Incorporating Internationalization and Translation in an Intercultural Classroom

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An examination of intercultural practices used in a culturally diverse classroom is essential given the globalization movement of the 21st century. The higher education, Western intercultural classroom is the ideal place to apply cross-cultural communication strategies in an effort to meet the educational needs of the culturally diverse student population. When defining internationalization and the need for translation, the call to adjust instructor pedagogy is put into effect as a means of providing a positive learning environment for all students, no matter their national origin. Internationalization, or the process of taking culturally specific material and making it more generalized in order to reach all students in an intercultural classroom, benefits both the students and the instructor. Although language is a potential barrier in the intercultural classroom, the call to use a hybrid form of translation through incorporating cultural norms of the diverse people groups in the Western classroom will build upon a positive learning environment for the students. However, in an attempt to utilize internationalization and translation in the intercultural classroom, instructors need to adjust their pedagogy by finding the right textbook, assessing the progress and success of the classroom, and seeking assistance from previously published material.

Keywords: globalization, internationalisation, translation, intercultural classroom

In the 21st century globalized world, the culturally diverse population representation that exists in both educational and work environments demands an examination of intercultural practices to use as a means of effectively communicating with those from other cultural backgrounds. One particular environment where

cross-cultural communication strategies can be applied is the Western, higher education, intercultural classroom.

The international student representation in a Western university or college classroom is rising (Brown). With this increasingly culturally diverse representation happening in the Western classroom, instructors need to examine the ways in which they are meeting the educational needs of all students in an intercultural classroom.

As a result, there needs to be a consideration of the term internationalization and how the discourse benefits an intercultural classroom. Furthermore, the need for translation due to language barriers and hybrid forms of translation that can be utilized in an intercultural classroom should be discussed, and suggestions for adjusting instructor pedagogy in an effort to incorporate internationalization and translation in the intercultural classroom provided. These specific elements necessary in a Western intercultural classroom will be dissected and further explained in order to suggest a methodology of creating a positive learning environment for the international students.

The process of internationalization, as it applies to the Western intercultural classroom, requires that the instructor take material that is culturally specific and make it more generalized so that all students in an intercultural classroom can glean from a positive learning environment that invites a culturally diverse representation (St. Amant). Internationalization has beneficial rewards for both the student and the instructor when considering the importance of being culturally aware in a globally interdependent world. However, there is still concrete evidence of opposition to this forward progression of becoming more culturally aware in America, regardless of the growing culturally diverse representation that exists in the Western classroom (Hser).

Many researchers have dedicated time and effort into examining the varied facets of the growing culturally diverse population that exists in America today. Brown has used access to the Bureau of Census in order to determine how America is growing and changing in terms of culturally diverse people groups who are either immigrating to America, or utilizing the Western university system to pursue higher education opportunities. Brown provides some initial insight into the international representation in America when he states that "The 'foreign-born' in the United States are estimated to be 9.7% of the population or 25.8 million people" (338). A lot of these foreign-born are either identified as adult learners who are pursuing educational opportunities through the access to Western university campuses, or children of immigrants who will (hopefully) eventually pursue higher education through a Western university in years to come.

Hser recognizes the growing awareness of what it means to be a part of a globally interdependent world in the 21st century higher education context or global workplace and how there is an increased awareness of the globalization that is occurring. At the close of World War II, it was determined that "the United States could no longer consider itself geographically isolated" (Hser 35). Therefore, Hser identifies the need to seek opportunities to become more culturally aware and accepting of various cultural norms, especially when we look to the culturally diverse representation that exists in a Western higher education environment.

Although it is clear that the intercultural classroom is not something a higher education instructor of a Western university or college can escape, there is still opposition surrounding the call to create a positive learning environment for an intercultural class. Macdonald and Sundararajan touch briefly on the subject when they say an assimilationist approach, which assumes that the responsibility of assimilating to the Western classroom lies solely with the international student and is separated from the necessary adjustments of instructor pedagogy, is still being used in American universities today. Furthermore, research shows that "Anecdotal accounts reveal that this assimilationist approach persists today despite an increasing awareness of international student issues and needs" (Macdonald and Sundararajan 42). This brings us to the question of why there is such distinct opposition to the internationalization of an intercultural classroom.

In the research conducted by Hser, it is evidenced that "American professors were the least involved in international activities such as studying and doing research abroad. Also, fewer American professors agreed that connections with scholars in other countries were important for their professional work" (38-39). So, one of the issues that can be tied to why internationalization methods have not been used in the intercultural Western classroom is due to the fact that American professors choose to be ignorant about the different educational needs that exist between international and domestic students.

This ignorance to the benefits of becoming culturally aware is likely the reason for the adopted assimilationist approach in the intercultural classroom, as discussed through Macdonald and Sundararajan's research. It becomes evident that many American professors are not willing to adjust instructor pedagogy and change their preconceived notions that lead them to believe that internationalization is not an important factor that changes the way a Western university instructor approaches an intercultural classroom. Furthermore, it has become apparent that some aspects including "lack of funding, lack of faculty participation, problems in study abroad programs, problems faced by international students, a negative perspective related to international student recruitment, and hindrances faced by

foreign scholars – are the most common obstacles that prohibit the development of internationalization" (Hser 39). This negative perspective of potential hurdles for furthered cultural comprehension juxtaposes the theory that a development of cultural awareness and acceptance is essential, thus leading to the instructor's inability to incorporate internationalization into an intercultural Western classroom.

Looking at the lack of funding alone, the call to incorporate inter-nationalization in a Western intercultural classroom is further opposed because funding for the international runs the risk of being cut, reducing the opportunity for international students to experience financial support from the Western university, and therefore causing the Western university system to return their focus solely to the American students (Hser). So, essentially, if the Western university has taken measures to cut ties with the international students who could potentially be studying at the university, then there is a reduced need to incorporate internationalization in the Western classroom because opportunities for the international student have declined, and possibly, at times, depleted. Such adopted negative perspectives of building a culturally aware and accepting Western classroom environment clearly resists the call to include an element of internationalization in the intercultural Western classroom in an effort to create a positive learning environment for the international students. Although these perspectives may be held in many American higher educational institutes, there still needs to be an incorporation of internationalization used in the intercultural classroom in order to create a positive learning environment that will prepare the students for the globalizing work place. Hser believes that "Advocates for international education . . . should make a greater] effort to recruit more international students in order to create a diverse and multicultural campus and educate American students about the rest of the world" (Hser 42). As the aspect of internationalization is being considered, it is also vital that the element of translation also be examined.

The process of translation in an international environment entails the conversion of documents or verbal communication into various languages in order to communicate effectively (St. Amant). Focusing on the language differences alone, we can see where the gap for creating a positive learning environment for the international students exists in the Western classroom. However, the stride here is not to translate the assignments, discussions or activities of the Western intercultural classroom, but rather to incorporate a hybrid form of translation that allows for better cross-cultural communication to exist between the instructors, domestic students, and international students in the intercultural Western classroom.

As identified through Brown's research, language barriers for the international student are categorized under accent, lexicon, syntax, sociolinguistics, language as nationalism and transcription systems. These five barriers prove that language differences, which inevitably exist in an intercultural classroom, will create issues of effective communication, thus calling for a hybrid form of translation used by the instructors of an intercultural Western classroom.

Many of the international students will have trouble understanding the different accents within the Western culture, and to add to the dilemma of accent providing a language barrier, the multitude of regional accents have potential to further confuse an international student. Ultimately, "Accent becomes a barrier to communication if either party has difficulty understanding the other" (Brown 341). Lexicon refers to the words that build the vocabulary, and how the complexity of certain words can confuse an international. Syntax relates to the communication problems with internationals as a result of our complex sentence structures; "When we speak with long sentences containing many embedded phrases and dependent clauses, we often stretch the limits of the hearer" (Brown 341). Sociolinguistics is the "study of languages in their social settings" (Brown 341), which will vary for an international in a Western context. Language as nationalism is explained by Brown as rival cultures that share the same language, but have culturally opposing norms and behaviors. Finally, transcription systems is deemed a category of language barriers for an international because word meaning can be lost through the process of transcribing or translating the international's native language into English (Brown).

All five of these categorized language barriers hinder an international student's ability to communicate effectively in a Western context (Brown). However, Ulijn and Strother indicate that "certain aspects of international communication could leave monolingual, English-speaking technical communicators at a disadvantage" (qtd. in St. Amant 324), which includes the instructor of a Western, higher education, intercultural classroom. So, in an effort to create a positive learning environment for the international students, instructors of a Western intercultural classroom need to consider utilizing a hybrid form of translation in their classroom that will not leave them at a disadvantage when attempting to communicate effectively across cultural and language barriers.

Brown identifies through his research of the international adult learners who study in America that "[m]any of these international adult learners show up in the decennial census as residing in 'linguistically isolated households,' that is, households where English is neither spoken nor understood . . . . Roughly 3.4% of the American population lives in such households" (339). However, most inter-

national students will have to be proficient in English, so the suggestion here is not to use direct translation of language in order for the students to learn in an intercultural classroom, rather to meet the students on their terrain by incorporating cultural norms, practices, patterns, and ways of learning that will assist in the translation process of activities, classroom discussions, and course assignments.

One example is examined through Macdonald and Sundararajan claim that students from an international background will likely have difficulty being active in classroom discussion. This is commonly due to the fact that, "…international students' efforts to participate in the classroom are thwarted by the pace of the discussion and the speed of domestic students' speech" (Macdonald and Sundararajan 51). So, we can think of translation in this particular example in terms of simply slowing down the conversation, encouraging the articulation of English words, and minimizing the complex sentence structures commonly used in Western classroom discussions. Ultimately, incorporating this hybrid form of translation in the intercultural classroom will build upon the positive learning environment necessary for an international student to effectively learn. Dr. St. Amant suggests that "By remaining open to other cultures and languages and by rethinking translation use, English-speaking technical writers [and instructors] can increase their chances for success in the global environment [and intercultural classroom] of the 21st century" (St. Amant 326).

Upon considering the importance of incorporating internationalization and translation in the Western intercultural classroom, the next move is to calculate the adjustment of instructor pedagogy in order to incorporate both elements effectively into the intercultural classroom. If the target goal is achieving a positive learning environment for the international student, one hindrance to that goal might be the pedagogical approach that ensures material is converted for internationalization purposes, and a hybrid form of translation is utilized so that internationals are encouraged to participate in class discussions, activities, and assignments. It is through the examination of internationalization and translation that the need for instructor pedagogy adjustment is evidenced.

Barker and Matveeva touch on this element of reaching an intercultural classroom not only through changing the instructor pedagogical approach to the culturally diverse educational needs represented, but also through the support of textbook use. Because the way in which discussions, activities and assignments in a Western classroom can often be linked closely to the textbook(s) that is (are) used in an intercultural classroom, Barker and Matveeva call instructors to not only focus on the content of the textbook, but also on the situation (in particular, the intercultural representation of the classroom) in which the textbook is used.

These authors encourage instructors to consider the textbooks that are being used in the intercultural classroom so that the material in the textbooks represents students from a culturally diverse background when looking through the lens of awareness, information, and practice. These three elements suggest a strategic approach that will help the instructor analyze textbooks, consider the current information on the latest tools, discover multi-cultural sensitivity with the images used and strategies incorporated within the text, all with the goal to enhance the internationalization and translation efforts deemed appropriate for a Western intercultural classroom (Barker and Matveeva). Furthermore, the idea of awareness, or self-awareness, should be analyzed in textbook use, especially when considering the diverse population of a classroom, how to effectively train all students in the classroom for the globalizing workplace, and how activities in the textbook can advance self-awareness through the attempt to break the mold of ethnocentrism.

Once awareness has been addressed, it is important to determine the informational methods that are explored in the textbook and their appropriateness when addressing a Western intercultural classroom. Barker and Matveeva offered some insight regarding their approach to a culturally sensitive class. These authors explained, "In addition to assessing the presence of theoretical discussions, we also looked for examples (documents, letters, or websites) showing students the cultural characteristics that illustrated the theory in the informational elements" (194). The practice element is a pillar that should be present in the textbook when considering how to incorporate cultural differences when writing and communicating. If international students in the Western classroom need to understand what it means to communicate effectively with those from other cultures in the global workplace, then the instructor needs to evaluate the components of the textbook used for the intercultural class based on material and the methods used to present the textbook content.

Another method of encouraging the adjustment of instructor pedagogical approaches necessary for an intercultural classroom in a Western higher education context is through research. Getto suggests through his personal experience in an intercultural classroom, that *engaged design*, the process of considering the international students' educational needs obtained through interviews and surveys, is important for the necessary pedagogical adjustments needed in the Western intercultural classroom, and this is done through incorporating the specifically discussed educational needs of the international students. Researching examples like Getto's experience will further intensify the need to incorporate internationalization and translation in the Western intercultural classroom through adjusting instructor pedagogy.

An adequate way of assessing personal success in the intercultural classroom is to align the theories described in previous researchers' experiences, like Getto's study, with the personal adjustments made to instructor pedagogics in an effort to strive for similar outcomes in the intercultural classroom. When an instructor determines what forms of instruction worked for the intercultural classroom in the past through other authors' experiences, then they are able to make changes in the current intercultural classroom by adjusting instructor pedagogy accordingly. In terms of what has been discussed throughout this article, this could entail the incorporation of internationalization and translation in the Western intercultural classroom. Learning from the past and applying methods that led to success from previous studies conducted on the intercultural classroom will allow instructors to determine what methods to apply in order to make necessary pedagogical adjustments needed in the current intercultural classroom.

Johnson-Eiola and Selber's textbook *Solving Problems in Technical Communication* historicizes technical communication that can be applied to the intercultural classroom, prioritize the future of technical communication as intercultural representation in the classroom continues to grow, and guides instructors in terms of what they need to know for interacting in a culturally diverse environment. More specifically, the instructor of an intercultural, Western, higher education classroom should examine chapter 7 "What Can History Teach Us about Technical Communication?" by Longo & Fountain, chapter 8 "What is the Future of Technical Communication?" by Mehlenbacher, and chapter 19 "What Do Technical Communicators Need to Know about International Environments?" by St. Amant. Finally, Ulijn & Strother's book, *Communicating in Business and Technology: From Psycholinguistic Theory to International Practice*, provides another example of how instructors can use outside sources to help drive the pedagogical adjustments necessary for an intercultural classroom. In this book, Ulijn and Strother explain that professionals who speak languages other than English are contributing to scientific fields and communication venues more and more; therefore, Technical communicators should adjust their view and use translation, especially if they hope to remain effective communicators in the global marketplace. St. Amant cites these author's work when he explains that Psycholinguistics is the merging of Psychology and linguistics; thus, Psycholinguists focus their studies on the, "mental structures and operations that make communication possible in an attempt to understand how people use language to communicate and to understand how linguistic variables affect human behavior" (St. Amant 324).

Ultimately, there are many texts available in the technical and professional communications field that will define and advance the need for instructors in the globalizing 21st century to consider the international representation that exists both in the Western classroom and global workplace to adjust their pedagogies for an intercultural classroom. These texts will help create a need in the instructor's mind for the necessary pedagogical adjustments that are evidenced in the studies, research, and publications provided.

The intercultural classroom is continuously growing in terms of the various cultural people groups represented. The globalizing 21st century world reveals itself through the cultural diversity of both the Western classroom and the global workplace. As a result, the Westerner needs to be made more culturally aware and become more culturally accepting in an effort to create positive learning and work environments that invite all cultures to openly express norms, behaviors and patterns as a means of developing an effective cross-cultural communication avenue. Incorporating internationalization, specifically in the Western intercultural classroom, requires the instructors to take culturally specific material and make it more generalized so that all students in an intercultural class will glean from the positive, culturally aware, learning environment created by the instructor. Utilizing a hybrid form of translation in the intercultural classroom will also allow for language barriers to break down so that the international students will be able to engage with classroom discussions, activities and assignments. However, the incorporation of internationalization and translation in the intercultural classroom calls for the instructor of that classroom to make necessary adjustments to instructor pedagogies in order to create a positive learning environment for the international students.

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Orientalism and the Syrian Refugee Crisis

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Orientalism and the Syrian Refugee Crisis

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The Syrian civil war since 2011 has led to perhaps the largest mass exodus of refugees in the present century. This exodus has created unequal distribution of refugee population across the European nations that have offered asylum to the refugees, or where the refugees have been forced to migrate. The varying reception to this refugee migration has been the cause of critical and political debate since the beginning of the civil war and of the migration as well. Instead of viewing the refugee as an individual seeking asylum, the discourse of West-centric political thought has branded the refugees with the status of a thematic 'Other'. This 'other'-isation is another manifestation of the Islamophobia rampant in Western cultural imagination. The paper argues for a more inclusive system of acceptance, and humanitarianism, in observance of Edward Said's notion of "the Orient", to suggest alternative views to the crisis and its resolution through more balanced and humanitarian methods.

Keywords: Syria, refugee crisis, asylum-seekers, Orientalism

The Syrian refugee crisis has traumatised the world since the Syrian civil war in 2011. An estimated 9 million Syrians have fled their homes and have taken refuge in neighboring countries. While over 3 million have fled to Syria's immediate neighbors, fewer than 150,000 Syrians have declared asylum in the European Union (*syrianrefugees.eu*). The Western world has fallen short in taking in more Syrian refugees. For instance, EU28 countries combined with Norway and Switzerland have only taken in 310,140 registered refugees as of September 2015. On the other hand, countries that are more on the Eastern front such as Turkey have

taken in as much as 1,939,999 (Focus on Syrians, *migrationpolicycentre.eu*). The numbers in comparison are staggering. Two positions are held on this issue: take in Syrian refugees or don't. Clearly, more Western countries need to take in more of these refugees, but they are reluctant to do so. This reluctance to support such a humanitarian objective can be better understood with Said's explication of the construction of "the Orient" and his theorisation of the way the West views Muslims, and particularly the people of the Middle East. Western and Christian civilizations are skeptical of providing asylum for Syrian refugees due to the negative representations of the Islamic faith propagated by the media. The Judeo-Christian world, which has colonized countries such as Syria for years, is reluctant to open their doors and provide protection for the refugees fleeing from the Middle East.

The Syrian refugees have been viewed as Other, or in the well-known words of Said, as the Oriental. It is important to note, especially in this instance, that the Orient was a European invention (Said, *Orientalism*, 71). This is important because the Orient then becomes a dichotomy for the West. The Orient is a contrasting image of the West and thus helps define Western civilization in terms that the Orient is foreign and therefore an exotic entity. This dichotomy separates the Western mindset from that of an Eastern one. In these regards, Said famously stated: "Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, by settling it, ruling over it…" (*Orientalism* 73).

This idea of the corporate institution, or the sense of responding to the crisis, the West, brought to mind Great Britain's prime minister David Cameron and his stance on accepting more Syrian refugees. Cameron stated that the best solution would be to bring peace and stability to the Middle East. He has said: "We have taken a number of genuine asylum seekers from Syrian refugee camps and we keep that under review, but we think the most important thing is to try to bring peace and stability to that part of the world … I don't think there is an answer that can be achieved simply by taking more and more refugees" (*theguardian.com*). Cameron has caught some criticism for these views. Andy Burnham, health secretary and Labour leadership contender, has said that the response of Cameron and his ministers have veered from the inadequate to the misjudged and was a stain on the nation's conscience (*theguardian.com*). Furthermore, Burnham states:

> Many of these refugees are children, fleeing the violence and horrors of war. The images we have seen of children washed up on beaches will leave no person unmoved. When Parliament returns next week, MPs must be given an opportunity to debate the Government's handling of the crisis and the chance to make a judgement on whether

> Britain should accept a share of refugees. (*thegurdian.com*)

Burnham's words paint a grim picture and pose a call of action for Cameron and Parliament. Cameron does not want to join any Europe-wide resettlement programs for refugees, believing that if the UK became involved in a large-scale scheme, it would act as a magnet for other migrants and it would be impossible to distinguish economic migrants from refugees (Wintour, *theguardian.com*). Both Burnham's and Cameron's words touch on exactly what Said was discussing, the idea that Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient. Cameron and Burnham, although they have opposing views, are both making statements, describing, and authorizing views of the Orient, or in this case, Syrian refugees. Cameron even goes as far to state that the crisis would be averted if they just bring peace to the Middle East, which has become a defunct notion and battle cry of the West. Cameron is speaking out of line and hints that the crisis in the Middle East can be cured if Western nations bring peace to the region as though they could have that authority to do so.

David Cameron is speaking from the Judeo-Christian stance that derives from the first-world and Western civilization. This dichotomy between Judeo-Christians and Muslims is part of dichotomy that puts the Muslim faith as 'other'. Cameron states that the best thing to do is to try and bring peace to the Middle East. However, he does not state who should try and bring about this peace, but since he feels that Great Britain can not solve the crisis (the West) accepting more refugees then it can be solved by the West trying to bring peace to the Syrian region. This implies that, in Cameron's view, the Christian world is more civilized or peaceful than that of the third world, the Muslim world. We know this not to be wholly true. In his text *Discourse on Colonialism*, Césaire states: "…the chief culprit in this domain is Christian pedantry, which laid down the *dishonest* [emphasis added] equations Christianity = civilization, and paganism = savagery, from which there could not but ensue abominable colonialist and racist consequences…" (61). Césaire makes a valuable point here that attacks Cameron's implications. Cameron's statement does have racist connotations in that he is stating that the underlying problem is that Muslims are incapable of peace. Cameron's comments come from a Judeo-Christian standpoint which juxtaposes those of Césaire's that fit into an Eastern mind-frame. Cameron's standpoint equates with that of Césaire's notion of the West's pedantry believing that Christianity = civilization. This can be seen from Cameron's earlier comments about bringing peace to the Middle East. In his mind, Muslims (or for my purposes "pagans" can be used in the Césarian sense here), are savages who cause their destruction thus producing these refugees. Con-

notations such as these are widely due to the portrayal of Islam in the Western media.

It is important to note that "Islam" and "the West" mean two separate things from each other depending on the perspective. For instance, a Westerner would view the West differently than a Muslim would and vice-versa. Edward Said touches on this idea stating that on one level Islam and the West can act simply as an identifying function such as apples and oranges, but then there is a deeper level to these labels. Said states: "To speak of 'Islam' in the West today is to mean a lot of the unpleasant things I have been mentioning. Moreover, 'Islam' is unlikely to mean anything one knows either directly or objectively" (*Covering Islam* 10). This statement is a reaction to what the Westerners know or what they may think they know about Islam. Terrorism has set a state of mind in the Western world in the 21st century. The U.S. media has painted a negative picture of Islam in the post-9/11 world that is, as Said states, a view of Islam that is misinformed or a view that is unlikely to mean anything a Westerner may know objectively. Islam is unlikely to mean anything one may know directly or objectively in the West because of the West being considerably Christian. Therefore, the practices of Islam are seen as foreign. Furthermore, the peculiar practices of Islam have always formed a part of the Western narrative of quintessential otherness and inferiority of Islam (Ahmed, 319). It is the misrepresentation of Islam that drives people like Cameron to describe Muslims as "other," subtly or not. The Western view of Islam as being other and inferior is a conscience barrier that prevents countries such as Great Britain from accepting more Syrian refugees.

I have laid out two positions for this issue of the Syrian refugee crisis. On the one hand, there is Cameron, a product of the Judeo-Christian West, whose position is that taking in refugees will not solve the crisis at all, but that peace should merely be brought to that region as though peace is something that can be air dropped by the United Nations. Then there is my position that Andy Burnham shares. Burnham has seen the pictures of women and children refugees who have been washed up on shores by trying to gain access to a safe and better life. Western nations should not be hesitant to accept Syrian refugees. We are reluctant to do so because of the ideas we have about Islam and the way it has been portrayed in the media. The Syrian refugee crisis calls for a humanitarian mission to provide safety to a group of people regardless of religious views. The West should try and abandon their misconceived views of Islam and open their doors to the people that need help from this region.

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Aesthetic Implications of *Kalokagathía* in Ancient Greek Culture

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Aesthetic Implications of *Kalokagathía* in Ancient Greek Culture

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This article discusses the aesthetic implications of *kalokagathía* in Greek culture and some of its implications for Modernity. The concept of *kalokagathía* is a compound of the Greek words *kalós* and *agathós*. Both can be translated as "excellent, worthy, good". However, if we try to look for the fine difference that separates both words, *kalós* refers to the excellence of something through their appearance, and on the other hand, *agathós* is used in reference to human behaviour. Someone was identified as agathós if he was a good citizen. Thus, we can confirm that for the classical idea of *kalokagathía*, ethics and aesthetics are not different: they were the models to be followed by the heroes, citizens, and craftsmen. The literary evidence of Homer, Hesiod, Plato, Aristotle and Xenophon help us to raise a wide range of analysis chronologically and conceptually.

Keywords: Homer, Plato, Aristotle, citizen, *kalokagathía*.

In the nineteenth century, the french philosopher Victor Cousin wrote *Du Vrai, du Beau et du Bien* (1854), which achieved tremendous success (29 editions were published) and exerted great influence through its translation into English. The title of his work expressed the belief that that philosophy is centred on the true, the good and the beautiful. Cousin had been a student of Hegel, although his principles had always occupied a place in philosophical thought from Plato and Aristotle. Since Plato first invented this triad in *Phaedrus,* philosophers have linked the discussion of beauty to the other two cardinal values of truth and goodness.

Why were the notions of "true", "good" and "beautiful" gathered in a triad? The reason for this is not immediately evident, as the history of philosophy shows that

there are other key issues such as the question of "being" and the idea of "unity". It is remarkable that metaphysics (next to psychology and logic) is related, in the triad of Cousin, to the idea of truth. In the famous essay *The Modern System of the Arts,* Paul Kristeller (1951) supports the view that the triad of truth, good, and beauty is a modern invention, a discovery of the nineteenth century. Cousin's book offers support to this position, in that it relates the idea of beauty to aesthetics: the author refers to the adage "l'art pour l'art". Let us consider, first, what is the latest on the aesthetic study of this triad of concepts in ancient Greek tradition. Two fundamental concepts in the aesthetic thought of the West are the *kalokagathía* and the *kalokagathós*. The meaning of both concepts can be translated as "beautiful soul," that is, as a synthesis of the beautiful (*kalós*) and the good (*agathós*).

Kalokagathía represents conformity between internal and external values, that is, the unity of moral beauty and sensation. The concept belongs to the time before the break between morality and aesthetics, between soul and body, being and seeming, matter and form (Bynum 224). Beltran identifies traces of *kalokagathía* in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, *Dissoi logoi* by an unknown author, *Hippias Major* and *Phaedrus* of Plato and Xenophon's *Symposium* and *Economic*. After the emergence of the historical world, the concept of *kalokagathía*, articulations of traditional aesthetics disintegrated, and the concepts of classical and imperial aesthetics were born. From the antiquity to the present day, the figure of *kalokagathós* usually presides over all genres linked to biographical time and public space.

Kalokagathía as a term reflects the ideals of harmony and unity that were highly valued in the antiquity, and particularly in ancient Athens. The word/noun itself is Greek (καλὸς κἀγαθός) and can be translated as "moral value", "honesty", "virtue". It is a complex word, derived from two adjectives: *kalósas* beautiful, pretty, handsome, honest, noble, and *agathós* as honest, good, noble, courageous. It is interesting to note that the word *kalós* already includes the values contained in the semantic field of *agathós*. Hence, *kalokagathía* as "the beautiful and the good" was an ideal to be achieved through education and lifestyle: in Platonic thinking, that which is good (as a reflection of the ideal Good) can only be beautiful, and vice-versa (Marrou 13). Neoplatonist philosophers took up the notion of *kalokagathía* in the late Antiquity and the Middle Ages and fundamentally Christianized it. Attention shifted to what one may call "inner beauty", the beauty of the soul and its virtues (Eco10).

What meaning could the word *kalós* have? In Homer, the adjective appears to have been applied to people (Il. 21.108; Od. 9.513; 13.289; 15.418), but also referring to buildings, manufacturing and weapons (Il.11.137; Od. 14.75, 21.447). *Agathós*, on the other hand, is someone illustrious, brave, skilled at his birth and is

good in his own right in Homer (Il. 1.131; 1.275, 21.180; Od. 18.276). According to some characterization, to be *agathós* is to be courageous, skilled and fortunate in war and peace; possess wealth and leisure (Conche 119). Thus, attributed to a person's quality, *agathós* is equivalent to a descriptive statement, something which can be determined by the actions of that person.

What, then, is the significance of the concept of *kalokagathía*? We can notice that this concept does not appear in Homer, but was introduced in the fifth century, in the Works of Herodotus, Xenophon, Aristotle or Isocrates. *Kalokagathía* denotes the perfect gentleman (in the literal sense: one who has enough wealth to pay for horses), the worthy noble honours, and the character and conduct of a person (a personality). While in Homer the adjective *agathós* was applied to a hero *only if* he exercised his true function and *while* he exercised that, now *kalokagathía* designates one who has descended from the lineage of a hero, regardless of the role they play and their personal qualities. Then, *kalokagathía* is the marker of heroic values of the classical times, in the remote economic and political conditions of the Homeric world.

Aeschylus and Sophocles introduced the concept of human greatness in the Greek theatre, expanding the concept of beauty, associated with morality and duty. These are the first expressions of the relation between the aesthetic and the ethical, the beautiful in identity with kindness and goodness. A confrontation between the ethical, physical and psychological characteristics of the Homeric hero and the Stoic sage necessarily lead us to the establishment of a dedicated model, not only for the literary tradition but beyond the socio-political or cultural paradigm. The manifestations of Greek art outlined the links established between beauty and the need for a canon in creative freedom; in this sense, it is interesting to note the thought of Hesiod.

The Greek conception of *kalokagathía* is present in Greco-Roman thought, especially in the Socratic dialogues of Plato and the works of Aristotle (Bourriot 56). In this very elitist and undemocratic conception, the perfect citizen should possess both the qualities of good citizenship (value, loyalty, etc., all within the term "goodness") as well as the qualities of physical beauty. The virtuous man is, therefore, excellent not only in the spiritual but also the physical qualities. An important corollary of the *kalokagathía* was the thesis of the impossibility of teaching virtue: the Greeks did not have the Christian meaning of free choice of the good, but insisted on the excellence of performance, the ability to achieve success in a given area. In the later aristocratic conception, the political virtues, the ability to control, imperturbability that comes from the awareness of his own superiority, can not be acquired through education but is inherited through the blood of the

parents.

Plato identifies *kalokagathía* as an indissoluble unity. In this sense, the *Timaeus* should be read as a key work in understanding why the good and the beautiful are the ontological attributes that give order and meaning to the universe (Inwood 122). Each of the component parts is ordered according to the goodness and beauty through the intelligence of the demiurge, the supreme architect of the universe, who takes the ideas as a model, order and print a form in unorganised matter. A characteristic teaching of the *Symposium* is that the beautiful always involves the good (201c). A human being who has seen the beauty itself is capable of producing "true virtue" [*areté*] (212a); he or she is good. For Greek thought, in contrast to the modern, the beautiful does not have a primarily aesthetic significance. Plato adopts a very critical attitude to art which is expressed through the typically Greek concept of *kalokagathía*, which shall gather as the comprehensive notion of spiritual perfection, the beautiful [*kalós*] and good [*agathós*]. Apparently, for Plato, the beautiful is a particular paradigm for the metaphysics of ideas. Modern commentators have interpreted this statement as the first formulation for the "true-good-beautiful" triad, but this is overkill. *Phaedrus* does not contain any explicit formulation of the classical triad, and a clear confirmation can not be found in any other of his works. This does not appear to be a coincidence (Dover 56).

This vision will permeate Aristotle's description of the *megalopsychos*, "the magnanimous man". The ethical thought of Plato and Aristotle, based on many aspects of the aristocratic ethics of ancient Greece, stresses that magnanimity is a moral virtue: it is indeed a virtue that presupposes all virtues. It is at this point that Jaeger identifies the ethics and aesthetics in Greek thought, as the supreme unity of all the virtues is in Plato and Aristotle's *kalokagathía* (Bouvrie 45). Aristotle's thought is different from Plato's in respect of the intellectual principles of creation.

The *kalokagathía* is contrary to the concept of *hybris*, which we understand as a lack or excessiveness. This notion appears in several works of the classical period such as the dialogue *Symposium* by Xenophon around 380 BC, in which the philosopher Socrates represents a *kalokagathós* par excellence. Xenophon's educational text written in classical Athens consists of nine books and is structurally divided into three parts. The first part is the presentation of the characters; the second deals with various topics such as the feminine nature, dance, wine and drunkenness, philosophy and sports, which are always guided by the importance of temperance (*sophrosine*). In the third and final part (specifically Book VIII) Socrates elaborates on his ideas of love, especially the love between an adult man (*erastés*) and a young man in the social formation process (*erómenos*). The thread of the work is the *kalokagathía*, achieved through a process of education of future

citizens. *Symposium* begins with the appreciation of *kalokagathós*: Xenophon says that not only the serious actions of virtuous men (*kalon kagathon*) are worthy of memory, but also their amusements (*paidiais*): "There are only, in my view, serious actions of virtuous men who are worthy of memory, but also their amusements. I know for testifying, and my desire is now known to do" (*Symposium* I.1). Both the serious action as well as the leisure time of a *kalokagathós* are worthy of memory, an example to serve others. Thus, Xenophon feels the duty to make public what he knows. Although the argument has been inspired by a real event and ontologically autonomous characters, it is clear that elements created and/or adapted by the author to give fluency and coherence to the facts narrated.

In the case of Xenophon's *Symposium*, *kalokagathía* is present throughout the dialogue, whether in action of the characters, or in his speeches in order to demonstrate that such virtue should be pursued and practised by the Athenian citizens. Preparing its text, Xenophon selected elements in the temperament of his characters who sought to awaken his readers to identify with and /or differentiate from them, so that, through reflection, their own acts were analysed. I would like to highlight three figures which represent the highest expression of a *kalokagathós*: Callias, Autolycus, and Socrates. Although Callias and Autolycus possess numerous qualities and stand out among the guests as those who are more virtuous, Socrates is to Xenophon the embodiment of *kalokagathía*. The philosopher has a good mood, concerned with health, is temperate and always involved in discussions in order to add something or to call attention to some unseen aspect.

The last example that expresses weighting of disability due to the presence of *hýbris* in their behaviour is Critobulus, the son of a close friend of Socrates called Crito, and whose membership can be confirmed in Book I of *Memorabilia* (I.3.8). Critobulus, proud of her beauty (*Symposium* III.7), ensures many received praise refer to *kaloikagathoi* (*Symposium* IV.10-11). This statement seems, at first, naive, however, it is justified by Critobulus through their uncontrolled love for Clitias. Critobulus is overcome by *hýbris* and so love without measure, claiming to be able to trade their freedom for slavery if Clitias wanted to be its owner (*Symposium* IV. 14).

After analysing the profile of Critobulus, we find that the receiving of a quality education and the mere possessing of physical beauty were not enough to be a virtuous man. Of course, these are the key factors expected in a *kalokagathós*, but without self-control and wisdom these predicates can deteriorate into harmful elements. In comparison, we use the example of Alcibiades in Plato's eponymous dialogue: Eupatrid, one of the most distinguished families of Athens, the patrons of the highly intellectual and aesthetically beautiful arts and philosophy, was repre-

sented as being self-centered and intemperate. Although it does not have as many vices as Alcibiades in Plato, Niceratus and Critobulus are portrayed by Xenophon as individuals taken by *hýbris*, illustrating that a smaller amount in disproportion to occur, that undertakes the activity of a citizen in the polis.

Thus, as a conclusion of the above, the word *kalós*, which we translate as "beautiful", actually had a broader meaning than the current one: it included not only what is pleasing to the eyes and the ears, but also the character and the qualities of the human mind. Ancient Greek culture also separates the sphere of beauty and the sphere of art to give an ontological foundation for nature and, in particular, in the body of man, the noblest and highest among natural beings. The Greek citizen were able to express their beauty, in the proportion of physical forms as well as the dignity of practical behaviour. Hence the link between good and beautiful, that in classical Greece finds its supreme expression in the ideal training of *kalokagathía* — the very condition of those who know they can be, at the same time, beautiful and good. *Agathós* is the moral aspect, combined with the nuances that come from the social and worldly origins of the beautiful. *Kalós* is physical beauty, with the inevitable erotic and sensual aura that accompanies it. The education of man is complete; he has spent years making his body a perfect war machine but did not neglect his mind. The beauty and spiritual strength of the Homeric characters originate above all from harmony and inner balance. Achilles is the perfect example, who knows how to put the body in the service of the mind and, conversely, how to make the brain conform to the physical needs. Greek culture and its aesthetics identify these men as the most attractive and desirable, because of the inner harmony that characterised Achilles and continues to divide society into winners (rare, unfortunately) and losers.

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Designing an Effective Announcement Page for an Online College Class

Mary-Lynn Chambers

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Designing an Effective Announcement Page for an Online College Class

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The design of the announcement page within a blackboard online course has an impact on student's emotions, which in turn would have a direct effect on their overall agency within the class. Therefore, the online instructor needs to consider what design elements would best help the student to engage with the material of the online course. This article proposes that colour is an important element that must be given priority when an instructor is posting an announcement on the announcement page. Different colours have varied effects on a student's emotional responses to the messages: the student views text written in red as important and that text written in blue as communicating encouragement. Also, research shows that large font size and CAPS help to communicate what is important and that variety within the announcements is desired by the students. Conclusions regarding the design of the announcement page are offered with the intent that online instructors will take the information and start designing their announcement page to fit the needs of the students and the tone of the message being posted.

Keywords: digital humanities, interactive teaching, online courses

Whether a professor is a seasoned online instructor or a novice launching into the great unknown for the first time, the announcement page in an online class is an element within the design that needs to be addressed. The announcement page is presented as the first portal where the students arrive after logging into their online class. This feature is designed to provide the latest updates in the

class, and every student has immediate access to it because it is the first thing they see when they enter the online class (Bradford et al.). Every student enters their online classes with emotions regarding the course they are about to take. Some students will be confident in their ability to navigate the online course and complete the expected coursework, others will be nervous about the technological challenges they might face as well as their ability to master the material in an online setting. These emotions play a role in the student's perception of the course as well as his or her ability to experience agency and success within the online class (Berenson, Boyles, and Weaver). Since the message on the announcement page plays an important role in establishing a clear communication between the instructor and student, as well as eliciting a positive emotional response within the student, it should be a priority for the online instructor to determine what elements within the design of the announcement page should be incorporated in order to create a positive response from the students.

As an online instructor, we need to think back to the first impression we had when we first clicked on the link to an online class and the page that appeared was staring back at us. For some, that first impression happened years ago, and for others, it is a more recent experience. However, if we are honest, most of us felt a bit lost as we stared at the page before us, and for many of us, anxiety, fear, and hesitation were part of those emotions we experienced. Linda Cooper in her article, "Anatomy of an Online Course," encourages us to consider the online course from the student's perspective as we approach designing the messages to be posted. Some of your students might be veterans, but there is a good chance that a few of your students are using your course as a trial run, wondering if online education is an option for them. Either way, your course is being viewed for the first time with emotions playing a part in the assessment of what they are viewing. Berenson, Boyles, and Weaver establish in their research that the role of emotional intelligence that the student possesses is an element that contributes to the overall success that a student will experience in their online class. Emotional intelligence is a student's awareness of his or her own feelings and needs (Jerabek). Awareness is helpful, but often those feelings are hidden in a student's subconscious, yet those emotions still have an impact on the confidence level with which the student approaches the course (Berenson, Boyles, and Weaver). When we, as instructors, first encountered an online course, many of us would have appreciated a warm and welcoming note on the announcement page that was inviting us to read and helpful in its content; a note like that would have helped to feed into the positive emotions that we were experiencing as well as help to dispel our fears. Well, if we can see the value of what that announcement page would have done

for us, then we must certainly consider the role that is will play in our student's emotional response to the online class they are taking.

The most popular Learning Management system used within American higher learning is Blackboard. This system is a tool that provides instruction, communication and assessment, allowing the students to benefit from learning at a distance (Bradford et al.). Although there are many aspects of communication that can occur within Blackboard, this research will be examining the role of design within the communication tool called the Announcement page.

There are seven principles that have been cited for effective teaching, and the first principle is "Good practice encourages student-faculty contact" (Graham et al. n.p.). Often the first point of contact between faculty and the student is the announcement page in an online class. Graham et al. suggest that an instructor's responsibility is to make sure that the communication that happens between faculty and his or her students will reduce fear and build the students' confidence to effectively manage the course expectations. In the research of Fein and Logan, we see a common approach used by online instructors regarding the strategies and delivery methods for an online class, but when it comes to the announcement page, there is little to no advice offered regarding specifics within the design. Fein and Logan explain that "Announcements need to be posted somewhere for the students to see . . .[and] should be updated regularly" (53). However, that is the only advice offered regarding the announcement page. Fredrickson, Clark, and Hoehner confirm that a consistent and frequent use of the announcement page will increase the level of participation in the course by the students, which is an important goal in online instruction. Yet, we are still left wondering what is the best way to design the information that is placed on the announcement page in order to inspire a positive emotional response.

If considering the student's perspective when designing an online class is a best practice (Cooper), then it should be apparent that a good place to begin is to survey a group of students in order to discover what they like or dislike related to the design of the text on the announcement page. In order to gain the students' perspective, 103 students at Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) were surveyed. ECSU is an HBCU located in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. The students surveyed were participating in an English class where Blackboard was used to enhance the educational experience. The first section in the survey asked the students to identify their sex and race. Of the 103 students, 85 were African American (AA), 11 were white, and 7 fell into the racial category of "other." Of the 85 African American students, 43 were male and 42 were female. In the white category, 9 were male and 3 were female. Finally, in the other category, 4 were male and 3

were female. In the data that follows, there was a consistent response between the males and females, except for one element that will be noted in the report. Also, their overall responses to the survey questions did not vary between ethnicities, except a few minor points that will be highlighted in the report as well.

The following six questions on the survey asked the students to identify their preferences related to the design of text used on the announcement page on Blackboard. The first question asked them to identify if they noticed when an online instructor used different fonts, colours, or sizes on the announcement page and whether they liked it when the instructor did that. In the AA group, 92% noticed and liked it when variety was used. In the white group, 92% noticed and 67% liked it when variety was used. In the other group, 100% noticed and 86% liked the variety. It is noteworthy that of the 11 students who did not like the variety, 10 of them were male. So, the vast majority of the students surveyed noticed and appreciated when an online instructor used a variety of colours, fonts, and sizes on the announcement page.

Next, I asked the students to identify the emotional response they had when the colour red or the colour blue were used on the announcement page. Since colour can affect people emotionally as well as have an impact on their behaviour and cognition (Elliot and Maier), it is helpful for an online instructor to be aware that the colours he or she uses on the announcement page can elicit certain emotional responses from their students. This became more apparent when the survey responses were considered. In the AA group, 92% said that red communicated importance. Regarding the colour blue, 67% of this group said it conveyed encouragement and 22% said it communicated importance. The white group had 100% identify red with importance; whereas, 67% identified blue with encouragement and 25% connected blue with importance. Finally, the other group had 57% say red was connected with importance and 43% with anger. Then with blue, 57% said encouragement and 43% said importance. This study will not investigate the connection red has with anger for other minority students, but that would be an interesting point for further investigation. Of the four emotional responses offered: anger, importance, encouragement, fear, there were a few who indicated anger or fear, but it was a very low percentage except for the other group in relation to the colour red. However, the overall consensus is that red and blue communicate importance and encouragement respectively to the students who are viewing those colours being used as part of the design for a text.

Red and blue are two colours commonly used when an online instructor might veer from the traditional black text that is the default option when typing a message on the announcement page. Research has demonstrated that red is more

arousing and can create anxiety, but blue is more calming (Valdez and Mchrabian). The students surveyed at ECSU support this general perception associated with these two colours when they attached importance to red (arousing) and encouragement to blue (calming). However, most systems provide other colour options than just red or blue, so it is important that the instructor is familiar with the typical emotional responses connected with each colour. Other colours that could be included in the creation of an announcement are orange, yellow, green, and purple. According to the website Color Psychology, orange communicates happiness, enthusiasm, and encouragement; yellow communicates cheerfulness and joy; Green suggests harmony, stability, and calmness; purple conveys wisdom and promotes ambition. So, the use of colour does play a role on the announcement page, and the emotions elicited by those colours are also significant to consider.

Colour is one way in which an online instructor can change the text on the announcement page, but there are also other options. Question four on the survey asked the students to identify their favourite design changes that they like to see implemented on the announcement page. The options provided were the following: large font, small font, colour, italics, variety, CAPS. The following chart summarises the results from the ECSU survey.

Group	Large font	Small font	Color	Italics	Variety	CAPS
AA	58%	0%	50%	0%	32%	34%
White	55%	0%	55%	0%	64%	0%
Other	0%	0%	71%	0%	29%	0%

Table One: ECSU students' preferences for design changes on the announcement page

The conclusions reached from the results gathered regarding question four on the survey is that overall, larger font with the use of varied colours is appreciated. Also, students value variety and some of the African American student body also place an importance on the use of CAPS.

The final two questions on the survey asked the students to select an option that reflected what they liked contained in the announcement and how often they wanted to see an announcement posted. Within question five, there were options that provided insight into the design of the text as well as the tone of the text. This element was incorporated to help confirm the students' previous answers related to design. The options provided in question five related to their preference regarding announcements are as follows:

- lots of information
- outline of important details
- important details highlighted with font, size, or colour
- friendly approach
- formal approach

The next table summarises the results found from the survey given to the ECSU students.

Group	Lots of info.	Outline	Details highlighted	Friendly	Formal
AA	29%	64%	87%	50%	18%
White	18%	82%	82%	36%	27%
Other	14%	29%	71%	14%	43%

Table Two: ECSU students' preferences for certain elements to be included on the announcement page

The results listed above demonstrate that the overall strongest preference for the announcement page is having important details highlighted with font, size, or colour. The next most valued element is that the information provided be an outline of important details. Other observations include the African American community wanting a friendlier approach and the other minority students preferring a more formal approach.

The last question helps to clarify the frequency that is used for posting announcements. The results from the ECSU survey showed that over fifty percent of all students were content to have the professor post only when needed. Between 18-34% of the students wanted announcements posted before every class, and between 14-30% of the students were satisfied to have an announcement posted only once a week.

The conclusions reached from the overall findings of the ECSU survey can help to provide some guidelines for online instructors. The overall consensus is that the students notice when a professor makes changes to the text on the announcement page, and they like it when they see variety in the text. They see red as identifying something of importance, and they see blue as a colour of encouragement. Their first desire is to see colour added to the text as well as a variety of elements used, which can include font style, size, and CAPS, as seen with the students' indication that they appreciate when an online instructor highlights important details with varied fonts, sizes, and colours. Also, they are thankful when the announcement is an outline of important details. Finally, over half of the students

found it helpful when a professor posts an announcement only when it is needed. This final observation needs further research, but an initial hypothesis connected to their preference to have an announcement posted only when needed could be that when a new announcement appears, they know that needed information is in it, and with the use of varied font, sizes, and colors, that new and important information can be highlighted for them.

Making a good first impression is important face-to-face as well as online, and the announcement page of an online course if the page that makes the first impression. Based on the research offered in this article, it is no longer appropriate for the online instructor to just use the default text on the announcement page. Instead, the online instructor needs to consider the racial makeup of their class, the tone of the message they want to communicate, and the design that will best serve their purpose for the announcement they want to post. Our students are more than just a name on a class roster. They are individuals who come to the class with a range of emotions, and what an online instructor puts on the announcement page will have an impact on the emotions the students are feeling. So, it is time for online instructors to use the design tools available to them and start creating announcements that send the appropriate and desired message that will lead to positive emotional responses and greater student success.

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Rethinking Postcolonialism: Capitalism as an Imperial Force in Twentieth-Century American Literature, 1900-1940

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Rethinking Postcolonialism: Capitalism as an Imperial Force in Twentieth-Century American Literature, 1900-1940

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In discussions of Postcolonial Studies, American literature is essentially excluded. Given its status as former imperial power, the United States is, it has been argued, specifically outside of any conversation that involves writing from the perspective of a colonial subject. This paper argues that such a perspective is applicable to the early twentieth-century American literature too, as they represent the sinister workings of the powerful capitalist system. It is my contention that Capitalism works as an imperial force in the lives of its subjects, controlling them in a way no different from an imperial force controlling colonial subjects. Canons are necessarily convenient constructions, but engaging with literature means the exploration of power-relations that are scribed into it, and it is precisely this notion that can lead to a blurring of this inside/outside boundaries.

Keywords: postcolonial studies, American literature, Orientalism

By its very definition, Postcolonialism is something of a moving target in literary discussions. Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge describe it as "a slippery term" (377), and Jasper Goss says that we have come to a point in literary criticism where "there is a degree of uncertainty and debate that exists as to what makes a particular stance, discourse, work, or condition postcolonial" (239). Despite the seemingly unstable nature of the term, most scholars are in agreement that American literature – especially that of the twentieth century – is specifically excluded from Postcolonial Studies. However, in this essay, I will argue in favor of including American literature under the rubric of postcolonialism. I will demonstrate themes present in that body of literature that reflect those found in more traditionally-accepted Postcolonial literatures and, because of those shared

thematic qualities, I will argue that the postcolonial canon should be expanded to include twentieth-century American literature.

Edward Said wrote of the colonial subject, "Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them')" (*Orientalism* 43). These terms are mirrored, thematically speaking, in Karl Marx's critique of capitalism, in which he establishes the socio-economic binary composed of the bourgeoisie (those who control the methods and means of production) and the proletariat (those who serve as laborers supporting the bourgeoisie). Marx's proletariat are essentially the same as Said's "strange," and the bourgeoisie "the familiar." On the surface, this might seem to be a semantic argument; I am simply substituting one term for another. However, it is the power dynamic inherent in the bourgeoisie/proletariat relationship that is the focus of my argument, as I see that dynamic reflecting the same forces at work in the relationship between imperial powers and colonial subjects. It is that particular way of looking at economic forces at play in American culture that informs my reading of American literature from 1900 to 1940, and it is this power dynamic that shifts the conversation from one of neo-Marxism to one of postcolonialism.

As Americans ceased to qualify as colonial subjects in the 18th century, it perhaps seems counterintuitive to describe twentieth-century American literature as postcolonial. However, it is my contention that the United States' capitalist system serves as an imperial force that colonizes American citizens, shackling them to a never-ending cycle of laboring in order to acquire those things that have come to symbolize the so-called "American Dream." In other words, these authors were writing both from the perspective of colonized people and about other colonial subjects.

James T. Adams was the first person to suggest that there was such a thing as the American Dream, and that suggestion did not come about until 1931. Adams wrote, "[T]here has also been the *American dream*, that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with the opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement" (374, italics original). This dream was represented, at least in part, by the vast array of material possessions that were available to any American who might be able to afford them. Those goods were marketed to the audience of potential buyers through the medium of advertisements, which served as the catalyst that drove the growth of the American commercial culture in the early twentieth century.

A by-product of that material acquisition was the ability for Americans to elevate their own social positions. Through both financial gain and the subsequent

purchasing of increasing numbers of goods that befitted that financial gain, individuals were able to climb the social ladder in ways that were heretofore inconceivable to a vast number of people. Scott and Leonhardt write of this idea of social mobility:

> Mobility is the promise that lies at the heart of the American dream. […] There are poor and rich in the United States, of course, the argument goes; but as long as one can become the other, as long as there is something close to equality of opportunity, the differences between them do not add up to class barriers (2-3).

In other words, despite the class differences that are inherent – even requisite components – in a capitalist system, there is also an opportunity for anyone within the economic system to change their particular socio-economic status. All that is necessary to effectively facilitate that opportunity is the education of the masses as to the existence of products that promise to enable their climb up the social ladder. And that educational tool is advertising.

Arguing that advertising has the inherent ability to spark in consumers a desire for more possessions, twentieth-century advertising executive Earnest Calkins once wrote:

> Advertising is that subtle, indefinable, but powerful force whereby the advertiser creates a demand for a given article in the minds of a great many people or arouses the demand that is already there in latent form (qtd. in Wills 34).

Furthermore, David Potter echoes Calkins' words in his argument that advertising has the power to shape consumer behaviors in terms of personal acquisition and consumption:

> We are dealing […] with one of the very limited groups of institutions which can properly be called 'instruments of social control.' These institutions guide the life of the individual by conceiving of him in a distinctive way and encouraging him to conform as far as possible to the subject (37)

In other words, advertising manipulates consumers' thinking and breeds a continually-growing desire to acquire more and more commodities.

One of the foundational tenets of this desire for material acquisition is the phenomenon identified by Karl Marx as *commodity fetishization*. On this topic, Marx writes:

> [T]he commodity-form, and the value-relation of the products of labour with-in which it appears […] is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things. […] I call this the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour as soon as they are produced as commodities, and is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities (165).

According to Marx, consumers of commodities attach an arbitrary value to a specific good, a value that has no direct relation to that good's actual material worth.

Echoing Marx, Herbert Marcuse says, "The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed" (9). Consumers came to believe that specific commodities dictate to others who they are as individuals. And producers were happy to oblige this commodity fetishism by making more and more goods, and in turn employing advertising agencies to market those goods to consumers. The partnership between producers and advertisers was – and continues to be – a symbiotic relationship, as the pair of businesses team up together to continually reinvent artificial needs and stoke the fires of innate human desire for newer and better commodities. These artificial needs suffuse a particular item with a perceived specific characteristic which, in the eyes of the consumer, contributes to the individual's desired public persona. This construction of a person's outward appearance, in turn, fosters a sense of class consciousness that infiltrates every level of the social ladder in a capitalist society.

It may be argued, then, that human vanity lies at the core of Marx's commodity fetishism. Consumers see a life they wish to lead – albeit one that is itself no more than an imaginary product of marketing – and they seek to emulate it. Here we see the concept of mimicry that Homi Bhabha argues is inherent in any colonial existence. Bhabha writes, "The *menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. And it is double vision that is a result of what I've described as the partial representation/recognition of the colonial object" (126, italics original). By mimicking those seen as somehow superior to themselves – be it their appearance, their possessions, or their very existence – consumers seek to dismantle their own class deficiencies by assimilating themselves into that perceived world of those whom they view as leading superior lives.

Despite their best efforts, however, the consumers are never able to fully realize their goal of complete assimilation. Instead, they serve as a sort of one-off copy, a

near-mimic. They can look the same, but they will never achieve full membership in the higher socio-economic class; they will never fully be what they emulate. This failure leads them to try a new product, a new commodity, a new strategy that will perhaps be the one to grant them that lofty goal. The process of trying-and-failing shackles the consumer to an endless repetitive cycle of laboring in vain as an economically colonized subject. They perpetually remain in an economic version of Bhabha's liminal world of "not quite/not white." They lie stagnant in the status of colonial subject, forever enslaved by capitalism and the commercial culture it fosters in society. As Richard Pollay argues, imitation of the scenes portrayed in advertisements

> requires […] the prior acceptance of an unworthiness of one's own life experiences. […] By constantly showing us that the grass seems greener elsewhere, we're led to look askance at our own immediate environment and experience. We may not be sure where the action is, but we suspect it's almost always somewhere else (303).

However, no matter how hard we may try to mimic what we see portrayed in advertisements, we will never actually achieve that full level of satisfaction that is promised in those ads. There will always be, in Pollay's words, greener grass somewhere else in fields where we want to be.

Another point worth noting here is the basic foundational principle of capitalism, namely that of supply-and-demand. Adam Smith invoked the metaphor of an invisible hand in his treatise on capitalism in 1776, *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith's contention was that a capitalist economy is guided by natural laws (the invisible hand) that work to determine the market value of a commodity. The more people who want the desired item, the higher the price they are willing to pay, and therefore the more the item will cost. As the supply of the item decreases and the demand for it increases, the price goes up. Alternatively, when there is an abundance (surplus) of the item and a shortage of buyers, the price goes down due to the limited demand and, hence, a lower price that consumers are willing to pay. This theory applies to both physical commodities that one might buy in a store and to things like cars and homes. It even extends to one's own labor. In theory, this practice works well. But the reality is quite different. As I will show, by incorporating the manipulative effects of the commercial culture in the United States, members of the bourgeoisie in early twentieth-century America were able to turn Adam Smith's theory in to what might best be called a rigged game that skewed the odds heavily in their favor at the expense of the proletariat.

In terms of specific application of this idea of the colonizing force of capitalism in twentieth-century American literature, consider the story of Sinclair's immi-

grants in *The Jungle*. They, like so many of the immigrants who came to the United States in search of a better financial existence, see the manifestations of prosperity all around them: people who own homes, people who wear nice clothes, people who have enough to eat. They are blinded by this culture of excess – especially compared to the Lithuanian subsistence life they had left behind – and become enamored with the idea of owning their own home. In their desire to achieve this component of the American dream, they fall prey to a real estate scam perpetrated by fast-talking salesmen and color brochures of the supposedly new home he is selling. They end up subjects of the domination of a faceless bank that holds the loan – and their personal well-being – in its hands. The bank, as an imperial agent, destroys the family unit and facilitates the death of many of its members.

One of the defining characteristics of postcolonial theory is that the literature it examines is written from the perspective of a colonized person, and that characteristic is present in *The Jungle*. Sinclair, like his characters, had also lived the life of a financially colonized citizen within a capitalist structure. Born in 1878 in Baltimore, Upton Sinclair was the son of an alcoholic liquor salesman father and a strict Episcopalian mother. His father's family had been wealthy Southern slave-holders who, following the end of the Civil War and Reconstruction, saw their family fortune lost. His mother, however, was the daughter of a railroad magnate, and her parents (with whom young Upton oftentimes spent time during the summers of his youth) retained their wealth and lived a very luxurious lifestyle. This first-hand experience with the stark differences between those with financial means and those without would inform much of Sinclair's later writing.

Throughout his childhood, Sinclair witnessed the power that money could wield over an individual, both in terms of his father's failed multiple failed attempts at making a living and his maternal grandparents' excessive wealth. But he also lived under the yoke of a strict religious upbringing, something that would further control his behavior and his life at the time. Thus, I would argue that Sinclair was writing from the perspective of one who had experienced the oppression fostered by imperial rule, and my reading of his novel is informed by that perspective.

Returning to *The Jungle*, we see a family that is also colonized by this same economic system that Sinclair witnessed throughout his childhood. The Rudkus family members were naïve to the colonizing effect of the loan they obtained in order to purchase their new home, and soon the interest payments (of which they were ignorant at the time of signing) begin to drain their limited resources. Despite their best efforts to keep the house, the bank forecloses on it, and the family is evicted. The home they once occupied is, in turn, re-sold to another immigrant family who is promised, just as the Rudkuses were, that it is brand-new and has

never before been occupied. It is clear to the reader that the Rudkus family is not the first family to have occupied this "brand new house," nor will they be the last. The process begins anew for yet another unwitting victim, and the colonization process continues. In capitalistic terms, there will be a seemingly endless supply of potential buyers for houses like this one, which fosters the demand for those houses. Adam Smith's invisible hand serves to secure equally invisible shackles to those unwitting and naïve consumers.

Michael Schudson says of American consumer culture that it is "taken to be a society in which human values have been grotesquely distorted so that commodities become more important than people; […] commodities become not ends in themselves but overvalued means for acquiring acceptable ends like love and friendship" (7). This description of consumer culture provides an encapsulation for the idea that marketing efforts on the part of advertisers create an artificial demand for a given product, luring in buyers with promises of improved lives, increased happiness, easier work, or any one of countless other implied benefits. Capitalism is predicated on this cultural phenomenon of demand, itself a by-product of advertising's influence on the perceived value of a particular commodity. In other words, consumers operating within a capitalist framework are convinced of the powers of a particular commodity to improve their existence, and dedicate a portion of their labors to acquiring that particular commodity. They are, in the words of Karl Marx, wage slaves, working to produce goods or services that enrich their employers, and subsequently use the proceeds they gain from that work to purchase goods that they have been convinced will make their lives better (and thereby further enriching the bourgeoisie). At that point, the laborer starts the process anew, focusing on a different commodity that will further improve his life, and the cycle begins again.

As a result, those living in a capitalist society are essentially reduced to the status of subjects under the control of a powerful force whose authority is enforced by the commercial culture. It is much the same situation as colonial subjects who are ruled by a distant, faceless power whose lieutenants enforce the imperialist's desires. Those people living in a capitalist system have been, in effect, colonized by that economic system. Although the power dynamics are arguably different from the traditional imperialist/colonial relationship present in a situation such as British imperialists controlling colonial subjects in India, the basic parameters are the same. An unseen power rules both sets of colonial subjects, sending their adjuncts to do the job of enforcement.

According to Edward Said, an important component of colonization is the colonial's belief that they are somehow dependent on the invading force for their per-

sonal well-being. Said writes in *Culture and Imperialism*, "The vocabulary of classic nineteenth-century imperial cultures is plentiful with words and concepts like 'dependency,' 'expansion,' and 'authority'" (9). These words, according to Said, are part of the imperialist mantra of bringing enlightenment to colonial subjects, the latter a population that has, up until the time they are colonized, resided in a sort of socio-economic and cultural cave. It is essentially the moral duty of the imperial forces, therefore, to rule over these unenlightened people so that they might be brought into a more progressive way of seeing the world. Of course, the imperialist viewpoint completely negates the existence of any objections from the colonial subjects, and it suggests that those colonials are lacking insight or knowledge that the imperialists possess. In other words, the process of colonization depends on the fact that the colonials are unaware of specific information possessed by the colonizers.

An illustration of this concept of dependence is found in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Forced off their Oklahoma farm land by the bank that owns it, the Joads are lured west, to California, by the promise of easy and plentiful work. Handbills are passed out in their community – themselves a manifestation of the commercial culture, as the family is used to seeing advertisements for things that promise to improve their lives – and those advertisements beg workers to move west. The ads suggest, in capitalist terms, that there is a surplus of available work and a high demand for laborers to do that work. In an ideal capitalist system, that combination would equate to higher wages. But as I will shortly show, those who are convinced by these promises of plentiful work fall victim to their own human instincts aimed at improving their lives. Because there are so many people who share the same inherent drive, the perceived lack of labor soon turns into a vast surplus, which drives wages lower and further tightens the tethers that bind the colonized laborers.

John Steinbeck, like Sinclair before him, was very familiar with the imperialistic nature of the capitalist economic system. Born in Salinas, California, in 1902, Steinbeck was the third of four children born to middle-class parents. His father lost his job at a flour mill when Steinbeck was a teenager, and then opened his own feed store with the aim of meeting the needs of local ranchers. However, this business venture failed, forcing the family to face the imperial nature of the economic system under which they lived.

While in college, Steinbeck worked odd jobs, frequently alongside Mexican immigrants in the agricultural industry that employed so many menial laborers in Southern California. Just as Sinclair experienced the dichotomy of those with financial means and those without, Steinbeck's employment afforded him a first-

hand view of the effects of capitalism on working-class people who were barely able to earn a subsistence living. Later, he would live and work alongside the migrant workers who were collectively termed "Okies," and used that experience as a defense against those who attacked *The Grapes of Wrath* as mere propaganda. Speaking to a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* following the book's publication, Steinbeck said, "I know what I was talking about. I lived, off and on, with those Okies for the last three years. Anyone who tries to refute me will just become ridiculous" (qtd. in Shillinglaw 177). Again we see an author who is not only writing about the financially colonized condition, but also from the perspective of one who has experienced that colonization first-hand.

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, the Joad family was the fictitious representation of those Okies alongside whom Steinbeck had lived. Given their colonial state, the Joads and others like them are dependent on the potential employers in California for their very existence. In addition to being othered – they are lower-class farmers who are struggling to make financial ends meet and have been forced off their lands by banks seeking to make a bigger profit – they are also entirely dependent on the willingness of those of the bourgeoisie to provide them with wages in exchange for labor. However, it is only after selling off nearly all of their possessions and driving a dilapidated car across the country that the Joads discover the truth about the capitalist system. With so many people looking for work – with so many others who have been colonized by the economic system – the wages the California landowners are offering is a fraction of what the Joads had expected. In much the same way that a surplus of commodities paired with a lack of demand creates lower prices, a surplus of laborers and a lack of work result in lower wages. The game of capitalism is rigged in favor of the bourgeoisie.

At the end of the novel, the Joads come upon a dying man, and his son informs them that he has not eaten for six days. Rose of Sharon, who has just given birth to a still-born baby, offers her breast milk as the only available sustenance. While some critics have interpreted this action as a sign of the inherent moral goodness residing in human nature, the fact that the man's only salvation comes in the form of nourishment originally intended for an infant that was born dead is much more critical of society than those interpretations might claim. The suggestion I take from the novel's ending is that the cycle of suffering will continue. The dying man will be kept alive, only for him to be forced to continue to struggle for survival as a colonial subject within the capitalist system. There is no escape from this system because it is the force that drives human existence at the most basic of levels, the need for sustenance.

Something we see in both of these novels – as well as many other examples from

this time period in American literature – is a desire on the part of the authors to subvert the American status quo, to interrogate the notion of capitalism as a manifestation of democracy within an economic system. In that questioning of the hegemonic structure, we may read a variant of what Ashcroft and Griffiths describe as "the project of post-colonial writing," which they argue is "to interrogate European discourse and discursive strategies from its position within and between two worlds" (196).

The idea that the acquisition of goods will result in one's personal happiness spans all socio-economic classes, and appears in much of the literature of this period in the United States. For example, similar themes appear in Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* (1922), Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* (1925), and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), among many others. In each of these examples, the protagonists of the specific novels ascribe to the belief that the acquisition of material possessions will enhance their lives and make them truly happy. In each case, however, the protagonists discover that what they thought would lead to personal satisfaction fails to do so, and they begin a new pursuit for a new commodity that promises the same personal happiness. The cycle continues until the characters become utterly disillusioned with their lives (as in *Babbitt*) or, alternatively, die (by electrocution in *An American Tragedy* and by murder in *The Great Gatsby*).

What this inherent desire for more suggests is a lack of agency on the part of consumers. While there is free will in terms of an individual making a conscious choice as to whether or not to purchase a particular commodity, the argument can be made that advertising practices exploit inherent human vanity in order to awaken and catalyze a latent human desire. Herbert Marcuse writes, "The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed" (9). In other words, because people have fetishized commodities in the way that Marx claimed they do, those commodities themselves have come to be representations of the persona consumers want to portray. And because of the human instinct to improve one's station in life – or, alternatively, the outward manifestation of an improved station – it can be argued that individual consumers sacrifice their own agency when it comes time to decide whether or not to purchase a particular item that they believe will either improve their own lives or that will potentially express to others that they have climbed higher on the social ladder. Echoing the words of Marcuse, Ronald Berman writes, "American middle-class life is indeed characterized by possessions [and] those possessions have powerful symbolic meanings" (25). It is those sym-

bolic meanings contained within possessions that denies the individual the power of agency.

This lack of agency is a theme of those works that comprise the currently accepted canon of postcolonial literature. Chandra Mohanty argues that the practice of colonization results in "a discursive or political suppression of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question" (196). Because this group of subaltern colonial subjects are effectively homogenized by imperial powers, then, they forfeit their ability to act on their own volition. This lack of agency on the part of the marginalized – what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak refers to as a lack of voice – creates a problem for postcolonialism as a field of study. If the postcolonial subject must be a part of the colonial population (a condition which deprives the subject of agency and voice), how can their voice be heard in their writing about that condition?

A characteristic of Orientalism as a school of thought which Edward Said was never fully able to reconcile in his mind was this seemingly impossible combination of being simultaneously inside and outside a particular social structure. Regarding this point, Robert Young asks, "If it is necessary, as Said demonstrates, to be inside such structures in order to make any argument at all, it is also, he argues, vital to be outside them in order to subvert them" (128). In the case of my application of postcolonial theory to both *The Jungle* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, I would suggest that my re-casting of Said's theories helps to resolve this apparent paradox. Both Sinclair and Steinbeck lived and worked among the populations about which they wrote. Sinclair spent several weeks working in a Chicago meat-packing plant prior to beginning work on *The Jungle* and Steinbeck worked as a farm laborer and spent years living with displaced farmers from the Dust Bowl who had sought work in California. Both authors were part of that world of the colonial subjects while, at the same time, apart from it. Their elevated perspective, enhanced by their time spent among the lower elements of the social ladder, enabled them to realize the ultimate postcolonial positon of being attached to both worlds at one and the same time.

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Underscoring *The Broadway Melody* 1929: a Passing Drama of Lesbian Exclusion

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Underscoring *The Broadway Melody* 1929: a Passing Drama of Lesbian Exclusion

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The paper is an analysis of the film *The Broadway Melody* (1929). The focus of the analysis is on the lesbian narrative that underscores the heterosexual narrative. The essay begins by setting the context for the hidden lesbian narrative in The Oresteia. It then proceeds to set the context of the film within the 1920s Machine Age and Jazz Age, comparing it to other dramatic narratives of the period that also involve hidden lesbian narratives. The paper examines how the hidden narrative and the ostensive heterosexual narrative relate to develop the film's powerful message. The analysis also takes into account the period style of the acting in the film and explains how it fits the storylines. The essay concludes with an understanding of tragedy in the context of the film.

Keywords: *The Broadway Melody*, lesbian narrative, film analysis, drama, tragedy

In Aeschylus's classic trilogy, *The Oresteia* (458 BC), Clytemnestra lures her husband, Agamemnon, to his death by persuading him to tread upon a purple cloth she has laid down for his return. To avenge his father's murder, Orestes kills his mother, Clytemnestra. At his trial before the androgynous Goddess Athena and the ominous Furies, the ancient gods of revenge, sue for the dead matriarch, Clytemnestra. When the jury finds Orestes innocent, Athena placates the blood-thirsty Furies' ire by persuading them to become the Eumenides, new gods with power over human fertility. Silently led by a group of women and girls, the Eumenides, donning purple robes, descend into a cavern. Hidden from society, the Eumenides' supplicants worship them as the "daughters of darkness."

Their origins in *The Oresteia* suggest that, although the Eumenides were not overtly or even necessarily sexual, they were nonetheless lesbian deities tacitly worshipped by women while dreaded and repressed by the Athenian patriarchy. This classical motif also explains how lesbians were first literally and figuratively sent underground, hidden from view, and why storytellers have, therefore, symbolically encoded lesbianism's muted presence underneath heterosexual narratives.

Throughout history, patriarchy has excluded lesbians as principal characters in the theatre. However, during the 1920s – coined as either the Machine Age or the Jazz Age – the newly popular psychological theories of Sigmund Freud and Havelock Ellis, which proclaimed homosexuality to be both an illness and an aberration, prompted the lesbian character's brief but defiant reemergence on Broadway. Culminating in 1928, the repressive consequences of this lesbian revival were to last for decades. Freud's theory established the notion that heterosexuality was the norm against which psychiatry was to judge other sexual orientations. Therefore, homosexuality was both abnormal, the result of some crisis in a child's early upbringing. Hence, many of those "afflicted" came to believe their condition was treatable by psychoanalysis. Ellis postulated the theory of congenital sexual inversion. Homosexuality was an abnormality with which an invert was born. Thus, unlike Freud's theory, in which homosexuals could be called deviants whose life experiences had perverted them from the norm, Ellis determined homosexuality was a faultless biological condition.

The suggested scientific biases of both Freud's and Ellis's theories characterised them as Machine Age orientations, somewhat lacking in affective attributes. One of the most important issues of the Machine Age was the preservation of the family, an entirely patriarchal concern. The self-avowed "lesbian basher," Floyd Dell's book, *Love in the Machine Age* (1930), popularised Freud's theories in order to preach that the Modern Woman was seriously threatening heterosexuality and the patriarchy. Floyd wrote that women were under a "welter of neuroticism," that heterosexuality represented mental hygiene, and that to grow up meant to become a heterosexual, "the full and passionate love of the other sex [being] the normal goal of youth."

The most famous book about lesbian life which adopted the Ellis viewpoint was "John" Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), for which Ellis wrote a brief foreword. The book was banned in England, where it went on trial as obscene. The central character of Hall's story is Stephen Gordon, a lesbian who essentially lives as a man, dressing as a man, and so forth. This book gave rise (as did Hall's own life) to the mythic mannish woman by establishing a complete picture of the androgynous lesbian.

On the other hand, although it did not ostensibly advocate for homosexuality as an alternative, perfectly normal lifestyle or sexual orientation, the naturally intuitive non-scientific outlook of the Jazz Age was highly affective. This Jazz Age humanism accounts for not only its tragic dimension but also its impact on the drama of the period. Certainly, other factors were also in play socially in the 1920s, not least of all the end of World War I. However, the tacit competition between the Machine Age and Jazz Age orientations had the greatest impact on the emergence of lesbian stories on Broadway.

When an English version of Sholem Asch's play *God of Vengeance* finally opened on Broadway after playing on New York's Yiddish stage for ten years it created a short-lived storm of controversy. A passionate realistic drama about one man's cataclysm of religious faith, God of Vengeance is also sexually frank and homosexually explicit. Yankel, a Jewish man, runs a brothel with his wife, a former prostitute. As an act of penance, Yankel orders a Torah scroll for his chaste daughter, Rivkele's dowry. But before her match to the rabbi's son can be certified, Rivkele makes love to and then runs away with her lesbian lover, Manke, a prostitute from the brothel.

Soon after its first English performance, the producer and cast of *God of Vengeance* were arrested for putting on an obscene and immoral play. The production was closed and both the leading actor and the producer, Henry Weinberger, were convicted and fined $200. Mr. Weinberger stressed that the case was "of national importance ... the first of its kind," but no other Broadway producers came to the play's defence. Furthermore, newspaper accounts of the event and the trial avoided any reference to lesbianism. Thus, it was never determined publicly or otherwise what precisely made God of Vengeance obscene or immoral; it simply was.

The trend continued in 1926 with Edouard Bourdet's psychological drama, *The Captive*. The central character, Jacques, agrees to play the role of fiancé and then husband to Irene, the woman he truly loves; but Irene cannot love Jacques in return because she is struggling with a secret compulsion, her lesbian identity. Jacques is defeated "in the face of a secret alliance of two beings who understand one another because they're of the same sex because they're from a different planet than he, the stranger, the enemy!"

The Captive's Lesbian storyline actually focused on how men dealt with finding themselves caught in a secret relationship between two women. However, Irene's lesbian lover never physically appears in the play. Instead, at the beginning and end of the drama, the lesbian is symbolised by "a large bunch of violets." These violets and the play's sensational publication in lavender covers restored to public consciousness the colour purple as a symbol of lesbianism.

The Captive ran for four controversial months on Broadway before it was raided by the police; the company (including star Basil Rathbone) was arrested. The literary merits of the play were conceded by many; but, the legal authorities nevertheless deemed it an immoral and dangerous influence, because police reports indicated that women and unescorted girls sitting in groups of twos and threes accounted for over half the audience.

Likewise, Mae West and company were arrested that same year for the play *Sex*, and her play *The Drag* about homosexuality was never produced. Finally, in April 1927, a New York state legislature enacted a law declaring it a misdemeanour to present any work "depicting or dealing with, the subject of sex degeneracy, or sex perversion." That law, effectively exiling lesbian characters from Broadway, remained unchanged for 40 years.

Thus, by 1928, the only way to produce a drama with a lesbian narrative was to hide it underneath or within a heterosexual narrative. There it might either pass unnoticed by those with no symbolic consciousness of the hidden narrative's iconicity or be conveniently overlooked by those who choose to maintain a narrowly repressed or strictly patriarchal outlook on love and relationships. However meaningful or even personally satisfying such a strategy may have been to those involved at the time, the tragedy of this approach is that the underlying truth of these dramas will inevitably disappear over time, as the allusions and symbolism drop out of public consciousness.

A case in point is Sophie Treadwell's 1928 crime melodrama, *Machinal*. Like Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, *Machinal* adopts a narrative of damnation. Nevertheless, by that time a story sympathetic to a lesbian's plight, even if she is executed as a murderer, could ever have been produced on Broadway. Although the play's hidden lesbian narrative is as obvious as is its titular allusion to the Machine Age, contemporary audiences now see it as an anti-patriarchal "feminist" polemic rather than a lesbian tragedy.

Treadwell, a newspaper reporter, ostensibly drew inspiration for *Machinal* from the Ruth Snyder-Judd Gray heterosexual murder case of 1927-28 in which Ruth Snyder and her lover, corset salesman Judd Gray, murdered Snyder's husband. Gray confessed to the killing, claiming Snyder forced him to it. But Snyder never confessed, claiming she even tried to stop Gray. They were tried together, convicted, and sent to the electric chair.

Although unacknowledged by Treadwell, the papers also carried the story of the Velma West murder case concurrently with the Snyder-Gray murder. Apparently, Velma West came home one evening and told her husband she wanted to go to a bridge game. He said no, so she took a hammer and hit him over the head with it

until he was dead. Then she went and played bridge. The day after Ruth Snyder's execution the papers reported that, under pressure from an outside source, Velma West plead guilty to second-degree murder in order to prevent the prosecution from revealing in court Ms. West's "attachment for another woman."

The proximity of the Synder-Gray and Velma West murder cases suggests that *Machinal* borrows from both stories. Thus, it is actually a lesbian drama couched in a heterosexual narrative. In addition, Lillian Faderman's article, "Love Between Women in 1928," explains how that year was the apogee of lesbian fiction. Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* appeared that year and like that novel, *Machinal* treated her veiled lesbian heroine as "rather an outcast, a neurotic, a peculiarity. . . ."

Machinal is filled with lesbian symbolism. But the most apparent of these symbols, besides the moon, is the kiss, which the heroine experiences with her secret lover. According to C. Stimpson's article "The Lesbian Novel," lesbian writers who were protective of their experience, often used codes, particularly within heterosexual narratives, to "encrypt" their meanings. The kiss is "a staple of lesbian fiction [having] vast metonymic responsibilities."

Coming almost as an afterthought at the end of the 1920s, MGM's first sound movie musical, the all singing, all dancing, all talking sensation, *The Broadway Melody* (1929) underscores its ostensibly heterosexual narrative with the sublimated story of a lesbian whose dream of stardom on Broadway is dashed by the prevailing forces of patriarchal subjugation. In effect, the heroine's tragic conflict resides in the narrative competition between heterosexual melodrama and lesbian tragedy.

The film won the Academy Award for Best Picture of 1928-29, and Bessie Love was nominated for Best Actress for her emotionally wrenching portrayal of Hank Mahoney, the vaudeville hoofer with her heart set on Broadway success. Hank's hopes perish when she saves her voluptuous sister-act partner, Queenie, from the clutches of a well-to-do would-be rapist, knowing it means she will have to lose Queenie instead to Eddie, the trusted Broadway song-and-dance man Hank had thought she was going to marry. In the end, exiled once again to vaudeville, with a tear rolling from her eye, Hank vows her return to Broadway.

Although film historians still fail to acknowledge the lesbian narrative in *The Broadway Melody*, it actually seems as obvious today as its heterosexual narrative seems dated. Naturally, in its own time, the heterosexual story was the only acknowledged narrative in the film and even that was not much appreciated by critics of the day. For example, in his prim *New York Times*'s reviews, Mordaunt Hall concerns himself more with the language than the narrative, as if the former were the latter: "[I]t is questionable whether it would not have been wiser to leave

some of the voices to the imagination, or, at least to have refrained from having a pretty girl volleying slang at her colleagues." "Under the paradoxical title of 'The Broadway Melody,'…the participants appear in various stages of dishabille, ever doing obeisance to the 'Great gawd' slang … If you could only take cotton wool and stuff your ears to avoid hearing some of the rasping lines, this show might prove a moderately good diversion."

 Film historians, such as, James Berardinelli, whose online essay shows little comprehension of the plot, also tend to excuse what they judge to be the film's dramatic shortcomings in order to focus on its technical achievements:

> The initial feature-length, full sound musical … benefited from being first and, as such, some of its flaws – which should have been evident even at the time of its release, 1929 – were easily overlooked…. Anyone approaching it today will find it horribly dated, badly produced, and filled with uninspired musical numbers and over-the-top performances.

Unquestionably, but just as obviously, *The Broadway Melody* is technically historic. However, its technical novelty is not what makes it the least bit important. In fact, when looked at from the dramatic perspective, the film's complex and richly unified dramatic narrative renders its technical achievements merely incidental.

The lyrics of the opening number, "Broadway Melody" clearly foreshadow the theme of the drama. Broadway is not interested in serious issues or sad feelings. It is not interested in depression or hardship. It is affectively distant. It requires clowning not frowning. Broadway always wears a smile. These classical oppositions, usually given equal value in the masks of tragedy and comedy, describe Hank and Queenie even before the audience meets them. As the drama unfolds, it becomes obvious that Hank wears the frown. She's worried, she's distressed, and ultimately suffers a terrible heart-wrenching anguish.

 On the other hand, despite fearful apprehension, Queenie wears the smile of a dim-witted blond. Hank even acknowledges Queenie's lack of insight in their very first scene together when she says, "Baby, they were plenty smart when they made you beautiful."

The first scene also definitively establishes the lesbian narrative with the quintessential kiss. Hugging one another like two lovers in a Tamara Lempicka painting, Hank and Queenie sit staring out the window. Hank reminisces about the hardships they've endured out on the road, then tells Queenie, "Ah, honey, I wouldn't steer you wrong," whereupon she kisses Queenie on the lips.

 As if that were not enough to establish the nature of their relationship, the girls

proceed to get undressed, preparing to take a bath together. The purpose of the scene is not so much to titillate, as to display a comparison between the ladies undergarments. Hank wears what appear to be men's style boxer shorts while Queenie wears a thoroughly feminine silk chemise.

Hank and Queenie have been on the vaudeville circuit doing a "sister act," the Mahoney Sisters, two girls who sing and dance. Such acts were common on the circuit, and many of the partnerships involved real sisters. On the other hand, the two girls were just as often not actually sisters. Although Hank and Queenie present themselves as such, the difference in their appearance is so striking and plays such an important role in the story, that it's unbelievable to presume they are actual sisters. Nevertheless, Hank compares their act to the famous real-life Duncan Sisters in order to support the heterosexual narrative and cast doubt on any suggestion that she and Queenie might actually be lovers.

However, when Eddie arrives and first sees Queenie, it's obvious she and Hank are not really sisters. To begin with, Hank introduces her to Eddie, saying, "That's my Queenie," followed by a short sequence of images that establishes the love-at-first-sight romance between Eddie and Queenie that will form the basis for the rest of the plot. Finally, a bit of contrived expositional dialogue weakly establishes their past relationship.

Although Eddie almost immediately proposes to Hank—without bothering to present her a ring—she puts him off, claiming she wants to establish herself on Broadway first. However, later in the story, Hank purchases Queenie an engagement ring for the latter's birthday. Unfortunately, by that time Queenie has already taken a path that will end in their separation.

The most archetypical feature of the heterosexual story is Queenie's decision to spare Hank's feelings by denying her own love for Eddie. To facilitate her plan, she accepts the rakish advances of the greasy looking Jock, whose lecherous interest in her is obvious to everyone. She even accepts Jock's more binding diamond bracelet over Hank's engagement ring. However, what makes this set of circumstances unique is how the heterosexual crisis between Queenie and Eddie directly forces the crisis of lesbian romance between Queenie and Hank, to which neither of them can openly admit.

Because none of the characters is capable or brave enough openly to express their true feelings, Queenie finds herself forced into accepting Jock's den of debauchery, the ultimate patriarchal sacrifice. When the moment of recognition comes for Hank, however, she gathers her strength and confronts Eddie, forcing him to confess his feelings for Queenie. She realises at the film's climax that the man who supposedly loves her is going to take from her the woman she loves. Hank,

thereby forges an alliance between the lesbian and heterosexual stories in order to save Queenie, the object of both her and Eddie's affections.

Hank heroically forces the resolution to the heterosexual conflict of the story by calling Eddie "yellow" and shaming him into the action of saving Queenie that she cannot take. By contrast, Hank's bravery propels the climax of the tragic lesbian narrative, as she suffers the full force disclosure and irony. In a final act of confession, she looks at the two photographs of Queenie and Eddie and then proceeds to wipe the make-up off her face, revealing her true self to herself. She knows at that moment that her dream is over. She'll never be on Broadway without a husband to give her heterosexual legitimacy. So she accepts 30 weeks back out on the road.

To denigrate the complex intermingling of affective issues the film at this point depicts by calling it "bad acting and pedestrian directing" is to miss the point of film criticism altogether. The filmmaking is obviously too finely pointed for pedestrian critical approaches to apprehend.

By contrast, the heterosexual climax of the play – when Eddies manages to rescue Queenie from Jock's clutches, just in a nick of time – receives comic treatment; it is really an epilogue masquerading as the denouement.

The final resolution of the film is more striking when considered in the light of its lesbian narrative. Upon returning from their honeymoon, Eddie and Queenie insist that Hank will come and live with them on Long Island, just as soon as Hank finishes her 30 weeks on the road. Hank knows different, however. As Uncle Jed, the agent says, "Hank, you're just a born trouper." And when Hank says goodbye, her feelings convey a sense of finality.

Left alone together, Eddie must console Queenie, and they assume very nearly the same pose Hank and Queenie had taken at the start of the story. Only this time, instead of Hank bolstering Queenie's confidence and diminishing her fears, Eddie tries to console her, rather selfishly defending their choices as a kind of inevitability: "Don't cry, honey. People can't help falling in love. It comes to you no matter what you do." The look on Queenie's face suggests that she may be thinking not of Eddie at that moment but rather of Hank, with whom she might really have been in love all along.

At the same time, Eddie never shows any understanding of the love that Hank and Queenie shared. He believes himself to be the hero of the story. He got what he wanted, after all, and displays the kind of shallow understanding that characterises heterosexual love when it is based upon nothing more than sensual attraction. The kiss he shares with Queenie at the end of the scene feels forced, hollow, the kind of kiss one might mistake for bad acting.

That the drama does not end with Queenie and Eddie but rather with Hank, who forces the audience to reflect not so much on the melodramatic triumph of romantic love but on the tragic consequences of impossible love, the kind of love society can neither acknowledge nor permit. Ironically, Eddie has already expressed these very sentiments to Queenie, "People can't help falling in love. It comes to you no matter what you do." Such was Hank's love for Queenie, the love to which she has been forced by circumstances to say goodbye.

Cast out of the bright lights of Broadway into the darkness of mid-America, Hank has little choice but to vow her return or else she will merely disappear. Thus, *The Broadway Melody* of 1929 is really a reflection of the lesbian character's brief return to the drama of the 1920s, a return that ended in 1927 just as it had 2400 years before in *The Oresteia*, with the lesbian again going underground, leaving only her tacitly encoded presence in the dramas of her times.

The Broadway Melody's greatest achievements were not its technical accomplishments. It did not win the Academy Award for Best Picture because it was a recognised milestone in the history of the cinema. It more likely won that prize because the members of the academy at the time recognised its hidden narrative as a statement about sexual freedom and liberation from the constraints of a patriarchal society. The voted for what they believed in, which is how they continue to vote in the present age.

Today, with the debate over same-sex marriage taking place around the world, *The Broadway Melody* assumes a renewed relevance. It begs the question, why would same sex relationships want to assume the formality of marriage, when that institution is nothing more than the invention of patriarchal repression? The answer cannot be for the sake of equality with heterosexual couples because marriage on its own actually sacrifices the truth of that concept.

The answer more certainly lies in one of the most revealing moments of the film, a moment when alone in her room spiritual faith takes hold of Hank and she prays for Queenie's safety. The truth of prayer may often nurture a cynical reality, that the blessings of the spirit often require sacrifice because prayer tacitly represents the pride that is the source of modern tragedy. Thus, to gain what she most desires, Hank secretly understands that she must first be willing to give herself up. Caught by Eddie in the act of making this sacrifice, she looks at him and suddenly realises, "I lost something." Then she runs into his arms, stating ironically, "Oh, Eddie, at least I've still got you."

It fact, it isn't Eddie or Queenie that she must give up. Rather, it is her dream, her desire to be under the lights of Broadway and escape forever from the dark cavern of loneliness and exclusion. The tragedy of *The Broadway Melody*, however,

is the knowledge, the revelation that the real world is one of loneliness and exclusion. That's what makes us troopers, and "troupers are all tramps. Here today gone tomorrow. No home, no nothing." That's what makes us equal.

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Karna-Kunti Sambad: Tagore's politics of translation and transcreation

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Karna-Kunti Sambad: Tagore's Politics of Translation and Transcreation

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Karna Kunti Sambad is a dramatic poem based on an episode in the *Mahabharata*. It was published in 1900 in Tagore's collection *Kahini*. Tagore retains the basic situation as it is in the original, but reworks it according to his poetic imagination. Kunti introduces herself to her long-forgotten and disowned son Karna and tells him the extraordinary story of his birth. It is a very significant episode where Kunti reveals to him that he is her eldest son and was conceived when she was an unmarried virgin. The all-powerful Sun God is his father. She begs him to unite with his brothers, the Pandavas, and fight on their side in the Great War and claim his rightful share of 'majesty' and kingdom. But Karna turns down his pleading mother and gives his own arguments for not doing so.

Tagore's lyrical drama in Bengali is a transcreation of the classical text. Translations and transcreations of these classical texts had been prevalent. Madhusudan Dutt, too, in keeping with the demands of his time, had transcreated the Meghnad episode of the *Ramayan*. Ketaki Dyson, who translated Tagore's text at the request of Bithika Raha of London, for a dance performance, gives in the translator's note the raison d'etre behind such reworkings. Stories from the *Mahabharata* or from the Buddhist lore were reworked with a view to re-interpreting them so that they resonate in modernity with new meanings. These were artistic tasks that Tagore took very seriously in his poetry and drama, opines Dyson. It is, therefore, important to examine how Tagore has reworked this episode and how he has even transformed the character of Kunti and Karna according to his own artistic needs. It is also important to analyze why he has done it. In this respect a comparison of Tagore's own translation into English of his own work and Dy-

son's translation of the same is necessary.

Roman Jakobson has rightly said that poetry by definition is untranslatable. So what goes in the name of translation is nothing but transposition. Transposition may be either intralingual, that is, from one poetic shape to another, or interlingual, that is, from one language to another, or, again, intersemiotic, that is, from one system of signs to another, e.g., from verbal art into music, dance, cinema or painting. Tagore's *Karna- Kunti Sambad*, which is his own creative episode of the event in the *Mahabharata* falls in the first model of Jakobson, the intralingual, that is, from one poetic shape into another. His own translation into English sticks to Jakobson's second model or the interlingual, that is, from one language into another. Dyson's translation, however, was done to achieve an intersemiotic transposition.

Let us now examine how Tagore's work is different from the *Mahabharata* episode or how he has transcreated the episode. For the *Mahabharata* episode I will refer to P. Lal's translation of 1980. In the *Mahabharata* , we find a third voice, the voice of Karna's father, the Sun God, who tells him to obey the advice of his mother. But Karna remains adamant:

> Karna heard a loving voice issue from the distant disc of the sun
> Surya speaking out of parental affection:
> *Kunti speaks the truth. Follow your mother's advice, Karna.*
> *Great good will come if you do so.* (P. Lal, 205)

Tagore's work does not have a third character. He has focused exclusively on the mother-son dialogues. Probably a third voice would loosen the tautness of the whole drama. An exclusively mother-son discourse makes the whole thing more effective .Now if we compare the dialogues of the two Karnas we will see how Tagore's own inclusions have totally changed the character of his Karna from the original Karna of the *Mahabharata*. The same has happened with Kunti. The Karna of the *Mahabharata* is more ruthless and fierce in his condemnation of his mother. He uses direct hard-hitting words. He does not want to pass for a coward. He directly tells Kunti:

> Born a Kshatriya,
> I was deprived of Kshatriya rites
> Because you treated me as you did.
> What enemy could have done worse?
> When I needed help,
> You gave me none.

You have deprived me of my samskaras.
Now you need me
And so you come to me. (205)

Then when Kunti tells him to join the Pandavas, he says

Who does not fear
The alliance of Arjuna and Krishna?
If I defect to the Pandavas,
Will they not say I did so out of fear? (P. Lal, 205)

Moreover, he explicitly expresses his wish for a duel with Arjuna. He promises Kunti that he will not kill her four other sons. But he would surely kill Arjuna, or Arjuna would kill him, and this is one of his most important reasons for declining Kunti's offer.

Tagore's Karna is much more mellow and his softness makes him a solitary and a desolate figure, foregrounding an otherness from the original in the *Mahabharata*. Indeed, Tagore has omitted all the above attributes found in the original. On his mother's revelation about his being her son, he says:

I do no understand: but your eyes melt my
Heart as the kiss of the morning son melts
The snow on a mounain-top, and your voice
Rouses a blind sadness within me of which the
Cause may well lie beyond the reach of my
Earliest memory. (Das, 304)

We also find in Tagore's Karna an element of temporary submission whereby he wants to go away with his mother without asking any questions: "the struggle for victory and fame and the rage of hatred suddenly becomes untrue to him" (306). It is not that he does not hold his mother responsible for making him homeless and a subaltern. But he does so in a softened manner and when the mother entreats the son to accept her forgiveness, he says "Mother, accept my tears".

Ketaki Dyson in the translator's note says:

Tagore's takes details from two contiguous sections of the 'Udyogaparva' of the *Mahabharata* a dialogue between Krishna and Karna and a dialogue between Karna and Kunti to make a new composite story of an encounter between a fostered son and

a long lost natural mother…. Tagore's treatment is more psychological: Karna is humanized to suit the tastes of Tagore's own time. (1)

In the *Mahabharata* Kunti goes to meet her son in the morning. Tagore gives a much softer setting. Here Kunti meets her son in the evening. Moreover Tagore has made his Kunti much more shy. She is embarrassed to tell Karna, how he was conceived out of wedlock. But in the *Mahabharata*, according to the mores of the time, Kunti tells Karna of his birth in a matter -of- fact manner. Moreover, in the earlier episode Krishna had already told Karna of his birth and the information from Kunti is only a confirmation.

Now let us compare the two translations of the Bengali version of *Karna-Kunti Sambad*. One has been translated by Tagore himself and the other by Dyson. It is also important to know that Tagore's translated version is in prose, whereas the Bengali version is in poetry. Dyson's translation is a word-for-word translation and is quite a good one. She has retained the poetic form. So it gives us a greater feel of the original. Strangely, Tagore's is a mere summary in fewer words than it is in his original version and has in the process lost all essences of the beautiful poetic form and idiom of the Bengali original. We can consider the following example, taking up Dyson's translation first:

> This quiet, unruffled hour
> From the infinite sky a music drifts to my ears:
> Of effort without victory, sweat of work without hope-
> I can see the end, full of peace and emptiness. (5)

Now let us see how Tagore translates it:

> Peaceful and still though this might be,
> my heart is full of the music of a hopeless
> venture and baffled end. (308)

Dyson in her translator's note mentions that her target audience is Bengali. She says that she has given "a slight tilt towards the original Bengali sound-waves by making them end-stopped when they are so in Bengali pronunciation". For example, instead of writing Arjuna, she writes Arjun, instead of writing Yudhisthira, she writes Yudhisthir and Duryodhan instead of Duryodhana. So it is very clear who her target audience is. But Tagore does not do so. He retains the sanskritized names, for example, Duryodhana, Yudhisthira, etc. So Tagore's target audience may not be only Bengali. Moreover Tagore's translation looks like nothing but a

summary of the Bengali version. He has not only translated it in prose, but has also considerably shortened it, so much so that sometimes there is only a single line translation of a whole five-line speech. For example, when Kunti tells Karna that he is her eldest son and must claim his share in the family, Karna says, (Dyson's translation):

> Karna:
>
>   By what right
> Would I enter that sanctum? Tell me how
> From those already cheated of empire
> I could possibly take a portion of that wealth
> A mother's love, which is fully theirs
> Mother's heart cannot be gambled away
> Nor be defeated by force. It's a divine gift. (3)

Tagore's translation of the same is a single line:

> Karna: But what right have I to take it? (305)

This is only an example. He has done it throughout the translation. Now the vital question that comes to our mind is why has he done it? My guess is that his target audience being the West, he was afraid that they would not understand the essence of his poetry if he insisted on details and nuances. The message that he wanted to disseminate would also be lost in the process. He was indeed more concerned with conveying the message of his poetry than the poetic beauty of it. So he chose to considerably prune the original. The same reason could account for his writing it in simple prose. He was probably trying to make the task of the Englishman easier. Mahasweta Sengupta in her essay "Translation as Manupulation" quotes Tagore's letter to William Pearson where he comments on his understanding of the demands of an English audience:

> I believe that in the English version some portions of it may profitably be left out, for I find that English readers have very little patience for scenes and sentiments which are foreign to them: they feel a sort of grievance for what they do not understand - and they care not to understand whatever is different from their familiar world. (166)

But at the same time we also have to reckon with the politics of Dyson. She is

translating it for a Bengali audience in England. She makes the names sound
Bengali. Why the need at all? The Bengali original would have been sufficient for
the audience. But of course Bengalis in a foreign country do not have the same
competence of the language. Yet it can be said that Dyson's intervention is noth-
ing but one serving the marketing strategy. She is actually proclaiming that she is
translating an essentially Bengali text written by none other than Tagore.

Another important aspect that should be examined on reading *Karna-Kunti
Sambad* is Tagore's representation of Karna and Kunti. Nirad C. Chaudhuri says
that Rabindranath's portrayal of Karna places him in the Eurocentric tradition.
He has introduced an element of self-conflict in his Karna, unlike the Karna of
the *Mahabharata*. He at one time almost wants to resign to his mother's entreaties
and follow her to the camp of the Pandavas:

> Yes, I will come and never ask question, never doubt. My soul responds
> to your call; and the struggle for victory and fame and the rage of hatred
> have suddenly become untrue to me, as the delirious dream of a night in
> the serenity of the dawn. Tell me whither you mean to lead? (306)

Karna of the *Mahabharata* was much more stern, outspoken and unambiguous
in his condemnation of his mother. Probably what Tagore was trying to project
through the character of Karna (it is only my conjecture) was nothing but Indian
values like devotion, respect, love and modesty. Karna is so modest that he says:

> By what right
> Would I enter that sanctum? Tell me how
> From those already cheated of empire
> I could possibly take a portion of that wealth.
> A mother's love, which is fully theirs. (Dyson, 3)

Probably Tagore is trying to project a relationship which is very unique, probably
very Indian, where brothers fight on the battle field yet retain the love and respect
they have for each other and where promise and devotion is more important than
anything else. An Indian culture is being represented which is in demand in the
West.

In the same way, Kunti's portrayal is also significant. Ketaki Dyson in her
translator's note says that "Tagore's Kunti is more of a Victorian aristocratic ma-
tron, who is too embarrassed to reveal the actual details of how she had conceived
Karna" (Dyson, 1). Tagore probably thought that if his Kunti starts speaking of
her son conceived out of wedlock in a matter-of-fact manner, the English audi-

ence will misunderstand Indian women and their virtue. He was also writing at a time when the reform movements were striving to improve the conditions of the women in India. A new concept of "cultured woman" was emerging in Bengal. Kunti conforms to this concept of a cultured woman. Tagore makes an effort to make Indian women much more respectable to the West by making Kunti, the representative figure here, shy and modest. And he does that not only for the West but also for the Indian audience, because even the Bengali original represents Kunti in the same way. Tagore being a political figure was probably taking part in the nationalist project which at that point of time was very consciously defining its culture, with women playing a vital role as being the seat of culture. As a result, when Kunti goes to meet Karna her eyes are lowered and she tells him about the mystery of his birth only "when the lids of darkness come down over the prying eyes of day" (304). He makes her as aristocratic as any Victorian Matron by endowing her with the correct behaviour. Hence he does not allow her to speak of Karna's birth in as matter-of-fact a manner as does the Kunti of the *Mahabharata*, which he was afraid would throw a bad light on Indian value system. His representation of Indian women in the figure of Kunti is further corroborated in his later works like The Home and the World where even though the 'world' invades the 'home' and women enter the public sphere and become modern, yet home , the spiritual and cultural sphere, remains inviolable. Kunti an aristocratic woman retains all the spiritual and cultural values. The cover page of the book speaks volumes of his approach where Kunti, standing under a tree, dressed like a Bengali woman, is ready to meet her son.

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"Pleasure of the Damned:" Reading the Static Iconization of the Christian Mother with Julia Kristeva and Adrienne Rich

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"Pleasure of the Damned": Reading the Static Iconization of the Christian Mother with Julia Kristeva and Adrienne Rich

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The paper tries to locate the traditional western institutionalized Motherhood as distinctly different from the real physical and psychosexual experience of moth-erhood by reading Julia Kristeva's "Stabat Mater"and Adrienne Rich's Of Woman Born. It also tries to analyze how the image of the Christian Mother has been con-secrated and iconized into immutability, essentially removing it from feminist theories and practices. The paper tries to look into the religious model that requires the institutionalized Mother as a receptacle, promise and redemptive possibility for the immortalization of the patriarch. In iconizing the Mother as a weeping or silently 'standing' scapegoat, Motherhood is turned into a reminder of Woman's primary sin and therefore turned into a functionally eternalized apology, a damnation without joy or sexual fulfilment. This is contrary to the actual pleasure of motherhood as Nancy Chodorow tries to examine. Both Kristeva and Rich try to locate a possibility of liberation of mothers, not in abandoning the pleasure of birth, but in rejecting the icon of institutionalized Motherhood as presented by the Father.
Keywords: Kristeva, Adrienne Rich, Chodorow, Christian mother

Adrienne Rich's book *Of Woman Born*, published in 1976, was one of the first theoretical treatises on motherhood, which was surprisingly late in the wake of numerous movements surrounding suffrage, property and sexual rights of women. Clearly, something had made the 'Mother' a category excluded from the general concerns surrounding women's emancipation. Rich herself remarks that the area of Motherhood has remained virtually unexplored and the crucial necessity of formulating a feminist theory on Motherhood is what made her choose to write. While the characteristics of being a good mother ensured a particular segment of women the prestige and 'support' of the patriarch, the privilege granted by a master to the best servant; there were certain 'signs' of Motherhood that

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distanced the 'woman with a womb' from the goals of feminism. The paper tries to analyze some of the implications of Motherhood on the body of the woman, how Motherhood functions as a sign or receptacle of the patriarch's pleasure alone. Further, it poses the problem of the pleasure of the so-called primary sinner. Can the Mother, bearing the burden of the tears of mankind in her own eyes ever find 'pleasure' in childbirth? The problem of 'static iconization' of the Mother may be addressed by comparing Rich's book with Julia Kristeva's iconic image of the weeping Mother, the "Mater dolorosa" ("Stabat Mater" 143). It may be possible to locate the signs of hidden 'damnation' in the structures that confine Motherhood as a domain that existing theories of feminism seems to need to necessarily evade. Thereafter, Kristeva tries to remodel these theories framing the icon of the Mother in such a way that it may embrace Motherhood as a situation of 'pleasure' instead of as a punishment for sin.

Rich finds two meanings of the term 'Motherhood', both of which, though distinct in their expressions or usage, overlap to give rise to the total cultural significance of the Mother. One of them is the 'potential relationship' of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to her children. The second aspect of Motherhood is the institutional meaning imparted to it to retain paternal control over instinctual Motherhood. Rich defines Motherhood as an institution as one that is excluded from the female will, as one that is controlled and continued exclusively by the authority of the Patriarch so that the myth of institutional Motherhood becomes intertwined with the woman's real potentialities of relationship with her body and her child. In the essay, Rich talks of her own childhood experience of being locked in her closet when she was four years old for playing pranks. This was done on her father's order. It was the father who would hold the ultimate authoritative voice, whereas the mother would carry out the orders of the father in her 'duties' of Motherhood.

The alternative to the father's voice, according to Rich is formed by the "outlaws from the institution of motherhood." (Rich 195) The 'institution' is the model produced by the patriarchs of the family by citing the Divine Patriarch—a model which essential situates the woman in an iconic role. An alternative motherhood, as opposed to the institutionalized and iconographic Motherhood, is that of an outcaste-mother. Mother-work in this alternative allows a complete fulfilment of female potentiality not just as a reproductive identity but also as a work-identity. The extra-institutional mother is socially useful in development of culture through childbearing according to feminist ideals and also by influencing the world through active socio-economic participation. Motherhood as mother-work thus can be a means of experience, liberation, and confrontation.

In the course of history of the nature of Motherhood as understood by men and women, repeatedly a pattern of twin meanings comes up, as exemplified in Rich's essay. The pattern of creating dichotomies like instinct/institution, nature/culture, personal/social etc. are commonly elaborated in patriarchal understanding of any of the 'differences' in gender, including but not restricted to mothering. Also, the body of the woman was the mysterious unknown—milk and menstrual blood, the changing shape of the woman's womb, the sudden tears of uncontrolled emotion—translated into the extended substance of change, comparable to the moon's cycle, a matter of fear, a matter that needed to be governed. It was the matter of the father's "envy" (Rich 103). The Father's version of the institution of Motherhood is one of control and surveillance over the tendency of the relationship of the mother-child to spill over into intense female potentiality; the threat of the downfall of the civilization based on patriarchal institutions, necessitated the capture of the familial space by the Christian Patriarch so that both hemispheres of the personal and the public can remain under his wing.

Julia Kristeva attempts an understanding of the nature of the mythical Mother, the institutional Mother created and reinstated by the Church the figure of the Virgin Mother in her essay, "Stabat Mater". Her essay provides a remarkable exploration of the history of theologizing of Motherhood, the limit of Patriarchal institutionalization of a female experience, and an appropriate exemplum of the 'capture' of female experience by rationalizing tendencies of the Patriarch. At the same time, Kristeva provides her own account of pregnancy which forms the final emergence of order due to the *nous* bringing the ceaselessly motile *chora* to rest. Like Derrida, Kristeva draws the concepts of the *chora* and *nous* to develop her semiotic theory in "Revolution in Poetic Language" (*The Kristeva Reader* 89-135) from Plato. The idea simulates the movement of the fetus in the womb, as Plato called it the receptacle and the nurse of all the generations. This was, however, an unbalanced power, a 'swaying' power that held the elements in it being churned till the directive influence of the '*nous*', a powerful command restrains its movement to allow the emergence of the Symbolic. While the expression of Kristeva's perception of pregnancy and birth is steeped in the wilfulness of the semiotic, the instinctual outburst of maternal joy, the study of the Madonna is starkly contrasting, being sacrosanct with paternal logos.

Interestingly, Rich's *Of Woman Born* was published only a year before "Stabat Mater" which was published in 1977. The title Kristeva uses is drawn from the popular Catholic hymn '*Stabat mater dolorosa*' which is translated as 'standing still, the mother cried', which clearly emphasizes the figure of the Virgin Mary, her face washed with tears, standing aggrieved but helpless and stoic while her son, the

son of God is being crucified. The consecrated feminine is a constructed icon, a glorified fancy of eternalizing the primary narcissism of the male child that is otherwise lost in growth and foreboding death. The virgin Mother is a 'link' or 'surrounding' that allows a prolonged identification of oneself in a state of completion or wholeness through the Mother who is the epitome of feminine perfection as represented by the Patriarch, the Hebrew God or the Word. The Virgin Mother 'stands' eternally because she cannot break down as she is permanently located in the pure Symbolic that does not permit her the passion to find bodily expression. Expression has to be either codified in language or she must be situated in eternal silence. Moreover, she is asexualized because the Mother is the only fancyfulfillment of avoiding Death. Reminiscence of mother-love is a reminder of the womb, that arena which situates a primary narcissistic 'I' that is, a being in another being, and therefore presumably protected from death of the individual 'I'.

The attributes of the Mother that the Christian saints glorify as the very attributes of Motherhood are reduced to a few symbols of submission to God, the Patriarch. The 'tears' of Mary, the 'ears' of Mother Mary and the 'breast of the Mother' constitute of the whole physicality of Mary. There is no other 'body' other that these disjointed parts that venerate three principle qualities of ideal womanhood: the tears that cover the face of the woman completely; the ears that would be the receptacle of the Word; and the breast that symbolizes endless promise of nourishment to the son. The mouth that might threaten with a feminist countercurrent of instinct is wiped out from the image and so is any trace of sexuality with a long matronly gown. The fascination with reposition of paternal power in the hands of the daughter without risking a loss of familial lineage might have led to the creation of the vast cult of the Virgin. Therefore, the revered Mother must serve as an example of the ideal set for the English woman—the ever-sacrificing, weeping, meek keeper of the Word of the Holy Spirit. Also, the nature of the Virgin Mother is hardly mentioned in detail in the Bible. Yet, the cult of Mary developed into a passion chiefly through glorification in hymns and songs. The Annunciation event was explicitly rendered as one in which the Word became alive, quietly passed to enrich the womb. 'Stillness' is opposed to carnal lovemaking. Using a centrifugal thought pattern, the seed-bearer of Mankind, the bearer of Man's pain, the Mother meekly takes the brunt of Man's fall. Clearly, it is the language of the Father that is instilled in the womb so as to ensure the perpetuation of the paternal language. Kristeva mentions that the semiotic is lost completely to propagate a purely symbolic Motherhood: "Any trace of matrilinearity is explicitly disavowed, leaving only the symbolic tie between Mother and son." (Kristeva, Stabat Mater 135)

The problem of feminism is the problem of this misappropriated image, the sacrosanct, immutable and static icon coerced on the woman. A rejection of Motherhood by feminists is a rejection of the institution and not a rejection of the instinct. Kristeva remarks that when feminists deny the association of femininity to 'maternity', they seem to recognize maternity with this idealized misapprehension; and feminism, because it "rejects this image that this fantasy abuses, sidesteps the real experience that this fantasy obscures" ("Stabat Mater" 133). What then comprises of the non-institutionalized motherhood? If institutionalization imposes the symbolic to obfuscate the semiotic from motherhood, then a feminist motherhood would imbibe a scope for the semiotic projection through bodily expression that finds evidence in the language of the mother. Such a projection, Kristeva seems to hint, can be approximated but not completely achieved because of an inherent disjunction evident in rational language that limits the irrational or pure semiotic by repression. She calls it the "impossibility of existing without legitimation (without books, map, family). Impossibility depressing possibility—Of transgression" (143). The French word '*enceinte*' meaning pregnant also means 'walled off', she mentions. The phrase implies separation of the mother-child duo from the 'Other' which comprises of the outer world. The idea of the unique nature of mother-child relationship can be traced in language. Being 'walled off' bears definite reference to the pre-Oedipal state in a mother-child relationship wherein the child and the mother were no separate identities because the child identified completely with the mother prior to a knowledge of sexual inadequacy.

    FIn "StabatMater", she also writes poetically of her own experience of pregnancy, which she found to be a rational experience as well as one that involved inner desire. She finds that the distinction between the self and the Other melts in pregnancy and as such the relation between the mother and child is a relation before language. According to Kristeva, child's access to order of the Father depends on its repression of its desire for the mother, the desire for what considers to be maternal *jouissance*: "(A)s if I had brought not a child but suffering into the world and it, suffering refuses to leave, coming back on me, insisting on me, insisted on, haunting me, permanently" (138).

    She repeatedly uses the word 'Flesh' in her poetic prose and clearly situates the existence of the woman free from the mere Symbolic in her experience of motherhood. This is possibly a dissolution of the borders of selfhood in the moment of birth:

> [T]he heterogeneity that cannot be subsumed in the signifier nevertheless explodes violently with pregnancy (the threshold of culture and nature) and the child's ar-

rival (which extracts woman out of her oneness and gives her the possibility—but not the certainty—of reaching out to the other, the ethical). Those particularities of the maternal body compose woman into a being of folds, a catas-trophe of be-ing. (*The Kristeva Reader* 182)

Such a dissolution of borders is necessary to her in order to be incorporated into the greater ethics of being, as the self in the process of being in connection with the oth-er. As a feminist, it is unique that she hints upon an ethical ideal. Kristeva's idea of the ethical is what she calls "herethics" ("Stabat Mater" 152) or 'heretical ethics', the refor-mulation of law so that it would include flesh, language and jouissance, and which would inevitably require the contribution of women. She incorporates her concept of the ethical in the possibilities presented by moth-erhood so that motherhood is free from dogmatized institution and envisioned in binding subjectivity in love as well as language and not mere Law. It can therefore be noted that in spite of being completely different approaches to motherhood, Rich and Kristeva seem to agree upon the point that the Patriarchal tendency to 'consecrate' or 'institutionalize' motherhood was not what defined the true nature of the mother-child relationship or even her own relation-ship to her body and subjectivity. The desire for being a mother is the desire to com-plete the female Oedipal complex, by desiring to bear the father's child. It is for this reason that she will marry a man to replace the image of the father. At the same time the mother also remembers the time of resolution of her own complex which had led to her discovery of the lack of the sexual organ in her own mother and thereby she had had to turn to her father for fulfilment. The loss of the primary narcissistic identification with the mother took place with her 'abjection', a key concept in Kristeva's system.

> The 'subject' discovers itself as the impossible separation/identity of the mater-nal body. It hates that body but only because it can't be free of it. That body, the body without border, the body out of which this abject subject came, is impossi-ble. (McAfee 48)

The new mother attempts to relive the state of narcissistic identification, this time by bearing the child herself, while reverting back to her own desire for her mother. Nancy Chodorow calls it the "Reproduction of Mothering" in her seminal work of the same title—a woman becomes a mother in order to regain a sense of being mothered and in order to compensate for a heterosexual relationship with a man, which can be a means to work out her unresolved relationship to her own mother. Thus there is a dou-ble identification within a woman during mothering: she im-

bibes in her selfhood the sense of being a mother as well as that of being a child. A heterosexual commitment to a man is insufficient for completion of the Oedipal desires of the woman as she also re-quires a return back to pre-Oedipal relation with the mother. This results in sexual jealousy on the part of the male lover which translates into punishment to the child by imposing the linguistic Law. In other words, if the Law governing the limits of mother-child relation is not imposed by the man, then, he fears a loss of her desire for him to a desire for the child. This translates into the immense institutionalization of mother-hood. Since the semiotic and the symbolic aspects of motherhood coexist in Kristeva's model, the semiotic is not formed after the infiltration of language, but is formed along with the Symbolic and occurs concurrently with it, therefore it does not predetermine maternity as a mere biological instinct but something that cannot be isolated from the paternal Word. The disruption of normal linguistic tendencies arose with the stifling of the semiotic by paternal impositions and they do not allow a proper assimilation of the experience of motherhood for the woman. If the desire for maternal fulfilment is natural for the development of selfhood, then a distaste for Motherhood (understood only as a symbolic language of the Father) would result in a perversion of the woman's self.

A dissociation of the semiotic and the Symbolic is what results in psychosis ac-cording to Kristeva. Such a state can possibly develop after childbirth when the fear of the Symbolic results in its rejection as it is interpreted as the language of institutional-ized Motherhood. At the same time, it becomes paradoxical for a mother to reject Motherhood (due to misrepresentation of maternity in its ideal representation) and also to desire a return to the *chora* experienced in the mother's womb and re-experienced in pregnancy, by rejecting symbolic subjectivity. Kriste-va considers psychosis as that state of the psyche when the former of the 'semiotic' and the 'Symbolic', constantly in mutual aggression, becomes dominant over the other so much so that it eventually supersedes the other. In normal social circum-stances, the construction of subjectivity is continuously formed and reformed by heterogeneous language. In this respect, the 'I' or the subject is never statically de-finable. The symbolic will build up a translatable language for expression of bodily sensations that are otherwise chaotic and perennially in move-ment. They have to be structured in a logic that can be deciphered by the 'other', that lies beyond the border of the semiotic self. At the same time, the symbolic, by permit-ting interac-tion prevents regression into narcissism and creates a separate ego. In a dis-ruption of the normal processes that form subjectivity, (and this is a continuous pro-cess, not merely restricted to infancy), the situation where the semiotic overpowers the symbolic causes a failure of language. In the process of continuous development

of the self, the subject will be swept by biological or physiological charges but this does not limit him to a pre-linguistic or pre-symbolic barbarian nature if he can negotiate with the charges within him to permit 'domestication' by the Symbolic. A stable subject neither lapses into silence nor utters sounds that are like the bab-blings of a baby, but pro-nounces expressions in codified rules that retain nuances of his semiotic urge but also casts them in sobriety so that there is no explosive chaos. Speaking beings must keep the non-expressive drive in continuous motility, but in control by syntactical expres-sion. In Kristeva's system, a psychotic individual is one who is out of touch with mean-ing and their relevance to the semiotic, and therefore at a loss of the selfhood that places him in a rational context.

However, Kristeva observes that the Virgin Mother is the one who stands and says nothing, does nothing. She is the silent wife of the giver of Laws, the God of the Ten Commandments. She does not even collapse to see her son on the cross. She does not embrace chaos or the pure semiotic and is always tied to the Father's Word. Glori-fied and venerated in the Church, she is also the fearful face of cold, asexual rejection of 'Man's' sexual desire. As Kristeva states in her essay, she has known no other man ex-cept the Son, which at once alienates her from whole of Mankind, who has sinned by consuming the fruit of knowledge. Her ignorance is at once vilified and esteemed. In any case, she is incomprehensibly '(M)other'.

In the absence of a mother-deity which cleaves the dichotomies of rationality and irrationality, of Symbolic and semiotic, of nurture and nature, the Western ideal of Motherhood is the Virgin Mary who is predestined to weep but never break into mad-ness. No Mother in this system can break the Patriarchal code of language and rational discourse. As such, as Kristeva questions, "Who calls this suffering ecstasy? It is the pleasure of the damned" ("Stabat Mater" 144). She implies that the western idealization of the Mother, is a false glorification, one that hinges the eternal shame of sin onto the secret pleasure of childbirth which is the feared and abhorred moment of an alien ecsta-sy to the Patriarch. The prom-ise of redemption is also the consolation of forgiveness, a promise of complete redemption by the Son of God, without which there would be no core towards which all the words of the scriptures may gravitate. She is a repository of sorrow and shame who can never be permitted 'pleasure' for the sake of the memory of disgrace. A woman steeped in the ecstasy of maternal jouissance is contrary to this very purpose of compensatory glorification. She is so content that she would not weep for man, being one who has forgotten the past in her embrace of the present moment. She has forgotten the motive of the future. By forecasting the motive of the Son, the triad of the Father-Child-Mother is completely in the clasp of the Heavenly Patriarch. If wom-en's emancipation wishes to be inclusive of all

important aspects of female existence, it must not forego motherhood completely by rejecting or alienating it. Rather the sign of the Mother must be turned the right side up on its strength. By pointing out the missing bodily parts in the image of the Mother, or by emphasizing the lost voice of the woman in the family triad, Rich or Kristeva have located the bias with which the western ideal of the Mother subjects feminism to a regressive politics. There are, of course, models of potent and vocal motherhood in other cultures which are, however, beyond the scope of this paper. Yet, these observations have played an important role in disclosing the loopholes of the theories of emancipation which precondition 'liberated' existence into mandatory rejection of specific sexual, familial or social choices.

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Saraswati Reincarnated: Representing the Body of a Female Vocalist

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Saraswati Reincarnated: Representing the Body of a Female Vocalist

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The research aims to conflate sociology of gender with the sociology of music. Sociology of gender concerns cultural ideals and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. In the field of music, there has been continuous engagement with the conventions of female respectability, and music has assumed, in subtle ways, a metaphor for gendered representations. The paper shall focus on how the body is created, shaped and reshaped for it to satisfy the 'acceptable'. In doing so, it shall focus particularly on the representation of 'female body' or bodies of women vocalists on stage. The presentation of women on stage in classical music is dictated by the 'acceptable' forms of dress code, limiting one's gestures during one's participation in the public sphere as female musicians, or rather acceptable gestures. In analyzing the complexities involved in the shaping of the body of a female vocalist, the paper shall also aim to understand its inter-linkages in class, caste and religion matrices, and the notions of chastity and purity.
Keywords: The Female Body, Women in Classical Music

Nirmala draped the off-white Tasar silk saree, pleated its anchal. She looked at the mirror to capture a glance of her 'self,' adorned in the fabric enclave and imagined that the anchal if left un-pleated, would look more beautiful, as it would expose the design of the fabric more extravagantly. However, immediately she becomes careful about the informal normative expectations that she has to adhere to as a performing female musician on stage. She was getting prepared, decorating herself, and meanwhile Rina also rang the calling bell. Rina is Nirmala's shishya, a young girl of sixteen or seventeen, a student of Shastriya Sangeet and also a student in one of the convent institutions in the city.
Rina was strictly instructed by her Guruma to wear a saree, preferably a silk sa-

ree, and if she could manage to be comfortable in this 12-hand attire, she might choose a salwar kameez with a dupatta.

Rina is an interesting character. She is an obedient student at school as well as a conformist shishya and shapes her appropriately to the situational contexts and expectations and social constructs.

Before they were about to set off, Nirmala emerged from her bedroom where she was getting dressed and came to the drawing room wherein Rina was quietly waiting for her. She emerged with a neatly tied hair, pleated saree, and a sober make-up, which is not prominently visible. She looked at Rina, adjusted her silk dupatta, and they both boarded the private car to head for the venue of the concert. Among many other aspects, she is careful about 'her visibility' on stage and her professional spheres which assume a significant area of concern.

Nirmala was one of the performers at the annual conference, organized by Rajya Sangeet Academy.

(An excerpt from *A Narration of Lived Experience*)

Participation of women in public sphere in the Indian context: a brief history

A critical historical analysis would reveal that public singing by women, unless connected to religious and ritual purposes (such as weddings), came to carry the taint of disrepute; it became the preserve of the *tawaif* (the courtesan), the lower caste woman (Srivastava 2004). Musicians received patronage in the courts of the rulers. Women musicians were stigmatized on the grounds of sexuality, their participation in the public sphere was perceived with much disrespect. Entry of women into the public domain followed after a process of classicization of music, which as Partha Chatterjee (1993) puts, was a careful and negotiated process of the national culture formation. It was necessitated to reshape music to be made suitable for and facilitate the nationalist agenda. Some prominent music scholars and teachers of the late nineteenth century, whose principal aim was to revitalize "what they felt had become neglected and tarnished musical tradition' made conscious efforts" (Moro 2004). The motivation behind their endeavour was a sense of a Hindu classical past, a Hindu Golden Age of Spirituality, which had eventually led to a negative valuation of the Muslim contributions to music during the extended period of Mughal patronage (Moro 2004).

Bureaucratization leading to sanitization of music:

The revitalization, which may be appropriately called the religious sanitization of music, was carried out by some means such as the founding schools, inventing systems of notation, crafting modern music scholarship and organizing music con-

ferences and instituting the public concert. History-writing, based on the study of Sanskrit treatises and intended to establish norms for performance, helped the process.

The introduction of All India Radio played a strategic role in canonizing or classicizing music. Under Vallabhbhai Patel's reign as minister for information and broadcasting (1946), the effort towards producing a purified national culture was manifested in the prohibition of "singers and musicians from the courtesan culture" (Lelyveld 1995). During Balakrishna Vishwanath Keskar's tenure as Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, there came to be instituted a bureaucratic selection procedure for All-India Radio musicians whose most explicit aim appears to have been the undermining of the Gharana system (Srivastava 2004). An important outcome of this process which included both institutionalization and bureaucratization of music was the entry into the profession of artistes from 'respectable' backgrounds; those, in other words, who had avoided the allegedly improper influence of the Muslim-dominated Gharanas and allied systems of performance (Srivastava 2004).

Nirmala is an upper-caste noblewoman, both of which she has achieved through marital institution/contract. Therefore, we may reflect upon her constant engagement and effort to adjust to the normative order of her achieved identity and re-socialize herself to become fit to be an able daughter-in-law of her in-laws. She has carefully designed her body, often compromising to the extent of alienation of her body from her 'self' to achieve and establish her identity as a female member of the musicians' family. Neither her self nor her body belongs to her but is a reflection of the gendered structure of society and public space in particular.

Interestingly, for many Brahmin elites, the sign of the successful classicization of music and dance from the 1920s to 1940s was the transformation of these into 'arts' fit for upper-caste, middle-class 'family women' (Weidman 2003). All this is to say that within early 20th-century nationalist discourse there existed a strong theme which linked the emergence of the modern Indian self to a 'pure' (Sundar 2003) and 'ancient' Hindu genealogy. The canonization or classicization of music comprised a part in the process of constructing a national gendered culture in India.

Appropriate Gestures to suit hegemonic space:
Some of the key arguments to introspect upon would comprise the assumption of a neutral user of space, the contested nature of public space, the centrality of gender in determining spatial access, along with concerns of respectability.

> As a child Rina would innocently ask her father, 'Baba, why does a vocalist con-
> tinuously move her hands while singing?'
> Her father would take the curiosity to Nirmala, when she would say that it is a way
> of expressing, is not deliberate, but spontaneous.
> However, Nirmala would often scold her disciples for expressing 'too much'
> through gestures and would instruct to limit those, which would otherwise be
> visually odd. The hegemonic structure thus puts a limit to the modes of expression
> as well.

Thus, there exists a dialectical relationship between social structure and space, and socio-spatial constructs play constitutive roles in the production, reproduction, and representation of social relations. In response to criticism for 'excessive' virtuosity, Kaushiki Chakraborty states in an interview that she is not "a 60-year-old trapped in a 20-year-old's body. [She] enjoy[s] the excitement of singing fast *taan*s; [She is] aware that at times [she] get[s] carried away." She has also had to face criticism for the way she conducts herself on stage: some people think that she is aggressive, possibly because she moves her hands. "It's funny how they expect a girl to be timid and demure on stage," she says (*Tehelka Magazine* 2010).

It is important to understand at this juncture how bodies experience space. When the tenuous structures of power are reinscribed through space by everyday practices of moving through and occupying space, it is the body that becomes the locus of action for it is through the body that the everyday is lived, executed and experienced. To paraphrase Shilpa Ranade, we might understand that the socio-spatial configurations play a significant role in producing gendered bodies, and this process is characterized by normalization of gender space and maintenance of this order for self-preservation through continuous or adherence of the order ensured through regulation and disciplining and replication of it. "Hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity have to be relentlessly performed by male and female bodies and anybody that attempts to transgress the boundaries of appropriateness threatens the social order" (Ranade 2007).

Thumri as a space for female vocalists

The space of women artists in the genre of thumri may be interesting to analyze. Thumri is a 'light classical' form of music, perceived as devoid of the purity of the classical forms of khayal and dhrupad. In other words, it lies at the bottom of a hierarchical structure based on purity wherein dhrupad is positioned at the top followed by khayal and then by thumri. Dhrupad and khayal have allowed extremely skewed space to women performers, with thumri being the permitted area for women. The extent of the devaluation of thumri may be understood from the

fact that it hardly comprises the major focus of recital in any concert and is mostly relegated to the last few minutes of a concert of 'serious' music. Thus, Hindustani classical music may be perceived as a patriarchal discourse, the self, the centre, wherein the norm is masculine; the feminine is banished to the realm of the other. An excerpt from an interview of Girija Devi says:

> The Benares tradition is of "Chau-mukhi Gayan" (vocalism with four facets). Our training encompasses the four principal genre—Dhrupad, Khayal, Tappa, and Thumree. Therefore, Khayal and the semi-classical genres do not present themselves to us as alternatives to building a career. When I was growing up, Maharashtra emerged as the home of Khayal vocalism, with its own regional and devotional genres pushing the Thumree into a corner. Up to Abdul Kareem Khan and his immediate disciples, the Thumree retained its stature, though it changed its complexion. In later years, however, the new Khayal establishment appeared to create a climate of opinion in which the Thumree and its allied genres were regarded as either easy to master, or otherwise inferior. This bothered me immensely. So, I decided to match the competence of Khayal vocalists on their "home turf," and challenge them to match me on mine. I worked very hard on my Khayal and performed it more widely and consistently than any other Benares vocalist in recent times. (swaratala.blogspot.in)

As mentioned, earlier, purification of music formed an important agenda of the process of 'Hinduization', which was carried out through bureaucratization of music. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (1872-1931) and Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860-1935) were two prominent figures who engaged in the process of social reform-oriented towards reclaiming and reviving India's tradition and culture, restoring its erstwhile spirituality. The enterprise of sanitizing music resulted in the banning of thumri artists from performing at All India Radio in the early years of independence. This, in turn, resulted in their shifting of professions and exploring the field of music. Women moved out or were pushed out of thumri's small canvas into the expanses of khayal or the world outside music (Rao 1990).

Interesting to note here is how a thumri singer's space gets defined and reshaped to ensure a stable and safe identity in the patriarchal, hegemonic societal structure. Thumri comprises mostly narration by viraha-stricken, lovelorn women, patiently yearning for a reunion with her beloved, overpowering emotions. It involves romantic lyrics and orientation to the male gaze, and an unorthodox musical structure. The rendition of such songs would involve certain controversies as the lyrics might be in conflict with the virtues of proper womanhood. The lyrics are somehow pacified by the diluted, subdued, pure image of a woman vocalist on

stage. The thumri singer continuously would emerge in the public space with a saree, often off-white, the anchal wrapped round her shoulder, and a high-necked blouse, ensuring a minimum exposure of skin. In other words, the unrefined content and 'unorthodox' characteristic of the songs in contrast to the khayal or the dhrupad repertoire is being diluted and pacified by the nimble appearance of the singer, presenting the piece characterized by lyrics that poses a potential threat to a woman's chastity and sexuality.

The gestures, with movements of eyes, hands, and torso have also reduced. In facts, these may be understood as rituals of purification of the body that maintain the purity and chastity of the body engaged in a 'not so pure' pursuit.

Interconnections with the politics of voice

Such limitations on one's visibility find expression in the politics of voice as well. The process of cleansing music from Muslim influence was crucial to the nationalist project, and it is evidenced in the singing style or the texture of voice. For example, women vocalists would always sing 'softer' ragas such as Yaman, Desh, Khamaj, Kafi that does not necessitate much gamak. It would be very unusual for a woman to render 'heavy' ragas such as Darbari Kanada, Puriya Dhaneshree, or Marwa. In fact, the voice and the gesture encompass certain intricacies as softer ragas would involve nimble texture in the voice expressed through 'softer', more feminine gestures, while the heavier ragas involve more 'masculine' ones, which are visually odd for a woman musician on stage. The thumris, mostly based on softer or sweeter ragas, are appropriate for a feminine engagement.

The central importance of the body may also be introspected in the field of popular music, especially in reference to Bollywood, and the intricacies of the body with voice would also be important to note. Body coupled with voice has contributed to the construction of an ideal Indian femininity through the popularization of a homogenous singing style and image of a female singer resulting in habitual consumption on the part of the audience. The most obvious manifestation of this process was Lata Mangeshkar's singing style (Srivastava 2004). Referring to Mangeshkar's songs in Aag (1948), Vijay Mishra writes that her 'virginally pure voice [is] a symbol of the lovelorn, viraha-stricken, constant woman of canonical literary texts of love' (Mishra 2002). Voice, in this context, may be perceived as a product of a particular historical and social moment. In the task of carrying out the larger agenda, Lata's voice was 'cleansed' of all those qualities that would in time be read as markers of decadence, immodesty, and by extension, in the warped logic of Indian nationalism, Muslimness (Sundar 2008). This enterprise was accompanied by the technological developments in the form of

gramophone and microphone, which were instrumental in producing this voice as much as a nationalist discourse.

Coupled with carefully designing her voice, equally important was the image of an ideal Indian woman that Mangeshkar was successful in establishing to her audience. Her modest white and off-white saris, lacklustre stage persona, and consistent refusal to sing 'vulgar' songs draw attention away from the female body—her own body and, by extension, the bodies of the women she represents vocally (Majumdar 2001). This disavowal of the body effectively contains female sexuality in film. Her single status also silently confirms her being a virgin and in a way implies her absolute devotion to music.

Her voice monopoly inter-linked with her appearance found prominence in the construction of bodies of later musicians such as Anuradha Paudwal, Kavita Krishnamurthy, Alka Yagnik, Sadhana Sargam, and, later, Shreya Ghoshal as well, a fact which was in contrast to those of Ila Arun, Alisha Chinai, Jaspinder Narula, Sunidhi Chauhan. Thus the body is not an entity, and it must be intersected to understand the complexities associated with its construction: a body assumes a reflection of social structure; it is situated within a socio-spatial frame and therefore necessitates a close introspection through a matrix of class, caste, gender, nation and so on.

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The Verse Dramas of Buddhadev Basu: Unique Synthesis of Myth and Modernity

Madhuparna Mitra Guha

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The Verse Dramas of Buddhadev Basu: Unique Synthesis of Myth and Modernity

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From the beginning of the Twentieth century, the area of Bengali poetic drama saw a lot of activity, and Buddhadev Basu was one of the sparkling stars in that star-studded sphere. His powerful writing opened new horizons in the realm of verse drama. The hallmark of his writing is a blend of reality with imagination and an effort to impose modern outlook and reasoning upon ancient texts. Basu applied myth in his poetic dramas and created a synthesis of ancient tales and modernity. He embedded the exquisite grace of mythology in his creation with a rare erudition and penetrating insight. The characters of his verse dramas those were taken from ancient texts had a striking relevance in modern times. He searched the *Purana*s to address the issues of his contemporary world. The spiritual crisis, struggle for existence, the pang and pathos; agony as well as ecstasy of both the past and the present intermingle in his composition.
Keywords: Modernity, Verse drama, ancient text, mythology, characters

Representation of the contemporary sentiment and consciousness, added with ancient myths, can make literature enriched and resonant. Some prolific writers have ventured to wade through the complexities of modernity by harnessing the allegorical sense of ancient texts, and with an aim to locate the trajectory of eternal values. Buddhadev Basu was such a literary polemicist. The mythical mode of Basu was noted by the post-Tagorean Bengali avant-garde authors. He intermixed the basic ingredients of the Western poetic dramas with the ancient Indian texts such as the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, the *Purana*s etc. The prime objective of this paper is to examine how the verse dramas of Basu attempt a discursive synthesis of ancient texts and modernity.

From the beginning of the Twentieth century in India, there was a trend of re-

juvenation in the area of poetic drama through the imitation of Western thoughts and outlook. T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, for example, inspired many Bengali verse dramas. A number of famous plays were written in quick succession by the renowned poets of the time. Basu, inspired by the Greek dramas, played a pioneering role for the enrichment of verse dramas in Bengal. The language of those Greek dramas was symbolic and images from these ancient texts were still relevant in modern civilization. In a similar way, Basu exploited myth in his poetic dramas because to him the *Purana*s were the breeding place of all sorts of conflicts. The extent of conflict scattered through centuries together violating the geographical boundaries and spread out the essence of new ideology upon which the present civilization flourished. He wanted to establish the eternal truth so that the darker aspect of life could be enriched with poetic fervour.

Basu stepped into the sphere of verse drama with his unparalleled composition *Tapaswi O Tarangini* in the year 1966. Afterwards, he composed innumerable poetic dramas. It is worth noting in this context that in his early life he composed a poetic drama named *Anuradha Roy*. The subject-matter and style of representation were not as attractive and appealing like that of his later creations. The characters of the later verse dramas of Basu were adopted from the *Purana*s and were presented from a modern perspective. Basu himself opined that the characters of Tapaswi and Tarangini were the products of his imagination though they were the inhabitants of the ancient period: psychologically they were our contemporaries. When a severe famine broke out in Anga, astrologers prophesied that only if saint Hrishyashringa, a lifelong dweller of the forest be brought to the capital and married to the princess, the catastrophe would come to an end. Tarangini, a prostitute was deployed to break the austerity of tapaswi Hrishyashringa. Tarangini became successful in her job: the tapaswi was brought to the capital and was married to Shanta, the princess. As a result, the rain poured on. Tarangini rediscovered her inner self through the association with the tapaswi.

 The evolution and elevation of feelings was a noticeable characteristic of this play. It was a story of transformation from sensuality to love. Tapaswi, on the other hand, could not confine himself within the bondage of his marital life because he had an eternal quest for the divine path. The transformation of both the characters was considered by Amiya Dev as "two faces in a mirror." He also viewed that it was the conflict between two forces in a single point. Apart from this, the pang and pathos; agony and ecstasy; the trauma, the struggle for existence were portrayed in this poetic drama in an artistic way. Here laid the perfection and competence of a writer who created the fusion of past and present through his literary brilliance. Under his magical poetic touch, the ups and downs of

ancient people, their sorrows and sufferings, and their defeat and victory were intermingled with the modern civilization. The tale of sorrow and conflict of human life was skillfully projected in this superb masterpiece. The ancient thoughts, the outlook of the people has been transformed in to modern world adopting a new method and new technique. In a word, his prime objective was to maintain a close relationship between the past and the present which were the integral parts of our modern society.

After completion of three years of his publication of the *Tapaswi O Tarangini*, Basu composed another legendary verse drama in 1969, known as *Kalsandhya*. It was based on the Moushal part of the *Mahabharata*. Two eternal truths of human life i.e. construction and destruction were presented on contemporary context through this verse drama. The death, blood, pathos, cry, anarchy all were the factors moving through the vicious circle. After completion of one circle, another one got started. The author through his verse drama *Kalsandhya* escorts the audience from the known to an unknown destination. The pain of separation and the feeling of melancholy were inevitable in their journey from known to unknown. It was the eternal truth that the death was the inevitable fate of all things created. Nothing there on earth could or in any account escape this destiny. It was meaningless to repent in this regard. Those combinations of moments created Eternity. One moment converted into another moment to create the circle of Eternity and it was a continuous process. This lofty philosophical realization was presented from a modern standpoint. The script of *Kalsandhya* no doubt was based on the *Mahabharata* but its appeal was eternal and universal. The drama was sketched luminously by Basu where he projected the continuous historical process of ups and downs of life.

Kalsandhya signified the declination of the past and greeted the advent of the new. The confluence of those two was known as 'Kalsandhya'. The term was used to denote the beginning of the start of evolutionary changes. None could predict the moment of elevation similarly the moment destruction. This was the inner truth of the human civilization: any sensible person like Basu could not avoid sensing the fury of destruction. He could realize it well that these were the indispensable part of life that could not be averted. Even Lord Krishna could not escape himself from inevitable destruction of time. He had to embrace death with the stroke of an arrow of a fowler named Jora. This poetic drama was divided into two acts; in the first act, two old citizens were horrified, terrified and totally perplexed over the prevailing situation of anarchism, terrorism, atrocities in Dwaraka. On the other hand, the woman-folk sensing impending danger became restless and perturbed. Satyabhama and Subhadra also became anxious. The turmoil of Dwaraka remind-

ed about the imprecation of Gandhari that Lord Krishna would die in a gruesome manner and the womenfolk of Jadav clan would be humiliated and insulted. Even Shri Krishna considered the situation as inevitable. *Kalsandhya* was composed in a time when a political turmoil had prevailed in Bengal from 1967 onwards. Some upright young people mostly students joined the Naxalite movement against the existing political system. The orthodox leaders became puzzled and helpless. The similar incident was depicted in *Kalsandhya* where Arjuna became helpless to face the Avir robbers: he became a mute spectator. In the preface of *Kalsandhya*, Basu opined that the narration surpassed the destruction of Jadavas and Dwaraka and extended far more.

The class discrimination, the merciless and inhuman torture of the masters was vividly expressed in his *Anamni Angana* published in the year 1970. The story was based on the *Mahabharata*. Bichitrabirja, the king of Kuru was married to Ambika and Ambalika who were the princesses of Kashi. He died on the battlefield without leaving any heir. The character of Angana had been presented as a domestic help who belonged to the lower strata of society. Her dream to build a happy nest of her own remained unfulfilled following her captivation. She was always looked down upon by the Queens. Rajmata Satyabati was kind and sympathetic to her but ultimately she utilized Angana for future heir of the kingdom. Satyabati also instigated Vyas for the same purpose. Vyas was the son of Rajmata during her spinsterhood. Angana was rather compelled to accept the heinous proposal of Rajmata with an expectation to be freed from the bondage of slavery. Afterwards, Vyasdev blessed Angana to be the mother of a wise, erudite, soft-spoken and brave son. This incident allured her to be a glorious mother despite her lower status in society. She preferred to confine herself in the domestic environment of the palace. This psychological tussle of Angana was the central point of the drama. Through the conversations of master and slave, the clear picture was available regarding the cruelty of masters and helplessness of the maid. This type of class struggle is also noticed in the modern period. Even in modern society, these types of exploitation, denial, deprival and hatred are still in existence. The subaltern people of the period who were carrying the seeds of lives silently and patiently used to hide behind the bars. The dramatist ventured to bring them out from complete obscurity and from profound darkness to daylight. Each and every dialogue of this drama was enriched with dramatic qualities and poetic efficiency. The prime objective of the dramatist was not to impose importance upon the subaltern people or to glorify them, but to give importance on their dormant dreams of emancipation and to materialize the same.

In the year 1970, the verse drama the *Pratham Partha* came out. The theme

was based on the *Udyoga Parva* of the *Mahabharata*. This part dealt with the pre-paring stage of the battle of Kurukshetra between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. This poetic drama initially started with the conversation of two old Brahmins of Hastinapur. They were the representatives of common mass who were not in fa-vour of war. The episode proceeded further through their conversations. In order to avoid the conflict between the two groups of kinsfolk, Lord Krishna took the role of mediator. But the mission became futile. During the course of his journey to the city Upalabya, Lord Krishna lifted Karna in his chariot. The drama centred around the conversation between Lord Krishna and Karna. Karna was the son of Kunti at her maidenhood stage. From this point of view Karna was the eldest son of Kunti and eldest brother of Pandavas, so in this verse drama, Karna had been addressed as 'Pratham Partha' by Basu. It will not be out of place to mention in this context that Rabindranath Tagore composed his "Karna Kunti Sambad" on the basis of the conversation between mother and son i.e, Kunti and Karna of the *Mahabharata*. Both the authors presented and viewed Karna from different angles. In the writings of Basu, the character of Karna was sketched as a self-styled warrior full of self-confidence and intrepidity. In this verse drama, Basu narrated how Kunti convinced her son Karna about the fact that from a religious point of view he too was Draupadi's husband. This news inspired Karna to strengthen his dignity though he was not entitled to enjoy the dignified position of the royal aristocrat family. He was encouraged by the spirit of self-confidence, coupled with valour and reasoning both in war front and in personal life.

Another outstanding creation of Basu was *Sankranti* which was also based on the *Mahabharata*, published in 1973. The theme was based on the incidents occurred before the demise of Duryodhana. This poetic drama stressed on the destiny. From that point, it was comparable to *Kalsandhya*. Both the verse dramas gave sufficient hints of destruction where the all the characters were the silent spectators. There was no doubt that contemporary social unrest had a deep impact upon this sensitive dramatist and prevailing situation also perplexed him to a great extent. He accepted everything as destiny. In this poetic drama destiny is a guiding force. In the *Mahabharata*, both Dhritarashtra and Gandhari had to face succes-sive bereavements due to death of Kauravas but Durjodhan was still alive. Sanjoy had a divine farsightedness who narrated the battle between Bhim and Durjod-han. In *Sankranti* the character of Sanjay was invisible but he narrated the battle of Kurukshetra from behind the screen. The description of dual fight puzzled Dhritarashtra and saddened Gandhari. The 'sankranti' was the clear indication of life and death, construction and destruction. In the said poetic drama the eyes of Gandhari remained uncovered. From the point of truthfulness and justice, she

was impartial. She was judicious, reasonable and unhesitant even in condemning the evil design of her sons. She had a firm conviction that crime indulged crime and jealousy indulged revenge. In *Sankranti*, the character of Gandhari had been represented as a symbol of eternal motherhood. Gandhari used to hide behind the screen of truth and righteousness which gave a clear indication of her suppressed sufferings.

Basu composed two other significant verse dramas viz. *Prayaschitta* and *Ikkaku Sennin*, but those were not his original compositions. *Prayaschitta* was a transcription of W.B. Yeats's *Purgatory*. Yeats wrote the book on the basis of folklores of Ireland. Basu applied his poetic excellence in transforming the characters to the ancient period with a view to make the moments relevant in the modern period. The play consists of two vital characters of a father and his son. The character of the old man was a living example of suffering. The play started with a curious question of a boy and ended with the lamentation of the old man who was conscious enough in maintaining the purity of the earth. The incidents of the play took place in front of a bare tree and a dilapidated house. The old man narrated his son about the background of the destruction of the house. The father of the old man was confirmed drank and oppressor who was responsible for setting ablaze the house. At the age of sixteen, being vexed with the constant inhuman torture of his father upon him and his mother, he was compelled to stab his father to death. The old man visualized the shadow of his deceased tyrannical father on the countenance of his son. Being apprehended observing the image of his deceased atrocious father on his son, the old man took instant decision to kill his son. His dream of maintaining purity failed miserably. He became the victim of mental sufferings, depression, repentance and helplessness. According to Basu, this repentance was nothing but a sort of the purgation. Yeats stressed on sufferings of life whereas Basu stressed on atonement. Here he made a sharp departure from the age-long outlook of Christianity because the Christianity believed in acute suffering, not on expiation. This poetic drama has presented an indication of complete annihilation so far as human and humanity was concerned.

He composed some remarkable poems and poetic dramas using and interpreting old stories from that hoard. His full-blown poetry showed likings for weaving both foreign and native Indian myth and legends into the fabric of his work. Basu got new impetus from the Japanese Noh mask drama of Komparu Motayasur titled *Ikkaku Sennin* in 1976. There was a striking similarity of this verse drama with Hrishyashringa episode of the *Mahabharata*. The drama consisted of some themes like magic, Divine power etc. It was designed on the Hindu mythology and was presented in a fantastic way. Ikkaku led a pious life and used to reside on

the peak of a rock. He was also a magician. He got involved in warfare with the demons. By dint of his magical power, he captivated the demons in a cave. As a matter of fact, those demons were none but the Gods who used to bring the rains. But the defeat of Demons brought a disaster as they made the rainfall stopped in Benaras. Finding no way out a beautiful lady named Senda was sent by Demon King to Ikkaku to deviate him from his path. Being lured he agreed to quit his magical power. Resulting which the Demons were freed and an inundation swept over the country that washed out the meditation of Ikkaku. During this time a complete change came over him. He realized that he was also a human being. Formerly he felt boast of his rigid status as a saint as well as a magician who would not face old age or death. But when he faced the grim reality then forth he faced the sudden death of his mind. Basu depicted here the awakening of common people, their suppressed pain and surprise under the mask of Ikkaku. This verse drama was a symbol of arousing of inner self from deep slumber which was applicable to the human being of the whole universe.

Basu procured mythical ingredients both from East and West. In all of his verse dramas, he transformed the ancient period into modern contemporary time. All the characters though extorted from ancient texts, bore the striking similarities with that of the modern era. Their hopes and despairs, their ups and downs, their trauma and triumph were blended with modern civilization. He intermingled the epical characters with modernity in such a fashion that their conflict, their pathos, their life struggle reflected in our modern social life. He had the credit of weaving their existence with our existence. The living and the dead got a new and different dimension in his works. Sometimes death became superior to life in his creations. He never thought to separate death from the flow of life. He experienced self-destroying politics of the period, saw the frantic modernity, witnessed attachment towards earthly pleasures; so his philosopher's mind shifted to the ancient texts for the survival of declining civilization.

During the turbulent period of World War II, a good number of hidden questions were vividly raised in the verse dramas of Basu. Basu selected the characters who had to traverse a long way full of hurdles. They were tired of their long strive to overcome their agony and sufferings. In the writings of Basu consciously or unconsciously the struggle, pathos and misery of the ancient characters were amalgamated with the modern people. He had to search into *Purana*s in order to quench the thirst of the contemporary period and to unveil the mystery of time. Coming in close contact with the modern concepts of the characters of the *Purana*s also got a new dimension. The supermen, the Gods or the demon characters were nothing but the reflection of the anxiety of the modern earthly human be-

ings in one way or other. Despite the scientific and technological excellence of the present era, the angst of human being remained unaltered from the very dawn of civilization. So modern writers with the help of ancient texts tried to find out the solution of the complexities of modern age where they belonged to.

Basu was the most versatile literary figure in Bengal someone about whom it could be said that Tagore's mantle had come to rest on his shoulders. As a writer of verse dramas, he has left a significant output.

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BookReviews

Tyler Mills, *Tongue Lyre* | Ajit Kumar
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Tyler Mills, *Tongue Lyre*. Southern Illinois University Press, USA, 2015. 69 pp. ISBN: 9780809332229

Review by Dr Ajit Kumar

Tyler Mills' debut book *Tongue Lyre* is about the myths and memories associated to the human life. The narrative and progressive aesthetics of human world take the reader to the level of familiar human set up mixed up with the linguistic and artistic capabilities of the poet. Descriptive and referential approach of the poet is reflected in all 45 poems of Mills. The poet mixes the zeugma of present and past together that compels the reader to be attentive towards each and every aspect of the poem. She discusses the vivid imaginative. The logical presentation of human souls makes the reader so allusive towards the reality of this universe. The poet takes us to a journey of the ancient values to the contemporary features of human world.

The musical plethora which begins with the poem, "Tongue" lasts till the last poem "Coda." In fact, Tyler Mills' all poems are large not only in size but meaning too. The musical words about myths and love affairs keep on echoing in the ears and moving in front of the eyes of the reader. She provides sounds to the muted:

> Two girls are chasing each other
> Around their mother's legs and tumble into
> Ribs of light folded within a blanket.
> Through the window's fluorescence. (*Tongue Lyre* 22)

The poet takes us to the reality of hustle –bustle of human life. Indeed, this is a collection of philosophical, creative, thoughtful and intuitive poems. Mills' poems exhibit a poetic mind for profound ideas which has created a new sensitivity. She shows her concern for the mankind. She says, "So in your car the steering wheel feels like bones. So when you lie flat on your bed you are a body. You think about death" (*Tongue Lyre* 19). In this collection, reader can easily find a balance of emotional turbulence, irony, social scenario and other human aspects which she draws throughout the poems.

Mills' debut anthology is a wonderful collection of mystic and echoing poems which are filled with varied poetic explorations having insightful and unveiling truth through the poetic talent of the poet. The book contains her reflective broodings over myriads of issues ranging the quest to explore the intricacies of life. With the help of the various myths, the poet wants to say about contemporary situations. Her style of writing incorporates between imagery and words, concrete and abstract, shaped and unshaped realities of life, certainty and uncertainty, fusion and confusion, a unique blending and invisibly and visible truths , in fact, a blending of thoughtful elegant philosophical ideas about the different events and values of life. She uses concrete and insightful ideas to exhibit the existence of subtlety and abstraction. The poet makes to look inward of one's own for the introspection.

Orhan Pamuk, *A Strangeness in My Mind* tr. by Ekin Oklap. Gurgaon: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 2015, 599 pp. ISBN 9780670085583.

Review by Preetinicha B. Prodhani
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Last year (2015), on a certain day, I was just browsing through the site on Orhan Pamuk when I came across a very good news. Pamuk's new book A Strangeness in My Mind was in the market. Of course, like the other novels of Pamuk, the 2006

Nobel Laureate in literature, this one, too, is written in Turkish as Kafafmda Bir Tuhaflik (2013). So I had to wait till the English translation came out. The translation by Ekin Oklap in 2015 seems to be a quite authentic version of the real. Though I can't read Turkish I could make this observation because the book takes the reader on a beautiful journey across Turkey, especially Istanbul of Pamuk's perception. I have been reading it for almost ten days; slowly, rejoicing each of its parts, just like sipping my evening tea. When I was off to work I used to long so much to return home, to the pages where I had another world waiting for me. The deep melancholy that most of Pamuk's earlier novels leave on the readers is somehow sweetened in this novel through the relaxed reflections of Mevlut Karataş. Though the protagonist, Mevlut loses a lot including his beloved wife, Rayiha, yet he makes the reader feel a sense of tranquillity while going through his story, which makes the novel distinctively different from the other novels of Pamuk.

The story encompasses many years of the Istanbul experiences (from 1969-2012) of the protagonist and his associates. It is primarily viewed from Mevlut's eyes. Though first person narration is used to present different views of the other major characters, most of the narration is presented through Mevlut's as well as the third person narrator's points of view. However, even the third person narrator, up to an extent, seems to be an extension of Mevlut's internal eye, though at times he narrates the external space and extraneous incidents. The narration is quite simple as well synchronic, unlike that of Pamuk's The Black Book (2006), in which one story unfolds from the inside of another story, only partially; yet releasing another half-revealed story. It starts at a certain dramatic point of the protagonist's life in 1982, and then it jumps over twenty five years forward in the very next chapter. The story then moves back to his childhood and continues, surpassing the crucial point where it has started. Besides the tale, the narration devotes a large space to the emotional and spiritual reflections of the protagonist. His life in Istanbul seems to be a journey towards self discovery as well as the discovery of the movements of the pulses of the city. Mevlut grows as the city grows and changes continually.

Mevlut, a boza vendor, comes from a village in Turkey to the city of Istanbul after completing his primary school. In his teenage he attends the Atatürk Boys' Secondary School at day time and accompanies his father to sell yogurt and boza in the afternoon. At the age of twenty one he falls in love with a pair of beautiful eyes belonging to his cousin's wife's younger sister, writes letters to her, praising her marvellous eyes for three years, but finally ends up running away with her elder sister, Rayiha because he confuses their names. However, he weds Rayiha and on the wedding party does not even recognise Samiha, the real owner of the

eyes and the letters. Throughout his life for forty years in Istanbul Mevlut keeps changing his day time professions following frequent mishaps that would take place. What remains constant are his evening ventures of selling boza, a traditional Turkish drink and his peerless love for his wife, Rayiha even after her death and his eventual marriage with Samiha.

The city of Istanbul with its ever changing shape (one of Orhan Pamuk's recurring imageries) reappears in this novel. The tale of the city's physical transformations coincides with Mevlut's coming to Istanbul when his father Mustafa takes him to the top of the Kültepe hill to get a view of the surrounding landscape. What Mevlut sees from that vantage is a partial view of the slum areas of Istanbul's outskirt which were "rapidly taking over the surrounding hills (Duttepe, Kuştepe, Esentepe, Gültepe, Harmantepe, Seyrantepe, Oktepe, et cetera), the city's biggest cemetery (Zincirlikuyu), factories of all shapes and sizes, garages, workshops, depots, medicine and light bulb manufacturers, and in the distance the ghostly silhouette of the city itself" (50). Mevlut's career as a boza seller gives him the opportunity to get the close up view of Istanbul's mixed neighbourhoods with motley of people living myriad lives and carrying varieties of opinions. His encounters with these people, be it the 'Holy Guide' or the kind lady at Feriköy, makes him invariably learn something new. The city that was changing rapidly with the serial demolitions and reconstructions gives him a lot, still takes away another lot, his wife, his gecekondu house, his comfort as a boza seller and finally the face of the city as he remembered as a young man.

Fifty five years old Mevlut finds his extended family living in a twelve storied apartment, all separately, all happy for being detached, except for himself, his much aged uncle, Hasan and aunt, Safiye who pines for their lost home with gardens, trees and birds. The old aunt regrets the selling of their four storied house in Duttepe for buying the new apartments:

> Well, we've got no plums and no mulberries; no chicks or hens; no soil and no garden. We can't live without our leaves and bugs and grass, my child. That's why your uncle Hasan has fallen ill. (567)

Looking at the city from the same position after forty years, i.e., through the window of the new apartment building built in Kültepe hills, Mevlut senses the difference of the physical self of the surrounding area:

> ...an ocean of apartment blocks of varying heights. The surrounding hills once marked by transmission towers, have now been submerged, lost beneath thousands of buildings, just as the old creeks hat used to run through the city had been

forgotten along with their names, as far as they'd been asphalted over and covered in roads. (578)

However, the story does not end in a pessimistic tone. Mevlut accepts the city space as he meets it. His walking through the city makes him feel as if he is walking within his mind, the city being the twin self of his own consciousness. Always loving his space, his position as a boza seller and his emotional memories as a son, a husband and a father, Mevlut wants to tell Istanbul his 'public and private' views: "I have loved Rayiha more than anything in the world" (584). With this revelation he and his Istanbul become the exchangers of the topmost yet most predictable secret of his life, which both would whisper in each other's ears till they breathe life. The book refreshingly resonates the quintessential Pamuk where pathos and solace quietly meander leaving readers with deep reflections.

Milton Sarkar. *Englishness and Post-Imperial Space: The Poetry of Philip Larkin and Ted Hughes.* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016. x+172 pp. ISBN: 978-1-4438-8598-0
Review by Subashish Bhattacharjee
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The book examines the poetry of Philip Larkin and Ted Hughes with an attempt to leveraging the contemporary images employed by the two poets in their respective poems as a means of making sense of the abrupt 'post-imperial' state which they were thrust into. The end of the empire/Empire led to the subjection of the British mind to.a sense of 'post-colonial' anxiety, a historical moment of rapid identity-formation which was essentially undone by the anxiety of the sudden transformation of the colonised. The Englishness conforming to the colonial and the newly post-colonial periods were radically different, shifting from a class egotistical optimism to a general sense of despair which found its literary outlets in the microcosmic. The 'angry young man' and the 'kitchen sink' became the microscopic elements that could highlight the contemporary situation more aptly than the wide landscapes of Dickens, Hardy, Tennyson, or even Lawrence. With the restriction of the map of the empire to certain geographical peripheries that at once denied the adage 'the sun never sets in Britannia', the consequent British reaction was in the lapse into a pre-catatonic fugue, laden with the precision of a depressive state of affairs. Englishness's innate superiority complex (or, superior

race-complex) had been severely bruised with the near defeat during the recently concluded World War II, and the loss of its flagship colonies delivered the final blows to the idea of nationhood that created the dominant idea of Englishness for the larger part of the first half of the twentieth century. Now, the sun did set on Britannia, and the sunset was the figurative symbol of the nation's containment within a specific geospatial area. The post-imperial/post-colonial moments for Englishness were overlapped with the residual effects of the War, leading to a. redrafting of the English consciousness. Notably, it was the loss of the colonies in the Indian subcontinent that led to the greatest shift in the idea of Englishness from its post-imperial epoch.

The book is divided into four chapters—an extensive and exploratory Introduction, mapping the sociological background and the specifics of the two poets's Englishness, followed by two chapters dealing consecutively with Larkins's and Ted Hughes's responses to this new 'Post-Imperial Space', and , finally, a Conclusion that ably sums-up the thematic array of the book. The author has largely isolated the 'post-imperial' as a category that is both inclusive of and also excludes the theoretical appendage of postcolonialism.

Sarkar states in the Introduction: "Englishness has been evolving for centuries. Intricately connected with the values emanating from England as a geographical space and England as a socio-cultural space, Englishness as an abstract idea is intrinsic to the identity of a people who gradually become politically powerful, so much so that the sun never set on the British Empire" (2). The Introduction traces the historical background of the period stretching from the end of World War II to the loss of the empire, and concludes with an overview of the Movement poets and their position vis-à-vis the question of Englishness. An important aspect of the Introduction is that it truly serves as an introductory piece not only for the post-imperial context which the book prioritises, but also the contingent issues that were part of the discourse at the centre of Englishness in the post-War, post-imperial scenario.

The Introduction is followed by the chapter on Philip Larkin's response to the post-imperial space. Sarkar writes:

> Larkin surveyed different aspects of the contemporary nation, and the resulting frustration and anger at the loss of energy and vigour were expressed in his poems. Larkin represented this England. He was aesthetic enough to sense that this was the only England available to him and her acutely felt the impact of the "rationed" life style [sic]." (29)

Following the extensive Introduction, and preceding the chapter on Ted Hughes,

what is immediately noticeable is that Sarkar's survey of Larkin's poetic English-ness is acute and comprehensive. In broad strokes, Sarkar also contends that "[a] sense of withdrawal from public and political engagement characterized British poetry in the immediate aftermath of World War II and Larkin's poetry was typi-cal and influential in this respect" (32). The general attributes are discussed in depth and the specifics and hinted at with academic acuity, preparing the course for further and more engaged reading of Larkin's poetry. Sarkar concludes the chapter saying:

> Much of the sense of loss has been internalized by Larkin [sic] characters as a result of which psychological "aberrations" in his characters range from sheer feeling of loneliness and alienation to the obsession with an overriding sense of darkness and death. (69)

On the question of Ted Hughes's response to the post-imperial space, Sarkar writes: "the poetry of Ted Hughes represents a challenge to the urbanised, industrial, post-War, post-imperial, denatured English society as well as culture by making, first, images and later, myths, that would reconnect the natural energies of man with those at work in the external natural world" (112). The chapter details the poetic oeuvre of Ted Hughes through the various implementations of images and symbols that the poet abounded in, even as it singularly traces how those images and symbols are essentially in pursuit of an Englishness. The chapter shows, as Sarkar intends, that unlike Larkin, Ted Hughes's Englishness was less specific, less trite even, if compared with a larger mass of poets. By encouraging a wider survey, Sarkar essentially brings to scrutiny the various objects of Ted Hughes's poetry and how they solidify under the thematic header of Englishness.

In his Conclusion, Milton begins by comparing the poetic position of the two poets with respect to the sociopolitical scenario: "They [Larkin and Hughes] looked at the reality from two different angles. Larkin … went into different aspects of Englishness and demonstrated both the richness and national themes largely evident in the poetry of the 1920s and 1930s was countered by both Larkin and Hughes—although in different ways" (113). The Conclusion is dedicated to a comparative analysis of the poetic traits of the two poets that may be unified using the theme of Englishness. It is in continuing with the survey in the Introduction, which essentially presented the stage for the demonstration of Englishnesses of the two poets, and finally taking it to a more complete , and apt, conclusion for the theme.

While the premise of the book is fairly well-covered by the author, it allows

for further exploration of the proposed theme. The systematic presentation of the post-imperial crisis in Englishness as projected in the poetic works of the two poets may lead a prospective reader to assume the validity of a comparative study to assess the impact of historical events on non-frameworked, but equally nationalistic, nationalisms such as 'Germanness' or 'Frenchness', that have often followed a similar trajectory to the Englishness that the book looks into. The idea of Englishness, despite the serious study of post-imperial space, remains a non-specific concept and context which allows for the thematic unification of several poems, setting the stage for an excellent introductory study, and also promising a far more engaged survey to follow.

The book is an interesting addition to the area of the study of literary Englishness, and especially one that assesses the poetic oeuvre of two poets who have been considered to be radically different in their approaches. Although the book signals the need for a more extensive survey, as has been stated earlier, it is, by no means, an incomplete survey. The book may well serve the purposes of the scholars across stages in the particulars of their research on the well-elaborated topic. By problematising the mutual spaces of cultural inquiry, Sarkar has presented the first conclusive survey of the two poets, and the jointly occupied coordinate of the nature of Englishness that each proposes in his respective poetry.

Alexander G. Weheliye. *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human.* **Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. 224 pp. 978-0-8223-5691-2.**

Review by Justin Holliday,
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In *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*, Alexander G. Weheliye explores what he refers to as "enfleshment," the juridical and extra-juridical creation and acknowledgement of the flesh. Following Hortense Spillers, Weheliye claims that the instantiation of the flesh is anterior to the body and its legal attachments to personhood, showing that even though flesh is often bound within law, it often precedes or exceeds law. His project posits that Giorgio Agamben's "bare life" and Michel Foucault's "biopolitics" are insufficient theories that do not represent all human lives; therefore, he invokes the work of Spillers of Sylvia Wynter. Black feminist scholarship shows the

importance of considering the ways that specific populations—nonwhite, poor, incarcerated, and/or transgender, for example—lead lives often found missing or incomplete in the work of white scholars who may rely on a universalization of the human, regardless of racial or gender disparities both inside and outside the law. Weheliye provides a provocative argument against what he terms "a strong 'anti-identity politics' strain in the Anglo-American academy" (7). For Weheliye, black studies and particularly black feminism are necessary to examine the multiplicities of humanity as a sociopolitical construct so that race is not reduced to only a biological phenomenon, which has stymied philosophical inquires into the intersection of flesh, life, and politics.

Weheliye contends that Man, the homogenizing metonym often presented to refer to humanity as a whole, often remains synonymous with white, male, heterosexual, and masculine. Those who do not fit this label may risk being categorized not as human but rather as not-quite-human. To overcome such a limiting designation, he turns first to Wynter's work on the "genres" of the human to expose the possibilities for other lives beyond the seemingly un-raced, ahistorical Man to exist. Her work, along with Spillers's, demands recognition of the assemblages that reinforce certain tropes of those surround nonwhite and/or non-male populations so that the limiting construct of Man can be dismantled.

Specifically, Spillers's invocation of the "pornotrope" posits the flesh, particularly black flesh, bound to desire and violence outside the law. Weheliye assesses the ways that slave owners mediated their sexual cravings for their slaves by looking at eroticized spectacles in films like Sankofa and Mandingo. Perhaps what attests to the strength the most is his envisioning of the transformative power of slave narratives. Sankofa illustrates a veritable metamorphosis of protagonist Mona the model into Shola the slave who receives a sexualized, brutalizing brand when she goes back in time.

Further, Weheliye shows that not only can the beating of Aunt Hester in the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* be read as pornotropic, but also Douglass's fight with Covey. Generally, this latter scene is read as simply Douglass's transformation into manhood; however, as Weheliye deftly shows, not acknowledging the libidinal potential within the violence refuses a full accounting of flesh, an obfuscation of "the many ways that blackness…remains antithetical to the heteronormative" (96). To fight against racializing assemblages, then, Weheliye instructs that there must be a full accounting of all abuses of human beings, not to spectacularize one's suffering, but rather to expose how those not always synonymous to a restrictive idea of Man have existed and are sometimes forced to exist in the inscriptive potentiality of their flesh outside the law.

In order to fight against the power of racializing assemblages, Weheliye takes on the popular theories of bare life and biopolitics. According to Weheliye, both Agamben and Foucault fail to provide a full account of the workings of race and racism in their discourses. He accuses European philosophers like Agamben of raising the Holocaust and its sufferers, especially the Muselmann, to an impossible pedestal, which often supersedes acknowledgement of the injustices of slavery or colonialism. Later in the book, he finally explains that this monumentalizing of the Jews results from their attaining a "hyperhuman" status, yet he also claims that this status is also "where black people are consigned to either this realm or the domains of the not-quite-human" (97). Weheliye does not consider that the creation of Jews as "hyperhuman" results in part from a different racializing assemblage: the Jew as racialized Other. Although in some areas Jews have assimilated into whiteness, or perhaps a state of non-blackness, there remains a history of otherness, labeling them as not-quite-human, even nonhuman as in the concentration camps. This assemblage shows the failure of whiteness, which allows for the survivors to become monumentalized as more than human but not less than because they have survived a state of exception even after some of them could "cover," or resist cultural determinations of the racial inscriptions of their flesh.

Weheliye shows no fear in making potential enemies. He points toward the gaps in Agamben and Foucault (along with Butler and Deleuze) to show that excluding race reifies racializing assemblages that block access to full juridical and extra-juridical humanity if someone does not belong to the all-too-often cited homogenized conception of Man. While his explanations occasionally could be more fleshed out, Weheliye effectively argues for the inclusion of black feminism and black studies in philosophy as a whole to begin the dismantling of universal, restrictive notions of the human.