“CAN ANYBODY SEE?”: MASCULINITIES IN MUSICAL THEATRE AND POST-SECONDARY MUSICAL THEATRE TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

Twenty first-century post-secondary students demonstrate a dissonance with the musical theatre "canon" and current training methods. My research invites post-secondary students to contribute as critical co-investigators, utilizing discussion group research to engage my suppositions. I employ Raewyn Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity and adapt her model of gender relations into a framework for the examination of masculinity in musical theatre. My examination of the vocal scores of Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* and Pasek & Paul's *Dear Evan Hansen* provide diachronic case studies, making visible the persistence of hegemonic ideals in musical theatre. This research demonstrates that hegemonic masculinity has been sustained in popular musicals across time and is maintained in current post-secondary musical theatre training. I suggest a revised pedagogical approach based on Lucy Green's model of dialectical musical experience to build toward an engaged musicology for musical theatre.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the students who have shared their voices with me.

To Noah Beemer and Gunho Kwak
and all the students who ask questions that need better answers.

And to Shannon Gunn and Gabriela Bokros
teachers who saw, heard, and taught *me*.

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Adam White

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ii
Dedication iii
Acknowledgements iv
Table of Contents v
List of Tables vii
List of Figures viii

Chapter One: Introduction 1
- Review of Literature 5
- Theory and Methods 15
- Chapter Summaries 26

Chapter Two: Discussion Groups 28
- Discussion Group Methods 29
  - *Discussion Group Participants 30*
  - *Educator as Known Researcher 33*
- Dialectical Musical (Theatre) Experiences of Post-Secondary Students 36
- Musical Preferences and Listening Habits 37
- The Singing Voice and Vocal Range 41
- Dream Roles and Hegemonic Masculinity 48
- Marginalized and Subordinated Masculinities in Musical Theatre 49
- Conclusion 57

Chapter Three: A Framework for Examining Masculinities in Musical Theatre 59
- The Musical and Background 60
- A Framework for Examining Masculinity in Musical Theatre 62
  - *Adapting Connell's Four-fold Model for Musical Theatre 63*
  - *Musical Expressions of Femininity 66*
- "You heard my voice and knowed it was me": Masculinities in *Oklahoma!* 69
- Conclusion 90

Chapter Four: "Can Anybody See?": Masculinities in *Dear Evan Hansen* 92
- The Musical and Background 93
- Masculinities in *Dear Evan Hansen* 95
- Examining Relations 98
- Conclusion 110

Chapter Five: Conclusion 112
- "Lost in the In-Between": Hybrid Masculinities 112
- Suggestions for Further Research 116
- An Appeal for Engaged Musicology in Post-Secondary Musical Theatre Training ... 118

Works Cited List 121

Reference List 125

Appendices ... 130

Appendix A: Email Request to Post-Secondary MT Instructors ... 130
Appendix B: Discussion Group Moderator Guide ... 131
Appendix C: *Oklahoma!* musical numbers for male characters ... 134
Appendix C: *Dear Evan Hansen* musical numbers ... 135

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Discussion Group Participants 33
Table 2: Musical Preferences 38

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Green's Model of Dialectical Musical Experience 19
Example 2-1: Vocal ranges of characters noted by participants...................................... 45
Example 3-1: "Many A New Day", bars 26-27... 67
Example 3-2: "Many A New Day", bars 40-41... 68
Example 3-3: Vocal ranges of leading male characters in *Oklahoma!*........................... 73
Example 3-4: "Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin'", melodic shape of opening phrase........ 84
Example 3-5: "Surrey With the Fringe On Top"... 85
Example 3-6: "Surrey With the Fringe On Top", alternating thirds in melody............... 85
Example 3-7: "Surrey With the Fringe On Top"... 85
Example 3-8: "People Will Say We're in Love", melodic shape..................................... 87
Example 3-9: "Lonely Room".. 89
Example 4-1: Vocal ranges in *Dear Evan Hansen*.. 101
Example 4-2: "Waving Through A Window", melodic shape of opening phrase.......... 108
Example 4-3: The increasing intervals established in the verse of "Words Fail" 110
Example 5-1: Vocal ranges of Curly McLain and Evan Hansen................................... 115

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"As a genre, opera is not inherently flawed with racist sexist negative stereotypes. Instead, it works as a mouthpiece, a conduit, through which a reflection of a society's cultural ideology—which may include those stereotypes—can be heard and seen." (André, *Black Opera* 196).

Musicals are about men. This statement may seem at odds with familiar musicals, as they appear to feature larger-than-life female characters or simple love stories. Other cherished musicals seem to be a celebration of community or a testament to the human spirit. However, maleness is at the center of many—if not most—of these works. A man's singing voice may be the first we hear. A young man may be the first person we see, and his epistolary self-address the first spoken words of the libretto. Beyond the male characters that appear on the page and sing on the stage, it has most often been men behind the scenes: the celebrated composers, lyricists, librettists, directors, choreographers, and producers in the history of the Broadway musical have overwhelmingly been male. However, masculinity in musical theatre continues to be "invisible". While there are male lovers, heroes or villains, fathers, brothers, and sons catalyzing the stories maleness does not often appear to be the central issue on the musical stage and is therefore taken for granted and goes unexamined. This research aims to visibilize masculinity visible in musical theatre.

I suggest that masculinity in musical theatre goes unseen as it does in culture and society. Some musicals seduce the audience into perceiving a progressive masculine representation, however closer investigation determines these are not as evolved as they first appear—or as we hope. Musicals may change to suit contemporary tastes and employ popular musical styles, but the underlying content regarding the representation of gender relations remains static.

I contend that *hegemonic masculinity* has been sustained in popular musicals across time and is maintained in current post-secondary musical theatre training, and consequently suggest

interventions based on the work of feminist scholars. My research invites post-secondary students to contribute as critical co-investigators, utilizing discussion group research to engage my suppositions as a problem-posing educator. I employ Raewyn Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity and adapt her model of gender relations into a framework for the examination of masculinity in musical theatre. My examination of the vocal scores of Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* and Pasek & Paul's *Dear Evan Hansen* provide diachronic case studies, making visible the persistence of hegemonic ideals in musical theatre. I suggest a revised pedagogical approach based on Lucy Green's model of dialectical musical experience to build toward an engaged musicology for musical theatre.

"Everything's Up To Date"?: or the Unchanging Nature of Post-Secondary Musical Theatre Training

The study of "Golden Age"[1] material is privileged in post-secondary musical theatre performance training in Canada. "Golden Age" repertoire is prioritized for the first year of study in many training programs, where the articulated goal is to build a foundation with the oft-celebrated material from this era. This was the focus of my first year of study at college almost two decades ago, continues to be the focus of the two post-secondary programs in which I have taught in the past ten years, and is identified as the first material studied in many post-secondary musical theatre programs in Canada as recently as 2018.[2]

[1] The term "Golden Age" has begun to be questioned by authors employing critical perspectives to examine musical theatre history. While it has frequently been recognized by scholars as the period between 1943-1964, there is continued debate as the exact definition of this term, and the use of the conventions usually associated with the "integrated musical" in this period. In recognition of the currently contested term, and the stories and artists which are privileged in musicals of this period, I use the term "Golden Age" in quotes throughout. See Sternfeld and Wollman's "After the Golden Age", *The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical.*

[2] Input from instructors regarding the use of "Golden Age" material in their training programs was solicited by email from post-secondary programs across the country, and responses were received from six instructors representing: Canadian College of Performing Arts, BC; Grant MacEwan College, AB; St Lawrence College, ON; and Sheridan College, ON. The responses were generally received from program coordinators, or chairs/heads of the voice dept.

I began studying musical theatre performance in a conservatory-style post-secondary program in 2003. I had grown up studying music and was very new to musical theatre. I was also very new to my identity as a young gay man, having come out approximately two years earlier. When I had the opportunity to select my own material in acting classes I chose almost exclusively monologues and scenes from gay plays and by queer playwrights: these were the stories and voices that interested and inspired me as I tried to figure out how to act—and what theatre was. I wanted to talk about being in love with men after a lifetime of heterosexual narratives. These plays allowed me to connect to a world, a culture, and history that I was only just discovering, but I somehow understood.

There was no queer material easily available to me in singing lessons and musical theatre performance classes: musical theatre repertoire for a young baritone was overwhelmingly about getting or losing the girl. I was drawn instead to songs with ambiguous lyrics, or songs that were not about love and romance. I was chastised for singing "I'm Old Fashioned", as it had been written for a female character, and was therefore inappropriate for me to present in a performance class. I was encouraged to sing simple, cheery songs from traditional musicals: "Kansas City" from *Oklahoma!* was recommended. I resisted these suggestions and did not sing any Rodgers and Hammerstein material in my two years at college.

I continued to learn more about the art form and began to appreciate the craft of musical theatre's "great works" after graduating from my musical theatre diploma program. I gained a deeper appreciation for the works of the composers and lyricists who reigned during the "Golden Age" of Broadway, and beginnning to teach required me to learn more about the conventional history of musical theatre.

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for each specific institution, and therefore these respondents guide the content and principles of their program. The email request is included in the Appendix A.

As a teacher I observe students navigating familiar challenges. In singing lessons, all my male students are pre-occupied with extending their upper ranges and singing high; as a low-voiced singer in college I had shared this primary concern. There is the impression that *all* contemporary musicals require tenors, and that an impressive upper range is required to work in contemporary musical theatre. However, the musicals written before 1965 generally do not require the same high pitches that students are trying to reach. There's a wealth of material that doesn't require this range: why aren't students interested in singing this repertoire?

My initial approach to teaching musical theatre history classes reflected the way I was taught: an outline of the chronological progress of musical theatre's "great works" in the manner provided most frequently by the published music theatre history texts. However, the musicals of the "Golden Age" are increasingly met with limited familiarity and receive a tepid response from students: why do so few students find this interesting? One day a brave student suggests that she finds the material "boring" and that the stories and the performance style of these musicals are artificial. The comment is met with disdain and an aggressive defense by my co-instructor, but other classmates affirm the student's perspective.

I am curious about the tension between students' identities and their educational experiences during the study of "Golden Age" material. There is a disconnect that leads to a resistance or outright rejection of this repertoire. I hypothesize that tension between contemporary lived experiences and representation demonstrated in "Golden Age" musicals creates dissonance for post-secondary students. A pedagogical approach that embraces engaged musicology can invite a critical examination of musical theatre will allow for a variety of identities and lived experiences to inform contemporary perspectives.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Musical Theatre Scholarship

The critical examination of musical theatre is relatively recent. Musical theatre has generally been perceived as a middlebrow popular entertainment, and therefore frequently excluded from "serious" scholarship. The study of musical theatre as an academic discipline emerged in the 1990s (Wolf, *Oxford Handbook* 4), and while it has gained considerable traction in the past 30 years, there is a vast expanse of musical theatre content that has escaped examination, and frequently cited musicals and writers have yet to be examined from a variety of critical perspectives. In an attempt to disrupt what Whitfield describes as "the cool white guy narrative" in musical theatre history, "where it is white men who get to do almost all the cool, important, revolutionary stuff" (xiv), musical theater scholarship has been examining who is in musicals and who is excluded, who wrote them and whose contributions have gone unnoticed, and questioning what musicals say about the culture in which they were created, and how they speak to contemporary audiences.

Musical theatre history texts have rarely gone beyond chronological descriptions of the "great" musicals in the canon and the celebrated works of frequently cited innovators (Kern, Rodgers, Hammerstein, and Sondheim) to examine the relationship between musicals and their cultural contexts (Koger). Elizabeth Wollman contributes to this space with *A Critical Companion to the American Stage Musical* (2017), which can enhance the more standard musical theatre histories with greater historical context, consideration of America's cultural shifts throughout the 20th century, and the inclusion of antecedent works by marginalized creators that are frequently overlooked in conventional histories. John Bush Jones' writing

examines musicals as a reflection of American society, and organizes musicals by thematic and ideological content, tracing prevailing political and social thought as presented in the musical.

Identity and Representation in Musical Theatre

Musical theatre scholars are grappling with identity and representation in the art form. A great deal of writing has focused on race: the depiction of racialized characters in the musical theatre canon and celebrating and "uncovering" the contributions of marginalized creators and writers throughout the musical's history. Allen Woll provides a detailed history of "black musicals" from the late 1800s to the 1980s. This history, published in 1989, is a frequent sourcebook for those examining marginalized musical theatre histories. This also sets the stage for questions about what defines a "black musical": Samuel O'Connell reviews the various writing on the subject to ask whether a musical is "black" based on its characters, its cast, its creators, or its intended audience, and ultimately suggests that it is based on "the music itself" (158). Brian Herrera has provided an overview of the representation of Latinx culture in musical theatre, and Broderick D.V. Chow has offered the positionality "seeing as Filipino" in response to his culturally and personally informed reading of the London production of *Here Lies Love*.

Warren Hoffman's *The Great White Way: Race and the Broadway Musical* is perhaps most closely aligned with the intentions of my research. Hoffman approaches the history of the musical theatre through a critical whiteness lens, recognizing that musicals have generally presented whiteness as the "norm" and seemingly do not depict racialized content unless race and ethnicity is the stated subject of a musical (i.e., *South Pacific, Flower Drum Song*). I agree with Hoffman's assertion that "the musical is uniquely positioned, given its combination of music and text, to carefully hide its hegemonic racial politics in plain view of its audiences" (11).

Hoffman's examination of *Oklahoma!* argues that the musical's setting in the early 20th century American frontier, with the opposing farmers and cowboys united against the unseen threat of Native Americans supports the mid-century construction of whiteness while Americans are fighting in World War II. In my research, I aim to make visible the ideologies of masculinity that are embedded in musical theatre, and similarly look to *Oklahoma!* to demonstrate how hegemonic gendered ideals are "hidden in plain view" in this celebrated and often produced musical.

Gender in Musical Theatre

The examination of gender in musical theatre has generally been focused on women. I am attempting to give voice to what is unremarked about masculinity in musical theatre and building on the existing work by considering masculinity in musical theatre. As gender is understood as relational, framed as a binary or continuum between masculinity and femininity, the research regarding women and femininity in musical theatre provides an excellent foundation to ground my work. Masculinity studies have been built upon feminist theory, and this current research would not be possible without the previous feminist examinations of musical theatre.

Stacy Wolf interrogates gender and sexuality in Broadway musicals, and provides feminist readings of musicals and musical conventions. Her work provides a powerful exhortation to investigate gender in musicals. Wolf uses performance analysis to examine several musical theatre conventions, including: the "I want song";[3] the heterosexual love duet;

[3] The "I want" song is generally considered a requisite of an integrated musical and is frequently present in musicals which adhere to "Golden Age" conventions. "The hero has to want something that is hard to get, and go after it come what may" (Viertel 53). The "I want song" usually appears early in the musical, and helps to focus the dramaturgical thrust of the musical. The character is who sings the song is generally the center of the story, and the objective revealed in this song will lead the audience through the musical.

homosocial duets, trios, or chorus numbers; and others. Wolf examines what characters *do* as male and female in the musical libretto; what they *sing* in a musical score; and how characters *relate* to one another as men and women. Much of her published body of work is focused on the representation of women in musical theatre.

Wolf provides the concept of "dissonant pleasure", which she defines as a feminist stance in which a response to a musical can simultaneously be "admiring and disappointed, celebratory and critical" ("*Hamilton's* Women" 168). A critical examination of particular—and particularly beloved—musicals is likely to elicit this response in both the researcher, colleagues, and students, and this concept is extremely valuable for the critical examination of musical theatre and implications for tension in the post-secondary training environment.

Wolf's work frequently provides description, suggesting how female characters subvert expectations and conventions, but there is limited detail regarding her examination of musical materials or the intricacies of spoken text, providing no discernable method for investigation of the selected musical works, and limited tools for continuing the work elsewhere. Her work provides a great number of examples from the musical theatre repertoire, presents an overview of the form, and a historical summary of the representation of gender in musicals. However, it is unclear why some musicals are chosen as examples, besides being popular and potential familiar musicals, and why other musicals were not selected for study.

In her examination of the women in Sondheim's *Company*, Wolf asserts that "the women in this musical elicit the quintessential challenge of analyzing musical theater from a feminist perspective" ("Sondheim's Women" 365) and sets to explore the eight female characters presented in the musical. The chapter quotes text and details the actions of the women in each scene and traces the musical in the order in which the scenes appear, examining "who/what".

The chapter also considers the contrast between the women as presented in the script, and the power that is demonstrated by the performers in show-stopping musical numbers.[4] However, the details are often scant. In discussing the Act One trio "You Could Drive a Person Crazy" (performed by the three women presented as Bobby's "girlfriends" in the script and score), Wolf observes that the "girlish melody opposes the women's well-observed sharpness, their cynical humor, and their barely concealed rage", and later describes the song as "funny" and "angular" ("Sondheim's Women" 371). There are no additional details that help to understand what musical materials make up the "girlish" melody, and whether the shape of the "angular" melody is an attribute which underlines its femininity or its comedic impact. The details which might aid in a clear examination of the differences between the representation of masculinity and femininity in this musical about contemporary (1970) relationships is lacking.

The representation of women as depicted in the musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein have received especially detailed examination by other authors, which provides an analysis of conventions with which to compare and contrast masculinity. In his examination of the "types" of female roles in the works of Rodgers and Hammerstein, Goldstein suggests that "women usually played one of four roles, while subscribing to a very narrow code of behavior and set of values" (1). Similarly, to Wolf, Goldstein examines what kind of songs the women sing, the lyrical content and function of the songs, and what the characters do in the musical. Goldstein locates four fixed "types"[5] of female characters, which are "separated or joined together on the bases of whether or not they are idealistic or realistic, romantic or lustful, dependent or

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[4] This reading is linked to Carolyn Abbate's exploration of the disparity between the depiction of female characters in opera, and the power and expertise that is required of and demonstrated by the performer. See "Opera, or The Envoicing of Women," *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. R.A. Solie (Berkeley, 1993), 225–58.

[5] It is beyond the scope of this research, but worth further examination to consider whether the types of female characters Goldstein identifies are truly fixed, or whether there is greater flexibility present in these roles than first appears. Connell's model may allow for a more detailed investigation of all gender relations in musicals.

independent… and will shape the various ideas about a woman's place in society found in these shows, ideas which can be described as conservative at best" (4).[6] Goldstein also finds a pattern in the song forms that outline female characters' romantic trajectory in each musical: "the woman's complaints are presented in comic song" before the "woman changes her mind, and this change is given voice through the introduction of a second number, one more heartfelt than the first, that recommits the woman to the man and sweeps away all criticisms voiced in the earlier song" (6).

Susan C. Cook takes a detailed musicological stance in her examination of femininity in the works of Rodgers and Hammerstein, and asserts that in Rodgers' compositions, femininity "acts as another kind of embellishment, a gendered 'regional flavoring' playing against the masculine norm… femininity carries connotations of ornament and the everyday, but cannot lay claim to the norm or the universal" (39). Cook specifically analyzes Laurey's "Many A New Day" from the musical *Oklahoma!* to identify musical conventions which mark femininity in Rodgers' compositions. In the selected song, Cook identifies "a detached melody of leaps and skips, and a prominent ornamental detail in the triplet on 'many a new' [which] sets of the refrain. This triplet marks 'the pretty' and variants of it appear in other settings by Rodgers, suggesting how it functioned for him as an embellishment of the feminine" (41).

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[6] The heroine is defined by "holding an extremely romantic view of male-female relationships" (2), is always the female singer of a waltz, and by the end of the musical, is set to marry her appropriate match and rear his children; the secondary plot heroine is the generally the comedic counterpart of the heroine, who acknowledges physical attraction and the sexual element of male-female relations, with songs that tend toward up-tempo and humorous, to counter the heroine's serious ballads; "The Advisor": an older character, frequently unmarried, who provides guidance to the musical's heroine. The advisor will usually deliver her thought in slow serious pieces" (3); and "The Independent Woman", a less frequent character type, who is often a mature (and likely sexually experienced woman) who is frequently a romantic competitor for the heroine, and generally loses the man.

Gender Studies in the Performing Arts

While musical theatre studies appear to have thus far been focused on representations of women in musical theatre, there is a great deal of study of men and masculinities in related fields. The representation and construction of masculinity has been well considered in literature and dance.[7] For the purposes of this research, and its focus on the representation of masculinity in the songs in musicals, my review is focused on the forms which have greatly impacted the development of musical theatre and its musical conventions: classical music and opera, and popular music.

Susan McClary approaches the whole of western music as a feminist musicologist and practices what she describes as "feminist musical criticism". Her writing examines both art music and popular music, which especially helpful as musical theatre is a hybrid form which embraces contributions from both. Her writing examines the musical details of disparate works to demonstrate how they are shaped by the social constructs of their time and identifies common elements from different historical eras and musical forms, illuminating diachronic cultural links. Her recognition that shifts in musical content reflect cultural change is useful for considering the tension between the music of different generations, students and teachers (and generations of teachers) in this research.

McClary defies traditional distinctions in the way in which she puts musical materials into conversation with each other. There is an absence of hierarchal valuing or aesthetic privileging in her writing: her examination of gender and sexuality in music includes both the

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[7] In literature, see James D. Reimer "Rereading American Literature from a Man's Studies Perspective: Some Implications" in *The Making of Masculinities*, edited by Harry Brod; Gray Cavender's chapter "Detecting Masculinity" in *Making Trouble: Cultural Constructions of Crime, Deviance, and Control* (1999). The examination of masculinity in dance is demonstrated in Julianne Lindberg's "The Time of Your Life: Gene Kelly, working-class, and music", *Studies in Musical Theatre* 10:2, *Dance and Gender: An Evidence-Based Approach*, edited by Wendy Oliver and Doug Risner.

Baroque opera of Monteverdi and pop culture icon Madonna, and engages the structures of classical sonatas and the development of the blues through the 1900s in her work on musical conventions and exploration of form. The selections McClary examines cross time and genre, identifying and exploring conventions, allowing elements to be teased out of seemingly disparate musical works. McClary provides a clear example that musical materials that are generally received as "popular entertainment" are as worthy of study as the celebrated "great works", and this practice encourages an examination of musical theatre as an artefact of popular culture, connecting it to larger cultural structures and the signification that is bound up in conventions. McClary's investigations of a diverse range of selections suggest a path for examining works that do not demonstrate obvious links, allowing this research to identify common threads in musical theatre works separated by decades, and which do not share the same musical style.

McClary's musical investigations delineate between "masculine" and "feminine" musical materials as a key project of her work. McClary suggests that

> in most dramatic music, there are both female and male characters, and usually (though not always) the musical utterances of characters are inflected on the basis of gender… a set of conventions for constructing 'masculinity' or 'femininity' in music. The codes marking gender difference in music are informed by prevalent attitudes of their time. But they also participate in social formation, inasmuch as individuals learn how to be gendered beings through their interactions with cultural discourses such as music (*Feminine Endings* 7-8).

As gender is frequently understood as binary, with masculine and feminine at opposite poles, the "masculine" can be understood as opposing musical characteristics to McClary's definitions of "feminine" musical materials in selected works, and identified within a variety of musical compositions. McClary's analysis of the opera *Carmen*, for example, reveals opposition in the musical representation of feminine excess and masculine universality, with extensive chromaticism present in Carmen's music, while Don Jose's music is "devoted to lofty sentiments

rather than the body. His melodies unfold solemnly, albeit with what Carl Dahlhaus characterizes as 'lyrical urgency'" (*Feminine Endings* 59). McClary's provides great detail in her musical exploration of discrete musical selections, as well as her motivations for the selection of specific pieces.

Singing and the Construction of Masculinity

Several authors provide integral insights on how the singing voice is utilized in the construction of masculinity throughout history and in different musical styles. McClary is a contributor here as well, as her "Soprano Masculinities" provides a historical and stylistic overview of the use of the male falsetto[8], and what higher male singing can signify in music. As the ranges of male singing voices seems to rise in both contemporary popular music and contemporary musical theatre, McClary offers an interpretation of the use of the male voice which I explore in the examination of *Dear Evan Hansen*.

The impact of both the establishment of specific vocal types in opera and masculine constructs in popular music can be seen in the "Golden Age" musicals that developed in the early 1940s, and the cultural norms that persist throughout the consequent history of musical theatre. Naomi Andre examines the shifting "vocal coding" in opera between the 18th to 20th centuries, and the rise of "heroic tenor" as the era of castrati[9] in opera ends. The subsequent roles assigned to specific voice types (i.e., the "heroic tenor" and villainous bass-baritones) persist in the operatic repertoire and are largely echoed in both operetta and early "integrated" musicals.

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[8] The term *falsetto* is frequently used to refer to the highest register of the adult male singing voice. There is no single definition for this term, and its use is varied depending on stylistic perspective and aesthetic bias, and changes over time. The term is used in speech language pathology to refer to a specific vibratory mode in the vocal folds.
[9] *Castrati* is the plural of *castrato*. The term refers to male singers who were castrated before puberty, which interrupts the development of the larynx and vocal folds, and maintains a high, flexible vocal register, unique from adult male and female voices. Castrati were employed as musicians by the Catholic church, and elite castrati also had careers on the opera stage.

Allison McCracken's study of the construction of masculinity and "crooning" in popular music offers unique insights regarding the use of the male singing voice in the decade that precedes the "Golden Age" of musical theatre. McCracken argues that the move toward a baritone popular crooning sound exemplified by Bing Crosby from the end of the 1920s into the early 1930s was part of a cultural identity project, which resonates unseen in popular music for decades. In addition to a detailed examination of crooning in the early 20th century, McCracken provides a diachronic summary of the use of male voice in popular music, and surveys high-voiced singing from the early 2000s. She draws a connection between the popularity of Adam Lambert on *American Idol* and the characters of Kurt and Blaine on *Glee*, the singing ranges of these gay-identified performers/characters, and the fact that "American youth today have grown up in a less homophobic, more femme-friendly culture, and are generally more accepting of gender fluidity and sexual non-conformity as a result" (322). McCracken's observations regarding changing vocal ranges and expressions of masculinity parallel the sounds of contemporary musical theatre and students' impressions of evolving representations of masculinity in musical theatre.

THEORY & METHODS

My research centers students and their experiences of musical theatre training. I had amassed my own anecdotal evidence and begun to create hypotheses around my observations of the dissonance of studying "Golden Age" musicals in post-secondary classrooms, but did not want to simply examine the representation of masculinity in several musicals which I had selected and thereby prove my interpretations to be correct. I was curious about how students' impressions of male characters aligned with what I suspected. Discussion group conversation invited post-secondary students to contribute as critical co-investigators, allowing me to reconsider my suppositions along with the students as a problem-posing educator (Freire 81).

Discussion Group Research

In the discussion groups I spoke with male students between the ages of 18 and 25, who were enrolled full-time at Sheridan College's Honours Bachelor of Music Theatre Performance program at the time of research. Discussion group recruitment notices were distributed at two Toronto-area post-secondary programs: Sheridan College and the Randolph College for the Performing Arts.[10] I have regularly been a faculty member in both programs; it was extremely likely that potential participants would be known to me as an instructor. Recruitment notices were therefore distributed via email by administrators in both programs and posted in common spaces to minimize any sense of obligation, promise of reward, or fear of reprisal regarding participation in the study. Thirteen responses to the recruitment notice were received from

[10] For future research, and further development of these ideas, discussion group research with students at additional post-secondary training programs could enrich the data. In addition to the Toronto-area programs at Sheridan College and Randolph College of the Performing Arts, participants could be recruited from other post-secondary musical theatre performance programs in Ontario, including St. Clair College (Windsor Campus), and St. Lawrence College (Brockville Campus).

students at Sheridan College, representing all four years of the musical theatre performance program. There was only one participant response from the Randolph College of Performing Arts, and ultimately no discussion groups were held with students from Randolph's program.[11] Participants were selected for individual sessions at random, based on their availability, and discussion groups were held on the Reading Week of the Winter 2018 semester. Two participants became unable to participate between recruitment and the scheduled discussion group, and one participant failed to attend their scheduled discussion group time. Ultimately, ten students participated in three discussion group sessions.

Discussion groups were held on campus at the Trafalgar Campus Sheridan College, in a Faculty of Arts, Animation, and Design (FAAD) classroom/studio. We met around a large square table: I sat at the head of the table, and the participants sat opposite each other (2x2). Participants were provided with pens and scrap paper to "jot" down any notes during the conversation and were encouraged to make notes rather than interrupt when someone was speaking. Two electronic recording devices were used (an iPhone and iPad using voice recording apps), placed at either end of the table for full "coverage" of conversation, and for back-up in case one device failed.

I developed a moderator's guide to lead conversation on a variety of topics related to the research question (see Moderator Guide, Appendix B), following the recommendations of the York University Institute for Social Research (ISR) workshops. Prompts encouraged discussion from a variety of vantage points, beginning with introductory questions to stimulate conversation

[11] I had a limited connection with the college and the students as an instructor and/or researcher at the time of recruitment. In the past, I have generally taught Musical Theatre History to the students in their first academic year at the college, and am familiar with the entire student body through that course. I was not teaching at the college in fall 2018, nor during the previous academic year. It is possible that without an introduction to my role as a teacher, fewer students were interested in volunteering for the study.

and get all participants engaged, and moving on to a group brainstorming activity. The moderator guide was employed as a loose outline, and low-moderator involvement allowed conversation to flow freely between participants. The moderator guide was revised slightly between iterations, to provide greater focus to the research topics as defined.

The discussion groups yielded a great wealth of data. Of particular interest is that fact that the participants are not especially familiar with musical theatre material. The participants' impressions of the content of musicals are limited and lack specificity and clarity. They have trouble recalling details of the musicals, often struggling to recall names and descriptions of the characters and details of the plot. An encyclopedic knowledge of musical theatre is not required by young performers, however, the beliefs the participants have built about musicals is based on incomplete information. This is reinforced by the fact that the participants did not choose to listen to musicals. They do not engage with the art form for pleasure, even though they have elected to study musical theatre at the post-secondary level. The passion that inspired them to attend Canada's leading musical theatre training program has waned since they began study and listening to musicals has become "work". There is a distance from this material that is manifest in listening habits and amplifies the disconnect from the material. Current post-secondary students may not be as engaged with and informed about musicals as educators assume.

The participants clearly state that they do not see themselves or their lived experiences in musicals. The characters and situations of "Golden Age" musicals are even more unrelatable for participants, and do not reflect their values and beliefs. Students who occupy a hegemonic position—the straight, white discussion group participants—more easily imagine themselves in roles from the musical theatre canon. These students have access to a greater number of "dream roles" and perceive fewer obstacles to their opportunities in professional musical theatre.

Dialectical Musical Experiences

I required a theoretical framework to help make sense of the conflict post-secondary students experience in studying "Golden Age" material and repertoire. Lucy Green provides a model for understanding gendered meaning and experience in music education, which can be extended to the critical examination of musical theatre. This rich framework offers a method to understand the students' resistance to "Golden Age" musicals, and their interpretations of contemporary musicals.

Green suggests that a musical work has two separate but simultaneous "meanings" which impact an audience's reception and experience of a piece: *inherent meaning* and *delineated meaning. Inherent meaning* is created within the musical materials themselves, made up by the relationship of the musical materials within a particular selection, and related to musical education and other musical experiences. While these inherent meanings are shaped by a listener's previous musical experiences, they remain in the "purely" musical domain. Musical components such as melody, harmony, rhythm, and structure are considered only for their intra-musical relationships, and whether they adhere to or subvert musical conventions. Green does not suggest that these inherent meanings are a "natural" part of the music itself, and instead suggests that the meaning can have a variety of interpretations, based on the audience, and what information and experiences they individually to the music. There is not a single inherent meaning in any individual piece of music, but only meanings that are made specifically from the musical content.

Green defines *delineated meaning* as connections to "sets of values and relations which exist outside, or beyond, the musical sounds themselves" (*Music, Gender, Education,* 132) that

are drawn when listening to or studying a musical work. The conscious or unconscious connections that are made between music and a variety of extra-musical content may include the specific performance traditions, the dress or costuming of the performer, personal connections such as the last time we heard a particular piece of music, or the values and beliefs that we associate with the music, its writers, or its intended audience. Here, music takes on a symbolic function, becoming representational in the interpretation of the listener.

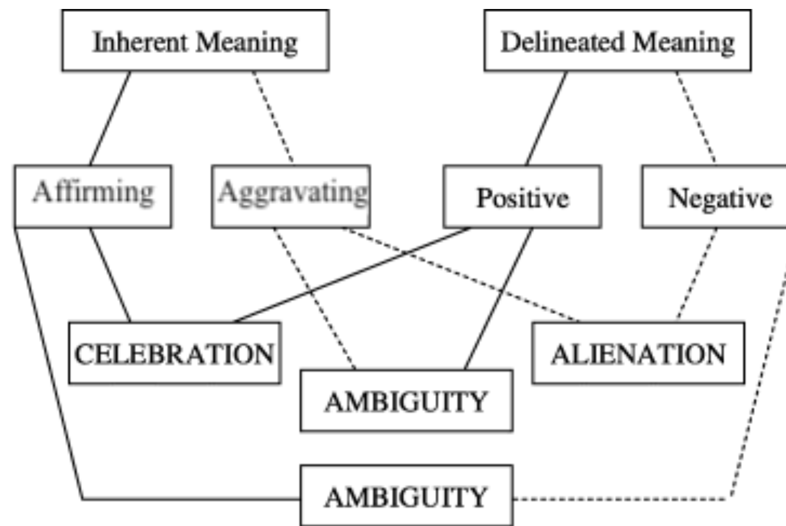

Figure 1: Green's Model of Dialectical Musical Experience (printed by permission of the author)

Inherent and delineated meanings can impact the experience of piece in a variety of ways (see figure 1, above). Inherent musical meanings, most clearly understood and recognized as "style", can elicit either an *affirming* or an *aggravating* response. Stylistic conventions provide "ground rules" for the listening experience and allow an audience to respond according to whether our expectations are met or surprised by a specific musical selection. "If we are unfamiliar with its style, the capacity of a piece of music to structure our intentions towards it is relatively limited… We therefore receive few, or merely confused, inherent meanings, and cannot engage with the music" (Green, *Music on Deaf Ears* 35). Particularly apt for the case of student listeners, Green goes on to suggest that "at times, such an experience is just boring". If

the stylistic conventions of a piece are familiar to and understood by the audience, the musical materials "make sense" and are affirming. Any tensions, displacements, or deviations in the inherent musical material serve these established conventions, and the listening experience meets a listener's expectations. If a listener is unfamiliar with a particular style and its conventions, the musical materials do not have any coherent sense. A listener does not have any expectations, and therefore they cannot be met or challenged, and the listening experience itself is without reference. Green labels this time of listening experience as aggravating, as the audience cannot connect to the musical materials.

Green describes responses to delineated meanings as either *positive* or *negative*. The response is determined by whether the audience chooses to align themselves with the extra-musical meaning of the song, which provides a positive response, or whether they resist or reject these meanings, and consequently have a negative response.

As I began this research, I believed that students were resistant to "Golden Age" material and that they felt disconnected from these songs and stories. Using Green's model, I posit instead that students are *alienated* from "Golden Age" musicals and their repertoire. As summarized above, the discussion group participants indicated that they are not listening to musical theatre, they prefer other musical genres. If they are not listening to musical theatre, nor musicals of the "Golden Age" period, they are likely less familiar with the conventions of the style and possibly having aggravating musical experiences. "Golden Age" musicals also do not reflect the students' experiences or values: they are having a negative response to the delineated meanings of musicals. Consequently, studying "Golden Age" musicals is alienating for these post-secondary students.

Hegemonic Masculinity

A framework is required to examine masculinity in the delineated meanings of the musicals. Connell's theory of *hegemonic masculinity* provides a lens for viewing masculinity, and an entry point for a detailed investigation of the representation of masculinity in musical theatre. Hegemonic masculinity theory allows for the investigation of "the omnipresent nature of hegemonic masculinities, yet simultaneously they show how these complex, specific masculinities are essentially hidden in plain sight" (Messerschmidt xi). Mobilizing Connell's theory in examining both the interactions of the previously described discussion group participants and specific selections from the musical theatre "canon" makes visible the pervasive and pernicious elements of hegemonic masculinity.

Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity is central to masculinity studies and is the most influential theory in the field (Wedgewood, Demetriou, Messerschmidt).[12] The theory allows for an investigation of the relations between men and women, masculinities and femininities, and between a number of masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity acknowledges multiple masculinities but avoids identifying singular definitions.

Central to the theory of hegemonic masculinity is the understanding that gender is relational, both between males and females, and between men. These relations create a hierarchy of gender relations that support the dominant culture. The contemporary concept of masculinity is a fairly recent historical product, that prescribes that "we are 'doing gender' in a culturally

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[12] Beginning as a feminist critique of sex role theory, Connell originally formulated the theory in her research in Australian high schools and politics, and further articulated and developed the theory in her research utilizing the life histories of men in Australia in the late 1980s to mid 1990s. Frequently appropriated in a number of academic disciplines, hegemonic masculinity has been misinterpreted, poorly applied, and frequently critiqued. This has led to further refinement of the theory with a critical rethinking by Connell and Messerschmidt in 2005, and Messerschmidt's *Hegemonic Masculinity* in 2017.

specific way" (Connell *Masculinities* 68). The hegemonic position is open to contestation from other models of masculinity, however, throughout the 20th century, and into the 21st, white, cisgender, heterosexual men have maintained the dominant position in society.

Bridges and Pascoe build on Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity and theorize *hybrid masculinities* as "the selective incorporation of elements of identity typically associated with various marginalized and subordinated masculinities" (5). Bridges and Pascoe employ Connell's framework of gender relations to explore how alterations in symbolic and emotional relations are mobilized to demonstrate changes in contemporary masculinities, but do not challenge the relations of power and labour. Hybrid masculinities appropriate specific elements in a manner which may appear inclusive of subordinated and marginalized masculinities, but these superficial transformations obscure the maintenance of hegemony and inequality. This development of Connell's theory provides essential insights for understanding current expressions of masculinity, both in the behaviour and beliefs of male post-secondary students and the representation of masculinity in contemporary musical theatre.

The application of hegemonic masculinity has often reduced different masculinities to specific traits and qualities, which was not Connell's intention. Rather than reducing potential masculinities to a static typology, "hegemonic masculinity was understood as the pattern of practices (things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue" (Connell and Messerschmidt 832). Connell proposes a hierarchal structure for the arrangement of masculinities in a given historical and cultural context. The following descriptions are not intended to be fixed categories of masculinities; instead, they reflect persistent trends of dominance and oppression.

1. *hegemonic masculinity* is a normative embodiment of masculinity, which is historically and culturally specific. This symbolic ideal is not fully realized by all individual men who receive its benefit; however, all men are positioned in relation to this model of masculinity. This masculine standard is often supplied and exemplified by representations in media and celebrity. “Hegemonic masculinities do not represent a certain *type* of man but, rather, they personify and symbolize an unequal *relationship* between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities that is widely dispersed and operates intimately and diffusely” (Messerschmidt 122).
2. c*omplicit masculinity* includes those who do not exemplify the patterns of hegemonic masculinity, but benefit from the “the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the front-line troops of patriarchy” (Connell *Masculinities* 79), and ultimately support and sustain hegemonic masculinity.
3. *subordinated masculinities* are those that have been excluded and are delegitimized by hegemonic masculinity. This specifically describes homosexuals, who have been subordinated by heterosexual men through political and cultural exclusion, cultural abuse, legal violence, street violence, economic discrimination, and personal boycotts. This “oppression positions homosexual masculinities at the bottom of a gender hierarchy among men. Gayness, in patriarchal ideology, is the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity… and easily assimilated to femininity” (Connell *Masculinities* 78). This repository may include any expressions of softness or weakness and “symbolic blurring with femininity” (Connell *Masculinities* 79) rejected by hegemony, to include archetypal “nerds” and “mamma’s boys” as subordinated masculinities.

4. *marginalized masculinities* acknowledge the intersection of gender and race and class. This includes those men that are excluded from the benefits of patriarchy, such working-class masculinities or racialized masculinities.

5. *protest masculinities* are formed in social positions which lack economic or political power and are marked by hypermasculine behaviors and practices. Protest masculinity is often demonstrated through increased physical violence and fighting, and extreme risk-taking activities. Connell presents an example of protest masculinity in a case study of working-class the members of a biker gang who demonstrate aggrandized expressions of violence toward each other and toward women.

Connell provides a four-fold model for examining gender relations, to investigate the various patterns of practice which distinguish these masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity theory examines the relations of power, labour, cathexis (emotional relations), and symbolism. Briefly summarized, these relations can be understood as follows:

- power relations are understood as the acts of oppression that support dominance of one group over the other, including both institutional forces that maintain inequality and an imbalance of advantages, and personal transactions which may be marked by violence or the threat of violence;
- labour relations describe the sexual division of labour;
- cathexis (emotional relations) include attachments and commitments, lust and desire, and may be positive or hostile;
- and symbolism (symbolic relations) include the semiotics of gender including the "presentation of gender through dress, makeup, body culture, gesture, tone of voice etc." and

"is an important part of the everyday experience of gender" (Connell *The Men and the Boys* 26).

To escape falling into typology based on simplified traits or specific voice types of particular characters in the musical theatre canon, this framework is an invaluable tool for examining masculinities in musical theatre. Hegemonic masculinity theory is utilized to investigate what characters in a musical do, to whom they relate, what they express, and how they express it. Chapter Three proposes a model for adapting Connell's four-fold framework to musical theatre, and then applies this adapted framework in an examination of Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* as a case study. Chapter Four utilizes the same approach to investigate the gender relations presented in the 2016 Broadway musical *Dear Evan Hansen*. Examining power, labour, emotional relations, and symbolization allows for a detailed and complex reading of gender relations present in musicals as artefacts of popular culture and allow the exploration of the interplay of inherent and delineated meanings to see patterns which persist over time.

Employing hegemonic masculinity in the examination of musical theatre allows us to investigate the relations of masculinities, rather than reducing the male characters in in musicals to fixed "types". We can consider whether the male characters in a specific work reflect the ideals of a given historical context and be able to compare and contrast the diachronic representation of masculinity in musicals. As Connell suggests, it is important "to recognize gender as a social pattern [which] requires us to see it as a product of history, and also a producer of history" (*Masculinities* 81). As musical theatre is an artefact of popular culture, the representation of masculinity in musicals also provides a template for male behaviours and perpetuates the gender practices that sustain hegemonic masculinity.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter Two explores post-secondary students' perceptions of musical theatre repertoire and their experiences of the training they are receiving. This chapter offers an interpretation of data collected from discussion group conversation with students enrolled in Sheridan College's full-time Bachelor of Music Theatre Performance Program in winter 2018. Participants' responses are collected to extend beyond anecdotal information and give voice to the resistance and discomfort that is often demonstrated in the post-secondary classroom. This chapter foregrounds themes and trends in the perspectives and experiences of current male post-secondary students and identifies the qualities and content that appeal to and deter these participants. The discussion group research also reveals the ways in which masculinities operate within the local context of the post-secondary institution and makes hegemonic patterns of practice visible in the interactions between the student participants.

Chapter Three offers a model for examining the representation of masculinity in musical theatre. Connell's four-fold model of gender relations is adapted into a framework for examining musical theatre conventions as patterns of practice and employed for a close reading of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*. *Oklahoma!* is frequently cited as the beginning of the "Golden Age" of musical theatre, and the repertoire from this musical is frequently studied in post-secondary musical theatre classes. This chapter examines labour, power, emotional relations (cathexis), and symbolization in *Oklahoma!*'s vocal score and explores what its songs reveal regarding masculinity.

Chapter Four builds on the previous chapter and applies the model to a close reading of the 2016 musical *Dear Evan Hansen*. The discussion group participants unanimously suggest that this contemporary musical presents an alternative version of masculinity from the "Golden

Age" musicals which they resist. This chapter illustrates that *Dear Evan Hansen* does not contest the hegemonic representation of masculinity. While the musical centers a marginalized masculinity, as represented by the character of Evan Hansen, and explores alternate symbolism in its vocal score, the conventions which support and perpetuate hegemony persist in the dimensions of labour, power, and emotional relations.

The final chapter presents recommendations for musical theatre pedagogy. The conclusion questions the conventional teaching of musical theatre history and repertoire and provides suggestions for an engaged musicological approach that will build capacity for critical examination of musical theatre. The model here is focused on masculinity, but these principles can be extended to a curriculum that reflects inclusivity of gender expression, race, culture, and ability.

CHAPTER TWO: DISCUSSION GROUPS

My goal for the discussion group research was to investigate post-secondary students' engagement with musical theatre repertoire from various eras, and their observations regarding the representation of masculinity in the musical theatre canon. I was interested in exploring their relationship with the songs, stories, and writers of "Golden Age" musicals, and to have the participants provide suggestions of more recent musicals which they view as presenting diverse representations of masculinity. The discussion group research provided insights well beyond the instrumental data I anticipated.[13] In this chapter I will explore the participants' response to musical meanings using Green's model of dialectical musical experience and examine gender relations between the masculinities demonstrated by the students.

Lucy Green's model of dialectical musical experience provides a frame to articulate contemporary post-secondary students' response to various musical meanings. The discussion group research reveals that the participants have limited engagement with material from "Golden Age" musicals and its musical conventions, which lead to negative/aggravating responses to the

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[13] A great deal of additional instrumental data was generated in the discussion group format, which is beyond the scope of this chapter and warrants further investigation. The participants identified musicals which they consider problematic, and musicals which they feel present alternative, non-hegemonic representations of masculinity. A number of musicals were mentioned in each discussion group: *The Bridges of Madison County*, *Come From Away*, *Company*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Falsettos*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, Into the Woods, Kiss Me, Kate, Legally Blonde*, and *Wicked*.
A number of these musicals (identified below) were recently rehearsed or attended by participants in performance at the college as part of the curriculum and Theatre Sheridan season, or are studied in detail in the program's curriculum. *Come From Away* had recently had its opening in Toronto at the time of the discussion groups, and due to its inception at Sheridan College as part of the Canadian Musical Theatre Project, students had been invited to attend its dress rehearsal.
Of particular interest are the musicals which each discussion group references as an example of alternative representations of masculinity: *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Falsettos*, and *Legally Blonde*. In each discussion group, participants express the belief that these musicals challenge the conventional representation of masculinity in musical theatre. These musicals warrant further detailed study, to examine their contents and to investigate the participants' observations about these works; *Dear Evan Hansen*, which features frequently in the discussion group conversation, is examined in greater detail in Chapter Four.

inherent musical meanings. Delineated meanings are explored as the participants discuss what the use of range appears to connote in musical theatre, both in the general repertoire, and "Golden Age" musicals in particular.

Analysis of the discussion group transcripts demonstrates the pernicious nature of hegemony as the participants' relations with each other illustrate hegemonic masculinity. Conversation about participants' "dream roles" in the musical theatre canon reveal the privileging of hegemonic masculinity in the repertoire, as white, cisgender, heterosexual characters and stories dominate the options available to students. The discussion group transcriptions illuminate the ways in which the participants themselves enact hegemonic constructions of masculinity locally, while concurrently articulating progressive worldviews, and striving toward inclusive attitudes and practices.

Discussion Group Methods

Students and their experiences are centered in this research, with their voices as an integral part of the conversation. The discussion group format allows their participation as "critical co-investigators", identifying questions and providing their own insights. Three discussion groups were moderated with a total of ten male participants who were enrolled in the Honours Bachelor of Music Theatre Performance Program at Sheridan College at the time of the research. The discussion group conversations were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.[14]

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[14] Discussion group methods are previous described in detail in Chapter One.

Discussion Group Participants

There were discussion group participants from all four years of Sheridan College's Honours Bachelor of Music Theatre Performance Program. Due to the nature of the conservatory-based training program, all participants were known to each other, and some participants were quite familiar. There are approximately 45 students in each of the four years of the Bachelor of Music Theatre Performance program, and the courses are closed to students outside of the program. There are projects which integrate the students across years of study, as well as extracurricular events and programs that are designed to foster relationships throughout the program. There was a degree of familiarity in the discussion groups, as everyone recognized each other, even if their interactions in the program were limited. This resulted in some assumptions regarding shared knowledge, both in discussion topics and about each other. Consequently, limited demographic information was articulated in the discussion group conversations.

Additionally, the annual production season is attended by all students in the program, and there are eight musical productions a year that all students have seen or performed in. In the eight weeks preceding the discussion groups, all students had performed in or attended productions of *Into the Woods*, *Trap Door*[15], *The Cradle Will Rock*, and *Kiss Me, Kate*. These musicals appeared to be top of mind for the participants and are frequently referenced in conversation. The previous year's performance season was also attended by 9 of 10 participants (as a first-year student, one participant may have attended performances, but was not required to before beginning the program), and several pieces from the previous season were also referenced in the discussion group conversations. Musicals in the 2016-2017 Theatre Sheridan season included:

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[15] *Trap Door* was a premiere production of a new Canadian musical, with a book by Morris Panych, music by Anika Johnson and Britta Johnson, and lyrics by Morris Panych, Anika Johnson and Britta Johnson.

Dogfight, Shrek: The Musical, Floyd Collins, Footloose, Senza Luce[16], and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*.

Discussion Group 1

There were four participants: Daniel, Harry, Jordan, and Simon.[17] Harry, Jordan, and Simon were in their fourth year of the musical theatre performance program, and their final semester of study. These students had each completed rehearsal and performances of two musicals within the eight weeks before the discussion group (*Into the Woods*, *Trap Door*, *The Cradle Will Rock*, and *Kiss Me, Kate*). Daniel was a third-year student, who had recently completed curriculum, and was about to enter rehearsal for *Crazy for You* in the final production block of the academic year.

Jordan referred to himself as "visibly white", suggesting an unspecified ethnicity. Daniel specifically identified as gay, referring to himself as "a homosexual man on stage" when the discussion turned to gay characters in musicals. Simon occasionally referred to his girlfriend at the time of the discussion groups, a relationship which was known to other participants, and which implied a heterosexual relationship. The transcript contains no other specific demographic information for this discussion group.

Discussion Group 2

There were four participants: Brian, Christopher, James, and Joshua. Christopher and Joshua are both third-year students; Christopher had just completed the rehearsal and

[16] *Senza Luce* was a premiere of a new musical by Canadian writers Neil Bartram and Brian Hill.
[17] Data has been anonymized, and all participant names are pseudonyms assigned to the students for the purposes of transcriptions and reporting on the research.

performance of *Kiss Me, Kate*, and Joshua had recently completed curriculum, and was about to being rehearsals for *Crazy for You*. Brian and James were both second-year students.

Christopher and James both self-identified as racialized. In conversation regarding dream roles, Christopher identified Aladdin as a role he would love to play, as he articulated that he had not "seen someone who is actually brown play the role. And I think It should only be played by a brown person, in my opinion. So, I'm hoping that I can have the opportunity to play that role and actually be, like, 'yeah, this is how it's supposed to look'." James described a perceived "ambiguous" ethnicity, stating "I don't like white enough, but I don't look Latin-- I look too Latino to be in it [*West Side Story*]. But I don't look Latino enough to be a Shark."

Discussion Group 3

Due to the withdrawal of one participant, and another participant not attending due to confusing the scheduled time, there were two participants in this discussion group: Drew and Nick. Drew is a third-year student who had just completed rehearsal and performances of *Kiss Me, Kate*, and Nick is a first-year student. Drew self-identified as gay in the discussion group conversation. Nick made a comment regarding his sexuality when he stated that he can see himself in leading romantic "Golden Age" roles: "maybe that's just because of my sexuality" but went on to suggest that "I often feel like I'm the only one who sees myself in roles like that". This seems to suggest that Nick relates to the heterosexual romances at the center of most "Golden Age" musicals, but that he is not perceived by others to embody those roles. However, Nick does not specifically identify his sexual orientation in the discussion group conversation.

Table 1 below provides the pseudonyms of each discussion group and summarizes the identifying information they provide.

DISCUSSION GROUP PARTICIPANTS		
Name	Year of Study	Self-Identified Info
Discussion Group 1		
Daniel	3	Homosexual/gay
Harry	4	
Jordan	4	"Visibly White"
Simon	4	Heterosexual/straight
Discussion Group 2		
Brian	2	
Christopher	3	"Brown"
James	2	Non-white
Joshua	3	
Discussion Group 3		
Drew	3	Gay
Nick	2	

Table 1: Discussion Group Participants

Educator as Known Researcher

My relationship with the participants must be acknowledged in this research. As an instructor at Sheridan College, I have previously worked with each of the participants as an educator, in both individual and classroom settings. At the time of the discussion group interviews, I had worked with the participants in a variety of classes:

- I teach all Sheridan Music Theatre Performance program students in Historically Informed Performance Practice (HIPP), which explores music theatre history and performance practices. This includes four course components taught during the first four study periods (1st and 2nd year). This class includes all students enrolled in the academic year in an interactive group setting. I began teaching this class in fall 2017, and did not teach Harry, Jordan, and Simon in this setting, as they had already completed the 2nd year courses.
- I have been the private singing teacher of Brian, Drew, Harry, and Joshua.
- I have taught Daniel, Harry, Jordan, Joshua, Simon, Joshua in a studio class which examines Stephen Sondheim's musical *Company* (1970).
- In the weeks preceding the discussion groups, I was the music director of Sheridan College's production of *Into the Woods*. All participants had attended the production, and both Harry and Jordan were cast in the musical. Additionally, the production had been impacted by the 2017 Ontario College Teachers' strike, which occurred in the semester before the discussion groups. The production started rehearsals as a student-led project before faculty returned to the classroom. In this context, I had worked closely with Harry and Jordan as assistant musical directors, providing mentorship and guidance throughout the process.

These prior relationships between researcher and participants appear to result in instances in the discussions where details or examples are presented as "understood", as shared knowledge between the participants and myself as researcher. The participants regularly draw on shared experiences in the classroom and the rehearsal hall. This leaves some "gaps" in the discussion group transcripts, where meaning was implied in the conversation. There are times when students refer to a shared experience, i.e., previous conversations, or work in class or vocal

tutorials, and consequently do not elaborate on information that is taken for granted to be known to me, and to other members of the discussion group.

This assumed shared information includes details regarding participants' identities: information regarding gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and culture are rarely explored in the discussion group transcripts. Due to my dual role as educator and researcher, and in a conscious effort to not exploit my power and authority in this setting, I did not elicit any personal information from participants, or request elaboration regarding personal identities. When James alludes to an ambiguous racial identity, and Jordan describes himself as "visibly white", no clarifying questions are asked in this regard. At one point in discussion group three, Nick states that "because of my own sexuality, which I can also, like, elaborate more on… I often feel like I'm the only one who sees myself in roles like that [leading characters of the "Golden Age"]". This is left unexplored, however, and no specific details about the participant's sexuality or sexual orientation are elaborated upon in the transcript. The Sheridan Research Review did not permit the collection of identifying demographic information, so this information cannot be further expounded upon.[18]

While low moderator involvement was intended, there are times where participants appear to give me the lead in the conversation, based on my role as a researcher/educator. They are likely aware that I have an intended plan, which had been presented in the introduction and the moderator's guide. There are occasions where participants appear to withdraw from the conversation, afraid to misspeak about details from musical theatre history. This also evidences different ways that students attempt to mediate the conversation with me as known researcher.

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[18] This demographic information would enrich further research. In any further studies, an outside moderator could be used in discussion group settings, allowing for anonymous data collections, and a potentially more fulsome profile of each participant.

Dialectal Musical (Theatre) Experiences of Post-Secondary Students

In order to examine the experience and response to particular musical selections, Lucy Green's model of dialectical musical experiences distinguishes between two musical "meanings": inherent meanings and delineated meanings. Inherent meanings are contained within musical materials: how musical elements relate within a particular selection and to a listener's other musical experiences (their musical knowledge and the styles and forms of music to which they have previously been introduced). Green suggests that music that meets a listener's expectations is affirming, and music which frustrates audience's expectations is aggravating. Delineated meanings are the extra-musical connotations, the associations and symbolism listeners affix to particular pieces or musical styles. Audiences may have positive or negative responses to delineated meanings.

The response to the delineated meaning of "Golden Age" musicals is decidedly negative for the discussion group participants. "Golden Age" was the simple response offered in the second discussion group when asked for a definition of "toxic masculinity", which was met with laughter from the other participants. The heteronormative romantic stories, and the mid-20th century American views and values do not align with those of the students. Joshua explicitly states that:"

> Some of the things that they say in Golden Age musicals, I go "wow". Like, that's so backwards. Or, I could never believe that, and having to study it here in this institution, and doing it all the time, it's very frustrating that— yes it's amazing how far we've come, but also, so much other theatre was already breaking molds, and musical theatre seems to be so far behind other ideas.

The students are frustrated. There is a friction between the material they "have to study", and their tastes and values.

As I began this research, my observations from teaching individual singing lessons and engaging with students in musical theatre history lectures suggested that students were resistant to "Golden Age" material, or that they felt disconnected from these songs and stories. Using Green's model to examine participants' experiences with musical theatre repertoire, I posit that post-secondary students are alienated from the repertoire of "Golden Age" musicals. In the section that follows, the participants' experiences with "Golden Age" musicals, and attendant inherent and delineated meaning is explored in greater detail.

Musical Preferences and Listening Habits

"*I actually don't listen to musical theatre at all.*" — Jordan

Discussion group participants overwhelmingly indicate that they do not regularly listen to musical theatre, and that when they do it is not for the pleasure of the listening experience. There is a general agreement amongst participants that, as college students studying musical theatre, listening to the repertoire has become work rather than pleasure. James states that "it wouldn't be my first choice" for listening, and Joshua suggests that he when he chooses to listen to musical theatre it is "not as often as I would listen to other genres of music". Participants instead identify a wide variety of musical styles that are highly individual and suggest unique tastes (see table 2). The participants in discussion group two attempt to summarize a ratio of musical theatre to non-musical theatre listening and suggest that musical theatre is generally 30% or less of the music they each listen to. Daniel is the only participant who offers a contrasting view from his peers, stating "I love it", and that "compared to them, I listen to mostly exclusively musical theatre".

Name	Musical Style	Musicals Identified
Discussion Group 1		
Daniel	"mostly exclusively musical theatre"; Michael Bublé	*Hello, Dolly!*
Harry	Jazz, 1970s R&B, Eva Cassidy	*Catch Me If You Can, Come From Away, Bridges of Madison County*
Jordan	Instrumental Rock	*Next to Normal, The Last Five Years, Dear Evan Hansen*
Simon	Joni Mitchell, Joan Baez	
Discussion Group 2		
Brian	Alternative, classical, and modern classical music	*Nine, Company, The Sound of Music, Pacific Overtures, Assassins, The Music Man, Fly By Night*
Christopher	Beyoncé, Madonna, Britney Spears	*Ragtime, Rent, Next to Normal, Parade, Bridges of Madison County*
James	Latin music, jazz, house, electro, rock, reggae, international music	"Golden Age": *Guys & Dolls, West Side Story, Oklahoma!, Jersey Boys*
Joshua	Alternative, pop, singer-songwriter	Cynthia Errivo, *The Color Purple*
Discussion Group 3		
Drew	"Soley listen to pop and R&B", "only women"	
Nick	Rap, Daniel Caesar	*Waitress, Wicked*

Table 2: Musical Preferences

Several participants state that they had listened primarily to musicals when they were in high school, but that these habits had shifted since attending college. Harry says that as a teenager he would "listen to the music theatre until the CD broke", and Nick states that in high school he "didn't have anything on my music library that wasn't a cast album, or a Josh Groban or Audra McDonald[19] album". Drew and Brian both express that they now listen to fewer musicals than they used to, as they respectively want to "join my generation" and "learn about the rest of the world" after high school listening that was focused on musical theatre repertoire.

[19] These performers are both associated with musical theatre and musical theatre performance styles. Audra McDonald holds the record for the most Tony Awards for a single artist and has appeared in seven Broadway musicals. She has released six solo albums, which tend to feature the works of musical theatre composers, especially contemporary musical theatre composer. Josh Groban recently appeared on Broadway in the original casts of *Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812*. Though he is largely associated with "adult contemporary" solo recordings, he sings in a style that is similar to musical theatre, and his 2015 album *Stages* was comprised of all musical theatre repertoire.

The participants suggest that when listening to musical theatre recordings they are almost immediately considering whether they can sing the roles, whether they could play the characters, and whether the material would serve them in an audition setting. As Harry says, he "stopped listening to music theatre because it kinda transitioned from a passion, to a profession in a way. And so, to me sometimes it does feel like work." Drew states that since beginning to study in the college program, and learning the skills for musical analysis, he is unable to listen to musical theatre repertoire casually, as he now listens for what the music elements might signify: "it's now active, I'm picking it apart… I'm listening to the accompaniment. I listen to "Glamourous Life". I love that song, but [sings some notes], I just "what does that mean?" And it's not relaxing." This is countered by Nick, who says that this is what he enjoys about listening to music, and that he happily listens to music of all genres in this manner: "I am a person who as soon as I start listening to something, I'm picking it apart instantly, and that's the fun part for me. Like, I, I'll just be like 'I feel like sitting and listening to music, and then I'll be listening to it, and I'll be like, 'what is the bass doing?'" In general, the participants describe listening to musical theatre as a work-related exercise, to stay informed about new musicals or to consider new repertoire.

In discussion group one, Jordan and Simon also talk about the fact that they prefer to engage with musicals in a live performance, seeing the show presented by actors and with sets, costumes, etc., as opposed to simply listening to a cast recording. Unless they are specifically listening to component parts of a musical (range of a song, doing a musical analysis), the participants do not seem to respond to the music as an individual element, instead considering how the pieces are integrated into a whole.

When the participants identify musicals they choose to listen to (see Table 2) they are generally not "Golden Age" musicals. As summarized by Christopher, "I'm into more

contemporary stuff". Only Daniel and James suggest that they choose to listen to "Golden Age" musicals, which means only two of ten of the discussion group participants are electing to listen to this material. It appears that participants do not connect to the style of musical content in "Golden Age" musicals, as the musicals that students do reference seem to align to their "non-musical theatre" tastes: Jordan indicates that he prefers listening to rock music and instrumental rock and suggests that a musical he enjoys is *Next to Normal,* a 2008 musical with a rock score. They indicate that they listen to musicals that are more pop/rock oriented: *Dear Evan Hansen, Waitress, Catch Me If You Can, The Color Purple* all have pop-infused scores (often reflecting the sounds and musical styles of the period in which the stories are set), and *Jersey Boys* is a jukebox musical which specifically uses the popular songs of the musical group the Four Seasons. The participants speak about the rhythm and drive of these scores, but do not mention the lyrical content or the stories of the musicals listed above. Participants appear to listen to musicals with affirming inherent meanings, musicals that align with their general musical tastes.

When discussing "Golden Age" musicals which the participants find problematic, the observations are focused on the content of the stories and the behaviour of the characters. Conversely, delineated meanings are generally absent from the conversation about musicals that the participants enjoy. Only *Catch Me If You Can*, a musical that is identified as one that Harry enjoys listening to, is more fully considered by the group for its delineated meaning. Harry suggests that he enjoys listening to the musical because the vocal demands of the score are so unlike his voice that he is not considering its potential as performance material (as noted as a challenge with listening for pleasure in the discussion above), and Daniel suggests that it is a role he would love to play. Later, Jordan states that "I'm intrigued by this show… I enjoy the show, but I also have a lot of issues with it", here giving voice to the potential of "dissonant

pleasure".[20] The participants then discuss its similarity to "Golden Age" musicals in its representation of the leading male character, and the use of female characters as supporting characters and sex objects throughout the show. As summarized by Jordan "I think *Catch Me*, even though it's a very recent musical, still represents the exact same thing from sixty years ago that we're critiquing".

The participants do not extend this critique of a musical with an affirming musical score to other contemporary musicals. It appears that the participants' affirming experience with the inherent meanings of these musicals may obscure their observations of the content, allowing delineated meanings to go unremarked. For example, *Falsettos*, *Legally Blonde*, and *Dear Evan Hansen* are identified in each discussion group as musicals which provide alternate (non-hegemonic) representations of masculinity. The more affirming experiences of these frequently pop-infused scores seem to encourage a positive experience of these musicals, allowing potentially negative delineated meanings to be overlooked. This will be explored further in a more detailed examination of *Dear Evan Hansen* in Chapter Four.

The Singing Voice and Vocal Range

The singing voice and vocal range[21] are the specific musical element most frequently discussed by the participants. The voice, its use in musicals, and different vocal styles are subjects explored by each discussion group. The participants profess a surprising distaste for the

[20] Stacy Wolf theorizes "dissonant pleasure" as the tension inherent a critical examination of musical theatre. See "*Hamilton*'s Women", *Studies in Musical Theatre* 12:2, 2018.
[21] Vocal range generally refers to two related concepts. The range of a given song is the span between the lowest and highest pitch in the vocal line of that piece. In a musical, the vocal range of a specific character is defined as the distance between the lowest and highest pitch sung by a particular character in the entirety of the vocal score. An individual's vocal range is the span between the lowest and highest frequency pitches that a singer can comfortably, consistently produce. Depending on this range, and the timbre of individual voices, male voices are generally labelled as tenor (the highest male vocal range), baritone (a moderate frequency male vocal range), and bass (the lowest male vocal range).

male singing voice: they do not enjoy listening to male singers, which evokes an aggravated response for many of the participants; the use of the male singing voice in musical theatre repertoire is frequently associated with negative delineated meanings for these students.

It is clear in each discussion group that the students experience a friction regarding the singing voice and its use in musical theatre. Several participants express a preference for female musical theatre artists and describe loving the voices of particular female performers. When engaging with musical theatre, the students indicate a preference for "belt[22]-y females", singing power ballads. As Christopher states, "I always find myself when, like, I'm singing musical theatre songs in the shower, it's always the female power ballads." It appears that this unique female vocal quality is what appeals to the participants, as these songs and characters tend to have thrilling, powerful, emotive solos.[23] Participants overwhelmingly identify a preference for female popular artists when discussing their musical preferences (see table 2 above). This familiarity with and enjoyment of the sounds of the female voice in non-musical theatre and participants' tastes and preferences seem to correlate to the response to inherent musical meanings in the scores of musicals.

The participants do not clearly articulate what appeals to them about female singing voices, instead what is presented is a rejection of male singing voices. Drew states this most explicitly, saying that he listens to "only women, ever. I never listen to men. I find their voices

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[22] "Belting" is a vocal quality and production that is the source of great discussion in musical theatre performance and vocal pedagogy. Currently there is not a singular definition of this term. It is generally recognized as a unique vocal timbre that may be described as "brassy" or "bright" and is frequently associated with a loud volume. Generally, it is associated with a chest voice (or TA) dominant vocal production at increasingly higher frequencies (pitches), and most often on open vowels (i.e. [a]). The term is more frequently applied to female singers throughout musical theatre history (i.e., Ethel Merman, Patti Lupone, and others), but it has been more recently posited that men also "belt".

[23] At this time, it is the preference for female singing that is specifically noted and explored. It is possible that there is also something in the content of these songs that the students are responding to, as they reference the "power ballads" versus some of the "anthems" of male characters. The students' relationship to the content—as opposed to the sound—of female repertoire is explored further later in this chapter.

really boring." This disaffinity for male voices is frequently intertwined with delineated meanings regarding the male voice and its use in musical theatre scores. When discussing male singing in musical theatre, the conversation quickly turns to the use of range and what this signifies regarding characters' age and masculinity; the participants perceive the use of higher pitches as connoting youth and effeminacy. This denotation can be traced to the early 1930s, when the connection was drawn between "high-pitched, emotionally vulnerable, and romantic male voices with either the immaturity of youth or the dangers of effeminacy" (McCracken 6) in theatre and popular music. Additionally, vocal range frequently frustrates the individual participants, as it creates limitations for the roles they can or cannot play based on physiological and technical limitations (what they can or cannot sing as individuals).

The participants in the second discussion group explicitly draw a connection between vocal range and the age of a character. The participants recognize the use of higher vocal range to denote youth, while older men sing lower, an interpretation that appears to be accepted by all participants. In the discussion quoted below, Brian summarizes that vocal range generally signifies the age of the characters, and this general observation is quickly and easily affirmed by the other participants. The impression that vocal range is frequently used in "Golden Age" musicals to denote age is agreed to without details, and this delineated meaning is accepted by the group. However, the conversation also demonstrates that some of these interpretations are generalized, and that the participants are lacking definitive information regarding the characters they use as illustrative examples.

BRIAN It almost feels to me like it's [vocal range] used to discern age more than anything. Like-

JOSHUA Mmmm. Young males are tenors, and older men are baritone-bass.

BRIAN Young males are tenors. Cause Sky Masterson is fairly—he's older, right? He's, like—but he's not like Curly who's 19 or something. How old is Curly? It's been a while? 16?

JAMES I thought. No, I thought always, I always thought Curly was like in his 30s.

BRIAN Really? Wow.

JAMES Yeah.

ADAM Why?

JAMES Well, I think in the, in the actual, I don't know, I can't remember exactly, but I'm pretty sure that in the, um, in, like, the description of the original play that *Oklahoma!* was based off of-

JOSHUA *Green Grow the Lilacs*?

JAMES It describes Curly as- pardon?

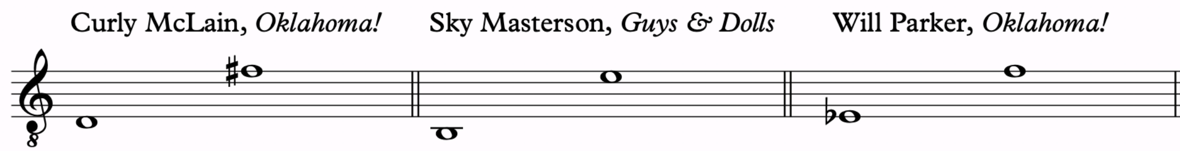
JOSHUA *Green Grow the Lilacs*?

JAMES Yes, thank you, yeah. Um, that Curly is a big, hairy man, like with a beard. Like, he is, you know a bit older, like a burly farmer man. Like that's kinda like the description they have for Curly in the play, I'm pretty sure. And so, I always, and I always figured that he was a little bit older than, than younger and Will Parker's the one that's in his 20s or and stuff like that. And that's what I always thought, yeah.

First, it appears that Brian is contrasting the characters of Curly McLain in *Oklahoma!* with *Guys and Dolls*' Sky Masterson, and suggesting that Curly would be a tenor, and Sky a baritone. However, these characters have very similar vocal ranges: Curly sings from is D3-F#4, and Sky Masterson B3-E4 (see ex. 2-1). Sky Masterson's range is slightly lower than Curly's, but both would be recognized as baritones.[24] What is also interesting is that Will Parker, sings a slightly narrower range than Curly, who sings both lower and higher than Will Parker. Based on

[24] Vocal types are clearly defined in the classical tradition based on vocal range, register events in the voice, and the colour/weight/timbre of the voice. While contemporary musical borrows and employs these terms (tenor, baritone, bass for male voices), contemporary performers are expected to demonstrate range and colour which extend beyond conventional classifications.

the statements the participants make in the exchange above, it appears that they expect Will Parker to have a higher vocal range than Curly, which is not the case.



Example 2-1: Vocal ranges of characters noted by participants

Additionally, James' impression of Curly's age and character does not align with his description in the musical *Oklahoma!*, nor the script of its source material, *Green Grow the Lilacs*. At Curly's first entrance in the play, the stage directions describe him as "a tall, waggish, curly-haired *young* cowboy in a checked shirt and a ten-gallon hat" (Riggs, 4, emphasis added). While participants have the impression that younger characters utilize higher vocal ranges, the examples the participants cite do not support this assertion.

Despite my personal observations in singing lessons that many male students are focused on increasing their range and ability to sing higher frequency pitches, it appears that the participants find this higher singing in musicals unpleasant. In discussing the characters in the Disney musical *Newsies*, a 2012 stage musical based on the 1992 film, the participants suggest that these characters are "young boys" and sound "whiny". The musical is a fictionalized account of the 1899 Newsboy Strike in New York City, and the characters are primarily adolescent males. The vocal ranges in this musical do extend above the examples above, as *Newsies*' leading character, Jack Kelly, sings from Bb2 to A4, a third higher than Curly. Joseph Pulitzer, described as age 35-50, sings between C3 and F4, a lower and narrower range than the young lead. This musical does provide a better example of the use of vocal range to signify character and age in

the musical. This example appears to be extended by the participants to apply to the generalized vocal sounds of "young boys" in musicals.

BRIAN Young boys they're always really whiny.

JAMES Yes.

BRIAN All of the power ballads. Like (singing poorly) "Santa Fe.."

JAMES Yeah. It's like "sh sh sh".

ADAM So those roles don't appeal to you?

JAMES Eh, not really, no. Cause they're whiny, like Brian said. They're whiny.

BRIAN They still appeal to me. I just can't sing them.

ADAM Okay. Yeah. Why can't you sing them?

BRIAN They're too high.

It is difficult to ascertain whether this aggravating response is related to the specific musical elements (the high vocal range), or the frustration the participants regarding their inability to sing these pitches themselves. As Brian notes, despite his negative assessment of the vocal quality, he is still interested in playing the roles. However, the songs in this score are "too high".

The participants also draw connections between the use of range is used to express a continuum between masculinity and femininity. They suggest a link between femininity and the use of higher ranges, and masculinity and the use of lower pitches. Interestingly, Joshua states that "the characters that fall in between generally have more aspects of both", suggesting the use of a wider vocal range. They identify characters from contemporary musicals like *Dear Evan Hansen*'s Evan and Whizzer from *Falsettos* as both using the upper range of the male voice, and

suggest these characters defy conventional gender expectations. It is interesting to note that Evan is a teenager and Whizzer is gay, so the connection between age and subordinated masculinity is clear in these examples.

The participants all express their perceptions that the range of the material is rising. The rising vocal ranges in musicals are also reflected in trends commercial popular music, which is observed by Nick in the discussion group conversation. Here again is a connection with participants' potentially affirming musical experiences: the range of popular music, to which they all suggest they are listening more regularly than musical theatre, reflects the sounds of more contemporary musicals. The use of vocal registers is also relevant here characters, as Brian notes that Evan and Whizzer "both use their falsetto frequently in the songs they're given", venturing into a lighter sound. This vocal register is rare in much "Golden Age" musical theatre, but frequently utilized in commercial popular music. These vocal qualities and vocal ranges in contemporary musicals are more closely aligned to the participants' musical tastes.

The participants' response to delineated meaning in contemporary musical theatre may be related to this shift in vocal range. If they perceive higher vocal ranges as suggesting youth and effeminacy, these shifts may be creating an affinity in the contemporary repertoire. The participants seem to find these characters closer to their age and experiences and believe that these characters demonstrate fewer negative characteristics of masculinity. This affinity is given greater exploration below, as the discussion group content reveals that, despite how the participants might view themselves, hegemonic ideals persist in their beliefs and in the interactions of the participants. It may be that the delineated meanings in contemporary musicals are much closer to the students' experiences, and that these are obscured by the use of higher vocal ranges in the musicals, and the progressive ideals of the participants.

Dream Roles and Hegemonic Masculinity

> "The very processes that confer privilege to one group and not to another are often invisible to those upon whom that privilege is conferred. What makes us marginal or powerless are the processes we see, partly because others keep reminding us of them" (Kimmel *"Invisible Masculinity"* 30).

"There's no limit to what you can and can't do"—Jordan

In Jordan's quote above, "you" is intended to be universal. As a visibly white, cisgender, heterosexual male, Jordan imagines that there are roles available to him throughout the canon of musical theatre, and this view appears to be affirmed by many of the discussion group participants who share Jordan's identity. The discussion group data helps to make visible elements that had previously gone unseen, and that largely remain invisible to the participants throughout their conversations: namely how hegemony persists in the musical theatre repertoire, and, unfortunately, in the words and views of the participants.

In each discussion group, the straight, visibly white participants each identify three or four roles they would like to play from the musical theatre canon, providing examples from throughout the history and displaying a great deal of variety of musical style. As Brian states, "I have, like, a dream role for every musical". They easily imagine themselves in many roles, with few limitations on what they can play. These musical theatre students consider it the job of casting directors and creative teams to decide what they can and cannot play, and the imaginations of those in casting positions are the only limitations. Otherwise, there is a great deal of possibility available to them. As Simon audaciously states, "if I'm attracted to a role, I can play it… The only time I wouldn't be able to play a role is, like, if I think it's stupid".

When participants are asked to name their "dream roles", characters that they would love to opportunity to portray, Simon announces that "I've compiled a list. It's short and I'm missing some." He demonstrates how easily he can identify roles which are available to him, which he

also finds interesting and compelling to potentially play. Naming the leading roles in *The Threepenny Opera*, *The Man of La Mancha*, and *The Enlightenment of Percival von Schmootz*, Simon suggests roles from throughout the history of the musical.[25] Common to all three of these roles is their centrality to the story. Though they are not the conventional romantic lead associated with many musicals, they are each the protagonist of their respective shows, and the center around which the story and other characters revolve. Simon can easily see himself as the focal point of these stories. The roles and musicals which he names are unique and somewhat unexpected, from obscure or infrequently produced musicals. These selections additionally display an element of contemporary hegemonic masculinity: the demonstration of expertise and the accumulation of knowledge. Simon's selections are contrasted by participants who identify roles from more popular or commercial musicals, which is subtly derided (discussed further below).

Marginalized and Subordinated Masculinities in Musical Theatre

"I don't see myself in here. At all." — Drew

Racialized and queer participants express a struggle to see themselves in the canon or identify roles which speak to them or represent their experiences. Kimmel's asserts that "to be white, or male, or heterosexual was to be 'American', to occupy the only raced, gendered, or sexual space available in the great story" (*History of Men* ix). This statement extends to the stories and characters of the American musical theatre, as the focus of the art form has been on

[25] *The Threepenny Opera*, by Bertolt Brecht with a score by Kurt Weill was originally produced in 1928 in Berlin, and on Broadway in 1933. It is adapted from John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, which premiered in 1728. *The Enlightenment of Percival von Schmootz*, music, book, and lyrics by Michael Kooman and Christopher Dimond, is a contemporary musical, commissioned by Sheridan College and workshopped as part of the Canadian Musical Theatre Project. After a 2014 workshop and concert reading, it had a two-week run at Sheridan in fall 2016.

stage productions from Broadway, fixing New York City and the United States at the center. Participants who do not occupy this hegemonic position are underrepresented in the musical theatre canon, and the stories and characters that do exist are either unknown or uninspiring to the post-secondary students in these discussion groups.

Drew—a self-identified gay participant—states that he "never thought he fit much" and has only recently begun to compile his own list of dream roles. He names only Judas in *Jesus Christ Superstar* as a dream role, before he pivots to a discussion of gender bending roles in the musical theatre canon, an option that seems to appeal to him and spark his imagination. The potential to offer a new interpretation of the musical's narratives interests him, as he states he isn't interested in swapping the gender of roles simply "for the sake of gender bending". He suggests the role of Marta, one Bobby's potential girlfriends in *Company*, because the character is a "free spirit that's a little too much for him, so adding to that narrative of a little too much, also, they're a male, which kinda hints at more to me".[26] Participants in each discussion group expressed an interest in the songs written for female characters, and Drew suggests that these choices could also offer a unique reading.

As Drew struggles to name roles that he would like to inhabit, in the exchange below, Nick can immediately stake ground in the conversation of gender-swapped roles as well.

ADAM (researcher) (*to Nick*) You responded when he said that about the gender bend. So, are there those for you, as well?

NICK Oh yeah. Oh yeah. There are so many roles I would love to gender bend. I've always wanted to be Elphaba-

[26] In 2018, director Marianne Elliott helmed a gender-swapped production of *Company* on the West End, in London, UK. With the support of composer-lyricist Stephen Sondheim, including a few revised lyrics, Bobby became a 35-year-old woman, and her romantic interests became male roles. Here Drew's suggestion of a male Marta (renamed PJ in the revision) appeared on the stage, but without the implications regarding sexual orientation. A Broadway mounting of this updated production was scheduled to open in March 2020.

ADAM Okay.

NICK -gender bent. I can sing the shit out of "Defying Gravity" down a fifth. Um, and, uh, yeah. That's the big one, having seen [a male student in a Sheridan College production] do Cinderella, I would really like to do that as well in *Into the Woods.* Yeah. Etc. There's probably other ones, but not-

ADAM Those ones are the ones that come to mind?

NICK Yeah.

ADAM (*to Drew*) Did you remember what the one was that escaped you?

DREW Well, I thought of one I thought of recently. I think, like, ones that I think send a cool message, like, Marta in *Company*. I think she makes the most sense in that show to gender bend.

It appears that Nick has spent a great deal more time imagining the places he would like to occupy, while Drew is tentatively exploring the territory. When Drew does identify a specific role, it is not one that he specifically imagines portraying himself, but instead suggests a role that gender-swapping could that casting the supporting role of Marta in *Company* would provide an interesting interpretation, however he does not specifically imagine inhabiting this role himself. This is contrasted by Nick's ability to immediately identify female roles that he also wishes he could play, and the ability to imagine himself in a variety of roles, whether they were originally written for male or female performers. He quickly notes how the roles may need to be adapted to suit his own skills and talents; these elements do not appear to be a limitation to his suitability for a role, as he identifies exactly how songs would be transposed. It is especially interesting that he identifies the role of Elphaba as a dream role, since *Wicked* has also been recognized for being centered on a female relationship and celebrated for the power that these two women demonstrate in the musical. Nick demonstrates the potential for those in a hegemonic position to assume this role, with little thought for the implications of the casting.

Daniel is the only participant who identifies as gay who enthusiastically responds to the question about dream roles. He is the first person in his discussion group to respond to the question and is noted to be nodding his head immediately in response to the question. However, as he begins to list the roles that excite him, he quickly states that he knows "I probably won't never play that role" (it is unclear which role he is referencing with this statement). This moment passes without elaboration, and it is unclear why he believes he would not be cast in the role. In the later conversation he speaks about possible casting limitations due to his vocal range, his accent (as he is a French-Canadian actor), his look, and his sexual orientation. It is interesting to note the way that he qualifies the possibility of inhabiting these characters, in a way that is not immediately demonstrated by his straight peers.

Additionally, other participants in the group also provide obstacles to Daniel as he speaks about his dream roles. As mentioned above, when Daniel suggests the role of Fredrick in *A Little Night Music*, Simon immediately challenges whether Daniel has the upper range the score requires.

DANIEL … From, uh, *Little Night Music*. Uh, Fredrick.

[Sounds of recognition]

DANIEL I think these would be the ones that come up to my mind.

ADAM Yep. Great. Who else?

SIMON You got that B flat ready?

ADAM Wait, the B flat is Henrick, right?

JORDAN He's a B natural.

SIMON [singing] "For God's Sake."

ADAM (*to Daniel*) So do you mean the son, or the father?

DANIEL The father.

ADAM Okay, all right.

JORDAN Cause he's definitely there for that one scene. He comes in, yells his high B, and then he's—

SIMON He's like "I'm a good singer, see you later."

HARRY Oh yeah. "I'm a good singer, bye."

Though it is quickly established that Daniel is referring to the role of the father Fredrick in the musical, and not the son, Henrick, as Simon originally believed, Simon and Harry continue to laugh at the song and the requirements of the role. Daniel's enthusiastic response to the question about dream roles is quickly dampened, and the conversation is then dominated by others. In the subsequent conversation, Jordan, Simon, and Harry list their dream roles without any commentary from their peers. Though subtle, the desires of the discussion group participant who occupies a subordinated position in the matrix of masculinity is put in his place by his peers. After questioning the possibility of his own goals, his peers also question his abilities. This is not extended to the others in the conversation.

The racialized discussion group participants have a very different response to the question about dream roles. These students appear to struggle to identify a place for themselves in the repertoire. They name fewer options, and instead suggest the barriers to casting they perceive. They do not share the ease and enthusiasm of their peers as they imagine their future goals. The following exchange demonstrates the difference between what visibly white and racialized students see for themselves in the musical theatre, and how the representation of race impacts what is available to them.

ADAM What about dream roles? Do you guys have, like, roles that you want to play? Are you shaking your head?

CHRISTOPHER Um, kind of.

BRIAN I have, like, a dream role for every musical. Essent—it's hard for me to-- I guess this is relevant. I can see myself in almost every show. Almost. There's some shows that I really shouldn't be in.

ADAM Like what shouldn't you be in?

BRIAN Well, um, well there's, like, I shouldn't be in *Pacific Overtures*.

ADAM Okay.

BRIAN Even though I think it's a great show. I'd love to be a part of it in some way, but also again, I'm not the ideal person of-- for that job.

ADAM Kay.

JAMES Um, I would say that, yeah, I do have dream roles. But, I, I would say that my, my knowledge when it comes to musical, I don't know that much of a lot of shows. So, the ones that I do know of, those, I would say, are the only ones I can think of.

ADAM So, like, what are they?

JAMES Well, like, one of them, which I could never actually potentially do, is Tony from *West Side*.

ADAM Okay. Why can't you play Tony?

JAMES I don't look-- I can't. I look, I don't like white enough, but I don't look Latin-- I look too Latino to be in it. But I don't look Latino enough to be a Shark, you know what I mean? Like, I'm in that, that grey area, of like "where would he go? I don't know."

ADAM Okay. So, you feel like you don't fit in *West Side Story*?

JAMES In a professional setting, no.

ADAM Okay. But Tony would be a dream role.

JAMES. Yes. Yeah. That would, I would say that's, like the first thing that comes to my mind.

ADAM Anything else?

JAMES Um, not this moment, no. Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER I'd love to play Aladdin.

ADAM Okay.

CHRISTOPHER Not necessarily because it's a role or a show that I'm in love with, but just because I have not seen someone who is actually brown play the role. And I think, well, there should at least-- It should only be played by a brown person, in my opinion. So, I'm hoping that I can have the opportunity to play that role and actually be, like, "yeah, this is how it's supposed to look."

In response to the question, Christopher is almost immediately noted to be shaking his head. Before he explains this response further, Brian jumps in with the variety of roles he would like to play. Brian immediately takes the space available in the conversation, and states that he has a role he would love to play in almost every musical. There are many opportunities available to him, many places he can see himself. This is contrasted by the limitations that James perceives: there is no place for him in a favourite musical, and his dream role is unavailable to him in a professional production. Christopher appears to be interested in playing the role of Aladdin as a duty, an apparent responsibility to representation. He doesn't describe a great interest or affinity for the role, but that it is due for someone of his racial background to play the role in a major production.

When the limitations of "appropriate" casting are hypothetically removed, the participants here turn to cross-gender casting possibilities. Christopher, who had previously noted a lack of dream roles, immediately identifies *Chicago*'s Velma Kelly as a dream role. As opposed to the sense of duty he notes in relation to the role of Aladdin, Christopher seems excited by the qualities and possibilities in the role of Velma Kelly: "I'm just so drawn to her unapologetic-ness, and badass and she dances her face off, and sings a lot, and is kind of the anti-protagonist". James also more easily names female characters he would love to play and

expresses his desire to play either Effie or Elphaba (the lead roles in *Dreamgirls* and *Wicked* respectively), and the opportunity these roles provide to sing the power ballads that have "the really powerful drive, that really showcases the power of the character in their song". While each of the participants in the discussion group respond favorably to the idea of gender-swapped casting, it is notable that both Christopher and James, who first struggled to identify dream roles, more easily name characters they would like to play when barriers of race and gender are removed. The possibilities embodied by these female characters seem to present the attributes that they are interested in, as the roles demonstrate power and expressivity that are not mentioned in the characters they name earlier in the conversation.

In the exchange above, Brian demonstrates the awareness that there are some roles that are not available to him as a white male: despite imagining a dream role in in every musical, "there's some shows I really shouldn't be in." However, he fails to fully express why certain roles may be inappropriate for him and does not fully articulate any concerns about race. Brian identifies *Pacific Overtures*[27] as a musical in which shouldn't be cast, and this reference appears to be understood by the other participants. Vocabulary related to race and representation is only explicitly used by the racialized participants. Brian still suggests that he would love to be a part of the musical, though not appearing in it. This passing reference also speaks to the positions of power that are dominated by visibly white males in the professional musical theatre, as creative teams and writers have overwhelmingly been male and white, allowing invisible ways he can participate in a production.

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[27] *Pacific Overtures* (1976) is a musical with a score by Stephen Sondheim, book by John Weidman, and the original Broadway production was directed by Harold Prince. The musical explores the impacts of western influences on Japan from 1853 to the current day of the musical. The original production was staged with Kabuki influences, featuring a predominantly male cast (portraying both male and female roles until the final number of the musical).

Conclusion

The discussion group research suggests that students are frequently having—at best—an ambiguous experience of musical content. There are very few examples that the participants provide in which they have an affirming response to inherent musical meaning and a positive response to the delineated meanings. Instead, there is a prevailing tension in much of the musical theatre repertoire with which the students are engaged, which supports the "dissonant pleasure" described by Wolf. There is something in the content of musical theatre that appeals to the students, elements which encouraged them to study musical theatre at the post-secondary level, but a celebratory experience frequently eludes them.

Participants are more frequently listening to contemporary popular music styles and artists, and these styles are appropriated in contemporary musicals. Students are generally more familiar with and interested in contemporary musicals, and it may be the familiar musical content which appeals to them. Delineated meanings seem to go unexamined in the musicals students enjoy; the affirmative experience of the works' inherent meaning appears to permit the content to go unexplored.

The dominance that "Golden Age" repertoire maintains in post-secondary training leads to an alienating musical experience, which is exacerbated as the students have limited agency in what material is explored in classes and productions. The musical style of "Golden Age" musicals frequently has a more classically informed vocal production and employs song forms and compositional techniques which are unfamiliar to current post-secondary students. The musical content of popular music and musical theatre largely diverged in the 1960s with the advent of rock'n roll, and the musical preferences of contemporary students are not reflected in

“Golden Age” repertoire. This unfamiliarity with the inherent musical material engenders an aggravated response to the inherent musical meanings of the works of this era.

The discussion group research also demonstrates the invisible nature of hegemonic masculinity. The student participants recognize and reject the misogyny and homophobia that is present in the history and content of musical theatre, however they do not have a lens to view gender relations between masculinities. Consequently, they are unaware of the ways in which their perceptions of musical theatre and their actions toward each other support hegemonic ideals. A framework is required that would facilitate the examination of masculinity in musical theatre.

The following chapters adapt Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity to first examine a musical from the “Golden Age” period in which the student demonstrate alienation, and then one which they appear to embrace, to examine whether the inherent and delineated meanings are truly as disparate as the students perceive.

Chapter Three: A Framework for Examining Masculinities in Musical Theatre

"A great deal of wisdom resides in conventions: nothing less than the premises of an age, the cultural arrangements that enable communication, co-existence, and self-awareness. At the same time, none of them counts as anything more than artificial constructs human beings have invented and agreed to maintain—in particular contexts, for particular reasons, to satisfy particular needs and desires" (McClary *Conventional Wisdom* 5-6).

This chapter proposes a framework for the examination of masculinity in musical theatre which employs the theory of *hegemonic masculinity*. I adapt Connell's four-fold model of power, labour, emotional relations, and symbolism to investigate gender relations as represented in musical theatre and explore Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* as a case study.

Oklahoma! is frequently cited as the beginning of a new era in musical theatre, the "Golden Age"[28] of the Broadway musical. The 1943 premiere of *Oklahoma!* established a number of conventions for the musical form that were prevalent for the following two decades, and continue to impact the structure, form, and stories of musicals into the 21st Century. In addition to theatrical conventions, historical constructs of gender (as well as sexuality, race, and socioeconomic status) are on display and at work in the musical. In my research, *Oklahoma!* serves as an exemplar of the works of Rodgers and Hammerstein, and—due to its influence on other writers of the period, and the template it provided—as representative of the musicals from Broadway's "Golden Age".

[28] The "Golden Age" of musical theatre generally refers to 1943-1964, and the age of the integrated book musical exemplified by the works of Rodgers and Hammerstein, Frank Loesser, Lerner and Loewe, Bock and Harnick, and others. These years, and the attendance guideposts of *Oklahoma!* (1943) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964) are being contested in contemporary scholarship. The term "Golden Age", and the stories and conventions it privileges, is also being challenged in critical examination of musical theatre history (see Sternfeld and Wollman's "After the Golden Age", *The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical*).

The Musical and Background

Based on Lynn Riggs' *Green Grow the Lilacs*, *Oklahoma!* is set in the summer of 1906, in Indian Territory which ultimately became Oklahoma. The story of *Oklahoma!* is centered on two love triangles in which a young woman is choosing between two suitors. The main plot is the "serious" and romantic love story that focuses on Laurey Williams, cowboy Curly McLain, and hired hand Jud Fry, which is contrasted by the comedic subplot featuring Ado Annie, cowboy Will Parker, and the peddler Ali Hakim.

In the primary story Laurey Williams and Curly McLain are both too proud to admit their romantic feelings for each other, and Laurey accepts the invitation of her dangerous and intimidating hired farmhand, Jud Fry, to inspire Curly's jealousy. At the Act Two auction for the women's prized picnic dinners (and their company), Curly outbids Jud for Laurey's hamper by selling his saddle, horse, and gun. Laurey and Curly ultimately admit their feelings for each other and are engaged to be married. The spurned Jud returns at the end of the play, and in a fight with Curly falls on his own knife and dies. Curly is quickly acquitted of murder by an assembled jury of townspeople and sent off to his honeymoon with Laurey. The community celebrates the marriage—and impending statehood—with the finale, "Oklahoma!".

In the comedic subplot, Laurey's best friend Ado Annie is unable to choose between two suitors. While her beau, Will Parker, has been competing at a fair in Kansas City, Ado Annie has been pursued by the travelling peddler Ali Hakim. Will has returned with a $50 prize, but spent it on gifts for Ado Annie, and therefore denied her father's consent to marry. Instead, Ado Annie's father forces Ali Hakim's proposal at gunpoint after she describes the time the two of them have shared privately. In Act Two, Ali Hakim buys the many gifts from Will, providing Will with $50

and alleviating Hakim's duty to marry Ado Annie. Ado Annie and Will end up together, and in the final scene, it is discovered Ali Hakim is now married to a girl from a neighboring town.

The love stories play out against the background of tensions in the community between the farmers and the ranchers, and the union of Laurey and Curly at the end of the musical serves as an example of what Raymond Knapp identifies as the "marriage trope", in which the lead characters represent larger antagonistic cultural forces, for whom marriage offers a possible resolution of conflicting ideals. As explained by John Bush Jones,

> The finale in both Rigg's play and Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical symbolizes the reconciliation of differences. In both, cowman Curly's marriage to farm woman Laurey cuts through the barbed wired of animosity between cattlemen and farmers. Hammerstein's own invented subplot doubles this effect with Ado Annie Carnes, a farmer's daughter, wooed, won, and, we assume, wed to another cowboy, Will Parker. These marital unions of opposites signal old rivalries, prejudices, and animosities stripped away, and the birth of a new, harmonious society (see Frye 163-64)—as does the imminent *union* of the new state of Oklahoma with the United States of America in the show's stirring title song (145).

In addition to its status in the history of musical theatre as a paradigm-shifting work, the original production of *Oklahoma!* matched the historical moment. The reconciliation of seemingly incompatible ideals, and the triumph of good over evil—as demonstrated in Curly winning both Laurey's hand and the physical fight with Jud—were especially potent for the original audiences of the musical. Produced while the country was fighting in World War II, *Oklahoma!* presented an ideal American story for the dominant culture of the United States. The early 20th century frontier setting celebrated the potential of America, and the idea that a man can make anything he wants of himself with land, community, and the promise of progeny in heterosexual marriage. The absence of visible Native Americans in the musical despite its setting of Oklahoma before statehood (described in the libretto as "Indian Territory") demonstrates the

ability of Americans to triumph over an invisible threat (Hoffman), an especially inspiring concept for an audience during a war being fought overseas.

Though it is frequently viewed as a relic of an earlier era, *Oklahoma!* continues to be produced and is being re-imagined in contemporary productions. In 2018, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival production revised the sex of several central characters with the approval of the Rodgers and Hammerstein organization, putting same-sex couples at the center of the story. Curly became a female character, and Ado Annie became Ado Andy. Aunt Eller became a transgender character, portrayed by a transgender performer. In 2019, “an intimately staged and darkly revisionist revival of *Oklahoma!*” (Paulson) transferred to Broadway after a critically acclaimed and sold-out run Off-Broadway and won the 2019 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical. This new production uses revised arrangements of the score for seven-piece band and a Curly who self-accompanies on the guitar, a “reconceived ending and video interludes” (Paulson), and a cast which features greater representation of race and abilities in the central roles. While the works of Rodgers and Hammerstein seem to present a bygone era, the 2019 revival is the sixth Broadway production of *Oklahoma!* since its premiere over 75 years ago. The musical endures, allowing a contemporary look at the elements which now seem familiar and inevitable. An examination of the representation of gender and sexuality that are present in the text of *Oklahoma!* allow for a greater understanding of the conventions demonstrated by the musical, and their relevance and reinterpretation in a variety of historical contexts.

A Framework for Examining Masculinity in Musical Theatre

This chapter presents a framework to examine masculinity in musical theatre based on the four-fold model Connell employs for investigating gender relations. Connell’s theory of

hegemonic masculinity provides a lens for viewing masculinity, which I am extending to viewing masculinity in musical theatre.

Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity posits a hierarchal structure for the arrangement of masculinities in a given historical and cultural context. In summary[29], *hegemonic masculinity* is the dominant ideal of masculinity in a specific context; *complicit masculinity* includes males who do not exemplify the patterns of hegemonic masculinity but benefit from the rewards of patriarchy; *subordinated masculinities* include men who are excluded from the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity due to homosexuality or perceived femininity; *marginalized masculinities* refers to males who are excluded from the patriarchal dividend due to race and class, and acknowledges intersectional oppressions; and *protest masculinities* are demonstrated by men in social positions which lack economic or political power who respond by adopting hypermasculine behaviours and practices. Employing the theory of hegemonic masculinity in the examination of musical theatre allows us to investigate the changing relations of masculinities, rather than reducing the men in musicals to specific, fixed "types". We can consider whether the male characters in a specific work reflect the ideals of a given historical context and be able to compare the diachronic representation of masculinity in musical theatre.

Adapting Connell's Four-fold Model for Musical Theatre

Connell and Messerschmidt define hegemonic masculinity as "the pattern of practices (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue" (832). Musicals present their own "patterns of practice", as they adhere to specific conventions in the use of song, dance, and story, as well as the structure and form of

[29] Hegemonic masculinity is presented in greater detail in Chapter One (see Theory & Methods).

integrated book musicals. Connell's investigation of labour relations, power relations, emotional relations (cathexis), and symbolism[30] are well aligned with Wolf's interrogation of what characters "do" in a story: "what do they sing? How do they move? How do they relate to each other as men and women?" (Wolf *Oxford Handbook* 210). These questions can be transposed onto Connell's model, facilitating an examination of how the conventions of musical theatre are linked to and represent gender in a musical drama. My investigation, and the adapted framework that follows, is centered on the sung material in the vocal score, with a particular attention to the melody and lyrics. I suggest this adapted framework can be employed to examine each dimension of gender relations in the myriad elements that are integrated in a musical, including analysis of the book (libretto), orchestrations, choreography, staging, costume design, etc.

Labour

Connell explores the sexual division of labour, the division of tasks between sexes and amongst/between men. This is adapted for musical theatre as an analysis of who is singing throughout the vocal score. What is the distribution of the sung musical material? What is the vocal range, and what are the vocal demands of specific characters?

Power

Connell defines power as "the ability to impose a definition of the situation, to set the terms in which events are understood and issues discussed, to formulate ideals and define morality" (1987, 107). The dimension of power presents a unique challenge in the examination of a

[30] Connell employed this model throughout her work. First conceived as a three-fold model, with power relations, labour, and cathexis as the components for examination in gender relations, Connell updated this model to include symbolism in *The Men and They Boys* (2000).

musical, as it frequently seems to live outside its sung material. Instead, power frequently appears to be demonstrated in the libretto, via dialogue and stage directions. However, song lyrics also provide the opportunity to explore how power is contested in a musical, and individual songs can be analyzed to evidence which characters are empowered and which are powerless. The following question can be posed for the examination of power in a vocal score: how are power relations demonstrated and contested in song?

Emotional Relations (Cathexis)

Connell suggests that emotional relations include attachments or commitments, which "may be positive or negative, favorable or hostile towards the object" (*Gender and Power* 63), and provides misogyny and homophobia as examples of hostile emotional relationships. Questions that allow for the exploration of emotional attachments in a musical's vocal score include: to whom does a character sing? What do characters share and "expose" to other characters (male and female), and what do they express in solitude? How is favorability and hostility demonstrated in song?

Symbolism

Symbolic relations were added to Connell's model as she continued to develop her theories. Considering the semiotics of gender, Connell suggests that "the symbolic presentation of gender through dress, makeup, body culture, gesture, tone of voice etc. is an important part of the everyday experience of gender" and that "we often understand gender differences through symbolic oppositions rather than images of gradation" (*The Men and the Boys* 26). Symbolism provides a rich site for examination in musical theatre scores, allowing for a fulsome exploration

of music and lyrics (including melody, rhythm, harmony, and elements of composition); the use of diction, imagery, and metaphor in the lyrics and libretto; orchestrations; structure, among many elements of musicals. With a focus on the characters' sung material, my questions include: what does the use of voice and range connote? How does it differ between characters? What is the language, both musical and lyrical, available to the characters?

Musical Expressions of Femininity

The framework explored in this chapter is intended as a starting point for the exploration of masculinity in specific musical components, rather than an extensive musicological investigation of the musical elements of *Oklahoma!*. The investigation that follows focuses on symbolism within the vocal score, with specific attention on melodic content. As stated above, there has been a focus on the representation of femininity in musical dramas (including musical theatre and opera); examining the representation of masculinity in the vocal score for *Oklahoma!* requires more detail to view the musical expression of gender in song. If gender is understood as a continuum, with femininity and masculinity at its poles, musical expressions defined previously as "feminine" provide a template against which masculinity can be considered, allowing for an investigation of the musical content of male characters in a musical drama. The musical representation of femininity is briefly surveyed below, in order to establish a comparison for the examination of masculinity in the vocal score of *Oklahoma!*

Susan C. Cook's examination of femininity in the works of Rodgers and Hammerstein asserts that in Rodgers' compositions, femininity "acts as another kind of embellishment, a gendered 'regional flavoring' playing against the masculine norm… femininity carries connotations of ornament and the everyday but cannot lay claim to the norm or the universal"

(39). Cook analyzes Laurey's "Many A New Day" from *Oklahoma!* to identify elements of femininity in Rodgers' compositions, which includes detached melodies featuring skips and leaps (ex. 3-1), and ornamental rhythmic details, including the use of the triplet on each iteration of the lyric "many a new" in the song's chorus. "This triplet marks 'the pretty' and variants of it appear in other settings by Rodgers, suggesting how it functioned for him as an embellishment of the feminine" (41).

Example 3-1: "Many A New Day", bars 26-27

McClary also invokes the contrast between feminine excess and masculine universality in musical representations of gender in her analysis of the opera *Carmen*. McClary notes that "Carmen's music is marked by its chromatic[31] excess", while Don Jose's music "is that of the 'universal' tongue of Western classical musical… it is devoted to lofty sentiments rather than the body. His melodies unfold solemnly, albeit with what Carl Dahlhaus characterizes as 'lyrical urgency'" (*Feminine Endings* 58-59). This use of chromaticism is also present in the melody of "Many A New Day", in both the song's verse and bridge. The lyrics that explore emotion in bars 13-18 are aligned with a chromatic melodic shape as pitches alternate between semitones as Laurey states "never gonna think that the man I lose…" and "I'll snap my fingers to show I don't care". A chromatic melodic shape appears again in bars 40-41 of the bridge, combined with a

[31] *Chromatic* pitches include all of the available pitches between the octave and are measured in semi-tones (half steps or half tones). Chromatic pitches are distinguished from *diatonic* pitches, which include the pitches which are built within a major or minor scale.

large melodic leap, as Laurey describes “a kiss gone by” (ex. 3-2).

Example 3-2: "Many A New Day", bars 40-41. Chromatic steps are indicated with the addition slurs (curved lines).

The markers of musical femininity described above appear in Laurey’s other musical selections in the score. In examining “Out of My Dreams”, the song that precedes the Act One “Dream Ballet”, Wilder observes that “its principal idea is a step-wise ascent and descent followed by wider steps. In the course of its progress it does many *lovely* things. For example, at the twentieth measure, it introduces a wholly new idea which is immediately imitated, to bring the melody within two chromatic steps of the original statement. The effect of this is magical” [emphasis added] (217-18). After opening with scalar movement in the melodic line, chromaticism appears in both the melody and the bass line, and the melody begins to utilize repeated intervals of a fifth. The intervals grow larger throughout the chorus, until the final phrase of the sung line, which covers a range of an 9th, and features a descending octave jump, bringing the “dream” back to reality when in lands.

These melodic expressions of femininity, as observed by Cook, McClary, and Wilder, can be summarized as: rhythmic embellishments, intervals of skips and leaps, and the use of chromatic pitches. If these elements define the feminine pole of musical expression on the continuum, the representation of masculinity in melody will be rhythmic regularity, scalar (stepwise) movement, and diatonic pitches.

“You heared my voice and knowed it was me”: Masculinities in *Oklahoma!*

“The representation and performance of gender and sexuality in musicals function as building blocks as basic to the form as song, dance, script, or design. Whether a musical seems to be ‘about’ gender or ‘about’ sexuality, these axes of identity invariably organize a musical’s message, its ideological work, and its emotional effects” (Wolf *Oxford Handbook* 210).

This chapter utilizes the framework detailed above to explore the representation of masculinity in *Oklahoma!*. This case study will focus on the musical’s leading romantic character, Curly McLain, who presents the hegemonic ideal of both the musical’s community and the historical and cultural moment of the original production. This section provides a detailed examination of the character’s sung material in the vocal score[32] employing Connell’s four dimensions of gender relations adapted for investigating musical theatre. The other male characters featured in the musical’s two love triangles (Jud Fry, Will Parker, and Ali Hakim) are also be discussed briefly. This examination is a starting point in making masculinity visible in musical theatre and allows for further consideration of how this “groundbreaking” musical serves as a template for male characters in musicals that follow.

The male characters in *Oklahoma!* present conventional musical theatre archetypes (the romantic hero, the juvenile, the comic, the villain), which are well-aligned with the hierarchal structure of hegemonic masculinity. Curly presents the hegemonic ideal, and the dominant local masculinity of the musical’s setting. He is young, handsome, white, and heterosexual. At the beginning of the musical he is a cowboy, but he settles down as a husband to begin a life as a farmer by the finale, as per the “marriage trope”. Will Parker, youthful and naïve, presents a complicit masculinity as he is striving to achieve hegemonic masculinity and is the beneficiary of

[32] There are many sites for examination of gender in a musical. For the purpose of this research, I am focusing on the sung musical material of the score. The music which underscores scenes or accompanies choreography will not be explored in this case study.

patriarchal dividends. Throughout the musical he working to earn the privilege of Ado Annie's hand in marriage from her father and attempts to demand fidelity from Ado Annie. Will's heterosexuality is confirmed in the final moments of the musical, as a stage direction indicates that as Ado Annie and Will Parker go upstage that "tell-tale wisps of straw are seen clinging to Ado Annie's back" (Hammerstein 63), suggesting the two have recently consummated their relationship.

The description of Ali Hakim, both by others and himself, sets him apart ethnically, and he is somewhat separate from the community throughout the musical. Hakim presents a marginalized masculinity in the musical. He draws a portrait of himself as a Persian (see references to his brother, and his "Persian Goodbye"), however, in the script, there is also a sense that this is an adopted persona, to suit his work as a peddler. Carter notes that "while the name 'Ali Hakim' may seem Arabic, those in the know would have spotted the reference to the Yiddish and Hebrew *hacham*, a 'clever man'", and that "the role of the Peddler is stereotypically that of a wandering Jew, or his counterpart, the 'lonely gyspy' (as Ali Hakim refers to himself in act 1, scene 2; p. 125)" (199). Despite being set apart, Hakim is welcome. He is established as a regular visitor to the Williams farm, familiar to both Aunt Eller and Laurey when he first appears in the play. The men in the community refer to him as "friend" in "It's A Scandal, It's A Outrage", and ultimately he is integrated into the community by his marriage to Gertie Cummings and set up to take over her father's store. He transitions from travelling salesman to local merchant through his romantic entanglements in the musical.

Though there are multiple readings and interpretations of Jud Fry's identity,[33] he is consistently recognized as an outsider, excluded from the musical's community. Jud is "a drifter

[33] Jud has been interpreted as racially or religiously "othered": coded as Jewish (Cushing Aikin). The 2018 Broadway revival suggested Jud's homoerotic longing for Curly, suggesting the character may be gay. In the

not productively tied to the land as are the ranchers and the farmers. To both groups a hired hand was beneath contempt" (Jones 145). As an itinerant worker, Jud speaks of working on several farms, and it is unknown how long he has worked on the Williams' farm. While valued by Laurey and Aunt Eller for his contributions to maintaining the farm, and the relative safety that a male presence provides, he is not integrated into their circle. Laurey's marriage to Curly renders Jud obsolete: Curly will now be the secure and productive male presence on the farm, and Jud can be released from working there. Jud's death at the end of the musical confirms his expulsion from the community.

There are no subordinated masculinities present in the musical as written. The main characters are all engaged in heterosexual romances and are ultimately wed (or intended to be) or killed by the musical's conclusion. In the homosocial ensemble number, "It's A Scandal! It's A Outrage!" the community of male characters lament being forced into marriage, rather than being permitted heterosexual romantic dalliances and sexual freedom.

The above summary of the hierarchal structure of the leading male characters in *Oklahoma!* is intended to illustrate how this "Golden Age" musical supports constructions of masculinity at the local level (the world of this specific musical), and how this reflects and constructs regional masculinities as an artefact of popular culture. The examination here is not intended to reduce masculinities in the musical to "types", as "hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same. It is, rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable" (Connell *Masculinities* 76). Male characters in musical theatre have been observed to not simply

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Oregon Shakespeare production, which crossed conventional gender roles, Jud is presented as the only heterosexual member of the community and interpreted to resist the gender and sexual fluidity of the those around him.

assume the stock types that are frequently assigned to female characters[34] and Wolf notes that "male roles are less typecast by vocal range than women's" ("Gender and Sexuality" 211). The flexibility afforded to male characters in musical theatre demonstrates the availability of a great variety of potential masculinities. In the section that follows, I aim to to investigate how masculinity works in *Oklahoma!*, and how the dimensions of gender relations are presented in the musical. I examine the dimensions of labour, power, emotional relations, and symbolism in the sung material of the vocal score.

Labour

Curly's voice—his singing—dominates the musical. There are 30 musical numbers listed in the vocal score's musical program (including orchestral sequences and changes of scene), and Curly sings three solos (two full songs and a reprise), three duets (again, two full songs and reprise), and is featured for the first iteration of the chorus of the title song "Oklahoma" (see appendix C). With this distribution of sung material, Curly has the bulk of the vocal labour in the musical, and the most musical material of any character in the show. While it is Laurey's choice of party date that anchors the story, and Laurey is the focal point of the "Dream Ballet" at the end of Act I, it is Curly who dominates the piece. In contrast to Curly, Laurey has two solos, and two duets with Curly. "Laurey waits for 37 pages of dialogue and 3 more musical numbers, including those by secondary leads, before getting a solo that might help us understand her place

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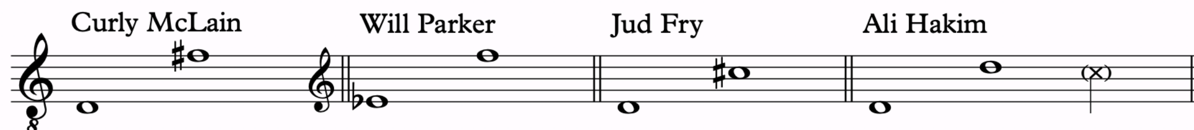
[34] Providing a general summary regarding the representation of women and gender in dramatic musical works, Taylor and Symonds state that "female characters have tended to be written as stock types: the virgin, the whore, the witch or mother; and musical narratives have tended to perpetuate the boy-meets-girl trope, in which the pretty women melts in the arms of a strong and dominant man before walking down the aisle to embrace happily married bliss" (140). This is supported by Wolf's assertion that "characters in musicals are drawn in broad strokes… Thus, characters as gendered fall into types, and often according to vocal range" ("Gender and Sexuality" 211), and outlines that frequently the ingenue is a soprano, with a comic sidekick who sings in the mezzo range. These generalizations align with Goldstein's summary of the female roles in the works of Rodgers & Hammerstein as summarize in Chapter One.

in this Oklahoma morning and her the reluctance to our waltzing cowboy" (Cook 40). While the plot hinges on Laurey's decision, it is Curly's solo "Surrey With the Fringe On Top" that serves as the musical's conventional "I want" song.[35]

The other leading male characters each sing two songs or less. Will Parker is introduced in the solo "Kansas City" and has an act two duet with Ado Annie, "All Er Nothin'". Jud sings one solo, "Lonely Room", and joins Curly in the duet "Pore Jud Is Daid" after Curly establishes the melody and content. Ali Hakim participates in only one song in the score: he is featured with the male ensemble for "It's A Scandal! It's A Outrage!".



Example 3-3: Vocal ranges of leading male characters in *Oklahoma!*

The vocal ranges of the leading characters (ex. 3-3) generally follow the conventional distribution of vocal types/categories in "Golden Age" musicals and their antecedents: Curly, baritone; Will Parker, tenor; Jud Fry, bass-baritone. Curly demonstrates the greatest vocal range of the male characters, covering an octave and a fourth, from C#3 to F#4, singing a semitone lower and higher than the other leading male characters in the musical. He demonstrates the greatest vocal labour of the four leading male characters, with the character's output exceeding the other leading male characters, which also requires the performer in the role of Curly to demonstrate a greater labour than the performers in the show.[36] This vocal range, along with his

[35] "The Surrey With the Fringe on the Top" occupies the conventional placement of the "I want" song, and establishes that the central question of the musical is whether Laurey will accept Curly's invitation to the Box Social.

[36] The vocal labour of the performer has been explored by feminist musicologists who contrast the power of female performers who dominate with their voices with the frequently disempowered roles in which they perform. See Abbate.

musical output, also suggests that he has strength, skill, and stamina, desired dominant male qualities in the frontier community which requires great labour and dedication as the territory is settled.

Will demonstrates the second largest vocal range to Curly, Eb3-F4, an octave and a tone. While Curly sings higher frequency pitches than Will, the tessitura[37] of Will's songs set him apart vocally, with both of the character's songs centered in the upper part of his range. The chorus of "Kansas City" presents many repeated Eb4's, and each phrase of the A section starts on a repeated pitch between C4-Eb4, which descends as the melody progresses. This creates the impression of Will Parker as a tenor role, which frequently used to help connote youth, and is demonstrated in "Golden Age" musicals with younger leading characters (i.e., Tony in *West Side Story*).

The voices of the marginalized characters are muted in the musical. Both Jud Fry and Ali Hakim have a limited number of songs, and these songs limit vocal range and expression. Jud's vocal compass in the musical does not extend to an octave: he sings from D3 to C#4 in in both songs. Ali Hakim is unique in that, while the character is featured in "It's A Scandal! It's A Outrage!", the notation of the score suggests that he does not actually sing. His vocal line is instead marked with 'x' note heads, which indicate that a vocal line is to be spoken, and provide rhythm, but not assigned pitch. The range chart (ex. 3-3) shows the pitches notated in "It's A Scandal! It's A Outrage!", however it is unclear in the written score whether the pitches in bars

[37] The "tessitura" of a vocal pieces is the range within most of the pitches of a song or role fall, within the overall vocal range of the piece.

79-82 are intended for the character to sing when the chorus repeats, or whether these pitches appear because the male ensemble has sung this section on the first iteration.

Power

Power is contested throughout *Oklahoma!* in familiar cultural terms: violence and money. Power contests featuring violence (or the threat of violence) and money are generally presented in the libretto, rather than in song, and are briefly reviewed here. Power relations and the ability to define the terms of a particular situation as represented in the vocal score are examined in greater detail below in the duet “Pore Jud Is Daid”.

Weapons are generally at the center of each power struggle between men. Connell states that “most episodes of major violence are transactions between men… violence can become a way of claiming or asserting masculinity” (*Masculinites* 83). Violence is employed in male power transactions throughout *Oklahoma!*, and this is highlighted at the beginning of Act Two when the dispute between the farmers and the cowboys is only suspended when Aunt Eller draws a gun. This is intended to be comedic, and the comedy here seems to be magnified by the fact that it is women who draws a weapon and asserts dominance in the situation. Throughout the remainder of the musical, it is the male characters who exemplify hegemonic masculinity who dominate in each power contest: Ado Annie’s father, Andrew Carnes (an older, white, farmer and landowner), forces Ali Hakim to propose marriage at the end of his shotgun, and Jud dies in a knife fight with Curly. In the scene where Curly visits Jud in his smokehouse, the threat of violence pervades the scene as Jud polishes his gun throughout their conversation. At the height of their conflict Jud fires his gun at the ceiling reflexively, which prompts Curly to demonstrate the accuracy of his aim. This skirmish is interrupted by Ali Hakim and Aunt Eller, who

admonishes the two men for being "a pair of fools swappin' noises" (Hammerstein 33). The threat that underlines this scene erupts in the fight near the end of the musical that results in Jud's death.

Economic power is also used between men to define situations. Carnes requires $50 cash from Will Parker before he can have Ado Annie's hand in marriage. Though Will returns from Kansas City with a $50 prize, he has spent it on gifts, and Carnes prevents Will and Ado Annie from marrying. At the Box Social in Act Two, Ali Hakim buys Will's assorted baubles for a total of $50 cash, so that Hakim can be free from marrying Ado Annie. The Box Social is the site of another contest featuring money as Jud and Curly both sell of their possessions to outbid each other for Laurey's picnic basket and the subsequent date with the girl that packed it. After Jud outbids all the other men at the picnic, Curly sells his saddle, horse, and gun to win the auction. While this ensures that Curly beats Jud in this contest, it is also an important moment in the musical symbolically. Curly has shed all the items that defined him as a free-spirited cowboy and has now moved toward the farm-based life that marriage to Laurey will require. In this act, Curly is emasculated by giving up his money and weapons, but his hegemonic masculinity is also confirmed in the promised of owning property and having children.

"Pore Jud Is Daid" does not specifically contest power on the grounds of violence, money, or sex. The song appears in the Smokehouse scene mentioned above, in which Curly and Jud are challenging one another.[38] If power is defined by Connell as the ability to set the terms of the conversation, the structure of this songs provides an interesting example. It is Curly who sets the terms of this song, establishing both the melody and lyrics (presented as an improvisation). Curly first sings the refrain, in which Jud first echoes short phrases, and then ultimately develops

[38] "Pore Jud Is Daid" is explored in additional detail below, in the examination of emotional relations.

further himself on the third iteration. However, the use of the melody and rhythm provided by Curly confirms that it is he who defining the conversation. Here again it is the male character in the hegemonic position who dominates the situation.

Emotional Relations

An investigation of a character's songs allows for a consideration of the affirming and hostile relationships in the musical. Solos allow for an examination of what characters reveal what they hide through the consideration of what they express to others, and what they express in isolation. Duets provide an opportunity for the investigation of the relationships between characters.[39]

Solos

Curly's solos demonstrate the character's confidence and bravado. He is always aware of the presence of other characters during his solos, and his songs are intended to have an impact on those who are listening. The songs present Curly's pride, as he does not address any of his objectives directly: rather than inquire about Laurey, he uses "Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin'" to entice her out of the house, and "The Surrey With the Fringe on the Top" is intended to woo Laurey to attend the Box Social with him, but without a forthright invitation. These solos demonstrate Curly's pride. He does not make himself vulnerable to Laurey with these songs, instead he is indirect regarding his intentions. While he resists vulnerability, the songs do illustrate that Curly is a romantic, as the final repeat of the chorus of each song turns poetic and reveals Curly's softer side. These revelations are quickly dismissed in the scenes that

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[39] The examination of ensemble songs would allow for a comparison of what male ensembles sing about together, versus the content of female ensemble songs and full (mixed) company ensemble numbers. The expressions of homosocial groupings in the musical warrants further investigation but is outside the scope of the current examination of the musical selections of the four leading male characters.

immediately follow each song, as Curly turns to teasing and taunting dialogue with Aunt Eller and Laurey in both.

"Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin'" is presented as diegetic[40]: the song is presented as a folk song with a repeated verse-refrain structure (unique from the other song structures of the musical and intended to reflect the use of folk songs in the original source material), and Curly is aware that Aunt Eller is present as he arrives singing. The stage directions note that Curly is "obviously singing from the benefit of someone inside the house" while "Aunt Eller looks straight ahead, elaborately ignoring Curly" (Hammerstein 1), and that after the song is finished "Curly looks wistfully up at the windows of the house" (Hammerstein 2). It is clear that he hopes that Laurey will hear his song, and that Laurey will come outdoors without having to inquire about her directly. The public singing suggests Curly's confidence and bravado, while also establishing the pride that characterizes Laurey and Curly's relationship, as both are waiting for the other to be the first to acknowledge their feelings. Laurey enters shortly thereafter singing the song's refrain, which establishes both that the song is familiar to the characters (confirming the folk nature of the song), and that she has indeed heard Curly. The song is then used to establish the nature of their relationship, as Laurey suggests that she did not know that Curly had arrived, but that she "heared a-singin' like a bull-frog in a pond" (Hammerstein 3). The relationship is established as antagonistic, however this teasing and taunting is presented as a guise behind which the two characters hide their romantic inclinations.

[40] The term *diegetic* has been appropriated for use in musical theatre from film theory. In film, a sound is diegetic if it is part of the narrative sphere of the film, if the characters hear it. In musical theatre, the term is used in instances where the characters know they are specifically singing, rather than using song as a continuation of expression. The majority of musical theatre songs are to be interpreted as *non-diegetic*, that the songs are a heightened expression that extends beyond words alone, but that the characters are not aware of the sung nature of the communication. Diegetic songs are often a feature of "backstage musicals", or musicals set in theatrical settings.

Curly's second solo, "The Surrey With the Fringe on the Top" quickly follows the opening song and the brief scene that establishes Curly and Laurey's relationship. After Laurey's insult about his singing, Curly states that he has "a good mine not to ast you to the Box Social" (Hammerstein 2), which lays bare the reason that Curly has visited the Williams' farm. Laurey responds that he would expect her travel with him on his old horse, and the song is Curly's description of the buggy and team of horses they would travel in together. Curly paints a fantastic picture, with intricate details regarding the buggy, its upholstery, and the white horses that would drive it. This suggests a great deal of expense and demonstrates Curly's ability to spend money. When Laurey rebukes him, suggesting that he spent all his money and now doesn't have a date, Curly's defends himself by claiming to have imagined the buggy and not have hired one at all. This later proves to be a lie to save his pride, as after Curly discovers that Laurey has accepted Jud's invitation to the dance, he confesses that he has, in fact, hired the rig and will use it to escort Aunt Eller to the Box Social. In the final repeat of the chorus turns romantic, as Curly describes the end of the evening, as the two would ride home in comfort and privacy together from the dance. The description of the surrey, and the enchantment Curly creates, are intended to entice Laurey to attend the Box Social with him, but not require him to ask directly.

Duets

The "ideal" romantic pairs in *Oklahoma!* each sing a duet together: Laurey and Curly have Act One's "People Will Say We're in Love", and in Act Two, Ado Annie and Will Parker have "All 'Er Nothin'". These duets both follow a familiar format, which Viertel suggests

plays on the subconscious of the audience in a way that is structural and subtextual. First one sings and the other sings a rebuttal, but both assertion and response have the same melody. So, there's something that tells us, subliminally, that these two have more in common than they think they do—they have the same music (84).

Each of the duets between the romantic couples in *Oklahoma!* have the characters presenting a list of "don't's" for the other. The lyrics demonstrate tension and conflict; however, the shared musical information helps to affirm that they share feelings—whether they are not yet aware of it, or not willing to admit it. This trope of musical theatre has been described as the "conditional love song", allowing the characters to express their feelings in an imagined or hypothetical way[41].

Curly and Laurey's duet, "People Will Say We're in Love", continues to demonstrate the antagonistic quality of their relationship. After Laurey confirms that she plans to attend the Box Social with Jud, she suggests it is to put to rest some of the community's gossip about her and Curly. They each indicate that the other is believed to be "stuck on" them, and the song's lyrics present of list of behaviours for each of them to avoid to dispel the rumors. At this point neither character will admit their feelings, and they provide their own argument, with brief spoken protests interjected by the other. The balanced structure of the song (Laurey's chorus followed by Curly's rebuttal), demonstrates that the two characters have not yet come together, and there is no unison or harmony singing. The Act II reprise of the song revises the lyrics to "let people say we're in love", and after alternating the familiar melody, the characters sing together in

[41] The conditional love song is a frequent feature of Hammerstein scores, appearing earlier in *Show Boat* with "Make Believe", and in *Carousel* with "If I Loved You". Conditional love songs frequently establish the characters feelings, while avoiding the need for characters who may have just met to suddenly profess romantic feelings for each other.

unison, and the confirmation of their feelings is affirmed as Laurey and sing in harmony for the final title phrase.

“Pore Jud Is Daid” is the only duet in the score sung by two male characters. After asking Laurey to go to the Box Social with him instead of Jud, Curly visits Jud in smokehouse where he resides to “see what’s so elegant about him, makes girls want to go to parties ‘th him” (Hammerstein 27). Curly and Laurey attempt to disguise their mutual attractions with disdain in “People Will Say We’re in Love”. “Pore Jud Is Daid” provides an opposite approach, as Curly’s hostility toward Jud is presented in a mock hymn that would mark Jud’s passing, which Curly sings “very earnestly and solemnly” (Hammerstein 29). Curly suggests suicide to Jud, as his passing would reveal how people in the community truly cared for him. The lyrics, and the improvised eulogy which is integrated into the song, criticize and mock Jud, however the musical quality is presented as solemn and reverent. Curly begins the song, and again his ability to charm and cajole are on display. Jud begins by echoing Curly in the second verse, and Jud himself begins the final verse, before the two men sing unison in the final chorus and harmonize on the final two iterations of “Pore Jud” that close the song. Viertel’s analysis of romantic duets suggests that the shared music of the contrary characters demonstrated their shared feelings, and this argument can also be extended to these two antagonistic characters. “Pore Jud Is Daid” demonstrates a different structure, as Jud builds on Curly’s ideas, instead of presenting a rebuttal. However, the pitches and lyrics that the characters share before joining in harmony support the interpretation that these men feel the same way about each other: hostile. In fact, while the stage direction states that Jud begins to weep at the end of the song, in the next moment he is threatening that “mebbe you’ll go first” (Hammerstein 31) as he polishes his gun while he speaks

with Curly. The loathing the male characters feel for each other is sublimated by the imagined funereal quality of their duet.

Other Male Characters' Solos in *Oklahoma!*

Will Parker's solo is presented as a homosocial dialogue with the musical's male ensemble. In "Kansas City", Will details the attractions and excitement of the "big city" from which he has just returned to the boys and Aunt Eller. His audience is keen to hear about the modern inventions Will discovered in Kansas City, and even more intrigued by the visit to the burlesque house he describes. He is celebrated for winning the steer roping contest at the fair, and he shows off the things he brought back with his prize money. One of the gifts he returns with is a "Little Wonder", a kaleidoscope in which the pictured female subject is undressed as it is turned. There is a preoccupation with sexuality in this homosocial song and scene: both the song lyrics which describe a female performer stripping, and the "Little Wonder" Will displays for the men are fixated on the female form. The men are eager to see and hear what Will has witnessed in the city, and all of this is jokingly approved of by Aunt Eller. Will's solo establishes him behaving appropriately as "one of the boys". However, Will has not yet received approval to marry Ado Annie (which is thwarted by the fact that he spent his award on gifts), and therefore is not acknowledged as a man by Ado Annie's father, Andrew Carnes. Will is reaping some of the benefit of the patriarchal dividend (praise for his skills, viewing the female body), but is being excluded from the hegemonic masculinity of this community.

"Lonely Room" is the only song in *Oklahoma!* that a character sings fully in isolation. After being visited by Curly (a scene which ultimately erupts in the firing of a gun), "Lonely Room" alone in the smokehouse. That Jud sings this alone amplifies his marginalization in the

musical, as his longing for Laurey and his loathing for Curly are both go unheard by any other characters. "Lonely Room" is the most genuine emotional expression of any male character in *Oklahoma!*, presented without deceit or bravado. The lyric develops from a recognition of his circumstance, to a poetic expression of his dream of Laurey's affection, to a declaration of his intended actions. The presentation of this song in isolation suggests that male characters are not permitted to publicly express emotions.

Symbolism

The analysis of symbolism in the representation of masculinity that follows is focused on the musical expression of the male characters in the vocal score of *Oklahoma!.* If masculinity and femininity are conceived as poles on a continuum of gender, the representation of masculinity should be realized in contrast to the musical representation of femininity as described above by Cook, McClary, and Wilder. Feminine musical representation in melody has been summarized above as utilizing rhythmic embellishments, intervals of skips and leaps, and the use of chromatic pitches. Thus, masculine musical elements will employ rhythmic regularity, scalar (stepwise) movement, and diatonic pitches.

Curly's songs in the *Oklahoma!* vocal score suggest a speech-like quality matching the plain-spoken cowboy, and their musical qualities lack feminine markers of expressivity. Curly's solos feature rhythmic regularity, and melodies with predominantly stepwise movement and the frequent use of repeated pitches..

The first three lines of song in *Oklahoma!* are sung by Curly before he appears on-stage. The musical's opening melody establishes Curly's masculine character in advance of his physical representation. These three musical phrases of "Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin'" begin

in the middle range of the male voice, covering the range of a perfect 5th, from E3-B3. The melody moves in a mostly scalar pattern, descending from dominant to tonic and ascending back again (ex. 3-4). When Curly finally appears on stage as the highest pitch of the verse is sung, rising to a C#4 on the word “eye”, before a phrase that settles on the dominant for ten repetitions (“it looks like it’s climbin’ clear up to the sky”, measures 25-28). This melodic content is repeated on each iteration of the verse, appearing a total of three times in the opening number. The song’s repeated refrain demonstrates greater melodic sweep, as it outlines arpeggiated major 7th chords[42]. While there is a greater us of skips in the melody of the refrain, it generally remains focused on the tonic chord, a strong harmonic “home base”.

Example 3-4: "Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin'", melodic shape of opening phrase

Stepwise melodic movement also predominates “Surry With the Fringe on Top”. The A sections of the chorus feature phrases with begin with repetitions of the dominant (E), that finish with skips that increase in distance as the section proceeds. However, this also demonstrates the scalar motion which underpins the song, as these final intervals each increase by one step throughout the 8-bar phrase (ex. 3-5). The bridge is more active, starting with the highest pitch of the song (E4), and featuring a melody that descends in a scalar fashion, without ever returning to

[42] A major 7th chord is made up of root, major third, perfect fifth, and major 7th (see below). An E Major 7th chord is E – G# - B – D#.
Arpeggiated means to play the chord as a series of pitches, successively, as opposed to simultaneously.

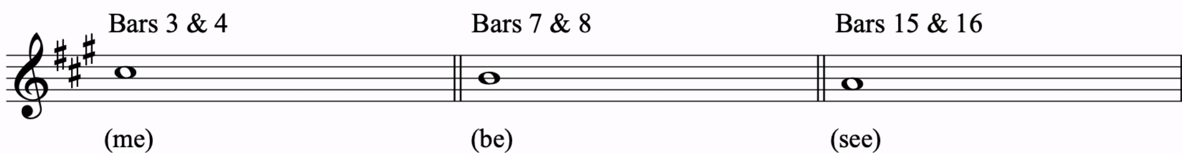
E3, the pitch that is the “home base” of the A sections.

Example 3-5: "Surrey With the Fringe On Top"

The verse of “The Surrey With the Fringe On Top” provides more musical contrast, but is again underpinned by stepwise motion. Here this is varied in a melody that features alternating thirds, providing a skipping sensation. However, the higher notes in this motif are always a step down from each other, and the move from the second pitch to the third is always a step up (ex. 3-6).

Example 3-6: "Surrey With the Fringe on Top", alternating thirds in melody

This pattern repeats at the beginning of each phrase of the 16-bar verse, beginning on a new pitch for its second and third iteration, before returning to the opening pitch for the final phrase. The sustained pitches at the end of each phrase move in stepwise opposition to the final intervals of the A sections: these notes trace a scalar descent (ex. 3-7).



Example 3-7: "Surrey With the Fringe on Top"

Neither of Curly's solos feature any of the melodic embellishments that Cook and McClary suggest denotes femininity. There is no rhythmic embellishment: each song uses only even divisions of the beat, without any triplets or dotted rhythms recorded in the score. There is very limited use of chromaticism in both solos. In "Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin'" the only non-scale tone in the song is the lowered 7th employed on the first iteration of the word "mornin'" in each refrain. This downward resolution of a semitone suggests a sighing quality, and "sets up the leading tone to tonic resolution on the syllables of 'fee-lin'' and move on effortlessly to restate the tonic resolution an octave apart on the first and last syllable of the final 'Ev'rythin's goin' my way'" (Cook 39). In "The Surrey With the Fringe On Top", D#'s appear to interrupt the repeated E in the first two phrases of the melody. The limited use of this chromatic pitch seems to be word-painting, suggesting the gait of the horses driving the rig. The bridge also features D#'s: here it is when the melody moves to its peak excitement, and the melody and harmony shift to a B major tonality for four bars (measures 37-40).

Curly and Laurey's duet, "People Will Say We're in Love", does feature musical markers that have been identified above as feminine. The melody of the chorus of is dominated by ascending and descending intervals of a 5th (larger than most intervals in any of Curly's solos), and each A section ends with much chromatic movement as it approaches the destination of the phrase (ex. 3-8). It is essential to note here that it is Laurey that establishes the content of their melodic expression for this song. She begins the verse as it transitions from the dialogue of the preceding scene, and she has a complete iteration of the chorus which Curly later repeats. Laurey presents the initial sung pitches of the melody ("why do they think up stories that link my name with yours?"), providing the opening phrase of the verse. Curly immediately responds with a repeat of the phrase, and his own question ("Why do the neighbors chatter all day behind

closed doors?"), altering at the end of the phrase to reach a semitone higher than Laurey did, increasing the tension in the argument. It is the female character that provides the expressive musical language, which the male character than employs in his response. This pattern appears in a number of "Golden Age" musical duets[43], and suggests that expressions of love demonstrate feminine musical expressions, and that the male characters require the music (and sometimes even the words) to be provided to them by the female characters, in order to be able to speak about love.

Example 3-8: "People Will Say We're in Love", melodic shape

When the song is reprised in Act 2, the lyrics reflect the evolution in their romantic relationship. As Laurey and Curly kiss for the first time onstage, it is underscored by the melody from their duet, "People Will Say We're In Love". After they kiss, the attention remains on Curly's voice, both in the dialogue and the sung musical information. First he proclaims that "'f there's anybody out around this yard 'at c'n hear my voice, I'd like fer you to know that Laurey

[43] This structure also appears in the next Rodgers and Hammerstein collaboration, *Carousel*. In the conditional love duet of Julie Jordan and Billy Bigelow, it is Julie who first gives musical voice to the verse and chorus that Billy then repeats. In the case of "If I Loved You", Billy also uses Julie's words in the chorus. This structure can also be observed in "I'll Know" from *Guys and Dolls*, the song that presents Sarah Brown and Sky Masterson's competing ideas of romance.

Williams is my girl.. And she's went and got me to ast her to marry me!" (Hammerstein 54). Again, we see the power of Curly's voice, as in the opening, it is expected to be heard, regardless of whether the speaker can be seen. The focus stays on Curly's voice as the dialogue transitions to song, and Curly declares "Let people say we're in love", a revised lyric set to the familiar melodic material first presented by Laurey at the end of the first A section, presented in the same key as the first iteration. Laurey's acceptance of Curly's wedding proposal is a step toward home and family life, and a realization of the ideals of the community and the musical's audience. This development is matched with Curly's ability to embrace and celebrate the feminine musical material of their love duet.

Marginalized Masculinities in *Oklahoma!*

The voices of the characters representing marginalized masculinities are muted in the vocal score of *Oklahoma!*. Established as outsiders in the musical's community, the characters are also set apart in their songs. Neither Ali Hakim nor Jud are "in tune" with the other characters in the musical, and their marginalization is written into their songs.

As described above, Ali Hakim's feature, "It's A Scandal! It's A Outrage!" is written as a dialogue with the male ensemble, with his music is notated as spoken in rhythm, as opposed to musical pitches. Ali Hakim is set apart from the community and the other leading characters in *Oklahoma!*, as he is denied a singing voice in the musical[44].

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[44] Carter notes that "although Rodgers' original manuscript gives him the melody in the chorus of "It's A Scandal! It's A Outrage!" Buloff delivered it in rhythmicized speech instead—so it appears from the cast recording—and this is how it gets represented in the vocal score" (201). This suggests that the song was intended to be sung, but informed by the original actor in the role, which impacted the writing and transcription of the vocal score (for more on the contributions of performers in shaping a role and musical, see Bruce Kirle *Unfinished Show Business: Broadway Musicals as Works-in-Process*, 2005).
There is room for a further diachronic exploration of this song, as the performer on the 1998 Royal National Theatre cast recording sings much of Hakim's material in the chorus. The performer in the role of Hakim sings the title

Jud Fry's solo, "Lonely Room", is unlike any other in the score. It does not adhere to the standard forms (either the conventional AABA structure of musical theatre songs, nor the verse/refrain form of folk songs), and the only song in the score in a minor key. As noted above, Jud has the most limited vocal range of the men in *Oklahoma!*; "Lonely Room" does not achieve a full octave, which creates an impression of being incomplete (ex. 3-9). The song also ends on the scale degree of the 9th, a pitch that creates tension with the final tonic chord in the accompaniment and creates a sense of restlessness. In this final note, Jud is yearning, melodically reaching beyond the tonic B of the song, but does not achieve a consonant musical resolution. Instead "Lonely Room" musically ends with a dissonance that supports Jud's feelings, and his place in the community.

Example 3-9: "Lonely Room"

Though Jud's music sets him apart from the other characters in the musical, the song does include the melodic markers of masculinity as explored above. The melodic shape of "Lonely Room" is predominantly scalar, with few skips or leaps. There is a great use of repetition in pitches, similar to the A sections of Curry's "Surrey With the Fringe On Top". The only deviation from this melodic content is the section between bars 27-28. The melody assigned to the lyric "and the girl that I want ain't afraid of my arms" (Hammerstein 35) employs descending minor 6th and ascending perfect fifths, and dotted rhythms, giving it a sense of ornamentation that is not seen anywhere else in the song. The use of these larger intervals and rhythmic variety calls on the musical cues of femininity as Jud sings of Laurey. From here, the song returns to the

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phrase, but delivers the rest of the lyric as speech on the 2019 Broadway Revival cast recording. These recordings present very different interpretations of the song as it is written in the vocal score.

use of repetition and even subdivision of beats, culminating in the rising pattern described above (ex. 3-9).

Conclusion

This chapter has examined masculinity as represented in the vocal score of *Oklahoma!* using an adapted version of Connell's four-fold model of gender relations. In summary, the dimensions of gender relations are demonstrated in the musical's sung material as follows:

Labour

The musical is a male dominated score, in which the leading male character does the majority of the labour of vocal performance. He demonstrates a greater vocal range than other men. Supporting male characters have limited solo material, limited vocal expression, and instead are featured in homosocial musical numbers.

Power

Power is contested through violence, money, and sex. The characters closest to the hegemonic ideal define the parameters of a power contest in song.

Emotional Relations

Emotional expression is frequently concealed. Male characters are unable to freely express affection or hostility, and instead tease, taunt, or lie about their feelings. The solos that express the greatest amount of male emotion (longing and hostility) are presented in isolation.

Symbolism

Male songs are marked by repetition and scalar motives, with regular rhythm and limited ornamentation. Female characters provide the musical information to allow male emotional

expression, and these songs may employ musical markers associated with femininity. Characters who exemplify marginalized characters are denied a voice.

As *Oklahoma!* is frequently recognized as a paradigm-shifting musical which established the conventions for integrated book musicals which followed, I suggest that its patterns of practice regarding gender relations as represented in the vocal score additionally impact musicals throughout history. The preceding examination of the musical conventions demonstrated by the leading male characters in *Oklahoma!* provides provide a framework which allows for the comparison of the representation of masculinity in the vocal scores of other musicals. The discussion group participants identified 2016 Broadway musical *Dear Evan Hansen* as an alternative representation of masculinity. In the following chapter I will use this adapted model to examine the leading male characters in *Dear Evan Hansen*, and the masculine musical conventions which persist in this contemporary musical.

Chapter Four: "Can Anybody See?": Examining Masculinity in *Dear Evan Hansen*

"To be an adult male is distinctly to occupy space, to have a physical presence in the world" (*Masculinities, 2nd Ed.* 57, qtd. From "Which Way is Up? Essays on Sex, Class, and Culture", Connell, 1987.19)

Dear Evan Hansen features a marginalized masculinity[45] in the character of Evan Hansen, which allows audiences to believe that the musical presents something unique in its main character. Seventeen-year-old Evan Hansen is afraid that he is invisible, that he lacks a presence and lacks a voice. The centering of this character encourages the perception that the musical *Dear Evan Hansen* presents a unique view of masculinity, with a vulnerable and expressive male protagonist. However, the shift of focus to a marginalized masculinity does not disrupt established gendered patterns of musical theatre, and there is a greater similarity to the conventions previously explored in *Oklahoma!* than may be immediately visible. While there are some adaptations of symbolic relations in the musical through the use of an increased vocal range and melodic elements which have been associated with the representation of femininity, an examination of power relations, labour relations, and emotional relations demonstrates that *Dear Evan Hansen* utilizes "Golden Age" conventions that reflect standard patterns of practice in the representation of masculinity.

The chapter that follows continues the effort to make masculinity visible in musical theatre. *Dear Evan Hansen* serves as the case study of a contemporary musical.[46] This musical is

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[45] Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity defines marginalized masculinities as created by "the interplay of gender with other structures such as class and race" (*Masculinities* 80) and includes those men that are excluded from the benefits of patriarchy (i.e., working-class masculinity or black masculinity). Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity is explored in greater detail in Chapter One.
[46] Musical theatre scholarship has not clearly defined the frequently used term "contemporary musical". In the *Routledge Companion to the Contemporary Musical* Sternfeld and Wollman locate contemporary musicals after the "Golden Age", and since the 1970s (4 of 6). The Merriam-Webster definition(s) of "contemporary" are both applicable in my research: "1) marked by characteristics of the present period, and 2) happening, existing, living, or coming into being during the same period of time" (merriam-webster.com). *Dear Evan Hansen* includes the influence of popular music in its score, and the integration of social media and technology in the musical's depiction

selected based on discussion group research, as post-secondary student participants identify Evan Hansen as an alternative, progressive masculinity to those they overwhelmingly see depicted in the musical theatre canon. They are correct that he is different from hegemonic male characters who are typically the romantic leads in musicals, as Evan represents a marginalized masculinity; however, this obfuscates the fact that hegemonic conventions are present throughout the musical.

This chapter employs the framework established in the previous chapter to examine the representation of masculinity in *Dear Evan Hansen*. The case study focuses on Evan Hansen, the character at the centre of the musical. Through this examination, I will continue my previous focus on sung material in the vocal score: specifically, Evan's solos and the duets and trios in which the character is a featured participant. This investigation makes visible the hegemonic patterns of practice that are present and maintained in this musical and identifies some development of symbolic relations.

The Musical and Background

Dear Evan Hansen is an original musical with a book by Steven Levenson, and music and lyrics by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul. The musical features a small cast of eight performers, is orchestrated for an eight-person band, and integrates a "virtual" choir and digital technology to enhance its scope. The musical won critical praise and enthusiastic audience reception throughout its development in regional and Off-Broadway theatres, before transferring to Broadway in December 2016. The musical won six 2017 Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical, and Best Original Score. The run continued until Broadway theatres

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of teenage life. The musical was also running on Broadway at the time of my discussion group research, and a Toronto run with a Canadian cast was imminent. The Toronto production ultimately ran from March through July 2019.

closed due to COVID-19 on March 12, 2020 and was playing to 98% capacity in the week of March 8, 2020 (playbill.com).

The musical centers on Evan Hansen, a lonely, anxious teenager who is encouraged by his therapist to write motivational letters to himself; the musical opens with his drafting of a "Dear Evan Hansen" letter. It is this letter, which is later discovered by another isolated teenager, Connor Murphy, and is ultimately found Connor's possession when he commits suicide. Connor's parents and the school administration believe this to be a letter from Connor to Evan, and an overwhelmed Evan attempts to comfort the grieving Murphy family with the story of their fictitious friendship. Evan forges emails to support the façade as it leads to a deepening connection with the Murphy family, a burgeoning romantic relationship with Connor's sister, Zoe, and finally, popularity and acclaim as the face of a social media campaign to honour Connor and promote mental health. When the original letter is posted online as part of a fundraising campaign, which results in a backlash against the Murphy family, Evan ultimately admits his deception and his relationship with the Murphys is severed. In the final scene of the musical, Evan meets Zoe a year later in the orchard park that was established in Connor's honour. Both characters express their regret that they are not meeting each other for the first time now, and part to go their own ways.

Dear Evan Hansen is mentioned in each discussion group as presenting an alternate representation of masculinity. Participants describe the character as flawed, sensitive, vulnerable, introverted, and insecure; qualities that stand in stark contrast to the perceived confidence and bravado of many "Golden Age" leading men such as *Oklahoma!*'s Curly McLain. Jordan suggests explicitly that "Evan Hansen is a 'leading man', but he's a completely different leading

man than we have ever seen." It is frequently overlooked by participants that Evan desires to achieve the hegemonic ideal. Only Nick notes that Evan strives to be more masculine, which he interprets as "fear of getting laughed at. And rejected, and for fear of not being seen as manly enough". An isolated outcast at the beginning of the musical, Evan enjoys the rewards of family, heterosexual romance, and popularity as he participates in and perpetuates the fiction he has created, and ultimately escapes any consequences when his deception is revealed to the Murphy family.

The participants also note that Evan uses a vocal range and vocal style that differs from many conventional representations and suggest that this musical material challenges expectations for male characters in musicals. Participants additionally make a connection between the use of vocal range in Evan's vocal performance and in contemporary popular music, including the relationship between the use of vocal registers of male and female pop performers, which frequently occupy the same vocal range. This aligns the character of Evan Hansen's vocal performance with the preferred commercial popular artists and female performers the participants identified in the discussion group conversation (detailed in Chapter Two). I posit that this affirming response to the musical's inherent meaning obscures the participants' interpretation of the musical. This allows delineation to go unexamined and prevents critical reflection of the musical's contents.

Masculinities in *Dear Evan Hansen*

Dear Evan Hansen focuses on a protagonist that does not represent the hegemonic ideal. Connell states that "to be an adult male is distinctly to occupy space, to have a physical presence in the world" (*Masculinities* 57): Evan is lacking this presence. Evan's first solo, "Waving

Through A Window", is focused on his concern that he goes unseen: "Can anybody see? Is anybody waving back at me?" (Pasek and Paul, no page numbers). In the world of the musical, this resonates with Evan's concern about whether he "even make[s] a sound".

Evan represents a marginalized masculinity as defined by Connell, a working-class masculinity that is denied the full benefits of patriarchy. Evan's socioeconomic status is demonstrated in the libretto via his single mother working extra shifts and taking night classes and encouraging Evan to complete scholarship applications as "we're going to need all the help we can get for college. Unless your stepmother has a trust fund for you I don't know about, with all of those fabulous tips she made cocktail waitressing" (Levenson no page numbers). This is contrasted by the image of the conventional ideal presented by the Murphy family and their offer of tuition money to Evan for post-secondary education later in the musical. Evan struggles with mental health, as evidenced by his own suicide attempt (before the action of the musical), and the unnamed anxiety disorder he demonstrates throughout. These intersections of mental illness and lower socioeconomic exclude him from the hegemonic masculine ideal. In this regard the students' observations are accurate, as the male character at the centre of this musical is not a hegemonic ideal, but a marginalized masculinity.

Evan is striving for the hegemonic ideal, and the musical presents this as desirable. Evan's yearning for "the norm" is expressed in his final solo, "Words Fail", as part of his explanation for his actions and motivations:

> I never had that perfect girl who
>
> Somehow could see
>
> The good part of me
>
> I never had a dad who stuck it out

No corny jokes or baseball gloves

No mom who just was there

'Cause mom was all that she had to be (Pasek and Paul, NO PAGE NUMBERS)

Ultimately, the musical ends without substantial consequences for Evan. He admits his deception, and his personal relationship with the Murphy family and his romantic relationship with Zoe Murphy are ended, but they do not reveal his deception to the wider community. A memorial park is built in Connor's memory, ostensibly with funds that were raised through Evan's deception. There is a final, awkward scene between Evan and Zoe, but the musical ends with a reprise of "For Forever", arranged as an affirming, inspiring ensemble number, in which Evan gets that "last word" with the final vocal iteration. Perhaps during the musical he does not attain the hegemonic ideal toward which he is striving; however, the privileges of the "patriarchal dividend" are granted to Evan in the final moments of the musical, as he has achieved a greater confidence and perspective, and has the opportunity for a fresh start.

It is the secondary male characters who are closer to the hegemonic ideal. The Murphy family is wealthy, and presents a traditional family with father as breadwinner, a stay-at-home mom, and a teenage son and daughter. Larry Murphy, the father, is the hegemonic ideal in the musical: presented as a successful, competent, rational father. The character of Jared is a family friend of Evan's. In their brief first scene together, we know that Jared's parents pay for his car insurance and that he has spent the summer away at camp, suggesting that Jared's family has a wealth that Evan's does not. Though Jared and Evan spend a great deal of time together in the musical, Jared declines signing Evan's cast, so as not to be associated with Evan, suggesting that Jared also has social capital that Evan lacks.

In the sections that follow, I examine the dimensions of labour, power, emotional relations, any symbolism to illustrate what remains consistent in the representation of masculinity between these two musicals, and what is adapting and evolving.

Examining Relations

In the previous chapter I adapted Connell's four-fold model of hegemonic masculinity to propose a framework for examining masculinity in musical theatre and employed this model to examine the gendered patterns of practice in Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* as an exemplar of "Golden Age" musical theatre. Exploring the dimensions of labour, power, emotional relations (cathexis), and symbolism in the musical's vocal score identified conventions employed in the representation of masculinity. In summary, these include: a male dominated score, in which the main male character demonstrates the greatest vocal labour (in both the number of assigned material and the vocal range of the character); male characters who represent the hegemonic ideal establishing the musical material in homosocial selections; male characters are unable to openly express their feelings, presenting expressive solos in isolation which go "unheard" by other characters, and female characters providing the expressive material in duets; and masculine songs marked by stepwise (scalar) and diatonic melodic material, regular rhythm, and limited ornamentation.

Dear Evan Hansen overwhelmingly employs these conventions, demonstrating a striking similarity between this contemporary musical and the previously analyzed *Oklahoma!* Despite how the musical may first appear, *Dear Evan Hansen* does not disrupt the dimensions of labour or power, and emotional relations remain essentially unchanged. The section that follows details

the gendered patterns of practice and hegemonic conventions that are maintained in *Dear Evan Hansen*.

Labour

As previously suggested, the male character at the center of the musical demonstrates the greatest vocal labour in the score. Evan has more sung material than any other character: he is featured in eleven of the songs in the vocal selections, including three solos and three of the musical's four duets. The character also demonstrates the largest vocal range of the score, G2 to C5, a demanding 2 and a half octave range which extends beyond the traditional expectations of voice types.[47]

Only one other character in the musical has a solo: Evan's mother, Heidi, has the penultimate number of the musical. Evan's love interest, Zoe, might be expected to be featured in the vocal score, however she sings only in duets, trios, and group numbers. Though "If I Could Tell Her" is presented as dialogue and therefore is perceived as a duet, Zoe's contributions to the song are negligible. The song is sung mostly by Evan: after Evan's two verses and choruses, Zoe briefly sings harmony with him for a short four bar phrase, and later sings six solo bars in the song.

Though there is a balance of four male and four female characters in the cast, it is the male voices that dominate the score, with the female characters on the periphery. The distribution of sung material for Heidi at the opening and closing of the musical seem to position

[47] There is ambiguity regarding specific vocal ranges per voice type, and an ongoing conversation regarding the efficacy of these terms in the 21st century, due to their traditional association with the sex and gender of the performer. Contemporary musical theatre frequently requires vocal production beyond historical range definitions. The Harvard Dictionary of Music suggest the following ranges: Tenor, B2-G4; Baritone, G2-E4; and Bass, E2-C4. The Grove Music Online details different pitches, which are slightly higher: Tenor C3-A4; Baritone A2-F4, and Bass F2-E4. Catherine Schmidt-Jones suggests the following ranges, which integrate the extremes of the preceding definitions: Tenor C3-A4; Baritone, G2-F4; and Bass E2-E4.

her strongly, but as Wolf acknowledges in her examination of female characters in Pulitzer and Tony Award-winning musical *Hamilton*, this positioning of female characters in a male-centered musical "seduce spectators into looking away from the demeaning representation of women" (*Hamilton's Women*, 168). The mothers of the teenager characters, Heidi and Cynthia, launch the show with the duet "Anybody Have A Map?", but we never hear another all-female number in the musical. Contrasting this are the all-male selections in the score: a duet for Evan and Larry, and the homosocial trio "Sincerely, Me" (and its reprises, which are not included in the vocal selections). In this small cast musical it is the male characters that are the feature of the vocal score.

This musical demonstrates the extraordinary vocal demands required of contemporary musical theatre performers. All the characters in the musical demonstrate large vocal ranges (ex. 4-1). Each of the male characters in *Dear Evan Hansen* demonstrates a larger vocal range than Curly in *Oklahoma!*, extending beyond the most expansive male vocal range in the previously examined "Golden Age" musical.[48]

[48] It is worth noting that contemporary musicals are written with microphones and amplification in mind, while "Golden Age" musicals were unamplified. The use of microphones impacts both what is possible for singers and how they impact audience expectations. For additional information regarding the evolution of vocal production in musical theatre can be found in Stephen Banfield's "Stage and screen entertainers in the twentieth century", Ben Macpherson's "Sing: Musical Theater Voices from *Superstar* to *Hamilton*", and "Amplifying Broadway after the Golden Age" by Arreana Rostosky.

Example 4-1: Vocal ranges of characters in *Dear Evan Hansen*

It is interesting to note how ranges overlap in this musical, with male and female characters frequently singing the same pitches and occupying the same space on the vocal staff. For example, the highest pitch that Evan sings in the vocal score, C5, is also the highest pitch sung by Cynthia. This aligns with practices in contemporary commercial music, where male and female singers often employ similar pitch ranges and affirms the observations of the discussion group participants. Evan's use of pitch will be explored further in the examination of symbolism below.

Power

In examining power in the vocal score of *Dear Evan Hansen*, I return to Connell's assertion that power is "the ability to impose a definition of the situation, to set the terms in which events are understood and issues discussed" (*Gender and Power* 107). In both of the homosocial songs in the vocal score the hegemonic character is the first to sing, and thereby establishes the content, both the subject of the moment and the melodic, rhythmic, and musical elements.

The duet between Larry Murphy and Evan, "To Break in a Glove", echoes the structure detailed in the previous chapter in the examination of *Oklahoma!*'s "Pore Jud Is Daid". As Larry is the character in the hegemonic position, he sets the terms of this conversation. The song is dominated by Larry, with Evan as "audience" and contributing limited sung material. The lyrics are focused on the late Connor's neglected baseball glove, which Larry offers to Evan along with advice and his personal method for caring for the glove. Larry shares fatherly expertise that Evan lacks, focused on the baseball glove, a symbol of "All-American" boyhood. There is a small break in the bridge, where Larry speaks about his failed efforts to care for Connor, but he quickly returns to the metaphor of the baseball glove, and repeated text from earlier in the song. Evan's response confirms that Larry provides the terms of the exchange in his spoken line near the end of the song "Connor was really lucky. To have a dad that… a dad who cared so much. About… taking care of stuff" (Levenson no page numbers). Evan is prohibited from speaking directly to the moment, and instead the conversation stays fixed on objects and expertise.

The musical material also follows the pattern of discourse established in "Pore Jud Is Daid". Larry sings the first two verses and the initial chorus before Evan joins in on the second refrain, first echoing the melody before creating some small variations. As Larry and Evan begin to connect, there are brief moments of harmony and a short phrase sung in unison. Near the end of the song, Evan takes up the musical phrase, affirming Larry's message and accepting the philosophy he presents. While the song appears to provide a moment of emotional connection between the two male characters, the hegemonic character dominates the exchange, emotion is contained within metaphor, and hegemonic patterns of practice persist.

"Sincerely Me" is the other all-male number in the score. As Jared and Evan draft emails to substantiate the fictitious friendships between Evan and Connor, the song employs Connor's

voice, as the character sings the words as they are written. This song also adheres to conventional patterns of practice. Connor is the first to sing, establishing the melody and rhythm of the verse and chorus, before this material is sung by Evan or Jared later in the number. It is revealed after the first 16 bars that Jared is providing the opening text, and this character's authorship of the letter doubles the effect of the characters closest to the hegemonic ideal dominating and defining the conversation. While emotional relations will be discussed in greater detail in the section that follows, it is illustrative to also consider how emotional relations between the male characters are demonstrated in this song between the three young male characters. The lyrics of the opening verse also suggest a homoerotic element to the "relationship" between Evan and Connor, which is employed for humorous effect. This establishes a theme which appears several times throughout the song, culminating in the bridge which details that the characters have a special bond, which is immediately countered by Evan and Connor explicitly stating that they are not gay, singing "we're close but not that way" (Pasek and Paul no page numbers) in unison before changing the subject and repeating the final chorus. The use of homophobic comedy in this number is another element of hegemonic masculinity, disparaging and excluding homosexuals, and creating distance from subordinated masculinities through hostility and a tacit acceptance of homophobia.

Both "To Break in a Glove" and "Sincerely, Me" employ conventional masculine tropes, and privilege the hegemonic male characters. It is Larry, Connor, and Jared who set the terms of these homosocial interactions, demonstrating their power in these relationships. These songs demonstrate a continued use of hegemonic patterns of practice in the musical's vocal score.

Emotional Relations

The examination of the emotional relations as demonstrated in the vocal score also exposes how little the conventions associated with "Golden Age" musicals remain unchanged in *Dear Evan Hansen*. Evan's "I Want" song[49], "Waving Through a Window" is sung without a scene partner, demonstrating the character's emotional isolation. "If I Could Tell Her" presents the familiar formula of the conditional love song, with Evan expressing his feelings for Zoe as imagined in the words of her deceased brother, Connor. In the musical's only romantic duet, "Only Us", it is the female character, Zoe, who provides the musical language and the lyrics of the verse, providing Evan with the vocabulary necessary to express his feelings. Each of these examples closely aligns to the emotional relations previously explored in *Oklahoma!*

Evan's most expressive and honest solos are presented in isolation, which mirrors the presentation of Jud's expressive solo in *Oklahoma!* In both musicals, the desires of the marginalized masculinities go unheard by anyone in their community. Evan's first solo, "Waving Through A Window", is delivered in the hallways of the high school, and develops out of a hostile interaction with Connor, which ends with Evan being pushed to the floor. After the first verse and chorus the song is interrupted by a brief scene with Zoe. However, there is no one present during the sung material; Evan is alone while he expresses his desire to be seen and be heard. This isolation is revisited when the musical material from "Waving Through A Window" is reprised in Evan's final solo, "Words Fail". After Evan's confession to the Murphys that he fabricated his entire friendship with Connor, he is left alone on stage. This is perhaps Evan's most vulnerable moment in the show, as he admits his deception and attempts to apologize. He has returned to where he began in the musical and the score reflects that with a repetition of

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[49] "I Want" songs are musical theatre conventions which articulate the protagonist's goal for the musical. This song helps to identify the main character of a musical, and to orient the audience as to the trajectory of the production.

lyrical and melodic material from “Waving Through A Window”. In both moments of honesty, Evan is alone without anyone to hear.

“If I Could Tell Her” is in the mode of a conditional love song. The “if” in the title allows Evan to conceal his feelings in much the same way Curly and Laurey do in “People Will Say We’re in Love” and follows the tradition of other “Golden Age” duets including “Make Believe” and “If I Loved You”. Evan presents his own observations and feelings for Zoe as if they were expressed to him by the deceased Connor. Evan fumbles with this conceit when he compliments Zoe as being pretty, and revises this to Connor describing Zoe as “pretty cool” when she dyes indigo streaks in her hair. The use of a conditional love song affirms that male characters are unable to directly state their feelings. Evan does not express any greater accessibility than male characters from “Golden Age” musicals, as he continues to express himself through a guise.

It is Zoe that begins the musical’s only romantic duet, and therefore she provides much of the expressive musical material and lyrical content employed in the song. The harmonic structure and melodic shape that Zoe establishes in the song’s first verse is later developed by Evan, and both the melody and lyric of the chorus are repeated by Evan in its second iteration. This reinforces the earlier analysis that male characters require female characters to provide the language that allows the male characters to express their romantic feelings. This song also develops from a conditional “so what if it’s us” to a declarative “so it can be us” between the choruses, tracing the same trajectory demonstrated by “People Will Say We’re in Love” and its reprise “Let People Say We’re in Love”. The emotional relations established in *Oklahoma!* are maintained in this duet.

As described above, the dimensions of power, labour, and emotional relations demonstrate the conventions associated with “Golden Age” musicals, as analyzed in *Oklahoma!*.

This demonstrates the persistence of the patterns of practice in gender relations and the representation of masculinity in musical theatre across time.

In the section that follows, symbolic relations are examined in greater detail. There is some adaptation of musical expression in *Dear Evan Hansen*, as the character utilizes both masculine and feminine symbolic elements in the vocal score. I posit that it is the changing musical materials that encourage the perception of evolving delineated meanings in the musical, obscuring the elements that have gone unchanged.

Symbolic Relations

The previous analysis of *Oklahoma!* determined that the musical's masculine characters generally employed melodies with repetition and stepwise movement, diatonic melodies, regular rhythm, and limited vocal ornamentation. This masculine musical expression is contrasted at the opposite end of a continuum with musical expressions of femininity that Cook, McClary, and Wilder suggest are represented by intervals of skips and leaps in the melody, the use of chromatic pitches, and rhythmic and melodic embellishments[50]. The analysis that follows is focused on Evan's musical material in the vocal score, examining the melodic content of his solos and the character's use of voice and range. Evan's musical expression does provide a departure from the previously established symbolic relations of hegemonic masculinity which suggests that the representation of masculinity in musical theatre may be changing in a limited way, and that evolving symbolic relations might influence the interpretation of delineated meaning in contemporary musicals without disrupting hegemonic ideals.

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[50] This is explored in detail in Chapter Three.

McClary's concept of "soprano masculinities" provides useful insight for the use of range in *Dear Evan Hansen*. In her analysis of a variety of musical genres, McClary suggests that the use of falsetto in male vocal performance can denote yearning or heroism (*Soprano Masculinities* 2013). Both explanations relate to the vocal extremes that the vocal score requires of Evan Hansen. He is yearning to attain the hegemonic ideal, and throughout the musical moves toward the attainment of a heterosexual romantic relationship, a normative home and family life, popularity, and financial security. The apex of each of Evan's solos aligns with the lyrics which suggest the greatest sense of reaching: the desperation of the lyrics "waving through the window", and the optimistic ascension in the final chorus of "For Forever". The suggestion that this vocal feat can also support the presentation of heroism also provides a masculine rationale for the use of the treble range. The extreme effort and technical prowess required for singing in the highest pitch ranges in the score suggests the mastery and effort we associate with maleness and affirms hegemonic masculine labour.

The melodic material in Evan's solos illustrate why the character may be perceived as presenting an alternate, progressive masculinity. Evan's solos travel the previously discussed continuum of masculine to feminine melodic conventions as the musical develops. "Waving Through a Window", Evan's first solo, demonstrates the use of scalar melodic shapes, diatonic pitches, and repeated rhythmic patterns. Near the end of the musical, "Words Fail" is marked with feminine "musical excess" as defined by McClary: the use of triplets, large intervals, melodic embellishments, and non-diatonic pitches. This also aligns with his emotional relations, as he goes from expressing his desires to himself in isolation, to sharing his feelings and the truth with the Murphys in his final solo, "Words Fail", before returning to isolation in the final section of the song.

Evan's first solo, "Waving Through a Window" overwhelmingly employs the masculine melodic qualities summarized above, with many of the same elements of "Golden Age" musical material. The melody of the verse is made up of scalar fragments, preceded with a pick-up of the dominant (see ex. 4-2). Throughout the verse and chorus C#4 is a frequently repeated pitch in the melody and seems to suggest that Evan is fixed in place, despite how the melody tries to move away. It is the accented pitch on beat two of all but one two-bar phrase in the verse (7 out of 8 phrases), and C#4 is repeated pitch in the chorus that aligns with repeated lyrics (i.e. "tap-tap tappin'" and "watch, watch, watchin'").

Example 4-2: "Waving Through A Window", melodic shape of opening phrase

The exceptions to these masculine melodic conventions include the large jumps that align with the title of the song in the lyrics. Each iteration of the phrase "waving through a window" starts a major seventh above the preceding phrase, and the word "waving" reaches the highest pitch of the song on its second syllable. This seems to link with Evan's yearning to be seen and is supported by McClary's interpretation of the use of vocal extremes in male vocal performance. Rhythmically, the melody emphasizes the second beat of the phrase, which is considered a "weak" beat in 4/4 time. However, this is done with regularity throughout the melody, such that it does provide a consistent rhythmic underpinning to the overall song. Emphasis on beat one, the strongest beat of the bar, is aligned with the title lyric and provides an anchor for the large intervallic leap in the melody. The large, dissonant interval, which suggests feminine musical expression, is contrasted with a strong, regular rhythmic pulse.

Evan's second solo, "For Forever" presents a greater blending of masculine and feminine melodic elements. In the song, Evan presents a lie to the Murphys, as he describes an invented afternoon spent with Connor. When the lyric is based on fragments of truth it adheres more clearly to "masculine" musical conventions, employing stepwise motion and diatonic pitches. The verses generally employ scalar movements, with limited use of skips of a third within the triad. As Evan becomes more expressive, and the details relate to his personal desires, there is a departure from the masculine conventions as Evan gives over more fully to fantasy and the world he is creating. In the choruses, as Evan begins to describe an imagined "perfect day", the melody begins to use larger intervals, and the rhythm becomes displaced from the beat with the use of dotted rhythms. This gives the melody an unsettled sensibility, which supports the fact that Evan is imagining these details, and again suggests Evan's yearning for friendship, and to be seen and known. The first instance of non-diatonic pitches in the song appears in the bridge as Evan imagines what Connor says to him as they explore the orchard together. The lyric "true friends" employs a major sixth, a disjointed interval as Evan both lies about their relationship and expresses that for which he longs. Feminine musical conventions are used in this song whenever Evan describes ideal, imagined details or expresses feeling in the lyrics.

"Words Fail" is Evan's final solo and the character's most expressive song in the show. It is a breaking point in which he confesses to the Murphys that his friendship with Connor was fabricated, and that the letter that they believed was Connor's suicide note, was in fact written by Evan himself. The song is marked with excess, and the melodic elements that represent femininity. The melody in the verse is dominated by leaps, with each phrase beginning with successively increasing intervals (see ex.4-3 with illustrates the 4th, 6th, and octave in the first three phrases of the verses). From the very opening of this song, masculine melodic conventions

are abandoned. “Words Fail” is the first of Evan’s solos that uses triplets, which are matched to the title lyrics “Words Fail” in the moments that Evan cannot express himself. There is a greater use of triplets in the melody as the song progresses and demonstrates greater emotional expressivity and vulnerability, culminating in the bridge. This section (measures 49-59) is dominated by the use of triplets, which are also are tied across beats and bars as Evan describes that his personal yearnings appeared to be within reach. There is no regularity to the rhythm, and it appears that Evan’s emotions cannot be held within the constraints of musical time.

Example 4-3: The increasing intervals established in the verse of “Words Fail”

Conclusion

Evan’s solos do employ musical markers of femininity. His songs demonstrate a greater use of feminine melodic elements as the musical develops, and as Evan becomes more expressive and vulnerable. The lyrical content of his songs and this use of symbolism suggests an emotional accessibility that is not present in the male characters in *Oklahoma!*, and which the discussion group participants suggest is not demonstrated by male characters in “Golden Age” musicals in general. The use of these musical elements combined with a pop-influenced score allow audiences to perceive a “different” masculinity as represented by Evan Hansen. However, these developments in symbolic relations are contrasted by the maintenance of hegemonic masculine conventions as demonstrated in the musical’s dimensions of labour, power, and emotional relations. The affirming experience of the inherent meaning of the musical score

allows the delineated meaning to go unexamined, and the fact that gendered patterns of practice are otherwise maintained in this musical is unseen.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

"An engaged musicology is more of an ideology that incorporates the vantage points of current diverse publics interpreting a work. In addition to the traditional tools of musicological analysis, engaged musicology emphasizes how a specific musical work has meaning today" (*Black Opera* André, 198).

Naomi André suggests that "opera is an art form that has potential for being a site for critical inquiry, political activism, and social change" (*Black Opera*, 193). I concur, and posit that musical theatre shares this promise, and may have greater aptitude in this regard due to its popularity and reach as a commercial art form. The possibility for critical inquiry and social change cannot be unleashed, however, without a disruption of the traditional approaches to musical theatre training and tools for critical examination of the "canon".

I contend that musical theatre training at the post-secondary level can build students' capacity for dissonant pleasure by beginning with celebratory musical experiences in the study of musical theatre history and performance. Building upon affirming experiences of inherent musical meanings can provide an entry point for the critical examination of delineated meanings and thereby encourage informed investigation of the ambiguity or alienation that the current musical theatre "canon" provokes.

In this concluding chapter I will draw links between the analyses in the preceding chapters, suggest avenues for further research, and advocate for an approach to post-secondary musical theatre training to support critical engagement in music theatre pedagogy.

"Lost in the In-Between": Hybrid Masculinities

Both the discussion group participants and the musicals that they view as potential alternatives to conventional masculine representations fail to present disruptions to hegemonic

masculinity, and instead demonstrate *hybrid masculinities*. As defined by Bridges and Pascoe, hybrid masculinities appropriate culturally desirable aspects of subordinated and marginalized masculinities, but do not disrupt established power and privilege as bestowed upon the hegemonic ideal. The discussion group research and the case studies of *Oklahoma!* and *Dear Evan Hansen* illustrate the invisibility and persistence of hegemonic masculinity.

Discussion group participants were unable to easily discuss and recognize masculinity, both in the musical theatre repertoire and in their own expressions of maleness as enacted in the discussion group setting. A framework for the critical examination of masculinity in musical theatre can help post-secondary students to “see” how hegemonic masculinity is enacted, both in the musical theatre repertoire and their own patterns of practice.

The discussion group participants frequently express their desire to distance themselves from conventional expressions of masculinity, however, analysis of the discussion group transcripts reveals that the participants do not see the ways in which they demonstrate hegemonic masculinity. For example, it is the straight, white, cisgender males who dominate the discussion group conversation, and subordinated and marginalized masculinities (identifying as homosexual or racialized, respectively) are teased, mocked, or dismissed based on their tastes, interests, or the inability to easily recall specific information and examples. The participants who most closely resembled the hegemonic ideal could easily imagine themselves in a variety of musical theatre roles and identified few impediments to their participation in musical theatre. The discussion group participants who are most closely aligned the hegemonic ideal espouse feminist and inclusive values, but do not cede space in the conversation, nor publicly recognize the privilege afforded to them in the roles and opportunities available in both the study of musical theatre and its professional pursuits post-graduation.

In contrast, participants who represent subordinated masculinities or marginalized masculinities overwhelmingly express a greater dissonance with the musical theatre canon and identified perceived obstacles to their engagement with the repertoire based on their identities, tastes, and lived experiences. These post-secondary students who do not represent the hegemonic ideal experience discord or alienation in the study of musical theatre history and the performance.

The musicals that the participants identify as presenting alternate representations of masculinity also more closely resemble hybrid masculinities, as opposed to truly subverting or rejecting hegemonic conventions. *Oklahoma!* and *Dear Evan Hansen* are not as divergent in their representation of masculinity as they initially appear, and analysis finds that both musicals employ the conventions that perpetuate hegemonic masculinity. While *Dear Evan Hansen* presents a marginalized masculinity is at the centre of the musical, as opposed to the hegemonic ideal who is frequently celebrated in musicals in the "Golden Age" and beyond, Evan is striving for the hegemonic ideal in the plot of the musical. The relations of labour, power, and emotional relations are static gendered patterns of practice which affirm and privilege hegemonic masculinity in both musicals.

Symbolism is the site of greatest difference between the vocal scores of the two musicals. *Dear Evan Hansen*'s vocal score demonstrates hybrid masculinity through its incorporation of elements like increased vocal range and melodic and rhythmic embellishments. Evan employs a much greater vocal range, covering an additional octave and singing both lower and higher than Curly (see example 5-1 below).[51] The vocal score of *Dear Evan Hansen* requires the character to

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[51] This is likely supported by the fact that the contemporary musical is designed for amplification and electronic and digital sounds in its score and reflects changing tastes and trends in both popular music and the musical genres employed in contemporary musical theatre.

sing an augmented fourth above beyond Curly's highest note, exploring a vocal range frequently associated with female characters and vocal performance.

Example 5-1: Vocal ranges of Curly McLain and Evan Hansen

Repetitive and scalar melodies, the use of regular rhythms, and limited melodic ornamentation is evidenced throughout the vocal selections of the male characters in *Oklahoma!* and the characters closest to the hegemonic ideal in *Dear Evan Hansen* (Larry, Connor, and Jared). Evan's solos demonstrate the contrasting musical markers of femininity, as defined by McClary, and Cook,[52] and a greater use of these conventions as the musical develops and the character becomes more vulnerable and expressive. It appears that a character who presents a non-hegemonic masculinity has different access to and use of these musical markers.

These superficial changes "seduce spectators into looking away" (Wolf *"Hamilton*'s Women 168) and allow the persistence of hegemonic masculinity to go unremarked. Gender hegemony is reproduced in the preceding analyses as gender relations remain unchanged in the discussion group transcripts, and gendered musical conventions are not contested or disrupted in musicals across time. Post-secondary students and educators require tools to illuminate these patterns of practice. In this manner, the study of musical theatre can be a site for critical inquiry that offers the potential for self-reflection and social change as suggested by André.

[52] See Chapter Two for a more detailed exploration of this topic.

Suggestions for Further Research

A more thorough examination of the representation of masculinity in musical theatre is required. As previously noted, the study of women in musical theatre and musical drama has been undertaken by a growing number of scholars and authors. Detailed exploration of masculine representations in musical theatre is required to identify, and ultimately disrupt, the persistence of conventions that have previously gone unnoticed.

Investigation of additional "Golden Age" musicals is required to fully evaluate the use of gendered conventions in the vocal scores of this era. While *Oklahoma!* is used in this research as an exemplar for the period, "Golden Age" musicals are too frequently perceived as monolithic, and nuances and complexities are overlooked. For example, a cursory consideration of the musical *Guys and Dolls* employing framework proposed herein suggests that the musical's leading male character troubles hegemonic masculine conventions. Though Sky Masterson is presented as a masculine ideal, his vocal selections early in Act Two disrupt the anticipated gendered patterns of practice and demonstrate vulnerability and emotional accessibility. "My Time of Day" is a brief through-composed solo with a melody that features a great deal of chromaticism, large intervals, and the use of triplets in changing time signatures, which provides an irregular rhythmic foundation. This leads directly into the duet "I've Never Been in Love Before", in which it is Sky who first expressed his affection for Sarah Brown and establishes the melodic and lyrical vocabulary that she repeats back to him, confirming her own romantic feelings. Detailed analysis of the rest of the musical's vocal score and additional examples from the period are required to fully establish how these conventions are established and employed in the "Golden Age" of musical theatre.

Critical examination of other male-authored contemporary musical work will help to illuminate the diachronic representation of masculinity in musical theatre. The musicals of David Yazbek may prove a useful site for further inquiry, as his musicals frequently center male characters. For example, *The Full Monty* and *The Band's Visit* both feature vocal scores dominated by male characters, and stories about groups of men in unusual situations or unexpected locations. Yazbek's recent musicals, *Tootsie* and the Broadway-aimed *Mrs. Doubtfire* offer unique, and potentially problematic representations, as the male characters in both shows assume female personas in pursuit of their personal and professional goals. The use of musical conventions Yazbek's vocal scores may provide interesting observations regarding the representation of gender in contemporary musical theatre.

The work of female composers is an additional area of inquiry, as suggested by the discussion group participants in my research. For example, it is notable that the works of composer Jeanine Tesori often feature historically marginalized characters[53], and critical examination of the vocal scores of these musicals is an interesting site for further investigation. The musicals that Tesori scores frequently center outsiders, and representation of subordinated and marginalized characters in these scores may provide insights as to how gendered patterns of practice are employed, and possibly subverted, by female writers in contemporary musical theatre.

Further research is warranted, employing the proposed framework to identify how common conventions in musical theatre vocal scores support or subvert hegemonic gendered

[53] *Caroline, or Change* features a Black female character at the centre of the musical, *Violet* has a female protagonist, and *Fun Home* is centered on the relationship between a lesbian cartoonist and her gay father, based on Alison Bechdel's memoir/graphic novel of the same name.

representations. This work could also be extended to critically examine the representation of other dimensions of identity, including gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and ability.

An Appeal for Engaged Musicology in Post-Secondary Musical Theatre Training

I suggest integrating Lucy Green's model of dialectical musical experiences with Naomi André's concept of *engaged musicology* offers a vital intervention for musical theatre pedagogies. Musical theatre training should aim to begin with repertoire that provides celebratory experiences for learners, with either familiar and affirming musical content or delineated meanings that elicit positive responses. After building learners' skills and tools with affirming repertoire and celebratory experiences, critical perspectives and frameworks can be introduced to allow the investigation and interrogation of delineated meanings and an examination of how particular works have meaning today. This will build the capacity for dissonant pleasure in the study of musical theatre by centering the unique experiences of post-secondary students in a historically informed interpretation of musical theatre history and its repertoire.

My research suggests that traditional models of post-secondary musical theatre training are failing contemporary students. The discussion group research explores some of the challenges male post-secondary students face in studying musical theatre history and the attendant repertoire, and highlights that this dissonance is most acutely obvious while studying "Golden Age" repertoire. However, "Golden Age" material is generally privileged in Canada's post-secondary musical theatre training programs, where this material is frequently the focus in the first year and/or first semester of study. Educators appear to prioritize this repertoire as the

requisite foundation for musical theatre training, due the perceived value of the quality of the work in musicals of this period.[54]

Students with the greatest privilege—straight, white, cisgender male students— have the greatest representation in the "canon" and are frequently afforded some level of privilege in training, as in society. They have the potential for celebratory training experiences as there is a vast expanse of repertoire available for study, and musical theatre histories have generally been written from a hegemonic perspective. However, they are currently denied the opportunity to reflect on their active participation in harmful behaviours and the perpetuation of hegemonic ideals: the opportunities for critical reflection and social change are missed.

Students who represent subordinated and marginalized masculinities are being alienated throughout their training. The repertoire does not reflect their musical tastes, lived experiences, or their artistic inclinations. Initiating training programs with aggravating and negative musical experiences does not inspire artistic or technical growth and fails to cultivate critical engagement.

While this research was intended to specifically investigate the representation of masculinity in musical theatre, this is only the beginning of an examination of identity and representation in musical theatre. The intersectionality of our students' identities has been neglected, and there is a disconnect between their experiences in the instruction of a largely hegemonic art form: musical theatre. This critical examination is essential, both to enhance the

[54] Email inquiries were sent to educators and program leads at musical theatre training programs across Canada: Canadian College of the Performing Arts (Victoria BC), Capilano College (Vancouver BC), Grant MacEwan (Edmonton, AB), St Clair College (Windsor ON), Sheridan College (Oakville ON), Randolph College for the Performing Arts (Toronto ON), St. Lawrence College (Brockville ON). Responses were received from Grant McEwan, Sheridan, and St Lawrence, and the information here is based on these responses, and my own experience as a faculty member at Sheridan College, and former faculty member and Interim Artistic Director at Randolph College of Performing Arts.

training of contemporary musical theatre students and the future of what musical theatre and its performance can be.

I have offered a critique of the way that musical theatre history and its repertoire is generally taught in post-secondary music theatre programs. This is intended for all contemporary musical theatre educators, including myself, and aims to provoke reflection on the pedagogies of musical theatre history and performance. Conventional instructional approaches in post-secondary musical theatre training tend to mirror the general practices of teaching in adjacent Eurocentric art forms (i.e., classical singing and traditional acting pedagogies), but fail to recognize the contributions and artistic influences of many cultures and communities.

An affirming critical musicology has the potential to build the capacity for "dissonant pleasure", as described by Wolf, and allow participants to both enjoy musical theatre while being intentionally critical of its contents and meaning. The intention here is twofold: 1) building inclusive and celebratory pedagogical practices; and 2) providing a methodology for making conventions visible so that they can be disrupted and subverted. Post-secondary students can be co-investigators in the examination of the existing repertoire and ultimately changemakers as they create the works and interpretations of the future. Critical examination of the established "canon" allows for the possibility that, as André suggests about opera, studying musical theatre can be "a site for critical inquiry, political activism, and social change" (*Black Opera* 193).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Email Request to Post-Secondary MT Instructors

Hello,
I hope this email finds you well and enjoying your summer. I am currently working on my MA at York University, and am writing to request the input of post-secondary educators to include in my (long-aborning) thesis.

My research examines the representation of masculinity in musical theatre and is in part inspired by the apparent reluctance of post-secondary students to engage with Golden Age repertoire.

As material from Golden Age musicals is frequently prioritized as a starting place in many musical theatre training programs, I would like to include some information from leaders in post-secondary training programs. May I request some thoughts from your regarding this material, and may I include your response (quoted or summarized) in my written thesis? I can provide a copy for your review before submission.

I would love your response to the following questions:

- Does your program focus on the study and performance of Golden Age material in the first year of study? Why?
- What is the value of studying Golden Age repertoire in post-secondary musical theatre education?

Your insights and contributions are greatly appreciated.

Many thanks,
Adam White

Appendix B: Discussion Group Moderator Guide

MODERATOR'S GUIDE – DISCUSSION GROUPS:
MASCULINITY IN MUSICAL THEATRE

INTRODUCTION

Thank you all for coming today. I am conducting research for my Master's Thesis at York University, which examines the representation of masculinity in musical theatre. In this context, I am an interested and inquisitive researcher and student, and I am going to try really hard *not* to be a teacher. I am holding this discussion group to get a sense of how current post-secondary students view masculinity in musical theatre and its repertoire, and what it's like for you to engage with this material.

To get started, I would like each person, in turn, to give your first name, your year of study in the program, and to identify your favourite musical/alternately the last musical they saw. I will begin.

GROUND RULES

Ideally, this will be a free-flowing conversation between participants, in response to questions and prompts that I have prepared. There are no right or wrong answers – I am interested in hearing your opinions and experiences. We will hopefully also have some time for open discussion at the end.

If you have a different opinion than someone else, please feel free to say so. I ask that you give everyone a chance to state their views; it helps if only one person is speaking at a time. Scrap paper and pens/pencils are available for any notes that you would like to make, anything that comes to mind when someone else may be talking.

As there are several issues I'd like to discuss, I may have to ask the person speaking to cut their answer short. Please don't be offended, it is just that I will keep things moving so that we can end on time.

I will keep everything that you say strictly confidential. As per the audio consent that you have each signed, our conversation is being audio taped as it is difficult to write detailed notes and follow the conversation at the same time. The transcripts of our conversation will be anonymized, removing all names to prevent identification. I remind everyone that respecting and maintaining the privacy of all discussion group participants is of utmost importance, and though confidentiality by other participants cannot be guaranteed, I request that you do not share the contents of today's conversation with non-participants.

As a reminder, you are free to withdraw from participating at any time. If you choose to withdraw, your contributions will not be included in the transcripts or research, and there will be no penalty for withdrawal.

Are there any questions before we begin?

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS
To begin, can you tell me about what you like to listen to? What is your preferred musical style? Who are some of your favourite artists?

Do you listen to musical theatre (for enjoyment/pleasure)? What do you listen to?

What are your dream roles/what characters (that exist/have already been written) would you most like to play in musical theatre?

Can you describe what most appeals to you/resonates with you/speaks to you in your favourite roles/musicals (i.e., musical style, story of musical, character, etc.)?

Do you see your own experiences and stories represented in musicals?

What challenges do you experience in/with the repertoire?

ACTIVITY (approx. 30 mins)
Let's create a hypothetical cabaret/concert performance, drawing from the musical theatre repertoire, and centered on exploring the general theme of "maleness"/"manliness".

First, I'd like you to write down the first 3-5 things that come to mind when I use the term "masculinity". What does the term "masculinity" mean to you?

What do we need to consider in the exploration of "maleness"/"manliness" in musical theatre?

What songs might we include?

- How do you feel songs and music relate to or express "maleness"?

Are there specific writers explore the idea of "maleness"?

Which musicals do you feel explore "maleness" and masculinity?

- What musicals do you feel offer "positive" expressions or models of masculinity?
- Are there roles or shows that you feel should be "retired" from the repertoire, based on the portrayal of masculinity or gender?

ACTIVITY #2 (if time allows)
Let's pick a "classic" (Golden Age) musical and examine its treatment/representation of "maleness".

- What do you perceive as the strengths?
- What could be improved? What are the flaws?

FINAL QUESTIONS

- What do you *wish* you saw expressed about masculinity in musical theatre?
- How would that be staged?

- How would it be sung?

We have had a very interesting discussion, and we could probably go on for a while, but I'd like to wrap things up for today. As we wind up the conversation, is there anything you feel has been missed in the conversation on this topic?

Thank you all very much for coming today! I sincerely appreciate you sharing your thoughts on masculinity in musical theatre, and for contributing to the research for my MA thesis.

Appendix C: *Oklahoma!* musical numbers for male characters

Song	Character(s)	Type	Sung to	Range	
Act 1					
"Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin'"	Curly	Solo	Himself (with Eller and Laurey as audience)	D#3	E4
"The Surrey With the Fringe on Top"	Curly	Solo	Laurey, with Aunt Eller	D#3	E4
"Kansas City"	Will	Solo (with additional lines)	Aunt Eller and "Boys" (Male Ensemble?)	Eb3	F4
Reprise of "Surrey"	Curly	Solo	?	D#3	E4
Entrance of Ensemble	Will	Musical Scene	Ado Annie, then ensemble and Curly enter	D3	D4
"It's A Scandal! It's A Outrage!"	Ali Hakim & Men	Ensemble	Men	B3	F#4
"People Will Say We're in Love"	Curly & Laurey	Duet	Each other	C#3	F#4
"Pore Jud Is Daid"	Curly and Jud	Duet	Each other	D3	C#4
"Lonely Room"	Jud	Solo	Soliloquy	D3	C#4
Act 2					
"The Farmer and the Cowman"	Old Man Carnes, Aunt Eller, Will, Curly, Ado Annie, Ike (?), All	Ensemble	Musical Scene, shared by community	E3	F4
"All Er Nothin'"	Will & Ado Annie	Duet	Each other	E3	F4
Reprise of "People Will Say We're in Love"	Curly & Laurey	Duet	Each other	D3	F#4
"Oklahoma"	Company, feat. Curly	Ensemble	Community	Db3	F4

Appendix D: *Dear Evan Hansen* musical numbers

Song	Character(s)	Song Type	Key	Range	
Act 1					
"Anybody Have a Map"	Heidi	Duet	F# major, G major,	F#3	C5
	Cynthia			G3	C5
"Waving Through a Window"	Evan (with Company)	Solo (with BG's)	A major, Bb major	A2	Bb4
"Waving Through a Window" (Reprise)	Not in vocal selections				
"Waving Through a Window" (Reprise #2)	Not in vocal selections				
"For Forever"	Evan		F major, Bb major, G major	G2	B4
"Sincerely, Me"	Connor	Trio (all male)	G major, Bbmajor, G major	D3	G4
	Evan			D3	G4
	Jared			D3	B4 (final chord)
"Requiem"	Zoe	Trio (mixed-2 F/1M)	C# minor	B3	E5
	Larry			B2	F#4
	Cynthia			B3	B4

"If I Could Tell Her"	Evan	Duet	E major, G major	B2	B4
	Zoe			G3	C#5
"Disappear"	Connor		Eb major, F# major, G major	C#3	G#4
	Evan			C#3	F#4
	Alana			G3	D5
	Jared			A3	A4
	Cynthia			G3	Bb4
	Zoe			G3	D5
	Larry			G3	D4
"You Will Be Found"	Evan		B major, D major	B2	F#4
	Alana			D4	A4
	Jared			F#3	F#4
Act 2					
"Sincerely, Me" (Reprise)	Not in vocal selections				
"To Break in a Glove"	Larry		E major, G major, Bb major	Bb2	F4
	Evan			D3	G4
"Only Us"	Zoe	duet	Gb major, Db major, Eb major	Gb3	C#4
	Evan			Bb2	G4
"Good For You"	Heidi		C minor, D minor	G3	D5
	Alana			G3	E5
	Jared			G3	A4
	Evan			G3	A4
"For Forever" (Reprise)	Not in vocal selections				

"You Will Be Found" (Reprise)	Not in vocal selections				
"Words Fail"	Evan		G major, C major, F major, C major	B2	C5
"So Big, So Small"	Heidi		G major	F#3	Eb5