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Volume 1

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AWE Editors

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AWWE

A Woman's Experience

Brigham Young University's Journal for Women's Studies
Volume I

A Woman's Experience

Brigham Young University's Journal for Women's Studies
Volume I

To our readers

AWE: A Woman's Experience, is a student-created journal dedicated to the expression of women's intellect and creativity and to the conviction that critical and artistic approaches to knowledge are as complementary as seeking learning by study and faith. This periodical strives to explore women's contributions to all fields of learning. Thus, contributions from all fields of study are invited. AWE intends to publish articles that openly address issues of relevance to women which conform to high scholarly standards. AWE also invites poetry, personal essays, art and photography dealing with subjects relevant to women. Short studies, notes, and letters to the editor are also welcomed.

Opinions expressed in AWE are the opinions of the contributors. Their views should not necessarily be attributed to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Brigham Young University, or AWE faculty mentors, editors or staff.

Submitting manuscripts

Deadlines and guidelines for submitting manuscripts will be posted at:
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What Woman needs is not as a woman to act or rule, but
as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul
to live freely and unimpeded, to unfold such powers as
were given her when we left our common home.

—*Margaret Fuller*

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Editor's Note

As managing editors, we are thrilled to publish our inaugural issue of *AWE: A Woman's Experience*. Starting a student journal from scratch is never an easy task, and the journey to create this collection of articles and artwork about women has been no exception. Thankfully, we have received extensive support and funding from the College of Humanities and the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences, without which we could not create this space for women's voices and discussions of women's issues. We would also like to recognize and thank our faculty advisor, Heather Jensen, for her support in all our endeavors. Finally, we would like to thank our contributors and staff members for their passion for women's studies and their willingness to work hard to create this issue of *AWE*. Without them, we certainly could not have accomplished this feat. But what is this feat, anyway?

AWE: A Woman's Experience. Our chosen title for Brigham Young University's women's studies journal reflects a desire to celebrate the contributions of women to every field we study at this institution. It also reflects a desire to take a hard look at what it has been like for women to do so—to successfully take their place among academics, philosophers, politicians, doctors, artists, writers, and in society in general. Our articles and artwork recognize and examine the ways that women have been ignored, included, and portrayed in various fields, the way that women have responded to such actions, and what we might learn from these women and the way that others have portrayed them.

Our opening article treats this theme and is taken from the keynote address given by Susan Pickett of Whitman College at Brigham Young University's, "Women and Creativity Conference." Dr. Pickett details the ways female composers have been ignored by undergraduate music textbooks and the damage this has caused for the progress of female composers and musicians. As academics, we need to

recognize the ways women have been contributing to our fields so that we can continue to build upon a legacy instead of falsely believing that we are the first women to start one. We celebrate the space our journal creates for women to share their voices, their unique perspectives, and their arguments. We know that when women have a space for recognition, conversation, and expression, that space will be filled. We hope that our journal will offer a place for women “as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded, [and] to unfold such powers as were given her” as Margaret Fuller suggested. We have created the space; now, we encourage future contributors to fill it.

—*Rachel Payne*

Naming the Journal

Choosing the Title

Lisa Hansen

During one of our early Women's Journal meetings, the editing staff tackled the topic of what to call our publication. It was late one afternoon when twenty women began offering up titles that both inspired and gave voice to our vision. Lively discussion ensued around the boardroom table until, finally, the conferencing, conversing and contending narrowed our choices to two. Would we call this journal *AWE*, or would we call it *Cassandra*? The voting remained stubbornly even despite an expressed unanimous love of the name *AWE*, because the women voting for *Cassandra* remained hopeful that the power of Cassandra's symbolism (see the note on Cassandra which follows) would generate an urgency for hearing women's voices that seemed absent from the connotation of the name *AWE*. Half of the editing staff believed that the role of the journal in magnifying women's voices was the journal's most important *raison d'être*. In moving toward the consensus that settled on the name *AWE*, these women requested this first issue pay written tribute to the role of Cassandra in mythology and in society. The voices of our various *Cassandras* must be heard and not lost.

Cassandra

Chelsea Adams and Aubrey Luddington

Cassandra is sometimes overlooked in Greek mythology, yet her story symbolizes the fate of women's voices in every culture. Although she was given the gift of prophecy, her curse was that no one believed the truths she told. Yet Cassandra was not deterred from declaring what she knew. Despite being

powerless to help others see the future she saw or to convince them of the worth of her vision, Cassandra was true to her gift.

Cassandra was the beautiful and intelligent daughter of King Priam and Queen Hecuba of Troy. To celebrate her birth (and the birth of her twin brother, Helenus), the royal family held a celebration at the temple of Apollo. When the festivities continued into the night, the exhausted twins fell asleep in a corner. While they were sleeping, the magic snakes of Apollo licked the children's ears clean, enabling them to hear the divine sounds of nature and bestowing upon them the ability to see the future.

Will we continue
to share our
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one is listening?

As a young woman, Cassandra returned to the temple of Apollo where Apollo appeared before her and began to teach her about her gift, hoping to seduce her. When she accepted him as a teacher but refused him as a lover, Apollo cursed her in his wrath. Unable to deprive her of her gift, he distorted it: She would foresee the future, but no one would believe her when she revealed it.

Returning to Troy, Cassandra attempted to warn the Trojans of the impending dangers of the Achaean war. She could see the danger of the Trojan horse, of the death of Agamemnon, commander of the Greek armies, and of the death of her brother Hector, but when she revealed these dangers to the people, they dismissed her as insane. Her brother in prophecy, Helenus, was occupied in the war and could not offer support to Cassandra's message, which went unheeded. Despite the scoffing received at every turn, Cassandra could not remain silent. She died still giving voice to her gift.

Women's voices and experience are often similarly unheard, but being ignored is not synonymous with losing voice. Will we continue to share our voices, to be true to our gifts, even when it seems no one is listening? Will we speak of the Trojan horses we see? Will we warn the world with the unique power of our gifts? Will we share ourselves with a world that seems uninterested, unwilling, unmotivated, and determined, occasionally, to believe us insane? Cassandra's choice even now echoes down the ages to us.

The Blessed Circle and Tales of Woe

Keynote Address given at the 2011
BYU Women and Creativity Conference

Susan Pickett

Professor of music theory and violin at Whitman College

A book entitled *A History of Western Music* written by Donald Grout has been one of the primary textbooks for undergraduate music history classes for decades. Most music students refer to this book as simply “the Grout.” I read the first edition of the Grout as an undergraduate during the early 1970s. Now in its 8th edition, it remains in that lofty position as an undergraduate bible of music history. Like many undergraduates, I presumed that this book was presenting a broad and also an in-depth perspective. I went on to my master’s degree in violin and then my PhD in music history and my impression of the Grout remained unchanged. Thirty-one years ago I began my college teaching career, assigning the Grout to my own music history classes.

Now, I confess to you, with the benefit of hindsight, with the benefit of what I have learned since college, I am mortified to think that I did not ask my own professors, “Why are there no women composers in the Grout?” On the other hand, if I had asked my own professors, it is safe to assume they likely would not have been able to tell me about women composers. At the same time, it is utterly ridiculous to accept as fact that during 2000 years of western music history not one woman composer existed who was worthy of being included in the Grout.

Today, I’d like to tell you about my journey into the world of women composers—a journey that has transformed my life as an academic and as a musician.

The earliest woman composer I know about, thus far, is Inanna, who lived around 3000 BC. Since the time of Inanna, over 6000 women have composed along side

their male colleagues. I have done extensive research on some of them and what I have found leaves me with a sense of elation for knowing about them and their music, but I also have a deep sense of concern about how much work is yet to be done. I also have a sense of panic, because so much of their music, which sits ignored in libraries and archives, is deteriorating from neglect and age: some of their music is literally turning to dust.

Let's stick with the sense of elation for the moment—the glee of discovery. My journey out of ignorance and naiveté began in the unlikely venue of Walla Walla, WA. Over 20 years ago I was searching for some new music to perform, so I browsed through dictionaries of composers to get some ideas. I ran across this information: Marion Bauer, woman composer, born in Walla Walla, WA. That certainly caught my eye. By that time I had been teaching at Whitman College for a decade and I had never heard her name mentioned. I wondered just how mediocre her music was, because surely if she were worthy she'd be in the Grout, at least in the appendices. Then I noticed that Marion was born on August 15: that's my birthday. Then I read that one of her orchestral works was performed by the New York Philharmonic in Carnegie

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Hall, conducted by Leopold Stokowski—one of the great conductors of the 20th century. Ah, now I was sure that at least one of her pieces was worthy. Thus began my journey into the world of women composers. Thank you, Marion, you changed my life.

A little later you'll be hearing Stephen Beus performing some of Marion's works for piano. So I'd like to tell you a bit more about her. First, you need to know that she lied about the year she was born. Virtually every book that mentions her says she was born in 1887 because that's what she claimed throughout her adult life. She was really born in 1882—the 7th child of French-Jewish immigrants. After Marion graduated from high school, she joined her older sister in New York City. The older sister was a respected music critic in New York, and was able to open doors for Marion that might have been otherwise shut. Marion studied composition in New York and she also studied extensively in Europe. When she was in her 20s and 30s her compositions received lofty reviews and she had no difficulty getting them published. By the time she was in her 40s she was arguably the premiere American woman composer. Although Marion never went to college, she became an assistant professor of composition at New York Univer-

sity, where she remained until her retirement in 1951. Supposedly she was retiring at the mandatory age of 65, whereas in reality she was 69 years old. By the way, she split the difference on her own gravestone, which shows her birth year as 1884.

Did Marion Bauer face gender bias during her lifetime? From what I can tell, not too often. She did receive some odd backhanded compliments. For example, a music critic wrote about her violin sonata, “This [piece] is one of the most distinguished products of our American composers—and it is the work of a woman!” About Marion’s string quartet, another critic wrote, “Those who like to descant upon the differences between the intellect of woman and that of man must have found themselves in difficulties while listening to Miss Bauer’s quartet. It is anything but a ladylike composition. This does not mean that it is rude, impolite or vulgar, but merely that it has a masculine stride and the sort of confidence which is associated in one’s mind with the adventurous youth in trousers.” This is typical of the language of reviews of music by women composers: if a piece is deemed worthy, it’s almost always characterized as “virile.”

In the music history books that do mention Marion, the reader is led to believe that she composed about 60 pieces—mostly short piano pieces and songs. In reality, she composed at least 160 pieces. I have found these misrepresentations to be very common in mainstream music history textbooks. Supposedly knowledgeable music historians make assumptions about women composers, students read those assumptions and take them as fact, and the myths perpetuate themselves.

Are the Grout and its competitors in the textbook industry doing better these days? Yes, a bit better. There have been glitches along the way. For example, the American composer Amy Beach was included for the first time in the 2001 edition of the Grout, where she was introduced as the wife of a Harvard surgeon. Howls of disbelief and disdain from academia forced a second printing of that edition. Then, one famous and influential music historian defended the way Amy Beach had been introduced when he said, “It is a common rhetorical gambit to introduce a person by way of another’s influence or encouragement, especially when that encouragement is viewed as unusual, as in the case of a husband supporting a wife’s desire to compose, at a time when relatively few women were involved in such activities.” Are we supposed to be grateful that Amy Beach was finally included in the Grout, only 57 years after her death. Grateful? I don’t think so. Not when it’s done so poorly.

I have spoken about two American composers so far, who fared relatively well during their lifetimes. What about European and Scandinavian women composers?

What about Clara Schumann? You know her—she's Robert Schumann's wife. During her lifetime Clara Schumann fared much better than most European women composers. As both a pianist and composer she was a child prodigy. One of her compositions was published when she was only 11 years old. She was engaged as a concert pianist throughout Europe and Russia and European publishers did not shun her music as they did many women composers, probably because Clara's fame meant good sales of her music. Mind you, Clara's life was quite bleak in some ways. She gave birth to 8 children in 13 years. She outlived 4 of her own children. Her husband went insane. One son was a morphine addict, another was schizophrenic. She had to raise some of her grandchildren. Through all of this, she still performed and composed. After her death in 1896, almost all of her music went out of print. But now, almost all of it is back in print and available on recordings.

Clara Schumann was the *only* female composer mentioned in the 5th edition of the Grout. She is actually mentioned three times in the text; I'll take a moment to read to you these entries.

1. (p. 670) "Some of [Robert] Schumann's *Lieder* are the love songs; in 1840, the year of his long-delayed marriage to his beloved Clara . . . , he produced over 100 *Lieder* . . ."
2. (p. 670–71) "[Brahms] made arrangements of many German folksongs, including a set of 14 dedicated to the children of Robert and Clara Schumann."
3. (p. 681) "The best . . . performers of piano music in the nineteenth century tried to avoid the two extremes of sentimental salon music and pointless technical display. Among those whose style and technique were primarily determined by the musical substance . . . were Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Clara Wieck Schumann."

Let's see—what's missing here? Oh, yes, the Grout forgot to mention that she was a composer. I am happy to report that the most recent edition of the Grout does correct this deficiency.

Did Clara Schumann face gender bias during her lifetime? Not much, from what I can tell—as either a pianist or as a composer. What is interesting is that she imposed bias onto herself. In her diary she wrote, "I once believed that I had creative talent, but I have given up this idea; a woman must not wish to compose—there never was one able to do it. Am I intended to be the one? It would be arrogant to believe that." It appears that Clara Schumann did not know any of the music of the 2000 women composers who had preceded her. Fortunately, she did not stop composing.

That brings me to an important point. If we agree that having role models and mentors in the arts is often important for developing skills, self-awareness, and self-esteem, women composers have been at a distinct disadvantage—not because there haven't been women composers all along—but because they are sucked into what I call the black hole of women composers. It's an odd and vicious cycle. Hildegard was lauded as a wonderful composer during her lifetime in the 12th century. When she died, her music was buried with her until its revival 800 years later. Francesca Caccini was the first woman to write an opera in the early 17th century; she was celebrated during her lifetime, and then her music had to wait 400 years to be revived. Elizabeth La Guerre was the protégé of Louis 14th and 15th. Her music was performed at their court. She also composed an opera, and she claimed to be the first woman composer of opera—so she didn't know about her female predecessor in Italy who 75 years earlier had already composed an opera. The 19th century French composer Louise Farrenc thought she was among the first women symphonic composers, so she didn't know that Mozart's sister had composed symphonic works during the preceding century.

[This is] the black hole of women composers—sometimes celebrated during their lifetimes and then sucked out of history as though they never existed

That is what I mean about the black hole of women composers—sometimes celebrated during their lifetimes and then sucked out of history as though they never existed—not privy to their predecessors who might have provided role models and inspiration.

How do we know that women composers were sometimes celebrated during their lifetimes? I often look to obituaries. And the accumulation of those obituaries has provided in their own peculiar way, comic relief. From the 18th century forward, one obituary after another celebrates the world's first and only woman composer. After I had collected a couple of dozen of these obituaries, the humor began to set in—punctuated by the tragedy.

Did some women composers face blatant gender bias? Absolutely. Take Elfrida Andrée, for example. She was a 19th century Swedish composer of about 100 pieces, including 2 symphonies and an opera. She was also an organist. She was educated at the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm, but as an external student—she was not allowed to be a bona fide organ and composition

student at the academy because she was a woman. Nonetheless, at age 17 she passed all of the examinations and she was as well educated as her male counterparts. Now Elfrida wanted to be a cathedral organist. The problem was that a long-standing Swedish law forbade women from being cathedral organists. Why? St. Paul said that women must be silent in the church, and the Swedish parliament had decided St. Paul's edict should apply to organists. Elfrida fought 4 years to have the law changed, and was finally successful—well, sort of. The new Swedish law said unmarried women over the age of 25 could now be cathedral organists. Elfrida Andrée was unmarried, but she was only 21 years old—and yet, she did get a position as a cathedral organist. I don't know why she was granted this exception—possibly to get her out of the Swedish parliament's hair. A few years later she auditioned for one of the most important cathedral jobs in Gothenburg and won the position that she retained until age 88. Another example of gender bias that she faced was when her first symphony was premiered in Stockholm. Some members of the all-male orchestra were incensed they had to perform a symphony written by a woman and during the performance the entire first violin section entered one measure late—and continued to play in the wrong place throughout the movement. The music critics who reviewed the concert did not know what was happening and severely criticized the work as chaotic noise. Nonetheless, Elfrida Andrée did enjoy some success and fame during her lifetime. She was voted into the Swedish Academy of Arts at a fairly young age. After her death in 1929, the manuscripts of her 100 compositions languished in the Royal Library for 70 years before being revisited by modern musicians. She'd be pleased to know that at the Nobel Prize ceremony a few years ago, a movement of one of her symphonies was performed.

In a few minutes you'll be hearing Stephen Beus perform music by the 20th century French composer named Marguerite Canal. She won the famous Prix de Rome composition prize in 1920 and subsequently wrote several outstanding works. Within a few years she married a music publisher. The combination of her talent and having a built-in publisher seemingly would allow her music to be widely disseminated. That was true for a few years. Then, when she divorced her husband, he claimed he owned the copyrights on her compositions and she had to take him to court to reclaim her own music. She won that battle. But she lost the war. You see, he apparently convinced French music publishers to blackball his former wife, and she could not publish her works that she composed during the height of her career. Those manuscripts still exist—they are housed at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. However, Marguerite Canal did not leave a will stating that her works should be considered in public domain. And she did not have any close relatives alive at the time of her death. When I asked the Biblio-

thèque for copies of her manuscripts, they said I needed permission from her estate. I hired a private detective to see if he could find perhaps a distant relative so that I could establish an estate, but to no avail. I got a legal document showing that the Marguerite Canal estate didn't even exist, and still, the Bibliothèque responded that I needed permission from her estate. There is a legal term for this, Marguerite's compositions are called "orphans"—and laws in the United States are now changing to grant access to orphan works—but that doesn't help Marguerite Canal's music. What we do have available to us is several solo piano works and a violin sonata that were published before the divorce, and they serve to whet our appetite for what lies silently in the library.

You can see, then, that the music of women composers is sucked into the black hole for more than one reason. Still, the overarching theme here is that they are women, women aren't supposed to compose, so once they die, their music dies with them. At least that was true

[Women composers are thus] not privy to their predecessors who might have provided role models and inspiration.

until recently. There are several researchers doing the sort of music recovery I do—working to bring back what has been lost to us, sometimes for hundreds of years. It's sometimes tedious work. To create a critical edition of just one big chamber work or symphony takes months. Given that Elfrida Andrée composed over 100 pieces, her music alone represents a lifetime of work. And she is only one of the 6000 women composers who deserve a second look through modern sensibilities.

Let's return now to Louise Farrenc, whose symphony you heard at the beginning of this session. She was admired during her lifetime as both a pianist and a composer. When she died in 1875, one obituary said, "without question she is the most remarkable of all women who have devoted themselves to musical composition. Her works bear witness to a power and richness of imagination as well as to a degree of knowledge which have never before been the attributes of a woman." Among the many women composers I have studied, Louise Farrenc stands out among the best, and yet her three symphonies sat unknown and unheard in a library for 150 years. Now that Farrenc's symphonic and chamber works had been brought out in excellent recordings, I thought that when the 8th edition of the Grout was coming out, Louise Farrenc might be included. I asked the senior editor of the Grout at that time whether this was the case. He responded, "I'm afraid Louise Farrenc has not yet made it into [the] Grout/Palisca Blessed Circle. But I'm copying this message to your Norton sales representative who will make sure you receive a copy of the book." No thanks, I responded.

I now teach a class on women composers. One of the most frequent questions from students is “How do you find the music of these composers?” When I first started looking for Marion Bauer’s music—pre-internet days—I was quite lucky. Much of her music is in the Library of Congress and New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. However, when I asked the libraries for copies of her manuscripts, I was told I needed permission from Marion’s estate and they gave me the name of the person. Easy, I thought. My letter to that person was returned to me stamped “deceased” and so too was the letter I sent to his wife. I tracked down their nieces and nephew, who were now lawfully in charge of the Bauer estate. None of them were musicians. “Why do you want copies of the music?” they asked. “To perform it,” I responded. “No!” they said. For reasons I don’t understand to this day, performing Marion’s music was not to be permitted. I could feel Marion rolling over in her grave. I waited several months for them to forget my request and made a second request. “Why do you want copies of her music?” they asked. “To study it,” I responded. “Yes!” Permission was granted. Now I had perhaps 75% of Marion’s music. What about the other 25%?

The most important missing manuscript was that of Marion’s work *Sun Splendor* that was performed by the New York Philharmonic. I tried to put myself in the shoes of Harrison Potter, the person who was designated in her will to “take care of” her music. He had been a musician. He was Marion’s close friend. He would have known the importance of that manuscript. What would he have done with it? Maybe he kept it for himself! Maybe it’s now in the archive at Mt. Holyoke College where he taught. I checked. They said no. I was so sure that I flew there to see for myself. Sure enough, they had it—under “P” for Potter rather than “B” for Bauer. I also hoped to hear the only recording of the piece by the New York Philharmonic. I contacted their sound archives and asked for a copy of the recording. No! Musician union rules prohibit making copies of it. I had to fly to New York, sit in the sound archive to hear it. Finally, 20 years after first reading about the piece I heard it.

The reason I have mentioned so much detail here is to allow you to grasp the scope of tracking down one piece by one composer. And there are 6000 more composers!

The search for the music of other composers has sometimes been easier. All of Louise Farrenc’s music is at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris—except for her string quartet, which they have apparently lost. All of Elfrida Andrée’s music is beautifully preserved in Stockholm. In other instances a search is seemingly fruitless. For example, in Louise Hérítte-Viardot’s autobiography she tells us she

composed 300 pieces; only a handful have been found. Tracking down her great-granddaughter in Switzerland proved fruitless. She was seemingly unaware of her great-grandmother's legacy.

When I do find music, what condition is it in? Sometimes wonderful. Other times ink has dried out over centuries and chipped off the paper. In music notation, that means what was a quarter note now looks like a half note. Ink has faded. Paper has started to crumble. That is why I mentioned a sense of panic earlier. The deterioration of this music is sometimes profound. Twenty years from now some of it may not even exist. Time is of the essence. What should be done?

A major breakthrough is conceivable if mainstream music history texts include the *crème de la crème* of women composers, like Louise Farrenc. Knowledge breeds enthusiasm, and that promotes research.

Will this happen? The grandiose entitlement evident in the phrase "Grout Blessed Circle"—and the stranglehold it represents on young, impressionable minds—is formidable.

To conclude on a much more upbeat note, having world-class artists such as Stephen Beus perform this music for the broader public is a marvelous counterweight to those who would deny women composers their voice.

The Fall of the Yellow Wallpaper

Unleashing the Female Gothic

Presented at the 2011 BYU Women and Creativity Conference

Rachel Payne

Critics have consistently pointed out the gothic influence of Edgar Allan Poe's, "The Fall of the House of Usher" on Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper," but few have envisioned this influence as multi-directional. In *Poe, "The House of Usher," and the American Gothic*, Dennis Perry and Carl Sederholm delineate the ways in which past critics have not only read Gilman's story as either a feminist move or a gothic tale, but also viewed these distinctions as oppositional to each other (Perry 24). On the contrary, Carol Margaret Davison deconstructs this notion of the two genres as at odds with each other by situating Gilman's story in the genre of the Female Gothic which "centers its lens on a young woman's rite of passage into womanhood and her ambivalent relationship to contemporary domestic ideology, especially the joint institutions of marriage and motherhood" (48). I agree with Davison's appraisal of Gilman's text, but wish to push the argument even farther along the line of Perry and Sederholm's reasoning. They argue that Gilman's variation of the Female Gothic involves "criticizing oppressive patriarchies, centering on the struggle between men and women and their societal roles, and championing female independence" (Perry 25). I find the key to my argument in their contention that these stories offer a striking example of intertextuality which demands "The Yellow Wallpaper" to be read as an interpretation of Poe's tale (Perry 20).

While I agree with Perry and Sederholm's argument, my own focuses more specifically on the way Gilman's narrator gives Madeline the voice that Poe's male characters repress in "The Fall of the House of Usher." In "The Yellow Wallpaper," the nameless narrator's voice goes unheeded by her male doctor and

husband, but finds power in the story itself since Gilman writes it as a type of first-person diary. A close look at the way Madeline is treated (and literally not treated for her illness) by her brother and his friend in Poe's story offers many parallels to the narrator's position in Gilman's story. In this way, both short stories feature an oppressive patriarchal system which silences its female subjects, but "The Yellow Wallpaper" suggests that a woman may escape such oppression through the creative act of rewriting. I intend to show how a careful treatment of Madeline's actions in "The Fall of the House of Usher" reveals that she also uses creative rewriting to unleash her own power in Poe's story. My argument also goes farther than those of other critics by using Clive's 1989 film *The Yellow Wallpaper* and Corman's 1960 film *The Fall of the House of Usher* to manifest the ways in which subsequent interpretations of the texts make even more radical arguments regarding the forced silence of women than the originals. Overall, I intend to show how *The Yellow Wallpaper* runs with Gilman's argument that imaginative writing benefits women far more than imposed silence, but goes beyond Gilman's text by empowering its heroine, aptly named Charlotte in the film to suggest the autobiographical relationship between Gilman's story's narrator and Gilman, to finally escape the oppressive men through the power of her rebellious rewriting. Having established Charlotte's triumph, I will reread the climax of Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" as rewritten from the perspective of Madeline, who finally triumphs by gaining the power to communicate.

First, it is important to note that Poe's, "Fall of the House of Usher," can certainly be read as a tale in which male forces repress Madeline's voice. While Poe's narrator and Roderick both speak throughout the course of the story, Poe does not give Madeline a single word in the narrative. In fact, the most that we hear from her is a "low moaning cry" before she falls upon her brother (Poe 216). Her oral absence from the narrative signifies the insignificant amount of space her perspective occupies in the mind of the male characters. Roderick proceeds to diagnose Madeline's condition in much the same way that John and the doctor in *The Yellow Wallpaper* film decide Charlotte's malady and the best way to treat her—without considering her own opinion (Poe 205). The description of Madeline's tomb, however, moves the male characters' actions from repressive to oppressive as they place her in a vault that is "small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light" with an "oppressive atmosphere" and in the lowmost reaches of the House of Usher (Poe 211). Possibly even more frightening, the narrator informs us that this long-forsaken vault was formerly used "for the worst purposes of a donjon-keep" (211), which we can infer may have had something to do with torture and suffering. Choosing to put Madeline in a place

such as this suggests the repressive and oppressive actions the male characters perform against our Female Gothic heroine.

Interestingly, Corman's film, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, goes even further to demonstrate the male oppression of Madeline than the original text, and even highlights a sexual oppression that Poe's text perhaps only hints at. Adding Philip's character to the film most significantly highlights Madeline's role as an object of male desire, for we come to see her as simply the object that both Roderick and Philip aim to possess. In fighting over her, neither Philip nor Roderick really appeal for Madeline's opinion without dictating to her what they think it should be. This is particularly apparent in the scene where Philip's hand covers Madeline's mouth in order to stifle her scream. The shot of this dark male hand clasped over her mouth offers an obvious symbol of the way both men attempt to silence Madeline's voice, for we are not sure which of the men the arm belongs to until the next cut. The setting of Madeline's bedroom colors the scene with a sexual tension which becomes almost unbearable when the camera reveals Roderick's presence in her room while she and Philip are kissing. In this sense, Roderick not only silences Madeline's voice, but any sexual desires she may have as he stops her from manifesting her physical attraction for Philip with his presence. Roderick does repeatedly silence Madeline's voice at dinner, though, and when he abruptly dismisses her to bed so she cannot have a meaningful conversation with Philip. Thus, while the film offers Madeline more time and words, it emphasizes the repressive nature of the male characters so that she still possesses no real space to express herself.

While both men repress Madeline's voice in the film, Roderick reveals himself as actively oppressing Madeline when he locks her alive within the tomb. The film poignantly illustrates what is left ambiguous in the story, when the camera shows Roderick's face focused on the movements of Madeline within her coffin. He then does everything in his power to close the lid to her coffin and bury her in the depths of the house before Philip can see that she is alive. Ultimately, this scene offers a striking representation of Roderick's maniacally deliberate, oppressive repression of Madeline. He oppresses her by confining her to very limited physical space in her coffin, effectively eliminating her ability to secure any sexual space with Philip, and extinguishing her oral space by placing her too deep for anyone but Roderick to hear her cries. Thus the film, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, reveals both the oral repression and the sexual oppression of Madeline.

Similarly, the men in "The Yellow Wallpaper" repress the narrator's voice by restricting her expression. Instead of validating the narrator's opinions regarding

her own health, John patronizes her by calling her “little girl” or “blessed little goose” and saying, “Bless her little heart!” . . . “she shall be as sick as she pleases!” (Gilman 19, 11, 20). Thus, no matter how she tries to verbally express herself, John represses her voice. Furthermore, John represses the narrator’s voice by forbidding her writing, which the narrator intimates to us by noting how she must frequently quit her writing in order to avoid being caught (Gilman 14). The narrator relates that she writes “in spite of [her husband and her brother]” but that it “exhaust[s]” her since she has “to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition” (Gilman 6). Additionally, her husband refuses to validate her interest in writing or activity of any imaginative sort since “He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures” (Gilman 5). Hence, he ignores the narrator’s feelings, ideas, and attempts to communicate with him—thereby tyrannically repressing her attempts at expression.

Women only seem to escape oppressive patriarchy, then, by rewriting themselves into gothic monsters.

Clive’s film, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, however, highlights the text’s forms of repression through morally repulsive depictions of the male interactions with Charlotte which emphasize the way in which she is sexually oppressed and unheard by the men around her. The bedroom scene between John and Charlotte offers a particularly

gruesome illustration of John’s repression of Charlotte’s voice as well as his oppression of her body and will. Charlotte attempts to make him understand her point of view when she tells him, “It’s the wallpaper that’s making me so nervous.” The film shows John’s complete disregard for her opinion and feelings when the camera cuts to a close-up of his face as he says, “It’s not the wallpaper,” without even trying to understand her point of view. Later, he refers to it as “stupid wallpaper,” further undermining the validity of Charlotte’s opinions. Next, Charlotte tries another form of communication: tears. Unfortunately, John reacts as unfeelingly to Charlotte’s crying as he does to her words when he says, “You know, when I’m away from you, it’s such a joy to know exactly what you’re doing.” Clearly, John’s “joy” at regimenting what Charlotte does each day so that he can control her even when he’s away from her, shows how much he relishes the opportunity to restrict Charlotte’s voice, actions, and abilities. The highest act of violation comes, however, when John proceeds to climb on top of Charlotte, practically suffocating her, and completely drowning her out of the scene. Thus, John treats Charlotte as no more than an object to be used for the satisfaction of his sex drive, the condition that Davison warns against when she says, “until men regard women as vocal desiring subjects as opposed to silenced objects of desire, America—and more specifically, its domestic sphere—will remain

a Gothic locale for women” (67). The nails keeping the bed in its place symbolize what Greg Johnson calls “a sexual crucifixion” (526) and what I would add amounts to Charlotte having to suffer her role as sexual object in this male-dominated society. In this world, Charlotte is forced to sacrifice her own desires for what the men desire of her, only she has no savior outside of her own mind.

In addition to suffering a sexual violation of her body in the bedroom scene, the doctor scene also shows Charlotte as a victim of what amounts to a rape of her mind. The scene begins with a close-up of the black back of the doctor completely filling the screen with a darkness signifying the lack of understanding he has for Charlotte’s condition. The camera moves around to show his hand around Charlotte’s neck, checking her pulse, but still alluding to a method of choking her voice. When the doctor then takes Charlotte’s journal from within her pocket, she vehemently asserts herself: “You do not have my permission to read a word of it!” He verbally responds that he wouldn’t dream of it, but proceeds to rummage through its contents and then tear her writing straight out. Charlotte looks utterly crestfallen at such a blatant violation of her desires, her mind, and inasmuch as writing can constitute her, her very self. His subsequent contact with Charlotte’s body associates his violation of her mind with a sexual violation of her body. He places his stethoscope on her chest slightly beneath the folds of her dress hinting at sexual intent, and moreover, returns to compliment her on the charming nature of her earrings as he reaches out to touch his hand to them. Failing to see the value of Charlotte’s opinions, writing, or mind, he can only see the stereotypical value of physical beauty. Charlotte’s flinching at his touch suggests that he has raped and pillaged her mind and body to an extent she cannot tolerate, but she is still caught in what Alison Milbank calls “female domestic powerlessness” (158).

The final cross-cut of the film, however, reveals just how much Charlotte’s writing allows her to escape the male attempts to force her into a social role she cannot exist in. Greg Johnson describes this as “an allegory of literary imagination unbinding the social, domestic, and psychological confinements of a nineteenth-century woman writer” (522), and Charlotte’s final actions exemplify this exact rewriting of her roles in all of these dimensions. The sequence begins with Charlotte physically rejecting male attempts to penetrate her via tonic as she vomits into the sink. The aerial shot following her slow ascent of the stairs connotes that she is rising to an occasion, albeit an eerie one with dramatic music emphasizing this fact, while the low angle shot of John descending the stairs reveals his inferior purpose. Charlotte shuts out the patriarchal eyes of the world by closing the window shades, and then proceeds to remove the nails keeping the bed in place.

This important departure from the text signifies not only Charlotte's dissatisfaction with her assigned role, but her rewriting of it. By simply moving the position of the bed to bar the entrance of man instead of welcoming it, she shows the new power she has gained to creatively rewrite man's dictations. If, as previously mentioned, the nails represent "a sexual crucifixion" (Johnson 526), her removal of them invokes a powerful image of her self-constructed resurrection from the deadly societal role she previously fulfilled. Ergo, this act effectively rewrites her role in society.

The rest of the sequence goes even further to emphasize the connection between writing and Charlotte's ability to triumph over the men who would silence and oppress her. The camera cross-cuts between John's ironic speech about the "restorative power of pleasure" and Charlotte ripping strips of paper off the wall. The paralleled sounds of John turning the pages of his speech regarding the medical institutional control of women and Charlotte's ripping paper off the wall are so like one another, we cannot help but see Charlotte's action as a reaction to John's. With each tear of the wallpaper, she seems to be destroying what he is saying about controlling women and, instead, rewriting a new and creative interpretation of herself. Because the camera sits behind the wallpaper, as Charlotte rips it off we see more and more of her. This effectively illustrates the constitutive power of writing which offers Charlotte an opportunity to create a new self. Finally, the comparison of the blank wall with John's closed speech-book would suggest that they are both finished, but the following tilt shot from Charlotte's feet to her head suggests that we need to size her up differently. As in the text, Charlotte then creeps around the room, finally communicating the gravity of her condition effectively to John and reversing their roles—for it is his turn to be silent and weakly faint, as females are expected to (Gilman 32). Still, the film shows Charlotte going further than just finding her voice in a male-dominated society. The final scene reveals her creeping not just around the room—and role—that John has assigned her to, but outside where there are no walls to enclose her. So, as Anne Williams argues women in Female Gothic fiction can, Charlotte "does not merely protest the conditions and assumptions of patriarchal culture," she "spontaneously rewrites them" (138). In doing so, she rewrites herself out of the oppressive patriarchal system into a space she created for herself—even if only in her mind—where she can enjoy a free range of expression.

Similarly, if we reread Poe's tale in context of a female triumphing over the men who would repress and oppress her, we find that her final act not only gets their attention, but destroys their efforts to confine her to this world. Through death, she is able to communicate a desire for and achieve a space for expression. Instead

of being buried in the basement of the house, she ascends to the height of her existence. Instead of being controlled by Roderick, she can, for once, exact an influence of her own by causing *his* death in addition to her own. Further, Perry and Sederholm argue that Madeline's move toward death may actually "signal the end of the old regime and the potential for a new social construction" (29), suggesting that the fall of the House of Usher can actually be viewed in a positive context—especially from Madeline's perspective.

Importantly, though, we must remember that it is the reading of a gothic tale that brings about Madeline's escape. She, too, is influenced by hysterical writing—gothic fiction. Like Charlotte who "overlays her Gothic reading onto her own experiences" (Perry 27) when she imagines that the "ancestral halls" she occupies for the summer truly make up "a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity" (Gilman 5), Madeline is called forth by the power of a gothic tale. She echoes "the very crackling and ripping sound which Sir Launcelot had so particularly described," the "screaming or grating sound" of "the dragon's unnatural shriek," and the "distinct, hollow, metallic, and clangorous, yet apparently muffled reverberation" (Poe 214–15), but in a different context. In this way, Madeline rewrites the story by enacting her own version of its events. Her power comes from words written on "dead paper" (Gilman 6), which only she can transform into her own narrative. Through her rewriting of this male dictated story, Madeline is finally able to force Roderick's ironically super-hearing ears to acknowledge her perspective. He finally recognizes "the rending of her coffin, and the grating of the iron hinges of her prison, and her struggles within the coppered archway of the vault" as demonstrations of her refusal to be oppressively repressed (Poe 215). She finds power over Roderick only through the use of a literary gothic spectacle, for surely her "enshrouded figure" with "blood upon her white robes" amounts to as much (215). Like Charlotte, it is only through creative rewriting that Madeline finds her power to escape the oppressive patriarchal structure that formerly confined her.

Thus, both women are able to exact their triumphs of making a space for their own expression through the power of writing. Charlotte rewrites her social role as she rips away all that John dictates to her and finally escapes his world, but only through her own madness. Similarly, Madeline finds her escape by becoming the gothic specter that so frightened her brother, rewriting her role in his life, as well. Still, even she can escape his world only through death. Thus, though these women find power to unbind the oppressive patriarchal cords around them, they can only do so through gothic means. They depict the type of women Kelly Hurley argues reign in gothic fiction when she says, "Remove the mask of feminine

innocence and you find beneath it a raging animal, a monster, a 'creature with . . . the face of a devil'" (202). Women only seem to escape the oppressive patriarchy, then, by rewriting themselves into gothic monsters.

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Veiled Woman
Erik Linton

The Bollywood Hindu Heroine

Ancient Mythology to Modern Day Cinema

Presented at the 2012 BYU Women and Territory Conference

Emily Holmstead

Put your henna on and keep the wedding palanquin decorated.

Beautiful girl, your beloved will come to take you away.

Put your henna on, and keep the wedding palanquin decorated.

Make yourself beautiful; keep your face veiled.

Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge

Why is it that you go to a temple and pray to Durga, Kali and Saraswati yet when you go home you treat your Durgas, Kalis and Saraswatis so maliciously?

Lajja

Bollywood is the simultaneously affectionate and derisive term for the Hindi-speaking Indian film industry. It is among the highest grossing commercial ventures in the world, selling more tickets and churning out more movies every year than Hollywood. A Bollywood movie, which usually clocks in at about three hours, is generally full of melodrama, whirling saris, mythological parallels, and archetypal characters. Scenes are regularly interrupted by choreographed song and dance sequences. Western ideas of realism are unexpected and unappreciated by the billions of consumers who flock to movie theatres and the elite group of families who dominate the big screen. Stars such as Shahrukh Khan and Kareena Kapoor are splashed across giant billboards and plastered on the walls of shops, their fame used to advertise not only their latest films, but also the most recent campaign in the Coke-Pepsi wars. The music industry is inextricably intertwined with the film industry, so the popularity of a movie is largely based on the popularity of its music and vice versa. Bollywood makes its presence known in almost every aspect of Indian culture with a blunt commercialism and unapologetic enthusiasm.

The leading ladies of Bollywood have a firm grounding in mythological Hindi ideals, but the western world and the feminist movement have changed women's depictions even in Hindi films. Today's films feature women whose *salwaar-chemise-and-jean-clad* forms fill university classrooms and cry out against social injustice even as they doggedly pursue husbands and perform traditional rituals. In Bollywood films of the last twenty years, the evolution of the Hindu heroine is further evident in the changing power structure of male-female relationships and the importance of a woman's education and career while echoes of Radha and Sita are still seen in the heroines' devotion to romance and the Indian characterization of motherhood.

I. Women in Mythology: Subservience and Fidelity

A Hindu heroine, regardless of her time period, is defined by her loyalty and love in romantic relationships. One of the most famous women in Hindu mythology is Sita, a role model for thousands of years of Indian women. She is one of the human incarnations of the Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, munificence, and purity. The *Ramayana* recounts the tale of her relationship with her husband, Rama, the seventh avatar of the god Vishnu (the *preserver* in the Hindu triad). She has a traditional arranged marriage with her royal groom and embodies all wifely virtues. She serves her husband with devotion and love.

When Rama is banished and forced to live a life of destitution for fourteen years, Sita insists that she be allowed to accompany and help him in his exile. After she is kidnapped by the villainous demon Ravana and refuses to be rescued by anyone but her husband, she submits to a trial by fire to prove her purity. And when Rama, enraged by gossip about his wife's infidelity, sends her away, she complies obediently, despite the fact she is pregnant with Rama's heirs.

Throughout her life, Sita is unwaveringly loyal to Rama. She honors and sacrifices for him. She lives her life at his beck and call. No injustice is too insulting to be endured to protect his good name, no adversity is too difficult to undergo to succor him, and no punishment is too unjustified to accept to obey him. All the major events and decisions in her life are either precipitated, guided by, or in response to Rama. Sita, the ideal Hindu woman, is defined by her love and reverence for her husband.

Another incarnation of this couple is Radha and Krishna, who are different physical manifestations of Lakshmi and Vishnu. Radha and Krishna are childhood

friends. The mischievous young man's feeling for the beautiful goat-herder blossoms into love. Though Krishna leaves Radha because he must fulfill his duty, her only duty is to love him. Krishna goes on to defeat an evil king, become a hero in battle, marry 16,108 women, and travel the land dispensing justice. Radha patiently awaits his return. Scorning the man her family forces her to marry, dishonoring her family, and neglecting her responsibilities, she clings to her beloved Krishna. Her life is consumed by him. In many chants and religious ceremonies Radha-Krishna is referred to as a single entity. This absolute devotion to her love elevated Radha to her current status as a pre-eminent woman in the Hindu tradition.

II. Traditional Women in Modern Films: A Little Vermillion

Just as the heroines of old, today's Hindu protagonists find fulfillment through romance. Whether it is Simran of *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (The Brave-Hearted Will Take Away the Bride), who betrays her father for the sake of her beloved, or the star of *Bombay*, who compromises her religious beliefs and abandons her family to marry her boyfriend, or Shanti in *Om Shanti Om* (God Grant Us Peace), whose only desire is to put vermillion in the parting of her hair and to be acknowledged as a wife even though it means she must give up the fame and wealth of her life as a movie star—no sacrifice is too great for love today, just as it was for Radha. A parallel to Sita's exile in the forest can be seen in the young heroine of *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*, (To and From the Apocalypse/Till Death Do Us Part) who runs away from her wealthy family to live a hand-to-mouth existence on the edge of civilization with her sweetheart. The formerly wealthy girl attempts to turn an abandoned building on a rocky outcrop into a habitable home: doing hard manual labor, trying to cook for the first time, and bathing in a stream. Despite her hardships, she sings happily, "What could we desire that isn't within our grasp, just so long as you're with me?...This isn't a dream anymore; this is my everything, this world of love, this tiny abode of the springtime, just as long you're with me!"

A woman's sacrifice for her beloved is an age-old theme in Hindu mythology. Enduring such hardships is proof of her devotion and the depth of her feelings. In *Veer-Zaara*, an epic romance featuring a bitter-sweet, cross-cultural love affair, the woman sings of the pain she undergoes to be faithful to her absent lover during a twenty-year separation.

For your sake, I live, swallowing all my tears. For your sake, I live with my lips sealed. But in my heart, the lamp of love continues to burn, for your sake, for

your sake! Life has brought with it the chronicle of days past, incomparable memories surround us now.... Look at what I desired, and what, in turn, I received... What can I say? The world has shown such ill-will to me. I'm commanded to live life, but without you. How ignorant they are, who say you are a stranger to me. How many wrongs we have been done, my love! But in my heart, the lamp of love continues to burn for your sake, for your sake!

The heroine's life, despite her social contributions and other meaningful relationships, is incomplete and painful without her love. Though men can find fulfillment in adhering to moral principles or forging successful careers, the only happy woman is a woman who follows her heart.

These principles are evident in the plot, characterization, and dialogue of Bollywood movies, but cinematography plays a vital role as well. In *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, the age-old idea of a woman's devotion to love is cinematographically evident in Simran's struggle between conflicting forces and her ultimate decision in the movie's final scene. The heartbroken Raj, unable to win over Simran's father, has decided to leave without his lover in order to preserve both the traditional familial structure and his own honor. Blood-soaked after a confrontation with Simran's villainous fiancé, he boards a train, closely pursued by Simran and her family. As the train begins to chug away with Raj on board, gazing sorrowfully at his beloved, and Simran on the ground, struggling against the restraining hand of her father in an attempt to get on the train, both Raj and Simran conform to gender roles that can be traced straight to mythology. Raj, unable to keep his word, must adhere to his principles and leave empty-handed. Simran, dedicated to her love above all else, must abandon her familial duties, and follow Raj. The camera follows Raj as he is symbolically carried away from Simran by the force of tradition and culture, and then zooms back to Simran, who is symbolically trapped by her emotional nature and her submissive role in society until her father lets her go, relinquishing his control over her and passing her into the care of Raj. The camera looks up at Raj (who is, as befitting a man, covered in the marks of battle) and down at Simran (who is as befitting a woman, bedecked in jewelry), denoting their respective places in the social power structure.

A woman is expected to sever other relationships and throw away her convictions for her love, though a man is discouraged from making the same sacrifices. Rama banishes his wife to save face in the community, and Krishna takes thousands of other wives for political reasons. In *The Hero*, a government official abandons his lover to serve his country, and in *Kisna* the protagonist leaves his true love to fulfill his duty to his community by participating in his arranged marriage. It is important to realize that these are the actions of reasonable, moral

men, not heartless scoundrels. Attitudes towards them range from admiration to worship for their personal sacrifices, their contributions to Hinduism and the Indian Independence movement, and to national security. These are avatars and heroes whose actions regular Hindu men are encouraged to emulate. However, a woman abandoning her love for anything similar – country, family or religion – is unthinkable blasphemy.

Even in religious matters, the Hindu heroine's conduit to completion is through a man. A woman, whose inferior gender is often attributed to misdeeds in previous births, can only reach spiritual salvation through her husband. Consequently, women play a very minor role in the ceremonies and rituals of Hinduism. For example, in the movie *Humko Tumse Pyaar Hai* (I am in Love with You), a revealing ceremony is conducted in which a husband carries his wife up the steps of the temple to give an offering to the gods. Without the help of a man, a woman is not able or worthy to conduct the ceremony herself. In the film, the heroine, Durga, has neither the ability nor the desire to make the trip up the stairs herself, depositing herself in the care of her lover. A woman's love and service to her husband brings her closer to God, and is, in many ways, the best route to reach divinity. In fact, a woman's husband is referred to as her god, an idea that is reinforced through rites such as Karwa Chauth, a festival where a wife fasts for the long life of her husband, as well as for the opportunity to marry him again in her next life. The specifics of the ceremony are almost identical to the specifics of many other ceremonies conducted in temples for gods like Shiva, which highlights the traditional power structure of the wife as a devotee of her husband.

Another ideal that hasn't changed much despite feminism and increased exposure to western ideas is the insistence upon a woman retaining her virginity until marriage. A sexually unsullied bride is the only proper bride. Despite the modernization and westernization of many aspects of Hindi cinema, the heroine is still a virgin when the *mangalsutra* (wedding necklace) is placed around her neck. A Bollywood actress may sport a sexy demeanor and wear revealing clothes but she still protects her honor at all costs. A woman may dance in the rain with her hero, thrusting her hips in a soaked and clingy sari while gyrating all over her man, but she won't kiss him until marriage. If she feels physical urges before the ceremony, she resists them, and if her intended attempts to coerce her, she refuses him with righteous indignation.

A related issue concerns the plight of rape victims. *Hamara Dil Aapke Pas Hai* (Respectfully, Your Heart is With Me) follows the journey of Preeti, a young woman who agrees to testify against a member of a notorious gang despite its

power and influence. In retaliation after the trial, a gang member rapes her. After the rape, she is rejected by her family, condemned by her community, and thrown out of her house to wander the streets in disgrace. The neighbors collaborate in banishing her, publicly humiliating her and even charging her with prostitution. A wealthy, progressive gentleman who admires her courage takes her in and eventually falls in love with her. Despite her merits, everyone -- including Preeti-- believes she is unworthy of him. The man's mother grudgingly admits that Preeti is a beautiful, accomplished woman and that what happened to her was not Preeti's fault, but she cannot accept a daughter-in-law who has been desecrated by rape. In the end, the mother is forced to reconsider her world view when confronted by irrefutable proof of her own husband's sexual abuse of his female workers and her son's unwavering commitment to Preeti. In the end, she accepts her new daughter-in-law and condemns her own husband. The stigma of rape, though decryd by the film's sympathetic portrayal of a good woman in a terrible situation, is still present in both India's film and society.

Female infidelity is also taboo. Though male affairs and indiscretion are treated light-heartedly, a woman's unfaithfulness is not a subject the Hindi film industry is ready to confront. In movies like *No Entry* and *Shaadi No. 1* (Wedding No. 1) a group of male friends conspire to cheat on their wives. These movies follow their comical attempts to seduce attractive younger women, the slap-stick schemes they create to hide the truth from their wives, and their boredom with marital life. The moral implications of such activities are swept under the rug as the married men cavort with strippers, sweet-talk their boss's daughters, and cozy up to clients.

Their wives (who, admittedly, are not very bright) remain blissfully ignorant of their husbands' infidelity despite warnings from friends and indications to the contrary until confronted with clear evidence or a confession. Though at first the broken-hearted wives claim they will never forgive their wayward spouses and resign themselves to life alone, threats of suicide are always enough to bring the women around. When a husband stands on a balcony or cliff, the two favorite locations of an unfaithful husband who is professing a desire to end his life in a Bollywood movie, threatening to throw himself off (whether or not his words are sincere) a Hindu heroine immediately begs him to come back, saying all is forgotten, and proclaims her undying love. In the end the couple embraces, and all is well with the world.

On the other hand, there are a limited number of Bollywood movies that deal with female indiscretion. These movies never end with happiness and reconciliation. In *Maya Memsaab* (Mrs. Maya) an unfaithful wife suffers from an unspecified

mental illness; in *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam* (Straight from the Heart) an unfaithful fiancée is thrown out of her home; and even in *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* (Never Say Goodbye) which is by far the most forward-thinking of the movies mentioned in this paragraph, an angry husband demands a divorce after his wife confesses the truth about her extra-marital affair. None of these movies depict these situations in a humorous or trivial manner. They are serious betrayals with heavy consequences.

III. The Development of the Independent Woman: Dancing in the Desert

Although the mythological feminine is alive and well in Bollywood, female roles have undergone significant changes in the last twenty years. Some heroines have more in common with less romance-minded avatars, such as Kali, the goddess of destruction, or Durga, known for her fierce compassion, than they do with Radha and Sita. For example, though devotion to romance remains, absolute subservience to men is less prevalent. In *Jab We Met* (When We Met) the heroine bullies the hero into transporting her from Mumbai to Punjab and then into running away with her. A telling song lyric from *Veer-Zaara* makes it clear that in the heroine's mind:

Whether or not anyone understands, I'll keep saying it: I'll always stay the way I am. I'm the queen of hearts, the mistress of my own desires. Why should I keep a scarf on my head? If it slips, it slips! Now, no matter whether someone is happy with me or irritated, even if we have a falling out, I'll always stay the way I am.

While the plot of *Veer-Zaara* still conforms to traditional gender roles of sacrifice, this song makes it clear that the sacrifice comes from a self-actualized woman with a clear identity, not a subservient woman with no will and no choice.

In *Isbq* (Love) the heroine initiates a full-out war with the man she eventually falls for, at one point humiliating him in a grocery store with tooth-paste and at another time sending him out in a car in which she has disabled the brakes. In *Hum Tum* (Me and You) the female lead is a smart, ambitious woman who can run a business, take care of herself and her mother, and overcome opposition with wit and nerve. Though love plays a major role in her life, she never fawns over her man. In fact, at different points in the movie she propels her love around Frankfurt against his protestations, and threatens to chop him up into tiny pieces and feed him to a dog after he questions a wife's relative importance in the family.

In the film's first song and dance sequence, the heroine pokes fun at the her male companion, singing

A disordered, meaningless, wasted way of living; and you lay a hand on your heart and swear you're different! A wet towel left on the floor, the toothpaste cap tossed aside, wearing yesterday's socks inside-out, heedless of the time! A girl teaches you the way to live. A girl makes you from a beast into a man.

She is comfortable enough with her status to make comments like this throughout the movie. These are not the words or actions of yesterday's Bollywood woman. The Hindu heroine has gone from demure to outspoken and from worshipful to self-assured. Her cinematic romantic role has changed accordingly.

The Hindu heroine's newfound permission for self-direction is evident in another scene from *Hum Tum*. Reema, the female protagonist, is returning to her native India after several years abroad, and her friend's brother arrives to pick her up from the airport. The cinematography highlights the irony in the scene between real control and the semblance of control. Her friend's brother is driving, which usually indicates control, her mother is in the front seat, which usually indicates dominance, and Reema is in the backseat of the car, which usually indicates subservience. However, even as the man directs the car, Reema directs the tone, conversation, and outcome of the scene. The man becomes increasingly flustered as Reema overturns the traditional chain of command. Even though he is driving, Reema decides where the car goes, and even though the man is the host, Reema doesn't act like a guest.

The most obvious evidence of change in the Hindu heroine's role is the complete about-face in regard to the attitude towards widows and *sati*. In the past there were only two proper things for a Hindu woman to do after her husband's death. The first option was to throw herself on his funeral pyre in a *sati* ceremony, cremating herself. This symbolized the woman's absolute commitment to her husband, and women who did this were regarded with much more respect after their deaths than they ever received during their lifetimes. Even in the Hindu marriage ceremony, the woman follows her husband around the sacred fire until the end of the seven rounds, when she steps in front of him to symbolize her wish that death should take her before it takes him.

The other option for a widow was to wear white (the color of mourning) for the rest of her life, isolating herself from all earthly joys. Women who chose this instead of *sati* were shunned. They were not allowed to interact with people, and were considered a curse on the household. Either way, a Hindu woman lost herself when she lost her husband.

Today's heroines resist such suicidal traditions as well as the social stigma of widowhood. In one recent fairly progressive quasi-protest film, *Baabul* (Father-Daughter Affection), a widow struggles to live a normal, happy life, including considering remarriage, something inconceivable a few decades ago. The story begins traditionally enough: After the death of her husband, the heroine is inconsolable. Her grief borders on madness, which is expected from a woman who has lost a husband she truly loves. In a less expected turn, her radical in-laws encourage her to throw off mourning and remarry, attempting to rescue her from loneliness and provide a father figure for their grandson. After significant introspection and resistance, she finally agrees, and when the community reacts in outrage, her father-in-law delivers a rousing speech in which he condemns the cruelty and injustice of old traditions.

In *Dor* (Thread), a young widow is confined to a life of degradation and servitude. During her husband's life she was respected for increasing her husband's business productivity, but as soon as his extended family receives word of his death she is stripped of all her worldly belongings and held a virtual prisoner within the house. However, with the help of a liberal friend, she begins to accept that being happy is not being unfaithful to her husband's memory. In the end she breaks away from her in-laws and community to forge a new life for herself. In *Hum Tum*, a widow lives a fulfilling life with her daughter, and in *Veer-Zaara*, a female lawyer fights against *sati*. All of these radical actions for women are portrayed in a positive light, in stark contrast to the past.

Cinematography highlights the Hindu heroine's recently claimed right to life after widowhood in the movie *Dor*. Meera, a recently widowed young woman in a conservative area of Rajasthan, has been gradually blossoming under the tutelage of Zeenat. For the majority of the movie, the camera emphasizes her obscurity by showing her as a small figure among the crumbling remnants of former opulence. She is always enclosed, either in her own bare room, within the walls of the compound, or simply by the *duppata* (long scarf) she keeps wrapped tightly around herself. Her first encounter with Zeenat, the catalyst of her transformation, is in the least confined of the spaces she is allowed— the open-air temple.

Right before the climax, the movie shows Meera's physical and emotional freedom as she rediscovers simple joys. Zeenat and Meera, accompanied by an errant but friendly camel driver, take a trip into the sand dunes. For the first time, Meera has room to breathe and move. The camera swoops around the unexpected space, highlighting the lack of restriction and inhibition Meera feels as she lets herself dance for the first time since her husband's death. A little radio blares Hindi film

songs to the isolated trio as they dance in the sand. The simplicity and stark beauty of the desert depict Meera's womanly affinity for nature and provide a refreshing alternative to the stifling environment of her in-law's ancestral mansion. Zeenat and the camel-driver join in the dancing, but it is Meera, rediscovering her passion, who dominates the scene with her dancing skill and with her laughter.

Heroines in today's films have also begun to speak out against social injustice and moral hypocrisy. They articulate the plight of religious minorities, lower-caste citizens, and especially the treatment of women. In *Lajja* (Shame/Modesty) the reverence towards goddesses contrasts sharply with the treatment of their devotees. In fact, the four women in this movie: Maithali, Janaki, Ramdulhari, and Vaidehi, all have names which are variations on the name Sita. Sita is universally honored, while her daughters are beaten, raped, and dehumanized. Throughout *Lajja*, the characters openly protest formerly accepted society values: the dowry system, the view of women's primary purpose as producing heirs, and the double standard in regards to sexual conduct. In *Kuch Na Kaho* (Don't Say Anything) the leading lady denounces her husband's behavior and the justice system's gender-biased view of spousal abandonment. Even more shockingly, these diatribes take place in public venues such as weddings, theatrical performances, and political gatherings, rather than in furtive clusters of women who disperse when they fear that might be overheard. This wave of speaking out against misogyny stands in stark contrast to the traditional woman's silent acceptance of her fate in the hands of men.

IV. Motherhood: For Her Sake

Another aspect of the evolving Hindu heroine is her role as mother. In ancient times, the role of a mother was woman's most powerful role. Motherhood was an undeniable demonstration of woman's connection with nature and her power as a creator. With this power came the ability to dominate. This dangerous element made a mother feared and revered in Hindu culture as a conduit for *sakti* or *prakrti*, the mythologically powerful, undifferentiated, disordered, active energy of nature.

Despite this chaotic creative power of motherhood, women in cinema are usually depicted as ordered preservers of culture. Women in Bollywood movies are much more likely to wear traditional Indian clothing, attend religious services, initiate prayer sessions, invoke deities, and engage in habitual Hindu idiosyncrasies than men. Wives and mothers encourage their families to revere the gods, take the blessings of elders, and put the customary red dot on their foreheads. For example, in *Humko Tumse Pyaar Hai*, a woman chides her lover for joking

about religion; in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (Sometimes Happiness, Sometimes Sorrow) a wife sings traditional hymns and lights incense despite her husband's irritation with the ritual; and in *Salaam-e-Ishq* (Salute to Love) the men generally wear jeans and a button-up shirt or a sweater while the women wear traditional *saalwar* chemises.

Though the status of a mother still commands respect, oftentimes that respect is eclipsed by the repressive drudgery of everyday motherhood represented in modern movies. In many films, the female characters are portrayed as losing their power when they have children. The power of youth and sexuality are stolen by childbearing, and mothers are contrasted with young, thin, single women and found wanting. In movies such as *Salaam-e-Ishq* and *Ankabee* (Stranger) the power of a mother is pitted against the power of a mistress, and the temptation of the mistress prevails against the man's devotion to his wife and the mother of his children. Sometimes mistresses even replace mothers when it comes to the affection and loyalty of their sons. Additionally, many women are portrayed as feeling cut off from the world after becoming mothers. Some are bitter after giving up careers, and others feel isolated from former friends by the tasks of motherhood.

On the other hand, the level of respect Hindu mothers are shown is still much higher than in the western world. The tagline of *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* says "It's all about loving your parents." Throughout the film a mother's love is glorified – almost deified. A mother is shown as the provider of unconditional love and acceptance. Though in many cases a father's respect must be won, the mother's support regardless of the circumstances is a given. An example of this is the prevalence heroes have of "swearing on" a mother when called upon to make an oath of truth, dedication, or fidelity. A hero will be called on to employ his mother's head, life, or honor as the basis of his vow. Sometimes, he will be called upon to make a moral decision or engage in a heroic act "for his mother's sake."

The theme of the persistence and depth of a mother's love can be found throughout the Bollywood film industry, from *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*, in which a mother's love for her absent son brings him back home after a decade aboard, to films such as *Karan Arjun*, in which a mother's love and faith brings about the reincarnation of her murdered sons.

One of the most memorable scenes in *Karan Arjun* depicts a mother, coated with blood, dirt and sweat, tearing into the temple of the goddess, Durga. She falls at the feet of Durga's statue and begs for her sons' lives. She says that Durga, as a mother, can't possibly "destroy another mother's womb" and proceeds to smash

her own head against a rock, weeping and bleeding, in a visceral display of dedication and sorrow. The next scene shows the birth of two boys, her reincarnated sons, interspersed with snippets of the mother, whose blood and pain in Durga's temple parallel the process of childbirth. The mother had the right to appeal to the Goddess on the grounds of their shared position as mothers, influencing divine intervention.

V: The Future: Tomorrow's Heroine

Despite the continued prevalence of female stereotypes and archetypes in Hindu cinema, Bollywood's current portrayals of daughters, sisters, mothers, and wives are more nuanced and socially aware than the depictions of ancient texts. Bollywood is inching its way into an era of sexual liberation and empowerment for women, but will likely retain restrictions that, for Indians, are inextricably linked with patriotism and national identity, contributing to a quasi-Victorian, schizoid stance on sexuality. The appetite for women-centered movies is growing as the theories and practices of female empowerment affect the population. Large numbers of educated women with a new set of standards for their on-screen counterparts are filling movie theatres and rising in the ranks of the film industry. The change in Hindu heroines, particularly in regards to their ambition, determination, and advocacy, will follow the escalating desire of modern filmmakers to create politically conscious films that spark thought and change. Though choreographed song and dance sequences and mythological themes will continue to be fixtures in the genre, Bollywood's women will develop progressively more modern characteristics and more enlightened social values.

She who has come into my dreams time and time again,

My heart has faith in her...

She'll come one day, my love...

I'll devote my life to her.

My heart is confident of it.

Andaaz (Secret)

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Plaza de Cuzco
Erik Linton

Feminism, Breastfeeding, and Society

Jen Bracken-Hull

A good friend recently asked me why it is that feminists disagree about breastfeeding. I responded that it is probably the result of differing visions of women's roles and contributions to society. Although feminists may disagree about reproductive issues, they seem to agree that greater awareness of women's contributions is essential. In this paper, I will discuss how differing visions of women's contributions create a dichotomy of opinion about breastfeeding. I will also examine a view that validates women's breastfeeding contributions to society and propose changes to accommodate this essential contribution more fully.

The prejudice some feminists harbor against breastfeeding took root in the 1970s and shortly before. Betty Friedan's 1963 *The Feminine Mystique* helped ignite the second wave of the modern women's movement. An exposé of white, upper-middle-class women's experience in America, the book revealed a society responsible for creating in women "a feeling of personal worthlessness and lack of self, arising from women's attempts to live through their husbands and children." Friedan wrote that society had "discriminated against women and forced them into homebound, vicarious lives" (Cullen-DuPont 70). Despite Friedan's attempt to detail women's roles, however, nowhere does she mention breastfeeding as a validating, meaningful activity.

Breastfeeding in America in Friedan's generation was the exception. Until even recently, breastfeeding women were completely excluded from public venues. In order to participate in regular public activities, women had to give up breastfeeding altogether. Additionally, during the 1970s many feminists expressed an antipathy toward reproductive functions, viewing children as restrictions on women's accomplishments. Over the centuries, they observed, women had been reduced

to a set of biological functions, contributing to society primarily through the birthing and nurturing of children. During WWII, families (that is, women) were encouraged to have five children in order to supply the nation with enough manpower to win the war. This government imposition of roles has not been limited to the United States. As recently as 1991, the Japanese government began bribing families to encourage them to have more than one child (Butow). In the Afrikaner nationalist movement, women were specifically relegated to domestic contributions, particularly the bearing and nurturing of more Afrikaner babies, in order to give Afrikaners a numerical advantage over their oppressors (Gaitskell). Second-wave feminists even saw parallels between breastfeeding and Nazi Germany, where the credo “Kinder, Küche, Kirche” (Children, Kitchen, Church) conformed women to a “doctrinaire model of domesticity” (Palmer 322).

Understandably, women grew tired of being consigned and limited to domestic contributions. Second-wave feminists began to blame “biology as interpreted by patriarchy” for their exclusion from interesting and creative work. They also saw breastfeeding (along with other reproductive functions) as a skill that rested on biology rather than intellect. Gabrielle Palmer noted, “In the striving for equality . . . childbirth and infant feeding [has] been made a humiliating, disempowering experience” (320). Reproductive debates during the 1970’s aimed to give women greater control over their bodies and reduce the essentialism of biological roles. At the same time, commercial infant formulas touted as superior to breast milk allowed women to make contributions in public settings while someone else fed their babies. It appeared as if breastfeeding might be on a permanent decline.

However, scientific studies have made it increasingly clear there is no adequate substitute for breast milk (Angier, Palmer 40–56). Important findings have disputed the exaggerated claims of infant formula marketers, encouraging women to once again offer the breast to their children. Many women today are actually eager to breastfeed, perhaps because evidence has convinced them that breastfeeding is nutritionally superior, or because of an emotional need to bond with their babies (Palmer 83–84), or because they find the breastfeeding role empowering.

For many women, breastfeeding is an empowering experience. They may feel less dependent on male doctors and pediatricians as they contribute to their child’s physical and emotional health. Instead of relying on expensive formulas, breastfeeding women are likely more conscious of the wonder of their own biology, thus increasing their confidence in and appreciation for their bodies.

And yet women who have fought for an expansion of gender roles may react negatively to such an increase in breastfeeding. The idea that male-dominated organizations and governments are pressing for greater adherence to biological roles may be alarming, coming at the expense of the personhood, the careers, and the expanded roles of women. Palmer notes that any glorification of motherhood is viewed with suspicion by some feminists, simply because “[it has] frequently been used to restrict women and exclude them from positions of power” (11).

Some feminists are now arguing that skills gained through motherhood are precisely the reason women should be included in positions of power. Palmer states that “it is those very mothering qualities which have led to highly valued traits such as intelligence, verbal and tactile communication, dexterity, endurance and love, and they are traits of men as well as of women” (11). Studies of some mammals indicate that changes brought about in a mother’s post-childbirth brain help new mothers improve their spatial memory and learning, thus increasing problem solving skills and intelligence (Kinsley). Such changes warrant notice and encouragement in a society that values intellectual capital so highly.

Third-wave feminism seeks to protect personally meaningful experiences in women’s lives, which experiences include birth and breastfeeding. As a result of third-wave efforts, governments, non-profit organizations, and activists work to provide women adequate information and resources to enhance choices during pregnancy and after birth. Particularly in the USA, encouraging such reproductive focus is a controversial issue for modern feminists who want to expand awareness of women’s roles separate from their biology. Breastfeeding feminists are also troubled by the difficulty of reconciling the private act of breastfeeding with the public spheres of influence and power. However, many breastfeeding women have decided not to surrender their rediscovered power to the historical truism that if a woman breastfeeds, she will become housebound.

Women called “lactivists” are now fighting for awareness of the legality of breastfeeding in public places. Even people in authority, people who should know, are often unaware that breastfeeding in public is legal in most places in America. In January, 2011, a woman visiting the Smithsonian Hirshhorn museum began breastfeeding her 11-month-old daughter on a bench in the main area of the museum. Two security officers approached and told her she needed to breastfeed in the bathroom. She agreed, but discovered there was nowhere to sit in the bathroom. She returned to the security guards and told them the problem. They replied that she should sit on one of the toilets. Instead, she decided to leave

(Guzman). The guards' prohibition was actually against federal law. The Right to Breastfeed Act, signed into law in 1999, asserted that women can breastfeed anywhere on federally-owned property, such as the bench in the Hirshhorn museum. Local laws also generally protect a woman's right to breastfeed in any public place where she would otherwise be allowed. However, even breastfeeding women, according to lactivists, may not be aware of laws that protect their right to breastfeed. Women who heard about the Hirshhorn incident decided to expand awareness of breastfeeding laws by staging a breastfeeding sit-in at the museum.

Such sit-ins serve another important function: the normalization of breastfeeding in public places. After newswoman Barbara Walters made an unenlightened comment about public breastfeeding, one lactivist said, "It's like any other prejudice. They have to get used to it.... People don't want to see it because they feel uncomfortable with it, and they feel uncomfortable with it because they don't see it" (Harmon). Lactivism has helped to educate and to shame a public ignorant of and ambivalent toward breastfeeding.

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However, despite increasing openness to breastfeeding women as customers, consumers and citizens (Corbett), many nations (the USA included) are still unwilling to accommodate breastfeeding by employees. A woman's right to paid maternity leave is nonexistent in the USA, making the establishment of breastfeeding and subsequent mother-child bonding for women who will return to work virtually impossible. Employers rarely provide facilities or regular breaks for breastfeeding mothers to express or pump milk, making breastfeeding and full-time employment incompatible. The less a woman's nipples are stimulated

via pumping or suckling, the less milk she will produce. In a few months' time, her milk supply may become so depleted that she will have to give up breastfeeding altogether, thus failing to achieve the World Health Organization's suggestion that women should breastfeed for at least a full year. Women who feel strongly about breastfeeding may cut their hours and become part-time employees, placing themselves at serious financial disadvantage. This problem is particularly prevalent in the USA, where no laws require employers to pay part-time and full-time employees a comparable wage or to provide benefits to part-time employees. Breastfeeding women and their children are thus disadvantaged in terms of health and financial security.

Such problems have led feminists to theorize changes that would accommodate breastfeeding mothers. Other governments offer important examples. Norway requires employers to provide working mothers two hours per day to breastfeed their children at home or the office. It is not uncommon for Norwegian women to breastfeed at their desks (Alvarez). This is an important accommodation, but feminists call for changes that have even more far-reaching restructuring of current attitudes.

Palmer argues that the value of breast milk should be financially compensated. She remarks:

If a multinational company developed a product that was a nutritionally balanced and delicious food . . . that both prevented and treated disease, cost almost nothing to produce . . . the announcement of this find would send its shares rocketing to the top of the stock market. The scientists who developed the product would win prizes. . . . Women have been producing such a miraculous substance . . . since the beginning of human existence, yet they form the least wealthy and the least powerful half of humanity. (1)

Maria Mies asserts that financial compensation is the best way to reverse the unfortunate historical attitude that breastfeeding is an animalistic activity unworthy of higher intellects. She observes that a human mother breastfeeding a child is not the same as a cow nursing her young. Mies asserts women's reproductive contributions, including breastfeeding, should be rewarded just as any valuable contribution in more public spheres is awarded (Mies). Some feminists urge that employment benefits, including social security, should be given to women *de facto* when raising a child, and particularly so when they breastfeed. As Palmer points out, providing a financial reward to breastfeeding women would certainly be cheaper than dealing with the barrage of health costs caused by the use of infant formulas.

For women not to be disadvantaged when they choose to breastfeed, fundamental changes in the workplace will be required: giving breaks for breastfeeding, providing facilities for breastfeeding, and providing on-site high-quality daycare where a woman can access her child during the workday. Appropriate accommodation would also necessitate legislation to provide part-time employees with equitable wages and reasonable healthcare benefits. Additionally, financially appraising breast milk's contribution to public health will help society—including mothers—value the unique and essential health contributions of breastfeeding women.

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The Feminine Peter Pan

Felicia Jones

The act of cross-casting, casting a female in a male role or vice-versa, is an important part of the history of the performing arts in societies throughout the world. Although cross-casting has been used to solve certain social problems regarding gender and its performance, it has also created as many social dilemmas in every society where it has been practiced.¹ Fascination and occasionally outrage have often followed when a character is specifically cast as a cross-dressed figure. Whatever its use, cross-cast characters often times have a powerful stage presence and deliver important cultural messages.

The cross-casting in *Peter Pan* is no exception to the power and intrigue associated with cross-dressing. Since the first time *Peter Pan* was performed as a play in 1904 in London, England, the main character, Peter, has been cast as a woman. For a long portion of England's history, boys were used to replace women on stage owing to a fear of female sexuality, which will be discussed later. As a result, this created a connection in the British mind between women and young boys.

England's practice of using boy actors and boy sopranos has led to the development of England's preoccupation with the idea of youth, establishing a perfect setting for a play about Peter Pan—a boy who would never grow up. Yet, since the play's first performance on stage, Peter has almost always been cast as an androgynous (non-sexual) woman and not by a prepubescent male. One is able to understand why Peter has always been played by a woman by looking at the history of boy actors and choristers in England, as well as in the author's own personal life, both of which are full of androgyny and blurring of gender lines to achieve an ideal.

1. See Orgel, Prest, Goldstein, and Robertson as selected examples of the ways in which cross dressing has both solved and created problems associated with gender performance on stage.

J.M. Barrie wrote *Peter Pan or the Boy Who Would Never Grow Up* as a reflection of family members, young friends, and childhood memories that inspired his love for the innocence of youth and were models for the characters of the story. As a child, his older brother David was killed in a skating accident just before David turned fourteen (Garber 169). His mother was so devastated by the death that she would not leave her room for weeks, leaving Barrie deeply worried about her (169). Marjorie Garber goes into greater detail about his concern, saying, "In a pathetic attempt to please his mother he learned how to whistle and stick his hands in his pocket like David, doubtless inflicting more pain as he made himself into the ghost—or the shadow—of the lost golden child" (169). Barrie eventually had to grow into a man, while David, like Peter Pan, was able to forever remain the perfect boy of thirteen. Hence, David became the inspiration for Peter Pan and other characters in many of

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Barrie's stories. A similar situation arose with another one of Barrie's childhood friends. A friend, Margret, tried to call Barrie "my friendly," but in her inability to pronounce her "r's," instead called him "her Wendy" (Garber 173). She died at the age of six and remained, in Barrie's imagination, forever caught in her unadulterated youth. It was the beginning of an obsession for Barrie, who continually tried to find the purity, innocence, and joy of childhood.

In addition to David and Margret, the five boys of Arthur and Sylvia Llewelyn Davies also became symbols of eternal youth for Barrie. He spent a lot of time with these boys, inventing new plays and games for them (Garber 170). Devastated when two of the boys died, Barrie did his best to capture their memories in many of his stories. The memories of these children ultimately shaped his life and history, influencing the development of Neverland and the never-aging Peter Pan. But Barrie's deep interest in youth went further than the events in his own life. He was also greatly influenced by England's own history, which was full of this passion for youth.

The history of theater in Europe, and particularly in England, reveals many instances of cross-cast roles. Women were banned from the stage by the Catholic Church as early as the thirteenth century, fearing the power of performing females over men (Austern 84). The late sixteenth-century Puritan writer Philip Stubbs not only speaks against the unmanly effect of listening too closely to

secular music, but warns “that the intensive study of practical music would effectively transnature young men into women” (Austern 90). In other words, listening to the female voice, or viewing the female body on stage, would cause a man to lose his manliness. Stephen Orgel explains, “Early modern moralists continually reminded their charges that manhood was not a natural condition but a quality to be striven for and maintained only through constant vigilance, and even then with the utmost difficulty” (19). Hence, men were in a constant battle to maintain their manhood and the mere presence of women on stage was considered threatening to men’s patriarchal dominance. In order to keep the superiority of men over women, women were forced into the sphere of private performance. To fill the void left by women, boys were cast as women and sang the women’s parts. Austern notes that “at the most basic levels of psychology, a large number of Renaissance thinkers noted specific similarities between boy’s and women’s underdeveloped masculinity, for the true distinction in this patriarchal society was not between the sexes, but between fathers and children” (Austern 85). In other words, women and children were no different until the boys hit puberty. This perceived androgyny of prepubescent boys allowed boy actors to capture the very essence of a woman without any sexual anxiety associated with actresses. Hence, boy actors were able to transgress gender structures as androgynous figures, which relieved the concern associated with females performing on the stage. This capacity to reach a wholesome state by watching these boys was even more powerful when the audience was listening to boy choristers.

In the case of choir boys, England grew to have a particular fondness for their vocal skills. Because their lives were dedicated to the art of singing, boy choristers were able to develop sounds that replicated the sounds of women. As Beet explains, “What is the boy’s voice . . . ? It is the women’s voice” (4). Boy sopranos replicated the treble sound of a female soprano beautifully, but also provided some unique features that were different from the sounds of a female soprano. It was believed that boys’ voices were those of angels, and one was able to be closer to God by listening to them. The voice of any boy soprano was considered a religious experience by many English aficionados of boy choristers (Beet 4). Boy trebles lacked the sexuality of females and males, so therefore were able to transcend gender and the anxieties that were associated with it.

Consequently, when the play, *Peter Pan*, was presented to English audiences, it was loved by many because it portrayed the same kind of purity embodied by the boy actors and choristers, allowing people to experience vicariously the joy and freedom of youth. Unlike the “real” boys found in the contemporary performing arts, the character of Peter was one who would never grow up. Thus, one of the

most important reasons for the play's success was its celebration of the British fondness for the joys of boyhood.

Regarding this particular affection for boys, Cernauti-Gorodetchi explains that, in the traditional British way of thinking, "being a boy is by far the best thing that could possibly happen to a human" (Cernauti-Gorodetchi 125). Barrie not only shared this British fondness for boyhood, but his own life circumstances further emphasized his attachment to the magic of boyhood. In particular, the young Davies boys inspired Barrie so much that he tried to capture the memories of all of them in the character of Peter. By doing this he was able to create a character that most British people loved: the androgynous boy that transcended gender. Peter is able to capture both the semi-religious transcendence of the choir boys and the anxiety-relieving androgyny of the boy actors. The incorruptibility and purity of Peter is lost the moment a boy grows up—a state not easily portrayed by a mature male actor.

Therefore, the need to portray this arrested state of innocence is the very reason why women have always been cast as Peter Pan. Barrie understood the historically rich association between boys and women when he wrote the play, and he wrote the role of Peter Pan with the actress of Maude Adams in mind as the idealized boy on stage (Garber 166). All the women who have played Peter have attempted to achieve this androgyny, transcending the issue of gender and capturing the innocence of childhood—something a man, who represents the opposite end of the gender spectrum, would never be able to do. By playing a boy, the woman becomes androgynous, just like Peter, and just like the beloved boy choristers.

Furthermore, the very reason that women have been cast as Peter is because they unequivocally lack the masculine sexuality of a grown man or even a growing boy. Peter is a masculine figure lacking full maturity, and Cernauti-Gorodetchi explains that "he knows he is a boy rather than a girl, but he is determined never to become a man" (126). The very act of cross-casting the character captures him in the world of impossibility, a place that could never be reached by the common person, who eventually has to grow up. He is untouchable, unreachable in reality, but on the stage he represents something that everyone can enjoy for a night. Rose calls attention to Peter's untouchability: "'No one ever touches me,' Peter Pan says to Wendy in their famous dialogue at the start of the play. It is because Peter Pan can never be touched" (16). Not even the Lost Boys can fully access all of Peter. But everyone reaches for him, just as Wendy, Tinkerbell, and Tiger Lily attempt to do at various times in the play. A female cast as Peter becomes untouchable herself because she, as a gendered being who will never become a man, is able

to fully represent a young boy who will stay eternally young. Billone states that “because grown women may have physical attractiveness without possessing the sexual potency of manhood, their impersonations of Peter Pan help us to see precisely what it is he lacks”—the mature masculinity of a grown man (9).

It is the actress’s job to create that complete absence of masculinity, a real-world impossibility for a young boy. The audience notes that a woman plays Peter, which should be implausible. Explaining the power and credibility of the cross-cast actor, Prest says, “It is the essence of theatre—this tension between reality and illusion, mediated by performance, and the discomfort it can still sometimes produce, that is perfectly captured by the cross-cast actor” (162). Nina Boucicault, the first woman to play Peter on the stage, was able to embody this world of reality and fantasy. She was the “Peter of all Peters . . . She was unearthly but she was real. She obtruded neither sex nor sexlessness” (Garber 166). She, like Peter, was able to stay in the world “that [is] between youth and age, or time and timelessness,” a place that the English have been enthralled with for hundreds of years (182). The resulting ideal Peter is, in fact, a woman and not a boy.

In addition to achieving the timeless androgyny of male youth, women are also able to cross gender lines so well because Peter himself has a very cross-gendered role. Throughout the play Peter pretends to be many different figures in order to play tricks on others. He pretends to be, at different times, Tiger Lily, a mermaid, and even Hook himself. Who better to capture this cross-casting of characters than a boy who is an androgynous woman? Billone argues that “we watch an adult woman disguised as a boy hero pretend to be a little girl and then reveal herself to be a little boy after all” (189). Hence, the cross-casting of Peter as different characters in the play, as well as the cross-casting of a woman as Peter, relieves the potential sexual tension that would normally be found in a play about a pre-pubescent boy. Bulman states that this sort of cross-dressing in actors “unmasks the inherent absurdity of conventional gender expectations” (19). The moment that fantasy is taken from the play and a man or young boy is put into the role of Peter, all that innocence and relief is lost, for the play becomes too realistic.

In the eyes of those who desired a male Peter, Peter is not an androgynous figure but rather a symbol of the quintessential male. As such, he defies the control of women: his mother, Wendy, Tinkerbell, and even Tiger Lily. In his defiance of women, he nonetheless remains youthful, always seeking adventure. Accordingly, for Peter to be played by a woman was seen as an insult to the very essence of masculinity. These feelings were felt since the play’s first performance. Patrick Braybrook, who was literary critic at the time, stated “that Peter Pan should never again

be played by a woman, for obvious and indubitable reasons: "There is no character of Barrie's so essentially masculine as Peter Pan" (Cernauti-Gorodetchi 124). His opinion was shared by many. The Royal Shakespeare Company also believed the play to be too childish when it was played by a woman. The play was originally written for the British Christmas Pantomime, a lower form of comedic opera and, therefore, considered childish. As *Peter Pan* became more popular, however, there was a call to make it less juvenile, so it was reconceived as a tragedy.

But this desire for realism lost the original intentions of the play. To many people, a male Peter destroyed the very idea of Peter, who is not considered tragic in any way. In their view, the real Peter was a boy who refuses to grow up. If Peter were played by a man, the audience would not be able to experience that catharsis of watching a boy enjoying being young. It is not ironic that the popular book *The Peter Pan Syndrome: Men Who Have Never Grown Up* was published the following year after the Royal Shakespeare Company's rendition of *Peter Pan*. The men, who were the object of the research conducted for this book, were unable to grow up and face the realities of the world. Unlike Peter Pan, however, these men were not innocent of the world around them but were unwilling to assume a mature, masculine role. However, equating the situation in which adult males refuse to accept adult responsibilities with the fictional character of Peter Pan is unfair to the original conception of this fantasy figure and misinterprets the role.

Ultimately, the youth, purity, and joy of Peter can only be truly captured by a woman, who herself is innocent and lacking male sexuality and the implied patriarchal dominance. As Schalow explains, "A neutral, androgynous object . . . allows men and women alike to give up their male or female positions and prerogatives, to enjoy a pleasure . . . based in the relief of gender anxieties" (64). It is the very reason why boy figures have been so loved in English history. The feminine, cross-cast Peter Pan perfectly embodies this androgyny and is the reason she continues to be found in plays even in modern times, allowing for a perpetual fantasy of Neverland.

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Unrelated

Kathryn Muhlestein

My sister and I look very little alike. In disposition, appearance, and personality, we are like total strangers. In fact, we don't have much in common at all other than a set of biological parents. But beneath the skin, she and I are sisters. In heart, in care for each other, and in concern for the others' happiness—the concept of sister goes so much deeper than the surface. Being a sister or a friend has little to do with appearances and everything to do with that unobservable devotion that is unrelated to outward circumstances. Being related is a condition. Being a sister is a decision.

Gilda's Gowns

Fashioning the *Femme Fatale* in Film Noir

Rachel Anne Wise

The 1940s brought the rise of a cynical, nihilistic film form in America, stereotypically characterized by its hardboiled detective crime plot starring a dominating female adorned in a black slinky dress with a pistol in her purse, seducing men and masterminding plots of cruelty and greed. This genre, film noir, grew out of the ashes of post-WWII America, lasting through the 1950s and satisfying the growing market for pessimistic and violent thrillers.¹ Film noir has generated much scholarship since its mid-century inception, particularly for feminists, with the landmark publication of Laura Mulvey's 1975 "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," an article that analyzed the male gaze, explicit voyeuristic elements, and inherent misogyny within the genre. Using a Freudian and Lacanian lens, she claimed that the *femme fatale* character, or "fatal woman," symbolized the ominous threat of castration. In 1978 Janey Place further explored the deadly sirens of the screen and claimed that their sexuality signified power: "men need[ed] to control women's sexuality in order not to be destroyed by it."² Following the lead of Place and the trends of mainstream feminist scholarship, by the 1980s and 1990s film studies scholars began considering how *femme fatale* figures, with their unchecked ambitious sexual prowess, were actually empowering to women.³ Social-cultural historians added fuel to these arguments as they claimed that the films portrayed 1940s male anxieties over the threat of female power and prestige—a

1. Film Noir continued on after the 1950s outside the United States, but largely disappeared in American cinema between the 1960s and 1980s. Neo noir began emerging in the 1970s, a genre dependent on film noir principles.

2. Place's essay was originally printed in the first edition of *Women in Film Noir*. It was also included in the 1998 edition as Janey Place, "Women in Film Noir," in *Women in Film Noir*. Ed. F. Ann Kaplan. London: BFI Publishing, 1998, 49.

3. Some examples include Elizabeth Cowie and Christine Gledhill.

true concern for returning GIs who found their jobs taken by a new workforce of females who were hesitant to relinquish their profitable positions.

But these interpretations, both that film noir is an enactment of the 1940s male fear of female power and that the *femme fatale* is a signifier of ruthless seduction, are too narrow in scope and too outmoded. Agreeing with the revisionist scholarship by Julie Grossman on film noir, and especially the *femme fatale*, I instead contend that the genre is too complicated for historical generalizations or to only be analyzed from a psychoanalytic viewpoint. In order to examine how, as Grossman writes, “narrative, social contexts, and mise-en-scene” shapes the *femme fatale*, scholarship now should move beyond discussions of the male gaze that overly objectifies women, or beyond interpretations that only acknowledge barbaric female power; especially when the *femme fatale* is a character who when read in context is far more complex than simply objectified sexuality or potent female power (Grossman 5). In this way a nuanced understanding of the *femme fatale* can be created that will debunk myths of the satanic seductress in the slinky black dress and that will address both her power and that power’s limitations within the genre (5).

In this paper I will specifically examine an aspect of the *femme fatale* that has been surprisingly ignored by scholars,⁴ but which is paramount for understanding the allure and power of such women—the *femme fatale*’s use of, exploitation of, and subservience to fashion. Indeed, it is her lavish gowns and excessive accouterments that distinguish the *femme fatale* from other females: almost universally film noir has consciously been aware of portraying the *femme fatale* as an irresistible fashion icon. As exemplified in the 1947 thriller *Out of the Past*, the fashion-conscious siren Kathie wears form-fitting gowns and luxurious fur coats made to sharply contrast with the homespun, overly modest clothes of Ann, the virtuous hometown girl. Much of the sexual charm of a *femme fatale* stems from her revealing clothes, though in their luxuriousness they also signify her wealth and power. As one bedizened *femme fatale* comments to another in the 1953 film noir *The Big Heat*: “I’ve been thinking about you and me; how alike we are, the mink-coated girls.”

To stay within the scope of this paper, I will address only one “mink-coated girl” to decode the complex signification of *femme fatale* fashion. Specifically, I will be analyzing the couture of Gilda, the *femme fatale* of Columbia Pictures’ 1946 movie of the same name, *Gilda*. The film takes place in Argentina at a gambling hall run by the brooding megalomaniac Ballin Mundson, who employs American Johnny

4. Two notable exceptions are Stella Bruzzi and Ula Lukszo. I will address their main concerns later on in my discussion of Gilda’s fashion.



Fig. 1: John Singer Sargent, *Madame X*, 1884.



Fig. 3: John Singer Sargent, *Madame X* (in its original state), 1884.

Farrell to patrol his tables. After leaving for a business trip, Mundson returns married to the glamorous Gilda, an old lover of Johnny Farrell. An uncomfortable love triangle ensues, defined by jealousy, hatred, and abuse, until Ballin fakes his death, allowing Johnny and Gilda to wed. When Ballin returns envious and rancorous, he attempts to kill Johnny but is instead stabbed by Uncle Pio, a worker at the gambling house, after which Gilda and Johnny safely return to America as happy newlyweds.

I chose to use *Gilda* as my case study because, more than other film noir, *Gilda* is consciously aware of the acts of dressing and undressing and their narrative importance to plot and shaping of the *femme fatale*. Additionally, Columbia Pictures employed Jean Louis, a well-known French costumer, to design the clothes for *Gilda*—he spent an astounding sixty thousand dollars on her wardrobe. His sleek black satin dress for Gilda's performance of "Put the Blame on Mame" is arguably the most famous *femme fatale* dress in all of film noir, in part because he modeled

it after the highly controversial attire of John Singer Sargent's *Madame X* (Fig. 1).⁵ I argue that Gilda's continual dressing and undressing in the film indeed serves a diegetic purpose, as her variety of wardrobe (negligees, white evening gowns, and black slinky dresses) signifies the complexity and multifarious personalities of the *femme fatale* character. Dressing and undressing Gilda's body are actions pregnant with power in the film, as characters Ballin Mundson, Johnny Farrell, and Gilda all compete for the control to create/dress and dismantle/disrobe the *femme fatale*. In understanding Gilda's character via her diegetic, fashionable, and mutable clothes, the *femme fatale* is exposed as a complex being defying stereotype by the variety of her wardrobe, but who nonetheless is fashioned in her black slinky dresses by masculine constructions of the fatal woman.

Before I begin my analysis, I must first clarify two points. First, as any film historian will corroborate, film noir is an artificial genre made up of a diverse array of heterogeneous movies.⁶ Yet I agree with the scholarship of Ula Lukszo that the costuming in film noir, particularly of the *femme fatale* and stock male characters, is essentially uniform (Lukszo 65). While my analysis of *femme fatale* fashion is limited to one movie, I do feel legitimized to make broader conclusions about the couture of dangerous women in the whole of the genre. Second, there has been contention in scholarship over whether Gilda really constitutes a true *femme fatale* because she is pitiable and "knowable" (Dyer 91-99). I agree with *The Film Studies Dictionary* definition of *femme fatale*—"a female character who uses her beauty to lure and entrap men, leading to their downfall and, usually, death" (Blandford, Grant, and Hillier 95-96)—and also hold that the *femme fatale* is an elusive character. Because Gilda fits the requirements of my definition, I contend that Gilda is a *femme fatale* and that her unusual personality and non-traditional actions broaden our understanding of and add to the complexity of the sirens of the silver screen.

Indecently Underdressed

In *Gilda* the *femme fatale*'s clothes are a synecdoche for her character. Johnny Farrell most brazenly makes the connection when he refers to Gilda as Ballin's "laundry" that he has been assigned to drop off and pick up. Of course meant as an insulting slight, this nickname accurately associates Gilda's character with her clothing. Such a connection is consistent with film noir, where a *femme fatale*'s clothing often signifies

5. Even today the dress is commemorated for its bold fashion statement: in 2009 *The Independent* listed Gilda's satin dress as one of "the ten best film fashion moments" in history. See Laura Davis.

6. The name was given after the fact by French film critics who noticed commonality between American movies produced in the 1940s. Some films categorized as film noir lack an actual *femme fatale* character or detective.

the key elements of her character: allurements and power (Lukszo 62). Even more generally, as Jane Gaines writes in her essay on women's dress in classical Hollywood, "costumes are fitted to characters as a second skin," rendering and relaying narrative information about the character to the viewer (181). More specifically in her treatment of women's costuming, Gaines argues that "a woman's dress and demeanor, much more than a man's, indexes psychology; if costume represents interiority, it is she who is turned inside out on screen" (181). Gaines's scholarship facilitates my analysis of Gilda's clothes, for I strongly contend that her costumes reflect her "interior" thoughts and function as critical narrative signs. Indeed, Gilda's wardrobe is more complicated than simply slinky black dresses, necessitating an examination of her clothing as signifiers for the complexity of her character.



Fig. 2: Rita Hayworth in her *désabillé* as Gilda, *Gilda*, 1946.

Gilda spends much of her on screen time wearing transparent sleepwear/underdresses, on one level connoting beds and her lecherous activities as a *femme fatale*, but on another connoting her inability to choose how to dress and act, mirroring her indecision and qualms about her old lover, Johnny Farrell, and her disastrous marriage with Ballin. Appearing in underdresses gives Gilda verisimilitude—glimpses of who she truly is—and a humane look at the *femme fatale* unmasked and exposed. However, the full revelation of Gilda will not occur until she is completely exposed, stripped of clothes and character. Nevertheless, these thin underdresses reflect the multi-layered nature of Gilda.

Gilda is first introduced in the film wearing a three hundred dollar pink *désabillé*, posed as a seductress in her bedroom lair, a potent image that undeniably defines Gilda from the outset as a *femme fatale*. Before Gilda appears on screen, the camera leads the viewer to her ornate and feminized bedroom, replete with a long vanity table and wall-sized mirror, setting the stage for the entrance of a seducing siren. Answering her husband's question, "Gilda, are you decent?" Gilda appears on screen and responds in a throaty voice while throwing her mane back and simultaneously exposing her shoulders, "Me?" (Fig. 2). The screenshot captures a very "indecent" woman—a *femme fatale* half-undressed in her boudoir directly gazing at the viewer and taunting them with a reply that indicates she is anything but decent. Of course "decent" is a double entendre in this context, referring to both her state of dress and her overall moral character. The question, then, merges the mean-

ing of the clothes and the character of Gilda, a connective relationship that will remain constant throughout the film. This first impression of the indecent Gilda aligns her with the stereotyped *femme fatale* character: sexually alluring, powerful, “the Other,” and the object of desire.

As the scene progresses, however, Gilda’s self-assured posturing falters for a moment and her costume transitions from fashionable and alluring to exposing and embarrassing. Johnny Farrell is close behind Ballin when they enter Gilda’s dressing room. As Gilda looks to the right of Ballin and sees Johnny Farrell in her boudoir, her self-assured façade breaks, and she lifts the sleeve of her negligee to cover an exposed shoulder. This moment is crucial, for it marks not only a change in the demeanor of Gilda from appealing and confident to disconcerted; it also marks a change in the signification of her nightgown. Now Gilda feels unmasked, stripped by a staring Johnny Farrell who not only penetrates her negligee with his gaze, but also the reason for her sham wedding. Farrell’s presence has changed Gilda’s *déshabillé* from a fashionable symbol of sexual power to a coarse mockery of her sexuality. But in metaphorically



Fig. 4: Rita Hayworth in beige tunic as Gilda, *Gilda*, 1946.

stripping Gilda of her clothes (foreshadowing the literal stripping of Gilda later in the film), Johnny has given the audience a candid glimpse of a used woman, terrified and scrambling to regain lost control—a view that adds another dimension to the usual imperious and unbreakable *femme fatale*. However, Gilda soon recovers from the shock of seeing Johnny and regains power in the scene by adjusting her nightgown and mercilessly teasing Johnny in dialogue.

In lifting the shoulder of her nightgown, Gilda attempts to retake power over her body and sexual allurements, to cover what Farrell has laid bare. Her action of covering her shoulder makes the first reference to John Singer Sargent’s iconic painting, *Madame X*. Sargent’s original painting, displayed at the Paris Salon of 1884, depicted Madame Gautreau with the right shoulder strap of her dress hanging dissolutely off her shoulder—a choice that elicited much consternation in audiences viewing the painting (Kilmurray and Ormond 102) (Fig. 3). For them the loose shoulder strap exposed too much of her bluish-tinted skin and suggested undress and immoral behavior.⁷ To appease the vitriolic audience, Sargent repainted Madame Gautreau with her shoulder strap properly in place. Gilda’s ex-

7. For a more detailed account of Madame Gautreau’s skin, see Susan Sidlauskas.

posed shoulders signify similar lecherous behavior and indecency. For both Madame Gautreau and Gilda, the action of covering an exposed shoulder restores decency to some extent. While Sargent had control of the portrayal of Madame Gautreau's body, Gilda has the power to restore modesty to her own body.

Gilda wears other underdresses in the movie which, unlike her *déshabillés*, do not overtly suggest sexuality but rather add complicated layers to Gilda's character. Ballin assigns Johnny the difficult responsibility of following and attempting to control the movements of Gilda, who proves elusive in her nightly escapades. After returning from an evening of swim-



Fig. 5: Rita Hayworth in nightgown as Gilda, *Gilda*, 1946.

ming Gilda sneaks into Ballin's casino in the early hours of the morning and sings her first rendition of "Put the Blame on Mame" in a beige dress, to casino employee and father figure Uncle Pio (Fig. 4). Unlike her negligee, Gilda's beige dress does not immediately suggest that she is "underdressed" or indecently dressed. Rather, the thick material of her outfit covers her body and is belted in the center. However, when Johnny comes into the room and yells at her to "get dressed," he unequivocally labels her as underdressed. In this state of quasi-undress, Gilda first reveals to Johnny her fears about Ballin: "I'm afraid! Getting married on the rebound is so stupid." Hayworth delivers the lines with a sincerity devoid of sexual undertones, and the close camera shots give her character verity. Stripped down to this utilitarian gown, Gilda psychologically and physically exposes herself to Johnny, candid about her disastrous relationship. Furthermore, Uncle Pio's presence gives credibility to Gilda's sincerity. Addressing the character of Uncle Pio, film historian Mary Ann Doane argues that he signifies the "common man and down-to-earth folk wisdom" of the movie (Doane 104). Uncle Pio, then, functions in the scene as a symbol of Gilda's trustworthiness.

It is fitting that Gilda wears another thick underdress/nightgown on the evening of her climactic kiss with Johnny Farrell, which finally proves the mutual and sincere love between the characters (Fig. 5). Donned in a thick nightgown that looks shapeless even on Hayworth's curvaceous body, Gilda's costume again suggests a moment of truth, unscripted and deviant from the stereotypical seducing *femme fatale*. While Gilda has an ostentatious ring on her manicured hand, the overall sense of her costume is one stripped down, subtly sexual in its connotations of beds and sleeping but predominately modest and



Fig. 6: Rita Hayworth in the “Fra Angelico dress” as Gilda, *Gilda*, 1946.



Fig. 7: Rita Hayworth in the first white evening gown as Gilda, *Gilda*, 1946.

genuine. When Gilda kisses Johnny, her costume signals she is being candid, affording the audience another glimpse of the knowable and relatable side of the *femme fatale*.

In closely analyzing the role of sleepwear and casual wear in *Gilda*, it is evident that these dresses show Gilda’s more feeling and accessible side. Gilda’s nightgowns conform to the stereotypical 1940s negligees in length and material (Peterson and Kellogg 232). Except for her French negligee, Gilda’s underdresses and nightgowns do not make a bold fashion statement, but rather showcase standard 1940s sleepwear. As opposed to the glittering tightly-laced gowns of the usual *femme fatale*, these normative and loose nightdresses reflect the more knowable and sincere aspects of Gilda’s character, helping to reveal a three-dimensional and multi-layered *femme fatale* persona.

The Angelic Dominatrix

Whereas I have been treating the “lesser” costumes of Gilda’s wardrobe, I shall now turn my attention to the fashionable dresses with cinched-in waists that she adorns to seduce men—dresses more typical of a *femme fatale*. However, even these canonical *femme fatale* gowns cannot simply be summarized as alluring and decorative in *Gilda*; they also carry unexpected symbolism and narrative importance about power.

Writing about the fashion of femmes fatales in both classic film noir and neo noir, Stella Bruzzi argues that when a dangerous woman wears white it is a “clear example of inverse symbolism” (Bruzzi 126). While Bruzzi does not use Gilda in her analysis, she still contends that the pale clothes of Kathie in *Out of the Past* and Cora in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* function as “narrative interjections that question, as well as underline, the *femme fatale’s* duplicity” (127). Deriding psychoanalytic scholarship, Bruzzi contends that the supposed omnipresent male gaze is “mocked” by these costumes, because they signify greater complexity than is perceived by such narrowly focused eyes. Bruzzi’s analysis is succinct and can easily be applied to the wardrobe of Gilda, which consists of three white gowns. Her pale wardrobe not only attests to her more angelic side, it also references her newlywed status, and heightens the contrast and discrepancy of her black satin dresses.

In describing the white evening gown Gilda wears to perform a dance after she has run away from Johnny, *Life* magazine⁸ claims that the embroidered design was taken from a Fra Angelico painting in an attempt to make Gilda look both “angelic and alluring” (34) (Fig. 6).⁹ Calling a Fra Angelico painting “alluring” is a misnomer, for his paintings were not intended to be sexually tempting to viewers. Instead, the elegance of his style renders his figures, and specifically angels, innocent and graceful. Supposedly, then, modeled after the art of an early Renaissance master, Gilda’s gown carries connotations of goodness, religion, and innocence. However, Gilda wears this belly-exposing gown in her performance of an exotic dance, somewhat weakening its connections to the innocent angels of Fra Angelico’s paintings. Unlike when she is attired in nightgowns, Gilda appears more of the siren in her white evening dress as she dances with the intent to attract another male to marry her. Nevertheless, the gown still functions as a “narrative interjection,” illustrating on a more general scale the multifarious character of Gilda.

While her other white evening gowns do not feature elements copied from artistic masters, they too still hold the supposed “alluring and angelic” elements of her Fra Angelico gown. Gilda wears a gold-encrusted white gown her first night at Ballin’s casino, that shimmers in the light (Fig. 7), and then a white halter-top gown belted in the middle the second night (Fig. 8). With Rita Hayworth’s soft dark hair billowing around her shoulders, she looks truly angelic in these dresses. However, her actions in these gowns are anything but angelic. In her gold tunic,

8. The very month *Gilda* was released, *Life* magazine published an article on the wardrobe Jean Louis prepared for Rita Hayworth’s portrayal of Gilda.

9. I have been unable to find any documentary evidence that Jean Louis truly used a Fra Angelico painting as inspiration for this gown; nevertheless *Life* magazine’s interpretation is still valid and shaped the way her gown was perceived by 1940s audiences.



Fig. 8: Rita Hayworth in a second white evening gown as Gilda, *Gilda*, 1946.



Fig. 9: Gilda being dressed by Ballin, *Gilda*, 1946.

Gilda even walks in a seductive hip-swiveling manner, her body's curves accentuated by the tightness of the dress around her stomach and thighs. She coyly taunts Johnny while drinking and then, against protocol, dances with an unidentified Argentinian gentleman whom she graces with her telephone number. The next night, when she is adorned in her halter-top dress, Gilda again behaves "badly": she gambles and runs off drinking with a young man she meets at the casino. Of course as proved above, despite these typical *femme fatale* actions, Gilda does have a kind and morally good side—it is merely alluded to, not manifested, while she wears her white gowns.

While I agree with Bruzzi's argument that pale dresses serve as "narrative interjections" in *Gilda*, they also carry other meanings specific to the film. It is significant that Gilda only wears these white dresses in the beginning of the film, a detail that suggests her gowns reflect her newlywed state. Gilda's white gowns constantly remind the audience of her unfortunate marriage to Ballin. After knowing him one day, she married him "on the rebound." While signifying her stupidity and potent *femme fatale* charm that ensnares men even as powerful and controlling as Ballin, the dress also reminds viewers that she is a victim. Caught in a relationship with a frighteningly ruthless man, the audience cannot help but be sympathetic toward Gilda. Her white gowns even connote martyrdom—not only married to Ballin, Gilda is constantly victim to verbal and physical abuse by Johnny. Furthermore, her white wardrobe could even suggest a Gothic novel iconography, with Gilda playing the part of the young and pale naïve girl constantly running and hiding from the vampiric Ballin, who is always elegantly dressed in black and even dons a Dracula-like cape the night of the masquerade party. Likewise, the whiteness of her gowns symbolizes virginity, a virtue that Gilda most likely lost long ago. While a naïve and

virginal *femme fatale* might seem contradictory, Gilda's white wardrobe signifies the possibility of these characteristics for a fatal woman. So in mocking, pitying, and celebrating Gilda, these white gowns convey mixed meanings of a complex character.

The white gowns also dramatically contrast with Gilda's black wardrobe that pervades the second half of the film. It is of note that Jean Louis used binary models for the centerpieces of Gilda's white wardrobe and black wardrobe: a nameless Fra Angelico painting and John Singer Sargent's *Madame X*. Not only do their representations differ visually, they are binary symbols—the angel and the devilish woman. By initially only dressing Gilda in white, Louis creates a strong visual contrast for Gilda's appearance in black, overtly emphasizing her evilness and *femme fatale* status. While the extreme color symbolism of the black and white gowns is mediated by Gilda's more neutral colored negligees, the evening gowns still heighten the symbolic and visual effect of their opposite color.

And yet despite the power inherent in her clothes, Gilda does not have full rein over her sexual allurement because she is dependent upon others to dress her body. Gilda has trouble “with zippers.” Unable to ever get into one of her white gowns without Ballin's help, Gilda is incapable of dressing herself (Fig. 9). She calls to Ballin as she is putting on her gold-beaded gown for her first night at the casino: “Ballin, will you come up and help me into this thing, my darling?” Consequently, she also needs his help to get out of her form-fitting dress—as he eases her dress off she says, “zippers throw me.” It is symbolically important that Gilda does not have complete control over the fashioning of her body. In order to appear as a *femme fatale* in her slinky dresses, she is reliant on Ballin. He becomes her dresser, and therefore has substantial control in creating Gilda's stereotypical *femme fatale* look. In dressing Gilda, Ballin also marks his ownership of her look, both as her husband and as a representative of the male spectator. The film insightfully makes clear that the stereotypical *femme fatale* is a male construction.

But on the night of carnival, Ballin's dressing services are replaced by the maid-servant Maria. This shift in power also mirrors the change in Gilda's wardrobe: after this evening of revelry and murder, Gilda begins appearing in black gowns and suits. And as her wardrobe reflects her interiority, it also marks the end of Gilda's marriage and subservience to Ballin. However, new men are relegated to the role of helping Gilda remove her black dresses, a power dynamic I shall discuss in my next section.

Gilda's angelic, slinky white dresses convey a complex iconography on screen that matches Gilda's depth of character. In suggesting that her portrayal as a *femme fatale* is dependent upon a male, I corroborate my earlier argument that Gilda has more power in defining herself when dressed in an un-gilded negligee. While her pale dresses signify a variety of meanings, it is Gilda's black wardrobe that epitomizes Gilda's stereotyped *femme fatale* identity.

Madame Mame

The only dress in *Gilda* that has been treated by scholars is the *Madame X*-inspired black satin gown Gilda wears to perform her final rendition of "Put the Blame On Mame" (Fig. 10). While universally acknowledged as Jean Louis' masterpiece and visual climax of the film, only Jill Fields has truly attempted to read the dress in terms of its origin. Her discussion of the gown (Fields 149-50), however, does not address the implications of fashioning Gilda as a modern day *Madame X*. A more clear view of the significance and reception of Sargent's controversial painting is needed to understand why this dress worked so well in conveying the sexual potency and power of Gilda. However, unlike Madame Gautreau's gown, Gilda moves in her dress, demanding an analysis of how she is both restrained and able to exert power via her dance and striptease. Similarly,

In dressing Gilda, Ballin also marks his ownership of her look, both as her husband and as a representative of the male spectator. The film makes clear that the stereotypical *femme fatale* is a male construction.

the words and music of "Put the Blame on Mame" must be examined to see how they help define the meaning and significance of Gilda's gown. Indeed, like her *déshabillés*, Gilda's black satin dress undeniably expresses the most stereotypical aspects of her *femme fatale* nature, via its color and sensual fit to her body—referencing Madame Gautreau's debauchery and role in temporarily ruining Sargent's career—and its movement during the dance number. Gilda's striptease and then Johnny's ultimate "disrobing" of Gilda provide evidence that the conventional *femme fatale* is just associated with Gilda's gown and can consequently be removed simultaneously from her character and body.

Madame Gautreau's biography aligns her with typical *femme fatale* features, exacerbated by her portrait and its contribution to the financial downfall of John Singer Sargent. Her rise to popularity in Paris was in part mediated by her mother, who helped establish her reputation as a "professional beauty" (Sidlauskas

11). Known for her eccentric skincare (Madame Gautreau applied lavender powder to her body every day, resulting in bluish skin tones), contemporary accounts also spoke of her graceful movements and overt ambitions to rise in social status (11). Not surprisingly, Madame Gautreau eagerly accepted Sargent's offer to execute her portrait—a painting that exaggerated her siren-like features. As Susan Sidlauskas, an American scholar interested in the portrayal of skin in nineteenth-century art, poetically states, Sargent painted a woman “who had already painted herself,” in terms of her bizarre maquillage and carefully constructed social appearance (11). Adorned in a dangerously low-cut dress made of a velvet bustier and a satin skirt designed by Félix Poussineau, a famous Parisian couturier, Madame Gautreau haughtily turns her gaze away from the spectator in order to display her profile and body as sexual objects to be enjoyed. Sargent portrays her having control over her body, especially as she steadily holds her back and neck in an awkward and nearly impossible position and wills her body to be visually consumed by a male gaze. Her ivory and lavender skin vividly contrasts with the blacks in her dress and the artificially reddened hair and ear tip. Sidlauskas argues that such contrast suggests imminent “death and decay,” making relevant the violent and macabre aspects of the *femme fatale* (12).



Fig. 10: Rita Hayworth in film still of the black satin *Madame X* gown. *Gilda*, 1946.

Furthermore, as Jill Fields points out, in this context the color of her dress becomes a “risqué sensual statement” (145). As Anne Hollander further notes, by the nineteenth century “black clothing had . . . its connotations of fatal sexuality . . . A lady in black is not only dramatic and dignified but also dangerous” (376). Though the history of black clothes is rich and varied,¹⁰ it is late nineteenth-century artworks like *Madame X* that specifically imbue dark gowns with a *femme fatale* iconography, later employed and expanded in film noir. Indeed, during the *fin de siècle* period black evening gowns were increasingly worn, not just by widows mourning death, but by socialites like Madame Gautreau and Sarah Bernhardt. As Valerie Steele maintains, during this period the black dress was the most “becoming” and “distinguished” gown a *femme fatale* could wear (“Femme” 325). Sargent’s imperial positioning of Madame Gautreau, as well as his choice to paint her in

10. For a brief overview see Valerie Steele, *The Black Dress*.

a fashionable black dress that carried connotations of seduction and dangerous woman, evinces why Jean Louis would have considered this painting the quintessential *femme fatale* model.

But Madame Gautreau proved most deadly and *femme fatale*-like when her image marred Sargent's career in Paris. Critics and Parisian society vehemently objected to the portrait of a ghostly woman, exuding lechery. The Hon. Evan Charteris, K.C. wrote in the 1920s about the painting's reception: "Here was an occasion such as [the Parisian public] had not had since *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*, *L'Olympia*, and the Exhibition of the Independents" (60). In elevating Sargent's painting to the status of Manet's revolutionary artworks of female nudity, Charteris overly emphasizes the avant-garde aspects of Sargent's work. Yet spectators did yell "Detestable!" "Boring!" "Monstrous!" at its salon viewing, primarily commenting on its indecency (Davis 178). Critics claimed that Sargent had marred Madame Gautreau's real life beauty: "This portrait is simply offensive in its insolent ugliness and defiance of every rule of art (178). By the second week of its showing, Sargent's painting had been blamed for the failure of the entire exhibition. Sargent was left stripped of artistic credibility in Paris's eye, and certainly had no chance of selling his portrait for a large sum. After fixing the slipped shoulder strap in the painting, Sargent left for England, hoping to improve public opinion. In 1916 he sold the blighted painting to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, making it likely that Jean Louis saw the painting in person. The lethal woman had marred Sargent's reputation, only adding greater significance to her *femme fatale* status in the public's eye.

In costuming Gilda in a *Madame X* dress for her show-stopping performance of "Put the Blame on Mame," Jean Louis chose a model of deadly femininity. Not just in dress, Gilda held much in common with the life of Madame Gautreau: Gilda, a red-headed expatriate who married for money, plays the part of socialite in Argentina, brings ruin to two men, and dresses as a fashion icon. Madame Gautreau's black evening gown had continued its connotations of risqué sensuality into the twentieth century, making the gown an ideal choice for adorning a *femme fatale*. Louis modified a few aspects of the *Madame X* dress to better fit Hayworth's body and the 1940s style. Because Hayworth had recently given birth, Louis designed a bow to wrap around the front of the dress, cinching in the waist, and requiring that Hayworth wear a corset (Chierichetti 161). In an interview years after *Gilda*, Jean Louis explained that he fashioned a "harness like you put on a horse" inside the dress with "grosgrain under the bust with darts and three stays, one in the centre, two on the sides" ("Obituary"). The result was a slimming, dazzling dress that Hayworth could dance in confidently. Unlike

Madame X, Louis only used satin in the dress, giving her costume a lustrous and tangible appeal on film.

Additionally, to update its style to the contemporary 1940s fashion, Louis made the dress strapless, exposing more of the *femme fatale's* skin, and added long black gloves and a diamond necklace (Fields 149). While women often wore long gloves to nightly affairs, evening gowns were not strapless in the 1940s—women wore floor length dresses, often high necked and with shoulder pads (Chierchetti 158, Steel Berg 266). It was not until 1947, when Christian Dior introduced “The New Look,” that strapless gowns with fitted bodices became the rage in America (Peterson 237). Jean Louis, then, predated Dior in introducing the strapless gown, giving further significance to Gilda as a fashionable trendsetter.¹¹ Despite these alterations, the dress still functions in a manner similar to the *Madame X* portrait. The dress symbolizes diabolical power and objectifies Gilda’s body. The satiny texture makes it lustrous on film, and the gown hugs Gilda’s form in a revealing way. With a literal audience watching Gilda perform “Put the Blame on Mame,” the dress draws attention to her body and sexual charm. Like Madame Gautreau, Gilda is haughty and imperious in her gown. She enters the casino with great self-confidence, sweeping a black cape from her back and immediately beginning her performance. Her dance moves consist of long strides, bold horizontal arm movements, and swaying of the hips—actions that put her dress in confident and assertive motion. The aristocratic feel of *Madame X* does not transfer to Hayworth’s portrayal of Gilda. Instead, Gilda becomes a showgirl, inviting spectators to feast on her body.

Her song “Put the Blame on Mame” illustrates the life of a *femme fatale*, coordinating seamlessly with Gilda’s dress and body language. Written specifically for *Gilda* in 1946 by Allan Roberts and Doris Fisher, the song narrates how Mame’s deadly sexuality caused the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, the Great Blizzard of 1888, and the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906. Of course Mame was chosen as the woman’s name in order to rhyme with the word “blame,” and that is precisely what the song suggests—blame Mame’s sexuality for all natural disasters, whether “hot or cold” (Fields 14).¹² Of further note, “Mame” is a derivative of the term “ma’am,” which in turn is a contraction of the French term “Madame.” Gilda’s song, then, creates further connections with *Madame X*, as it describes the nameless “Mesdames” who have caused great sexual and natural disasters. In this way, the song and Gilda’s dress together reference Sargent’s *Madame X*.

11. Note that in 1943 Hayworth’s costumer, Travis Banton, used a strapless gown for her role in *Chorus Girl*. While Louis was innovative in making Gilda’s dress strapless, he was not the first.

12. “Hot or cold” also carries sexual connotations.

The song is addressed to a male audience: "Put the Blame on Mame, Boys," indicates that it is males who associate lethal actions with the *femme fatale* character. In terms of motifs in the film, putting the blame on Mame is akin to dressing a *femme fatale* in her seductive evening wear, helping construct her potent image. In this particular scene, putting the blame on Mame results in fashioning Gilda in a black dress, full of licentious connotations, which is why it is paradoxical that as Gilda performs, she starts removing her clothes. First, Gilda slowly peels her black gloves off, leaving her white arms bare. Next, she removes her diamond necklace and throws it out into the audience. Then she makes a move to strip away her *Madame X* dress, but having trouble with zippers asks for a male audience member's help. Her actions evince her defiance of the male-constructed *femme fatale* type. Un-fashioning her body, she releases herself from the constructed, stereotyped *femme fatale* image. Of course striptease is a highly sexualized act and it would be wrong to argue that the striptease is not sexualized in this scene, but the dance can also be read as a simultaneously liberating act for Gilda.

Gilda never fully exposes her body, and an enraged and embarrassed Johnny Farrell takes her off stage, confirming his power over her body, dress, and image. Violently slapping her outside the dance hall, Farrell truly does cinematically strip her of her clothes: while she is still wearing her dress, the camera stays focused only on her bare shoulders and crying face. The strong and controlling *femme fatale* figure of the dance floor has been subverted in the film by an overriding male character. Nevertheless, Gilda's performance still showcased a truly powerful woman able to expose the artificial masculine construction of the *femme fatale*.



Fig. 11 (above): Rita Hayworth in pinstripe skirt suit as Gilda, *Gilda*, 1946.

Fig. 12 (left): John Rawlings, Mrs. William S. Paley in Jean Louis' "Carnegie Suit," 1946.

Conclusion: A Newly Suited Gilda

After her harrowing experience with Johnny Farrell, Gilda changes her wardrobe one last time, a change in costume that is no longer controlled by a male dresser. Donning a pinstripe skirt suit, Gilda takes charge of her situation (Fig. 11). However, this is not the first time Gilda has worn her business suit. When she left Johnny Farrell for the first time, Gilda returned to Argentina in a suit, ready to take the legal action necessary to get an annulment. With equal confidence Gilda dresses herself in her pinstripe suit again at the end of the movie, her outfit for traveling back to America and for leaving Johnny Farrell again. Lukszo suggests this change in wardrobe signifies that Gilda is penitent (Lukszo 62). To a certain extent, I agree with Lukszo. However, Gilda's penance started when she was still wearing negligees. Instead, her pinstripe business suit suggests that she has finally stripped all stereotypical *femme fatale* layers of clothing from her body and has adorned her figure anew with clothes signifying a new type of power. As many scholars have noted in the past, almost all film noir men dress the same way: gray suits, fedoras, and trench coats. Gilda seems to cross over to their wardrobe styles in wearing a fedora-like hat and a suit, albeit a feminized one. In doing so, she no longer appears as "the Other" in the film or the sexual object for males to watch and enjoy. Subsequently, her clothes no longer signal feminine sexual power, but instead a liberating type of female power that is not dependent upon male fashioning or the male gaze. Additionally, it seems likely that Gilda's suit was inspired by the Carnegie suit that Jean Louis designed in the 1940s while working for Hattie Carnegie's maison de couture (Fig. 12). The suit had a fitted top, square shoulders, and cinched-in waist, a style similarly used in Gilda's pinstripe suit. In its day, Louis's Carnegie suit was worn by "everybody who was anybody," suggesting the suit signified societal and personal power (Staggs 255).

Analyzing Gilda's fashion allows for deeper conclusions to be made about the genre of film noir as a whole. As evidenced in my paper, the *femme fatale* cannot be pigeonholed into narrow definitions. And as her clothes reflect her interiority, they too become complex signifiers of the *femme fatale* character. Gilda's vacillation in wardrobe between negligees, white evening gowns, and black satin gowns suggests the vacillations in her character. Furthermore, Gilda makes the process of getting dressed meaningful in terms of who has the ultimate control over the fashioning of the *femme fatale* body. The film endorses the misogyny of film noir, for it is males who construct the stereotyped image of the *femme fatale* in the black slinky dress. Yet when Gilda's costumes are understood as narrative symbols, they also become Gilda's means to power and signifiers of her complex character. While other film noir may not allow costuming the same diegetic powers, their slinky *femme fatale* dresses

should not be read purely as an objectification of the siren's sexual power but rather as key to understanding the multifaceted nature of the *femme fatale* character.

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Inconstant Moon

Michelle Hubbard

Sweet Moon,
How full now?
Six days ago
Your heavy light
Pulled me.
Now my sea is quiet.

Contributors

Chelsea Adams is a senior honors student studying English and editing at BYU. She is a freelance editor, a creative writer, and an avid blues dancer. If she's not reading or writing, you'll find her on the dance floor.

Jen Bracken-Hull graduated from BYU in 2012 with a degree in English literature and a minor in international development. She is currently pursuing graduate studies at Columbia University in New York City.

Emily Holmstead is a world-traveling Bollywood aficionado, currently studying at BYU. She is an English major and an editing minor. She is interested in intercultural communication and women's issues, particularly in South Asia and the Middle East.

Michelle Hubbard returned to BYU at the tender age of 41 to pursue a bachelor's in English with an editing minor. She has been a slush reader for *Leading Edge Magazine*, *Inscape*, and *AWE: A Woman's Experience*. She was recently selected for publication with *Leading Edge Magazine* for their "Best First Chapter of a Novel Contest." She also works as an on-call librarian for Pleasant Grove and is a volunteer for the "Writing and Illustrating for Young Readers" conference in June, 2013.

Felicia Jones is from Draper, Utah and currently a senior at BYU studying social cultural anthropology with a minor in photography. Her interests include cultures and photojournalism. She enjoys interdisciplinary pursuits and would eventually like to use photography as a way of teaching people about different aspects of their own cultures as well as others around the world.

Erik Linton. As a public health master's student at BYU, Erik Linton incorporates cultural, political, and religious themes into his pieces. He believes that countries and borders have been created, policies have been made, books have been written, but women have been largely excluded from the world's history. He believes our future is in the arms of mothers, and wants his art to illustrate the essential influence of women on the individual, the home, the community, the economy, and the world as a whole.

Aubrey Luddington is finishing up her senior year in the English program at BYU. She served as head of the copy-editing team for this issue. She is pursuing minors in editing and Russian.

Karen McKay. Before graduating from BYU in April 2012 in studio art and art education, Karen McKay moved to Washington D.C. to complete her student teaching. While there, she challenged parents to spend more time creating artistic responses with their elementary school children for an ORCA grant project. Since graduation, she has been involved with the Corcoran College of Art+Design's program called ArtReach and the Playseum Upstairs teaching art to youth and children.

Kathryn Muhlestein was born in Durham, North Carolina. She grew up in a large family with 7 brothers, 3 sisters, and approximately 450 books. At a young age she fell in love with the wonders of art and design and self-published her first magazine at the age of 11 (two copies were distributed). She studied graphic design at BYU and currently works as a designer at BYU Broadcasting. Her sister is currently serving an LDS mission in Arizona.

Rachel Payne. Originally from San Diego, Rachel Payne is an English master's student at BYU with an emphasis in rhetoric and composition. She is currently working on her thesis entitled, "Strict Mothers, Nurturing Fathers: Confusing Labels While Parenting Writing Ability." Her other research interests include performative gender constructs in Gaskell's gothic short stories and women in the Renaissance. Rachel teaches courses in writing and rhetoric at BYU and is currently a co-managing editor of AWE.

Susan Pickett is Catharine Chism Professor of Music Theory and Violin at Whitman College. During the past two decades she has uncovered the music of hundreds of women composers from the 17th-20th centuries. Her research has been featured by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, NPR, and "Good Morning America."

Rachel Ann Wise grew up in San Diego, California. Currently she is a second-year graduate student in art history at BYU and will be graduating in April 2013. Although her main area of study is early modern Netherlandish visual culture, she also has interests in film noir and early American movie culture.

Artist Statements

Erik Linton. Scratchboard became increasingly popular in Britain and France in the 19th century as it could be easily photographed, scaled, and reproduced for books and newspaper printing. Scratchboard incorporates a technique similar to engravings done on wood, metal, or linoleum; however, scratchboard etchings are produced by scratching through a thin layer of black India ink to reveal white China clay underneath. Different textures can be produced by using instruments such as knives, needle point, fiber glass, paint, and even steel wool. For these pieces I primarily used knife and needle point tools to produce the textures and light.

Women's Studies Annual Conference: Women, Race, and Ethnicity

Brigham Young University

November 7-9, 2013

The 3rd Annual Women's Studies Conference will focus on Women, Race, and Ethnicity. Women have been perceived as the "exotic" other, exhibited as curiosity objects, and have also succeeded sometimes in overcoming racial, gender, and social barriers. Women have worked as slaves, they have owned slaves, and they also have fought in the desegregation movement. Enslaved women have raised their masters' children, and transmitted their cultural heritage to their own children. Women have built both walls and bridges between racial and ethnic groups. Colonial arts and literatures have depicted women stereotypically, and postcolonial arts and literatures have allowed women's voices to be heard. Women, sometimes excluded and barely tolerated, can impose their presence as legitimate and gain recognition for their roles and contributions to society.

We invite scholars to submit 300-word abstracts for individual papers on these topics or other related themes. We also welcome advanced students to submit both a 100-word abstract, and an 8-10 page paper. Possible themes include, but are not limited to

- Women and slavery
- Women in colonial empires
- Race, ethnicity, and gender stereotypes
- Fighting discrimination, women in the desegregation movement
- Representation of race in colonial literature
- Women and postcolonial literature
- Orientalism, exoticism and racism
- Gender, race, and ethnicity as economic factors
- Women, race, and politics
- Gender, ethnicity, and race within the family
- Anthropological, legal, and ethical definitions of gender and race

Submissions should be sent to: BYUWSconference@gmail.com by May 19, 2013. Please include your name, title, academic and departmental affiliation, e-mail, mailing address and phone number, title of your paper, topic from the list above in which it may fit, and the abstract (students should also submit the 8-10 page paper).

