 2
[402] Liz Hill, 'Exploitation rife as unpaid work subsidises the arts', *Arts Professional,* 8th February 2019, https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/exploitation-rife-unpaid-work-subsidises-arts, [Accessed 10/10/2021]
[403] David Chandler, 'All Work and No Pay: Creative Industries Freelancers are Exploited', *The Guardian,* 18th May 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/2017/may/18/all-work-and-no-pay-creative-industries-freelancers-are-exploited [Accessed 10/10/2021]
[404] Brook et al, 2020, p.9

and choice over engagements with unpaid work'[405], whereas those who identified as working class offered more 'constrained and pessimistic visions of working life'[406]. Brook et al found that middle class interviewees demonstrated a level of agency when it came to both accepting and refusing unpaid work. For example, Georgie, a white, middle-class interviewee stated

> I've done some placements which were unpaid and I've done some projects which were unpaid or very, very low paid but I never had to do them because I didn't have other work… I haven't personally felt like, 'If I didn't do unpaid work, I'd never be able to get a job'[407].

Similarly, middle class theatre maker Ellie, discussed her approach to unpaid work:

> If I am going to not be paid a proper wage at least I am going to enjoy myself doing it, and you know if someone asks me to do something that I don't want to do and they are effectively not paying me to do it I am just going to say no[408].

Here, Ellie raises an important point: work can be rewarding and pleasurable even when we know it is exploitative. This is a complex dimension of the debate around unpaid labour because there are many, like Ellie, who enjoy the work they do for free and reconcile working for free because of this enjoyment. However, the ability to even consider enjoyment as part of decisions regarding work is itself a privilege which many cannot afford. Regardless of whether a person may enjoy undertaking unpaid work, if their financial situation will not allow it then this is not an option. Furthermore, while unpaid labour is still a means to progress a career in the cultural sector, a person enjoying that work and being willing to do it perpetuates the notion that unpaid labour is feasible for creative workers. This was made clear by interviewees like Veronica, who discussed not being able to afford to do as much free work as her peers and stated that 'if you don't have the money to do it, you don't really get a chance to grow so it's not really fair'[409]. In an industry where the expectation is that one will be able to complete a period of unpaid work, with no guarantee that it will ever lead to a paid opportunity, a person's economic capital can be a defining feature of the experience of unpaid labour. For example, a person able to complete an unpaid internship at a theatre whilst receiving financial support from their parents or an inheritance will be

[405] Brook et al, 2020, p. 12
[406] ibid
[407] Brook et al, 2020, p. 13
[408] ibid
[409] ibid

different from the experience of someone who must subsidise that unpaid internship with multiple part-time jobs. Furthermore, when those with economic capital choose to undertake unpaid work for enjoyment – like Ellie described – they contribute to the wider expectation that people will be willing to work for free, pushing those who do not have the same economic capital to provide unpaid labour they perhaps cannot afford.

Unpaid work in the cultural industries also highlights the relationship between economic, social, and institutional cultural capital. The ability to get a 'foot in the door' at a venue with an international reputation or a prestigious drama school in the early stages of your career can create opportunities and connections that are career-defining. To gain that institutional capital, workers may be willing to sacrifice economic capital, but this is only possible for those who can afford to make that sacrifice. Leslie Regan Shade and Jenna Jacobson's paper examining the experiences of unpaid female interns in the creative sector emphasised that many of their interviewees had undertaken multiple unpaid internships[410], and did so without any guarantee that these would lead to paid work. Many of the interviewees cited financial support from their parents as crucial to them being able to carry out these internships.[411] If an individual does not have that option, and they have no guarantee of paid work at the end of the internship, then the prospect of taking extended periods of unpaid work becomes more difficult to sustain. This takes on particular significance in the context of findings from Wil Hunt and Peter Scott, who used findings from the Creative Graduate Careers Study to analyse the extent to which social class influenced participation in creative internships in the UK. They found that 'those from less advantaged backgrounds' struggled to access paid internships, whereas 'graduates with high levels of social and economic capital were more able to access the better, paid opportunities that are likely to be of more help in the graduate labour market'[412]. The work of both Regan Shade and Jacobson and Hunt and Scott demonstrates how economic capital, or a lack thereof, shapes engagement with

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[410] Leslie Regan Shade and Jenna Jacobson, 'Hungry for the Job: Gender, Unpaid Internships and the Creative Industries', *The Sociological Review,* 63:1, May 2015, pp 188-205, p. 194

[411] Leslie Regan Shade and Jenna Jacobson, 2015, p. 196

[412] Wil Hunt and Peter Scott, 'Participation in Paid and Unpaid Internships among Creative and Communications Graduates: Does Class Advantage Play a Part?' in Richard Waller, Nicola Ingram, and Michael Ward (eds) *Higher Education and Social Inequalities: University Admissions, Experiences and Outcomes* (London, Routledge, 2018) pp 190-209

unpaid labour and in turn the amount of institutional cultural capital an individual can gain through unpaid opportunities.

Workers in the cultural industries – especially marginalised workers – may also sacrifice economic capital in the hopes of gaining social capital. As I will discuss more fully in the next chapter, social capital is often crucial to a career in the cultural industries. Siebert and Wilson argue that 'unpaid work in the creative industries allows people to acquire the social capital needed to find employment' and, in their study of unpaid work as a route to employment, they argue that those excluded from unpaid work due to their lack of economic capital will be disadvantage[413]. Siebert and Wilson also emphasised the inequity of opportunities for unpaid work based on social capital[414]. Not all unpaid labour within the sector comes through formal channels such as internships for which anyone can apply. Instead, unpaid work opportunities can often come through one's existing network, building on existing social capital rather than creating new capital. This has a knock-on effect on economic capital. Those who have to go through the process of applying and interviewing for unpaid positions must do extra labour that those who are granted opportunities through existing connections and networks do not. This can mean taking time from paid work to be able to fill out applications or attend interviews, therefore sacrificing economic capital for the chance of social capital. Acknowledging the benefits that some find in unpaid work – increased social capital and increased experience in their chosen field - Siebert and Wilson propose that

> Putting an end to the practice of work experience should not be seen as pulling a rug from under people's feet and making it even more difficult for them to gain employment. Providing work experience opportunities with due consideration for harmonious relations in the workplace might be an answer to the dilemma[415].

They suggest that this should include pay, as well as transparency about recruitment processes. This has the potential to make working conditions fairer for interns and to ensure that companies are not taking advantage of unpaid workers.

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[413] Sabina Siebert and Fiona Wilson, 'All Work and No Pay: Consequences of Unpaid Work in the Creative Industries', *Work, Employment and Society,* 27:4, 20th May 2013, pp 711-721, p. 713
[414] Siebert and Wilson, 2013, p. 716
[415] Sievert and Wilson, 2013, p. 718

Rosie Priest pointed out that unpaid work is often encouraged by universities and other institutions:

> I found that weird when I was doing art history, [my tutors] were like 'volunteer'. Cause I volunteered for some galleries, and I did that, and I was like, but I still have to work while I'm at uni. Why, why are professionals telling me that this is how I'm only going to get a job in the arts? And it's also, I mean, I'm coming from a…you know, I'm a single woman. I don't have any responsibility. I don't have to, but like, if you were a primary caregiver, disabled, anything. Like yeah...bananas[416].

What is clear in this comment from Priest is both that the belief in the necessity of unpaid labour is instilled in young creatives by some higher education institutions, and that such institutions make assumptions about the economic capital of their students. Class inequality, and specifically the dominance of middle-class students, in higher education has been explored extensively in existing academic literature. The dominance of middle-class students within universities and within drama schools can lead the middle-class university experience to be treated as the default[417]. This is clear in the unspoken expectations at an institutional level. For example, as an English Literature undergraduate at University of Glasgow, I was often expected to read multiple novels in a week. There were usually limited supplies of set texts in the university library, which meant that to keep up with the workload of the degree I spent a considerable amount of money on books each semester. Similarly, many of the student sports clubs and societies have a membership fee and often require purchasing extra equipment, clothing, and travel expenses to participate. Not only do these additional expenses exclude working class students on a practical, financial level, they proceed from and contribute to sustaining an implicit assumption that everyone at university comes from a level of financial security that makes such expenses possible. This takes on particular significance when we consider that working class students are more likely to drop out of university than their middle-class peers[418].

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[416] Rosie Priest, Interview, 27th August 2020.

[417] See Dave O'Brien, 'The Class Problem in British Acting: Talking at Camden People's Theatre', 27th April 2015, https://stratificationandculture.wordpress.com/2015/04/27/the-class-problem-in-british-acting-talking-at-camden-peoples-theatre/ [Accessed 11/10/2021]

[418] For further discussion of the rate at which working class students drop out of university, see Adam Smith, 'Tuition Fees is Causing Working Class Students to Quit Uni, *Metro,* 21st July 2017, https://metro.co.uk/2017/07/21/tuition-fees-is-causing-working-class-students-to-quit-uni-6794481/ and Olivia Fletcher 'University Challenge: Why Working-Class Students are more likely to drop out', *The FBC Paris,* 30th October 2019, https://www.thefbcparis.com/bookmarks/university-challenge-why-working-class-students-are-more-likely-to-drop-out [Accessed 12/08/2021]

In my discussions with women about their experience of drama school and university, it was clear that a lack of economic and embodied cultural capital contributed to some of the interviewees feeling like an outsider within higher education. Mahri Reilly discussed the difficulties with completing her degree as a working-class student:

> I've got to be honest, being at drama school in with all of the other things I had to deal with as someone who had to work as well as study, you're living at home, traveling in, you know, some of my classmates were in, had a, you know, had other fortunate positions where they didn't have to do that. So, I left drama school and actually I left without my degree[419].

Reilly demonstrates a number of ways in which students might find themselves marginalised within the drama school or university experience. Firstly, the struggle of working alongside studies is one that many students face. A 2019 survey of students found that more than a third had a part-time job, and 21% held down two jobs alongside their studies[420]. But the number of hours that drama school students are expected to be in classes and rehearsals can make it particularly difficult to participate while working a part-time job. Similarly, the additional cost of moving into student halls or rental accommodation can be difficult for those from lower income households to afford. This means either having to take on additional student loans – which create added financial pressure on students and their families – or commuting from home. Commuting and working during your degree not only makes it difficult to keep up with workload, but it also makes it difficult to take on any extracurricular activities such as the unpaid work that young creatives are encouraged to undertake. Furthermore, given the important social capital that is created through the relationships formed at university and drama school, students who have additional responsibilities such as part-time jobs may find themselves excluded from social networks that would later provide opportunities for work.

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[419] Mahri Reilly, Interview, 28th July 2020.

[420] Emily Kinder, '21% of UK university students work two jobs while studying', *The Boar,* 20th April 2019, https://theboar.org/2019/04/uk-students-two-jobs-studying [Accessed 10/10/2021]

Further to the practical issues that Reilly highlights, my conversation with Julia Hughes demonstrated the ways in which embodied cultural capital impacts student experiences:

> It was like when I went to university, I never knew what to do. I didn't know the codes and the, like my pal, my best pal in my first year at university, it was, you know, quite posh/middle class from Cheshire. She'd been to sixth form college. You know, she would set right on the front at university with her hand up and went kind of. [Hughes demonstrates how her friend would raise her hand] and I was lurking in the back absolutely terrified to, you know, cause I've gone to a Scottish comprehensive and we were never encouraged to speak up[421].

The ‘codes’ that Hughes refers to are varied, but many of them fall into the category of embodied cultural capital – having the ‘right’ style of speaking and writing or wearing the right clothes, for example – and are often the kind of unspoken rules that make it difficult for perceived ‘outsiders’ to assimilate into the culture within an institution. Many universities and drama schools have committed to accepting students from a diverse range of backgrounds, and many have specific schemes aimed at supporting those who might struggle to access opportunities like drama school training[422]. However, while these schemes may help students to get accepted onto their choice of course, it is more complicated to dismantle the various ‘codes’ that make some students feel unwelcome. The dominance of middle-class voices both in terms of staff and students within educational settings translates into a dominance of such individuals within the industry as a whole.

Conclusion

Two key threads emerge in this chapter that will inform the subsequent work within this thesis. The first is that in order for women’s labour within the cultural sector to be fully recognised, the scope of discussion must be widened to

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[421] Julia Hughes, Interview, 24th August 2020.

[422] For example, RADA, LAMDA, Guildhall School, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland all participate in the Open Door initiative which provides free auditions, travel and tutoring to young drama school applicants who ‘do not have the financial support or resources to gain a place’ at such institutions. See https://www.opendoor.org.uk/who-are-we. [Accessed 04/11/2022]

look beyond high-profile creatives and those working in major cultural venues. This was clear in my analysis of the visibility and value of women's work, where I argued that including creative learning and youth theatre work was key to acknowledging the full scope of women's leadership within the sector. It was also evident in my conversations with Annie George and Rosie Priest about the limitations of focusing on the 'mainstream' which, in turn, leads to talent on the fringes being missed. This links to the second key thread that emerged: the importance of an intersectional approach to thinking about gender inequality in the Scottish cultural sector. It was apparent throughout this chapter that women's experiences of working in the cultural sector were intrinsically linked not just to their gender identity, but to their class, race and, for some women, their age. The issue of motherhood is perhaps the best example of this, with women's attitudes to how much motherhood had changed their career largely reflecting the levels of economic and social capital they held within the sector. Similarly, the different experiences of unpaid labour further demonstrated how middle-class women have advantages over their more marginalised counterparts.

The intersectional inequalities that women face in the cultural industries will be discussed further in the next chapter, as I look at how networks and communities within the sector contribute to gender inequality and how they particularly disadvantage marginalised women. These communities and networks are intrinsic to the nature of work within the cultural sector and so an analysis of how they manifest is crucial to a full understanding of how women might lead within the sector. It is also an important element of understanding women's role in shaping cultural narratives and national identities in Scotland. As women navigate these communities and networks, they are also navigating an environment in which they have the potential to lead the narrative of Scottish national identity. Considering how inequality shapes these networks and communities allows us to more fully understand how these inequalities are produced and reproduced in our construction of the nation. With this in mind, I will now turn my attention to a more detailed analysis of networks and communities in the Scottish cultural sector.

Chapter Four: Power, Networks and Community

The penultimate question I posed to each of the interviewees was 'if aliens landed in Scotland tomorrow, and you had to define Scottish theatre to them, what would you say they should expect?'. To my surprise, there were two concepts that almost every woman mentioned as defining features of Scotland's theatrical landscape. The first was an interest in history and on subversive adaptations of canonical texts, which I will focus on in the next chapter. The second was a focus on community. Over the course of the interviews, women described the close-knit relationships between theatre-makers in Scotland, often discussing how these were partly encouraged by Scotland's relatively small theatre scene, and how they helped to foster a sense of support between artists. While for the most part these stories were positive, I was interested in what this 'community' meant for women, and in particular marginalised women, and whether it might be a source of inequality as much as it was a source of support. In particular, I was curious about what closer examination of networks and communities could reveal about leadership in the Scottish cultural sector. To that end, this chapter has two main aims. The first is to examine and critique notions of community within Scottish theatre, focusing on the ways in which informal networks are valuable but can reinforce inequality. The second aim is to establish what leadership looks like for women in this context, and to interrogate how women negotiate their power within an industry in which they are disadvantaged. I do this by putting the notions of community in conversation with theories on inequality in order to problematise the version of community put forward by many of the interviewees. In focusing on women's cultural leadership, and the complexities of that leadership, I am able to further interrogate their influence on how Scottish identities are 'staged and culturally produced' and how female leadership expands the cultural narratives associated with Scotland. The previous chapter focused on more general issues of gender inequality, but in delving deeper into the specifics of how women experience leadership, and how they navigate hierarchies within the sector, I will demonstrate the complexities of women's relationship to power within the sector. In doing so, I complicate the idea that the success of female leaders can be taken as indicative of wider gender equality within the sector.

Throughout this chapter, I will move between examples taken from Scottish, UK and international contexts. I do this partly because Scotland is a relatively small nation and often there are gaps in the existing research available about the specifics of the Scottish context. Using a broader cross-section of work from different nations allows me to consider how trends identified on a national and international level might map on to the Scottish cultural sector. On a more theoretical level, and to return to Steve Blandford, small nations are partly defined by their relationships to other countries, and the power dynamics within these relationships[423]. By moving between a local, national, and international context, I am mirroring the ways in which Scotland itself is influenced by these external circumstances. Scotland does not exist in a vacuum, and so I believe it is vital to have an awareness of the wider international context within which this research is located and to draw on relevant material from across different nations in order to better understand the situation in Scotland.

I will begin by focusing on networking, drawing on theories of social capital to argue that the reliance on informal networks within the Scottish cultural sector disadvantages women, and creates a cyclical effect where opportunities are continually given to the same, small group. Then, drawing on Sara Ahmed's work on the figure of the stranger, I will turn my attention to the rhetoric around 'community' in the cultural sector. I will argue that the focus on community within the sector further disadvantages marginalised women, and that the rhetoric reinforces assumptions about who does, and does not, belong in Scottish culture. The chapter will close with a focus on leadership. I will argue that in this 'community' where the lines between friendship and work are blurred, leaders can struggle to identify their own privilege. Using the anecdotal evidence from interviewees, I will demonstrate that within this 'community', leaders have a responsibility to recognise their own privilege and power, even when they may face discrimination. In particular, I will focus on the need for feminist leadership within the sector, arguing that this is crucial to a more egalitarian industry.

'Working with people begets more work'[424]: Networking

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[423] Blandford in Blandford (ed), 2018, p. 4
[424] Frances Poet, Interview, 10th June 2020

The concept of 'networking' is not unique to the cultural industries. Indeed, most young professionals will at one stage have found themselves at a 'networking event' where they have hovered awkwardly, clutching a free glass of wine, hoping their handshake is firm enough to impress whichever member of industry they have cornered for small talk. Beyond networking events, young people are encouraged by schools and universities to use social media – especially Twitter and LinkedIn – as 'networking tools' and to focus on developing relationships and connections within their chosen field[425]. Networking, at its core, is about the idea that it is 'who you know' that matters when attempting to forge a career. In the cultural industries, as Roberta Comunian argues, networking takes on additional importance because of the working conditions within the sector. Comunian highlights the fact that 'the creative industries sector is comprised of small and medium sized companies, and solo trading is typical', an ecology of scale which means that networking is key to 'economic growth and support'[426]. Secondly, Comunian cites Helen Blair's work on the labour market in the British Film industry to highlight the 'unstable, temporary working conditions (part-time, freelancing, contract working)'[427] that are common within the sector, and which make networking vital to 'access work and obtain future contracts'[428]. Finally, Comunian argues that 'social dynamics' are important not just in creating working relationships, but in the creation of 'values and trends' within the industries because it is often in communication with social groups that artists and cultural workers identify commonalities and shared interests in their work[429].

Further to Comunian's arguments, networks take on a specific importance within the theatre ecology of Scotland due to the geographical spread of artists within a relatively small country. I discussed this dynamic with Christine Hamilton who, among her other roles, was Chair of the Touring Network from 2015 to 2020. The Touring Network is an organisation which supports artists living and working

[425] For example, the University of Strathclyde careers service offer to check student's LinkedIn profiles for them and offer a number of online resources on how to use the website https://www.strath.ac.uk/careers/studgrad/apply/linkedin/. [Accessed 4/11/2022]

[426] Roberta Comunian, 'Exploring the Role of Networks in the Creative Economy of North East England: Economic and Cultural Dynamics' in Barney Warf (ed), Encounters *and Engagements between Economic and Cultural Geography,* (Dordrecht, Springer, 2012), pp 143-157, p. 146.

[427] ibid

[428] Blair, 2001 in Comunian, 2012, p.146.

[429] Comunian, 2012, p.146

in the Scottish Highlands and Islands[430]. This experience gave Hamilton specialist knowledge of the work being created by artists across the country, and we discussed some research she had once commissioned to look at the connections between artists in the North of Scotland with those in the central belt:

> we worked with a geographer called Rachel Granger, who works now at De Montfort, and she did this mapping exercise, which was really interesting...we sent out a survey to all the theatre companies and so on. And we asked them to say who their main contacts were. You know, who did they get in contact with? And she then took that and did…nobody was named on it, but she then did this map which showed the relationships between different networks and what she expected 'because she doesn't live in Scotland, she isn't Scottish. She expected it to be a hub and spoke. She expected it to be a hub maybe to the National Theatre of Scotland, Creative Scotland, something like that.[431]

Instead, Granger found that the network was far more complex, connecting people all over the country, not just to major organisations but to each other at an individual level. Hamilton commented that this network was 'astonishingly important' and 'might hold the key' to the future of Scottish theatre[432]. It is crucial not to be overly emphatic about how well this community of artists connect to each other across the country, as the central belt continues to be densely saturated with artists, venues, and opportunities for theatre-makers and oftentimes these resources are not equally shared with artists outwith the major cities. Nevertheless, the mapping exercise demonstrated the power that networks in the cultural sector held in Scotland insofar as they create links between disparate theatre practitioners spread across different parts of the country.

Jean Cameron, who I met at an event several months before our interview and who had introduced herself to me as a 'professional networker', described her view of networking:

> Networking is that kind of industry or whatever term but it's actually just human interaction, isn't it? And curiosity. And, um, and…just being really enthused by someone as well. And you want to feed that sort of admiration back. Those are all very human things, I think.[433]

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[430] See The Touring Network, How We Help, https://thetouringnetwork.com/how-we-help/ [Accessed 4/11/2022]
[431] Christine Hamilton, Interview, 29th May 2020.
[432] ibid
[433] Jean Cameron, Interview, 3rd July 2020.

Some of the characteristics that might make one a 'successful' networker like Cameron are, to an extent, human nature but it is perhaps not as straightforward for everyone as it is for Cameron. To begin, there is the challenge of 'getting in the room'. While some networking, like the networking events I described, takes place in a formal setting where individuals who do not know each other are brought together with the expectation that they will make professional connections[434], a person's social network - or social capital - also forms a significant part of their professional networking. Because of this, there are inequalities in networking that impact marginalised individuals. Such inequalities have been the subject of existing literature that provides critical context for this chapter.

In her study of informal recruitment practices for screenwriters in the UK, Natalie Wreyford interviewed forty screenwriters - of all genders - and their employers. She argued that networking disadvantages women in part because of a sectoral focus on 'risk reduction'. Wreyford states that 'creative work takes place in the context of high risk' because of the financial investment that each project requires whilst the profits are still uncertain[435]. The high-risk nature of such work, Wreyford argues, leads to a reliance on existing relationships between creatives[436]. This analysis is in line with Susan Rogers' finding that '50% of writers in British film had a previous working relationship and 42% had a personal relationship with the producer, director or production company responsible for their hiring'[437]. Wreyford argues that because the senior positions in the film industry are heavily dominated by white, middle- and upper-class men, this leads to an industry that 'uphold(s) gender and other inequalities through informal recruitment practices, even when those processes are not conscious or deliberate by those taking part'[438].

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[434] For example, the three universities in Glasgow – University of Glasgow, University of Strathclyde, and Glasgow Caledonian University – all mention on their websites that both students and alumni are given access to networking opportunities. Additionally, a search for 'networking events in Glasgow' led me to several industry specific events targeted at those looking to make professional connections in their chosen fields. See https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/careers/graduate-information/alumnicommunity/networking/#recommendedblog,whatourgradssay, https://www.strath.ac.uk/alumni/connectandnetwork/ and https://www.gcu.ac.uk/alumni/mintprogramme/networkingandtalks [Accessed 4/11/2022]

[435] Natalie Wreyford, 'Birds of a Feather: Informal Recruitment Practices and Gendered Outcomes for Screenwriting Work in the UK Film Industry', *The Sociological Review,* 63:1, May 2015, pp. 84-96, p. 89.

[436] Natalie Wreyford, 2015, p. 90

[437] Susan Rogers, 2007 in Natalie Wreyford, 2015, p. 90

[438] Natalie Wreyford, 2015, p. 93

Whilst Wreyford is focusing specifically on the film industry, the dangers of a focus on 'risk reduction' are also clear in the theatre industry. This idea was explored further by Incubate Propagate, an AHRC funded research network which sought to answer the question of 'how we might collectively overcome challenges and identify opportunities that might facilitate greater socio-economic diversity within artist development structures in the fields of theatre and performance'[439]. They carried out three research workshops based on this question and published a report on the emerging themes within those workshops. In their report, they advocated for greater risk taking amongst programmers and producers, especially when it came to 'artists or artistic practice that emerges from socio-economic backgrounds that are different to their own'[440]. This was born out by concerns from workshop participants that the phrase 'too risky' was 'often disguised as an economic barrier to producing work, where it might in fact be disguising unspoken value systems that decide which work, and which artists, to take risks on – given that all artistic practice is risk'[441]. This report - when considered as a parallel to Wreyford's work - further demonstrates how the concept of 'risk' contributes to inequality within the sector. I will draw on Wreyford's work later in this chapter both in terms of thinking about 'risk reduction' and in the notion that often the harm done by these informal networks happens without any ill intent by those who perpetuate them.

The concept of 'trust' forms a significant part of Wreyford's research and is also crucial to my own thinking about networks. Wreyford found that when she asked employers what they looked for in a potential screenwriter, almost all of them mentioned trust as an important attribute[442]. She noticed that their concept of trust rejected vulnerability and risk, and focused on 'co-operation, confidence and predictability'[443]. She argues that this definition of trust leads to a 'reliance on homophily' which 'provides the employers with the desired conditions to trust those that they are employing' but 'upholds the inequality of gender, race, and

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[439] Liz Tomlin, *Incubate Propagate Project Report,* 2021, https://incubatepropagate.files.wordpress.com/2020/10/incubate-propagate-project-report.pdf p. 5
[440] Incubate Propagate, 2021, p.10
[441] Incubate Propagate, 2021, p. 11
[442] Natalie Wreyford, 2015, p. 91
[443] ibid

class in key creative positions'[444]. To support this claim, Wreyford points out that female screenwriters she spoke to found 'a large percentage of opportunities through other women'[445]. This, she suggests, implies that women are 'perhaps not so trusted by men'[446]. Wreyford's work on trust is a helpful parallel to the work from Sara Ahmed about the figure of the stranger, which I discussed in the introduction and informs my own thinking about community. I will return to Wreyford in my discussion of Ahmed to argue that the concept of trust is key to the creation of the figure of the stranger within the cultural industries.

The racial inequalities within networking were explored by David S. Pedulla and Devah Pager, who gathered data from over two thousand Black American jobseekers to look at the role that networks play in people's chances of gaining employment. In this study, they focused on network access, network returns, network placement, and network mobilization[447]. The arguments proposed by Pedulla and Pager are based on their study of the US labour market. I have drawn on this study because I was unable to source a similarly detailed study of the impact of race on networking in the UK, and certainly not in Scotland. My inability to reference the Scottish context specifically here should not be taken as implication that this problem is less pertinent in Scotland, but rather that there is some way to go in acknowledging these dynamics in research. Pedulla and Pager defined network access and network returns as 'pathways' into a career. Network access refers to the community of employed people that a jobseeker has to draw on.

Pedulla and Pager initially hypothesised that compared to white jobseekers, Black jobseekers would be 'less likely to hear about specific job openings from network-based channels rather than from formal channels'[448], however in actuality, they found that 'Black and white job seekers receive job leads from their social networks at similar rates'[449]. The difference, they found, was in network returns, which they defined as 'the benefits that accrue through those networks'[450]. When Pedulla and Pager analysed their data, they found that

[444] Natalie Wreyford, 2015, p. 92
[445] Natalie Wreyford, 2015, p.93
[446] ibid
[447] David S. Pedulla and Devah Pager, 'Race and Networks in the Job Search Process', *American Sociological Review,* 84:6 (2019), pp. 983-1012, p. 1007
[448] Pedulla and Pager, 2019, p. 986
[449] Pedulla and Pager, 2019, p. 1006
[450] Pedulla and Pager, 2019, p. 987

while finding a job via one's network resulted in a 'higher probability of receiving a job offer for both Black and white job seekers…these benefits are significantly smaller for Black' jobseekers[451]. This led Pedulla and Pager to question 'why might the networks of Black job seekers be less effective…in producing job offers?'[452]. The answer to this, they believed, could be found by looking at how network placement and network mobilization function as 'mechanisms for network returns'[453]. Network placement refers to the status of a person's contacts within an industry, how likely they were to know someone within the company they applied to and how much power the people in their network had within their workplace. Network mobilization refers to the likelihood of people within an individual's network being willing or able to use their resources or contacts to help a jobseeker. They found that overall, Black jobseekers were less likely to know people within the company they applied for, and that, when they did have contacts, those contacts were less likely to 'mobilize key resources on their behalf'[454]. The findings of this study are useful because they offer terminology for thinking about the multifaceted nature of network inequality. They also demonstrate that the question of networking is not just about how many people within the sector that one might know, but about how able and willing those networks are to mobilize on your behalf. If your network is made up of people who are themselves vulnerable within the sector – whether that be because of their class, race, gender or because of the precarious nature of their employment – they may be less able to mobilize.

Pedulla and Pager's work focuses specifically on racial inequality but in 'Panic: Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries', Dave O'Brien, Orian Brook and Mark Taylor argue that networking also disadvantages those from a working-class background. They conducted a survey of 2,487 cultural workers and found that people who held positions within the cultural sector 'were disproportionately likely to know other cultural and creative workers'[455]. This might seem unsurprising – if you work in any sector, you are likely to make connections with other people in that sector – but it takes on additional

[451] Pedulla and Pager, 2019, p. 1007
[452] Pedulla and Pager, 2019, p. 987
[453] ibid
[454] Pedulla and Pager, 2019, p. 1007.
[455] Dave O'Brien, Orian Brook and Mark Taylor, *Panic: Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries*, (Edinburgh, AHRC, 2015) p. 10

significance when we consider that cultural and creative workers were 'least likely to know people in…traditional working-class jobs'[456]. Such jobs included factory workers, bus drivers and postal workers. In practice, this means that those who hold those jobs, or come from families where those types of jobs are common, are least likely to be able to draw on a network of cultural and creative workers when looking to find work in the sector. This contributes to the dominance of middle-class voices in the cultural and creative industries[457]. The relationship between social class and networks was discussed further by O'Brien in 'Class and the Problem of Inequality in Theatre'. In this article, O'Brien stated that

> Those from profession and managerial, middle-class, social origins are not only more likely to bring with them the economic resources, or capitals, to bear the costs of speculative engagements with an uncertain market for their ideas, talents, and labour. They are also more likely to have the cultural and social resources, or capitals, which offer them access to networks along with the confidence that comes from having a sense of place and possibility within an industry staffed and attended by people like them[458].

This comment encapsulates how middle-class cultural workers benefit not just from their economic privilege, but from the social capital that comes from their networks. The unequal access to social capital inspired Josie Long and Neil Griffiths to set up Arts Emergency, a charity which aims to help young people from underrepresented groups to access higher education and the creative and cultural industries[459]. They do this by providing

> 16-18-year-olds with a trained mentor working in their field of interest so that they can achieve their goals. This year of mentoring then acts as a gateway to our alternative 'old boy' network which offers young people real world opportunities and a supportive community until the age of 24[460].

Their 2018 impact report stated that 96% of their mentees applied to university, and that 88% of mentees feel more supported when making choices about their future[461]. The work of Arts Emergency demonstrates the power of social capital, and how taking deliberate steps to expand the networks of marginalised young people can improve their confidence and opportunities within the sector.

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[456] ibid

[457] See also Liz Tomlin, 'Why We Still Need to Talk about Class', *Studies in Theatre and Performance,* 40:3, 7th January 2021, pp 251-264

[458] Dave O'Brien, 2020, p. 246

[459] Arts Emergency, *Impact Report 2018*, (London, Arts Emergency, 2018) p. 4

[460] Arts Emergency, 2018, p. 5

[461] Arts Emergency, 2018, p. 3

The importance of social capital, and the uneven distribution of such capital, was clear in Frances Poet's reflections on her own network:

> it's misunderstood as an idea isn't it, networking? Because actually going and talking to people in a room because they're the people you ought to talk to is soul destroying and doesn't garner much fruit, whereas those genuinely collaborative relationships you make, they endlessly bear fruit. There's also a weird thing, which is, you know, when I was starting out, when I was working at Hampstead, I was working with Tony Clark and he knew Jim Cartwright and had developed various Jim Cartwright plays and you go, 'Oh my goodness you know Jim Cartwright! I studied him at uni'…but what you realize is that these people that you're hanging out with in your twenties, that you're working with, become the Jim Cartwrights. The relationships you make in your twenties through those, as you say, networking, but you know, just your pals and say, 'Hey, let's make something together'. They are the ones that when you hit your thirties and then your forties, that are running theatre. That's how it works. That's the game[462].

This is not a universal experience. Poet completed her undergraduate degree at the University of St Andrews, one of the top universities in the UK[463]. St Andrews University, with alumni including the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, is a prestigious institution which attracts a number of international students – especially Americans – and has garnered a reputation as a home for wealthy and privileged students[464]. The friends that one might make in their 'twenties' when they've spent that time at St Andrews are far more likely to have economic privilege and networks to mobilize. Poet herself benefitted from such a network. She was involved in student theatre while studying, and 'thinking she wanted to be a TV director, Poet spoke to a friend of her uncle's, who was a script editor on *Midsomer Murders* and who suggested she do some script reading for various theatres'[465]. Poet had never considered that such roles existed, and this family friend provided vital industry insight that eventually led to her being hired by Bush Theatre[466]. Of course, once a person has been given that 'foot in the door' it is perhaps what they do with the opportunity that matters, and Poet has proven herself to be a skilled literary manager and a talented playwright, but her example

[462] Frances Poet, Interview, 10th June 2020.
[463] Frances Poet, Interview, 10th June 2020.
[464] See: Howard Swains, 'How Scotland's University of St Andrews Became a Top American School', *Town and Country Magazine,* 24th July 2017, https://www.townandcountrymag.com/society/a10274881/st-andrews-scotland/ [Accessed 23/08/2021]
[465] Neil Cooper, 'Playwright Frances Poet on the clash between parenting in the 1970s and today', *The Herald,* 19th April 2018, https://www.heraldscotland.com/life_style/arts_ents/16169672.playwright-frances-poet-clash-parenting-1970s-today/ [Accessed 23/08/2021]
[466] Ibid.

highlights how informal social networks are often a reflection of the privilege that a person holds, and that the prominence of these networks in the cultural industries reproduces that privilege in a cyclical manner. The more successful, economically privileged, and expansive a person's network, the more likely that said network is going to provide opportunities, and the more opportunities a person gets, the wider their network becomes.

A similar dynamic was apparent in my discussions with Christine Hamilton about some of the individuals she had worked with over the course of her career, during which she observed that 'John McGrath, Liz MacLennan and Giles Havergal all went to Oxford together'[467]. McGrath, MacLennan and Havergal are some of the most influential figures in Scottish theatre history. This reputation owes to their work as part of 7:84 Theatre Company but is also due to their individual work, including Havergal's thirty-four-year tenure as co-director of The Citizens Theatre in Glasgow. Hamilton talked about working on a project called the Clyde Built Season, where McGrath picked four plays from different time periods in Scottish history – one from each decade from 1920 to 1950 – that he felt had been 'hidden' up until that point[468]. As part of this project, they staged Ena Lamont Stewart's *Men Should Weep* and 'John invited Giles to direct it and it went on to be an enormous hit'[469]. Hamilton added that 'they took different directions, but they both came from a similar kind of educational background, and I'm not suggesting this is all Oxbridge stuff, it was just very interesting that they have these connections, that network'[470]. When we consider that Oxford is an elite university that, much like St Andrews University, is known for being dominated by wealth, privately educated students, the implications of such networks in terms of class inequality become clear[471]. As I have already discussed in previous chapters, the link between class inequality and education is clear, and there is also an attainment gap between white students and those from a global majority background[472]. The prominence of these university-based networks within the

[467] Christine Hamilton, Interview, 3rd May 2020.
[468] ibid
[469] ibid
[470] ibid
[471] See Mary-Ann Harvey, 'Inaccessible: Why Oxford's latest state-school statistics shouldn't be celebrated', *Cherwell,* 29th June 2020 https://cherwell.org/2020/06/29/inaccessible-why-oxfords-latest-state-school-statistics-shouldnt-be-celebrated/ [Accessed 24/08/2021]
[472] See Universities UK, *Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: #ClosingtheGap,* (London, Universities UK, 2019).

industry contributes to the perpetuation of the cycle of white, middle-class voices dominating the sector, and because these networks are not always visible, it does so in a way that naturalises that dominance.

This often invisibly cyclical impact of an artist's network was something that Frances Poet discussed further in our conversation about the relationships she has formed through her working career:

> It's interesting [in terms of the relationship between] director [and] writer because it feels more two way…it feels like they've got your back and that, you know, if the right project lands…that you'd be one of the top three names that they would suggest in those meetings with the Artistic Directors, you know, that's a glorious position to be in and similarly when I'm in those meetings, you know...working with people begets more work.[473]

To an extent, this is a normal way of working in lots of different industries. It is understandable that if you have worked well with someone before and you are given the option to work with them again, you will welcome that opportunity. Similarly, creative work such as directing, writing, and acting can feel vulnerable and personal, and therefore bonds that form between people who work together can be particularly strong. It could also be argued that these close relationships between collaborators strengthen the creative work they produce, and that this is something which should be encouraged. Indeed, this is where Wreyford's discussion of 'trust' is significant. The trust between artists is a delicate and crucial part of the creative process. I have been in rehearsal rooms with both adults and young people where a great deal of time is spent on 'trust exercises' intended to develop such a relationship. However, the idea that 'working with people begets more work' can also be problematic because it keeps the same, small group of people in work and potentially excludes artists who have perhaps not found someone who will suggest that Artistic Directors hire them.

The importance of 'reputation' and networks within the industry can also mean that people who have succeeded in other aspects of the cultural sector can be given opportunities in theatre ahead of lesser-known theatre-makers. This has been discussed in terms of 'stunt casting', a trend that often sees reality TV personalities and influencers taking leads in major productions, over trained professionals, a decision that is generally motivated by a desire to boost ticket

[473] Frances Poet, Interview, 10th June 2020.

sales by drawing on the individual's existing fanbase[474]. However, it also extends to writing and directing opportunities as well. During our conversation, Annie George discussed how the Artistic Director of a prominent Scottish venue had always declined to program her work, despite her trying on many occasions to have her work commissioned by this individual. The Artistic Director in question later attended an event hosted by George, where a friend of George's, who was a successful musician, had agreed to appear and give a speech. George wrote the speech, and it was well received by the crowd and by the Artistic Director:

> So, the Artistic Director of this theatre, um, ran up to him afterwards, who never talks to me usually. Two weeks later I get an email saying, oh, I loved that speech that that person was doing can I get his contact address? And I was like, let me check with him first. You know, so I sort of bookmarked it and she kept trying to get meetings with him and about the third time, every time she approached him, she kept saying I really loved that piece of yours. You know, and we all kept saying no, I wrote it, you know, and then they eventually met, and she goes, but it was so authentic, I thought it must have been yours… It's like, well, you don't know my work. And you know how many times do you have to be told? And so, she ended up saying [to the musician], if you've got any ideas, I'll commission you, um, and any tickets you want, let me know, blah, blah, blah. You know what I mean? I was, I honestly, it was like a gut punch[475].

There are a few dynamics at play in this story, and the important role that Artistic Directors play in creating opportunities is something I will return to later in this chapter. But in the context of thinking about networks, this anecdote demonstrates the unequal playing field that many find themselves in when it comes to networking. This musician, no matter how talented they may be in their own right, was being pursued by this Artistic Director on the merit of someone else's work, and no matter how many times this was made clear to the Artistic Director they still wanted the musician over George. While the musician may have had an engaging stage presence, and it may have been understandable for the Artistic Director to see his potential as a performer, there was no basis on which to believe that this musician should be commissioned to write. At this point of her career, Annie George has decades of experience as a writer and theatre-maker, as well as in community arts practice. Her experience illustrates the fact that an industry built on name recognition, networking, and reputation, is not necessarily

[474] See: Lewis Baird, 'Stunt Casting is Becoming an Issue in the UK', *OnStage Blog*, 24th May 2019, https://www.onstageblog.com/onstage-blog-uk/2019/5/24/stunt-casting-is-becoming-an-issue-in-the-uk [Accessed 23/10/2021]

[475] Annie George, Interview, 19th August 2020

one that functions as a meritocracy where the most talented or experienced people get work. Rather, it creates inequalities that can make it nearly impossible for some artists to get a 'foot in the door', whilst others are repeatedly given opportunities.

George's anecdote also demonstrates the lack of transparency around how networks function within the sector, and how this contributes to a sense of inequity. Part of an Artistic Director's role is to make judgements about which artists to work with and what work to commission. Just because George was not being programmed at this venue does not necessarily mean she was being treated unfairly. However, what is clear in this account from George is the confusion and hurt that she felt because of the lack of honest communication about how decisions were being made. My reading of this situation is that part of what hurt George in this moment was the fact that she had, for many years, been 'playing the game' – submitting her work through the official channels, continuing to write and work elsewhere in the meantime, trying to 'network' as much as possible – and had little success when it came to this particular venue. She then watched an artist be given credit for her work and be given opportunities she had been trying in vain to access. In this moment, George was faced with a concrete example of how some are given opportunities through mechanisms she does not have access to and has no way of earning because they are often subjective and based around networking practices which are not always based on talent or ability.

This lack of transparency in networking led me to consider how the repeated description of the cultural industries as a 'community' related to these networks, and how it might provide further insight into inequalities within the sector. Many of the women I spoke to praised the 'community' of Scottish theatre-makers and spoke fondly of their experiences of working within that community. It was clear to me – and often to them – in their narration of these experiences that for all the positive aspects of this 'community', there were also significant inequalities. Networks and communities may seem, in many ways, interchangeable and there is significant overlap between the concepts. However, as someone interested in power and leadership, I was specifically interested in the non-hierarchal potential of a 'community'. A 'network' is something a person uses; it has a particular social and professional function and is often cultivated

with explicit professional aims in mind. It is useful to have people in your network who are in positions of power to grant opportunities. The hierarchies within a 'community', however, are less clear and I was interested in how this ambiguity might contribute to inequality and exclusion

'It's a family, but only because families are also sort of shit'[476]: Community

Sara Ahmed's work on strangers was the main influence on my thinking about the concept of 'community' in the Scottish cultural sector. In the introduction to her book *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality,* Ahmed invokes the figure of the alien to illustrate how strangeness is used to establish communities. She argues that in the fictionalised narratives of alien invasions and abductions, for example, aliens are used as a means of defining humanity:

> The detection of alien forms becomes a mechanism for the reassertion of a most human 'we': we must be able to tell (see, smell, touch) the difference…The fantasy of aliens who are too close to home expands rather than threatens our knowledge: the possibility that aliens could be nearby requires that we invent new ways of telling the difference, new forms of detection, better practices of surveillance[477].

In short, the figure of the 'alien' as an outsider represents a threat to our understanding of humanity, leading us to create firmer boundaries and definitions of what is and is not human. Beyond science fiction, the term alien is often invoked to refer to something foreign and unfamiliar, and primarily is used to imply something unpleasant about this unfamiliarity. Ahmed extends her argument to encompass strangers of all kinds, and argues that

> the stranger is not *any-body* that we have failed to recognise but *some-body* that we have already recognised *as* a stranger, as a 'body out of place'. Hence, the stranger is some-body we know as not knowing, rather than some-body we simply do not know[478].

The act of recognising the stranger creates boundaries between 'us' – those who we recognise as belonging in a particular space – and 'them' – those we have identified as strange within that space. Crucially, Ahmed argues that it is impossible to simply 'be' a stranger, and that strangers are always created through this act of boundary drawing, stating 'that it is in the process of expelling

[476] Ishbel McFarlane, Interview, 10th August 2020
[477] Sara Ahmed, 2000, p.2
[478] Ahmed, 2002, p. 55.

or welcoming the one who is recognised as a stranger that produces the figure of the stranger in the first place'[479].

What does this boundary drawing look like in practice? Ahmed draws on a variety of examples of how nations define themselves through encounters with the stranger, including through migration. Ahmed focuses primarily on how the figure of the stranger shakes our understanding of belonging within a nation. Given the link I have already established between cultural activity and our understanding of national identities, Ahmed's work has been influential insofar as it has allowed me to consider how 'strangers' manifest in the cultural sector. Key to this is the idea that the emphasis on 'community' within the cultural sector creates a working environment in which boundaries are drawn between 'us' and 'them' and renders some as strangers within the sector.

Whilst Ahmed argues that the figure of the stranger is made real through the act of boundary drawing, she also cautions against the assumption that this means we are all equally as likely to be a 'stranger'. Ahmed draws on the work of Bülent Diken, who also focuses on the role of the stranger in the discourses of nationhood. Diken reaches the conclusion that 'almost all people are in one way or another displaced', and that in some way or another we are all, in fact, strangers. In her discussion of Diken's work, Ahmed notes that this perspective means that strangeness 'is universalised as that which 'we' have in common'[480]. Diken concludes that 'within the stranger, we find ourselves'[481]. This, Ahmed argues, is a perspective drawn from psychoanalysis, and she quotes Julia Kristeva's statement that we should lean into the stranger within ourselves, asking 'how could one tolerate the stranger if one did not know one was a stranger to oneself?'[482]. This perspective is demonstrated by Ahmed to be limited, and she cautions against perceiving us all as a 'universe of strangers' because

> While identity itself may operate through the designation of others as strangers, rendering strangers internal rather than external to identity, to conclude simply that we are all strangers to ourselves is to avoid dealing with the political processes whereby some others are designated as *stranger than other others*[483].

[479] Ahmed, 2002, p. 4.
[480] Ahmed, 2002, p.6
[481] Diken, 1998, p. 334 in Ahmed, 2002, p.6
[482] Kristeva, 1991, p. 182 in Ahmed, 2002, p.6
[483] Ahmed, 2002, p.6

This distinction between the internal relationship to one's own strangeness and the external influences that make one more likely to be seen as a stranger is crucial to my understanding of how strangers are created within the Scottish cultural sector. As I have discussed in earlier chapters of this thesis, the cultural sector in Scotland has traditionally favoured a white, middle class, male voice. This reflects the inequalities entrenched in Scottish society more generally, and the 'political processes' through which such inequalities are created. These political processes include the attainment gap within the Scottish education system[484], the UK government's 'hostile environment' towards immigrants[485], and inequalities in access to healthcare[486].The result of these political processes is a society where a person's life – their education, health, their career prospects – are shaped by factors such as their class and racial identity. Therefore, no matter how much of a stranger a middle class, white person may feel within themselves, this is not the same as those who are marked as a 'stranger' by wider political mechanisms such as those mentioned above. This is a vital distinction when thinking about community within the cultural and creative sector because while all cultural and creative workers may experience feelings of 'imposter syndrome' and isolation on an individual level, this experience is not equivalent to the systemic inequality that marks marginalised people as 'strange' within cultural and creative spaces.

When theatre-maker Ishbel McFarlane and I spoke about the 'community' dynamic within the cultural sector, she quipped that 'they sort of feel like it's a family and it's like, I mean, it's a family, but only because families are also sort of shit'[487]. While McFarlane was being flippant, she offers a relevant observation about the way these terms are invoked in discussions about the cultural industries. For one, the appeal to family serves to naturalise particular social arrangements. Families are rarely non-hierarchical, even the most functional family units will have individuals – often parents – who hold more power and influence over other

[484] See Lucy Whyte, 'School attainment gap 'remains wide', watchdog warns', BBC News, 23rd March 2021, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-56489714 [Accessed 27/10/2021]
[485] See JCWI, 'The Hostile Environment Explained', JCWI, https://www.jcwi.org.uk/the-hostile-environment-explained [Accessed 27/10/2021]
[486] See Public Health Scotland, 'What are health inequalities?', Improving Health, http://www.healthscotland.scot/health-inequalities/what-are-health-inequalities [Accessed 27/10/2021]
[487] Ishbel McFarlane, Interview, 10th August 2020.

family members. Even if the sector did function as a family, this would not negate the need to critique those power dynamics. Family narratives in the workplace have also been critiqued in because they can enable exploitation, overwork and manipulation of staff and can conceal abusive dynamics[488]. In short, you should be able to critique your boss, ask for time off, or quit your job without feeling like you are letting down your 'family'. Furthermore, a person's experience of 'family' will change their understanding of what people mean when they say, 'we're all like a family', and our expectations of what that might look like will be shaped by our previous experiences. Our prior experiences of 'community' will have a similar impact. This is particularly important in the context of intersectionality. If you are, for example, a white man in Scotland, you are used to being represented, you are used to walking into a room and seeing people who look and speak like you. In the Scottish cultural sector, a white, middle-class man or woman is more likely to see themselves already represented in the 'community' of Scottish theatre. They are therefore more likely to see the existence of this community as a positive thing, and as a space where they can belong. In contrast, if you are someone who has experienced marginalization, and who looks in on this community from the outside and sees people to whom you do not relate and in whom you do not find yourself represented, your perception of this community may be radically different.

Ishbel went on to talk about the idea that 'privilege is invisible to itself'. We were discussing The Arches, and I will move on to that specific context in later sections of this chapter, but she noted that those who were comfortable at the Arches didn't see problems with the venue's practices because 'privilege is invisible to itself, and in-groups are invisible to themselves'[489]. This idea also applies to feminism, and as I have already discussed, an intersectional approach to feminism is key to making that privilege visible, which is the first step towards challenging that privilege. This is also clear in Ahmed's work. She illustrates how collapsing the identities of all women globally into a collective definition of

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[488] See Joe Pinsker, 'The Dark Side of Saying Work is 'Like a Family', 16th February 2022, *The Atlantic* https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2022/02/work-actually-is-like-a-family/622813/ and Justin Pot, 'We Need to Stop Referring to Work as Family. Here's why', 19th June 2021, *Fast Company* https://www.fastcompany.com/90647846/we-need-to-stop-referring-to-work-as-family-heres-why [Accessed 03/10/2022]

[489] Ishbel McFarlane, Interview, 10th August 2020

‘woman’ usually involves viewing some women as more advanced than others[490]. Drawing on the work of Chandra Mohanty, Ahmed argues that Western feminism has used ‘third world women’ as a means of furthering their own agenda, often positioning the third world woman as lesser than her western peers. Specifically, Ahmed states that the figure of the third world woman is invoked to represent the ‘progress’ made my Western women. She argues that ‘third world women come to define not simply what Western women are not (and hence what they are), but also what *they once were*, before feminism allowed Western women to be emancipated’[491]. Not only does this position Western women as inherently more advanced and ‘free’ than the third world woman, but it also positions them as the authority on feminism because they are the ones who are seen to have been ‘emancipated’ by this knowledge.

This also relates to what Ahmed defines as the ‘central question for post-colonial feminism’ – ‘who is speaking here?’.[492] This question refers to the dominance of certain – namely white, Western- voices in feminist movements, and is based on the work of Gayatri Spivak, who asks ‘does the subaltern woman speak?[493]. Ahmed states that this question ‘reminds us that feminism is implicated in the relations of force and authorisation that structure the very possibility of one speaking and the other being spoken for’[494]. Ahmed builds on this by stating that to fully understand the power structures that define who can and cannot speak, the question ‘who is knowing here?’ must be asked alongside the question of who speaks[495]. She argues that this is essential in order to understand not just who is speaking, but who is positioned as powerful and knowledgeable within the conversations. To illustrate this, Ahmed includes the example of white Australian feminist Diane Bell. Bell published an article about the rape of indigenous women by indigenous men and listed Topsy Napurrala Nelson – an indigenous woman – as a ‘co-author’. The article was entitled ‘Speaking about Rape is Everyone’s Business’. After the article was published, several complaints were made about Bell having co-opted the stories of aboriginal women, and of having appropriated

[490] Ahmed, 2002, p. 174.
[491] Ahmed, 2002, p. 165
[492] Ahmed, 2002, p. 60
[493] Ahmed, 2002, p. 61
[494] ibid
[495] ibid

Nelson's work[496]. Ahmed argues that the controversy around Bell's article is not just rooted in a conversation about who has the right to speak about the rape of aboriginal women, but is also about the extent to which Nelson can be heard within the article:

> The article was published in an international women's studies journal, in English. It fulfils some very specific formal and scholarly requirements in terms of language and argument…Nelson's writing is italicised, and separated off from the main body of text, which develops the over-arching framework and argument[497].

Although Nelson's words are used, she is othered within the article because it is bound by the conditions of academic publishing. Nelson's work is quite literally separated from Bell's, with the latter doing the arguing and 'knowing' whilst Nelson's words are used as evidence of Bell's knowing. What is clear in this example is that even when an individual speaks, they are not heard if the structures they are speaking in are not built to include them.

To demonstrate how this applies within the cultural and creative sector, I am drawn to the recent discussions – largely on social media - about 'passing the mic'. The phrase 'passing the mic' has been used in a few different contexts in recent years but was especially prominent during the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020. Initially, the phrase was used to encourage white allies to take a step back from actively participating in conversations, compelling them to instead listen to Black people's lived experiences[498]. Further to this, the phrase was then used in several different aspects of the debate around racial inequality. One example was the 'pass the mic Broadway' campaign, which saw popular white Broadway stars hand over their Instagram accounts to Black artists to share their work[499]. While in many ways campaigns such as this were an important demonstration of solidarity, and an acknowledgement of the disproportionate power that is held by white theatre-makers, I was also conscious of some problematic implications in the way this phrase became diluted over time. Much of the language around 'passing the mic' reinforced power dynamics which

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[496] See Diane Bell, 'White Women Can't Speak?' in Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitzinger (eds), *Representing the Other: A Feminism and Psychology Reader* (London, Sage, 1996)

[497] Ahmed, 2002, p. 63

[498] See Stephen Frost, 'Black Lives Matter: If You're White, Pass the Mic', *Forbes,* 3rd June 2020, https://www.forbes.com/sites/sfrost/2020/06/03/black-lives-matter-if-youre-white-pass-the-mic/ [Accessed 30/08/2021]

[499] See @passthemicbroadway on Instagram.

position white artists as generous and charitable in making this (often temporary) space for Black theatre-makers. Rather than necessarily challenging the structural inequalities that lead to the unequal distribution of power within the industry, these conversations could be seen to reinforce those dynamics by making the 'mic' something that belongs to white people and is automatically theirs to pass. In this conceptualising of the relationship between white and Black theatre-makers, the latter is consistently positioned as the stranger being invited into the space by the generous hosts. While Black creatives might have temporarily been heard and seen within this space, they are using the 'mic' that has been established as belonging to the white creative. This provides a moment of visibility but does nothing to challenge the systems through which inequality is created and sustained. As I discuss how the community of theatre-makers in Scotland functions, this power dynamic is one that I am conscious of as it relates to Black theatre-makers as well as to artists and cultural workers other marginalised groups. It leads me to question how the boundaries around who is and is not part of this Scottish theatre community can be reinforced, paradoxically, by behaviours that have the initial intention of making a space welcoming and inclusive.

The feeling of being an outsider within the Scottish theatre community was discussed further in my conversation with Ishbel McFarlane about her experiences with The Arches. She described discussing her work with her friend, playwright Gary McNair:

> Gary would be like, you should speak to LJ at The Arches or speak to Jackie at the Arches. He'd be like, she definitely wants to do this. And I'd be like, no, she wouldn't because who am I? I'm some wee gadgie[500] that like is one of a million, but to you because they're your friend, like privilege is invisible to itself and in-groups are invisible to themselves. So, the folks that were at The Arches, for example, this isn't. like specifically The Arches, but yeah, people that worked there and people that made work there felt it was such an open door…. They didn't see that it was a club because they're in the club, so they couldn't see the club[501].

This anecdote encapsulates the problematic aspects of 'community-building'. I will use The Arches as an example in this discussion because that is the venue that

[500] Gadgie is a colloquial Scottish term used to describe someone who is poorly educated and is often linked to hooliganism.
[501] Anonymous, Interview, 2020

was mentioned by Ishbel, and while this problem is not unique to The Arches, there are certain circumstances at The Arches that would perhaps make the privilege, or ‘club’, less visible. The Arches was founded in 1991, in the wake of Glasgow’s year as European City of Culture 1990. The venue had been renovated to house the *Glasgow’s Glasgow* exhibition as part of the City of Culture Programme but was then closed. Andy Arnold obtained access to the space for Mayfest 1991, which led to further funding to use the venue for performance events[502]. He later began using club nights as a way to subsidise performances in the venue[503]. Under the leadership of Arnold and, later, Jackie Wylie, The Arches would become known as one of Scotland’s most exciting and influential venues until its sudden closure following the loss of its late alcohol license and subsequent insolvency in 2015. In particular, The Arches gained a reputation for producing experimental performances that differed from the literary dramatic tradition which was represented at the other major venues in Scotland. Ian Smith, who was co-director of performance troupe Mischief La Bas until his death in 2014[504], once stated that The Arches during Andy Arnold’s tenure was

> started with a love of theatre, not commerce. No other venue has achieved or maintained credibility in the same way. Andy Arnold has a safe pair of hands, but he’s not scared to look, listen, or hand over the reins to the mad people on a regular basis[505].

In her interview for *BRICKWORK*, L J Findlay-Walsh expressed similar sentiments when describing the origins of the *Behaviour* festival at The Arches:

> And then of course, there's something about the name 'Behaviour' that really spoke to the moment, because of course it speaks about the human condition, but it also speaks about mischief and bad behaviour, and I do think that The Arches was seen as that from the outside. And maybe we all enjoyed that on some level - the kind of renegade aspect of what we were doing. The bad behaviour, perhaps. The being left to our own devices[506].

This view of The Arches as a space for the ‘mad people’, outsiders and renegades, and a space where those voices were not just heard but where they led, was key to the venue’s identity, both in Scotland and across the UK.

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[502] For a fuller account of the beginning of The Arches, see David Bratchpiece and Kirsten Innes, *BRICKWORK: A Biography of the Arches* (Edinburgh, Salamander Street, 2021)

[503] The List, ‘History of the Arches’, *The List,* 18th September 2006, https://www.list.co.uk/article/189-history-of-the-arches/ [Accessed 31/08/2021]

[504] See Mark Brown, ‘Ian Smith: An Appreciation’, *The List*, 15th September 2014, https://www.list.co.uk/article/64739-ian-smith-an-appreciation/ [Accessed 31/08/2021]

[505] Ian Smith in The List, 2006.

[506] LJ Findlay Walsh in David Bratchpiece and Kirstin Innes, 2021, p. 142

Ishbel McFarlane recognised this, pointing out that The Arches had a reputation for being open to work and to artists that wouldn't necessarily be programmed elsewhere

> it was just like 'they'll do anything' and it was, in loads of ways, compared to other, like the scratch was a really important thing that anybody could do. And that like folk came to see, like actually came to see and whereas, you know, thinking about getting the Artistic Director of a theatre coming to see the scratch and, you know, the Tron scratch you have to apply for and like you have to go through a process. Whereas at The Arches, it was just like, you want to do it? You can do it[507].

The dichotomy that she presents – where The Arches was simultaneously an experimental space that gave people opportunities who perhaps would not have found them elsewhere but was also a 'club' that some felt excluded from – demonstrates the complexity of claims of 'community' and communal belonging within the cultural sector. McFarlane expanded on these comments in an interview with Stephen Greer for his podcast, *The Soloist*. McFarlane offered two separate elements of the culture at The Arches that made the environment feel particularly alienating. Firstly, she explained that the venue's reputation for experimental performance art meant that she felt there wasn't necessarily space for her more narrative based work. She described feeling that her work was perhaps too experimental for more traditional venues such as the Tron Theatre but not experimental enough for The Arches[508]. This, she acknowledges, proved to be partly false assumption, as she was eventually awarded The Arches' Platform 18 award for her piece *O is For Hoolet* which she performed at the venue's *Behaviour* festival in 2015[509]. Perhaps the more difficult element of the culture at The Arches to overcome was McFarlane's sense of the venue's figurative 'club' of artists. In *The Soloist*, McFarlane critiqued the conversations about The Arches' legacy in Scotland. She queried if, in the desire to celebrate and recreate the atmosphere of the venue, the perspective of those who had *not* felt included was overlooked. Much like in our conversation, she tells Greer that those in the 'club' could not see that to those outside of the 'club', The Arches felt 'like a closed door'[510]. She emphasises that this was not malicious behaviour but reflected 'the nature of

[507] Ishbel McFarlane, Interview, 10th August 2020,
[508] Ishbel McFarlane in Steve Greer (host), 'Ishbel McFarlane', *The Soloist* [audio podcast], < https://stevegreer.org/the-soloist-podcast/> [Accessed 20/12/2021]
[509] Ishbel McFarlane, 'O is for Hoolet', https://ishbelmcfarlane.wordpress.com/o-is-for-hoolet/ [Accessed 20/12/2021]
[510] Ishbel McFarlane, *The Soloist,*2021

human beings'. What was clear in my conversation with McFarlane was that while venues like The Arches may have structures, policies, and events such as the scratch night in place that are intended to make their venue open and inclusive, it is often in the unspoken and informal aspects of an organisation's work that these 'cliques' and 'clubs' appear. And when a venue such as The Arches is largely dominated by people who have found themselves seen as 'the mad people', the outsiders or 'the strangers' within traditional theatre spaces, it can be more difficult for those individuals to then see themselves as an 'in group'.

This complexity also extends to explicitly feminist spaces. Ishbel McFarlane discussed making her show *Newhaven Fishwives* at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery with Stellar Quines in 2014. I asked her if working with an all-female team changed the rehearsal and performance experience and she responded that:

> I was struck in that… just the kind of relaxation that came from being in a room of all women…now I feel my, my kind of feminism is more intersectional than it was then. And so, and I might feel now that part of that relaxation, wasn't just that it was all women, but it was all women of the same class and, and pretty racially... I feel there were, it wasn't all white, but it was very dominant white, um, and in a very white space, you know, at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery[511].

Here, McFarlane illustrates how even companies like Stellar Quines, with an explicit remit for supporting female artists, can contribute to the exclusion of intersectional voices. *Newhaven Fishwives* was a feminist piece that focused on the relationship between women in the workplace, drawing parallels between the contemporary office worker and the fishwives captured in one of the portraits in the gallery[512]. It was an important intervention in a space that is largely dominated by portraits of men and was a creative response to the issue of gender inequality in Scotland[513]. While it was a feminist work, and one where McFarlane felt comfortable and relaxed, she acknowledges that it may have contributed to sustaining inequitable structures of practice because it centred the perspectives and experiences of white, middle-class women. This demonstrates, much like the dynamic I have discussed at The Arches, that even spaces which are intended to

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[511] Ishbel McFarlane, Interview, 10th August 2020
[512] Ishbel McFarlane, 'Newhaven Fishwives: Untaught to Shine', https://ishbelmcfarlane.wordpress.com/newhaven-fishwives-untaught-to-shine/ [Accessed 25/10/2021]
[513] Thom Dibdin, 'Theatre Pops back up in Portrait Gallery', *All Edinburgh Theatre,* 8th May 2014, http://www.alledinburghtheatre.com/theatre-pops-back-up-in-portrait-gallery/ [Accessed 25/10/2021]

be inclusive and welcoming can contribute to feelings of exclusion within the supposed ‘community’ of the cultural sector.

Moreover, because this was a feminist piece that was providing a positive working environment for some women, and a positive experience for some audience members, it can be more difficult to acknowledge the harm it may be doing to others. With this in mind, it is notable that McFarlane describes her feeling of relaxation as directly relating to the fact that she was in a room not just of women, but of women *like her*. This is an example of the discomfort that comes with encountering ‘the stranger’. Ahmed discusses the various ways in which we are conditioned to fear the stranger – the concept of ‘stranger danger’ being taught to children or the existence of ‘neighbourhood watch’, for example – and to use the presence of the stranger to further define who does and does not belong[514]. While those involved in *Newhaven Fishwives* might not have had intentions of being exclusionary, the comfort that McFarlane felt by being surrounded by other, similar women, is an example of how communities are frequently built on the existence of an ‘us’ who belong, and an implied ‘them’ who do not. This dynamic also relates to Wreyford’s discussion of ‘trust’ in networking. Wreyford cites Rosabeth Kanter, who stated that ‘in conditions of uncertainty, people fall back on social similarity as a basis for trust’[515]. The conditions of uncertainty both apply in terms of the material conditions of work, and in the experience of participating in that work. That is to say, much like the ‘risk reduction’ strategy Wreyford writes about, the concept of ‘trust’ within the community of the cultural sector can function as a justification for programming or hiring individuals who are familiar and, by extension, assumed trustworthy. This can mean hiring people that are already known to a venue or organisation or hiring people who are seen to be ‘like’ those. As McFarlane suggests often this presumed ‘likeness’ is on the basis of identity markers such as race and class.

A final aspect of ‘community’ within the sector that can be detrimental to artists is the fact that an emphasis on informal communities can undermine the actual community building work that is done within the sector. As I discussed in the previous chapter, community and outreach work within the cultural industries

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[514] Ahmed, 2002.
[515] Rosabeth Kanter, 1997 in Wreyford, 2015, p. 91

is often led by women and is an aspect of the industry that can be overlooked. The rhetoric of community and family in the cultural sector can serve to conceal and further devalue the specific, conscious labour of those who work in community outreach. For example, Annie George told the following story about an interaction with a senior member of staff at the National Theatre of Scotland:

> When [NTS] set up, they didn't have a budget for diversity, so he was applying for the same fund that people like me were applying for, for projects, if they wanted [access to] diversity funds. Right? And so, he wanted me to, they had a personal assistant, who's a friend of mine, and she got in touch with me, and she says, oh, [senior member of staff] is really interested in doing a project with communities. And he wanted to know, he basically wanted all my information, which had built up over like 20 years, you know?... And basically, he wanted all my ideas and contacts and all that sort of stuff. And I said, well, then, why don't you develop me as an artist because they were developing artists and he said well I don't know your work. And it's like, well, come see my work.[516]

Not only does this anecdote demonstrate that in the early years of NTS diversity was somewhat of an afterthought without its own dedicated budget, but it also shows the inequality in 'community building' strategies. From George's perspective, this senior figure approached their encounter with a level of power, privilege, and connections that George did not have. The contacts that they wanted to get from George were ones she had built over the course of her career as an artist working in community settings. She had built these contacts from her marginalised position as a woman of colour and also as a freelance artist working with little organisational input or support. Locating this within Ahmed's work on the stranger and community, I would argue that the senior staff member's position both as a white man and as a member of a high-profile organisation gives him a status of unquestioned belonging within the community of Scottish theatre. Thus, his request comes from a position of power that makes it possible for him to take shortcuts to connections that others, such as George, will have to work to create. In failing to recognise the act of making connections and creating pockets of community within the sector as work, the senior staff member made George feel as if that work had been devalued.

[516] Annie George, Interview, 19th August 2020.

I would argue that this can partly be attributed to the fact that in an industry which sees itself as a community, the skill that goes into actually bringing people into the community through outreach work is undermined and taken for granted because it is seen as a given that such connections already exist. This is especially the case for those who are used to being a part of the theatre 'community' and therefore can feel a sense of entitlement to connections that others must earn. Returning to Frances Poet's comment that networking is 'just your pals', the implication that for many, being part of the Scottish theatre community feels natural and these connections come with relative ease can make it difficult to comprehend that for others, and in particular for marginalised people, these connections might require more work. Moreover, when she suggests that he mentor her as an artist and he replies, 'I don't know your work', this senior figure positions George on the outside of the community. Whilst he acknowledges that she is useful to him in so far as her ability to provide information that he needs, he makes it clear that he has little interest in her as an artist. George referenced that this experience was one of the reasons that at one stage she considered leaving the Scottish cultural industries altogether. While this example is just one perspective on an event, it is representative of how people in positions of power within the theatre community can draw boundaries that make others feel unwelcome, and of how the perception of community building as something that simply happens naturally can undermine the work of community and outreach practitioners.

The emphasis on 'community' within the cultural sector can contribute to a false sense of non-hierarchical working with the industry. If the perception is that we are all simply 'friends', 'community members' or 'family', it can be easy to ignore the unequal power dynamics that exist between cultural workers. But even families have hierarchies and power imbalances that shape the relationship between family members. Thinking about leadership in relation to these networks and communities allows me to examine the ways in which power and hierarchy functions within the Scottish cultural sector. These power dynamics have particular significance for women because – as I will discuss in the next section – they must reconcile their power to lead within the industry with the disadvantages and discrimination they may still face even in that position of power. Before I move on to focus on leadership, I first want to emphasise the importance that

thinking about these networks and communities – and the power dynamics within them – holds in relation to cultural leadership as a form of imagining the community of the nation. I have established how networking and communities within the cultural sector can create or exacerbate inequities for marginalised people. If cultural activity is crucial to creating the imagined community, then understanding the context in which that work is created provides insight into how the narratives of a nation are produced. Understanding who is allowed 'in' to the community of the sector, and crucially who can progress to leadership positions, provides fresh insight into who is writing the narratives of Scottish theatre and who, in turn, is contributing to the overall sense of Scotland's cultural and national identity.

'I'm not a gatekeeper, I'm a fangirl'[517]: Leadership

Navigating the hierarchies within the cultural sector from a position of leadership requires individuals to acknowledge their power in order to use it to lead and benefit others. However, this can this be particularly challenging for women who may simultaneously be disadvantaged by their gender and in a position of power within the sector. In this section, I will argue that acknowledging one's power even within systems where you may feel disadvantaged is key to feminist leadership and that this transparency about where power lies is a crucial first step to dismantling the hierarchies that exist within the sector. There was one particular story from my conversations with the interviewees that illustrated how an awareness of the power that one holds is crucial to leadership within the cultural sector. One of the interviewees – a freelance theatre-maker- described meeting the Artistic Director of a major venue in Edinburgh. This Artistic Director had reached out to artist to discuss her work and her expertise in Scots language. He had asked her to set up a meeting, she described this as 'really exciting' and phoned his secretary to make an appointment.[518] The first available meeting was six months after the initial email. She described arriving at the venue to meet him:

> So, I came through to the theatre and, uh, I went to the stage door, and they were like, Oh, [Artistic Director]'s at, you know, he had meetings and he's at the cafe around the corner. So, he wants you to meet there. Um, so we

[517] LJ Findlay-Walsh, Interview, 24th August 2020
[518] Anonymous, Interview, 2020

went, I went around the corner and he's like, ah, you know, he's obviously incredibly busy. It's not just like maliciousness, you know? Eh he's incredible busy. He's had meetings back-to-back. He's got that meeting and he needs to eat. So, he like is in this cafe and he's like, I thought it would be better for us to meet here cause it's just a nicer environment. It's not in the dark, you know, it's got windows and stuff. To me being, having a meeting in the [venue], would have been much better because the number of reasons, one of them was that, you know, we'd walk through and he would be like, Oh, [participant] this is Jean, who's the head producer, [participant] is a theatre-maker, I know her through this way and I'd you know chat, chat, chat, and I'd like, feel more relaxed. I've never been backstage at the [venue] but l think I'd feel more relaxed in that space. He'd be like, oh, you should speak, you know, blah, blah, blah.

Anyway, we're in this bar. There's no room, we're on a fucking high, high table with no footrest. And I'm like, and the first thing he said is, the first thing he says is, I'm sorry, this is a bit rude, but why are we meeting? And I'm just like, you asked me to come in. So, I felt like I was there as an expert, you know, and that he needed to consult with me. Um, and then, then I'm sort of justifying myself and, and then he does, various like, he's, you know, he's so clever, but again, I'm like at a hundred percent and at one point he's like, you know, translations into Scots of European plays. Like, there's just not enough of them, you know, it goes straight into English. So, if you could address right now, if I could commission you to translate one, play in a European language, into Scots language, what would it be like...uh again with like, I've never seen theatre? (laughs) Yeah. And so, he threw loads of stuff at me about various things. And then I was like, okay, I need to think about some of those things. And I sort of fumbled my way through it a bit. And I sent him a long email afterwards with like answers to his things, being like, you know, we're going to meet up again and then nothing.

Um, to him it was so it was just like people meeting and I think he still thinks of us.... you know, I'm not young. I was in that meeting. I was like 30. I'm not like 20, still at uni or whatever, but he sees us as peers. And I see [the relationship between us] as like a huge imbalance for a number of reasons[519].

There are several small moments within this anecdote which demonstrate the subtle ways that power imbalances can manifest in interactions between artists. Firstly, it seemed to me that throughout this interaction, the Artistic Director failed to acknowledge that this meeting with the interviewee was work for her. He reached out to her to discuss a subject – Scots language – in which this interviewee was highly skilled and well informed. She had prepared for the meeting, had paid to travel from her home in Glasgow to Edinburgh, and she followed up on their conversation with a lengthy email which took time and skill to compose. All these things are work and came at a cost to the interviewee but,

[519] ibid

as she said, he seemed to view this meeting as simply a chat between peers. The informal nature of this ‘chat’ became further complicated by the Artistic Director changing the location at the last minute. As the interviewee highlighted, there are advantages to meeting within a venue. Her desire to meet and be introduced to other members of staff is understandable, given the importance of networking in creating opportunities within the sector. This last-minute change of plans is also likely to make the interviewee feel flustered, especially given that earlier in our conversation she mentioned being nervous about this meeting.

What struck me as I listened to the interviewee’s narration of this encounter was the moment where the Artistic Director could not remember why they were meeting. Had this situation happened in reverse, and the interviewee had arrived for a meeting for which she had not prepared, that would have reflected badly on her. There would have been a risk for the interviewee of reputational damage if she was seen as either uniformed about her area of expertise, or as unprepared and someone who does not take the opportunity to discuss her work with an Artistic Director seriously. To return to the idea that the cultural sector is a community, the importance of reputation within that community is clear. It is therefore vital in situations such as this meeting for that freelance theatre-maker to make a ‘good impression’ not just because of the opportunities that the Artistic Director can provide directly but because of the possibility that he can provide further contacts and links within the community. In this example, the blurred lines between a community and network are obvious. A community in which individuals have the power to create professional opportunities for one another is, in many ways, a network. And yet, community has connotations of care, support, and companionship that a network, perhaps, does not. This blurring of the lines is what makes interactions like the one described above particularly difficult, because a meeting which seems, in theory, like a positive and friendly encounter comes with an often unspoken set of expectations and pressures.

Whilst this interaction could be read as a one-off incident of unprofessionalism from a man who – as the interviewee herself noted – is ‘incredibly busy’ and overstretched, it takes on wider significance because of the power dynamics that it reveals. The final statement from the interviewee that ‘he

sees us as peers, and I see us as a huge imbalance for a number of reasons' summarises this dynamic and illustrates the importance of how leaders perceive themselves and how they acknowledge the power that they hold. Later in our conversation, the interviewee made the observation that the Artistic Director and others in positions of power can 'still see themselves as like scrambling around and desperate and therefore not as people with power who are the people that they railed at'[520]. To return to my earlier discussion of how it can be difficult on an organisational level to recognise how the working conditions within a venue or company may differ from the lived experiences of those working for or with the organisation, it can be similarly challenging to recognise on an individual level how one contributes to inequality within the sector. This becomes especially difficult if you perceive yourself to be an activist or someone who 'rails' against the people with power.

This tension between how leaders see themselves and how are they perceived by others was also illustrated by LJ Findlay-Walsh. In our conversation about the qualities, she thought were important in leaders within the cultural sector, she mentioned that someone had once referred to her as a gatekeeper, to which she responded: 'people in my position are fangirls, I am nothing but a glorified fangirl working for those who I hold in such high respect, like "I am at their service"'[521]. Indeed, people who work in leadership positions within the theatre industry will likely have pursued that career at least partly because they enjoy theatre and enjoy working with artists, and so there is an element of 'fangirl' in many of these leadership positions. This can be clear both in the ways that they work with artists, and the factors that inform how they choose artists to work with. Findlay-Walsh expanded on her approach to leadership in *BRICKWORKS*,

> I think the beautiful thing about The Arches, and the thing I've taken away from my experience at The Arches and taken into how I work within Take Me Somewhere and so on, is that it isn't really a top-down approach in terms of what we presented, it was really responding to the innovation that already existed within Glasgow. Just really keenly immersing yourself in what artists are doing in the moment, from a very early point in their practice. We were also really immersed within the artistic community that we were also trying to support.[522]

[520] Anonymous, Interview, 2020.
[521] LJ Findlay Walsh, Interview, 25th August 2020
[522] LJ Findlay Walsh in David Bratchpiece and Kirsten Innes, 2021, p. 144

This provides more context for Findlay-Walsh's description of herself as a 'fangirl', rather than a gatekeeper. It is clear that she views a close working relationship with artists as central to her role as an Artistic Director, and in rejecting the 'top down' approach she is able to develop close working relationships with artists. She described how this type of working practice benefitted The Arches, and was crucial to the venue's success:

> Jackie and I used to joke about how we knew we were punching above our weight in terms of getting some of these artists back, but we had offered them such a good time and such a good party and had really brought them into what we considered to be The Arches community and The Arches way of being, and that that offer separated us from the crowd. And we often got artists back that we wouldn't have got otherwise, if we'd gone down a more traditional method of how you host artists. It often wasn't traditional…it was important, because you don't just fall in love with the work, you fall in love with the artist. It's hard not to create those kinds of relationships. And at that time, and space, we had the time to invest in that way[523].

Findlay-Walsh demonstrates both how a perception of 'community' functioned positively in the Arches and how, crucially, the working environment at The Arches allowed for the time and space to invest in the artists they work with. The emphasis on experimental practice, as well as the fact that the venue held regular Scratch nights designed for artists to share work that was in development, and the wider reputation of the venue as somewhere that platformed the work of 'renegades' and 'outsiders', all contributed to the ability for Findlay-Walsh and Wylie to take time and energy to invest in work that they viewed as important. The 'fangirl' element of Findlay-Walsh's leadership is clear in the warmth with which she spoke of the artists that she works with, and in the long-standing relationships that she builds with those artists.

However, it is possible to be both a gatekeeper and a fangirl. Artistic Directors, alongside other senior figures within arts organisations, have the power to give career changing opportunities to artists and this shapes the interactions between an artist and an Artistic Director. The 'love' that Findlay-Walsh describes having for artists she works with is in many ways a positive thing in the sense that it makes her a passionate leader, however, I am conscious of the ways in which 'love' might function in a similar way to 'risk' within the cultural sector. That is

[523] LJ Findlay Walsh in David Bratchpiece and Kirsten Innes, 2021, p. 143

to say that when Artistic Directors are driven by 'love', they may be making value judgements about an artist's work based on unconscious biases about what makes good work, or on how they feel about that artist as a person rather than the quality of their work. Furthermore, Artistic Directors have limited time and resources, and it raises the question of how the love that an Artistic Director might feel for one artist may disadvantage another. I have already discussed the ways in which the 'community' within a venue like The Arches might make people feel excluded, and the love that Findlay-Walsh describes can function in the same way.

Identity Politics in Leadership

There are specific implications of the 'fangirl' and 'gatekeeper' relationship in the context of gender inequality. The existing data shows that women in positions of leadership tend to create opportunities for other women in a kind of cyclical effect, however, this does not mean that having a small number of very successful women within the cultural industries will automatically lead to a sector that is more egalitarian [524]. In short, there is a crucial difference between being a female leader and a feminist leader. In addition to the conversation I had with Annie George, more than one interviewee described being bullied or feeling unsupported by female bosses. To honour their desire for these stories to remain private, I will not discuss them in close detail, but these experiences offer an important nuance to the discussion about female leadership. If we focus only on quantitative data and on the percentage of women that are holding positions within the sector, it leaves little room for an understanding of the relationships between these women. Specifically, it leaves little space to consider how these relationships are shaped by intersectionality, and how they can work to reinforce inequality within the sector. As a person climbs 'the ladder' of a career in the arts, their relationship to power shifts, and this can be difficult to accept if a person's sense of personal and professional identity has hinged on being marginalised, or in challenging the status quo. Naturally, I am particularly focused on the implications for this in the context of women's leadership, but it has wider relevance across a variety of contexts due to the increasing focus on identity politics in discourses around leadership. It is important to fully understand how identity politics functions within women's leadership of the cultural sector because it allows for further insight into the complexity of relationships within

[524] See Purple Seven, *Gender in Theatre: Based on trends 2012-2015,* (London, Purple Seven, 2015)

the networks and communities of the Scottish cultural sector. In turn, this allows for a deeper understanding of how leadership functions within these communities.

The term ‘identity politics has been widely employed across a number of political contexts in recent years, but the phrase was first used to advance a feminist critique by Barbara Smith and the Combahee River Collective in 1974.[525] The Combahee River Collective were a group of Black, lesbian activists who used ‘identity politics’ in a paper that set out define and clarify the collective’s politics. In this work, they used the phrase to express their argument that ‘the most profound and potentially most radical politics come directly from our own identity’.[526] In this early iteration of the phrase it overlaps significantly with the concept of intersectionality, as was clear in this example used by the Collective:

> We believe that sexual politics under patriarchy is as pervasive in Black women’s lives, as are the politics of class and race. We also often find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously. We know that there is such a thing as racial-sexual oppression which is neither solely racial nor solely sexual, e.g. the history of rape of Black women by white men as a weapon of political repression.[527]

Here, the Collective demonstrate how ‘identity politics’ foregrounds personal, lived experiences in discussions of broader political issues – in this case, they view political repression through the lens of Black, sexual violence victims. In particular, the Collective argue that identity politics is necessary for Black women because instead of ‘working to end someone else’s oppression’, it prioritises their need ‘to be recognised as human’ in ways that other political movements have not allowed.[528] At its core, the identity politics described by the Collective rejects political processes in which the struggles of marginalised people are ignored. This foundation still underpins many of the contemporary understandings of identity politics, however, the phrase has been broadened to include groups other than Black women. I will borrow Susan Hekman’s definition of identity politics as ‘the organization of political movements around specific identities – women,

[525] Alicia Garza, ‘Identity Politics: Friend or Foe?’, The Othering and Belonging Institute, 24th September 2019, https://belonging.berkeley.edu/identity-politics-friend-or-foe [Accessed 29/10/2021]
[526] Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, https://americanstudies.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Keyword%20Coalition_Readings.pdf 1974 [Accessed 29/10/2021].
[527] ibid
[528] ibid

racial/ethnic groups, gays, lesbians, and so on – instead of around political ideology or particular political issues'[529].

Identity politics have also been met with some criticism and resistance. Merriam Webster define identity politics as 'politics in which groups of people having a particular racial, religious, ethnic, social or cultural identity tend to promote their own specific interests or concerns without regard to the interests or concerns of any larger political group'[530]. This definition is notable because it illustrates some of the assumptions that are made about identity politics even within purportedly neutral sources such as the dictionary. The notion that identity politics comes at the expense of any 'larger political group' assumes that there are other forms of politics in which all groups are equally catered to and in which no one group's interest is catered to above – or at the expense of – another. This is unrealistic, and directly contradicts the very basis for the Collective's work on identity politics, and of later work on intersectionality. The negative connotations of identity politics can be seen in current media debates on a variety of social issues. Much like 'political correctness' or, more recently 'woke', 'identity politics' is a phrase that has been employed by right wing politicians and media in vague terms in order to criticise social justice movements.

In the context of UK politics, this can be illustrated by looking at Keir Starmer's leadership of the Labour Party. Since Labour's defeat in the 2019 election, there has been a great deal of discussion about how Starmer's party should attempt to win over new voters and, crucially, win back old voters who did not support the party in 2019. The role of identity politics in the party's policies has been a key source of debate. Writing in socialist publication *Morning Star,* Beck Robertson blamed Labour's focus on identity politics for their 2019 election defeat, arguing that 'traditional working-class Labour voters' were driven away by the fact that the party was fixated on 'liberal identity politics'[531]. In illustrating this, she cites their focus on 'issues such as reforming the Gender

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[529] Susan Hekman, 'Beyond Identity: Feminism, Identity and Identity Politics', *Feminist Theory,* 1:3, 2000, pp 289-308, p. 305

[530] Merriam Webster, 'identity politics', Merriam Webster https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/identity%20politics [Accessed 29/10/2021]

[531] Beck Robertson, 'To win back the Working Class, we must ditch Identity Politics', *Morning Star,* 12th January 2020, https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/f/win-back-working-class-we-must-ditch-identity-politics [Accessed 12/04/2022]

recognition act to allow self-ID for transgender people, charging white people more to hear Corbyn speak in Loughborough or decrying those displaying the English flag as racist'[532]. The examples Robertson gives here make it clear who she presumes to be the 'traditional' Labour voter, and it is even clearer given that the headline states that 'to win back the working class we must ditch identity politics'[533]. This focus on identity politics as being oppositional to working class concerns is a recurring theme in numerous commentaries on the Labour party, from all sides of the political spectrum. In *CapX,* an online publication founded to 'make the case for popular capitalism'[534], Tom Harris argues that Labour should continue 'its historic role in fighting for the conditions and rights of all working people' rather than placing 'identity-whether race, gender, sex or religion- front and centre'[535]. A similar sentiment is put forward by Rakib Ehsan and Doug Stokes in their article for *The Critic*. They argue that a focus on identity politics has been driven by Labour's 'overwhelmingly middle class, metropolitan, graduate base' who find it 'feasible that today's privately educated, ethnic minority, female Cambridge graduate may be more oppressed than yesterday's white, male miner'[536]. Whilst these commentaries take different approaches to their critique of identity politics, they reveal both how the term has come to be used to refer in vague terms to any kind of advocation for a marginalised group, and how certain identities are treated as default, whilst others are marked as 'identity politics'. In positioning white, working-class men as somehow the opposition to 'identity politics' not only do they erase the experiences of non-white, working class people, they also present 'white, working-class' as a kind of neutral status, rather than itself an identity with its own politics.

Whilst I have demonstrated the flaws in criticisms of identity politics that rest on the notion that some identities are a neutral default, my own critique of identity politics within the context of female cultural leadership rests on the notion that an overemphasis on a person's individual identity can disguise the wider power dynamics at play in cultural leadership. My arguments are rooted in

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[532] ibid
[533] ibid
[534] CAPX, 'About', https://capx.co/about/ [Accessed 12/04/2022]
[535] Tom Harris, 'Can Starmer stop Labour spiralling into the identity politics abyss?', *CAPX,* 25th June 2020, https://capx.co/can-starmer-stop-labours-spiral-into-the-identity-politics-abyss/ [Accessed 12/04/2022]
[536] Rakib Ehsan and Doug Stokes, 'Poor White Men and Labour's Identity Trap', *The Critic,* May 2021, https://thecritic.co.uk/issues/may-2021/poor-white-men-and-labours-identity-trap/ [Accessed 12/04/2022]

feminist critiques of identity politics, many of which are informed by Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*. Within the context of feminist leadership, I am particularly interested in their writing on power. Central to Butler's argument is the claim that 'feminist critique ought also to understand how the category of 'woman', the subject of woman, is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought'.[537] Essentially, the notion that there is a definitive category of 'woman' disguises the systems of power that create gender, and in turn create gender inequality. Butler argues that rather than focus on identities as fixed, deconstructing these structures 'can establish as political the very terms through which identity is articulated'.[538] They also relate this to intersectionality, refuting

> The political assumption that there must be a universal basis for feminism, one which must be found in an identity assumed to exist cross-culturally, often accompanies the notion that the oppression of women has some singular form discernible in the universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy or masculine domination.[539]

This statement aligns with the work I have already shared about intersectionality, but I raise this point again here because when thinking about how power structures work to 'create' gender, the mechanisms which create gender do not necessarily create gender equally for all. In her analysis of Butler's work, Susan Hekman writes that 'the differences that identity politics embrace are the differences that society creates and enforces'.[540] She continues her analysis by stating that 'the identities of identity politics are not tailored to individual differences. Nor do they recognise identities as fluid and constructed. Rather, they fix identity in a new location'[541]. This encourages a sense of hegemony within such identity groups, failing to address the nuance of relationships between people who fall under the wider bracket of an identity like 'woman'. Butler, and Hekman's analysis of Butler's work, demonstrates two key ideas in the context of identity politics and cultural leadership. The first is that such identities are created through power dynamics, and that an understanding of identity that fails to consider the relationship to power is incomplete. Secondly, that because identities are constructed rather than naturally occurring, they are also reflecting wider

[537] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity,* (New York and London, Routledge, 1999), p. 5
[538] Butler 1990 in Hekman, 2000, p.292
[539] Butler, 1999, p. 6
[540] Hekman, 2000, p. 296
[541] Hekman, 2000, p. 295

inequalities within society – this is clear both in the labelling advocating for marginalised groups as 'identity politics' and in conceptualisations of identities such as 'woman' that fail to recognise the individual differences within such categories. In highlighting the relationship between identity and power, Butler and Hekman both capture a tension in the relationship to power for female leaders.

As I have shown in both this and the previous chapter, women are disadvantaged within the cultural industries and face barriers to leadership on the grounds of their gender. When women progress to leadership positions, they still face inequality that shapes their careers. But if we only focus on the inequality that women leaders face, it conceals the fact that they can also contribute to that inequality themselves. The limitation of thinking about leadership within the context of identity politics is that it encourages a perception of one's identity as a leader as a static, unchanging entity. To see feminist leadership as something that you are – 'I am a feminist and a leader therefore I am a feminist leader' – rather than something you do – 'My leadership is led by feminist principles that seek to better the working lives of all women'– risks creating a tokenistic approach to women's leadership within the sector. Furthermore, given that Butler has established how the construction of 'woman' is shaped by external power dynamics, this raises the question of how the construction of 'woman leader' is further shaped by such dynamics. Rather than focusing on how many women are in the industry, it is perhaps more useful to question how the figure of the female leader has been constructed by assumptions about women that rest on power structures that have benefitted white, middle-class women at the expense of other, marginalised women. In doing so, these power structures are made visible and scrutinised. The question of 'where are the women?' has been asked – and answered – by Christine Hamilton, but the simple number of women in a given role – even a leadership role – only goes so far in answering the wider question of what it means for women to lead culturally within Scotland. In order to answer that question, it is necessary for me to build on the work of Hamilton and others who have focused on gender inequality, focusing instead on how women's relationship to cultural activity is shaped by power – both power they hold and power that is exercised against them.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I set out to establish how 'community' functions within the cultural sector, and what it means to be a leader in this context. I have argued that the reliance on networking, and in particular on informal social networks, within the sector perpetuates inequality. Whilst women I spoke to often shared positive experiences of networking, it was clear that such networks often excluded marginalised people. Drawing work from Wreyford, Pedulla and Pager and O'Brien, Brook, and Taylor, I demonstrated that networks disadvantage workers based on gender, race, and class. I argued that the tendency to hire from within one's own 'network' led to a dominance of white, middle-class voices and meant that the same, small group of people were repeatedly given opportunities. This led me to consider the tendency amongst interviewees to refer to the sector as a 'community'. Thinking about communities in relation to Sara Ahmed's work on the stranger, I argued that although the rhetoric around communities was positive, they had the potential to exacerbate marginalisation. Whilst a community may seem like a positive thing to those involved, it often necessitates exclusion in so far as it differentiates between those who are 'in' the community and those who are not. Drawing on Annie George's account of her experience with a senior figure from NTS, I also argued that the idea of the cultural sector as a community can devalue the work that goes into community and relationship building within the sector, especially from a marginalized position.

With the inequalities in networking and communities in mind, I turned my attention to leadership within the cultural sector. The rhetoric around community might give a false sense of non-hierarchal working, but as I have demonstrated leaders within the industry have a great deal of power. Because of this, it is crucial that those in leadership positions acknowledge and are transparent about the power that they hold. In the anecdotes I shared, it was clear that when leaders failed to do this, it led to confusion and to women feeling undervalued and ostracised within the sector. Moreover, the lack of transparency around leadership can conceal the power dynamics which contribute to inequality within the sector, particularly when it comes to female leadership. As I established latterly in this chapter, a focus on female leadership within the sector – and of the power that women hold – provides fresh insight into the intersectional inequality within the sector because it moves away from focusing on the number

of women in a given position in the sector, and instead allows for consideration of the experiences of these women and the extent to which women – especially white, middle class women - can sustain inequality within the sector.

In the next chapter, I will move on to focus more specifically on the creative work that results from women's cultural leadership in Scotland. The findings of this thesis so far have demonstrated that women's leadership is significant in relation to gender inequality, but that it also plays an important role in cultivating a cohesive sense of cultural and national identity in Scotland. The work I have done in this chapter establishing how women's leadership functions provides important context for this next chapter because it has highlighted some of the mechanisms through which women progress to leadership positions, and it shows how hierarchies within the sector limit the potential for marginalized women to have their voices heard through their creative work. As I move on to focus on case studies of women's creative work, I do so with an acute awareness of how inequality shapes women's experience of the cultural sector, and how this, in turn, shapes whose creative work is staged, studied, and understood as part of Scotland's cultural narrative.

Chapter Five: Establishing Scotland: Identity and Belonging in Scottish Women's Playwrighting

So far, I have focused primarily on the working conditions in the cultural sector and how women lead within this context. I now want to shift focus, as I explained in my introduction, to women's playwrighting work. This is, in itself, a form of cultural leadership both because their playwrighting provides a platform for women's stories and because it comes to form part of Scotland's cultural history. I advocated in chapter three for a broadening of the terms in which we discuss women's work, moving beyond public facing roles like that of a playwright to consider other roles that have previously garnered less attention. However, this broadening still includes roles like playwright, and I will demonstrate throughout this chapter that Scottish women's playwrighting practices have been an important form of cultural leadership. Specifically, this chapter will argue that women's cultural leadership has been central to their relationship to a changing Scotland. In a decade of political and cultural upheaval, I will argue that cultural activity has allowed women a platform through which to re-imagine Scotland and that in this period, women's relationships to Scotland's past, present and future were explored through their playwrighting which was key to their relationship to both their gender and national identities.

This chapter will focus on three case studies: Rona Munro's *The James Plays* trilogy (2014), Annie George's *The Bridge/Home is Not the Place* (2014/2017) and Frances Poet's *Adam* (2017). I have chosen these plays because they provide useful illustrations of how female playwrights responded thematically to some of the key issues that emerged in the Indyref and Brexit campaigns, namely migration, civic nationalism and belonging. In particularly, they illustrate how women lead through their playwrighting, using these works to make interventions into wider political discourses, seizing opportunities provided by the specific contexts of their development to maximise their impact. They also demonstrate how women engaged with Scotland's past and present to work through their hopes and fears about Scotland's future, specifically in the context of the Brexit and Indyref votes. I will begin with a focus on history, first by contextualising my own research within the wider field of critics writing about Scottish theatrical engagement with history, and the role that shared history plays in the construction of national identities. I will then move to discuss Rona Munro's *The James Plays,* focusing

particularly on her use of contemporary Scots and the way in which she centres women's voices within the trilogy. From there, I will go on to consider how Annie George and Frances Poet's works for the stage engage with migration and multiculturalism, and the ways in which these works use biographical narratives to problematize notions of identity and belonging for migrants in Scotland. These examples each offer insight into how women's cultural leadership can be seen in their creative work, and how this work reflects women's experiences of contemporary Scotland.

History and the Imagined Community

Benedict Anderson's theory of the imagined community, as discussed in the literature review in chapter three, hinges on the notion that shared experiences of cultural activity contribute to an overall sense of belonging which, in turn, allows an individual to imagine themselves as part of the community of the nation. The community of the nation – as defined by Anderson – is perhaps not far removed from the community of the cultural sector I have discussed in the previous chapter. In many ways, both rely on a sense of connection to other individuals despite little in the way of actual commonalities. However, in this chapter, I want to focus specifically on the community of the nation, and how it relates to history. In his arguments about nationhood, Anderson stresses the importance of simultaneity. Quoting Walter Benjamin's definition of Messianic time – 'a simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present – Anderson argues that such simultaneity of past, present, and future is key to creating a sense of community amongst those within the nation, connecting them to their current neighbours within the imagined community, but also to their ancestors[542]. In his analysis of Anderson's work, David McCrone illustrates this dynamic with an example from the 1995 Quebec independence referendum, noting that the Parti Quebecois government – who were in favour of independence - 'mobilised the past as the ally of the present'[543]. He shared this statement given to voters:

> The time has come to reap the fields of history. The time has come at last to harvest what has been sown for us by four hundred years of men and women and courage, rooted in the soil and now returned to it. The time has come for us, tomorrow's ancestors, to make ready for our descendants'

[542] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London, Fontana, 1973), p. 265 in Anderson, 2006, p. 24

[543] David McCrone, 'Tomorrow's Ancestors: Nationalism, Identity and History', p. 263 in Edward J. Cowan and Richard J. Finlay (eds), *Scottish History: The Power of the Past,* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2002)

> harvests that are worth the labours of the past. May our toil be worthy of them, may they gather us together at last[544].

This example, McCrone argues, is an example of how 'virtually all states attempt' to capture history in the national interest[545]. Borrowing from Homi Bhabha, McCrone describes histories as 'like "narratives" which tell [members of a nation] and others stories about who they are and where they come from'[546]. These narratives can be invoked to connect present, past and future members of the imagined community, giving a sense of 'continuity and coherence' throughout time, despite the material conditions of living within that imagined community varying significantly over time[547]. The contemporary residents of Quebec will, for the most part, have limited understanding of the realities of day-to-day life in the same place four hundred years ago, but they were encouraged to feel connected to these people through the shared narratives of the nation.

In *Scottish History: The Power of the Past,* McCrone similarly engages with the example of William Wallace to demonstrate how historical narratives can be mobilised in contemporary settings for the benefit of a particular ideology. William Wallace is perhaps one of the most well-known figures in Scottish history, due in no small part to the success of the 1995 film *Braveheart* (dir. Mel Gibson). Indeed, the image of Mel Gibson as Wallace riding on a horse, face painted blue and white, leading his army into battle with the cry of 'they may take our lives, but they will never take our freedom' has become synonymous with Wallace's story, despite the film's lack of historical accuracy[548]. Given Wallace's association with the wars of independence it is perhaps understandable that his contribution to Scotland's history is usually discussed within the context of current debates about Scotland's place within the United Kingdom. Indeed, the SNP used *Braveheart's* release as an opportunity to campaign for independence. They issued leaflets to audiences leaving screenings of the film which on one side said, 'TODAY IT'S NOT JUST BRAVEHEARTS WHO CHOOSE INDEPENDENCE – IT'S ALSO WISEHEADS – AND THEY USE THE BALLOT BOX' and on the other side said 'YOU'VE SEEN THE

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544 Bill 1, an Act respecting the future of Quebec, preamble, Declaration of Sovereignty, 1995 in David McCrone, 2002, p. 263.
545 David McCrone in Cowan and Finlay, 2002, p. 263
546 ibid
547 ibid
548 See Tim Edensor, 'Reading Braveheart: Representing and Contesting Scottish Identity', *Scottish Affairs,* 29:1, Autumn 1997, pp 135-158

MOVIE, NOW FACE THE REALITY'[549]. McCrone noted that in the aftermath of the film's release, support for the SNP rose eight percentage points in the polls (the so-called *Braveheart* blip) and membership applications rose to sixty per day[550]. For the SNP and their supporters, there were clear parallels between Wallace's fight and their own campaign for independence. Whilst their methods for achieving this goal differed, they shared a common desire for Scotland to be recognised as an independent nation and to be freed of English authority. It is perhaps surprising, then, that over a hundred years earlier, when discussions were underway about the erection of a Wallace monument in Stirling, it was in part credited to his contribution to the Union. The Earl of Elgin, who served as chair for the movement to build the Wallace monument proposed that the success of the Union was due to the 'successful struggle' of William Wallace and Robert the Bruce because it meant that 'the Scottish people have been able to form an intimate union and association with a people more wealthy and numerous than themselves without sacrificing one jot of their neutral independence and liberty[551]. Whilst they have contrasting political agendas, both the Earl of Elgin and the SNP provide a useful example of how the narratives of a nation's history can be interpreted, mobilised, and capitalised upon in service of a particular ideology.

The role of history in the narrative of the imagined community has additional significance in Scotland both because of its status as a 'stateless nation' and because of the abundance of historical iconographies, figures and stories that are embedded in Scottish culture. Scotland's status within the United Kingdom and the ongoing debate around its place within that union, as I have already discussed in the introduction and literature review, are central to the narrative of Scotland as an imagined community. It is therefore somewhat unsurprising that there is a great deal of focus on images, people and histories that are considered to be distinct to Scotland. As I discussed in the literature review in reference to McCrone et al's *Scotland the Brand*, the saturation of historical iconographies in Scotland is closely linked to the country's history as a stateless nation. McCrone et al argue that 'in Scotland the weight of identity has conventionally been placed

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[549] David McCrone in Cowan and Finlay, 2002, p. 258
[550] ibid
[551] Earl of Elgin in Graeme Morton, *Unionist Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland 1830-1860* in David McCrone, 2002 p. 258-59.

since the Union on cultural rather than political matters' and critique the ways in which Scotland's statelessness has contributed to cultural representations of Scotland that misrepresent the country[552]. They state that 'because Scottish identity could not take a political form of expression, it was subverted into a cultural backwater of deformed nationalism' which has allowed for iconographies such as tartan to be manipulated and commercialised in service of the wider project of 'creating' a Scottish identity that can be commodified and sold to tourists, regardless of any historical inaccuracies this might involve[553]. In *Theatre & Scotland,* Trish Reid echoes McCrone et al in arguing that the term 'history' has a 'problematic and exaggerated significance in Scottish culture' and in acknowledging that 'key figures and events in the nation's past have been circulated, distorted, sentimentalised and mythologised in a process of representational overload'[554].

The relationship between heritage and history, and the ways in which the former often strays from the latter are significant because of the role that heritage and the narratives surrounding heritage play in the imagining of a national community. If the relationship between heritage and the formal accounts of historical events is tenuous, and the images and iconographies that we have come to attach significant meaning to as part of our nation building are largely figments of our imaginations, then the possibility remains that re-imaginings and reworkings of these historical narratives have the potential to shape our interpretation of the past, our understanding of the present, and our visions of the future. This has particular significance for women, who have historically been excluded from positions of political power and whose stories have traditionally been side-lined in favour of male perspectives on historical events. To return to the argument put forward by Jen Harvie in *Staging the UK* that national identities are 'staged and culturally produced', the central role of history in producing a sense of cohesive national identity means that work made by women which engages with history and heritage has the potential to ultimately shift those narratives. This allows women to actively participate in the staging and cultural producing of the nation.

[552] David McCrone et al, 1999, p. 197
[553] David McCrone et al, 1999, p. 63
[554] Trish Reid, 2013, p. 6

History in Scottish Theatre

Given the abundance of representations of Scottish heritage discussed above, and the importance that this heritage holds in our experience of national identity, it is somewhat unsurprising that plays set in the distant or more recent past have been a common feature of Scottish theatre. To quote Ian Brown, 'while intensity of interest may vary from generation to generation and period to period, history is a dominant creative theme' in the work of Scottish playwrights[555]. In *History and Theatrical Metaphor,* Brown focuses on how these playwrights have used historical material, language, and dramatic structure to 'achieve particular theatrical and ideological ends'[556]. Brown had identified this turn to the historical in an earlier work, his 1996 chapter 'Plugged into History: The Sense of the Past in Scottish theatre'. In this chapter, he draws on several different case studies to demonstrate the importance of history plays in Scottish theatre and argues that

> One of the great achievements of Scottish plays in the last twenty-five years…has been the variety and complexity of ways in which it has dealt with history and the particular significance of this use of the past for the present stage of Scottish culture and history[557].

Brown tracks the popularity of the history play throughout the seventies and eighties, with a particular focus on the importance of John McGrath's work for 7:84, especially the use of historical material in *The Games a Bogey* (1975), *Little Red Hen* (1975) and *Joe's Drum* (1979). In these plays, Brown argues, McGrath 'presents historical material in dynamic dialectic with contemporary events, so that history is used to explicate the contemporary'[558]. In *The Games a Bogey* and *Little Red Hen,* McGrath does this by integrating the stories of the Red Clydesiders – labour activists who led an era of radical strikes and other movements from the 1910s to 1930s. *The Games a Bogey* centres on Red Clydesider John MacLean, but the narrative switches between MacLean's lifetime and contemporary Glasgow. In doing so, McGrath is able to draw parallels between the two periods. Similarly, *Little Red Hen* incorporates the history of the Red Clydeside into a story about Henrietta, a young activist campaigning for Scottish independence. *Joe's Drum* is a 'review of key events and popular protest' in Scotland since 1707, which

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[555] Ian Brown, *History as Theatrical Metaphor: History, Myth and National Identities in Modern Scottish Drama* (Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2016) p. xi

[556] Ian Brown, 2016, p. viii

[557] Ian Brown, 'Plugged into History: The Sense of the Past in Scottish Theatre' in Randall Stevenson and Gavin Wallace (eds), *Scottish Theatre Since the Seventies,* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp 84-99, p. 85

[558] Ian Brown in Randall Stevenson and Gavin Wallace, 1996, p. 90

McGrath wrote as a response to the 1979 devolution referendum which fell short of the support needed to trigger the creation of a devolved assembly for Scotland. In doing so, McGrath uses historical material 'to argue for direct popular action as a model of democratic rectitude'[559].

The historical material in McGrath's work serves two purposes that are relevant to my research. Firstly, he brings to the stage stories from groups who are somewhat ignored or undervalued in mainstream theatrical and cultural representations. McGrath has a clear focus on working-class narratives and socialist activism, but this raises questions of how historical works can be utilised to spotlight other marginalised groups. Furthermore, Brown argues that McGrath's work includes historical material not necessarily to 'understand the complexities of history' but rather 'to apply a vision of history, which may itself be mythologised, to support McGrath's contemporary vision'[560]. This position parallels McCrone's work on heritage and illustrates how history can be utilised within creative work to serve a particular ideology or agenda. Read together, McCrone and Brown's work suggests how looking back on historical events, however accurate such accounts might be, allows us to create new perspectives on present day circumstances.

I will return to Brown's work momentarily, in my discussion of Rona Munro's *The James Plays* cycle, but his ideas form part of a wider body of work which considers the role that history plays in the Scottish theatre ecology. David Archibald's essay 'History in Contemporary Scottish Theatre' charts the popularity of the history play in Scottish theatre from the 1970s to the 2000s beginning with a commentary on how Scottish theatre represented working-class histories throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Like Brown, he focuses on the work of John McGrath and 7:84, highlighting the socialist values that were central to the company's productions. For Archibald, 7:84's work 'combined elements of music hall and comedy and fused fact and fiction, the dramatic and the didactic, to create formally innovative productions informed by Marxist historical analyses'[561]. Archibald argues that the work of McGrath and 7:84 – and in particular the hugely

[559] ibid
[560] Ian Brown in Randall Stevenson and Gavin Wallace, 1996, p. 91
[561] David Archibald, 'History in Contemporary Scottish Theatre' in Ian Brown (ed) *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Drama* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp 85-94, p. 86

successful *The Cheviot, The Stag, and the Black, Black, Oil* (1973) – 'resurrect[ed] histories of working-class struggle' and 'uncover[ed] the radical political strand of Scottish theatre'[562]. But Archibald demonstrates that McGrath was not the only theatre-maker of the time who was interested in drawing from historical narratives, and he cites numerous examples of this trend[563]. Among those examples are Tony Roper's *The Steamie* (1987), Chris Hannan's *Elizabeth Gordon Quinn* (1985) and Liz Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (1987), all of which centre female narratives, countering the perception that 'much of the work in this period focuses on working class men'[564]. Archibald moves on to discuss how historical adaptations became less common during the nineties and noughties, as theatre makers began to experiment with post-dramatic theatre, moving away from traditional text based and dramatic forms[565]. Despite this shift, he argues that 'the past has still proved useful to some of Scotland's most notable writers', including David Greig, Zinnie Harris, and David Harrower[566].

This interest in history within Scottish theatre is perhaps connected to the common misconception that there is a lack of a Scottish theatrical canon. As Femi Folorunso explains, 'it is against the norm, whether in literary criticism or cultural debate, to suggest that there is a tradition of drama in Scotland'[567]. Dan Rebellato provides further context for this by explaining that the belief that Scotland is an antitheatrical nation is rooted in the Scottish reformation:

> Records are patchy, but in the medieval period Scotland appeared to have as vigorous a tradition of folk-drama and religious drama anywhere in Western Europe (and, in Sir David Lindsay's Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis [1540] perhaps the greatest play produced in these islands before Shakespeare). With the turn against Catholicism, most of the religious plays that had enlivened feast days were at a stroke heretical and banned. Folk plays were outlawed on dubiously Biblical grounds. All other plays were to be submitted for hostile inspection by a Church whose face was set against image-making. As a result, so it is sometimes claimed, a deep suspicion was laid against any attempt at theatrical performance[568].

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[562] ibid
[563] See David Archibald in Ian Brown, 2011, p. 87
[564] ibid
[565] David Archibald in Ian Brown, 2011, p. 89
[566] David Archibald in Ian Brown, 2011, p. 90
[567] Femi Folorunso, 'Scottish Drama and the Popular Tradition' in Stevenson and Wallace, 1996, p. 177
[568] Dan Rebellato, 'David Greig and Scottish Theatre', · https://dan-rebellato.squarespace.com/s/David-Greig-Scottish-Theatre.docx [Accessed 13/06/2022]

The idea that Scotland is a nation in which there is no theatrical history has been a persistent feature of writing about Scottish theatre, but contemporary theatre critics have challenged this simplistic approach to the Scottish theatrical tradition. Trish Reid points out that

> contemporary Scotland boasts a rich, lively, eclectic and distinctive performance culture. It seems unlikely that this culture appeared fully formed in the mid-twentieth century without drawing on pre-existing performance practices and traditions, however marginalised and obscured those traditions had become[569].

Reid points to the work of Ian Brown and Bill Findlay as examples of critics working to complicate the simplistic narratives around Scottish theatrical history. Findlay's *A History of Scottish History* provides the 'first comprehensive survey of Scottish theatre', tracking the growth of Scottish theatre from the medieval period to the present day[570]. Ian Brown's *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Drama* opens with the declaration that there has been a 'love affair' with drama in Scotland that has been both 'important and constant'[571]. He argues that there is a 'creative amnesia' about this love affair, which 'is destructive of the self-confidence and sense of deep continuous history Scottish drama and theatre actually should have'[572]. He credits this in part to the fact that the Scottish theatrical tradition exists in parallel to the English tradition, which has produced more well-known playwrights. Brown notes that whilst Scotland had a thriving tradition of drama in English, Gaelic, and Scots, this was not recorded in the same way as the English tradition and thus it was more difficult to establish a playwrighting canon[573]. The other reason for the 'creative amnesia' put forward by Brown is the lack of research into Scottish drama, and the fact that it is often left out of or only mentioned in passing in wider commentary about British theatre[574]. The dominance of history plays in contemporary theatre can potentially be read as an attempt to fill gaps in the Scottish theatrical tradition not because historical Scottish works do not exist, but because they have not been recorded and documented in the same way as their English counterparts.

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[569] Trish Reid, 2013, p. 5-6.
[570] Bill Findlay (ed), *A History of Scottish Theatre* (Edinburgh, Polygon, 1998)
[571] Ian Brown, 'Introduction: A Lively Tradition and Creative Amnesia' in Ian Brown (ed), *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Drama,* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp 1-5, p.1
[572] Ian Brown in Ian Brown, 2011, p.5
[573] Ian Brown in Ian Brown, 2011, p.2
[574] Ian Brown in Ian Brown, 2011, p.3

The existing critical literature I have discussed in relation to history and Scottish theatre mirrored some of the comments made by the women I interviewed. In my conversation with playwright Frances Poet, she explained that when she moved to Scotland from London, where she had worked as literary manager at the Royal Court, she felt that

> A lot of English theatre was more present tense, and a lot of Scottish theatre was historical…So if you think about something like Slab Boys written by John Byrne, written in the eighties, set in the fifties. The Steamie, similarly, set in the past…Lots of the prominent plays in the repertoire when I came up to Scotland were plays that were already set in the past[575].

Similarly, Christine Hamilton, Jemima Levick and Zinnie Harris all emphasised the recurrence of classical adaptations within Scottish theatre. However, they were also quick to highlight that these histories were staged in new and creative ways that involved a reworking of Scotland's knowledge of its past. Hamilton described new work as the 'lifeblood' of Scottish theatre but extended this to include 'new translations…new adaptations…new ways of looking at it'[576]. I will discuss Harris's comments in greater detail later, but she described 'revisiting the canon' as central to her work because it allowed her to address the dominance of men within those classical texts[577]. Jemima Levick similarly noted that when Scottish theatres present 'the canon' they 'reinvent it within an inch of its life'[578].

The continued interest in original historical works and in adaptations of classical texts is clear in Scotland's theatre tradition regardless of the writer's gender. Nevertheless, I am specifically interested in what can be learned by considering the ways in which female playwrights have engaged with history in their work given the scale and scope of their endeavours. Since 2015 alone, Zinnie Harris has adapted Aeschylus's *Oresteia* (2016), Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* (2017) and Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* (2019). Stef Smith's *Nora: A Doll's House* (2019) has received critical acclaim within Scotland and transferred to the Young Vic in London. Isobel McArthur's *Pride and Prejudice *sort of* (2018) was a hit in Scotland and was nominated for three Olivier awards following a limited run in the West End. In terms of original works rather than adaptations, Rona Munro's *The James*

[575] Frances Poet, Interview, 10th June 2020.
[576] Christine Hamilton, Interview, 29th May 2020.
[577] Zinnie Harris, Interview, 29th June 2020
[578] Jemima Levick, Interview, 8th July 2020

Plays trilogy (2014) – which I will discuss momentarily – is perhaps the most high-profile example, but she is not alone in engaging with histories of Scottish cultural and political identity. There is a demonstrable trend in recent women's playwrighting that includes autobiographical, biographical, and fictional works that have engaged with Scottish history. Cora Bissett's *Glasgow Girls* (2012) is a musical retelling of the true story in which a group of Drumchapel schoolgirls campaigned to prevent their friend being deported. Bissett's *What Girls Are Made Of* (2018) is an autobiographical work which focuses on her experience as a teenage musician in the 90s. Fiona J Mackenzie's *A Little Bird Blown Off Course* (2013) uses Margaret Fay Shaw's collection of Scottish Gaelic song to provide a biographical history of Shaw's life, and a history of Gaelic culture. There are, perhaps, practical, and pragmatic factors influencing women's continued interest in adaptations and history plays. I have already discussed the limited opportunities that women have to be programmed in major venues, and we might conceive that if women are seen as a risk or lesser choice by Artistic Directors and programmers, then proposing a new take on a familiar story may make it easier for women to be programmed than if they were to propose a new work. However, this does not explain the number of original history plays, and risks offering a one-dimensional account of women's contributions to this area of Scottish theatre. I am interested in delving beyond the practicalities to consider the creative and ideological motivations that may lie behind women's continued interest in histories.

Specifically, I am focused on how women use these historical plays as a means of locating themselves within the imagined community of the nation. A similar idea has been explored by Adrienne Scullion, who problematises the notion of the imagined community in her work on contemporary Scottish women playwrights. She argues that whilst Anderson presents a version of the nation that is 'open, egalitarian and pacific', the creation of a national community necessitates building both literal and metaphorical barriers that restrict membership

> The point in the establishment of society, of community, at which one group, one identity is legitimised and the other disenfranchised, marginalised, cast, however crudely as 'other', is a result of the socio-cultural development of the community, a conjunction of historical, economic, social, and political factors but defined in the nation's

traditions, myths, and collective imagination, and replayed in its cultural texts[579]

I have already discussed the limitations of the imagined community earlier in this thesis, but Scullion reminds us of how Anderson's theory becomes more complicated when considered alongside systemic inequality and the marginalisation of certain groups within society. Scullion notes that Scottish culture has a 'tendency towards patriarchy and the phallocentric[580], which echoes Trish Reid's argument that women are relegated to 'supporting roles' within the nation's story:

> The iconic image of socialist industrial Scotland, or Clydesideism, for example, was a skilled male worker. The myth of the 'lad o' pairts', or the clever young Scot able to rise from humble origins thanks to an open education system, included no analogous 'lass o' pairts'. Discourses of 'tartanry' largely circulate around the Scottish soldier, and the martial tradition he embodies[581].

The dominance of male narratives in traditional histories of Scotland adds a new dimension to consideration of women's history plays. History and heritage are crucial to our understanding of national identity, and therefore representations of this history can produce new knowledge about this relationship. Scullion and Reid both highlight key issues here, but where my own work furthers this narrative is by thinking specifically about how women's cultural leadership in their creative work can produce new representations of Scottish history, and how the increasing number of women contributing to Scotland's cultural narratives through historical representations can widen the boundaries of the imagined community of the nation. In doing so, they can create space for women's stories in a way that the Scottish theatrical tradition has not previously accommodated.

I will consider examples of original historical works in a moment, but I want to begin by considering how women playwrights in Scotland have used adaptations as a means of exploring their gender and national identity. The importance of adaptation was emphasised by Zinnie Harris:

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[579] Adrienne Scullion, 'Contemporary Scottish Women's Playwrights' in Elaine Aston and Janelle Reinelt (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Modern British Playwrights* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp 94-118, p.94
[580] ibid
[581] Trish Reid, 2013, p. 19

> Initially [in my career] I felt that I was often pigeonholed as a female writer and the kind of constraints that, or the understanding of what a female writer would be tackling [which] I felt was quite limited. And I started to kind of think quite hard about that. It felt to me that it was about the audience's relationship with central characters and in particular…when a female writer put a female character in the lead role, that character was emblematic of womanhood and not emblematic of humankind. And yet, a man could write about his gender and talk about all of humankind through that character.
>
> So, I've thought a lot about the kind of female characters that we get in classical texts and what I found about a lot of them, not all of them, but that there was a kind of stereotypical understanding of psychology and motivation. So, for instance, in a character like Clytemnestra in the Oresteia, which I adapted into This Restless House. I felt that the received Clytemnestra that we were given by Aeschylus and subsequently by anyone that has ever directed it or, or produced, it was a kind of evil woman who killed her husband and very little attempt either in the original text nor the productions that I'd seen to understand why she would have done that.
>
> And so, I suppose I just wanted to kind of go hang on a minute. Why are we accepting these versions? Why are we accepting these very thin versions of psychology, particularly when attached to women and then really enjoying the complexity of these male characters like King Lear or Willy Loman, or, you know, where are our complex female characters and, you know, I didn't see them that often.[582]

Throughout her career, Harris has developed several critically and commercially successful adaptations of classical works. She has adapted works by Ibsen, Strindberg, Aeschylus and, most recently, *The Duchess (of Malfi),* based on Webster's seventeenth-century drama. Harris identifies adaptations as a means of complicating the narrative of women, moving beyond the two-dimensional representations that she feels have been offered historically. She highlights the ways in which restaging classical texts like those she has adapted can offer new insight and perspectives on women's experiences whilst also staking the claim that those experiences can have wider relevance and implications for people of all genders. Of course, it is possible to present such female characters in original works – something which Harris has also achieved– so what does a historical adaptation offer that an original work does not? By engaging with familiar, and often iconic characters – Clytemnestra, Miss Julie, The Duchess of Malfi – and presenting them in a new light, Harris makes a cultural intervention that calls attention to the existing cultural and theatrical norms within these classical texts and creates new possibilities and alternatives. Harris's power to complicate our

[582] Zinnie Harris, Interview, 29th June 2020

understanding of women lies as much in the story she chooses *not* to tell as in the one that she does. When Harris presents a version of Clytemnestra, for example, who is as complex as the one in *This Restless House*, she is not only making use of this version to explore new perspectives, she is also drawing on and in dialogue with the previous iterations of Clytemnestra. The distance between Harris's version and the original, or Harris's version and other reworkings, tells its own story and invites an audience to consider the ways in which Harris has diverged from the received versions of Clytemnestra. This divergence makes space for new understandings of the character, new imaginings of who Clytemnestra is and can be.

'You know the problem with you lot? You've fuck all except attitude' - The James Plays[583]

In a joint production between National Theatre of Scotland, National Theatre of Great Britain and Edinburgh International Festival, The James Plays trilogy was first staged at the EIF in August 2014 before transferring to the National Theatre in London and later revival for a national tour in 2016, visiting ten regional theatres between February and June 2016[584]. *The James Plays* were directed by Laurie Sansom who was, at the time, the Artistic Director of NTS, but they had first been commissioned under Vicky Featherstone's leadership during her tenure as Artistic Director. She had asked Munro what her dream project would involve, and when Munro pitched *The James Plays*, Featherstone was immediately supportive of the idea[585]. Whilst Featherstone was no longer Artistic Director by the time the productions were staged, her role in their creation – and the leadership she demonstrated in commissioning them – should not be understated.

The James Plays cycle consists of three plays: *James I: The Key Will Keep The Lock*, *James II: Day of the Innocents* and *James III: The True Mirror*[586]. *James I* opens with King James I being released by the English captors who have held him hostage since he was thirteen. He is returned to Scotland with a young bride –

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[583] Rona Munro, *The James Plays* (London, Nick Hern Books, 2016), p. 286
[584] National Theatre of Scotland, 'The James Plays (2014)', https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/past-performances/the-james-plays-2014 [Accessed 15/03/2022]
[585] Rona Munro in Nick Major, 'The SRB Interview: Rona Munro', *Scottish Review of Books,* 11th November 2014, https://www.scottishreviewofbooks.org/2014/11/the-srb-interview-rona-munro/ [Accessed 15/03/2022]
[586] For brevity, these will henceforth be referred to as *James I, James II, and James III*

seventeen-year-old Joan, cousin of the English King Henry V - and a ransom on his head. The Scotland he returns to is poor and troubled. James must assert his authority as King whilst facing opposition from nobles and questions over his right to rule. *James II* is told through flashbacks and dream sequences, as King James II relives his turbulent childhood. In *James II* we see a King who was crowned at six years old, abandoned by his mother and manipulated by the powerful adults advising him. In the second act, as James comes of age and must rule as an adult, he struggles to gain the respect and obedience of his subjects. Ultimately, he murders his only friend, William Douglas, over his refusal to obey the King's orders on taxation. In *James III,* the titular character is a mercurial and reckless King. Cruel to his children, narcissistic, irresponsible, but also charming and funny, he is a controversial leader. As the play progresses it is clear that the people's divided opinion on their King could lead to civil war. His wife, Queen Margaret of Denmark, must step forward as the leader the nation so desperately needs.

I have previously analysed *The James Plays* in the context of the National Theatre of Scotland's response to indyref as a moment of rupture in Scottish national identity[587]. In that work, I proposed that the National Theatre of Scotland choosing to mount a production of this trilogy during the referendum year was an opportunity for them to stake their claim as a National Theatre who were capable of large-scale, historical productions and an opportunity to present themes relevant to the debates around Scottish independence. Here, though, my focus is specifically on how Munro uses *The James Plays* as a vehicle in which to represent women as central to Scotland's narrative. As part of this, I will naturally consider the wider themes of the plays, and their relevance to the political context in which they were written, but my primary interest is in Munro's leadership role as a female playwright, rather than on NTS's leadership as an institution. The role of playwright is perhaps not traditionally regarded as an explicit 'leadership' position but, as I established in my introduction, my criteria for leadership was an individual who created opportunities for others to participate in the cultural sector, and who could shape the direction of the sector. Munro fits both criteria because, as I am about to demonstrate, her work in *The James Plays* not only provided many opportunities for participation in and engagement with the work,

[587] Katie Hart, *What Kind of Country Do You Want This to Be? Staging Indyref at the National Theatre of Scotland* (Unpublished Masters Thesis), (London, Queen Mary University of London, 2016)

but also made a significant cultural intervention into the sector and into the 'history play' tradition.

In an interview with Nick Major for *Scottish Review of Books,* Munro explained that she was partly inspired to write *The James Plays* upon attending a production by the Royal Shakespeare Company in which one ensemble of actors performed a complete cycle of Shakespeare's history plays. Prior to this, Munro explained, she had not been a fan of Shakespeare's work and had felt resentful of the 'stranglehold' he had on theatre spaces[588]. However, in viewing those history plays she realised that 'so much of what we understand about English history came from those plays. Even if people hadn't seen them, they know the stories, and we don't have an equivalent in Scotland' so she thought 'it would be fun to try and create that' for Scottish audiences[589]. Munro demonstrates the important role that historical narratives play in the formation of national identities, and the ways in which fiction and reality become intertwined in our understanding of a nation's history.

If Munro's intention was to create a trilogy which would engage with Scottish history, it is perhaps unsurprising that the productions lean into some of the existing iconographies and traditions associated with Scotland. Throughout the plays we see characters donned in tartan and kilts, and the use of smoke and a dark, moody aesthetic plays into some of the previous mythologisations of Scotland and in particular of the Scottish Highlands[590]. Whilst the play's aesthetic has a nod to tradition, it is also firmly rooted in the contemporary. As the audience enter the auditorium for *James III*, the cast are already on stage, dancing to the music of a traditional Scottish folk band. But rather than performing the traditional ceilidh music one might expect from a folk band at a dance, they were playing songs like Pharrell's *Happy* and Lorde's *Royals,* which were popular chart hits in 2014[591]. In *James III,* the costuming also becomes more contemporary, with the Queen wearing platform shoes in various scenes and the King wearing red flared trousers as he abdicates the throne[592]. Sarah Thomasson argues that these

[588] Rona Munro in Nick Major, 2014
[589] ibid
[590] See McCrone et al, 1999
[591] Sarah Thomasson, '*The James Plays* by Rona Munro (review)', *Theatre Journal,* 67:2, May 2015, pp 328-332, p. 330
[592] ibid

choices 'deliberately broke with the conventions of historical performance to foreground these plays as new works exploring historical subject matter to comment on contemporary Scottish nationhood'[593]. The decisions around costuming and staging were almost certainly made in collaboration with, or perhaps entirely by, other members of the production's creative team, so in order to consider Munro's leadership in this context, I want to focus specifically on the play-text. As such, I will now move on to a literary analysis of the plays which allows for insight into the ways in which Munro employs language, thematic and character devices especially in relation to the women within her play.

Contemporary Scots Language

To begin with language, in the introduction to the published script of the plays, Munro states that 'the rhythm and language of the dialogue is contemporary Scots. Apart from Joan and Henry V in *The Key Will Keep the Lock* and Margaret in *The True Mirror,* all characters are speaking Scots'[594]. In contrast to the Shakespearean dramas which inspired her work, Munro opted for contemporary language as a means of allowing the audience to connect more directly to the characters:

> People in the fifteenth century weren't different to you and me. They were homo sapiens with the same brains and the same emotional reactions, it was just the circumstances were different. And when they were talking to each other they would have experienced that as contemporary language. To reproduce what their experience would have been you have to bring the language up to the present day[595].

In drawing these connections between contemporary Scottish audiences and the historical Scots featured in the play, Munro demonstrates the importance of shared language to the concept of simultaneity. Munro uses the contemporary Scots language as a means of drawing parallels between present day Scots and their historical counterparts, reminding the audience of their shared experiences and humanity. This encourages Scottish audiences to feel a connection to their history, giving them a sense of a through line that links them to the historical figures in the play. This is especially significant given the subject matter of the plays – Scotland battling to define itself and stand on its own two feet despite facing turmoil and opposition both internally and externally. For audiences in

[593] ibid
[594] Rona Munro, 2016, p. vii
[595] Rona Munro in Nick Major, 2014

Scotland in 2014, and indeed in 2016 as we approached the Brexit referendum, these issues could have felt urgent and personal.

In his analysis of *The James Plays*, Ian Brown critiques Munro's use of contemporary Scots, arguing that it represents the Scottish nobles poorly. He argues that some of the names Munro uses for characters are reductive, highlighting in particular her 'decision to refer to James, the youngest son of Murdoch, Regent, and Duke of Albany usually called 'James the Fat' as 'Big James'' arguing that this 'makes him sound like a street gang-member'[596]. I would dispute this. The term 'Big' in colloquial Scots greetings is often used as either a term of endearment or a physical description. The greeting 'alright big man' is common, particularly amongst Glaswegian men, and one need only think of the much-loved comedian Billy Conolly – often referred to as 'the Big Yin' – to see that the term 'Big' does not necessarily connote 'gang member'[597]. Furthermore, the alternative would potentially have been 'Fat James' which to a contemporary Scottish audience could have seemed every bit as negative as Brown's interpretation of 'Big'.

Brown's reading of 'Big James' is perhaps more understandable when considered alongside his wider comments on Munro's use of Scots:

> The use of words like 'gubbed' and 'nyaff' highlights a particular implication of the linguistic choices made in presenting most of the main characters of *The James Plays.* That is that they employ an urban demotic based on the discourse of street life…Munro's language choices, further, which include a substantial number of sexual expletives, reflect a treatment of her characters apparently designed to undermine any dignity they might possibly have...Munro represents the Scottish nobles as thuggish[598]

Whilst I acknowledge that the language used by the nobles in *The James Plays* is colloquial, and not typical of how one might expect nobility to be portrayed, there is a potential to read this choice more generously than in the critique Brown puts forward. Whilst Brown equates Scots with thugs and 'street life', historically, this has not always been the case, and the James Kings themselves are recorded as

[596] Ian Brown, 2016, p. 206
[597] See Jonathan Margolis, *The Big Yin: The Life and Times of Billy Connolly,* (London, Orion Books, 1998)
[598] Ian Brown, 2016, p. 206-207

having published both poetry and court documents in Scots[599]. There is also a growing movement within contemporary Scotland to see Scots given more prominence and respect as a language. Scots is one of the three official languages of Scotland, alongside English and Gaelic, and in 2011 the Scottish Government committed to 'develop[ing] a national Scots language policy with increased support for Scots in education, encouragement of a greater profile for Scots in the media, and the establishment of a network of Scots co-ordinators'[600]. In 2015, they published a 'Scots Language Policy' outlining how they would achieve this commitment. Aside from legislation, MSPs have also shown their commitment to Scots in a ceremonial setting, with several choosing to take their oath to the Scottish Parliament in Scots. All MSPs must take the oath in English but they can opt to repeat it a language of their choice, and in the three most recent ceremonies (2011, 2016 and 2021), there have been a growing number of MSPs using varieties of Scots for their oath[601].

The use of contemporary Scots in Munro's work can, then, be read as a celebration of Scots, rather than as an attempt to 'undermine' the dignity of the characters. Brown applies a logic wherein Scots is read as urban and thuggish and therefore those who speak Scots are being characterised as such. However, Munro's use of Scots can alternatively be read as elevating the language by using it as the language of nobility. In this case, Scots is legitimised because it is the language of nobles, rather than the nobles being delegitimised because they speak Scots. Munro's intention to use Scots language to show contemporary audiences that these historic figures 'weren't different to you and me' involves demonstrating the variety of experiences held both within contemporary Scotland and within the historic period of *The James Plays*. The contemporary language allows Munro to draw connections between history and present, but also presents an opportunity for challenging assumptions about that language and for re-imagining how that language might be used.

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[599] The Scottish Language Centre discuss James III's Scots Poetry here: https://www.scotslanguage.com/Scots_Culture/Scots_writing/A_History_of_Writing_in_Scots and The British Library archive includes a Scots version of the Lord's Prayer allegedly written by James VI during childhood: https://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item126633.html [Accessed 20/10/2022]

[600] Scottish Government, 'Scots Language Policy', September 2015, https://www.gov.scot/publications/scots-language-policy-english/ [Accessed 20/10/2022]

[601] Kathleen Nutt, 'Language Record Broken at MSP Swearing In Ceremony as Scottish Parliament Opens', *The National,* 14th May 2021, https://www.thenational.scot/news/19301869.language-record-broken-msp-swearing-in-ceremony-scottish-parliament-opens/ [Accessed 20/10/2022]

Scotland and England

As I have already discussed, I am primarily concerned with the female characters in *The James Plays* but before I begin to analyse these more fully, I would like to briefly consider the ways in which Munro represents the relationship between Scotland and England, and what this contributed to the debates around Scottish independence. I will focus on *James I* as this is the play in which those relationships are most explicit. When asked about the influence of indyref on this work, Munro said that she was 'very aware' of the historical moment in which she was writing, despite starting to write before a date had been set for a referendum:

> It was probably a good thing I didn't have to write with the burden of knowing these productions would actually go on straddling the referendum. At the same time, I really wanted them to go on this year because at the moment when you're considering what your future's going to be is exactly when you should be looking at your past. It did seem to me, looking at the fifteenth century, that so much of what is the contemporary relationship between Scotland and England is mirrored in the relationship back then, financially in terms of alliances and economic power, all the seeds of what ended up being the relationship between Scotland and England were sown back then.[602]

Whilst the referendum on Scottish independence was about Scotland's place within the United Kingdom, there was a great deal of focus in public debate and media specifically on the relationship with England. This was due in part to the fact that England is the largest country within the UK and houses the Parliament, but arguably was also to do with the long-standing conflict between the two nations to which Munro alludes. With that relationship in mind, a play about a King who spent eighteen years in English captivity takes on new meaning.

James I opens with James being freed by his captor, King Henry V. The English army have been defeated in battle in the days prior and are angry about their loss. James is introduced as a quiet, gentle man who writes poetry, a direct contrast to the boisterous and aggressive English guards and the spiteful King Henry V. It is somewhat surprising, then, that he proceeds to critique Henry's leadership, explaining that he and his knights were to blame for the loss:

> **JAMES:** Do you know why you lost the battle today?
> **HENRY:** Do you?

[602] ibid.

> **JAMES:** Yes. The enemy already knew all your battle positions, where you'd put the archers…where the horses were…
> **HENRY:** What do you mean they already knew? Who told them?
> **JAMES:** The ditch diggers. The farmers.
> **HENRY:** Why?
> **JAMES**: Because you rode down their ditches. Do you know how long it takes to build a field-drainage system?
> **HENRY**: No. Is it relevant?
> **JAMES:** Days. Days and Days. You have to excavate the ground. You have to line the base of your ditch with loose stone, not too big, not too small, you have to angle the sides so the wet earth can't collapse…
> **HENRY:** (cutting him off) Why the fuck did the farmers talk to the enemy?
> **JAMES:** Their enemy is the man who rides down their ditches. Your knights did that…Yesterday. When we rode out to study the ground? There was that man, the farmer who shouted up at you…showing you what your men had done…your knights had made a playground of the farmland, practising war…the ditches are ruined…all the fields are flooded…the whole crop spoiled…everyone here will starve this winter, King Henry[603].

In this interaction, James is positioned as the man of the people in contrast to Henry's power grabbing at the expense of his farmer's crops. James is calm, measured and well informed, whilst Henry gets angrier as the conversation progresses. Indeed, when he cannot respond to James's questions about why he allowed his knights to behave in this reckless manner, Henry deflects by attacking James:

> **JAMES:** There's a *law* against trampling a man's crops, Henry. A law with your name on it. If you were the kind of king who cared about the law and the ditch diggers maybe…
> **HENRY** *has a knife at* **JAMES***'s throat.*
> **HENRY:** I hold two kingdoms! Two! And you're my fucking prisoner, King James of Scotland! Aren't you? (*Shaking him.*) Can't hear you?
> **JAMES**: (*quiet*)Yes.
> **HENRY** *lets him go.*
> **HENRY:** Yes, you are. And always will be. My vassal King.[604]

James is demonstrably smarter, more skilled, and more compassionate than Henry. But that doesn't matter because Henry is more powerful. If Munro considered the relationship between contemporary England and Scotland to be reflected in her portrayal of these fifteenth century rulers, the implications are clear. Furthermore, Henry's description of James as a vassal King, a subordinate given power only at the discretion of his English ruler, has further implications in the context of Scottish independence. In order to hold a referendum on Scottish

[603] Rona Munro, 2016, p.13
[604] Rona Munro, 2016, p.16

independence, the Scottish government had to be granted permission to do so by Westminster. This is just one example of the ways in which Westminster's rule over Scotland supersedes the existing Scottish government, an issue that has been discussed in many different contexts in recent years as the ideologies and priorities of each government continue to diverge significantly. While not a direct comparison to the situation in the fifteenth century, the notion that England granted power to Scotland only on their own terms would have resonated with an audience in 2014, as it was a common theme amongst independence campaigners. Furthermore, Henry proceeds to send James back home to sit as King of Scotland, but on the condition that he orders the Scots to pay his ransom, taking a considerable amount from an already poor country. A central tenet of the arguments for independence had been the financial imbalances between the two countries, and how much Scotland paid into the union in comparison to how much funding they were given. A prominent unionist argument was that Scotland simply couldn't afford to go it alone. By representing this dynamic in *The James Plays*, Munro draws attention to how little the debates around Scotland's autonomy have progressed throughout history, but she also brings fresh perspective by staging the dynamic in the context of a new independence referendum. In this case, she is inviting the audience to draw comparisons between James's position and their own, and perhaps to consider their ability to change that position.

Queen Joan and Meg

As I have made clear, there are several moments in this opening scene alone which demonstrate how Munro invokes historical narratives as a means of exploring and understanding experiences of contemporary Scotland. I will now turn my attention to the women within *The James Plays* considering the ways in which Munro uses the characters of Queen Joan and Meg as a means of simultaneously exploring nation and womanhood. We are first introduced to Joan preparing her castle for visitors. She is seventeen, which while not a child by the standards of fifteenth-century Scotland, is a young woman to most contemporary audiences. Despite this, she instructs her staff with confidence, ordering various servants around who all obey her every command. Enter Meg, a gift sent from the King, to inform her of her upcoming wedding to King James and of her new life in Scotland. Meg is a few years older than Joan, with a warm and friendly nature and a sense of childlike wonder that contrasts Joan's more serious temperament.

These women are both commodities, one being married off to a stranger, the other being sent as a gift to the new Queen. They represent the ways in which women were treated as property to be traded at the whim of the men around them. This dynamic is further illustrated during Joan's wedding to King James. Following the ceremony, James addresses the Scottish nobility and assures them that he can stand up to the English despite previously being their hostage:

> England has pursed our wealth and bled our wealth for a hundred years or more and looks ready to do it for hundreds more until this is a nation of beggars…They think I'll help them in that work. They think that because in eighteen years *they* never knew what I was thinking. They never learned who I am.
> I am the King of Scots. And they will get not *one* more penny that is yours! You'll lose no more of your wealth.
> And look what I brought back to Scotland.
> *He raises* JOAN's *hand, she's deeply embarrassed*
> The greatest jewel that England had is ours now. And that is how it will be from now on[605].

This speech makes clear that whilst Joan has been treated with kindness by James, he views her as little more than a means of proving his strength as a leader to Scotland and England alike. The marriage had in fact been Henry's idea, a means of keeping James connected to the English monarchy through marriage, but James frames this marriage as the Scots claiming a 'jewel' from the English. His treatment of Joan in this scene shows that he views her as property, and as a symbolic representation of his ability to challenge English rule.

Joan's 'deep embarrassment' at this treatment is further exacerbated when she discovers that the Lords of Scotland intend to share her bedroom, and bear witness to her and James consummating their marriage. No one warns Joan of this, she learns that this is their intention when the Lords begin to publicly declare to James that they will 'lie at the side of [his] bed to defend [his] royal person this night and all nights'[606]. Meg tells Joan that the men will be 'too drunk' to see anything, but it is clear from the men's behaviour that they intend to watch:

> **BALVENIE:** More wine, King James…
> **JAMES:** Let me serve my Queen first…
> *He takes the wine to* JOAN *as they all erupt, 'Oh aye, you serve her Jamie! We'll see you serve her!' etc*[607].

[605] Rona Munro, 2016, p. 44
[606] Rona Munro, 2016, p. 47
[607] ibid.

James assures Joan that he will be gentle with her and that they can take it slowly, but Joan responds

> No, honestly, just be quick. Please, please just be quick.
> *He goes back to the others, they are roaring and singing. She gulps her wine, it spills, red on her white dress.*
> Meg, I've spoiled my dress.
> JAMES *comes to her on the bed. Everyone is round them, watching.*
> I've spoiled my dress[608].

Joan's distress is clear in this scene; she is almost childlike in her desperation. Again, it is clear from the behaviour of the men in court that she is viewed as property, and this intimate moment between Joan and her new husband becomes a piece of entertainment for the court. In the wedding scenes, Munro again demonstrates how women are controlled and objectified by the men around them. This makes the bonds between women, in this case the friendship between Joan and Meg, particularly important because it offers a space for support and a sense of safety that is not provided by the men around them.

Meg and Joan are also the two characters through whom we are introduced to the world of the play. As Meg describes Joan's new home and the life she will be expected to live, she is also building an image of this country for the audience. The image is of a country poor in material goods but rich in culture and community. Meg describes the poverty in Scotland, remarking that 'we're poorer than beetles in a rotten log'.[609] When Joan is surprised at her claim that they don't have much in the way of sweet foods, she tells her that while there is not much honey it is *good* honey, and that the English don't appreciate it because 'you're eating honey here all the time. You don't know what sweet is, your mouths are so full of sweetness you just think it's the taste of air itself'[610]. While she is somewhat enamoured with the luxuries Joan describes having in England, Meg is quick to decide that she prefers Scotland:

> **JOAN:** What's the best thing?
> **MEG:** The best thing about home? (*Thinks about it)* You can understand folk better. What they say.
> **JOAN:** But will I?
> **MEG:** You make me out well enough, don't you?[611]

[608] Rona Munro, 2016, p. 48
[609] Rona Munro, 2016, p. 23
[610] Rona Munro, 2016, p. 22
[611] Rona Munro, 2016, p. 24

This moment can be read in two ways. There is the practical sense in which Meg finds Scots easier to understand. She is a Scots speaker, so Joan's received pronunciation is alien to her. She quite literally finds it easier to understand what people are saying in Scotland, and she is encouraging Joan to grasp that because Joan can understand her, she will be able to understand other Scots. The other reading of this interaction is that Meg is also referring to the kinship and sense of belonging one might feel in the imagined community of their nation. Having listed several ways in which life in Scotland is different to what Joan has experienced in England, it seems natural that she will be feeling out of place and alien in Joan's world. She understands the people of Scotland better not just linguistically, but because of their shared experiences and culture. When she encourages Joan that she too will understand Scots, it can be read as an invitation to her that she too will one day feel that sense of belonging and understanding. Joan is about to be Queen of Scotland, a title that will give her a formal sense of ownership over the Scottish people, but it is in this ability to understand the Scots that a true sense of community and belonging will be found.

Later in the play, this idea of 'understanding' is returned to in an argument between Joan and Meg which begins when Meg criticises Joan for throwing the bones of her meat on the ground, pointing out that unlike in England they could not afford to waste the bones as they needed them for broth:

> **JOAN:** It's just a chicken bone…
> **MEG:** Oh, that's just wonderful! That's a great example to be setting, isn't it? That's how they do it in England, is it? Throw their chicken bones on the ground for the dogs to choke themselves on? Have you *any* sense? And you fretting yourself sick about money.
> (*To the Stewart brothers.*) Well, she comes from a heathen country where they've got servants running round like ants clearing up after them, and all their big lords and ladies never think the servants have eyes and ears and they never know their names half the time. Here there's just me and *here* we need the bones for the soup tomorrow. So leave them on your bloody plates![612]

Meg is Joan's only friend in Scotland, and Joan is struggling to bond with her husband. In this moment, she publicly declares Joan an outsider, someone who does not know how to behave and who does not belong. This moment of conflict between the two women seems to affect Joan greatly, and several scenes later she is still angry with Meg:

[612] Rona Munro, 2016, p. 51-2

> **MEG:** You're very quiet.
> **JOAN** *says nothing*.
> **MEG:** Quiet as a mushroom.
> **JOAN:** What does that even mean?
> **MEG:** Eh?
> **JOAN:** 'Quiet as a mushroom', what does that even *mean*?
> **MEG:** It's just something I say.
> **JOAN:** I don't understand a word you say!
> **MEG:** Why are you picking a fight with me?!
> **JOAN:** I can't imagine! I can't imagine, I mean if I was a proper English princess, I wouldn't even know your name, would I? You'd just be a little ant scurrying about doing what I want and never speaking.[613]

Joan's cry of 'I don't understand a word you say!' brings the audience full circle from the women's first conversation. Joan clearly *does* understand what Meg says – the two have communicated comfortably throughout the play – and although she may not understand the exact phrase Meg is using, it's clear that this argument is about more than a misjudged simile. At this moment, Joan is pregnant and feels vulnerable and isolated in the royal court. As the conflict between James and his nobles intensifies, she feels increasingly frightened and lonely. When Joan says she doesn't understand, it can be read as a moment of detachment: I don't understand you, I am not like you, I do not belong. She may hold the title of Queen of Scotland, but she feels at this point like a foreigner. Meg and Joan's relationship, and Joan's relationship to Scotland can be read as a representation of the kind of civic nationalism that was at the heart of debates around Scottish independence. Civic nationalism is based on the idea that anyone can belong within the nation regardless of their ethnicity or background and, as I will discuss later in this chapter, Scottish nationalism has embraced migrants and migration enthusiastically in campaigns for Indyref and Brexit. The idea of Joan 'understanding' and belonging to a community in Scotland is more important to Joan's status as Queen than her English roots, and this is in keeping with the wider discourses around belonging in Scotland at the time which centred on making Scotland open to people from all countries of origin who wished to consider themselves Scottish[614].

[613] Rona Munro, 2016, p. 65
[614] See Eve Hepburn and Michael Rosie, 'Immigration, Nationalism and Politics in Scotland' in Eve Hepburn and Ricard Zapata-Barrero (eds), *The Politics of Immigration in Multi-Level States* (Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2014) pp 241-260.

Through the characters of Meg and Joan, Munro achieves two things. Firstly, she gives the audience a sense of the way in which women were treated as a commodity in fifteenth-century Scotland, and how their futures were decided by the men around them. Through their friendship, Munro also explores notions of belonging and kinship within the nation. This friendship can be read as representative of the civic nationalism that takes belonging to a nation as being about more than birth right.

Queen Margaret of Denmark

Like Joan, Margaret is a foreigner. She is Queen of Scotland but was born in Denmark. As I will demonstrate, her status as a foreigner is an important part of her role within the play, and again Munro highlights the ways in which a civic nationalism like that put forward by independence campaigners has the potential to resist anti-immigration and racist narratives that have traditionally been associated with nationalist movements. In Margaret, Munro also presents a strong female leader who steps up and leads when her husband, King James III, is unwilling to do so.

Munro depicts the relationship between James and Margaret as a tumultuous one in which Margaret spends a considerable amount of time attempting to manage the king's reckless nature and control his temper. This dynamic is established in the opening scene of the play, in which members of the royal court are enjoying a dance. James is talking with Daisy, a young member of the court who does not realise she is speaking to the king. He lets her discuss her excitement at seeing the king, who she has heard is attractive, before revealing his identity. He seems to enjoy the moment of normalcy in which Daisy treats him like a member of the court, and he offers to dance with her after he's spoken to Margaret:

> **Daisy** *hurries off as the dance finishes*. **Margaret** *joins* **James**.
> And how is the French Ambassador?
> **MARGARET:** I think I've reassured him you're committed to the alliance. Next time don't make fun of his shoes, not to his face anyway. Who was that?
> **JAMES:** I think she works in the laundry.
> **MARGARET:** Were you doing the 'I'm just a shy, bashful common man' routine?
> **JAMES:** That's a very malicious description.
> **MARGARET:** It's what it looked like.

JAMES: It always works.
MARGARET: For a day or two, then the real you sort of shoulders its way out, doesn't it?
JAMES: I had you in love with me for at least a year.
MARGARET: Oh, I'm still in love with you, dearest. It's an affliction, like a club foot. I just drag it around after me and carry on[615].

This interaction establishes three things for the audience. Firstly, it sets the tone for the dynamic between Margaret and James. They are both playful and charming, Margaret an equal partner within her marriage. Secondly, we establish that whilst James was talking with Daisy, Margaret was placating the French ambassador who James had offended earlier in the evening. This positions Margaret as a problem solver, and as someone who takes responsibility for correcting James' mistakes. This is a recurring theme throughout the play, and eventually leads to her stepping up as leader of the Scots when James abdicates the throne. Finally, her statement that her love for him is an 'affliction' that she drags around foreshadows the many times throughout the play that she chooses to stand by and love James despite the warnings from those around her that he will hurt her and her children[616].

Over the course of the play, James continues to shirk his responsibilities as king, leading to increasing hostility amongst groups within his Parliament. As the play's climax approaches, Margaret urges James to go to Parliament, apologise and begin to work with them to improve life for the Scots. He tells her he will do this, but when he stands up to address the crowd, he instead abdicates the throne. He does so with his typical showmanship, telling them that 'I was your glitter. I was your sparkle before the dark', passionately kissing his personal servant – Ramsay- and then running off with him[617]. Margaret could, understandably, have retreated in humiliation. Instead, she steps forward and tells her son – the heir to the throne – to sit down. She addresses the crowd and tells them to get on with their work in the king's absence. When they dispute this and accuse her of only taking charge to steal money, she challenges their unspoken assumptions about her leadership:

> Who would want the job of ruling Scotland? I'm Danish, you ignorant, abusive lump of manure! I come from a rational nation with reasonable people. You know the problem with you lot? You've got fuck-all except

[615] Rona Munro, 2016, p. 197
[616] Rona Munro, 2016, p. 224-5
[617] Rona Munro, 2016, p. 284

> attitude. You scream and shout about how you want things done and how things ought to be done and when the chance comes look at you! What are you frightened of? Making things worse? According to you things couldn't get worse for Scotland! You wear me out, do you know that? You drive me mad. Would one of you please explain to me why it is I still love you so much? Would someone please tell me why a rational woman, born in a reasonable country, would rather live here and be your Queen than exist in quiet, happy, peace anywhere else on earth? I am the Queen of Scots. And no, I don't always like that. But I do love it. Always. I was twelve years old when I came here. I didn't understand a word anyone said to me. I was frightened, I was lonely, I had no friends on this side of the North Sea. But you talked slowly till I understood. You showed me that the more frightened you are the better the joke you can tell about it, you taught me you can find friends anywhere you share food and drink if you just wait and see how to join in the conversation. By the time I was thirteen this was my home.
> You let me be.
> You let me grow.
> You taught who I am.
> I am the Queen of Scots.[618]

Within this speech, there are several moments in which Margaret's character is used to explore ideas of national and gender identity. A woman coming forward to lead in place of her husband during this historical period is a powerful statement. It takes on additional power in a trilogy of plays that began with women being traded as commodities. Interestingly, the opposition that comes from the court has nothing to do with Margaret's gender – the Lord merely assumes that Margaret is looking to gain financially from the role, not that her gender makes her an unviable leader. James's abdication and Margaret's leadership are imagined, but Munro's choice to rewrite history and include this moment allows her to envisage a Scotland in which such a moment would have been possible, and perhaps to remind an audience that in contemporary Scotland it *is* possible. In doing this, Munro places a woman at the centre of a historic moment and makes visible the many women whose stories – positive, negative, or otherwise – were never recorded in history.

Beyond the gender politics, this speech offers the most explicit link to indyref in the three plays, especially in this moment:

> You know the problem with you lot? You've got fuck-all except attitude. You scream and shout about how you want things done and how things ought to be done and when the chance comes look at you! What are you

[618] Rona Munro, 2016, p. 285-6

frightened of? Making things worse? According to you things couldn't get worse for Scotland[619]!

To an audience in 2014, this statement could be heard as addressing their own concerns about Scotland's future. One of the Yes campaigns slogans was 'Hope Over Fear'[620], and the Better Together campaign were accused of 'fear mongering' in the months leading up to the vote[621]. The idea that things 'couldn't get worse' was a common one. In 2014, Scotland was being called to make a choice and the fear of having 'fuck-all except attitude' could have resonated with those on all sides of the debate about independence. On one hand, the Yes campaign had made strong statements about Scotland's ability to function independently and to support itself financially, and perhaps there were some who feared that when it came time to actually vote, people would struggle to turn this rhetoric into action. On the other hand, there were those who feared that Scotland was not in fact able to function independently, and that were votes to fall in favour of 'Yes', the reality of an independent Scotland would differ considerably from the positive campaigning. In both cases, Scotland's 'attitude' would not be enough to create change.

The other notable element of this speech is the emphasis Margaret places on her Danish roots. Again, this relates to the civic nationalism at the heart of the independence campaign, and the notion that a person becomes Scottish – or even Queen of the Scots – by choosing to be Scottish. It is Margaret's understanding of Scottish humour, Scottish customs and Scottish culture that makes Scotland her home. This is similar to the way that Joan comes to understand the Scots, but with Margaret, Munro makes it clear that she is an able leader *because* of her foreign roots rather than in spite of them. Margaret's assertion that she is Danish, as well as later describing Scotland as home, shows that she can hold both identities simultaneously, and moreover her rationality that she attributes to her Danish nationality is what the Scots need in that moment. Her immigrant status will strengthen her leadership and give them qualities they are lacking. This had implications for Scotland in 2014, but perhaps even more so when the production

[619] Rona Munro, 2016, p. 286
[620] See https://hopeoverfear.scot/ [Accessed 31/03/2022]
[621] See Yes Scotland, 'Project Fear – No Campaign's Unbelievable Scares', July 2013, https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/yesscotland/pages/1755/attachments/original/1373290492/YES_A4_Project_Fear_July13.pdf [Accessed 31/02/2022]

toured the UK in the months approaching the 2016 Brexit referendum. Whilst Munro certainly could not have predicted that context when writing *The James Plays,* the themes in Margaret's speech would perhaps resonate with an audience in a moment where narratives around immigration were at the forefront of political life across the UK.

When asked if she considered her work political, Munro responded that:

> When I'm writing it's going to be informed by my politics, but I'm trying to represent what can be universal whatever your political opinion. If you put characters on stage that people are not familiar with seeing centre-stage or carrying a narrative, that is political. Just putting women centre-stage when I started out was a fairly political act. By making the audience have that act of empathy with someone whose experience isn't theirs is political. But within that I don't think plays should be arguing a case one way or another – characters within plays can – but plays themselves? If they are doing that it's not drama as I understand it[622].

If it is the characters within Munro's work who are political, rather than the plays themselves, then the female characters within *The James Plays* are a powerful force through which Munro explores contemporary national and gender identities. Building on the idea that the very act of placing woman centre-stage can be a political act, she not only places them in the centre of these plays, but in the very centre of Scotland's history. Through these three women she highlights the importance of belonging and community to the experience of national identity and the way that contemporary civic nationalism attempted to make space for those who self-defined as Scots regardless of their birthplace. This cycle of history plays, like many of the Scottish history plays that came before it, were an opportunity to explore the present and – as Scots were being challenged to make choices about their future – imagine the change that was possible.

'Someone was ripping away my identity' - International Relations[623].

The positive approach to foreigners and a desire to learn from other cultures was not just something that was clear thematically in Munro's work but was also something which arose in my conversations with interviewees about their broader_experiences of the Scottish theatre industry. Many of the women

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[622] Rona Munro in Nick Major, 2014

[623] Jean Cameron, Interview, 3rd July 2020

interviewed for this project mentioned the importance of Scotland being part of the wider international theatre industry. L J Findlay-Walsh spoke about seeing her community 'not just as a Glasgow, Scottish community, but as a kind of national and international community'[624]. Jean Cameron – who has spent much of her career working on international programmes for major organisations – emphasised the importance of highlighting that Scotland is an 'international player', 'Glasgow was the first European capital of culture…we host the world's biggest arts festival for goodness' sake'[625].These perspectives raise the question of how the desire to assert Scotland's status as an international player in terms of cultural activity relates to Scotland's ongoing attempt to assert itself as a nation.

This link was most clear to me in the way that participants talked about Scotland's relationship to Europe, expressing a great deal of concern about the impact of Brexit on the links between Scotland and the rest of Europe, both practically in terms of the bureaucratic difficulties of navigating visa and funding issues and on a more symbolic level. When asked about Brexit, participants described the grief and distress they felt at the result. Jean Cameron explained feeling as though

> Someone was ripping away my identity. I studied languages all my life. I've been working as a European, living as a European, all my life. And someone was telling me I wasn't, uh, an EU citizen. It was bloody awful[626].

The emotional responses to Brexit largely centred around a feeling of loss at the connections to other countries, and concern about some of the motivations behind the Leave campaign and the implications for British politics, a view summarised by Rosie Priest's perception that

> it happened at a moment in time when everything seems a lot more frantic difficult and the identity, which, you know, I, I sort of linked to, of being British or being European is being eroded to being, to being white effectively. Yeah. It's sort of gone hand in hand with this sort of this horrible, radical right wing[627].

[624] LJ Findlay-Walsh, Interview, 24th August 2020
[625] Jean Cameron, Interview, 3rd July 2020
[626] ibid
[627] Rosie Priest, Interview, 27th August 2020

It was clear from the conversations that there was still a strong desire to remain connected to Europe both on a practical level in terms of a desire to keep seeking residencies and opportunities to work with European theatres, but also in a desire to identify and be seen as European.

In contrast, many of the participants were quick to distance themselves from England. For some, this was related to the perceived lack of similarities between Scottish and English theatre, as exemplified by Harris referencing Mark Brown's *Modernism and Scottish Theatre since 1969* which she quoted as arguing that Scottish theatre was[628]

> closer in form to European theatre than it is to, um, London contemporary theatre or the rest of the UK and what he sort of means by the sort of, well, you know, modernism in theatre means, but, but, but he's sort of talking about a theatrical language and a, um, abstraction, uh, and, uh, kind of inherent theatricality, which I think you see in Scotland and you, and you see in Germany and in France and I don't always see on the, on the. English stage or do very rarely. And I think that's quite interesting that we're, we're kind of aligned more with our kind of European neighbours[629].

For others, there was also a clear political and ideological motivation for their desire to distinguish themselves from England:

> I have no frame of reference in terms of the kind of the English theatre culture, and actually, nor do I have an interest in it. I find it...terribly stuck up and I'm like, I can't bear going. I find it very hard going to see work, my dad lives in Oxford and quite often goes, oh, you know, we'll go to the RSC, and we drive through to Stratford, and I find it all terribly English and sort of a bit bleurgh… recently I was approached to apply for a job down South. I just went oh, no. Why would I want to live in England? Do you know what I mean? I was just like...with Boris Johnson and all his cronies[630]?

Every woman that I spoke to expressed support for the remain campaign in the Brexit referendum, and for Yes campaign during indyref, so this group is by no means representative of the country, and perhaps not even of the theatre industry. Nonetheless, what their responses demonstrate are the ways that Scotland's relationship to other countries has been brought into sharper focus in recent years, and how cultural workers' personal and professional identities

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[628] Mark Brown, *Modernism and Scottish Theatre since 1969: A Revolution on Stage* (Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2019)
[629] Zinnie Harris, Interview, 29th June 2020
[630] Anonymous, Interview, 2020

interact and are shaped by one another. The overlap between the personal disappointment and hurt the women described, and their professional desire to remain part of European cultural communities exemplifies the ways in which cultural activity can provide space to work through moments of cultural change and political upheaval. Considering cultural activity as a way of understanding our political activity and national identity, attempts to align with or distance from the culture of another country can provide new understanding of the relationships between those countries, and in turn of the relationship to Scottish identity. Scotland's status as a small nation makes its relationship to these other countries even more significant, and so looking at how Scotland relates to other nations is a key part of understanding Scottish identity.

Christine Hamilton's claim that 'we can take the best of the international repertoire and bring it to audiences in Glasgow' is supported by a long-standing history of international work being showcased in Scotland[631]. The obvious example of this is the array of international work presented at the Edinburgh festivals. These festivals, and their impact on Scotland's theatre ecology, have been written about extensively and as such I will not focus on these in great detail. However, they are not the only place in which you will find international work being programmed regularly within Scotland. This has been driven by organisations but also by individuals such as Richard DeMarco, co-founder of the Traverse Theatre and of the DeMarco Gallery, which championed cross-cultural links between Scottish and European artists[632]. In terms of festivals, Glasgow's *Mayfest* which ran from 1983 – 1997 championed work from Scotland and abroad, pairing a focus on community-based projects with an experimental and international outlook[633]. Take Me Somewhere – a festival designed to build on the legacy of the Arches and 'position Scotland as the place to create and see radical performance' launched in 2017[634]. Since then, it has hosted three in person festivals, one online festival and numerous international residencies. They also offer year-round support to artists and the annual Adrian Howells Award for Intimate Performance is given

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[631] Christine Hamilton, Interview, 29th May 2020
[632] See the Demarco Archive for more information: www.demarcoarchive.com [Accessed 4/11/2022]
[633] See Scottish Theatre Archive, 'Mayfest', https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/library/files/special/collections/STA/Collections/mayfest/index.html#:~:text=Mayfest%20started%20in%201983%20in,Council%2C%20and%20various%20commercial%20sponsors. [Accessed 4/11/2022]
[634] Take Me Somewhere, 'Vision, Mission & Values', https://takemesomewhere.co.uk/vision-mission-values [Accessed 4/11/2022]

each year to an artist wishing to 'explore new territories in the field of one-to-one and intimate performance'[635]. Buzzcut, founded in 2012, is another example of a festival in Scotland which draws international interest. Buzzcut hosts an annual Live Art festival, as well as 'Double Thrills' - a monthly performance programme which brought both Scottish and international live art practitioners to Glasgow [636]. In turn, Tramway hosts Dance International Glasgow on a biennial basis, a festival which includes dance and performance art[637]. These festivals provide opportunities for Scottish artists to gain international recognition and for Scottish audiences to experience the work of artists from all over the world. The Glasgow and Edinburgh Melas also provide these opportunities, focusing primarily on art, music, dance. The Glasgow Mela began as part of the Glasgow's year as European City of Culture in 1990, and the Melas have been a staple of Glasgow and Edinburgh's cultural calendar since[638]. These examples all demonstrate the important role that festivals play in the international nature of Scotland's performance traditions. This, coupled with Scotland's major venues regularly hosting international theatre companies and productions, contributes to the overall sense of Scotland's cultural industries being connected to those of countries all over the world. On a practical level, this provides opportunities, and on an ideological level it aligns Scotland's culture with that of its international neighbours.

These international engagements are also spaces in which women have, especially in recent years, been prominent. I have already discussed Jackie Wylie and L-J Findlay Walsh's tenure at the Arches, but both have also had extensive international experience beyond this. Wylie founded Take Me Somewhere, with Findlay Walsh starting there as an Associate Programmer before taking over from Wylie as Artistic Director when Wylie moved to National Theatre of Scotland. Findlay-Walsh is also Senior Performance Curator at Tramway. Five of the six current staff members of Buzzcut are women or non-binary people, including Creative Producer Claricia Parinussa[639]. The Edinburgh Festival is currently led by

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[635] Take Me Somewhere, 'The Adrian Howells Award for Intimate Performance' https://takemesomewhere.co.uk/adrian-howells-award [Accessed 4/11/2022]
[636] See https://www.glasgowbuzzcut.co.uk/ [Accessed 4/11/2022]
[637] See https://www.tramway.org/projects/dance-international-glasgow/ [Accessed 4/11/2022]
[638] See https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/arts-music-and-cultural-venues/glasgow-mela [Accessed 4/11/2022]
[639] Buzzcut, 'About Us', https://www.glasgowbuzzcut.co.uk/about [Accessed 25/10/2022].

Chief Executive Shona McCarthy, with actress Phoebe Waller-Bridge currently serving as President of the Fringe Society. Women's cultural leadership and influence in these international performance spaces is clear, and it provides opportunities for women's voices to lead representations of Scotland on a global stage.

Scotland is certainly not unique in its desire for international artistic collaboration, nor is it the only country that has managed to successfully create numerous opportunities for such collaboration. What makes Scotland's situation particularly interesting is how these international relationships within the cultural sector reflect Scotland's wider position as a small nation grappling both to define itself as culturally distinct and to locate itself within an increasingly globalised world. To return to Steve Blandford, who argued that small nations are 'defined at least partly by power relationships', Scotland's international collaborations have significance in relation to how the country defines itself[640]. Scotland's links to other countries are significant because they represent the desire to be both distinctly independent *and* part of an outward-looking, inclusive global community. As the women I interviewed expressed, a sense of belonging to a wider European community was crucial to their identity, their understanding of what it means to be Scottish tied intrinsically to what it means to be Scottish *in relation* to other nations. When that relationship to Europe changed, so did their perception of belonging within the United Kingdom. Cultural activity, therefore, provides women with space to explore these relationships and to examine how their internal sense of national identity is shaped by wider political discourses relating to the nation.

'Put on a Tartan Sari and Batter Your Pakora': Migrant Narratives[641]

As I have already discussed, the civic nationalism at the heart of the indyref campaign relied on the idea that belonging to Scotland was a choice, and that Scotland was a country which welcomed 'New Scots' from any background. This idea gained renewed traction during the Brexit campaign, and in the post Brexit UK political landscape. As Scotland located itself within the post-Brexit UK, the

[640] Steve Blandford in Blandford, 2016, p. 4
[641] Annie George, Interview, 19th August 2020

Scottish government emphasised their desire to remain part of a global community. On the date that the UK was first meant to leave the EU – 29th March 2019 – VisitScotland released a video as part of their #ScotlandIsNow marketing campaign. In this video, a man stands alone on a beach and addresses Europe, stating that 'Scotland has a message for you, Europe. From the bottom of our hearts, Scotland is open to you'. The video ends with the man inviting Europe to 'continue their love affair' with Scotland.[642] This video was a clear statement: although Scotland was formally leaving the EU, they were doing so reluctantly and with a desire to maintain a relationship with their European neighbours. Beyond Brexit, the Scottish government have also been vocal opponents of the UK Government's increasingly punitive approach to refugees and asylum seekers.[643] This approach appears to have the support of the majority of Scots, with a study in 2021 showing that 64% of Scots thought Scotland should welcome the same amount, or more, refugees than it was currently housing.[644] A further 77% supported the right of refugees to work and support themselves whilst they waited for their status to be assessed.[645] Given the role that migration has played in political life in Scotland, I am interested in how these narratives have been explored creatively by women. I have chosen two case studies - Annie George's *The Bridge/Home Is Not the Place/Fragments of Home* and Frances Poet's *Adam* - which illustrate how women have engaged with displacement and migration in their work and how they use that work to critique attitudes to immigration in the UK.

'No Problem Here': Race and Migration in Scotland

Before I focus on these case studies, I want to begin with a brief summary of key issues related to race and migration in Scotland. As I discussed in Chapter Three, Scotland has a complex and somewhat unique relationship to race and

[642] PA News Agency, 'New Campaign Urges Scotland to 'continue love affair with Scotland', *East Lothian Courier,* 29th March 2019, https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/national-news/17536781.new-campaign-urges-europe-continue-love-affair-scotland/ [Accessed 10/03/2022]
[643] For example, Nicola Sturgeon and many MSPs spoke out against the 2021 Nationality and Borders Bill which was intended to make it more difficult to seek asylum or refuge in the UK. For more information see: https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/the-anti-refugee-bill-what-comes-next/
[644] Scottish Refugee Council, 'New Polling shows Scotland Welcomes Refugees' , 2021, https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/new-polling-shows-scotland-welcomes-refugees/ [Accessed 10/03/2022]
[645] ibid

migration, and this relationship should be understood as distinct from the rest of the UK. The complexities of debates around race and migration in Scotland have been exacerbated by recent events such as Brexit, indyref and the Black Lives Matter Movement, but they also relate to Scotland's past involvement in the British Empire. Writing about Scotland's imperial past in *No Problem Here,* Minna Liinpää notes that 'there is still a long way to go in terms of recognising and addressing' Scotland's role in sustaining the British Empire[646]. Liinpää explains that Scots enjoyed various opportunities through their involvement in the empire 'as migrants, doctors, plantation owners, soldiers, slave traders, merchants and appointed imperial officers and governers'[647]. Drawing on Tom Devine, she furthers this by noting that Scots were actually 'disproportionately represented' in the 'managing and running of the Empire'. She notes that despite only comprising one tenth of the population of Britain, 'more than 47% of appointed writers, 49% of the office cadets and over 50% of the assistant surgeon recruits in Bengal were Scots'[648]. Liinpää also emphasises the key role that Scots played in sustaining the slave trade in the Caribbean. Scots were present as 'plantation owners, merchants and their employees, clerks, bookkeepers and overseers' as well as 'managing the estates of absentee landowners'. This meant that Scots 'occupied key positions of responsibility and wielded enormous power over the enslaved Africans'[649]. Liinpää's work makes clear that despite the complex relationship between England and Scotland in which, as I demonstrated in my discussion of *The James Plays,* Scotland is often positioned as victim, hostage, or servant to their more powerful Southern neighbour, historical evidence would suggest that Scotland has perhaps played a far more pro-active role in some of the most troubling periods of British history.

Scotland's role in sustaining the transatlantic slave trade is made particularly obvious in areas such as Glasgow's Merchant City, where street names and buildings can be linked directly to the slave economy. In 2019, Glasgow City council commissioned a study into Glasgow's 'historic connections' to and

[646] Minna Liinpää, 'Nationalism and Scotland's Imperial Past' in Davidson et al, *No Problem Here: Understanding Racism in Scotland* (Edinburgh, Luath Press Ltd, 2018) pp 14-31, p. 16
[647] ibid
[648] ibid
[649] Minna Liinpää in Davidson et al, 2018, p. 17-18

‘modern legacies’ of slavery[650]. The findings of this study demonstrated the continued influence of the slave trade on Glasgow’s geography. They found that ‘a minimum of 11 existing mansions and urban buildings in Glasgow are connected to individuals who were involved with Atlantic slavery’, whilst ‘eight individuals with connections to Atlantic slavery are commemorated across multiple monuments and other representations in Glasgow’[651]. Additionally, they found that sixty-two ‘streets and locations have ‘direct’ or ‘associational’ connection to Atlantic slavery’[652]. The Black Lives Matter campaigns in 2020 drew attention to the presence of statues and place names linked to slavery across the UK[653]. In Glasgow, activists placed alternative street name plaques alongside those commemorating slave owners, renaming these streets after prominent Black figures including Rosa Parks, and George Floyd[654]. Since then, Glasgow City Council have stated their intention to review the street names in the city, but they have also confirmed that they will not ‘rush’ this process and want to first focus on consultation with members of the public, ‘primarily targeted at the BME community’[655].

It could be argued that focusing too heavily on Scotland’s past is unfair, and that it is more productive to instead focus on Scotland’s present, contemporary engagement with race and migration. However, as the example of street names and monuments illustrates, Scotland’s historical involvement in the slave trade and the British Empire remains relevant to discussions of contemporary Scotland because of the clear legacies of that period which remain a daily part of life in Scotland. Furthermore, as I have demonstrated in the earlier sections of this chapter, history plays a key role in our understanding of national identity, and this idea is supported by Minna Liinpää who argues that ‘not every historical event is drawn on when composing the ‘national story’; rather there is a selective and

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[650] Susan Aitken, ‘Glasgow’s Slavery Legacy’, February 2022 https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=27980 [Accessed 20/02/2023]
[651] Stephen Mullen, *Glasgow, Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: An Audit of Historic Connections and Modern Legacies,* (Glasgow, Glasgow City Council, 2022) https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=56499&p=0
[652] Stephen Mullen, 2002, p.21
[653] ibid
[654] PA Media, ‘Glasgow ‘slaver’ streets renamed by anti-racist campaigners’, *The Guardian,* 6th June 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/06/glasgow-slaver-streets-renamed-by-anti-racist-campaigners [Accessed 20/02/2023]
[655] Stewart Paterson, ‘Glasgow won’t ‘rush’ to change street names linked to slavery’, *The National,* 17th January 2023, https://www.thenational.scot/news/23257767.glasgow-will-not-rush-change-city-street-names-linked-slavery/ [Accessed 20/02/2023]

fluid process of remembering'[656]. Liinpää notes that groups such as the Scottish National Party regularly draw on historical events in their campaigns, and on their construction of Scotland's narrative, however, the events they draw on only tell part of Scotland's story. This idea was further explored by Nasar Meer in his study of how multinationalism and multiculturalism are narrated by Scottish political elites. He interviewed a selection of MSPs and academics about their views on Scotland's racial diversity, and one of the issues that was illuminated in this work was the idea that the narratives around Scottish history have 'cultivated a chip on the shoulder, you know, Scotland as victim…because the nation's history was not really taught in schools, or at least until very recently'[657]. The lack of education, coupled with existing narratives of Scottish history which emphasise times when Scotland has been victimised, such as the Highland Clearances, have resulted in what Tom Devine describes as an 'amnesia' in public discourse about less favourable elements of Scotland's history[658].

To move on to the current context of race in Scotland, there have been positive legislative developments that demonstrate the Scottish Government's commitment to racial equality. In 2016, the Scottish Government published their Race Equality Framework and action plan, which laid out their goals for tackling racism and inequality by 2030. These goals covered areas including education, employability, and community cohesion, with the overarching aim of building 'a Scotland where we all share a common sense of purpose and belonging'[659]. The concluding remarks of the framework emphasise the need to 'be strategic but realistic' moving forward, noting that their approach is 'ambitious and the way forward will be challenging'[660]. The framework is important progress because it demonstrates tangible, actionable commitments to racial equality, and encourages a level of accountability by making public the government's goals. That being said, in 2019, the Scottish Government's Equalities and Human Rights Committee commissioned an inquiry on the issue of 'race equality, employment and skills' in public authorities which were issues identified in the Racial Equality

[656] Minna Liinpää in Davidson et al, p. 15
[657] Nasar Meer, 'Looking up in Sscotland? Multinationalism, multiculturalism and political elites', *Ethic and Racial Studies,* 38:9, 2015, 1477-1496, p. 1487
[658] Tom Devine in Meer, 2015, p. 1487
[659] Scottish Government, *Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030,* (Edinburgh, Scottish Government ,2016) p.15
[660] Scottish Government, 2016, p. 80

Framework. They commissioned this inquiry because 'outcomes for minority ethnic communities have not improved over the past two decades' and because 'employment is key to addressing the issues of housing, health, education, poverty and participation in public life'[661]. Their overall finding, following consultation with minority ethnic communities and public authorities, was that 'progress [had] either been slow, stalled, or in the case of the ethnicity employment gap gone backwards'[662]. The employment gap referenced was 16.4% in 2019, which was 2% higher than it had been in 2017[663]. When focusing on women, they found that BAME women had a 20% lower employment rate than white women[664]. Overall, the committee was

> Unanimously of the view that, despite all the mechanisms or tools at the disposal of public authorities…the ethnicity employment gap remains unacceptable and much more needs to be done to reduce the ethnicity pay gap and occupational segregation. The committee concludes that Chief Executives and senior leaders within public authorities must demonstrate leadership in this area. It is two decades past the time for acknowledging there is work to do. Now is the time for concerted, definitive action to be taken[665].

This report suggests that despite the Scottish Government's plans and goals relating to racial equality, actioning those plans is proving more complex. This raises questions about the limits of Government influence on such issues and raises questions of how inclusive rhetoric and goals translate into tangible change for minority communities in Scotland.

The disparity between rhetoric and action is also recurring theme in academic work relating to Scotland's racial equality and its approach to migration. The Scottish Government has, particularly in the wake of Brexit, promoted migration as a positive influence on Scottish society. They approach this both from a practical sense – acknowledging the key role that migrant workers play in the Scottish economy[666] - and in an ideological sense, focusing on their desire for 'people from across the UK, and across the world, to make Scotland their

[661] Equality and Human Rights Committee, *Race Equality, Employment and Skills: Making Progress?* (Edinburgh, The Scottish Parliament, 2020) p.4
[662] Equality and Human Rights Committee, 2020, p.5
[663] Equality and Human Rights Committee, 2020, p.6
[664] ibid
[665] Equality and Human Rights Committee, 2020, p.35
[666] Scottish Government, *A Scotland for the Future: The Opportunities and Challenges of Scotland's Changing Population,* (Edinburgh, Scottish Government, 2021) p. 53

home'[667]. The idea of Scotland as a welcoming place is pervasive, and several studies of migrant experiences demonstrate that this welcome is recognised by so-called 'New Scots' who were born elsewhere but make lives in Scotland. In her study of migrant narratives in post-Brexit Scotland, Anna Gawlewicz interviewed both UK-born participants and Polish migrants living in Glasgow about 'the interplay of community relations, migration, political hostile environment and the city'[668]. Gawlewicz found that in her conversations with migrants,

> Scotland was widely perceived as 'more welcoming', 'open and tolerant' and 'friendlier' as opposed to England, which was demonised as 'unfriendly', 'anti-immigrant' or even 'racist'. England was clearly *othered*, i.e made to be intrinsically different, in these stories and served as an imaginary opposite or a boundary outside[669].

Here, Gawlewicz demonstrates how Scotland's constructed narrative of openness is regularly placed in opposition to a negative perception of England. This again evidences how the dynamic between Scotland and England plays a crucial role in our understanding of contemporary Scotland. Gawlewicz expands on this idea, arguing that post-Brexit Scotland has been 'reimagined' against the backdrop of the referendum. Gawlewicz argues that this has partly been made possible by the image of Scotland as welcoming and inclusive, which has previously 'been largely a political elite projection until recently' had been 'increasingly internalised by ordinary people and manifests itself in everyday talk'[670].

However, despite these inclusive ideologies trickling down into everyday life in Scotland, racist and xenophobic attitudes persist. The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights, a Scottish anti-racist organisation, reported that 'racist hate crime remains the most reported hate crime in Scotland, with 3,285 charges reported in 2020-2021, which is almost 9 charges being made a day'[671]. Indeed, racism in Scotland was recently highlighted by actor James McAvoy who told GQ magazine that he had been 'shocked and dismayed' by the amount of racial abuse his castmates of colour received when he came to Glasgow on tour with *Cyrano de Bergerac*. He said that 'most of the women of colour in the cast got racially

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[667] Scottish Government, 2021, p. 56

[668] Anna Gawlewicz, 'Scotland's Different: Narratives of Scottish Distinctiveness in post-Brexit-vote era, Scottish Affairs, 29:3, 2020, pp 321-335, p.324

[669] Anna Gawlewicz, 2020, p. 326

[670] Anna Gawlewicz, 2020, p. 328

[671] Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights, Ten Things We Need to Say About Racism, https://www.crer.org.uk/ten-things-we-need-to-say-about-racism [Accessed 20/02/2023]

abused pretty much on a daily basis' in Glasgow[672]. Whilst this is an anecdotal example, it prompted discussions once again about Scotland's issues with racism[673]. In a study of young Eastern European migrants and their relationship to national identity in Scotland carried out by Daniela Sime, survey respondents discussed experiencing hate crimes. One described how 'Scottish guys (aged 16-18) …assaulted [their] friends with wrenches, pipes, and hammers for being Polish'[674]. Another stated that 'someone drew a swastika on my house and wrote go back to your country and stop stealing jobs'[675].

Interestingly, Sime explained that instances of racist and xenophobic abuse 'went largely unreported and young people often brushed them off'[676]. Incidences of abuse were also downplayed by Gawlewicz's interview participants. One described a group of 'Scottish lads in their 20s' making comments about the participant conversing in Polish. The participant quickly dismissed this by saying that she thought 'that they simply didn't know what was going on, they didn't know the circumstances. They simply had limited knowledge'[677]. Another participant stated that there had been 'no concerning news from Scotland' regarding hate crime, and when Gawlewicz mentioned an incident in Glasgow in which 'stickers with Nazi symbols' had been seen 'in some neighbourhoods', the participant responded 'so what? Has anything happened to anybody?'[678]. In diminishing these experiences, the migrants demonstrate the extent to which they had 'bought in' to narratives of Scotland's openness and distinctiveness and Gawlewicz noted that migrants were more likely to produce these types of narratives about Scotland than their UK born counterparts. But whilst Scotland

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[672] Robert Dex, 'James McAvoy shocked by hometown racism in Glasgow after castmates abused on the street', *Evening Standard,* 29th November 2022, https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/james-mcavoy-shocked-racism-glasgow-cyrano-b1043621.html [Accessed 20/02/2023]

[673] See: Neil Mackay, 'James McAvoy is right, Scotland is racist. The solution: get more woke', *The Herald,,* 1st December 2022, https://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/23160172.james-mcavoy-right-scotland-racist-solution-get-woke/ [Accessed 20/02/2023] and Brian Wilson, James McAvoy did Scotland a service by calling out racism, *The Scotsman* 3rd December 2022*,* https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/james-mcavoy-did-scotland-a-service-by-calling-out-racism-brian-wilson-3940266 [Accessed 20/02/2023]

[674] Daniela Sime, 'New Scots? Eastern European Young People's Feelings of Belonging and National Identity in Scotland Post-Brexit', *Scottish Affairs,* 29:3, 2020, pp 336-353, p. 342

[675] ibid

[676] ibid

[677] Gawlewicz, 2020, p. 331

[678] ibid

may be more welcoming than other nations, it does not make it a country free of prejudice.

Daniela Sime's work with young migrants in Scotland also highlighted the complexities of migrant's relationship to national identity. Sime found that whilst young people spoke positively about life in Scotland, they were often reluctant to claim a Scottish identity. Sime carried out a series of focus groups and case studies and found that many

> Young people felt that could not claim a Scottish identity. While they were keen to emphasise their sense of belonging in Scotland, claiming national identity was seen as more problematic…Many felt they could never claim to be Scottish, no matter how long they had lived in the UK and that any claims of Scottishness would denied them by their Scottish-born friends or neighbours, based on markers of difference, such as their accent or them not being born in Scotland[679].

Sime's participants illustrate a dynamic described by Melike Peterson in her study of racialisation and resistance in Scotland. Peterson interviewed migrant populations in the West and North of Glasgow and argued that 'notions of 'whiteness' continue to weave through past and present political discourses on national identity and belonging in Glasgow, and wider society, as Scottishness is equated with whiteness'[680]. This also resonates with some of the conversations that Nasar Meer had with MSPs and academics about Scotland's multiculturalism. A useful parallel to Sime and Peterson's discussions about migrant identities is Meer's conversations with MSPs about minority languages. Meer noted the protect status of Gaelic as one of Scotland's official languages. He raises the question of why languages popular amongst migrants, such as Urdu and Punjabi which are spoken more than Gaelic, deserved the same status. When confronted with this question, Meer found that his participants were of a 'general consensus' that such languages should not be included. He quotes a Conservative MSP who argues that we should instead be encouraging speakers of these languages to 'integrate' and it could be 'dangerous' and encourage segregation if these languages are legitimized[681]. Meer argues that 'in this assessment, historical multilingualism [such as we see with Gaelic] is a feature of the national identity whereas migrant

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[679] Daniela Sime, 2020, p. 346

[680] Melike Peterson, 'Microaggressions and Connections in the Context of National Multiculturalism: Everyday Geographies of Racialisation and Resistance in Contemporary Scotland', *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography,* 52:5, 2020, pp 1393-1412, p. 1394

[681] Nasar Meer, 2015, p. 1490

languages are potentially, but not necessarily, fragmentary'[682]. Whilst the relationship to Gaelic is very specific and perhaps not comparable to other languages, Meer does illustrate here the potential boundaries and limitations placed on how 'multicultural' Scotland is willing to become.

As I have shown, much has been written about how the political elite in Scotland have continually pushed a pro-migration and pro-racial equality stance, and the ways in which this has – or has not – trickled down to daily life for ordinary Scots. However, Peterson argues that the 'routine framing' of Scottish nationalism as civic 'risk silencing relations of race, ethnicity and inclusion in Scottish nationhood'[683]. It is therefore vital that there remains space for critique and given that theatre plays a key role in creating and sustaining national identities, it also provides a possible platform for critiques and alternative narratives of Scotland's relationship to migration and racial equality.

The Bridge/Home is Not the Place/Fragments of Home

Annie George's *The Bridge* was the first production by a South Asian performer living in Scotland to receive touring funding from Creative Scotland. Following its run at the 2014 Fringe, it toured across Scotland before being staged at the Nehru Centre, London in 2015. Since then, George has adapted *The Bridge* into a more intimate performance called *Home is Not the Place* which premiered at the Storytelling Centre during the 2017 Fringe. *Fragments of Home,* a seven-minute filmed version of the show premiered during the 2020 COVID19 lockdown. Each of these productions tells the same story, although the staging differs. George looks back over her family's history, and in particular tells the story of her grandfather - Paduthottu Mathen John – a poet and writer from George's native Kerala. Her grandfather died before she was born, but George feels connected to him by their shared passion for storytelling, and in talking about him she also reflects on her experiences as a young migrant growing up in London.

My ability to offer an in-depth analysis of George's work is limited significantly by the lack of documentation of these productions. In my analysis of *The James Plays* and *Adam,* I have been able to draw on the published texts as

[682] ibid
[683] Melike Peterson, 2020, 1396

well as my experience as an audience member. Whilst I did see *The Bridge* in 2014, without a published text to refer to I would struggle to accurately recall the details of this work. In the context of cultural leadership, and the role that cultural activity plays in forming wider narratives of a country's past, present, and future, the lack of documentation of George's work raises important questions about whose stories are prioritised and privileged in that narrative. It is far easier for a play to shape a country's cultural narrative if a record of that play exists beyond the live performance, not only because it allows for repeated readings and re-stagings, but also because it allows for the work to be studied in academic contexts. It is worth noting that George is the only woman of colour who is featured in this thesis, and so the lack of documentation of her work also raises questions about how the work of marginalised people becomes excluded from established and thereby dominant cultural narratives. I have nevertheless chosen to include George's work in this chapter because it made a critical intervention in the 2014 Cultural programme which confronted the harm caused by the British Empire. Our conversations about this work and her experience as an immigrant in the UK were also crucial to shaping my understanding of how cultural activity has been invoked as a means of complicating narratives around migration in contemporary Scotland. When I discuss the themes of the work, I am drawing on the *Fragments of Home* film, and on my conversations with George.

The Bridge was originally staged as part of the Culture 2014 programme at the Edinburgh Fringe Festivals. George explained that she had been disappointed by the lack of diversity in the Cultural Programme overall:

> It was coming up to 2014 and the Commonwealth Games cultural programme was on and that really pissed me off because I'm like, hello? I'm from the Commonwealth! And in the cultural programme there was hardly any people of colour…I think they had announced that there was a small fund. It's not the official programme, but it was a little bit of commissioning money, and it wasn't a bad sum of money…I literally sat on the day of the deadline and hammered out the application form to get it in for five o'clock because I just thought, you know, F you[684].

The Commonwealth Games' connection to the UK's colonial past made them a complex undertaking for Scotland in 2014. The Culture 2014 programme seems, to me, to boast a diverse range of work with people from all backgrounds, and from all corners of the commonwealth. That being said, I don't have access to

[684] Annie George, Interview, 19th August 2020

information about the percentage of funding that each group received, so George's frustration at the lack of diversity in the programme is perhaps also reflective of disparities in funding, resources and marketing each production received. As I discussed in chapter three, looking at the percentage of funding and resources that a production is granted can highlight the type of work that is valued and prioritised by an organisation, and so George's frustration at only having access to a small fund separate from the main cultural programme is understandable.

A key focus of *The Bridge* and its later iterations is the devastating impact of the British empire on both George's family in India, and its influence on her own experiences of growing up as part of a South Asian diasporic community in London. George refers to how children in India were taught British history before learning their own, and that many chose to speak English because they were looked down upon for using their mother tongue. Speaking of her childhood in London, she remembers how her classmates would mock her for her skin colour, and that the only images shown on TV of India were of impoverished people which she said contributed to her classmates' bullying. Staging a story which was so directly critical of the UK's colonial past in the context of the Commonwealth Games – an event that's very existence is rooted in that colonisation – had the potential to disrupt and subvert narratives around the Games and the associated Cultural Programme. The Culture 2014 programme was an opportunity to showcase Scottish talent on a global stage, but it also provided opportunities for representing Scotland's values. It would, perhaps, have been easy for Culture 2014 to be simply a celebratory programme which focused on the diversity in contemporary Scotland. In presenting a story in which that diversity is directly critiqued, and in which the impact of the British Empire is placed in the spotlight, George's work invited audiences to consider the ways in which the Games and the Cultural Programme contribute to a sanitised and whitewashed narrative of the United Kingdom's colonial past.

George further problematised the notion of contemporary Scotland as a diverse and welcoming nation during our conversation:

> My father, he never changed his passport. He never got a British nationality. My Mum did, my sister did…my Dad wouldn't change his nationality because he didn't want to lose his Indian passport. I asked him why and he said it

> was about identity or something like that and I thought at the time, well, I'm not going to either because I don't feel British…I've never really felt really welcome here whether in England or Scotland. I've felt more comfortable in Scotland, but I've always felt in Scotland it was like, maybe I have to be Scottish first and then we will like you. If you just put on a tartan sari and batter your pakora and have pakora and chips then you know, we're comfortable with you and then we'll all get on fine.[685]

In this comment, there are echoes of Sara Ahmed's work on the selective affirmation of multiculturalism. In *Strange Encounters,* Ahmed discusses how multiculturalism is invoked as a means of affirming 'the nation' through the 'difference of the 'stranger cultures''.[686] Building on Anderson's imagined community, Ahmed argues that 'nations are produced and constructed as places and communities in which 'a people' might belong'.[687] This production and reproduction of the nation is in part shaped by relationships with strangers:

> Nationhood is constantly renegotiated, and that negotiation is crucially dependent on encountering those who are recognisable as strangers, and who demand a response from the citizen: Who are they? Do they belong here? Who am I? Who are we? The distinction between native and stranger within a nation is not simply enforced at the border: rather, that distinction determines different ways in which subjects inhabit…the space of the nation.[688]

The significance of the stranger as one who is marked as 'different' within the nation, and not simply as one who exists beyond the nation but who exist within it, lies in the ways in which 'strangeness' comes to be embraced and absorbed by the nation.

In order to illustrate what these encounters with the stranger might look like, Ahmed focuses on multiculturalism in an Australian context. She cites the National Agenda for Multicultural Australia (1989). This agenda was published by the Australian government with the aim of providing a formal definition of multiculturalism, and to set out goals for the government to pursue in relation to creating a multicultural society. The document is described by the Government as 'a necessary response to the reality of Australia's cultural diversity' and they state that their policies 'aim to realise a better Australia characterised by an enhanced

[685] ibid
[686] Ahmed, 2000, p. 95
[687] Ahmed, 2000, p. 98
[688] Ahmed, 2000. P. 101

degree of social justice and economic efficiency'[689].The agenda opens with the question 'what is multiculturalism?' and they answer this with the following definition: 'multicultural is simply a term which describes the cultural and ethnic diversity of contemporary Australia. We are, and we will remain, a multicultural society'.[690] In this statement, 'difference' is claimed as integral to the identity of Australia as a nation, the strange absorbed into the fabric of a country which defines itself as 'multicultural'. As Ahmed explains,

> Immediately, the use of the term, 'multiculturalism', to describe the nation allows cultural diversity to reinforce, rather than undo, the fantastic inclusiveness of the nation: what 'we' are is not 'one', but 'many'. What binds Australia together as a 'we' is the fact of our differences: differences that belong to us, and that allow Australia to 'be' as a nation.[691]

The concept of a 'multicultural society' allows for nations to reconcile the existence of multiple cultures, ethnicities, and identities within its borders by claiming this diversity as central to the identity of the nation. But as George's example of the tartan sari illustrates, this relationship between cultures within the imagined community of the nation is not always straightforward. Ahmed quotes a later section of the National Agenda which states that:

> Multiculturalism is concerned to encourage all Australians, including those from non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds, to share their diversity of culture, rather than excluding one another or being forced into separate enclaves. It seeks to make it clear that colour or language, style of dress or mode of worship, are no indication of the degree of personal commitment to the future of our nation. Being Australian has nothing to do with outward appearance'.[692]

It is worth noting here that this document was published in 1989, and conversations about cultural appropriation have been more prominent in recent years, so the concept of 'sharing' culture is recognised as more nuanced than this document allows[693].

However, what is clear in this example is the ways in which assimilation is often assumed to be the goal within a multicultural society. The National Agenda works on the assumption that everyone wants to feel or be 'Australian' regardless

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[689] Office of Multicultural Affairs, 'National Agenda for Multicultural Australia', 1989, http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/doc/multoff_1.pdf [Accessed 04/11/2022]
[690] Ahmed, 2000, p. 102
[691] Ahmed, 2000, p. 103
[692] Ahmed, 2000, p. 105
[693] See Richard A. Rogers, 'From Cultural Exchange to Transculturation: A Review and Reconceptualization of Cultural Appropriation', *Communication Theory,* 16:4, November 2006, pp 474-503

of their country of origin, and that any Australian should feel a claim to elements of other cultural identities on the basis that Australia is a multicultural nation. While on the surface the idea that 'being Australian has nothing to do with outward appearance' is an inclusive one, it also erases the potential for those within Australia to identify as anything other than Australian. George's discussion about her father keeping his Indian passport because he felt it was part of his identity demonstrates the desire that many hold to maintain their connection to their country of origin, or who identify with some form of dual citizenship. Similarly, when George talks about wearing a tartan sari and eating pakora, she demonstrates the ways in which elements of foreign cultures come to be absorbed into our understanding of the nation, but often only on the basis that those elements can be claimed as part of the dominant culture within the nation. Wearing a sari may mark you as a 'stranger' within the nation but wearing a *tartan* sari allows for the individual's 'strangeness' to be claimed as part of *our* collective, multicultural nation. The tartan sari comes to represent the ways in which multiculturalism relies on individuals being willing to give parts of their culture – in this case, the sari – over to the nation and allow for it to be absorbed.

When George discusses the feeling of needing to be 'Scottish first' to be welcomed in Scotland, she demonstrates how multiculturalism in contemporary Scottish politics has been used as a means of reconciling the country's nationalist movement with its liberal politics. The focus on 'New Scots' and freedom of movement which dominated public narratives around migration in both the post-indyref and post-Brexit political landscape was as much about defining Scotland as it was about legislative decisions about migration. This is not to suggest that the desire to make Scotland inclusive and multicultural was not a positive one, but it raises the question of how these inclusive narratives have been co-opted as part of the wider project of establishing Scotland as a nation. For example, the #WeAreScotland hashtag has been employed by the Scottish government as a means of encouraging an inclusive Scotland. The hashtag is introduced on the OneScotland Scottish Government website with the statement that:

> the reality is – and the evidence shows – a more equal, more diverse society makes for a more productive, happier society. So it's with pride we say that

> in Scotland there's no V, there's just you, me and we. And we are Scotland[694].

Much like the statements about 'multicultural Australia' quoted by Ahmed, the statement that 'we are Scotland' evidences the ways that cultures are embraced and absorbed into the national landscape in such a way that they reinforce the existence of that nation, expanding the definition so as to maintain the relevance of the nation state. But this statement also makes clear the ways in which multiculturalism is invoked in service of the nation in a practical sense. A multicultural nation is a more productive one, according to the government, and they emphasise this on their website with graphs detailing how migration helps counter the problem of an aging population in which fewer children are born each year. The space held for multiple cultures within that nation, then, is crucial to the continued existence of the nation. Cultural diversity is embraced because it is useful to the overall building of a nation. In this case, the 'stranger' is embraced as a means of ensuring that Scotland survives as an imagined community.

Adam

Annie George's work allows us to understand how women's playwrighting practices can provide new insight into migrant experiences, and that this form of cultural leadership is significant insofar as it creates new interventions into existing narratives about multiculturalism in Scotland. That being said, George's work did not deal directly with gender, and further conclusions can be drawn by looking at work that deals specifically with gender in relation to migrant experiences.

Frances Poet's *Adam* tells the story of a young Egyptian who seeks asylum in Glasgow in order to be able to live authentically as a transgender man. The play is a based on the real-life experiences of Adam Kashmiry, who has played himself in every production to date. Kashmiry met director Cora Bissett at Here We Stay, a community arts project he was involved in with Scottish Refugee Council at the Citizen's Theatre. Upon hearing Kashmiry deliver an autobiographical monologue, Bissett approached him about collaborating on a larger scale project based on his story. Several playwrights were attached to the project before Poet, who joined

[694] OneScotland, '#WeAreScotland', https://onescotland.org/campaigns/we-are-scotland/ [Accessed 08/03/2022]

the team in 2015[695]. Poet's script was based on several conversations with Kashmiry, though Kashmiry was not directly involved in the writing process. The play was first staged by the National Theatre of Scotland during the 2017 Edinburgh Fringe Festival and toured venues across the UK in 2019 before being included in the 2019 Skirball Festival in New York.[696] In 2021, in a partnership between NTS and BBC Scotland, *Adam* was adapted into an hour-long drama which won the BAFTA Scotland for best scripted television drama.[697] There are two elements of this production that I want to consider in relation to how the play approaches issues of migration, identity and gender: the casting of two Adams to portray the central character and the play's representation of the bureaucratic cruelty in the UK immigration system. In doing so, I will argue that *Adam* provides a critique of post-Brexit narratives around migration within a Scottish context.

For most of the play, there are just two characters on stage – Glasgow Adam and Egyptian Adam. Kashmiry takes on the role of Glasgow Adam whilst Egyptian Adam is portrayed by a female actor. Staging the characters in this way has dramaturgical implications both in terms of how the play conceptualizes gender and in how it approaches the migrant experience. In terms of gender, the relationship between the two Adams can be read as a straight-forward, and perhaps quite reductive, 'before' and 'after' wherein the female Egyptian Adam is a representation of Adam's former life in which he was socialised as a woman. The play depicts that from a young age Adam was experiencing gender dysphoria[698]. As a teenager, he works in a woman's clothing store and describes watching women and mimicking their gestures and movements to help him pass as a woman[699]. He did not have the vocabulary to express that he was transgender, but he knew that he did not belong in the way that women around him did. The inclusion of a female, Egyptian Adam could therefore be interpreted as a reminder to both Glasgow Adam and the audience of his past and, potentially problematically, its persistence in the present. This dynamic is perhaps most clear in one of the final scenes in the play, in which Adam, struggling with depression,

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[695] Frances Poet, Interview, 25th November 2021

[696] National Theatre of Scotland, *Adam,* https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/events/adam [Accessed 08/03/2022]

[697] Gillian McCormick, 'BAFTA Scotland Awards 2021: Winners Announced', Press Release, 20th November 2021, https://www.bafta.org/media-centre/press-releases/bafta-scotland-awards-2021-winners-announced [Accessed 08/03/2022]

[698] Frances Poet, *Adam,* (London, Nick Hern Books, 2017) p. 8

[699] Poet, 2017, p. 12

attempts to cut off his own breasts. This is staged in such a way that it is Egyptian Adam who instigates the act - 'I'll cut them off. These – (gestures to their breasts) tumours. I'll take the blade to them' – and then phones the emergency services before pressing the knife into their chest[700]. At this point, the stage goes dark whilst Glasgow Adam's voice can be heard narrating his perspective – 'I watch my woman's body try to cut away the flesh. Is that me? With testosterone coursing through it, the body I was born with has…died'[701]. The monologue ends, the lights come back on, and the following sequence of events takes place:

> *We are back in the room.* EGYPTIAN ADAM *is gone.* GLASGOW ADAM, *lifeless, is where* EGYPTIAN ADAM *held the knife moments before. Suddenly, movement* – GLASGOW ADAM *stabs the needle of testosterone into thigh. It's like a shot of adrenaline and* GLASGOW ADAM *gasps. Alive. A door is opened. Light floods the room*[702].

In this moment, the relationship between the Egyptian and Glasgow Adams appears somewhat linear – the former needs to 'die' for the other to live.

However, this reading is problematised by the fact that, as Stephen Greer discusses, Poet throughout the play chooses to foreground Glasgow Adam's experience. Greer notes that 'Glasgow Adam – in other words, the actor Adam Kashmiry – is most often Adam, even when he is presenting as or treated as a girl or young woman' and argues that 'this complicates a reading of the play as staging any kind of straightforward cis-gender before and transgender after, even as it narrates a movement between given gender identities'[703]. There is, then, an alternative reading of the two Adams which allows space for the complex connections to and distance between versions of oneself. Rather than a simple 'before' and 'after', the placing of Glasgow Adam in scenes in which he is being treated as a woman highlights that Adam was always – whether those around him saw or accepted it – a man. Greer extends this analysis in his discussion of how the term 'real' is invoked within the play. There is a scene in which the Adams sit together at a laptop, whilst Glasgow Adam types the question 'can the soul of a man be trapped in a woman?'[704]. He is met with a flood of information, testimonies

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[700] Poet, 2017, p. 42
[701] Poet, 2017, p. 43
[702] Poet, 2017, p. 44
[703] Stephen Greer, *'From Egypt to Scotland, across borders and genders' – National Theatre of Scotland's Adam and the figure of the trans migrant',* Conference Paper, IFTR 2018: Theatre, Nation and Identity: Between Migration and Stasis, Belgrade.
[704] Poet, 2017, p. 27

from trans people worldwide which is described as ‘a global choir of experience and knowledge’[705]. Glasgow Adam responds to this information by simply declaring ‘I. Am. Real’[706]. This is a turning point in the play, which leads Adam on his journey to seek asylum in Glasgow. But, as Greer argues, the staging of the play in which Glasgow Adam is regularly featured in scenes where he is presented as a woman highlights that ‘Adam is or always was Adam. He was always real, even before the character in the play makes this realisation or says it out loud. Adam was always real’[707]. The ‘real’ nature of Adam’s identity therefore becomes more about how he is perceived as ‘real’ by those around him, and how he is able to adhere to the narratives around transness that are accepted publicly and, crucially, by the state. As will be clear in my discussion of Adam’s interactions with the Home Office, there is an expectation placed on those seeking asylum to narrate their experiences in a specific manner which, to quote Millbank and Berg, ‘explains apparent inconsistencies and complicates neat categorizations of human sexual experience, yet at the same time to present this narrative in such a way that it is recognisable to the decision-maker’[708]. In order for Adam to be legitimised and viewed as ‘real’ by the state, he must adhere to specific, and often inaccurate, assumptions about transgender identity, which may in fact feel far removed from his actual experience.

Whilst Adam’s story is inextricably connected to his transgender identity, and his experiences of the immigration system – which I will return to – are shaped by that identity, the casting of an Egyptian Adam and a Glasgow Adam has additional significance in the context of multiculturalism because it offers fresh perspective on assimilation and belonging for migrants in the UK. In a scene not long after Adam has arrived in Scotland, Egyptian Adam begins to discuss feeling homesick and compares themselves to the first Adam – the biblical character exiled from the Garden of Eden because of his sin:

> EGYPTIAN ADAM: This room, this is exile.
> GLASGOW ADAM: Exile is nothing new. I’ve lived it my whole life. Here it is safe to be what I really am.
> EGYPTIAN ADAM: What is that?

[705] ibid
[706] ibid
[707] Greer, 2018
[708] Jenni Millbank and Laurie Berg, ‘Constructing the Personal Narratives of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Asylum Claimants’, *Journal of Refugee Studies,* 22:2, 2009, pp 195-223, p. 217

> GLASGOW ADAM: A transgender
> (…)
> EGYPTIAN ADAM: Egypt is trans. Transcontinental. It is Asia and Africa. Egypt was home to the first trans man. A pharaoh – Hatshepsut. Born a woman but ruled with a beard and the headdress of a king. I see no pharaohs here. Why am I?
> (…)
> I miss home. I want to go home.
> GLASGOW ADAM: I will go home. Tell me it is safe for me in Egypt and I will go home[709].

In this interaction, both Adams represent a complex relationship to 'home'. Adam's life in Egypt was dangerous, having been caught by his boss kissing a female co-worker, he was assumed to be a lesbian and his boss assaulted him. Following this incident, he began to wear men's clothes when on nights out and went by different male names as he explored his gender identity. He states that if he was caught doing this, he would be killed. Following a confrontation with his father, his family home is no longer a safe place for him. He is homeless for a while in Egypt, before seeking asylum in Scotland. Glasgow Adam knows that he is safe in Glasgow and that he is happy to be starting a new life there, but there is a part of him – and this part is represented here by Egyptian Adam – that still considers Egypt home. Whilst practically, returning is not an option, that does not erase the connection he feels to Egypt. This is further complicated by the fact that Adam describes feeling that he has lived in 'exile' forever, never truly belonging in Egypt.

The pull that Adam feels to his home in Egypt despite being glad to be in Glasgow is significant because it further problematises the premise of assimilation. In particular, it challenges the concept of the gratitude in relation to migration. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion,* Ahmed furthers her work on multiculturalism and the nation, arguing that embracing multiculturalism is key to the 'love' of the nation and key to the nation's existence. Focusing on the UK she argues that those who do not embrace multiculturalism are a threat to that existence:

> The multicultural nation can itself be taken away by the presences of others – who do not reflect back the good image the nation has of itself – such as

[709] Frances Poet, 2017, p. 29

> intolerant racist others…the nation can also be taken away by migrants or asylum seekers who don't accept the conditions of one's love[710].

Migrants and asylum seekers are therefore expected to perform multiculturalism, to embrace the 'British' lifestyle regardless of their country of origin:

> migrants 'must learn to be British'; that is, migrants must identify themselves as British by taking 'the nation' as their object of love. This becomes a matter of allegiance and adherence…importantly, migrants must become British even at home…The others can be different (indeed the nation is invested in their difference as a sign of its love for difference), as long as they refuse to keep their difference to themselves, but instead give it back to the nation, through speaking common language and mixing with others[711].

This leads to a pressure to assimilate, and the desire for the difference that migrants represent to be absorbed into the narrative of the nation regardless of their sense of belonging to that place. This both coincides with and often directly contradicts the negative way in which asylum seekers and immigrants are spoken about within political discourse. Ahmed draws on speeches from former leader of the Conservative Party, William Hague, and former Home Secretary David Blunkett. In a speech in 2000, Hague used words like 'flood' and 'swamped' to describe asylum seekers arriving in the UK which Ahmed argues 'create(s) associations between asylum and the loss of control and hence work by mobilising fear, or the anxiety of being overwhelmed by the actual or potential proximity of others'[712]. Several years later, David Blunkett 'used 'swamped' to describe the effect on others that children of asylum seekers would have if they were taught in local schools'[713].

In the years since Ahmed's text was published, there have been several more examples of this rhetoric in regard to asylum seekers and immigrants in the UK. For example, one of the most well-known images associated with the Brexit campaign is a UKIP poster of a long queue of non-white men, presumed to be refugees, with the caption 'BREAKING POINT: the EU has failed us all. We must break free from the EU and take control of our borders'. Another infamous image was a *Daily Mail* cartoon which depicted several rats running towards a sign that

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[710] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion: Second Edition,* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2014) p. 134

[711] ibid

[712] Sara Ahmed, 2014, p.46

[713] ibid

said ‘Welcome to Europe’ implying that refugees and rats were somehow comparable. Despite this, there is still an expectation placed on those who are making a life in the UK to be grateful or happy to have the opportunity[714]. Both George’s work in *Home is Not the Place* and the duality put forward in Poet’s *Adam* demonstrate that the relationship to the UK as ‘home’ can be more complicated than the current narratives around migration in mainstream political discourse represent.

This has particular significance in the context of Brexit and the UK’s ‘hostile environment’ for migrants and asylum seekers. Frances Webber defines the hostile environment as

> Policies which have the avowed aim of making life impossible for migrants and refugees who do not have permission to live in the UK, and which remove such migrants from the right to housing, health, livelihood and a decent standard of living[715].

The hostile environment was first introduced by Theresa May in a speech in 2012, and in the years between 2012 and 2016, several legislations were brought in which were intended to make it difficult for migrants to access housing, healthcare, and work[716]. In the lead up to the Brexit vote, The Leave campaign focused on immigration despite the fact that, as Amanda Garrett notes, the vote would actually only directly relate to EU citizens moving between countries, which was separate to the issue of asylum seekers and refugees:

> This did not stop the Leave campaigners from crafting a staunchly anti-immigrant message that (purposefully) obscured the important political and legal distinctions between these two anomalous groups…By erroneously lumping these categories of migrants together and recasting them in the minds of potential voters as a homogenous ‘immigrant’ population, the Leave campaign could more easily tap into a broader spectrum of fears concerning economics, security, race, culture, and sovereignty[717].

Garrett illustrates the ways in which anti-immigrant sentiments were mobilised by the Leave campaign to support their desire to control border movements in the UK. Despite the inaccuracies in their campaigning, the fact that the Leave

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[714] See Christine Schwobel-Patel and Deger Ozkaramanli, ‘The Construction of the ‘Grateful’ Refugee in Law and Design, *Queen Mary Human Rights Review,* 4:1, 2017.
[715] Frances Webber, ‘On the Creation of the UK’s Hostile Environment’, *Race and Class,* 60:4, January 2019, pp 76-87, p. 77
[716] ibid
[717]Amanda Garrett, ‘The Refugee Crisis, Brexit, and the Reframing of Immigration in Britain’, *Europe Now,* 1st August 2019, https://www.europenowjournal.org/2019/09/09/the-refugee-crisis-brexit-and-the-reframing-of-immigration-in-britain/

campaign opted to stoke the fire of anti-immigration suggests that they believed these opinions to be held widely and to resonate with potential voters. In doing so, they played into the existing hostile environment and the resentment towards migrants that existed within the UK.

The hostile environment is represented in *Adam* through Adam's interactions with the Home Office. He regularly meets with a 'Home Office representative' who is played by the same actor who takes the role of Egyptian Adam. These meetings are designed for the Home Office representative to decide if Adam is a legitimate asylum seeker, but it is clear throughout that they have a very limited understanding of the transgender experience. The Home Office representative asks Adam how many people in Egypt knew he was a transgender and seems suspicious when Adam tells her that he never shared his identity with anyone in his home country. From there, she moves on to discuss Adam's visa:

> HOME OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE: I understand you entered the UK on a holiday visa, Miss Kashmiry – is that correct?
> GLASGOW ADAM: I didn't know you could seek asylum in your own country
> HOME OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE: Your application stated that you were from a wealthy family, visiting family friends in the UK and that you intended to return home. You even bought a return plane ticket, is that correct?
> GLASGOW ADAM: If I had known I could travel to Cairo and claim asylum, I would have –
> HOME OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE: How much of the visa statement that you signed on that visa was correct?[718]

Adam attempts to explain that he thought he had to lie on the form to be able to enter the UK, and that life in Egypt was impossible for him because to be able to live and get a job, he would have had to present as a woman. The representative takes this as an admission that his real reason for travelling to the UK was to work, rather than to claim asylum. His asylum claim is rejected on the basis that 'the Secretary of State does not believe your claim to be a transgender man'[719]. This leads Adam to try binding his chest in order to 'prove' that he is a man, despite the fact that this is a practice which causes him great pain[720].When he visits his GP, they tell him to speak to a consultant psychiatrist at a gender clinic. Adam responds: 'I have. She will not prescribe the hormone therapy until I am granted asylum. They will not grant me asylum because I have not begun the hormone

[718] Poet, 2017, p. 31
[719] Poet, 2017, p. 32
[720] ibid

therapy'[721]. Finally, Adam meets again with the Home Office representative who questions him about his allegation that he was assaulted by his former employer.

> HOME OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE: Did you report your attack to the Egyptian police?
> GLASGOW ADAM *gives a shake of the head*
> So, you did not feel significantly threatened?
> GLASGOW ADAM: I, I don't understand the question. From whom could I seek protection?
> HOME OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE: The police, of course.
> GLASGOW ADAM: If I tell the police that a person on the street has hurt me, they hurt me twice as bad. I tell them I was sexually assaulted by a man. Three police assault me. Redress? Protection? There is none.
> HOME OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE: So, to clarify, Miss Kashmiry, there is no formal record of your attack? Nothing to prove it ever happened at all[722]

These three scenes happen in quick succession, which contributes to a sense of overwhelm. The audience, like Adam, are bombarded with information and questions whilst they also feel the claustrophobia of being confined to Adam's one, small room. These scenes are a powerful representation of how the hostile environment towards refugees in the UK can be traumatising for those hoping to seek asylum. The events in these scenes are partly what leads Adam to attempt to remove his own breasts with a knife. Only after he has physically harmed himself is he able to receive the help he needs. Considering *Adam* in the context of Brexit, the play can be read as a critique of the hostile environment and the bureaucratic cruelty of a system in which an individual must come to serious harm before they can receive help.

Adam is the story of one man's unique and personal journey, but the implications of sharing this story in the context of 'Brexit Britain' are far-reaching. Poet's interpretation of Adam's story focuses on the complex nature of the migrant experience in the UK. *Adam* forms part of a growing body of theatrical work that is written about, by and in collaboration with asylum seekers. In the introduction to *Performing Statelessness in Europe*, S.E Wilmer observes that

> because the need for asylum has been increasing and the problem is not being solved by political means, artists have been using theatrical performance to intervene in the political arena to offer insight and new perspectives[723]

[721] Poet, 2017, p. 33
[722] Poet, 2017, p. 34
[723] S.E Wilmer, *Performing Statelessness in Europe,* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 2

This view is supported by Alison Jeffers, who argues that 'the arts, especially performing arts, hold the potential to challenge preconceptions and validate refugee experiences'[724]. Specifically, Jeffers advocates that 'studying the many theatrical ways in which refugee stories are presented compels the listener to understand how these stories function and operate'[725]. In terms of Poet's cultural leadership, her intervention with this work is the way in which she draws attention to how Adam's story functions within the UK's immigration system. The Home Office requires Adam, and other queer asylum seekers, to tell their story in a way that prescribes to their narrow understanding and acceptance of queer identities. Similarly, attitudes towards migration which prioritise assimilation also require asylum seekers and migrants to present a version of themselves and their stories which prioritise belonging in their new home, often at the expense of their sense of national and cultural identity in relation to their country of origin. *Adam* offers a space for Adam Kashmiry's nuanced experiences to be understood outwith the confines of the immigration system.

Conclusion

Cultural activity is key to our understanding of national identity, and for women it can provide a platform through which to work through their relationship to their nation. In a decade in which Scotland faced significant upheaval, it is perhaps unsurprising that women's creative work reflected debates around Scotland's future. In turning to the past, Rona Munro is able to imagine women as central to Scotland's history and put women in the spotlight. Her cycle of plays presents several women through whom themes of belonging, kinship and identity are explored. Furthermore, Munro focuses on a civic nationalism in which these women choose to consider themselves Scottish. This relates to the work I have discussed which focused on migrant narratives in the context of indyref and Brexit. Both Annie George and Frances Poet use stories about migration to critique attitudes towards migrants and refugees, and to represent how multiculturalism functions in contemporary Scotland. In these representations of Scotland past and present, the women can be argued to be imagining a future for Scotland where

[724] Alison Jeffers, *Refugees, Theatre and Crisis: Performing Global Identities (*Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 110
[725] Alison Jeffers, 2018, p. 2

women are centre stage, where all are welcome, and where ‘Scottish’ is a label that one chooses.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This thesis has argued that women are playing a key role as leaders in the Scottish cultural sector, and that they use their cultural activity as a means of reimagining versions of Scotland. This research brings together elements of existing work but makes a fresh intervention into the field of cultural leadership by considering what this leadership looks like in relation to national identity in Scotland. Moreover, it brings the voices of thirteen female leaders into conversation with one another and with theorists for the first time. Doing this has enabled fresh insight into how the work being produced by these cultural leaders relates to national identity and into how women have creatively responded to both Indyref and Brexit. The specific time frame in which this research is based brings the relationships between gender and national identity into sharp focus

because these referenda brought questions of national identity to the forefront of political and cultural life in the UK. Furthermore, the conversations I had with women about their experiences have problematized notions of community within the cultural sector, and that they revealed the complex hierarchies and power dynamics that characterize working in a sector which relies so heavily on networking and informal connections.

This research has demonstrated that there are gaps in previous work on gender inequality in the Scottish cultural sector which fail to take an intersectional approach and consider the ways in which different forms of inequality and advantage interact. My research has foregrounded an intersectional analysis and, in doing so, has problematised the dominance of white, middle-class women in leadership within the Scottish cultural sector. I have shown that there are a number of high-profile women leading within the creative sector, women who have often enjoyed significant successes. However, if we take these individual success stories as evidence of wider progression it can eclipse the nuances of inequality that continue to disadvantage marginalised women and those without structural privilege. The role of cultural activity in the formation of national identity means that an analysis of gender inequality in the theatre sector has significance and consequence beyond the domain of the creative industries. As such, interrogating the voices who are leading within the sector and the work they are producing has created new knowledge about the wider narratives of national identity in Scotland.

Summary of Key Arguments

This thesis set out to examine the nature of Scottish women's cultural leadership in the Scottish theatre sector and consider what can be learned about their experience of national identity by looking at the creative work they produce, the organisations and companies they lead, and the opportunities they seek to create for others. In the first two chapters of this thesis – the introduction and literature review – I established the link between gender identity, national identity, and cultural activity. This relationship is central to my first and third

research questions[726]. My arguments in these chapters are heavily influenced by Benedict Anderson's theory of the imagined community. Anderson's work established the idea that nations are 'imagined' through a variety of means, including cultural activity. Drawing and expanding on Harvie's statement that nations are 'staged and culturally I produced in relation to Anderson's work, I argued that if nations are imagined, they can also be re-imagined, and that they can be re-staged and reproduced. I have shown how both the Indyref and Brexit referenda were moments in which Scottish people were invited to re-imagine their nation as part of a broader project of social and political transformation. I proposed that cultural activity in this period was central to understanding these practices of re-imagining, and therefore looking closely at who is leading within the cultural sector is important not just in terms of equality within that sector, but because those voices are also contributing to wider narratives about Scottish national identity on a local, national, and international scale. In particular, and in extension of arguments put forward by scholars such as Cynthia Enloe and Nira Yuval-Davis, I argued that women's experiences of national identities should be understood as distinct from men's, and that looking at the creative work that women produce creates new knowledge about those experiences.

In the third chapter – *Gender Inequality in the Scottish Cultural Sector* – I examined the key issues that women were facing in their careers, in line with my fifth research question[727]. There were two central arguments that emerged in this chapter. The first was the idea that examining how different forms of inequality interact is crucial to a nuanced understanding of gender inequality. With this in mind, this chapter focused on how age, race, and class shaped women's experiences of the cultural industries. I then went on to apply an intersectional analysis to some of the significant issues identified by myself and my interviewees: sexual harassment, visibility and value of women's work, and motherhood. I argued that while women from all backgrounds are affected by these issues, their experiences are shaped – at least in part – by factors other than their gender. These different experiences have implications for cultural leadership in Scotland because they highlight the ways in which different forms of inequality interact

[726] What was the relationship between Scottish women's theatrical and political activity between 2011 and 2021? How can women's theatrical activity produce new knowledge of the relationship between gender and national identity in contemporary Scotland?

[727] What are the key issues facing women in the cultural sector in Scotland?

and disadvantage marginalized women. This is significant because my work makes clear how the experiences of circumstances such as motherhood, or the experience of unpaid labour, can fundamentally shape an individual's career. It is therefore vital, when considering women's cultural leadership, to question how the dominance of white, middle-class voices in the Scottish theatre sector relates to the systemic barriers that make it difficult for marginalized women to progress to leadership positions. One of the ways in which these dynamics might be better addressed is through state funding structures which more actively acknowledge these systemic barriers and work to produce long-term solutions which focus on making the cultural sector equitable and accessible.

The second key thread which emerges within this chapter is the idea that in order to fully acknowledge women's leadership within the cultural sector, the boundaries of what is considered both leadership and creative work must expand. In this chapter, drawing on the perspectives of my interviewees alongside broader research into the Scottish theatre sector, I discussed how women's work often goes underacknowledged either because they work in parts of the sector which are less prominent, or because the work they were producing was not given the same critical and commercial attention as work by their male counterparts. It is my hope that this research goes some way towards creating a record of women's cultural leadership in Scotland, and that it provides new insight into how and where women are leading, and the significance of their leadership in relationship to national identity in contemporary Scotland. As part of this, I have deliberately included interviews with women who work in administrative, creative learning and youth work roles, in order to acknowledge that these are spaces in which women are prominent, but which are often absent in discussions about the Scottish theatre ecology. The core of my arguments in relation to visibility and value is that conversations about gender inequality have for a long time focused on the relative lack of women in high profile leadership roles within the Scottish cultural sector, roles that are often perceived to be at the top of conventional hierarchies of theatrical production. But there is also much to be learned about women's experiences by looking at the roles in which they are leading but which our current frameworks for thinking about leadership do not accommodate. This is particularly important when it comes to the work of marginalized women who may find it particularly challenging to access mainstream opportunities, or to gain access to

positions of power. Widening the scope of what we consider leadership creates space for women's leadership to be more fully examined and critiqued.

In terms of critiquing women's leadership, my fourth chapter – *Power, Networks and Community* – focused on the nuanced power dynamics and hierarchies between women within the cultural sector. Having established the sector-wide barriers that women face to a career in the cultural industries and their manifestation in the specific context of Scotland in a period of heightened political debate, in this chapter I turn my attention to women who *have* managed to forge a career within the sector. This chapter related to my fourth research question, focusing primarily on power, and how looking at power dynamics within the cultural sector illuminates gender inequality in new ways by moving beyond the number of women employed in the sector to thinking about how women's experiences are shaped by their relationship to power[728]. This analysis required consideration of both systemic problems and the specific experiences of my interviewees in the Scottish cultural sector. To begin, I focused on the way that women I interviewed regularly talked about the 'community' of Scottish theatre makers. This 'community' struck me as a potential source of inequality, especially when read through the lens of Sara Ahmed's work on the stranger, which provided the theoretical underpinning for this chapter. Ahmed's idea that the stranger functions as a confirmation of community - that in order to belong to an 'us' we need someone who we can consider a 'them' – invites us to consider the ways in which the community Scottish cultural sector has been built on exclusion.

Further to this, my analysis of networking considered how the practice is often positioned as central to careers in the arts, and many of the interviewees spoke positively about how their networks had helped build their careers. However, I argued that the various networks that exist within the cultural sector can be exclusionary because they encourage a distinction between those who are 'in' the network, and those who are not. In line with Ahmed, I emphasise the impact on those who are otherwise viewed as outsiders or strangers within the sector – namely marginalized women – who may find it particularly difficult to access networks. This chapter also made clear that the lines between 'networks' and 'communities' are blurred, and that this makes it even more difficult to

[728] How have women led within the Scottish cultural sector during the period of 2011-2021?

navigate networking. Specifically, the lack of recognition of how social dynamics function as power dynamics conceals the power and influence that these networks and communities hold. Whilst these dynamics certainly exist outside of the cultural sector, they have particular consequences in the context of the Scottish sector because of its relatively small scale. This small scale means that the communities within the sector can have an influence over the entire country, as the mapping exercise discussed by Hamilton suggested, because they are connected to artists across the sector.

Furthermore, I advocated for the importance of focusing on how leadership functions within these communities. Rhetoric around community – including the notion that the theatre sector is a 'family' - can lead to a false sense of non-hierarchical working. Because of this, it is within the parts of the sector that seem to be least hierarchical that the question of how leadership functions is often most important. Whilst the idea of working within a community or family may seem positive, and there are advantages to working in a genuinely non-hierarchical organisation, from the conversations I had with my interviewees it became clear that the language around community within the cultural sector concealed complex power dynamics between cultural workers. Crucially, it also risks absolving leaders of the responsibility that comes with a position of power. That is to say that a leader who views themselves as a 'community member' equal to all others within that community is perhaps a leader who fails to acknowledge the power they hold, and the opportunities they have to improve working conditions and equality within the sector. I argued this with specific reference to the working practices at The Arches, which provided a clear illustration of the complexity of working within a 'community' of artists. Whilst it was clear from my research and conversations with theatre-makers that for many The Arches was a nurturing environment that was crucial to their artistic development, I also discussed the ways in which their practices could be exclusionary, and how what for many was a family was, for others, a clique. This problem, though, is not unique to the Arches. Rather, the dynamics I discussed at the Arches can be taken as just one example of a wider complexity for leaders within the cultural sector: balancing a desire to foster 'community', whilst also acknowledging the hierarchies that will exist within that community.

This complexity raises specific questions about the role of a 'female leader', and in the latter stages of the fourth chapter I turned my attention to the role of identity politics in conceptualisations of female leadership. My key argument in this section was that often when we look at the number of women in a given position – in the way that quantitative research encourages us to do – this can lead to a tokenistic and simplistic approach to women's leadership wherein the presence of any woman is taken as a victory for all women. This approach conflates 'female leadership' and 'feminist leadership', assuming that women in leadership positions will naturally advocate for and champion other female artists. This leaves little space for recognition of the ways in which women can uphold patriarchal structures. Furthermore, it homogenizes the female experience, viewing the presence of any woman – no matter their circumstances - as interchangeable with another. This section of the chapter made clear that in order to fully understand women's cultural leadership in Scotland, it is vital not just to determine how many women are working within the sector, but also to consider what can be learned about gender equality by looking at their experiences of those roles and the work they produce.

In the final chapter - *Establishing Scotland: Identity and Belonging in Scottish Women's Playwrighting* – I focused on women's playwrighting, asking what can be learned about the relationship between gender and national identity by looking at women's cultural activity. This chapter centred on the Brexit and indyref votes as moments of political rupture and looked at my second and final research questions[729]. As I set out in my introduction, I view women's creative work as a critical part of their cultural leadership because it allows a space for women to present new imaginings of their nation. This chapter focused on three case studies: Rona Munro's *The James Plays,* Frances Poet's *Adam* and Annie George's *The Bridge/Home is Not the Place/Fragments of Home*. I employed a close textual analysis of these texts to argue that women use their creative practice as a means of reflecting on the past, understanding the present and exploring the future possibilities. Rona Munro's *The James Plays* centred female narratives in a period of Scottish history which has traditionally been dominated by histories of male

[729] How has women's creative work responded to – and been informed by – major political events such as Brexit and Indyref? How did female leaders use cultural activity as a means of imagining Scotland in this period and what kind of Scotland did they imagine?

identity and experience. Both Poet and George confront issues related to migration in their work, challenging assumptions about Scotland being a 'multicultural' nation. This is particularly pertinent in the wake of Brexit and Indyref because the Scottish Government have placed a great deal of emphasis on Scotland being an egalitarian and welcoming nation. What is clear in the work I explore in this chapter is that while women imagine Scotland in this way in their work, they also often use their work to highlight how the current realities of life in Scotland can fall short of this imagining.

The thread that runs through this thesis is the idea that looking closely at where and how women are leading in the cultural sector can produce new knowledge about gender and national identity in Scotland. In terms of gender identity, my discussions with women about their experiences of the Scottish cultural sector revealed that whilst conversations about gender that focus on the unequal opportunities and barriers faced by women in the sector are important to continue challenging the dominance of male voices, there is also a great deal to be learned about the causes and experience of that inequality by switching focus to consider women's leadership. I am referring to leadership here both in the sense of women in positions to potentially create opportunities for others, and the leadership of contributing to cultural debates and narratives about the nature and experience of Scottish identity. This shift in focus to leadership allows us to ask a new set of questions, questions about women's relationship to power, and how that relationship shifts once they are in leadership positions. Questions about intersectionality and the continued marginalisation of minority women in leadership positions. Questions about what it means to be a female leader as opposed to a feminist leader. These questions reveal new dimensions to the existing conversations about gender equality, demonstrating that while more women in the industry and greater parity of pay and opportunity is, of course, vital, women are not a homogenous group whose experiences can be judged purely as a collective.

Thinking about national identity through the lens of women's cultural leadership provides fresh insight into women's relationship to national identity in contemporary Scotland in several ways. For one, it allows us to establish the role that cultural activity plays in creating and sustaining national identities, and the

significance of cultural leadership within that relationship. Asking ourselves which women are able to participate in cultural activity, and who can lead within that sector, is key to interrogating which voices are being heard in the construction of national identities. In turn, this also relates to how the figure of the 'woman' is constructed within nations, and the assumptions about women that come to be absorbed into the cultural narrative of a nation. The second insight that focusing on women's cultural leadership provides is that it allows us to analyse how women represent the nation through their cultural activity, how they interpret and imagine Scotland, and how they respond to major political events. Finally, looking at women's work in this way emphasises the important role that women are playing in the Scottish theatre sector, and by extension in Scottish cultural life. Whilst more can always be done to ensure greater gender parity across creative roles in Scotland, I hope this project goes some way towards documenting the significant impact that women already make to Scotland's rich culture.

Future Possibilities

Given that this project has engaged with how women's leadership can be understood as imagining future possibilities for Scotland, it is perhaps unsurprising that I have also thought a great deal about the future possibilities for this research. This research has begun to address the question of how women's cultural and political activity interact, and how women lead within the Scottish cultural sector. But, like any research, it has its limitations. As I addressed in the introduction, despite my efforts to approach a broad range of women to participate in this research, the women I ended up interviewing were overwhelmingly white and middle class. Whilst this does reflect the dominance of white, middle-class voices within the sector, it has certainly limited my ability to fully interrogate how race and class inequality shaped the experiences of women in the Scottish cultural sector. Future research into cultural leadership in Scotland should endeavour to draw on a broader cross-section of voices, so as to allow for greater understanding of how different forms of inequality intersect and the ways in which women from underrepresented communities have nonetheless made significant contributions to the sector.

Furthermore, this project has worked within the confines of a gender binary and as such I was not able to consider the experiences of those who do not identify

as either ‘man’ or ‘woman’. I am conscious that I am finishing this research during a period when questions around gender identity are at the forefront of political debate in Scotland, particularly in relation to reform of the Gender Recognition Act. The debates around this act – which aims to make it easier for trans people to change their legal sex on their birth certificate, bringing Scottish legislation more in-line with international standards – have demonstrated that there is significant hostility towards trans people and gender non-conforming people in Scotland, including from public figures such as author J.K Rowling, and from politicians like SNP’s Joanna Cherry[730]. In the context of this hostility, it feels particularly important that future research into how different genders experience and express their national identity considers those whose identity does not conform to the gender binary.

I am writing this conclusion in September 2022, with a sense that the next few years are going to bring fresh challenges and political change for the United Kingdom. The country is still in the early stages of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and is facing a cost-of-living crisis, with energy bills reaching record highs[731]. There are also still logistical issues, particularly in relation to importing and exporting goods, and political tensions following the decision to leave the European Union[732]. On 7th July, Boris Johnson resigned as Prime Minister. This followed months of criticism following the ‘party gate’ scandal wherein he and members of his staff were found to be partying during the national COVID-19 lockdowns. Liz Truss was appointed as his successor on 6th September but resigned in October after criticism for her controversial ‘mini budget’ which saw tax cuts for the richest and little in the way of support for those in the lowest income brackets[733]. Her successor, Rishi Sunak, took office on 25th October 2022, warning

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[730] See Tom Gordon, ‘Start of SNP Conference hit by row over Transgender Rights’, *The Herald,* 26th November 2021, https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19744399.start-snp-conference-hit-row-transgender-rights/ and Samantha Bergeson, ‘J.K. Rowling Doubles Down on Transphobia in International Women’s Day Twitter Rant’, *Indie Wire,* 8th https://www.indiewire.com/2022/03/jk-rowling-transphobia-international-womens-day-rant-1234705640/ [Accessed 25/10/2022]

[731] See Daniel Harari, Brigid Francis-Devine, Paul Bolton and Matthew Keep, *Rising Cost of Living in the UK: Research Briefing* (London, House of Commons Library, 2022), https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9428/ [Accessed 14/06/2022]

[732] See Ruth Strachan, ‘British Manufacturing Still in Recovery Mode from Brexit, *Investment Monitor,* 25th May 2022, https://www.investmentmonitor.ai/manufacturing/uk-manufacturing-brexit-recovery-confusion [Accessed 14/06/2022]

[733] See Nicholas Watt, ‘Kwarteng’s mini budget: Shock-and-awe tactics from an unapologetic chancellor’, *BBC News,* 24th September 2022, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-63011639 [Accessed 25/09/2022]

that there would be 'difficult decisions' to come[734]. Queen Elizabeth II died aged 96. With her death came a period of national mourning, but it also brought debates about the future of the monarchy in the UK. In Northern Ireland, the 2022 Assembly election brought a historic result with nationalist party Sinn Féin winning the most seats for the first time ever[735]. Given that Sinn Féin support the idea of a united Ireland, it seems likely that they will propose a referendum on Northern Ireland's membership of the UK. This, however, is complicated by the fact that there is little evidence of growing support for a united Ireland in opinion polls, and there is growing support for the Alliance Party, who position themselves as neither nationalist nor unionist[736]. In Scotland, as I have mentioned previously, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has made her desire for a second independence referendum clear[737].

It is possible that the immediate future of the UK is going to be tumultuous, and to return to Nadine Holdsworth, bring 'moments of rupture'[738]. It is in these moments of rupture that the relationship between cultural activity and national identity is most important, and where the potential to use cultural activity as a means to re-imagine nations is most potent. This research has demonstrated that moments of rupture serve as an opportunity to imagine new possibilities for a nation. Whilst Brexit and Indyref brought turmoil, they were also moments which enabled debate and discussion about nationhood, and in which new perspectives were represented. The work in this thesis will only become more relevant over the next few years, and that a continued focus on how cultural activity is being used to understand the past, present, and future of the nation is crucial to understanding how people are experiencing their national identity. Indeed, as I write this conclusion, the latest instalment of *The James Plays – James IV: Queen*

[734] Rishi Sunak, 'Rishi Sunak's first speech as Prime Minister: 25th October 2022' https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-minister-rishi-sunaks-statement-25-october-2022 [Accessed 4/11/2022]
[735] Enda McClafferty, 'NI Election Results 2022: Sinn Féin wins most seats in historic election', *BBC News,* 8th May 2022, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-61355419 [Accessed 14/06/2022]
[736] Politics.co.uk, 'Alliance Party of Northern Ireland', *Politics.co.uk,* https://www.politics.co.uk/reference/alliance-party/ [Accessed 14/06/2022]
[737] See Chris Green, 'Scottish Independence: Nicola Sturgeon ramps up preparations for second referendum in 2023', *I News,* 9th June 2022, https://inews.co.uk/news/scotland/scottish-independence-second-referendum-vote-2023-nicola-sturgeon-preparations-1679003 [Accessed 09/06/2022]
[738] Nadine Holdsworth, 2010, p. 7

of the Fight - is touring venues across Scotland[739]. Like the other James plays, *James IV* puts women's narratives centre-stage, and in particular focuses on the experience of two young, female immigrants. Munro's cultural leadership in terms of highlighting women's role in Scottish history once again demonstrates the interventions that creative work can make in our cultural narratives.

I met with my interviewees during a summer that was similarly filled with uncertainty and fears for the future. At the end of each conversation, I asked the women what they thought the future held for Scottish theatre. The responses were varied. Some expressed optimism about the future, noting that the pandemic had shown theatres the possibilities that come with embracing new medias and formats to reach a wider audience and improve accessibility. Others were less positive. Frances Poet expressed concerns about how COVID would impact emerging talent:

> I wouldn't dare call myself established, but I feel like…free of emerging. And now that feels like my career is maybe going to survive this. But I fear for the emerging, there's a chance that the strides we were making with those less represented voices, some of which are females, some of which are not. That's the fear…that that all stagnates, and we default to the safe pair of hands[740].

Poet's concerns were echoed by Zinnie Harris who said she felt

> so shitty for people that were going to get their first break at the international festival this year, or the fringe this year…just trying to get their first step on the ladder. How are people like that going to fare?[741]

Harris and Poet's concern about emerging voices, and in particular emerging voices from marginalised communities, highlights the fragility of progress within the sector. Whilst there has been demonstrable progress in terms of gender equality in the Scottish cultural industries, when it comes to marginalized women that progress has been slower and less consistent. There is certainly a risk that in the period of rebuilding post-COVID, and amid a cost-of-living crisis which will almost certainly impact ticket sales, some of that progress will be lost. Christine Hamilton took a more phlegmatic approach, and turned to history to make sense of what might come next:

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[739] National Theatre of Scotland, 'James IV: Queen of the Fight', https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/events/james-iv-queen-of-the-fight#gallery1202507-9 [Accessed 04/11/2022]

[740] Frances Poet, Interview, 10th June 2020

[741] Zinnie Harris, Interview, 29th June 2020

> When theatres had to close during the black death, they still came back…when theatres were closed by Oliver Cromwell, Restoration drama came back with a vengeance…whether it's black death, whether it's political closing down, or whether it's just cultural reluctance, all of these things have happened in the past and theatre has come back stronger than ever[742].

The seeming resilience of theatre as an art form is encouraging as we look to an ever more uncertain future, but the real question remains not whether theatre itself will survive, but who gets to survive in theatre.

This thesis has argued that cultural activity is key to our understanding of the imagined community of the nation, and so the significance of gender equality within the cultural sector lies not just in making sure that women have opportunities to participate in cultural activity, but also in ensuring that women have the opportunity to participate in imagining and re-imagining the nation. It is through close consideration of the intersection of questions of gender, cultural leadership, and national identity through the lens of theatrical activity that we come to better understand the significance of cultural leadership in the formation of national identities. As such, it is vital to play close attention which voices are leading in the Scottish cultural sector, as those voices have a key role in shaping how Scotland remembers its past, understands its present and imagines its future.

[742] Christine Hamilton, Interview, 29th May 2020.

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