Constellations

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About *Constellations* - Journal of the NYI Global Institute of Cultural, Cognitive, and Linguistic Studies

The NYI Global Institute of Cultural, Cognitive, and Linguistic Studies proudly presents *Constellations*, an open-access academic journal.

Constellations has its roots in the inaugural issue of an NYI-affiliated journal released in the early 2000s, and it now continues the tradition.

As a biannual scientific and cultural journal, *Constellations* mirrors the diverse content of the NYI Institute. We cover a range of topics, including Theoretical Linguistics, Cognitive Psychology, Race & Ethnicity Studies, Gender & Sexuality Studies, Literature & Visual Arts, Critical Media Studies, and Translation Studies. In addition to scientific articles, *Constellations* features a special section dedicated to poetry, prose, and their translations.

In this first Summer issue of *Constellations*, we are thrilled to present 10 articles spanning linguistics, literary and critical cultural studies. Alongside these scholarly contributions, you'll find a prose piece, five poems, and a translation of a Hindi poem into English.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the authors who have submitted their top-quality, praiseworthy, and creative works. We extend gratitude to the reviewers whose support and hard work have been indispensable in maintaining the high standards of content in this inaugural Summer issue of *Constellations*. Lastly, a special appreciation is reserved for the Editorial Board, whose dedication has been crucial, from the founding of the journal to ensuring that all approved works reach the public.

Articles

Gender and Class Inequities Among Female Healthcare Workers in Pakistan: Breaking the Glass Ceiling

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Abstract: This article is part of a larger book project that examines the polio eradication initiative in Pakistan from an intersectional lens of gender, class, and labor. In this paper, I showcase how class can play an essential role in the tone of the discrimination felt by female healthcare workers. I draw from my longitudinal interviews conducted between 2015-2022 in South Punjab, Pakistan, to compare the experiences of female medical doctors (medical officers or MOs) and lady community health workers LHWs, who work alongside the healthcare workforce to show why an intersectional must be adopted to understand the complexities of gender and class at the workplace in Pakistan.

Keywords: Pakistan, global health intervention programs, gender and labor, community health workers, state and development, polio eradication

Introduction

The Pakistan (publicly funded) healthcare system perpetuates gender and class inequities among female healthcare workers (Khan, 2019). To understand the everyday sexism and classism experienced by women, we must contextualize gender and class. Women globally perform most of the world's care work, often informal and unpaid, and sociocultural and religious norms reinforce the site of this work primarily in the home, including in Pakistan. Even when women engage in paid and formal work, they are impacted by gendered expectations (Acker, 1990; 2006).

When women in Pakistan do work, they are marginalized, especially in the private sector. Ali (2000) explains that this is because of the "informalization of jobs and the deregulation of the labor market. Moreover, because of occupational segregation and women's immobility, overcrowding of women in female-dominated occupations [which] lowers their wages and enables employers to profit from this cheap labor" (Ali, 2000, p. 1). In addition to being exploited for labor, women are subject to varying levels of harassment from their male colleagues. Mirza's (1999) research showcases the everyday sexism and harassment of women in middle-level positions in the urban city of Lahore, as well as tactics they must use to negotiate space and power in the office,

including creating fictive kinship systems with male colleagues, social distancing and creating their own (women's) spaces. Mirza (1999) also concludes that women opted into occupations where contact with the opposite sex was minimal and did not have to leave their offices to do outside work. One such occupation is in healthcare, particularly in the government, as my respondents told me that working in the government brought more legitimacy.

In 2010, the Harassment of Women at the Workplace was passed to redress harassment issues working women faced every day. However, while turning the bill into law was a crucial step, it was not implemented, despite Pakistan being a signatory to many international documents advocating for women's rights.

Pakistan's (public) healthcare system

Pakistan's healthcare system is rooted in a colonial legacy, which perpetuated unequal power distribution between the British and natives in colonial India (Kumar, 1998). Today, patriarchal and patrilocal norms (see Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001) persist, and access to the highest positions in the healthcare administration remains inaccessible to most—such that the highest positions that once were limited to the British remain circumscribed to mostly men from largely privileged backgrounds. Jalal (1991) adds that women have little choice, especially because gendered inequalities are reinforced by Islamic morality and Islamic policing through military takeovers of the government. While women have opportunities to work in the healthcare field, the work of Lady Health Workers (LHWs) rests upon the gendered expectation of women being nurturing, in line with literature that shows healthcare as being a gendered occupation (see Zimmerman and Hill, 2006). Additionally, female community health workers (Lady Health Workers or LHWs) are also hired in Pakistan as they can access parts of a (female) patient's home that a male worker usually cannot when abiding by strict Islamic norms, which is important, especially in remote spaces of Pakistan where the *purdah*, the practice of women not being seen by men they are unrelated to) is observed.

At the core of the public healthcare facilities is the Lady Health Worker Program, which employs female workers at the community level to provide primary care in rural areas too far from major hospitals. LHWs, at the lowest rung of the public healthcare system, are trained for 15 months to provide postnatal care and identify symptoms of common illnesses. They are also the

frontline workers during the Polio eradication campaigns, going door to door to administer polio drops to eligible children (Khan, 2011; Ahmed, 2020).

LHWs are assigned to Basic Health Units (BHUs), a 1-2 room clinic with an attached pharmacy serving nearby communities as a hospital. In rural places like parts of Southern Punjab, where I conducted my interviews, BHUs were instrumental in allowing marginalized people unable to access healthcare to more prominent hospitals in cities. At these BHUs, medical officers, or MOs, head the operation. MOs are physicians in the government sector whom I was told must complete the first few years upon being hired into government service in BHUs before being promoted to more specialized public-funded hospitals in cities. Most MOs in my fieldwork were women. Unlike LHWs, whose work often involves going door-to-door during polio vaccinations and doing postnatal checkups, MOs do not leave the BHU to see patients. Outside of working hours, LHWs' homes are also designated as 'health houses' wherein community members can seek their help around the clock.

However, the tone of such discrimination differed across the socioeconomic class lines of the two groups. It is these class-based differences, I contend, that must be contextualized to understand the lack of solidarity across female health workers in various posts in the larger hierarchy of Pakistan's health care system.

Methods overview

The research presented in this paper is part of a larger book project (see Ahmed, 2020) that emerged from my doctoral dissertation. I visited parts of South Punjab, Pakistan, in 2015 and initially conducted interviews with 30 LHWs. Since then, I have visited the field to conduct follow-up interviews annually (except for 2020) with 22 of the LHWs I initially interviewed. The latest round of interviews was in December 2022, and the number of interviews since 2015 is 85 in total, of about an hour each over the last eight years. I have also interviewed 5 MOs and had informal conversations with several government employees in the state health department, four Pakistan-based members of Rotary International, and two local members of the World Health Organization. I conducted all interviews in English, Urdu, and Punjabi and primarily used my notebook to jot down field research notes (see Emerson, 1995) and direct quotes, as most respondents were wary of me using a voice recorder.

I translated and transcribed the data using MS Word, though I have used Dedoos in recent rounds of follow-up interviews. During the analysis, names were changed to protect the confidentiality of participants. The analysis was done through line-by-line and axial coding using Word's highlight and comment features to note patterns in speech, behavior, and cultural norms. In the initial rounds of interviews, I wrote memos to understand and draw out meanings to my findings, considering existing research and attempt better explain the rationale for the observed patterns and revisiting the recordings and field notes.

Gender & Class at the Workplace

Crenshaw (1989) stresses the importance of intersectionality to contextualize the effect of racism and sexism that impacts Black women in particular ways compared to white women and Black men. I use this framework of intersectionality in my research to argue that socioeconomic differences between LHWs and MOs create varied experiences of gendered discrimination in the workplace. Furthermore, my data reveals that the lack of solidarity between the two groups can also be traced back to class differences.

I also use Acker's (2006) inequality regime as an added dimension to understanding the discrimination that happens at the workplace in Pakistan's public healthcare system. While both female worker groups face gendered discrimination, only the LHWs have created a labor union to give them a stronger representation to demand better working conditions from their employer, the state. In contrast, MOs do not similarly experience inequalities or have unions like the LHWs. For instance, during visits, I was frequently told by LHWs in my research that MOs appeared disengaged and disinterested in their work, perhaps due to being stationed at a BHU, which is usually not equipped with much staff or medical tools and is generally in rural and peri-urban settings.

One MO, Ayesha, expressed her dissatisfaction during a tea break, saying, "My entire family thinks I am in some dump, and I am!" When discussing the LHWs, most MOs seemed critical, often calling them uneducated and unruly. LHWs, too, commented on MOs not having the best interest of LHWs, mainly because they would be posted elsewhere within a couple of years. Additionally, LHWs complained that MOs would divert patients to private clinics run by MOs, where patients could be charged higher fees that go directly into the MOs' pockets.

A stark contrast in the socioeconomic positions between the LHWs and MO further consolidates the differences in treatment and perception of gendered discrimination by both groups. Ayub & Siddiqui's (2013) book investigating attrition rates of LHWs in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province also highlights doctors' lack of trust and respect for LHWs. LHWs must request paid sick leave and/or be paid on time.

In my observations and interviews, I found that while both groups face discrimination, they face these differently due to socioeconomic differences. For example, the rule for LHWs to be married before they can be hired from a functional perspective is for the LHWs' safety—that married women are assumed to be more protected than their single counterparts. It also allows for LHWs to "cash in on their in-laws' contacts and respectability," as one MO explained to me. On the other hand, a female MO need not be married to be hired.

There is also an apparent difference in how the administration handles requests from LHWs and female MOs. LHWs face the gendered expectation of being a good mother and daughter-in-law at home. For example, while both LHWs and MOs wait at district offices, I observed MOs being able to sit in the privacy of her superior in an air-conditioned room while waiting to ask for an approved leave from work. In contrast, LHWs wait in halls with no fans, often sitting on the floor even when there may be space inside their superior's office room. One female health worker, Kinza, said, "Sometimes they make [LHWs] stand there for hours just to insult them. There is no place to sit in those areas because they are packed. These girls are there for hours for simple requests [to take some time off]."

In contrast, discrimination against a female MO looks different, as in the case of Ayesha, who came into the office of a district health officer during my conversation with him to understand the organization of the state health department. The district health officer made us wait as he had tea and chatted with some of his other guests, making us sit in the corner, telling us we should chat till it was our turn. Ayesha told me this was common practice, and she and her coworkers were used to this. While waiting for my turn, I repeatedly watched the district officer call Ayesha *'bachi'* (young daughter) and '*beta'* (child), which seemed to be infantilizing her and her designation despite her being there for official leave approval. The tone was kinder in most of these conversations I observed between MOs and their superiors from how LHWs described their interactions.

Furthermore, despite being regularized as government employees, in my early interviews, LHWs told me that they do not share the same benefits as other government employees, such as free or subsidized healthcare access, even if they are injured during work. They are also not reimbursed for expenses during work, including having to buy new shoes every month. Manzoora, an LHW, reported, "I have to walk so much every day, especially during the polio campaigns. I need to buy shoes every month because they wear out. That is another expense I need to put aside for work. The government tells us not to make an issue out of it."

The work as an LHW is in addition to the second shift of care work and household chores LHWs perform (see Hochschild and Machung 1989). Although three LHWs reported having help from their mothers to take care of the kids, most LHWs reported waking up at four in the morning to perform the morning prayer, after which they would make breakfast, clean the house, and get their children ready for school before going to work themselves. When I asked LHWs if their supervising MO could have been helpful, Saba said, "They [MO] do not have our interests in mind. Rather, they will tell patients to see them after hours in their private evening clinic. They do not trust us or respect us."

To be sure, the socioeconomic differences between most LHWs and MOs are stark. Regarding education, the basic requirement for an LHW is finishing eighth grade, though I met a few LHWs who had done two master's degrees, and some were even working on their MPhil degrees. In contrast, MOs are medical officers who must complete at least an MBBS degree to apply. In many BHUs, the differences between clothing and appearance between LHWs and MOs was also quite apparent: many MOs I saw did not cover their head and/or wore much more expensive-looking clothes and accessories than their LHW counterparts, though I did see some exceptions. As LHWs complained, many MOs told me that LHWs were incompetent in their jobs. Mehr, an MO, said, "They [LHWs] only bring us the patients when it is too late. They are just very incompetent." Another MO, Gazala, added, "They do not even come to work half the time or do their job. It is quite stressful trying to supervise [them]."

Another possible reason LHWs do not feel that their interests are aligned with MOs is due to the latter usually being posted in a BHU for a year or so only, which is not the same as LHWs, who usually have lived in the same place for years if not decades, relying on their social capital and networks.

For these reasons, the LHW union has allied itself with other government employees in precarious working conditions and similar socioeconomic backgrounds instead of working with MOs to work against gendered discrimination against all female employees in the healthcare system. Given the time and space constraints, this collective action cannot be expanded here but will be available in a forthcoming paper and book.

Conclusion

Despite being a signatory to many international conferences and even passing a bill in 2010 to penalize harassment in the workplace, the government of Pakistan has done little to implement these laws into practice. This paper examined how female health workers in Pakistan's public healthcare system experience discrimination differently across class divisions. Class differences also create a lack of solidarity among the two groups in focus in the paper: Lady Health Workers (LHWs) and their supervisors, known as MOs (or medical officers) in the field. Through interviews and observations, I demonstrate that while both MOs and LHWs experience workplace discrimination, discrimination is a lot more overt in the case of LHWs.

Addressing gender and class inequalities in the healthcare industry requires a comprehensive approach considering the sociopolitical, historical, and cultural factors contributing to these inequalities. It gives insight into why there are divisions among female health workers across class lines. The Lady Health Worker Program is crucial to Pakistan's public healthcare system. Subsequently, addressing the disparities and challenges LHWs face is essential to ensure their well-being and effectiveness in providing healthcare services.

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Pied-piping and Swiping

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Pied-piping in Chol (Coon 2007) and swiping in English (and Northern Germanic, Merchant (2001)) both involve fronting of a minimal *wh*-element in the pied-piped wh-phrase, therefore it is tempting to analyse both constructions in the same way. In this paper I discuss (possible) analyses of these phenomena and resulting problems for such a unified treatment.

The Patterns

As shown in (1), a non-*wh* possessor in Chol obligatorily follows the possessum, which agrees with the possessor by a prefix glossed as A3. *wh*-words, on the other hand, must undergo *wh*-movement to SpecC. Unlike in the case of subjects and adjuncts, out of which *wh*-elements may not be extracted (Coon 2007:166), a *wh*-possessor inside the internal argument of the predicate may either extract out of the possessive phrase, as in (2a), or pied-pipe the possessum, as in (2b-c). In the pied-piping construction, however, as the contrast between (2b) and (2c) shows, the *wh*-possessor must precede the possessum, unlike a non-*wh* possessor as in (1), which must follow the possessum.

(1) Non-*wh* possessors

    a.   Tyi   yajl-i   [i-plato   aj-Maria]

           PRFV   fall-ITV   A3-plate   CL-Maria

    b.   *Tyi   yajl-i   [aj-Maria i-plato]

           PRFV   fall-ITV   CL-Maria   A3-plate

           'Maria's plate fell'

(2) *wh*-possessors

    a.   Maxki$_i$ tyi   yajl-i   [i-plato   t$_i$]

           who   PRFV   fall-ITV   A3-plate

    b.   [Maxki   i-plato]$_i$ tyi   yajl-i   t$_i$

           who   A3-plate PRFV   fall-ITV

   c.   *[I-plato   maxki]$_i$ tyi   yajl-i   t$_i$

       A3-plate   who   PRFV   fall-ITV

In recursive possession constructions, the base-generated non-*wh* structure of which is represented schematically in (3) and in a natural-language example in (4), the *wh*-possessor, if it does not extract out of the DP and then move to SpecC, as in (5a), may either pied-pipe the possessum it directly relates to, as in (5b), or the entire DP may undergo pied-piping, as in (5c). Regardless of whether one or both possessed nouns undergo pied-piping, the *wh*-possessor, in contrast to a non-*wh* possessor as in (4), must precede the possessed noun(s).

(3) [$_{possessum}$ possessum [$_{possessor}$ possessum possessor]]

(4) Non-*wh* possessor recursion in Chol

   Tyi   yajl-i   [i-plato   [i-ts'i   aj-Maria]]

   PRFV   fall-ITV A3-plate   A3-dog   CL-Maria

   'Maria's dog's plate fell.'

(5) *wh*-possessor recursion in Chol

 (6) a.   Maxki$_3$ tyi   yajl-i   [$_{DP}$ i-plato   i-ts'i   t$_3$]

       who   PRFV   fall-ITV   A3-plate   A3-dog

    b.   [$_{DP}$ Maxki   i-ts'i]$_2$ tyi   yajl-i   [$_{DP}$ i-plato   t$_2$]$_1$

       who   A3-plate PRFV   fall-ITV   a3-plate

    c.   [$_{DP}$ Maxki   i-plato   i-ts'i]$_1$ tyi   yajl-i   t$_1$

       who   A3-plate A3-dog   PRFV   fall-ITV

    d.   *[$_{DP}$ [$_{DP}$ Maxki   i-ts'i]$_2$ i-plato t$_2$]$_1$ tyi   yajl-i   t$_1$

       who   A3-dog   A3-plate   PRFV   fall-ITV

This pattern resembles that of swiping, i.e. inversion of *wh*-words and prepositions in the context of sluicing. Sluicing, as illustrated in (6a-b), is "an ellipsis phenomenon in which the sentential portion of a constituent question is elided, leaving only a *wh*-phrase remnant" (Merchant 2006).

(7) Sluicing
   a. She bought a robe, but God knows for who(m).
   b. She bought a robe for one of her nephews, but God knows for which (one).

Following Merchant (2001), I will take sluicing to be the result of *wh*-movement to SpecC, followed by deletion of TP triggered by an E-feature on C, i.e., by $C_{[E]}$ (but see Merchant (2006) for arguments against a movement account for sluicing). If the remnant *wh*-phrase in SpecC involves a pied-piped preposition, that preposition and the *wh*-word can optionally undergo inversion in English (and in Northern Germanic languages, see Merchant (2001)). As the contrast in (7a-b) shows, only minimal *wh*-elements can be fronted. In regular *wh*-clauses, on the other hand, *wh*-phrase inversion is not possible even with minimal *wh*-elements, as shown in (8):

(8) Swiping
   a. She bought a robe, but God knows who(m) for.
   b. *She bought a robe for one of her nephews, but God knows which (one) for.

(9) Standard *wh*-clauses
   a. *I don't know [whom for] you bought the robe.
   b. I don't know [for whom] you bought the robe.
   c. *I don't know [which nephew for] you bought a robe.
   d. I don't know [for which nephew] you bought a robe.

What pied-piping in Chol and swiping in English (which, following Merchant (2001), also implies pied-piping, namely of a PP) have in common is that a minimal *wh*-element moves to the left edge of the pied-piped *wh*-phrase. Now the question arises if this leftward movement should be analysed in the same way in both constructions. However, a unified treatment of these patterns is not entirely unproblematic, given their distribution: While fronting of a minimal *wh*-word applies obligatorily in every pied-piping construction in Chol, it is optional and limited to sluicing contexts in English – as (8) shows, it is ungrammatical in standard *wh*-clauses.

Existing analyses of pied-piping

Coon (2007) proposes an analysis of pied-piping involving a functional head Q independently argued for by Cable (2007) based on evidence from Tlingit (Na-Dene). To account for all three configurations in (5a), (5b) and (5c), Coon assumes that in Chol, this functional head Q can be

merged with the *wh*-possessor, as in (5a), with DP$_2$, as in (5b), or with DP$_1$, as in (5c). When merged with DP$_2$ or DP$_1$, the Q head attracts the minimal *wh*-element, i.e. the *wh*-possessor, to its specifier, yielding a maximal projection QP, which subsequently moves to SpecC.

Crucially, in Coon's (2007) analysis, fronting of the minimal *wh*-element takes place *before* pied-piping. Therefore, if applied to the swiping configuration in English, the analysis predicts swiping to occur not only in sluicing contexts but also in standard *wh*-clauses. However, as shown in (6), in English, fronting of a minimal *wh*-element is ungrammatical in standard-*wh*-clauses and may only occur in sluicing contexts. Recall further that sluicing, following Merchant's (2001) analysis, implies pied-piping of an XP to SpecC and subsequent deletion of the TP by an E-feature on C. This means that, unless one wants to assume look-ahead, swiping can only take place *after* pied-piping has applied.

Heck (2009) argues that pied-piping is repair-driven rather than feature-driven and results from the ranking of a gradient constraint requiring locality of Agree and constraints on movement. He adopts the Strict Cycle Condition (SCC) adapted from Chomsky (1973), represented in (9), as well as a version of Huang's (1982) Condition on extraction domains (CED) which states that any XP that it is not a complement is an island for movement.

(10)   STRICT CYCLE CONDITION (SCC): No operation can apply to a cyclic domain δ in such a way as to affect solely a proper sub-domain of δ that is also cyclic.

(11)   CONDITION ON EXTRACTION DOMAINS (CED): Movement must not cross a barrier. An XP is a barrier iff it is not a complement.

Chomsky's (1995:228) assumption that all movement must be driven by the need to check certain features is implemented via a Feature Condition (FC), which ensures a probe is eliminated via checking/Agree with a matching goal, and Last Resort (LR), a constraint banning unmotivated movement by requiring movement to be feature-driven, specifically by a feature [wh] in the case of wh-movement. Heck (2009) furthermore proposes a violable constraint represented in (11) which requires the distance between probe and goal to be minimal and therefore triggers movement of a *wh*-phrase to SpecC in the presence of a *wh*-probe on C. The notion of an active probe, on which the definition of LA in (11) relies, is defined in (12). Note that (11) is assumed to be a gradient constraint: The more phrase boundaries intervene between probe and goal, the more violations are assigned to LA.

(12)   LOCAL AGREE: If goal γ in Σ matches active probe β, then no XP dominates γ but not β.

(13)   ACTIVE PROBE: A probe β is active iff a. or b. hold.
   a. β is part of Σ.
   b. β is a single in the numeration.

Given these assumptions, a *wh*-phrase, be it minimal (like *who*) or not (as in a possessive *wh*-phrase like *whose dog*) first moves to SpecT to check the EPP feature on T. In a next step, when C is merged, a minimal *wh*-phrase moves to SpecC to check the [wh] feature on C. Being minimal, the *wh*-phrase checks both the EPP feature and the [wh] feature under sisterhood, so LA is not violated. If the *wh*-phrase is not minimal, as in *whose dog*, it can match the probe on T and check the [EPP] feature under sisterhood, as the probe on T probes for any DP. In the next step, however, when C is merged and the [wh] feature on C needs to be checked, moving a non-minimal *wh*-phrase like *whose dog* to SpecC violates LA, as a DP boundary intervenes between the probe on C and the minimal *wh*-element. However, extracting *whose* from *whose dog* violates the Left Branch Condition (Ross 1967), according to which the leftmost item of an XP cannot be moved out of that XP. Moreover, as *whose dog* has been previously moved to the specifier of T, extracting *whose* would violate the CED in (10), which bans extraction out of non-complements. Ranking LBC and CED higher than LA thus yields pied-piping of *whose dog* to SpecC.

Recursive possession structures as in (5b-c) are derived via LA-driven movement of the *wh*-possessor either to the specifier of the complete DP_1, which results in pied-piping of DP_1, as in (5c), or to the specifier of the embedded DP_2, as in (5b). In both (5b) and (5c), the pied-piper is in the specifier of the topmost moved DP, incurring only one LA violation (as only one DP boundary intervenes), whereas pied-piping of recursive specifiers, as in (5d), would result in one additional LA violation per embedding.

Like Coon's (2007) approach, Heck's (2009) analysis relies on the assumption that fronting of the minimal *wh*-element takes place *before* pied-piping and is therefore not applicable to swiping. As mentioned above, LA is responsible for both pied-piping and minimal *wh*-fronting in pied-piping contexts, and the order of these operations follows from LA being relevant even if the probe is not yet present in the syntactic structure as long as it is present in the numeration, as well as a tacitly assumed version of the Earliness Principle (cf. e.g. Pesetsky 1989), which requires any operation

X to be carried out as soon as the structural description for X to apply is given. In this case, as soon as the *wh*-phrase to be pied-piped is built, provided that there is a *wh*-probe in the numeration, the structural description for LA-driven operations is given under the assumption of (11b). Now one of the LA-driven operations relevant here, namely pied-piping to the specifier of the head containing the *wh*-probe, cannot yet apply as the head is not yet present in the syntactic structure, therefore the other relevant operation, movement of the minimal *wh*-element to the specifier of the respective XP, must take place. Note that this ordering also follows from the Strict Cycle Condition (SCC, represented in (9)): When pied-piping to SpecC takes place, the current cyclic domain δ must be CP, of which the pied-piped XP is a proper subdomain. Subsequent movement within that XP would therefore affect solely a proper subdomain of δ and violate SCC. If one abandons the analysis of minimal *wh*-fronting as movement within the pied-piped XP and instead assumes it to involve movement from the pied-piped XP to an outer SpecC, one still runs into problems. Movement to an outer SpecC would imply an additional C' projection intervening between the minimal *wh*-element and the probe on C, and thus possibly incur an additional LA violation, and even if one assumes that X-bar projections do not count as interveners between probe and goal for LA, movement to an outer specifier is still ruled out because it would imply extracting a *wh*-element out of SpecC. This violates the Condition on Extraction Domains (CED, represented in (10)). As has been discussed earlier in this section, in Heck's (2009) analysis, pied-piping follows from CED (and Left Branch Condition) outranking LA, and the observation made by Coon (2007) that Chol does not permit extraction from subjects nor adjuncts independently suggests that CED is ranked higher than LA in Mayan. Lastly, ranking LA higher than the CED would not even solve the problem, as the order of minimal *wh*-fronting and pied-piping in Heck's (2009) approach follows, independently from all the considerations listed above, from the crucial assumption that both operations are driven by the need to check one and the same [wh] feature on one and the same probe. Given this assumption, if pied-piping applied first, it would already check the [wh] feature, thus bleeding further LA-driven movement of the minimal *wh*-phrase. However, as has been argued above, the fact that minimal *wh*-fronting in English is restricted to sluicing contexts suggests that, unless one assumes lookahead, it must take place *after* pied-piping.

Possible analyses of swiping

As neither of the analyses for pied-piping in Mayan discussed above are applicable to swiping in English, the question arises what an analysis for swiping should look like. Given the assumption that sluicing implies pied-piping to SpecC and subsequent deletion of TP by an E-feature on C (following Merchant 2001), the fact that swiping is restricted to sluicing contexts suggests that it takes place after sluicing and involves either movement within the pied-piped XP, in violation SCC, or movement out of the pied-piped XP in SpecC to an outer specifier of C, in violation of the CED. In either case, swiping violates a constraint on movement independently argued for. This suggests that an optimality-theoretic approach to swiping is most suitable. Following Müller (e.g. 2020 for morphology) in assuming that the SCC is inviolable, I will here disregard the first option involving XP-internal movement, and focus on the second option involving extraction out of SpecC, which can be implemented in an optimality-theoretic account via a low-ranked CED. The question that remains to be answered is which constraint outranks the CED and thus triggers swiping, since, as I have shown above, LA-driven swiping is counterfed by previous checking of the [wh] feature relevant for LA by pied-piping, and postulating an additional feature responsible for swiping, for example by enrichment, would give rise to a lookahead problem. This, alongside the restricted distribution of swiping, suggests that it is repair-driven rather than feature-driven. So what could repair-driven movement arise from? One possibility[1], which I will consider here, is that there is a constraint on the *alignment* of a minimal *wh*-element that, if ranked sufficiently high, leads to fronting of that *wh*-element, in analogy to alignment-driven morphological movement as proposed in Müller (2020).

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[1] As an anonymous reviewer points out, Heck & Müller (2000, 2007) derive repair-driven *wh*-fronting via a constraint WH-RECOVERABILITY which requires any *wh*-phrase to be at the edge of a phase marked by an E-feature. In the original version in Heck & Müller (2000, 2007), this constraint is satisfied if the *wh*-phrase is *in the edge domain* of an *[E]*-marked phase, i.e. *not dominated by an [E]-marked category*, which is the case if the *wh*-element is inside an XP that is in SpecC. This version does not derive swiping. A modified version of the constraint requiring (minimal) *wh*-elements to be immediately at the left edge of an *[E]*-marked phase would predict swiping correctly if ranked variably wrt the CED but would not derive *wh*-fronting in Chol which takes place in contexts that do not involve sluicing. For the cases at hand, this modified version of WH-RECOVERABILITY thus makes the same prediction as the constraint in (13c). While this latter constraint can be parametrised wrt the properties of the C head in order to extend the analysis to Chol, it is unclear how the relevance of recoverability could be motivated in the absence of deletion in order to extend an analysis in terms of WH-RECOVERABILITY to the Chol data.
On a side note, in German, swiping constructions as in (8a) are ungrammatical. This means that the modified version of WH-RECOVERABILITY requiring a minimal *wh*-element to be immediately at the edge of an [E]-marked phase would have to be ranked higher than the CED in German but lower than the CED in English, which would be a very neat instance of variation in OT rankings explaining grammatical variation.

(14)   Possible alignment constraints

  a. L ⇐ *wh*-min: Assign 1 violation for every element that intervenes between the left edge of a CP and a minimal *wh*-element.

  b. *wh-min ⇒ R: Assign violation for a minimal wh-element that is aligned with the right edge of a CP.

  c. *wh-min ⇒ C[E]: Assign violation for a minimal wh-element that is aligned with a head bearing an E feature.

The most straightforward way to implement alignment-driven leftward movement is via a constraint requiring a minimal wh-element to be aligned with the left edge of a CP, as in (13a) (I adopt Trommer's (2001) and Müller's (2020) notation of ⇐ for left-alignment and ⇒ for right-alignment). As swiping is optional, two rankings of L ⇐ *wh*-min and the CED must be simultaneously available to English speakers such that (6a) and (7a) emerge from the same candidate set, each under one ranking. To derive swiping, L ⇐ *wh*-min must be ranked higher than the CED. As (14a-b) show, this ranking makes correct predictions for swiping: it yields fronting of the minimal *wh*-element *who* but rules out fronting of the non-minimal wh-element *which one*. The reverse ranking, where the CED outranks L ⇐ *wh*-min, correctly rules out fronting of both *who* (as shown in (14c)) and *which one*, yielding the sentences in (6a-b). However, the analysis overgenerates, as high-ranked L ⇐ *wh*-min also predicts swiping to occur in standard *wh*-clauses, which, as shown in (8), is ungrammatical.

(15)   Derivation of swiping

  a. L ⇐ *wh*-min >> CED: Swiping of minimal *wh*-elements

	[CP [PP [P for] [wh whom]]]	L ⇐ *wh*-min	CED
a.	[CP [PP [P for] [wh whom]]]	*!	
☞ b.	[CP [wh whom]1 [CP [PP [P for] t1]]]		*

  b. L ⇐ *wh*-min >> CED: No swiping of non-minimal *wh*-elements

	[CP [PP [P for] [wh which one]]]	L ⇐ *wh*-min	CED
☞ a.	[CP [PP [P for] [wh which one]]]		
b.	[CP [wh which one]1 [CP [PP [P for] t1]]]		*!

  c. CED >> L ⇐ *wh*-min: No swiping of minimal *wh*-elements

	[CP [PP [P for] [wh whom]]]	CED	L ⇐ wh-min
☞ a.	[CP [PP [P for] [wh whom]]]	*!	
b.	[CP [wh whom]₁ [CP [PP [P for] t₁]]]		*

A constraint that would predict swiping in sluicing contexts but not in standard *wh*-clauses would be that in in (13b) penalising minimal *wh*-elements at the right edge. Again, two rankings of **wh*-min ⇒ R and the CED must be simultaneously available, where **wh*-min ⇒ R is ranked higher than the CED to derive (7) and lower than the CED to account for (6). This constraint makes the same predictions for sluicing and swiping as (13a), but in addition exclude minimal wh-fronting in standard wh-clauses, where the minimal wh-element is not at the right edge of the CP and **wh*-min ⇒ R is not relevant. However, high-ranked **wh*-min ⇒ R would rule out *wh*-in-situ clauses (*You saw whom?*), where the minimal wh-element is at the right edge of the CP, and therefore undergenerate. One might argue that in *wh*-in-situ constructions the *wh*-element is in a more deeply embedded phrase, at the edge of *v*P, and therefore not exactly at the edge of CP. On the other hand, in sluicing constructions, only the TP has been deleted so there is an empty C' node with an empty C head intervening between the *wh*-element and the right edge of CP. So while **wh*-min ⇒ R both triggers swiping and rules out *wh*-in-situ if it refers to the phonological left edge, it does neither if the left edge is defined in syntactic terms.

What predicts swiping in sluicing contexts but not in standard wh-clauses, and does not rule out wh-in-situ clauses, is a ban on adjacency of a minimal wh-element and a C head with an E-feature, as in (13c). Again, outranking the CED correctly predicts swiping of minimal *wh*-elements and derives (7), whereas the CED outranking **wh*-min ⇒ C[E] predicts no swiping in either case, yielding the structure in (6). The assumption that both rankings are simultaneously available to speakers accounts for the optionality of swiping.

Finally, the question arises whether these analyses are extendable to the Chol data if one assumes that, like swiping in English, minimal *wh*-fronting in Chol takes place *after* pied-piping and is alignment-driven. The analysis based on the constraint in (13b) banning alignment of a minimal *wh*-element with the right edge of a CP rules out minimal *wh*-fronting in Chol pied-piping contexts for the same reason as it rules out minimal *wh*-fronting in English standard *wh*-clauses: In both contexts, the minimal *wh*-element, even if it is at the right edge of the pied-piped XP, is not at the right edge of the CP, therefore it does not need to be fronted. A high-ranked constraint requiring a

minimal wh-element to be aligned with the left edge of the CP correctly predicts minimal *wh*-fronting in Chol standard *wh*-clauses, but, as discussed above, incorrectly predicts the same in English standard *wh*-clauses. The constraint in (13c), which penalises adjacency of a minimal wh-element to a C head containing an E feature, does not derive minimal *wh*-fronting in Chol, which also takes place in the absence of an E-feature on the C head. One could, however, modify the analysis by assuming a constraint banning adjacency of minimal wh-elements to any C head which is ranked higher than the CED but lower than LA in Chol, as in (15a), (and possibly lower than LA in *wh*-in-situ languages) and lower than the CED in English, while a version of this constraint additionally specified for C heads bearing an E feature is ranked higher than the CED, as in (15b)[2]. This "parametrised" version of the analysis based on (15) derives both the Chol pattern and the English pattern.

(16)   Rankings
            a. LA >> *_wh_-min ⇨ C >> CED
            b. LA >> *_wh_-min ⇨ C_{[E]} >> CED >> *_wh_-min ⇨ C

Conclusion

Although there are instances of fronting of a minimal *wh*-element in *wh*-phrases pied-piped to SpecC in both Chol and English, the distribution of this phenomenon in both languages differs: While minimal *wh*-inversion obligatorily takes place in all pied-piping contexts in Chol, its occurrence is restricted to sluicing contexts and optional in English. This renders a unified analysis of both patterns problematic. In fact, existing analyses of the Mayan data are incompatible with the English data, as they rely on minimal *wh*-fronting taking place before pied-piping, while the restriction of its distribution to sluicing contexts suggests that it must take place after pied-piping to SpecC. This involves extraction of the minimal *wh*-element out of SpecC in violation of the CED, which can be taken as an argument for optimality-theoretic approaches to syntax. I have therefore sketched three optimality-theoretic approaches to swiping in English. While two of these approaches make false predictions either for English or for both Chol and English, the third one, which involves a ban on adjacency of a minimal *wh*-element to a

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[2] This could also be implemented by assuming a hierarchy of markedness constraints for C heads and conjoining an alignment constraint with this hierarchy, in analogy to conjunction of a constraint penalising the absence of a value for case with a hierarchy of markedness constraints in Aissen's (2003) analysis of differential object marking in El Cid Spanish.

C head bearing an E feature, correctly predicts the occurrence of minimal *wh*-fronting in English and can technically be extended to the Chol data by making the additional assumption that adjacency of minimal *wh*-elements to C heads is generally marked, but to a different extent in different languages depending not only on the ranking of the respective markedness constraints but also on the quality of the C head. This assumption, however, has yet to be independently motivated.

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Haptic Remembering: Potential Approaches to Speculative and Affective Archives

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To define something–an image, an encounter, a process–as haptic is to let the sensory experience of touch surface. Film and media philosopher Laura U. Marks (2000) describes hapticity with respect to images as a vision like touch writing, "While optical perception privileges the representation power of the image, haptic perception privileges the material presence of the image" (p. 163). Teddy Pozo and Tina M. Campt apply Mark's work on hapticity to critical analyses of video games and multimedia art, respectively. In video games, Pozo (2018) applies hapticity as "the continuity between affect, tactility, feelings, and being moved in game design" (para. 5). Campt (2021) applies hapticity to formal analyses of multimedia art as, "the labor of feeling across difference and precarity; the work of feeling implicated or affected in ways that create restorative intimacy" (p. 104). Hapticity is about connection, sensory connection to an out of body stimulus. Through synthesis and connection of hapticity to archives or potential archives, I am engaging what Lauren Berlant (2022) would call "to loosen an object" (p. 28). I am looking at archives in an attempt to reconfigure, trouble, or otherwise explore what can be an archive. This discussion on archives looks at the parallels between institutional and cultural archives and video games and addresses how certain video games engage with history and culture. It also describes the limitations of video games as haptic cultural archives by looking at how multimedia art installations concentrate hapticity in archives that are both speculative and affective.

The Potential of Archives

In an attempt to explore and reconfigure the archive, I began where many other archival scholars began in Derrida's *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1995). I am drawn to the passage where Derrida describes his computer, "the little portable Macintosh" (p. 25). Derrida writes:

> I asked myself what is the moment *proper* to the archive, if there is such a thing, the instant of archivization strictly speaking, which is not, and I will come back to this, so-called live or spontaneous memory (mnēmē or anamnēsis), but rather a certain hypomnesic and prosthetic experience of the technical substrate. Was it not at this very

> instant that, having written something or other on the screen, the letters remaining as if suspended and floating yet at the surface of a liquid element, I pushed a certain key to "save" a text undamaged, in a hard and lasting way, to protect marks from being erased, so as to ensure in this way salvation and *indemnity*, to stock, to accumulate, and, in what is at once the same thing and something else, to make the sentence available in this way for printing and for reprinting, for reproduction? (p. 25-26).

I am drawn to this passage of saving the same way I am drawn to video games as an archive, the instantaneity of the save, the availability of the content, the reduction of archival moments because of a nearly infinite ability to archive. Derrida deconstructs the archive by sitting with the fever that accompanies the need to save, to store, to produce, to live forever, and places the archive into the everyday experience of saving a word document on a personal computer. Derrida describes the public record experience through the metaphor of impression where the suspension of liquid text is impressed technologically into a hard save. Derrida surfaces a way to think about archives, archival moments, and the process of public record by describing a single moment that facilitates the motion of a sentence from the private sphere to the public sphere.

Achille Mbembe (2002) explicitly defines archives to theorize how archives function as a technology of power. Mbembe defines archives as follows:

> The term 'archives' first refers to a building, a symbol of a public institution, which is one of the organs of a constituted state. However, by 'archives' is also understood a collection of documents - normally written documents - kept in this building. There cannot therefore be a definition of 'archives' that does not encompass both the building itself and the documents scored there (p. 19).

Read separately, the definitions of archive from these specific passages of Derrida and Mbembe seem to be at odds with each other. Each describes a specific process of archiving. Derrida describes the process of impression, how to take an idea and make it public. Mbembe describes an archive as a building, a symbol of the state, and the collection of written documents within. Reading Derrida and Mbembe together and taking a literal understanding of deconstruction, we can start to see an archival potential form around video games and video game consoles with their seemingly unlimited cloud storage, graphics, and save buttons.

Video Games as Archives

Video games can be and in many ways already act as an archive. Further considering video games with Mbembe's theorizations on archives surfaces multiple points of connection. Thinking about games with their own worldbuilding, *Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* is a fantasy, single player game consisting of its own histories, maps, peoples, politics, ecologies, and more. It is a complete world that consists of in-game documents that describe fragments of that world. A player moving through the game can collect scrolls, letters, and books that provide pieces of the history of Skyrim, the player's history and role within the central quest of the game, and opportunities for character customization and side quest development. The player can either save these collected items in their pack to eventually place in one of their homes or the player can disregard the item, not knowing if it will be relevant in a future quest. In this example, two archives are happening simultaneously. In the process of worldbuilding, the game creators had to make the archive that the player accesses analogous to an institutional archive and the player is making an archive of their character's experience—a cultural archive. Reading the archives introduced through this specific video game example recalls Mbembe's discussion of rituals in that there is a certain level of secrecy to accessing the Skyrim archive; it requires skill to play through the game and find the fragments in addition to having access to the game system, the game itself, and the time to devote to playing (p. 19-20).

Pokémon is another video game that utilizes archives as a crucial element to gameplay culminating in the Pokédex, a taxonomic archive of Pokémon. Always incomplete, the Pokédex requires the player to explore "unexplored" places in the game to find pokémon that are not currently in the index, learn their attributes, and classify them. The more extensive a player's Pokédex, the more advanced the gameplay becomes. Yet, a more complete Pokédex signifies that the gameplay is exhausted and the player will need to start the game over or acquire a new game to play. Although aesthetically and ludically different, both *Skyrim* and *Pokémon* provide examples of video games that engage in archival practices for worldbuilding. In many ways, the archives of these respective games are crucial to the gameplay. Yet in thinking about the archive potential of video games, can video games be a historical archive?

In "Videogames as Public History: Archives Empathy and Affinity" authors Abbie Hartman, Rowan Tulloch, and Helen Young (2021) explore video games as an avenue for public historical discussion. In that:

Videogames offer an important way for large segments of the population to interact with detailed historical content for extended periods of time; a game typically takes longer to play than a film does to watch, a museum to visit or a book to read. Videogames, we argue, are a common form of public history which is only beginning to be explored and understood in scholarship in that field (para. 3).

Hartman et al. identify three concepts that merit an understanding of critical evaluation of historic video games: interactive archive, historical empathy, and affinity space potential, that contribute to "history-making experiences outside play contexts" (para. 4). For a historical video game to act as a haptic archive, it cannot simply use archival material or footage but must include the participation and agency of the player in accessing the archive. Hartman et al. use the archive of historical objects and facts in the video game *Valiant Hearts* as an example of affective interactive archives in that as players navigate the gameplay and pick up objects, they are given a historical account of the object through photos, diary entries, and other primary sources from World War One. Addressing the significant amount of time a player devotes to play a single video game, Hartman et al. link that to a potential for developing sustained historic empathy. They write, "In allowing the player to act as an agent in the recreated past, and in training them into its world, culture and logics, videogames can facilitate the establishment of a potentially nuanced and sustained form of historic empathy" (para. 15). This interaction between player and video game is not perfect nor is it a complete and accurate history. As a cultural archive, a video game that engages with history will more aptly convey the affective structure of a particular cultural moment of significance than a complete and perfect (impossible) factual presentation.

In many ways, this discussion of complete and accurate history with respect to historical video games echoes similar discussions in historical films. In the introduction to *Playing with the Past: Digital Games and the Simulation of History,* Kapell and Elliot write, "In video games, as with film, given that it is impossible to show everything, any simulation of the past is of course constructed to a great degree by which facts or details are selected, which leads to new issues" (2013, p. 6). The decisions on what to include in a historical video game, much like in a film, depend on entertainment, plot development, and projected commercial success. The relationship between film and videogames as objects and as potential archives raises two questions: Does the dependence on entertainment, plot development and commercial success limit the archival

potential of video games? How does the relationship between film and video games provide us with the necessary methods to explore video games as archives? Ann Cvetkovich describes film and other similar media as important to the synthesis of cultural archives of feelings. She goes on to describe the role of fantasy or speculation as invaluable to queer documentary film "as a way of creating history from absences" (2003, p. 269-271). I am unaware of a video game that engages with history in a way that constitutes an affective archive or creates history from the absences. *Valiant Hearts*, as an example, engages with history in a way that populates its gaming archive of stuff and generates storylines. It functions as an archive. Other video games that engage with history, like the *Assassin's Creed* franchise, seem to echo that engagement. Yet, video games have the potential to contribute more to historical and cultural archives through their particular hapticity.

Haptic duality in video games is a convergence of affective and effective definitions. "Affective" is the multi-sensory, emotional response of being moved that connects the player to the gameplay and "effective" is the technologically created sensations of touch like through a rumble pack or other wearable. Yet, hapticity and the potential for video games to act as a haptic archive is slightly more than the summation of affective and effective definitions. Campt (2021) expands:

> Hapticity is, in this sense, the labor of feeling beyond the security of one's own situation. It involves cultivating an ability to confront the precarity of less valued or actively devalued individuals without guarantees, and working to sustain a relationship to those imperiled and precarious bodies nonetheless. (p. 104)

Understanding video games and specifically historical video games through Campt's haptic framework is to understand that in playing a video game, a player is also confronted with images that have the potential to push them into feelings beyond themselves. Although video games have the potential to act as archives in speculative worlds as well as archives grounded in historical realities, multimedia art installations engage in hapticity without having it as part of the very mechanics of their spectatorship, unlike a game. Can understanding the hapticity of multimedia art as it engages in history enhance the fantasy and overall potential of video games as an archive?

Multimedia Art as Archives

Video games as an archive of how to be moved or to participate in history. By distilling video games to a fundamental level of active participation in images, we can describe additional approaches to archives and public history that are haptic and potentially develop video games as significant archives. Laura U. Marks (2000) further describes the haptic image as:

> [connecting] directly to sense perception, while bypassing the sensory-motor schema. A sensuous engagement with a tactile or, for example, olfactory image is pure affection, prior to any extension into movement. Such an image may then be bound into the sensory-motor schema, but it need not be. The affection-image, then, can bring us to the direct experience of time through the body. (p. 163)

The liminal aesthetic experience of interactive installations and temporally folding photographic experience in this section asks the visitor to participate haptically in histories that are in many ways parallel to historical video games in the previous section. There is an intentional blurring of history and present, self and others, and remembering and speculation that foreground the experiences of memory and archiving by asking the visitor to participate intimately in multi-sensory remembering.

In *A Black Gaze,* Tina M. Campt's (2021) surfaces and thinks with hapticity as a way to describe how the viewer participates with art in a way that is beyond empathy. Campt discusses two installations from her assembled cultural archive that interact with history in a speculative and affective manner: Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born's active movement piece titled *Sitting on a Man's Head* in the 2018 Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art (p. 112-121). This piece is intended to have people interact with it both as performance to watch and as visitors to the installation with instructions. *Sitting on a Man's Head* refers to the practice and protest of Igbo women in eastern Nigeria where "sitting on a man" is a way a community of women can call attention to the offenses done by a man (p. 115). In 1929, Nigerian women "sat on " warrant chief Okugo to force his resignation, an example of women's diplomatic power in Igboland (Uchendu & Okonkwo, 2021, 247). Through Campt's viewing, *Sitting on a Man's Head* provides a link to historically significant actions, it encourages visitors to embody difficult and liminal feelings, but does not provide limits of specificity or define how and if a visitor should participate in the process of remembering.

The second installation that Campt discusses is Simone Leigh's show "Loophole of Retreat " installed April 19- August 4, 2019, at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum that includes sound installations, sculpture, and film (p. 145-158). This showing was partly based on the 1861 writings of Harriet Jacobs and her struggles to escape enslavement, specifically Jacob's experience of seven-years hiding in an attic crawl space (p. 146). Campt writes extensively about the sound installation of Leigh's show, *Loophole of Retreat I*. This sound installation by Simone Leigh and Moor Mother is intended to remember what it might have sounded like during the three days that Debbie Sims Africa and her community hid the birth of her child while she was incarcerated in 1978 (p. 149-150). It is the speculation of the noise it would take to conceal a baby from prison authorities in a confined and heavily surveilled space and the process of experience of that sound in a space with overwhelming visuals of captivity and freedom that like the previous installation create a haptic and multisensory historical experience. Beyond empathy, the affective experience of Simone Leigh's installation is a participatory history that is not concerned with comfortable history but an approach to archiving a particular collection of complex feelings and labor.

Thinking with Campt to other haptic visual projects that do the work of an archive, Kajri Jain's (2021) essay, "Go Away Closer: Photography, Intermediality, Unevenness," discusses photographer Dayanita Singh's particular oeuvre. Although Jain's argument is centered on Singh's ability to trouble the relationship between capitalism and photographic practices, Jain also acknowledges Singh's reorientation of archival practices (p. 104 - 105). Jain describes Singh's *Museum Bhavan*:

> The Museum Bhavan book follows from the Museum Bhavan show (Hayward Gallery, 2013), comprising a set of nine self-contained mobile museums, each a wooden structure containing an archive of images with frames to exhibit the images on their surfaces as well as in smaller modular structures, enabling multiple constantly changing displays. (p. 105)

This description of Singh's work as a collection of mobile museums that visitors can move, look through, and participate in contains moments and photographs from not only Singh's oeuvre but her life as well. The "Museum Bhavan Walkthrough" describes this merging of memories within *The Museum of Little Ladies* that also has photographs of Singh taken by her mother at moments that the artist wanted to archive and merge with her own work (Spontaneous Books, 2016). Jain

(2021) identifies that Singh's artwork foregrounds the personal, the memorial, the domestic and with that is also an archive of social relations (p. 112-113). Dayanita Singh creates movable museums that seek to reclaim archival space for everyday objects and realities that would otherwise not be remembered because of their relationship to the domestic sphere as opposed to the political sphere of institutional archives.

Another example of speculative and affective approaches to archives is introduced in Nicole Erin Morse's *Selfie Aesthetics: Seeing Trans Feminist Futures in Self-Representational Art* (2022). Morse describes the speculative approach the multi-media artist Vivek Shraya applies to her own family archives, writing, "Undoing the ties that bind the present to the past and constrain the future, the trans artist Vivek Shraya uses self-portraiture to open her family's diasporic South Asian history to other narratives, other trajectories, and even other family members" (p. 123-124). Morse continues to describe Shraya's project *Trisha* as an intervention in her family's history, a bending of time, and a production of a speculative archive (p. 124). Shraya does this by recreating photographs of her mother and placing them side by side in a folding archive of past and present. For Morse, the significance of this project is in the self-knowledge developed by Shraya by creating this project and the participation in the creation of self through a haptic understanding of the past (p. 130-131). As method, Shraya's project of creating a speculative archive through the recreation of an image in conversation with the original image enhances the affective aesthetics of the archive, and ultimately addresses what is absent in the past from the present. Shraya (2016) writes in one sentence that merges past and present within herself and within the project, "You used to say that if you had a girl, you would have named her Trisha." This sentence summarizes the archive and the archivist's relationship to it.

Hapticity is fundamentally about connecting the self to an object. Thinking with Lauren Berlant, the goal of this discussion was to loosen the archive by thinking through the hapticity of video game and multimedia art projects that engage with history and archives. By looking at parallels between institutional and cultural archives and video games, I identified how video games are and can be fantastical and historical archives. I also addressed some of the surfacing limitations and complexities of hapticity in historical video games and their archival nature. Ultimately, this discussion introduces the superficial stuff and primary entertainment purpose of video games archives–even though video games are haptic by design–and foregrounds how

hapticity in visual images and multimedia art engages in history with greater nuance forming a cultural archive that is both affective and speculative.

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The Cultural Aspects of Developing Critical Thinking in an ELT Classroom

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Abstract: The article covers the problem of the cultural aspect in the process of developing critical thinking within the framework of the intercultural competence an ELT classroom. Learning a foreign language requires familiarity and acceptance of the culture of the language studied. To build a clear paradigm for understanding culture, it is necessary to provide cultural awareness along with a higher level of critical thinking, critical rethinking of the cultural context and cultural experience. Cultural awareness is regarded as the awareness of the differences between personalities, as subjects of a certain culture or various cultures, and representatives of other macro- and microcultures with different views, cultural practices, and values. The article establishes the relationship between the culturological aspect of the development of a linguistic and cultural personality and directly critical thinking, which acts as the main object of the analysis. Enhancing critical thinking prevents cultural disputes and misunderstandings and aids in the effective implementation of intercultural communication. The article concludes that enhancing critical thinking is integral to the acculturation process.

Learning a foreign language takes familiarity and acceptance of the culture of the language studied. A natural question arises before teachers about how it is possible to integrate into the target culture in their lessons, excluding natural familiarization with the main systems of the target language, as well as with some conventional and stereotyped elements of the national cultural component of the representatives of the object language.

For the successful implementation of the given task, it is necessary to build a clear paradigm for understanding culture in a specific and broadest sense for oneself, as well as for students' understanding. Such clarity in the paradigmatic plan will provide the necessary level of cultural awareness, intercultural competence along with a higher level of critical thinking, critical rethinking of the cultural context and cultural experience.

First, let's define the concepts of "cultural awareness" and "intercultural competence". Speaking of cultural awareness, it is worth referring to the works of Russian culturologist I. G. Belyakova, who defines the term in question primarily as a fundamental component of intercultural competence, which includes the following important features: "awareness of one's own culture" along with "awareness of another or different culture" (Belyakova, p.194). In the context of this study, it seems appropriate to distinguish between "cultural recognition" and "cultural awareness", since the first term can be attributed to the sensory or neurolinguistic level of perception, while awareness rather belongs to the cognitive level.

Thus, speaking of "cultural awareness", we will mean the awareness of the differences between ourselves, as a subject of a certain culture or many cultures, and representatives of other macro- and microcultures with different views, cultural practices, and values.

Let us turn to the concept of the British specialist M. Bayram, who combines the concept of communicative competence with the ability to use the language in the process of diverse cultural interaction, that is, with intercultural communication. In the theory of M. Bayram, the linguistic personality acts as a kind of intermediary that crosses cultural boundaries and can interact with representatives of a diverse multicultural identity (Byram, p. 5). From the above statements we can conclude that a respectful, tolerant attitude towards a different culture, as well as the awareness of oneself and others as separate cultural personalities, is the fundamental principle of intercultural competence and intercultural communication.

It seems possible to describe in more detail the essence of the considered theoretical model of successful intercultural communication. Such a model has the possibility of existence in the presence of the following necessary abilities or skills:

• interaction between different macro- and micro-cultures.

• mediation of cultures, otherwise interpreting one culture in terms of another or others (cultural awareness).

• critical and analytical understanding of one's own culture and the culture of another (cultural recognition).

• awareness of one's picture of the world and the fact that individual thinking is culturally determined.

The above perspective of considering intercultural competence allows us to establish the relationship between the culturological aspect of the development of a linguistic and cultural personality and directly critical thinking.

At this stage, it is advisable to introduce the concept of critical thinking, which acts as the principal object of the analysis. There is a wide variety of definitions of critical thinking, but a single universal one still does not exist. The term 'critical thinking' has been explored by several researchers, including Bloom B., John Hughes, Stella Cottrell, Anderson, L.W., and Krathwohl, D.R. These researchers have provided valuable insights into the subject, based on their extensive experience in the field. Therefore, drawing upon their expertise, it is possible to derive the following working definition of critical thinking.

Critical thinking within this cultural context is a special mental and cognitive skill aimed at qualitatively transforming the human mind in terms of flexibility, accuracy, consistency, impartiality, reflectivity, and aimed at forming a unique multidimensional polyphonic view of the objective reality. Polyphonic here will directly mean diverse, multimodal, multicultural. Borrowing the term "polyphony" from M. M. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, an attempt is made to emphasize the multilateral and multidimensional nature of intercultural communication, in which "individual voices and their worlds are opposed as indivisible" (Bakhtin, p. 163).

The studies of M. M. Bakhtin perfectly reflect all the specifics of the correlation of critical and intercultural worldview. Instead of emphasizing the identification of differences, limitations in cultural products, practices, values, traditions of each cultural personality, the possibility of coexistence in the context of macro- and microculture, the possibility of polyphonic mutual renewal and replenishment within the limits of the objective reality is considered, as well as in the collective cultural consciousness, in the sphere of intellect and thinking.

Since critical thinking is essentially an acquired ability, a skill, it is possible to propose a paradigm of collocations with the term "critical thinking" that are appropriate for use in the context

of further research and practical implementation of the main methods and principles for the development of critical thinking:

- **have** critical thinking
- **learn** or acquire critical thinking
- **develop** critical thinking
- **use** critical thinking
- **require** critical thinking
- **lack** critical thinking

Provided that the acquisition, development, and improvement of critical thinking is a permanent process, it seems possible to single out certain functional stages of this cognitive concept. It is advisable to synthesize the stages of the evolution of critical thinking with the basic concepts of B. Bloom's taxonomy, in which LOTS (lower order thinking skills) and HOTS (higher order thinking skills) can be distinguished. The following figure clearly depicts the correlation and relationship of the above stages with the categories of B. Bloom's taxonomy:

CREATE - ARTISTRY STAGE

EVALUATE - PROFICIENCY STAGE

H
O
T
S

ANALYZE - EXPERTISE STAGE

APPLY - ACCOMPLISHMENT STAGE

UNDERSTAND - EXPERIENCE STAGE

REMEMBER - THE GIFT STAGE
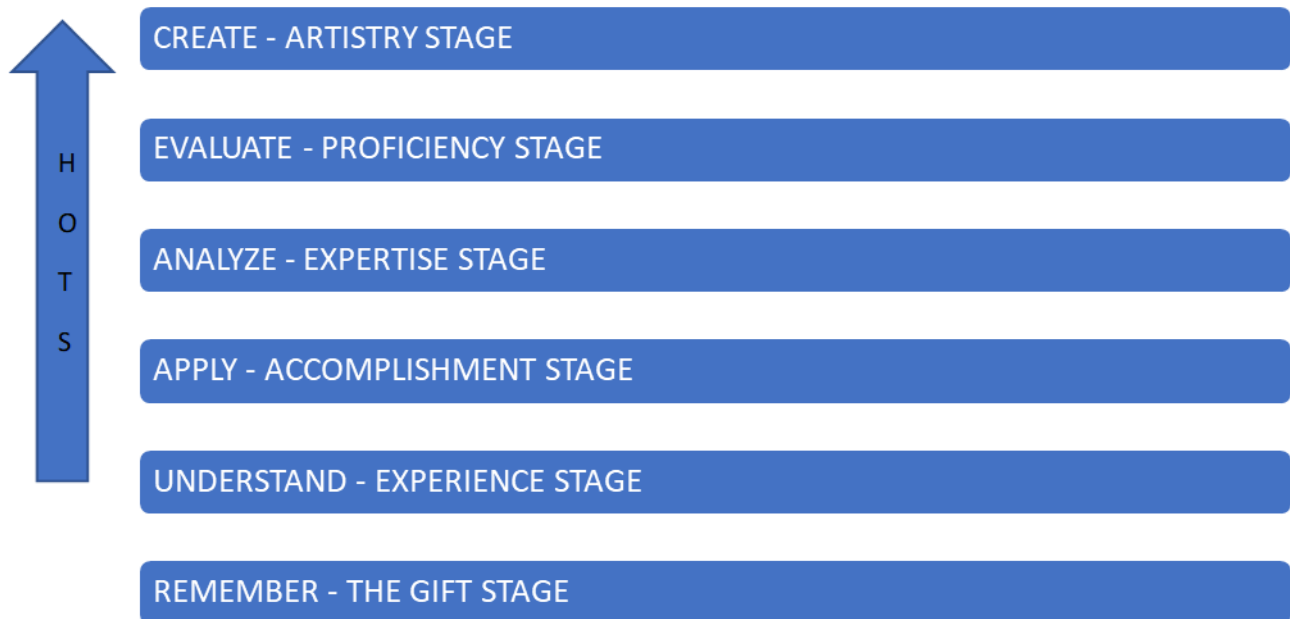
Picture 1. Stages of the evolution of critical thinking in accordance with the levels of B. Bloom's taxonomy

For the formation and transformation of traditional thinking into critical thinking, the human mind must be able to go through all the above stages to be able to interact with objective reality, give and receive appropriate feedback from the surrounding world.

At the same time, it is necessary to synthesize the desired results for changing critical thinking with the cultural aspects of cognitive and practical experience, both individual and collective. In this context, the initial stage of cultural awareness is connected to the 'level of memorization.' This means that cultural awareness begins with the basic acquisition and memorization of cultural facts, such as historical events, cultural practices, and traditions. It forms the foundation upon which higher levels of cultural understanding and awareness can be built. As individuals progress through the stages of critical thinking, they can leverage their knowledge and understanding of cultural aspects to engage with the surrounding world in a more meaningful and contextually appropriate manner. In other words, cultural awareness enhances critical thinking by providing a broader perspective and facilitating the interpretation and evaluation of information within a cultural context.

It is important to notice, that work on practical aspects of increasing cultural awareness should begin with the level of memorization and understanding where each focus group participant is considered a "cultural being".

At this point, it's crucial to define "microculture." According to the definition provided by James Neuliep, it can be regarded as an identifiable group of individuals who share a common history, linguistic and nonverbal symbol system, and set of values, beliefs, and behaviors, but who systematically deviate from the larger, frequently dominant cultural background (Neuliep, p. 16).

It seems interesting to consider some aspects of this definition. An extremely important point is precisely the fact of the possibility of identifying a microculture according to certain characteristics. It can be assumed that if, objectively, by external signs, we cannot recognize representatives of a culture precisely as a group, perhaps the signs of microculture are not sufficiently formed. It also follows from the above definition that members of a single community share common values, beliefs, and behavior patterns.

The next criterion that needs to be singled out for the representatives of a single microculture is the presence of a common history. The presence of a common information system is also a prerequisite for the existence of such a community. First, we are talking about the verbal system (special terminology, slang, or jargon), and we also include extralinguistic means or symbols here. Examples include such microcultures as a classroom, a work team, a group of friends, an interest group (hobby) and others.

As a practical implementation, students are invited to realize various aspects of themselves as a cultural being - an object and a subject of culture. This includes presenting graphically possible microcultures, of which they are representatives. An example of such a graphical representation can be seen in Picture 2, which showcases separate cultural personalities in the context of microcultures:
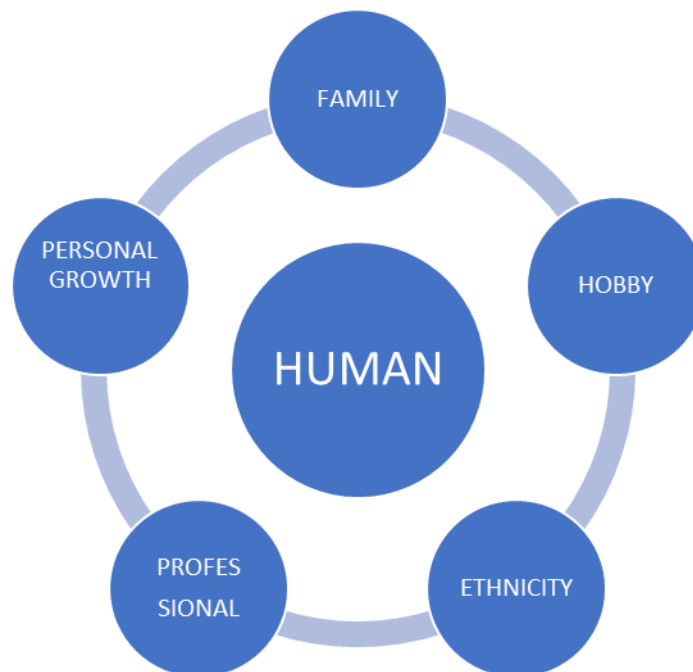
Picture 2. Separate cultural personality in the context of microcultures

It should be noted that the figure presented is just one of many options. Each person daily becomes part of a variety of microcultures, so identical options for the graphic expression of individual cultural characteristics are unlikely to exist.

The practical tasks mentioned aim to increase cultural awareness and align with the stages of critical thinking development as described in the article. Let's explore how each task corresponds to a certain stage.

In the 'gift' stage, the emphasis is on natural abilities and lower order thinking skills, particularly at the level of remembering. Tasks such as identifying cultural personality may fit into this stage, as they involve recognizing and recalling one's cultural characteristics.

The 'experience' stage focuses on learning, comprehending, and sharing previously acquired knowledge. Tasks like creating microcultures can be associated with this stage, as they require understanding and applying what one has learned about different cultural aspects.

Moving to the 'accomplishment' stage signifies the transition to a higher order critical thinking level of applying previously learned knowledge to practice. This stage may correspond to tasks that involve applying cultural understanding to real-world situations, such as analyzing information related to microcultures.

The 'expertise' stage represents a crucial point where the mind reaches a level of analyzing the data it receives from the world. Tasks related to analyzing information, exploring cultural dynamics, and critically evaluating cultural aspects align with this stage.

The 'proficiency' stage indicates an advanced level of critical development and emphasizes the ability to evaluate. Tasks that involve evaluating cultural practices, norms, and behaviors could correspond to this stage.

The 'artistry' stage represents the highest complex stage where individuals are competent enough to generate new ideas and create new products. Tasks that encourage students to think creatively, propose innovative cultural concepts, or contribute to the development of new cultural practices may be relevant to this stage.

By engaging in these practical tasks, students can progress through the stages of critical thinking development, gradually enhancing their cultural awareness, and involving higher order

thinking skills. These tasks provide opportunities for students to demonstrate different levels of critical thinking and cultural understanding.

Considering the aforementioned factors, it is reasonable to assert that enhancing cultural awareness has a direct and significant impact on the development and improvement of students' critical thinking skills. The increase in critical thinking abilities is closely intertwined with the process of acculturation, which helps prevent cultural conflicts and misunderstandings, while fostering successful intercultural communication.

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Discontinuity as Prosody: Meaning and Form of Jump Cuts on YouTube

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Abstract

In this paper, I discuss the meaning and form of jump cuts, i.e., instances of visual discontinuity within a single video shot, in YouTube videos. I report the findings of a small-scale qualitative study, in which I sought (i) to identify the various semantic/pragmatic functions of the jump cut in YouTube videos, drawing comparisons with segmental, suprasegmental, and/or gestural realizations of similar meanings; and (ii) to analyze prosodic integration of sub-ip jump cuts with the speech stream, comparing it to other types of similar cross-channel integration. I concluded that integration of jump cuts with the speech stream draws on existing patterns of integration of segmental, suprasegmental, and gestural material into a coherent multi-channel signal at the level of both meaning and form—which allows jump cuts (and editing more broadly) to become a synergistic part of this multi-channel signal in YouTube videos.

Introduction

A jump cut (JC) in video editing is when a single shot is split into two parts, with some sort of visual discontinuity introduced between them. For instance, objects can change position within the frame, and/or the framing of the shot itself can change. This creates an abrupt, even jarring effect, which can be used intentionally to convey a range of meanings. One medium where JCs are used especially extensively is YouTube, which is a particularly interesting case from a linguistic perspective, as editing in YouTube videos integrates tightly with speech, both at the level of meaning and at the level of form, especially prosody. Looking at this integration can thus be a valuable contribution to the "Super Linguistics" research program, which seeks to apply the toolkit and the mindset of a linguist beyond language proper, with one of the ultimate goals being to achieve a better understanding of the universals of human cognition (see, e.g., Patel-Grosz et al. 2023).

Olson (2017) claims that the JC "has become ingrained in the basic visual language of [YouTube]" and attributes this to both practical and semantic considerations. From the practical

perspective, intentional JCs can be used to conceal disfluencies or transitions between different takes: while some level of discontinuity is inevitable in these cases, a clearly intentional JC, with an obvious discontinuity, will appear less jarring than a seemingly unintentional one, with a less ostensible discontinuity, which would just look like an editing error. Besides, most YouTubers are limited in their inventory of editing techniques for technical reasons (for instance, they often use a static single camera set-up), so JCs are one of the few tools available to them to make their videos appear more dynamic.

Aside from these practical considerations, Olson credits the popularity of the JC on YouTube to its "high degree of semiotic flexibility". However, he himself only discusses a few of the JC's functions, namely, "break[ing] up long, complex ideas into smaller, more manageable bites" and marking parenthetical statements and/or jokes, as in 0. Besides, in all examples he uses, including 0, JCs occur at clause boundaries in the speech stream and, thus, at intonational phrase (IP) or at least intermediate phrase (ip) boundaries in ToBI (Beckman & Ayers 1997) terms.

This can serve to properly differentiate a joke from a serious statement by moving either very far

from or very close to the camera or, <JC-side> [IP going back to

my own example] <JC-back>, it can create an aside by literally

moving aside. (Olson 2017; 'aside')

In this paper, I report the findings of a small-scale qualitative study of the JC in YouTube videos, seeking to provide a more detailed (albeit still not fully comprehensive) description of its meaning and form. In this study, I sampled and annotated 160 JC tokens (section 0). I used this data set (i) to identify the major semantic/pragmatic functions of the JC, drawing comparisons with segmental, suprasegmental, and/or gestural realizations of similar meanings (section 0); and (ii) to analyze prosodic integration of sub-ip JCs with the speech stream, comparing it to other types of similar cross-channel integration (section 0). I concluded that there are remarkable similarities between JCs and (near-)linguistic material at the level of both meaning and form, and that editing in YouTube videos can thus synergistically add to the speech stream.

Methodology

I selected 12 YouTube videos from 2018–2023 in 3 different genres (video essay; commentary; edutainment), with 2 channels per genre and 2 videos per channel. I sampled 10–20 tokens of what I judged to be intentional JCs or sequences of connected JCs from each video. A JC sequence can be a pair of JCs separating out a piece of the audiovisual signal (for instance, a parenthetical; see subsection 0), a sequence of JCs separating list items (see subsection 0), or an instance of what I call a "ramp-up sequence" (see subsection 0). The total number of tokens was 160. I transcribed and annotated these tokens, categorizing them with respect to the function and form of the JC/JC sequence, using an inventory of tags that I developed and adjusted in the process of analyzing the data set. The list of source videos is provided at the end of this paper, and video clips of examples from this paper, alongside the spreadsheet with the transcribed and annotated tokens can be found at https://tinyurl.com/jc-ex-nyi.

I treated any form of abrupt visual discontinuity within a shot as a JC, and I used my own intuitions to judge if it was introduced intentionally, based primarily on how ostensible the discontinuity is. Of course, it is entirely possible that in some cases, a given JC was introduced primarily for practical reasons, with the discontinuity exaggerated to appear intentional. That said, at least in my data set, there didn't seem to be many—if any—cases of a clearly intentional JC that wouldn't be able to serve some identifiable function, so it would seem that even when creators use JCs for practical reasons, they typically do so at places where a JC would seem natural and meaningful.

I would also like to note that the vast majority of JC instances in my data set are abrupt frame shifts, not teleporting JCs like in 0. This makes sense from a practical standpoint, because JCs like in 0, or JCs where the background location changes (which are also discussed in Olson 2017), need to be planned during the filming process. Based on my data set and personal long-term experience of consuming YouTube content, as well as knowledge about how most creators film their videos (at least within the three genres I looked at), the vast majority of JCs in YouTube videos are actually introduced during the editing process. One interesting consequence of this is that the vast majority of JC instances in my data set are essentially abrupt zoom-ins or zoom-outs, which raises the question of how such JCs compare to regular, gradual zoom-ins/zoom-outs in terms of meaning and form—a question that I, however, will not address in this paper.

Finally, a note on the notation conventions adopted in this paper. In the examples I discuss, I provide a transcription of the example, followed by the number of the source video and the name of the clip from the accompanying folder in parentheses. I transcribe JC instances as <JC>, with an additional optional suffix indicating if it's an ostensibly zooming-in JC (<JC-in>), an ostensibly zooming-out JC (<JC-out>), or a JC where the subject ostensibly shifts to the side (<JC-side> and, if applicable, <JC-back>). Some instances were not easy to categorize in these terms, so I left them as just <JC>. Also, when relevant, I indicate cuts from or to a picture or a video clip insert (e.g., <cut-to-clip>); such inserts can be independent of JCs, but they can also be used instead of an opening or closing JC in an enclosing JC pair. Finally, when relevant, I transcribe gestures and other demonstrations in all caps.

Functions of the jump cut

In this section, I discuss what I found to be the most prominent semantic/pragmatic functions of the JC based on my data set. These functions are not mutually exclusive, and some of them are related to one another; so a single JC instance can perform multiple functions. Note also that this is not a fully exhaustive list, and some cases remain hard to classify, but the functions listed in this section cover the vast majority of JC instances in my data set.

Marking transition between discourse units

The broadest function of the JC is to mark transition between two discourse units of various sizes or to separate a single discourse unit from the rest of the discourse by enclosing it into a pair of JCs. Oftentimes, this function applies alongside the more specific functions discussed below, but sometimes, this seems to be the only function a given JC instance is performing.[3] For instance, a JC can mark a narrative transition:

And I was… I was too gay to laugh. <JC> A few minutes later, t.A.T.u. performed… ((1b-ii), 'later')

Marking supplements

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[3] Of course, in the case of large discourse units, JCs are also typically introduced due to practical considerations, because such large discourse units are often recorded with breaks in between.

A special case of JCs separating out discourse units are JCs marking supplements, i.e., parentheticals (as noted in Olson 2017), appositives, and sentence-level adverbials. In this use, they function similarly to (and co-occur with) the so-called "comma intonation", to use the term from Potts 2005. For instance, in 0, a pair of enclosing JCs separates out a parenthetical; in 0, the JCs separate out an appositive;[4] in 0, the JC pair separates out a sentence-level *however*, which is also an instance of contrast-marking JCs (see subsection 3.7).

A few examples are hermit crabs, pubic lice <JC-in>—the last kind of crab you ever wanna come across—<JC-out> and horseshoe crabs. ((3b-i), 'lice')

And as a bonus, it doesn't produce toxic waste, <JC-in> that may be killing you and everything around you. <JC-out> But see, when we say "ceramic"… ((3a-i), 'waste')

And for some, it may have been a moment of queer sexual awakening. <JC-in> However, <JC-out> a year before the performance, Britney had ended her long-term relationship with Justin Timberlake. ((1b-ii), 'however')

Marking list items

Another case of JCs functioning similarly to and in synergy with phrasal spoken prosody is JC sequences used to separate list items, as illustrated in 0. Note, however, that in this specific case, the first JC comes before the first list item (see also subsection 0), while "list intonation" in spoken prosody is a right edge phenomenon that occurs between two list items.

It's generally just coloration that an animal has to tell the world that they are <JC-in> toxic, <JC> disgusting, <JC-in> or just won't provide any benefit should one choose to indulge. ((3b-ii), 'toxic')

Marking irony

As noted in Olson 2017, JCs can mark irony. They can do so at both clausal and sub-clausal level:

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[4] Here, the closing JC also serves as a separator between this discourse unit and the next one. In speech, sentence-medial supplements are enclosed by the "comma intonation" on both sides, while sentence-final supplements end with whatever the appropriate utterance-final boundary contour is in this case. Somewhat similarly, when a pair of JCs surrounds a piece of audiovisual content utterance-medially, the video will normally cut back to the initial framing and subject position after the closing JC. But when JCs separate out an utterance-final piece of content, the closing JC will typically cut to a new framing and/or subject position. In the examples discussed in this paper, I normally don't include the closing JC for such utterance-final cases. However, I included it in 0, to highlight the contrast with 0.

But they are insights that today's <JC-in> youths <JC-out> apparently haven't heard before. I

  guess because <JC-in> not enough of them are alcoholics. ((1a-i); 'youths')

Such JCs are similar to (and often co-occur with) irony-signaling pauses around the target material and changes in voice quality, tempo, etc. over the target material. Note that irony-marking JCs are particularly likely to shift the framing to a much closer/further one (as also noted in Olson 2017)— more drastically so than some of the more "neutral" zooming-in or zooming-out JCs—although more subtle irony-marking JCs are also quite common. It seems that the more drastic vs. subtle frame shifts are akin, respectively, to the more exaggerated vs. subtle prosodic irony marking. This is so in 0, where *youths* is produced with a more ostensibly ironic, even sarcastic prosody, and accordingly, the JC-enclosed frame shift is much more drastic, while *not enough of them are alcoholics* is delivered in a more deadpan fashion, and the frame shift is much less drastic. It is also possible that sub-clausal irony marking might tend to be more ostensible across the board.

Marking demonstrations

JCs can mark demonstrations, in the broadest understanding of this notion from Davidson 2015. This includes demonstrations introduced by overt attitude predicates or items like *like*; role shifts that are only marked prosodically and/or visually; partial quotations (in which case the JC may co-occur with gestural and/or prosodic air-quotes); demonstrations that co-occur and interact with spoken material ("co-speech"); compositionally integrated demonstrations that have their own time slot ("pro-speech"); demonstrations that are standalone discourse units (e.g., commenting on the preceding utterance, i.e., "post-speech"), etc. To give just a few examples: in 0, the demonstration enclosed in JCs is an ironic partial quotation with an iconic gestural and prosodic component; in 0, the JC separates out a compositionally integrated cringing facial expression that serves as a predicate roughly meaning 'such that it warrants the following reaction: DEMONSTRATION' (see Esipova 2022 for more examples of such reaction-based compositional integration of demonstrations); in 0, the JC separates out a "post-speech" snicker (cf. utterance-final face emoji, as discussed, e.g., in Grosz et al.).

And I realize that to most people, complaining about <JC-in> [being cancelled WAAH]$^{\text{WEEP-}}$

  $^{\text{GESTURE+VOICE}}$ <JC-out>, it sounds incredibly whiny and self-absorbed. ((1a-ii), 'cancelled')

There was a time, not so long ago, when the UK's trans representation in the media was <JC-in>

  CRINGE-FACE. ((1b-i), 'cringe')

So it's a good thing my parents spent all that money. <JC-in> SNICKER+COLOR-CHANGE.
    ((2b-i), 'money')

Marking contrast

JCs can mark contrast. For instance, they can be used to introduce adversative clauses, either enclosing the adversative connective, as we have already seen in 0, or simply separating the adversative clause itself from the preceding (and possibly following) material, as in 0.

And I think, maybe, in this instance, what's happening is that Kerrigan knew how to write a
    Northern family, when they're all cis, <JC-in> but he doesn't know trans people. ((1b-i), 'cis')

JCs can also mark contrast in the absence of adversative connectives (note also the speaker's contrast-marking gestures that interact with the on-screen text):

But see, when we say "ceramic", and when <JC-in> they say "ceramic", we're not actually talking
    about the same thing. ((3a-i), 'ceramic')

Marking intensification

JCs can be used to mark degree intensification, often alongside prosodic and/or gestural degree intensification (see, e.g., Esipova2019a,b; 2022), as in 0. Note also the connection to demonstration-marking JCs here, as expressive degree intensification (via spoken expressives, prosody, and facial expressions) can be analyzed in a demonstration-based way (Esipova 2022).

Now, this craze has gone <JC-in> so far beyond just the celebrity class. ((3a-ii), 'beyond')

Marking emphasis

The notion of emphasis is somewhat nebulous and presumably plays a role in many other functions of the JC. That said, this is the best characterization I have for now for examples like 0.

...because I am <JC-in> not a gamer. ((2a-ii), 'gamer')

"Ramp-up sequences"

One can also have a sequence of zooming-in or zooming-out JCs—which can be more dramatic than a regular, gradual zoom-in/zoom-out—for instance, to convey ramping up emotions:

Celebrities are under attack. <JC-in> This is the new Salem. <JC-in> This is Orwell's nightmare. ((1a-ii), 'attack')

Marking disfluencies

While, as noted above, JCs can be used to mask disfluencies when editing, a fairly common meta use of a JC is to instead draw attention to a disfluency, such as struggling with pronouncing a word, as a self-deprecating joke, for instance:

In the early days, PTFE was manufactured by using <JC-in> perfluoro-octa-noic acid, PFOA. ((3a-i), 'pfoa')

Expressing identity and/or individual style

While the widespread use of JCs on YouTube is undeniably due to its practicality and semantic versatility, its proliferation has now arguably led to YouTubers also using JCs because other YouTubers do. There also appear to be genre effects; for instance, JCs seem to occur much more densely in commentary videos than in video essays, likely because the commentary genre often uses more dynamic and less polished editing overall, has higher joke density, etc. Finally, the use of JCs can be part of one's personal style. For example, Lindsay Nikole uses far more JCs than the other creators on my list. Many individual JCs in her videos don't necessarily have a very specific semantic/pragmatic function, but instead align with prosodic events and/or syntactic boundaries, not unlike beat gestures, resulting in a unique, dynamic editing style that matches the choppy prosody of her delivery.

Summary

When it comes to the range of functions that JCs can perform, perhaps the closest counterpart from spoken communication would be simply a pause, as pauses emerge in all cases above, too (see, e.g., Beltrama & Hanink 2019; Esipova 2019a,b; Harris 2021). However, JCs often occur without ostensible pauses (as shown in subsection 0 below), so the two are not fully homologous.

Prosodic integration of sub-ip jump cuts

Many JCs occur at intonational phrase (IP, largest prosodic unit, typically mapping to clause boundaries in the syntactic structure) or at least intermediate phrase (ip, smaller prosodic unit within IPs) prosodic boundaries (see the ToBI guidelines in Beckman & Ayers 1997 for details): e.g., 0 and 0, respectively. However, there are plenty of cases of sub-ip JCs. There are two major strategies of integrating such sub-ip JCs with the speech stream: (i) co-occurring with and supporting acoustic prosodic discontinuity; and (ii) anchoring to a pitch accent, similarly to beat gestures. I elaborate on both strategies below, and I also briefly discuss how JCs can use either strategy when integrating with expressive beat sequences.

Aligning with prosodic discontinuity

Sub-ip JCs can align with prosodic discontinuity within an ip, in particular, pauses, with lengthening of the preceding segmental material, a preceding intake of breath, etc. (essentially, prosodic boundaries that would be labeled with break index 2 in ToBI). JCs thus create a synergistic visual discontinuity matching the acoustic discontinuity. For instance, in 0, the JC aligns with a pause and is preceded by ostensible segment lengthening on *with*:

((2b-ii), 'horror')
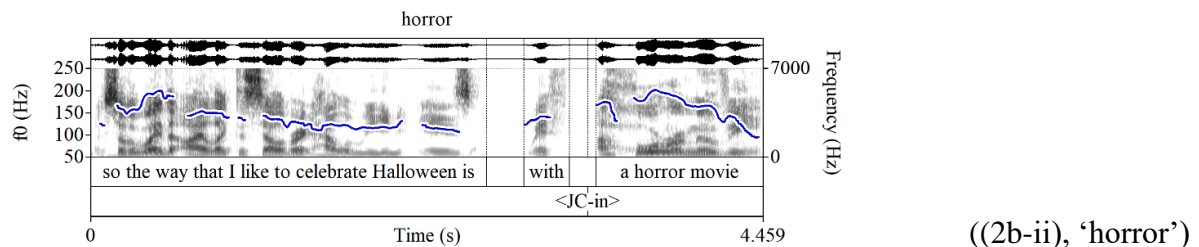
Note that such prosodic discontinuity is typically necessary to integrate pro-speech demonstrations with speech (see Esipova 2019a; Harris 2021), so you often see it in examples like 0 or 0.

Anchoring to a pitch accent

Sub-ip JCs can also anchor to a pitch accent, and when they do, they will typically slightly precede one, as in 0. This is reminiscent of prosodic integration of beat gestures, which also often anchor to pitch accents in a similar way (see, e.g., Loehr 2004 and references therein); note that 0 does contain a beat gesture anchoring to the pitch accent on *favorite*, as well.
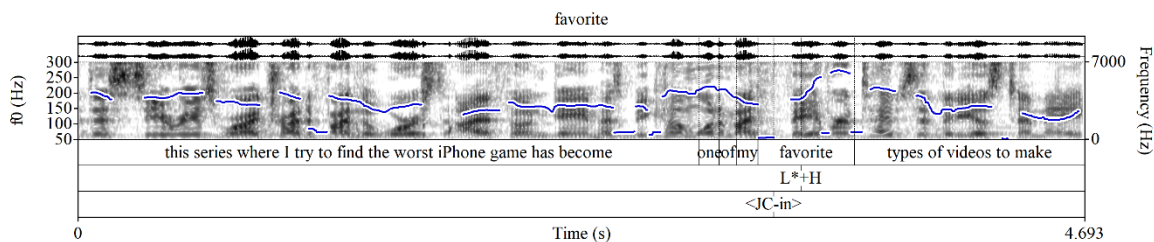
((2a-ii), 'favorite')

Integration with expressive beat sequences

Ramp-up JC sequences (discussed in subsection 0) can co-occur with what Esipova (2022) calls "expressive beats" (in prosody, gesture, and written text), creating a choppy visual rhythm to match the rhythm created by the spoken prosody (and sometimes gesture). When JCs integrate with such expressive beat sequences, they can use either of the strategies above. I.e., they can align with the pauses between the beat units (similarly, to how punctuation marks or emoji occur between units in written expressive beat sequences), as illustrated in 0. Or they can anchor to the pitch accents of the beat units (similarly to gestures), as illustrated in (20).
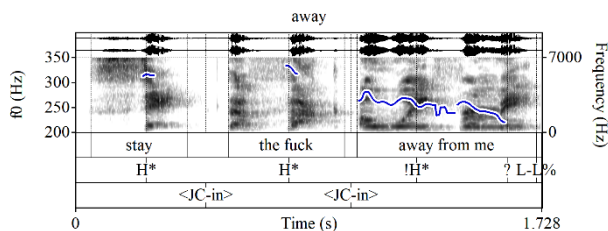
((3b-ii), 'away')
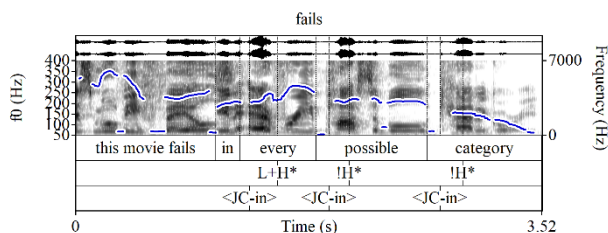
((2a-i), 'fails')

Conclusion

As YouTubers are often more limited in their technical resources than conventional filmmakers, while at the same time less constrained by the pressure to follow the traditional rules of editing, they have been extensively using the jump cut as a replacement for a lot of conventional editing

techniques. Despite my study being very modest in scale, it does warrant a conclusion that by now, the jump cut has evolved into one of the fundamental elements of visual prosody on YouTube, helping create a visual prosodic structure that integrates with the co-occurring speech stream, both at the level of meaning and at the level of prosody. While this integration is diverse and complex, it is not random: as the many examples discussed in this paper show, it draws on existing patterns of integration of segmental, suprasegmental, and gestural material into a coherent multi-channel signal. This allows JCs (and other editing techniques) to become a synergistic part of this signal in YouTube videos. Having different realizations of the same meaning via different channels can create a strong cumulative effect in spoken communication, especially in the case of highly iconic depictions, whose aim is to create a direct sensory experience for the addressee (see, e.g., Dingemanse 2015; Clark 2016 on depiction). Adding editing events that match the different aspects of the spoken-gestural signal further enhances this sensory experience. I, thus, hope that this paper can serve as an inspiration for linguists to explore more cases of such speech-gesture-editing integration in the future.

Source videos

(1) Video essays

    a. 'ContraPoints' YouTube channel:

        i. 'Jordan Peterson | ContraPoints' (2018); https://youtu.be/4LqZdkkBDas

        ii. 'J.K. Rowling | ContraPoints' (2020); https://youtu.be/7gDKbTl2us

    b. 'verilybitchie' YouTube channel:

        i. 'Good LGBT Representation is Boring (and why that's a problem)' (2021); https://youtu.be/cR3b2Gblq0

        ii. ''00s Bisexual Chic' (2022); https://youtu.be/hqdD5d3iRoU

(2) Commentary

    a. 'Danny Gonzalez' YouTube channel:

        i. 'An Absolutely Terrifying Low Budget RomCom' (2022); https://youtu.be/uubMLkM5L9E

        ii. 'Trying To Find The Worst iPhone Game 3' (2023); https://youtu.be/m8LBvGX2hCQ

    b. 'Kurtis Conner' YouTube channel:

        i. 'A Deep Dive Into Disney Adults' (2021); https://youtu.be/BvNmLwOLz3w

ii. 'This Low-Budget Horror Movie is Terrifying...For All The Wrong Reasons' (2021); https://youtu.be/yvZP3YQNuRo

(3) Edutainment

a. 'Future Proof' YouTube channel:

i. 'The TRUTH about Ceramic Cookware' (2022); https://youtu.be/TeXObJa4D4k

ii. 'Why Are People OBSESSED with Diet Coke?' (2023), https://youtu.be/L3meiJwNLTQ

b. 'Lindsay Nikole' YouTube channel:

i. 'Is CRAB the final form?' (2023), https://youtu.be/pv--L0FyIu4

ii. 'Zoologist Answers: WTF is THAT?? (& Don't Touch Them!)' (2023), https://youtu.be/i6V-RBjecpI

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Voice and VP-ellipsis revisited

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1. Introduction

Though English verbal morphology is not very rich, Collins (2005) proposes that English monotransitive clauses have at least three functional heads: Voice, v, and V. According to his view, v and V introduce the external and internal arguments respectively, while Voice is the locus of the active/passive distinction. Collins' proposed functional hierarchy is shown in (1).

(1) Collins' (2005) functional hierarchy for the verbal domain
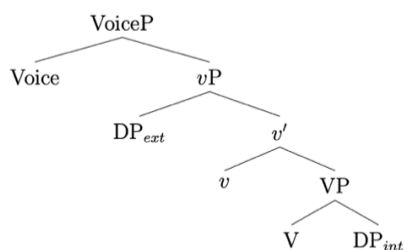
Merchant (2013) argues that ellipsis tests provide important motivation for Collins' proposed functional hierarchy. He suggests that Voice mismatches under various types of ellipsis can be used to diagnose the amount of functional structure that gets elided. Based on his tests, he argues that Voice must indeed be projected above all of the argument-introducing heads, as Collins proposes, and that VP-ellipsis necessarily deletes a constituent that is smaller than VoiceP.

In this paper, I demonstrate that different argument configurations behave differently with respect to Merchant's tests. More specifically, we will see that double object constructions and predicates that take multiple non-DP arguments block Voice mismatches under VP-ellipsis where monotransitives and prepositional dative constructions permit them. Given these new data, I conclude that "VP-ellipsis" can target different heads in different circumstances, depending on how many heads are needed to introduce all of the arguments.

2. Merchant (2013)

Merchant presents data like (2) and (3), which show two things: 1) that VP-ellipsis permits the Voice of the ellipsis site to differ from that of the antecedent clause, and 2) that sluicing does not permit such a mismatch in Voice.

(2) Voice-mismatches in VP-ellipsis (Merchant 2013, ex. (1a), (2a), p. 78-79)

a. The janitor must remove the trash whenever it is apparent that it should be

<removed>. (active antecedent, passive ellipsis)

b. The system can be used by anyone who wants to <use it>. (passive antecedent,

active ellipsis)

(3) No Voice-mismatches in sluicing (Merchant 2013, ex. (5), p. 81)

a. *Joe was murdered but we don't know who. (passive antecedent, active ellipsis)

b. *Someone murdered Joe, but we don't know who by. (active antecedent, passive

ellipsis)

Merchant, following Lobeck (1995), describes two main requirements that must be met for a phrase to be elided: the *licensing* requirement and the *identity* requirement. The licensing requirement relates to an idiosyncratic property of the head whose complement is elided, while the identity requirement refers to the properties of the elided phrase relative to its antecedent. To illustrate a simple case of VP-ellipsis, the licensing condition demands that the sister of the elided VP have some property (labelled *E*) that licenses the ellipsis, while the identity condition requires the content of the elided phrase to match that of its antecedent. In (4), both conditions are met: T has a feature *E*, which licenses ellipsis of its sister VP, and the content of the elided VP (*see Joe*) is identical to that of its antecedent.

(4) Abby didn't see Joe, but Ben did. (Merchant 2013, ex. (18), p. 86)

```
            TP
          /    \
        Ben     T′
              /    \
           T[E]    <VP>
            |      /    \
           did   see Joe
```
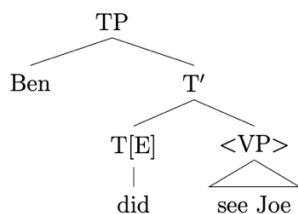
The central puzzle that Merchant addresses is why Voice-mismatches under ellipsis are variably tolerated for different kinds of ellipsis. We saw that VP-ellipsis permitted Voice-mismatches (2), but sluicing, or TP-ellipsis (3), did not. Merchant proposes that the contrast is easily explained by the identity condition on ellipsis if we adopt a slightly richer clause structure than the one in (4), namely that of Collins (2005), repeated below in (1).

(1) Collins' (2005) functional hierarchy for the verbal domain
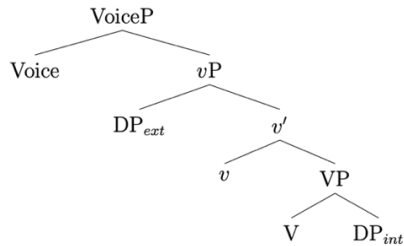
Merchant proposes with Collins that the Voice head in (1) is not an argument-introducing head. Instead, it is the locus of the active/passive distinction. In other words, all material below Voice is presumed to be identical across Voice contexts. What makes an active clause active and a passive clause passive is just the choice of Voice head, where each choice has subsequent consequences for the morphosyntactic alignment of the clause.

According to this view, ellipsis that targets a constituent below Voice will see no Voice value, but ellipsis that targets a constituent above Voice will. As a result, the identity condition on ellipsis should care about Voice in the latter but not the former case. This distinction is illustrated in (5).

(5) Voice mismatches permitted if something smaller than VoiceP is elided, but not if something larger is
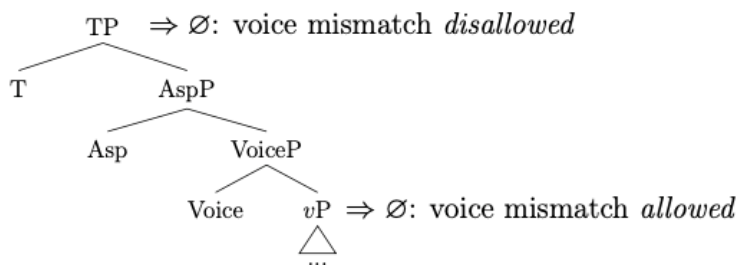
In addition, Merchant argues that VP-ellipsis always targets vP, rather than VP. In other words, "VP-ellipsis" always elides the base position of the external argument. He supports this claim with evidence from other kinds of transitivity alternations, in which mismatches are uniformly blocked across all kinds of ellipsis, including VP-ellipsis. For example, the causative/inchoative alternation (6) does not tolerate mismatches under VP-ellipsis (7). Assuming that the causative/inchoative alternation is controlled by the choice of v head, this

result suggests that the identity requirement evaluates *v* in the antecedent, even under VP-ellipsis, where it doesn't evaluate Voice.

(6) Causative/inchoative alternation

    a. Bill melted/broke the copper vase.

    b. The copper vase melted/broke.

(7) No transitivity alternations under VP-ellipsis

    a. *Bill melted the copper vase, and the magnesium vase did, too. (Sag 1976:160, (2.3.48))

    b. *Maria still tried to break the vase even though it wouldn't. (Houser, Mikkelsen, and Toosarvandani 2007:188)

  In sum, Merchant argues that the availability of Voice-mismatches in ellipsis is a good diagnostic of the size of the elided constituent. Whenever Voice-mismatches are tolerated, we know that the elided portion is a constituent smaller than Voice; whenever Voice-mismatches are disallowed, we know that the elided portion is at least as large as Voice. Moreover, similar transitivity alternations indicate that VP-ellipsis always targets a constituent at least as large as *v*P.[5] As an aside, this approach also requires us to assume (uncontroversially) that the pronounced position of the verb in English is within *v*P, or else it would not be deleted under VP-ellipsis. I will suppose that the verb is usually pronounced in *v*.

3. VP-ellipsis with other kinds of VPs

  It is important to note that Merchant's examples of Voice-mismatches under VP-ellipsis, while extensive, are fairly limited in form. Almost all of his (~20) examples are of monotransitive VPs. There are three possible exceptions to this generalization, where the extra phrase in the elided portion of each is arguably an adjunct.

(8) Voice mismatches in VP-ellipsis with an extra VP-internal phrase (Merchant 2013, ex. (1f,g,h), p. 79)

    a. Actually, I have implemented it [= a computer system] with a manager, but it doesn't have to be <implemented <u>with a manager</u>>.

    b. Steve asked me to send the set by courier through my company insured, and it was <sent by courier <u>through my company insured</u>>.

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[5] See Tanaka (2011) for motivation for this overall approach, with arguments that Voice mismatches under VP-ellipsis require a syntactic rather than a semantic explanation.

c.   "Nevertheless, I shouldn't have brought you into this."

It seems I already am <brought <u>into this</u>>, thought the piano tuner, but he was

silent.

If we try to replicate Voice mismatches under VP-ellipsis with a wider range of argument

configurations, the results are more variable. Double object constructions (9) and examples with

multiple non-DP internal arguments (10) (e.g. PP+TP) do not tolerate Voice mismatches under

VP-ellipsis. Prepositional dative constructions (11), by contrast, do appear to tolerate Voice

mismatches under VP-ellipsis, like monotransitives.[6]

(9) No Voice mismatches in VP-ellipsis of double object constructions

a.   ??/*The janitor must give the animals food whenever it is apparent that they

should be <given food>.

b.   ??/*The system can be given my personal information by anyone who wants to

<give the system my personal information>.

(10) No Voice mismatches in VP-ellipsis of double-XP constructions

a.   *The janitor should rely on the superintendent to call in a plumber whenever it is

clear that the manager can't be <relied on to call in a plumber>.

b.   *The system can be relied on to store personal information by anyone who has to

<rely on the system to store personal information>.

(11) Voice mismatches in VP-ellipsis of prepositional dative constructions

a.   ?The janitor must give food to the animals whenever it is apparent that it should

be <given to the animals>.

b.   My personal information can be given to the system by anyone who wants to

<give my personal information to the system>.

Assuming Merchant's analysis of monotransitives is correct, these additional results suggest

a surprising difference between the VP-ellipsis of these different kinds of argument

configurations. "VP-ellipsis" of double object and double XP constructions patterns like sluicing,

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[6] The data in (9-11) reflect the judgments of approximately 10 native speakers of US English, most of whom are non-linguists. I also consulted a few additional speakers, some of whom had different judgments than those reported here, but since these additional speakers had difficulty with Merchant's baseline examples, I excluded them here. Those speakers who struggled with Merchant's baseline examples interestingly found less of a contrast between the baseline monotransitives and the double object constructions in (9), and found (11b) to be quite acceptable in contrast with all other examples in this paper. It would be interesting to further investigate these two populations of speakers in future research.

indicating that when the "VP" of one of these constructions is elided, whatever structure is silenced must contain VoiceP.

(12) "VP ellipsis" might be different sizes for different argument structures
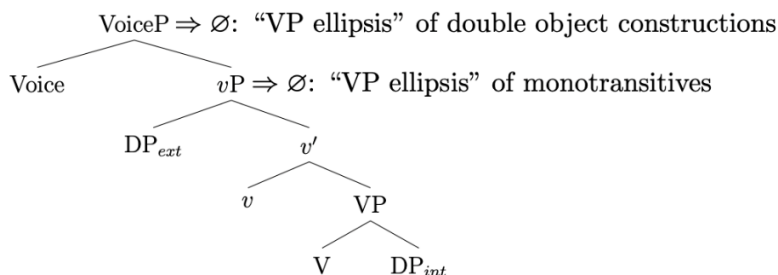
These examples raise the following puzzle: why does "VP-ellipsis" target different amounts of structure for different kinds of argument configurations?

4. Flexible "VP-ellipsis"

Taking Merchant's analysis as our baseline, the puzzle is: why does VP-ellipsis of monotransitives and prepositional dative constructions target vP, while VP-ellipsis of double object and double XP constructions targets something at least as large as VoiceP? Though I don't have space to attempt a full analysis here, I will provide some speculation. Essentially, I hypothesize that VP-ellipsis is always licensed by the head that minimally c-commands all of the argument-introducing heads (loosely inspired by Bošković 2014, who suggests that the highest head in the extended projection of the verb licenses ellipsis). This head might or might not c-command Voice, depending on how many functional heads are needed to introduce all of the arguments.

(13) Tentative proposal:

VP-ellipsis always deletes a constituent containing the highest argument-introducing head, which may include Voice in some contexts but not others.

Recalling the data in (9-11), it seems that the difference between the constructions that tolerate Voice mismatches under VP-ellipsis vs. those that don't relates to the height of the additional internal argument. Prepositional dative constructions arguably project the second internal argument within VP, where the direct object is introduced. By contrast, double object and double XP constructions arguably project the second argument in a higher position. Each case is explored below in (14-16).

(14) Prepositional datives, like monotransitives, project all internal arguments in VP
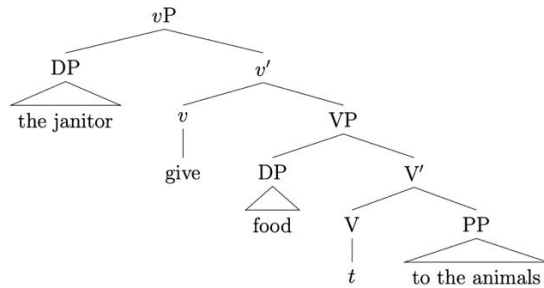
(15) Double object constructions require additional functional structure, like a VP-shell or an ApplP
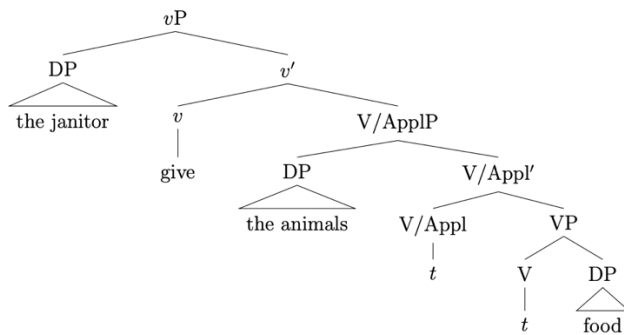
Though double XP constructions have attracted less attention than double object constructions, Pesetsky (1995) offers a VP-shell structure for those as well, with the second VP shell licensing the higher XP argument.[7]

(16) Double XP constructions also require additional functional structure, such as a VP-shell (Pesetsky 1995, following Larson 1988)
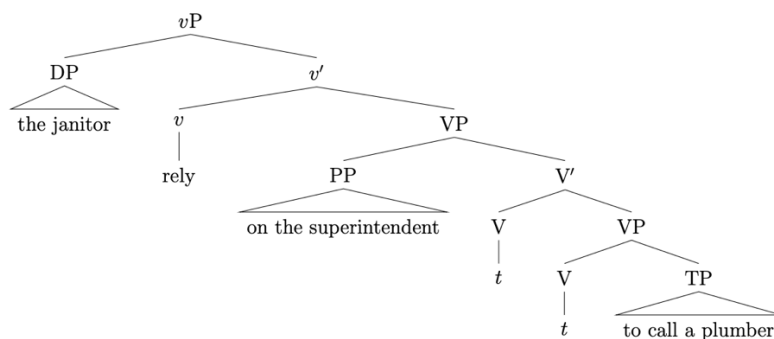
If the additional structure in double object and double XP constructions is projected below *v*P, it is not immediately obvious why these structures should expand the domain of VP-ellipsis

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[7] See also Newman (2021) for further arguments that additional non-DP arguments require additional structure.

to VoiceP. However, if we ignore the category labels in (15-16), the shape of an explanation begins to emerge. Another way of capturing the generalization is to say that when all of the arguments span just two functional projections, VP-ellipsis targets vP. When all of the arguments span three functional projections, however, VP-ellipsis targets VoiceP.

On this description, the most natural explanation follows if the function of each head in Collins' functional hierarchy becomes different in these different contexts. In monotransitives and prepositional datives, we can imagine that v introduces the highest argument, leaving Voice to solely control the active/passive distinction, as proposed by Collins and Merchant. In double object and double XP constructions, which require another argument-introducing head, we could instead imagine that v introduces the second argument, leaving Voice responsible for both the active/passive distinction and external argument-introduction.

(17) Changing the category labels for double object and double XP constructions
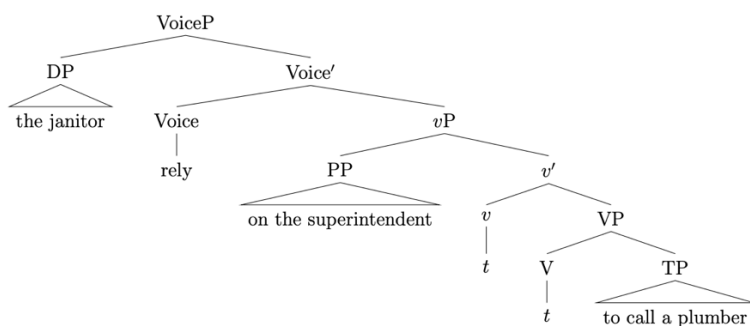
If the head that introduces the external argument is always silenced in VP-ellipsis, VP-ellipsis would have to target vP in monotransitives and prepositional datives, but VoiceP in double object and double XP constructions. Allowing ourselves flexibility with category labels thus captures the facts in (9-11).

Is such an analysis plausible? In other words, is it plausible that Voice and v can take on these different roles in different structural contexts? Possibly, though a deeper investigation of the syntax-morphology interface is required to decide for sure. Some independently motivated claims that would support the present approach are explored here.

Pylkkänen (2002, 2008) argues that the different functions of Voice and v can indeed span one or two heads in different languages and contexts, calling this choice the "Voice-bundling" parameter (see Harley 2017 for additional discussion). If this is right, English would have to exhibit both parametric settings, each in a different context. In monotransitives and prepositional

dative constructions, the functions of Voice and *v* would have to be split, so *v* introduces the external argument and Voice controls the passive alternation. In double object and double XP constructions, these functions would be bundled together on Voice, because *v* introduces another argument instead.

A second relevant proposal from Wood & Marantz (2017) treats argument-introduction as a syntactic feature rather than a lexical property. On this view, the meaning and function of a head are impacted by its local context, rather than the reverse. As a result, we could imagine that all of these heads (V, *v*, and Voice) have access to such argument-introducing features. Depending on how many arguments we have, different combinations of those features might get checked or unchecked, affecting meaning and pronunciation.

5. Conclusion

In sum, this short paper has explored how the number and distribution of arguments affects the availability of Voice mismatches under VP-ellipsis. We discussed data and argumentation from Merchant (2013), which suggested that English monotransitive clauses have three verbal heads: V, *v*, and Voice, where V and *v* introduce arguments, and Voice controls the passive alternation. Merchant's data suggested that VP-ellipsis always targets *v*P, which, being smaller than Voice, does not require Voice-matching with its antecedent.

We then discussed some cases of VP-ellipsis that did not tolerate Voice mismatches under VP-ellipsis, suggesting that the elided portion in these cases contained Voice. Such examples had in common the property that they required additional functional structure for the purpose of introducing a second internal argument. I speculated that this additional structure did not add to the total number of functional heads in the clause, but rather shifted some of the functions of *v* to Voice. As a result, VP-ellipsis of such constructions targeted VoiceP instead of *v*P. An elided VoiceP must match its antecedent in Voice.

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A Post-Soviet Feminist Odyssey: De-terminating Identity and Transcending Abjection

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Abstract. This article addresses the issue of feminist identity shaping by tracing the author's personal narrative encompassing life in both the metropole and subaltern territories in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet era. Being a half-Russian, half-Muslim ethnic minority, the author uses autoethnography and personal narrative as a method and 'a mode of thought, communication and apprehension of reality' (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012:15). It is argued that identity performance, border thinking, otherness as well as re- and dis- identification as feminist concepts are subject to multiple reconsiderations in collisions with bigotry and abjection. The article demonstrates some cognitive and emotive processes that the author experienced alongside the colonial mode of thinking that manifested itself in different periods of her life.

Keywords: postcolonialism, postsocialism, border thinking, Caucasus, Soviet colonialism, Chechnya

'Narratives of the self are tailored according to their purpose' (Jones-Gailani, 2020:65). I am sitting in Moscow in December 2022 and ponder over the purpose of my narrative. This year, with its war between Russia and Ukraine, rekindled memories of another war and my personal odyssey through borders and territories, from the Global South to the Global North, if we may say so about the territory of the same country.

My story is the story of one family whose life was connected with the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, as well as with Ukraine and the Chechen Republic. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the collapse of families. The history of our family was akin to the microcosm of society. These multiple stories of our family had long been in my memory, however I did my utmost to forget about them and bring them back to life only during rare family gatherings with the older members of our family. All of a sudden I realized that there was more than one 'lived experience' in my life and more than one 'observer' in me. Writing 'about the multiple identities and perspectives that make up a human life' (Cremin, 2018:4) is one of the goals in this paper. Multiple identities or pulsing identities give voice to life narratives at different times, echoing and mirroring

external events and giving way to something that has been oppressed in its author for a long time. This process makes it similar to a narrator who sees the world through multiple lenses depending on the context and circumstances that revive the narrative.

I am a half-Russian, half-Muslim ethnic minority, who was born in 1974 in the USSR and grew up in the North Caucasus but left it in 1994 because of the First Chechen war (1994-96) and went first 1000 km to the north and then to the capital city of the Russian Federation. This is where I came across nationalism, bigotry and xenophobia. Being 'other' – a Russian - in a national republic, I again encountered this 'otherness' when I went to the Russian part of my country where I was not perceived as a truly Russian. Wherever you go, you are out of place, longing for assimilation, and have to be malleable to discard of 'otherness'. Therefore, my intent in this article is to contribute, if possible, 'to the building an alternative world in which no one will be an other' (Tlostanova et al., 2016:217).

I will give a testimony to the events that my family and I witnessed, thus reconsidering my identity. Cremin claims that 'autoethnography in the twenty-first century goes further to recognise diversity within the individual, and more than that, diversity that comes from the passing of time' (Cremin, 2018:5). However, identity formation and shaping are not linear processes and 'many feminist, queer and anti-racist thinkers have developed complex models of identification, drawing together relationality, intersectionality, hybridity and affect in resisting simplistic binaries' (Tlostanova et al., 2016:213).

I have never returned to the North Caucasus since the war. Albeit memories are painful, I feel obliged to narrate this region and the people living there. A part of the hypothetical East/Oriental land, geographically the North Caucasus is a part of southern Europe. Similarly to Easter/Central Europe, which 'has a tradition of seeing itself as a bridge, a threshold between Europe and the Orient, between East and West, while also carving its own East and West within the region' (Mudure, 2007:143), the North Caucasus can be considered a bridge between North and South/East Russia. At the same time it is a 'twilight zone' or 'grey' zone (Norimatsu, 2012:286), which does not receive much attention and even in Russia not many people are aware of the existence of several national republics on its territory. King and Menon argue that 'the region's republics are unfamiliar to outsiders (and, indeed, to average Russians): Adygea, Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Chechnya, and Dagestan. Its population of six to

nine million--estimates vary--is divided among a variety of ethnic and linguistic groups, including ethnic Russians, who account for a significant percentage of the population in some areas' (King and Menon, 2010:1)

Crossing the borders ushered the advent of a new period in my life, simultaneously putting my previous identity 'on a silent mode'. This dual identity development or, metaphorically speaking, a 'palimpsest' of identities, was a means of adjustment to the new life and fostering emotional attachment as well as a sense of belonging in a new place. According to Cassano, this happens on the border, where 'our own identity terminates [termina] and is determined: it acquires its own form, acknowledges to be limited by something else which is, in turn, limited by us. The term "border" de-termines' (Cassano et al., 2012:35).

Childhood. Ukraine.

I was born in the Soviet Union, in the North Caucasus, in the Chechen-Ingush Republic, which was one of the 20 autonomous republics in the Soviet Union. I am a postcolonial, post-Soviet feminist author and teacher, whose life is rooted in 'the South of the poor North' (Tlostanova, 2011:1). My family's history reflected the history of the country and of the south of the Soviet country. My grandfather was from Berdyansk, a town in the south of Ukraine which was called 'Osipenko' in 1939-58 (after the Soviet woman pilot Polina Osipenko), and my grandmother came from Krasnodar, a town in Russia, 255 km from Berdyansk. They had married in 1919 before Ukraine became a part of the USSR in 1922. In the 1930s they moved 600 km to the south, to Gudermes, a small town on the territory of the Chechen Republic, where, I assume, they were looking for jobs.

Here I would like to return to Berdyansk in Ukraine as the place where my elder sister and my grandmother used to come back to regularly during 1974-84. We spent every summer in our grandfather's house, who had died by that time. The house was occupied by his niece and her large family. For me, as a Soviet child, this was my huge home country, our homeland. My first encounter with language and ethnic diversity happened there, in Ukraine, in 1980, when my relatives gave a room for rent to a family from the western part of Ukraine. I was six years old and watched the kids from this family playing with a toy watch, which was a rare thing in the time of the consumer goods deficit. However, what surprised me more than the toy watch was the fact that the children were speaking Ukrainian: *desyat godyn p'yat khvilin* (ten hours five minutes, as they

say about the time in Ukrainian, or five minutes past ten). Even though I had grown up in a national republic and heard people speaking languages other than Russian on a daily basis, the fact that a Slavonic girl spoke another language shook me to the core. In hindsight, I think this living alongside people speaking different languages and being citizens of one country was the first – efficient – lesson of tolerance and diversity. For me, as a child, the Slavonic people in the Soviet Union were not supposed to be different in their language and culture. Numerous peoples in the Caucasus were different from us in that they were Muslims. It is no wonder they were speaking their own languages. However, Christians living in the same country and speaking their own language were an unusual phenomenon for me at that time. Forty-two years have passed since, but I still recall that episode and the way I was mesmerized by that scene. It was so brave of them. The reason for my astonishment was rooted in the 'inversion of social and cultural differences' (Etkind et al., 2012:14) among East Slavic peoples, which was a peculiar feature of official Soviet imperial rhetoric. Hence, ethnic and cultural differences among them were downplayed or rejected, especially in imperial-era literary works (Etkind et al, 2012).

Childhood and adolescence. 1974-1993. Chechen-Ingush republic.

The legacy of the Orientalist approach to the Caucasus was and is that the region is seemingly 'a twilight zone' for both Russia and the West. Tlostanova argues that 'the future of the Caucasus people was not really of any interest to the West then or today. They have remained the stiffened emblems of Orientalist fantasies, the dehumanized arguments in the rivalry between Russian autocracy and Western liberalism' (Tlostanova, 2014:107). Similarly, it is of little interest to the local metropole. The history of ethnic minorities and the life in the North Caucasus do not get much publicity in Russia, even though its seven national republics have the population of approximately 8 million people (as of 2010) or five and a half per cent of total population in Russia. The state language in the republic was Russian. We did not study the Chechen or Ingush languages, although they were not forbidden. Local folklore, literature, art, and history of the North Caucasus as a colonized territory were not taught at schools. This 'homogenization of the empire' (Etkind et al., 2012) was intentionally imposed by the metropole. The niche for local culture was predominantly allocated for folklore genre and was marginalized as somewhat archaic. According to Khodarkovsky, this asymmetry of relationships between the metropole and its subalterns is the

main characteristic of colonialism (Khodarkovsky, 2012). He claims that 'the conquerors believed that their role was "civilizing". It was in this role that Russia found itself, moving further and further south and east over the centuries' (Khodarkovsky, 2012:112).

However, there were two drama theatres in Grozny – Russian and Chechen-Ingush, where performances were staged in the corresponding languages. They still exist in Grozny, notwithstanding the fact that there are almost no Russian actors in the Russian theatre. The Chechen and Ingush republics are among the five regions in Russia with the smallest Russian population. According to official statistics, there are less than one and a half per cent of Russian population in these regions, even though in the 1970s Russians comprised thirty per cent of population, right before the perestroika – almost twenty-five per cent.

Our home was a welcoming place for women and men of different nationalities, because my mother and grandmother had a vast network of friends and acquaintants. These women were of different lifestyles and trajectories. What I disagree with is the opinion of the local women as an average Third World woman who 'leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and her being "Third World" (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized, etc.)' (Mohanty, 2003:22). Among our women friends were locals who defined their career paths and their private lives independently from their parents and husbands.

My most vivid reminiscences of life in Chechnya relate to two stories of resistance rooted in the colonial oppression of locals by the Russian Empire. The first story is about a monument to Alexey Yermolov, a Russian imperial general of the 19th century. 'During his tenure as commander-in-chief in the Caucasus, Yermolov (by that time promoted to the rank of full artillery general) was responsible for robust Russian military policies in Caucasus, where his name became a byword for brutality' (Wikipedia). His monument was exploded several times by unknown people. Since it was located near our house and my grandmothers had witnessed the accidents, they told me the story. This was one of my earliest memories of childhood.

Another rebellious act of vandalism occurred in the Arts Museum in Grozny in 1970, when my mother worked there as chief curator. The museum arranged an exhibition of Franz Roubaud, a Russian-German artist of French origin, who created numerous paintings of the Caucasus. His oeuvre includes depictions of battlefields, everyday scenes of local life as well as Orientalist paintings such as "The Captive". One of the most controversial paintings by Roubaud was 'Capture

of Imam Shamil by Russian Troops in 1859', which at that time was not openly exhibited because it had been attacked and cut by some Chechen visitors as a sign of protest against the Russian imperial conquest of Chechnya. The decision to exhibit it again was a fatal flaw and the painting was cut again in front of everyone.

When perestroika began in the late 1980s and the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 the situation in the republic started to worsen. The war did not start unexpectedly. At first banditry ramped up, and all civilians were endangered. Lieven asserts that 'in Chechnya, Russia finds itself faced with a modern state's nightmare: a region on its immediate frontier which is simultaneously a chaotic failed state, a haven for banditry and organized crime, a threat to Russian control of adjacent regions, and a base for Islamic terrorist actions in Russia' (Lieven, 2000: 145). Women were in great danger and three of our close friends suffered during this pre-war period. One woman was chased and nearly raped, the other one was kidnapped, and we never found her, and the third one – my elderly teacher of English – was almost executed by insurgents. Fortunately, something stopped them from shooting her at the last moment. The risks for women increased during the war, however even in previous peaceful life women experienced constant sexual objectification, with permanent interest from males, who could approach you in the street, not letting you walk by. This made you an object of sexual appeal, and the effect it may have is that during your life you always feel *visible*. You cannot become 'invisible' when you want to, which makes you feel hunted. The repercussions of this attitude continued to reverberate throughout my adult life.

Originally an indigenous nationalist movement, the Chechen conflict was co-opted by the international jihadist movement and aimed at using Chechnya as a launching ground to attack Russia (Garner, 2013). Even though both sides of the war acted as criminals at times, with some cases documented and others – not, the insurgents' regime was beyond any law and genocide was thriving. I left Grozny for good in 1993 whereas our four elderly relatives decided to stay there. They went through both wars, suffered during bombing and the siege of Grozny, were starving there and were eventually thrown out of their house by armed insurgents.

The second Chechen War admittedly ended in 2009, but thirteen years later it is still a war that is not much discussed. 'A survey of recent Russian military literature suggests that Chechnya has been Russia's forgotten war as far as serious military analysis is concerned' (Mathers, 1999:113). Or as Reznikova asserts, 'We can consider Russian discourse about Chechnya after 1999 as a laboratory of exclusion from the space of life' (Reznikova, 2014:35). Casualties during the two

wars are not yet exactly known, but some estimate them to be approximately 250,000 people. Among them there were people of different nationalities, including Russians, Greeks, Georgians, Chechens, Ingushes, Armenians and many others living in the Chechen-Ingush republic.

The catastrophe did not happen long ago. It begs the question: What did Russian and Western societies do to stop the massacre? Did anyone help the refugees? Was there any information on what was happening in the region, which is in fact part of Southern Europe? Why do some wars attract resentment and condemnation globally while others go unnoticed? As Butler claims, 'We might think of war as dividing populations into those who are grievable and those who are not. An ungrievable life is one that cannot be mourned because it has never lived, that is, it has never counted as a life at all' (2009:38). Those who are 'ungrievable' are reduced to bodies and denied vulnerability (Solovey, 2019). And not only in Russian media and social discourse but also in the West.

Adult life. 1993-present time. Russia. Rostov-on-Don and Moscow.

Fleeing from the war brought me and my mother to Rostov-on-Don, a large city 1600 kilometres north of Grozny, between Grozny and Moscow. There we managed to buy a tiny and shabby flat in an old house, which was in huge contrast to what we had had in Grozny. Unfortunately, the flats and houses in Grozny did not cost much at that time.

The beginning of the 1990s was not an easy time for all the people living in Russia. Relocation to the Russian/Northern part of the country posed many hardships. For example, in a Muslim republic alcoholism was unusual. When we moved, we realized that alcohol addiction is much more frequent, particularly in the neighborhood where we bought a flat. Our 'otherness' was evident in many things, even in the way we cooked and were hospitable to our neighbors. Even the climate with snowy winters was a shock because living in Grozny we did not see much snow. Another unusual thing was that now we could not live in the centre of the city and had to use public transport which was always packed back then and quite often it was merely inaccessible.

Besides, bigotry and xenophobia were ubiquitous. When people found out that we are from Chechnya the questions they usually asked was 'You aren't terrorists, are you?'. Even though this was admittedly a joke, the message was clear. They treated us with suspicion. Another issue was my passport with 'Grozny' specified as the place of birth. Several times I was told that authorities would not give me a foreign passport for travelling. When I asked why the reply was 'Some born

in Grozny will not get a foreign passport'. So, we were stigmatized because of our place of birth and living. I was ashamed to show my passport because of this and only recently (almost thirty years later) started to say proudly where I had been born. Even though we relocated to the metropole, we still experienced 'marginalization and stigmatization of subalterns' (Reznikova, 2014:37), when a mere place of birth or living created a whole group people stigmatized in hegemonial discourse.

The same xenophobia attitude was exercised by our university teachers. We were segregated into two groups: the teenagers from 'noble Rostov families' and students who came from some provincial towns near Rostov and from other regions. The former were the crème de la crème with the best teachers and challenging internships, which the latter supposedly did not deserve.

Your test could be graded lower than it was supposed to. Once I was told that I had cheated it. 'What makes you think so?', I asked. The teacher responded: 'There are no mistakes in it. You cannot make no mistakes, students coming from provincial backwater do not know English that well'.

Another issue was my non-quite-Slavic appearance. My hair is dark and perhaps the features of my face are non-Slavic. I was called 'chernomazaya', an obscene word similar to 'a blackie'. This is an interesting phenomenon because I am actually White. Thus, there is a new type of racism in Russia. 'Diasporic nations often find themselves in the situation of symbolic Blacks' (Tlostanova, 2014:99). I was often stopped in the street by the police to check my passport when I was walking. The question they usually asked was: 'Where did you come from?' The same happened to my friends who were from Dagestan or Chechnya.

Inquiries about nationality also came from neighbors. Such questions as 'Are you from Moldova?' or 'Are you Greek?' signaled that people first of all had curiosity borderline anxiety trying to determine my nationality. Secondly, they always called southern countries, not Western-European though, to label me based on their biases, for example, that all Greeks have dark hair or all Moldovans have non-Slavic faces. As Quijano asserts, the process of the new world power becoming Eurocentric led to the imposition of such 'racial' criteria on the new global social classification of the people. 'So, in the first place, new social identities were produced all over the world: 'whites', 'Indians, 'Negroes', 'yellows', 'olives', using physiognomic traits of the peoples as external manifestations of their 'racial' nature' (Quijano, 2007:173).

Finishing this paper in May 2023, thirty years after I left my hometown, I still think that the possibility – albeit hypothetical - of returning to the place where you were born is a sine qua non of your identity formation. Odysseus, mentioned in the title of this paper, returned to Ithaca at the end. Your metaphorical Ithaca may transform, gradually undergoing change, but it should exist not as a newly built location after it had been levelled to the ground. Not as a geographical name on a map, not as a mirage, or fata morgana, in your reminiscences, but as a place which maintains continuity of lived experience in your life. I assume this helps to navigate through the toughest challenges and find light in the darkest times, when we have to re-imagine our future putting the Goliath of colonial wars, bigotry, chauvinism and xenophobia against the David of personal goodwill, open-mindedness, solidarity, and alliance with other people.

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A Revolutionary Vanguard: Aleksandra Kollontai and the Deconstruction of Bourgeois Feminism in Eastern Europe

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Introduction

This work seeks to reassess the conventional representation of feminism as a "western", bourgeois or "lifestyle ideology" within a post-Soviet context, utilizing the works of Alexandra Kollontai as a pivotal reference point. Kollontai, an influential early 20th-century theorist and political figure, was a pioneering Russian revolutionary. She held roles as the inaugural People's Commissar for Welfare and the world's first female ambassador. As a staunch advocate for women's liberation, Kollontai endeavored to reinterpret feminism within a socialist paradigm, embedding women's rights within the broader discourse of social and economic class.

To juxtapose Alexandra Kollontai's Marxist-feminist perspective with Western feminism, it's important to briefly outline liberal feminism. According to Tong and Botts' (2017) "Feminist Thought," liberal feminism is a reformist approach towards equality achieved through civic reform, articulated in works like Mary Wollstonecraft's "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" and John Stuart Mill's "The Subjection of Women" (Tong and Botts', 2017). The ideology seeks to overturn customary and legal constraints that perpetuate female subordination, fostering unfair discrimination against women in academia, the public forum, and the marketplace. In this essay, we use this definition to contrast the liberal feminist approach with Kollontai's theory of Marxist feminism, which espouses more radical structural transformations within the socio-economic sphere.

This study specifically employs the term "post-Soviet" to encapsulate the unique social, cultural, economic, and political transitions that have been unfolding within the countries formerly constituting the USSR, including but not limited to Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania, and the Warsaw Pact countries such as the GDR, Hungary, and Poland. These European "post-socialist" states embody distinctive geographical characteristics that set them apart within the broader socialist bloc. To sidestep entanglements with more complex cultural variances manifested in the Asian territories of the previous USSR as well as diverse socialist states across Africa and Asia, this study narrows its scope to the European portion of the post-socialist landscape.

Feminism in post-Soviet countries presents a complex contradiction. While Eastern European women have a long history of emancipation in areas such as education and the job market—often seen as key indicators of gender equality in Western academia—they face heightened levels of both structural and individualized discrimination. These include demands for balancing multiple roles as breadwinners and caregivers, domestic violence being decriminalized in a number of states, and societal expectations such as conforming to strict beauty standards, sometimes referred to as a "third shift." In many Western countries, federal laws, such as the US Equal Pay Act and Title IX, exemplify efforts to recognize and legislate against various forms of gender and sexual inequalities. Regrettably, these inequalities persist as glaring points of distress for women in post-Soviet countries, indicating a regional-specific ideological demand for the feminist movement.

Furthermore, as Kristen Ghodsee argues, the introduction of western liberal feminism along with neoliberal capitalism to the region in the early 1990s set off a wave of retraditionalization by the late 90s (Ghodsee, 2021), with calls to return women from their work occupations to the private sphere. This discourse shifted the focus from addressing structural inequalities to individual-level issues, bolstered by Western Liberal Feminism, promoted through NGOs, contributed to the rise of far-right politics. These movements exploited the narrative of feminism as a Western import, threatening local traditions and values while overlooking the rich history of Eastern European feminism's evolution before and during the socialist period.

In response, this essay will examine the work of Alexandra Kollontai, one of the most prominent feminist theorists from the Eastern-European bloc. Through delving into her scholarship, this work attempts to offer a perspective on her normative theory of Marxist feminism, an ideology inherent and influential to the gendered reality of the post-Soviet space, as opposed to Western Liberal feminism, labeled as a bourgeois, imperialistic, and singular ideology by Marxist, Intersectional and of-Color feminist movements. The main point of criticism toward the Liberal Feminism in this work is its accusation of expanding the privileges available to the higher classes under the "universal women question" label, providing a shift from the structural foundations of inequality to identity politics and the disjunction of the men and women of the proletarian class. This essay aims to scrutinize and challenge these perspectives by shedding light on Kollontai's distinct, historical, and regionally-embedded approach to feminism, address the main points of

criticism toward the Kollontai's scholarship, and approach it from the normative and descriptive approaches toward marxism-feminism.

Aleksandra Kollontai's Trailblazing Approach to Feminism in Eastern Europe

"The New Woman" (Kollontai, 1919) essay opens by identifying some general patterns of the emergence of a new type of representation of the modern woman without reference to a specific class dimension. In this essay, Kollontai analyzes the peculiarities of the new type of representation of the modern woman in the work of predominantly female authors. Kollontai believes that although not all of these works can claim high artistic value, most of them are more relevant for sociological analysis since they reveal the unpalatable realities of the new female experience, by which she postulates the importance of the gendered nature of personal history: "Since women writers no longer blindly follow male models, … since women writers have begun to speak their own idiom – a wholly feminine idiom – their works, even though at times lacking in artistic beauty, will assume a special value and significance" (Kollontai, 1919). These autobiographical accounts and deviations from male-centric models provided invaluable insights into the nuanced experiences of women during the period, effectively questioning established narratives and enriching our understanding of gender dynamics and societal transformations. Significantly, these writings, as Alexandra Kollontai singles out, underscored the autonomy and personhood as the main characteristics of the emerging type of the "new woman," who asserted her agency in the public sphere, distinct from her role in relation to men, by prioritizing personal and professional self-realization as an independent subject rather than a subordinate object within the traditional framework of family relations. The new type of fictional heroine described by Kollontai is notable for its universal character and is not exclusively limited to Russian or Soviet prose. In contrast to the preceding type of the female character as a passive companion of the man and his "resonator," Kollontai gives the new type of protagonist the name "single women" ("Die junggesellinen"), which she defines as: "heroines with independent demands on life, heroines who assert their personality, heroines who protest against the universal servitude of woman in the State, the family, society, who fight for their rights as representatives of their sex" (Kollontai, 1919).

In her writings, Kollontai linguistically contrasts "primitive" instincts and expressions of feeling characteristic of bourgeois morality, such as possessiveness, emotionality, and jealousy, to the principles of comradeship. She uses metaphors associated with the animal world to describe

such expressions of feeling, contrasting high humanistic matter: "woman-samka" or "woman-baba"[8] versus "woman-person," "man-samez"[9] or "zver"[10] versus "man-comrade" (Kollontai, 1919). Here one can already read the premises of her idea of free Marxist love, in which a woman no longer needs a man as the sole source of material wealth or social status. In contrast, a man must learn to see a woman as "not the representative of sex, but the human being, the personality," not a "female" who guarantees the reproduction of his lineage. Furthermore, Kollontai opposes the male consumerist perception of women as "mere instruments of pleasure," from which comes another prominent feature of the "new woman"—an increased demand for a man to accept women as equals and pay attention to her inner world, personality, aspirations, and vocation. For Kollontai, the ideal of interpersonal relations is "harmony between passion and spiritual kinship, the reconciliation of love and freedom, comradeship with mutual independence" (Kollontai, 1918). Thus, in contrast to the bourgeois values of romantic love, she proposes a form of a relationship built on the principles of comradeship, personal freedom, and female independence.

Advocating for the sexual emancipation of women, Kollontai calls for a rejection of the binary perception of women in the form of the archetype of the Madonna/Prostitute complex. Kollontai also raises the question that in "bourgeois-proprietors morality," only the sexual purity of women, not men, mattered, the only women who could transcend this puritanical sexual ethics belonged to the intelligentsia. Thus, this privilege belonged only to those not subject to intersectional oppression—men or women of the upper class. Kollontai elaborates on this intersectional point in the "Love and the New Morality" (1919) essay, in which she comments on a psychosociological study entitled "The Sexual Crisis," in which Greta Meisel-Hess addressed the critique of the bourgeois morality of sexual relations, based on religious asceticism and prostitution, as two sides of the degeneration of the love life.

Following Meisel-Hess, Kollontai proceeds from the premise that the moral rules governing sexual life have two primary purposes: to promote sexual selection for the health of the offspring (a remnant of the scientific fallacies of early 19th-century Europe) and to help enrich the sensual experience of human beings. Kollontai identifies three fundamental forms of sexual relations: legal marriage, free union, and prostitution. The "marriage" form is based on the principle of non-

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[8] rus. "sissy"
[9] rus. "real man/macho"
[10] rus. "beast"

dissolution derived from the false premise of the constant human psyche and needs, including the choice of a partner, and the perception of one's partner as property. On the other hand, "free unions" lead women to the risk of unplanned motherhood, demanding sacrificing professional fulfillment for the sake of performing reproductive labor in the absence of any social guarantees. As for the "prostitution" form, Kollontai addresses it as a byproduct of the ideology glorifying female celibacy, as well as the result of "growing insecurity of the female labour force" due to the gendered wage gap. Thus, all three forms of engagement are the product of a capitalist system based on unpaid or marginalised female labor. Therefore, the only way out of this sexual crisis is through a systematic change in all economic, social, and cultural realms—a transition to communism, which will enrich the human psyche with "love potency." Following Meisel-Hesse's position, Kollontai instead proposes "love play" or "erotic friendship" as a transitional phase in the assimilation of a deeper connection—relationships in which partners, not bound by a formal commitment, learn to respect their autonomy to avoid absorption, in which women's self-actualization is relegated. Kollontai concludes that Maisel-Hess pursued a classic socialist strategy in her reforms addressing "love impotence:" creating conditions for the economic and political emancipation of women, combating prostitution, protecting motherhood through social guarantees for reproductive work, and desacralizing bourgeois sexual morality through civil marriages with the option of dissolution.

Kollontai's attitude to the universal women's question, the class struggle, and bourgeois feminism is most fully expressed in her works, "Sexual relations and the class struggle" (1919) and "The Woman Worker in Modern Society" (Kollontai, 1998). In the first article, "Sexual relations and the class struggle" (1919), she invokes the theme of historical materialism to explain the transformation of the code of sexual morality, by turning to the Renaissance and Reformation eras to describe the period of incipient bourgeois values, challenged by the shift in modes of production following a labor movement's rise. This shift was supposed to trigger a consequent alternation of cultural and social areas, including sex-moral codecs: "It is an old truth that every new class that develops as a result of an advance in economic growth and material culture offers mankind an appropriately new ideology. The code of sexual behaviour is a part of this ideology" (Kollontai, 1972). She recalls the classic dichotomy of private and public, in the context of transferring a new form of freedom and self-realization to the private realm, from which she derives a theory of eros as a means of salvation from individualism—a characteristic feature of

bourgeois morality. Finally, even though we examined the subject of love potency extensively in discussing the previous section, according to Kollontai, the sexual crisis is caused three-quarters by socio-economic problems and only one-quarter by love impotence. Kollontai identifies the following socio-economic issues underlying the women's question: self-centeredness, physical and spiritual spousal ownership, the idea of female "backwardness," addressed by a patronymic attitude toward female counterparts (Gorshuch, 1996), and a "double morality" in evaluating male and female actions. Thus, Kollontai suggests that only by eliminating all forms of exploitation, both gendered and capitalist, we could achieve a state of true gender equality—by establishing the principle of "comradeship" as a legitimate outcome of the class struggle.

Kollontai believes that a qualitative transformation of the family structure will originate from the working class since a new ethic of relationships is closely linked to the social tasks of the proletarian movement of the early 20th century. As a consequence of the constant deterioration of workers' conditions and the intensification of capitalist exploitation, the working class goes through a double adjustment process: passive and active. The passive process, relevant to all social strata, includes belated marriage, prostitution, and the regulation of procreation, often through infanticide. Active adjustment is characterized by resistance against any form of exploitation and prioritizing class interests over individual happiness. This process is specific to the working class since participation in the revolutionary movement requires the presence of emancipated women in the public field (as opposed to housewives depending on their husband's wages) and an expression of "comradely solidarity." On the contrary, bourgeois morality is built on the principle of subordination and individualism: "For Kollontai, comradeship is a mode of belonging characterised by equality, solidarity, and respect. Collectivity replaces isolation, egoism, and self-assertion. It makes people capable of freedom" (Dean, 2017b). Analyzing the use of this term in the works of Alexandra Kollontai, Jodi Dean emphasises that, although the address "comrade" in Russian is a masculine term, "yet its power is such that it liberates people from the chains of grammar," (Dean, 2019, p.56) being used to express political belonging regardless of gender: "A Soviet book on literary language published in 1929 gives the example of "comrade sister," a formulation that sounds funny in Russian but evokes the new language and emotions of the revolution" (Dean, 2019, p.56-57). Jodi Dean describes the transformative power of comradeship as a form of political belonging through the example of Maxim Gorky's article "Comrade," published in English in 1906 in The Social Democrat journal. When a prostitute feels a man's hand

on her shoulder, she is frightened of being treated with objectification as a woman engaged in a socially condemned profession. However, when the woman hears the address "comrade," she relieves herself because this addresses her as an equal subject in subsequent interconnection. According to Jodi Dean, comradeship is a unique form of human relationship because it focuses on the political rather than on the individual level of sympathies/antipathies: "What matters is not the uniqueness of a skill or experience but its utility for party work. In this sense, the comrade is liberated from the determinations of specificity, freed by the common political horizon" (Dean, 2019, p.67). In this respect, the relationship of comradeship cannot be personal. It is always political and differs from allies in sharing a commonplace in the political structure. Therefore, it cannot be devoid of the class dimension in the form of the unified women's question, since in this liberal stance it deprives the feminist and proletarian movement of its radical revolutionary goals of eliminating all forms of oppression in favor of the gendered adjustment to the existing social hierarchies, which is expressed in the Kollontai's essay "Woman Worker in Modern Society" (1998).

In a work entitled "Woman Worker in Modern Society" (Kollontai, 1998), Alexandra Kollontai articulates to the most explicit extent the reasons for her opposition to bourgeois feminists. She characterizes bourgeois feminism not as a conscious struggle for women's emancipation but as an attempt by the privileged class women to expand the social benefits available to the men of their class through the hands of others: "Equalizing women's rights with the men of their class"—what, except equalization in powerlessness with their fellow proletarian, can the favorite motto of feminists give women?" (author's translation from Russian, Kollontai, 1998) Proletarian feminism, according to Kollontai, addresses the immediate problem of the double burden of private and public sphere work faced by all working-class women, thus, they do not seek access to the labor market, but the State's intervention in the contract between labor and capital—the social security of labor conditions and reconsidering the "frozen forms of social coexistence" that have become rudimentary under industrialization and the need for female labor power, which does not address the bourgeois feminism. Therefore, Kollontai questions the possibility of addressing a unified "women's issue." Kollontai points out that only as class representatives do women have real influence in the political arena. Only through fear of mass strikes and revolts can the exploiters improve the working conditions of the workers. Therefore, it is a question of class, not gender interests: "The history of the struggle of female workers for better

working conditions, for a more tolerable life, is the history of the proletariat's struggle for its liberation" (author's translation from Russian, Kollontai, 1998).

Challenging Feminist Frameworks: State Patriarchy vs Marxist Feminism

Historians and feminist theorists have controversially evaluated Alexandra Kollontai as an author and historical figure. Jodi Dean, in her public lectures on Kollontai in 2020, says that the main criticism of Kollontai can be categorized in two directions: first, she does not challenge the sexual division of labor in the home; second, Kollontai rejects the idea that reproduction labor does not produce value, to which her critics object that it produces labor since it produces labor-power. In addition, this work incorporates the critique expressed by Mihaela Miroiu in her discourse titled "Communism was a State Patriarchy, not State Feminism," (2007), which has been further explored by Brigitte Studer in her article, "Communism and Feminism" (2015).

Mihaela Miroiu provides the following arguments supporting her position: First, she believes that the term "communist feminism" is a contradiction in itself. Notably, Mihaela Miroiu does not give concrete definitions regarding the use of terms such as "communism feminism", "state patriarchy", as well as "room-service feminism", therefore we would try to deliver them from the context of the work. Since in Eastern European countries, according to Mihaela Miroiu, industrialization only partially took place, and women in society took the position of the family worker, the Soviet Union created a new type of "state patriarchy," bypassing the stage of "modern patriarchy", rooted in industrialization and characterized by a woman's dependence on her husband's wages: "East European countries were only superficially and partially industrialised, and remained massively peasant societies" (2007). While Mihaela Miroiu's writings acknowledge the potential reliance on a Western approach that emphasizes autonomy as the ultimate goal of the feminist movement, her analysis heavily draws upon the historical trajectory of female rights and struggles based on a Eurocentric model. This includes the recognition of stages such as the "modern patriarchy" following industrialization, and subsequent waves of feminism fuelled by grassroots activism. However, it raises questions about the applicability of this normative framework in evaluating the unique gendered experiences of women in socialist and post-socialist countries. This inquiry extends beyond concerns about eurocentrism. It confronts the challenges of attempting to replicate the Western trajectory of feminist development—an evolution that was shaped by distinct historical elements such as feudalism, the rise and struggle of the bourgeois

class in cities against feudalism, and the advent and expansion of capitalism—in the unique context of Eastern Europe. This context, devoid of these Western historical constituents, makes the application of such a model questionable, limiting the creation of proactive strategies for future feminist progression in Eastern Europe and leaving the room for criticism.

Mihaela Miroiu criticizes the "state patriarchy" for the following reasons: First, the socialization of the child-rearing process helped women raise their children but reduced the possibility of private influence over them, despite the state's failure to intervene and change the private structure of the family, in particular, the division of labor within the family. Secondly, the state established unequal wages for light and heavy industry workers, expressing the system of privileges created by the state patriarchy, backed by a quota system that promoted the apparent rather than actual representation of women in high positions: "Women's promotion by quota system aimed to assure their physical presence as obedient soldiers under the party's command. It barely had to do with the political representation of women's interests" (Miroiu, 2007). Finally, Miroiu argues that the paternalist state formation in the USSR leads to the damaging "feminization" of men and women into self-sacrifice in favor of communist ideals, in other words, the state patriarchy. The major argument against "state patriarchy" is that communist ideology did not have the emancipation of women as an ultimate goal but viewed female freedom as a necessary component of the deconstruction of a system of capitalist oppression. In her writings, Kollontai indeed supports this thesis, constantly stressing out that the true emancipation of women would be possible only after the combating of capitalist oppression: "The followers of historical materialism reject the existence of a special woman question separate from the general social question of our day" (Kollontai, 2006b), "Only the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of soviet power will save them from the world of suffering, humiliations and inequality that makes the life of the working woman in the capitalist countries so hard" (Kollontai, 2017), etc. However, the lack of seeing the topic of women's liberation as a "goal in itself" is not a sign of a lack of interest in the topic of women's liberation, nor was it a reason for abandoning these goals in a society of building communism, as Kollontai repeatedly notes, here is an excerpt from the text, written two years after the October Revolution: "We are only in the process of struggling for communism and we are surrounded by the world we have inherited from the dark and repressive past. The shackles of the family, of housework, of prostitution still weigh heavily on the working woman. Working women and peasant women can only rid themselves of this situation and achieve equality in life itself, and

not just in law, if they put all their energies into making Russia a truly communist society" (Kollontai, 2017).

This crucial aspect of societal transition is overlooked by Mihaela Miroiu, who approaches the history of the USSR as a whole entity without considering the significant shifts that occurred over time: "Lenin firmly opposed the autonomy of women's organizations, and Stalin turned the Zhenotdel into an openly gender-conservative tool. He was, in fact, the official founder of the politics of the double working day (burden) together with those of maternity in service of the state" (Miroiu, 2007). While acknowledging the initial establishment of the Zhenotdel by Kollontai in 1919 and the party's early commitment to gender equality, it is important to recognize the critical divergence that took place after the 1930s under Stalin's leadership (Goldman, 1993). During this period, the Soviet Union witnessed a shift towards a more gender-conservative approach, abandoning the socialization of reproductive domestic labor and adopting a traditionalist rhetoric that justified a double-shift system for women. It is crucial to acknowledge that the Soviet Union's pursuit of women's emancipation was a complex and evolving political project, characterized by fluctuations and changes in various spheres of life, including the regulation of women's issues. Consequently, making sweeping generalizations about the Soviet Union's approach to gender equality based on works written in the early 20th century would be inappropriate and irrelevant.

After briefly summarizing Mihaela Miroiu's main arguments regarding the "state patriarchy", we may now proceed to challenge this position. Firstly, Mihaela Miroiu begins her work by defining feminism as a struggle for female autonomy in the form of the categorical imperative—ideology/activism may only be considered feminist if they are ultimately objectives toward female emancipation, aiming at women as members of the sex, not the class. Such an interpretation ignores other forms of feminism as a political ideology, such as intersectional feminism, eco-feminism, Marxism-feminism, black feminism, etc. Miroiu's account of feminism operates through a "negative conception of freedom" in terms of Berlin (1959), which is peculiar to right-wing ideological thought, and considers it as the only universal one, or at least as a minimum requirement of "feminism." Miroiu argues that the ideologues of the USSR, including Kollontai, actively denied their involvement in feminism as an element of bourgeois ideology. However, as Brigitte Studer points out in her article (2015), by such accusations, we miss the marginalization of this category in that historical and cultural context. Even though not all of the reforms aimed at promoting gender equality proposed by Kollontai were successfully implemented

due to the lack of resources and disagreements inside the party's body, even the partial implementation of these reforms had already presented a significant change in the status quo. For instance, the historian and sociologist Anne E. Gorsuch (1996) classifies the 1918 Bolshevik Code on Marriage, the Family, and Guardianship as the most advanced in the world in protecting women's rights during this historical period. Thus, we can consider the reforms proposed by Kollontai and enshrined in the Bolshevik Code on Marriage, the Family, and Guardianship as having promoted women's emancipation, bypassing their association with bourgeois political strategies. Even if we assume that socialism addressed the women's issue from an instrumental point of view rather than as a goal in itself, it nevertheless achieved an outstanding result in this regard: "so-called 'top-down' socialist model of women's emancipation undertook the project of socializing domestic labor that has yet to be replicated under capitalism" (2018). Therefore, evaluating such directives in terms of intentionalism rather than consequentialism, in the absence of the possibility of testing a different political strategy due to the marginalized notion of feminism in the historical period, is questionable.

The following argument presented by Mihaela Miroiu was that the socialization of child-rearing helped women raise their children but reduced the possibility of private influence on them. Many authors have criticized the transfer of socialization of children into the public sphere, a topic that also requires examination from various counter perspectives. Firstly, as Anne E. Gorsuch (1996) suggests, the desired parental influence level in children's upbringing is subject to individual author and ideological variations, casting doubts on universal assertions. Secondly, as Kollontai articulates in "Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle" (1919), bourgeois and noble families often delegated child-rearing to nannies and governesses, while proletarian mothers were already burdened with double shifts, reducing their interaction time with their offsprings. Still, such a transfer was not received as critically as the proposal to hand over this process to the sphere of state responsibility. Lastly, following Althusser's theory of ideology's universality (2013), all child education methods inherently carry an ideological component—be it within families or public institutions.

The following argument presented by Mihaela Miroiu in favour of her concept of state patriarchy is the feminization of men and women through the idea of self-sacrifice for the party's sake: "The state patriarchy negatively 'feminised' both women and men … Men's celebration had the same negatively feminised pattern (read obedience and self-sacrifice), minus Fatherhood"

(2007). Firstly, Miroiu's argument risks perpetuating essentialist notions of femininity by attributing traits like obedience and self-sacrifice solely to women, which overlooks the agency and complexity of the "new women" who emerged in literature as a reflection of evolving societal standards and gender dynamics.

Secondly, the concept of self-sacrifice in communism, inherently linked with comradeship, warrants further clarification. Within the context of a normative communist ideology, self-sacrifice does not pertain to a surrender to a leader or dictator, representing a voluntary commitment to the collective cause instead—a cause that, theoretically, is driven by the people and for the people. According to Jodi Dean, comradeship is defined as a "generic figure for the political relation between those on the same side of a political struggle" (Dean, 2019), and functions in three forms: "as a mode of address, figure of belonging, and container for shared expectations" (Dean, 2017). In this context, comradeship surfaces as a unique political bond, untainted by personal sympathies and prejudices, and rooted in a shared commitment to collective goals. Consequently, the act of self-sacrifice becomes a dedication to one's own objectives, which are aligned with the goals of the broader collective. In this stance of Marxist ideology, the party embody the common goal of the collective as a creative vanguard of a grassroot proletarian movement where the constituents are both the leaders and the followers of the movement - the party is envisaged as an organ of the people, by the people. However, during the actual implementation of socialism, there was a notable divergence from this normative ideology when the party eventually became estranged from its people to various degree (from representatives of the people who drive limousines in the place of the ordinary people" to "ordinary people themselves who drive limousines through their representatives", as Slavoj Zizek (2020) framed it), highlighting a disconnect between theoretical Marxism and its practical realization. Therefore, it's imperative to distinguish the normative theory of communism from its real-world applications. Even within liberal and democratic systems, concepts such as non-aggression, individual property rights, and law obedience can necessitate personal sacrifices. Miroiu's explicit definitions of "self-sacrifice" and "obedience" would further contextualize her argument.

To understand whether "state patriarchy" in socialist states was indeed more harmful than beneficial in addressing women's issues, it is essential to provide a more accurate comparison. We need to contrast the position of women in socialist and capitalist countries during the same period, rather than compare the descriptive analysis of women in communism with the normative concepts

of its ideologues, such as Alexandra Kollontai. While such normative theories provide value guidelines for political course choices, they do not serve as direct action guidance, making this comparison methodologically inaccurate. To this end, this work suggests referring to an article by Kristen R. Ghodsee and Julia Mead (2018). They argue that state socialism, on the contrary, effectively equalized men and women in their dependence on the state, reducing reliance on husbands for basic needs and allowing for some control over their lives and autonomy comparatively more remarkable than that of women in capitalist societies at the time. The authors draw our attention to the example of the gendered division of labor in post-war Germany after 1949, comparing the communist German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the capitalist Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). After a territorial and symbolic division, the FRG opted to return to the traditional form of family relations to assign jobs to men by returning women to unpaid domestic work. In contrast, women retained their jobs and greater social, economic, and political autonomy in the GDR. A similar situation unfolded in capitalist Austria and communist Hungary following World War II. Despite receiving monetary assistance via the Marshall Plan, Austria did not significantly increase women's employment; by 1951, about one-third of women worked outside of the household. In contrast, Hungary, which did not receive such assistance, had an equal rate of women's employment in 1949. Notably, over the next two decades, this number skyrocketed to 65% in Hungary by 1970, while Austria saw a slight decrease to 31%. Furthermore, Kristen R. Ghodsee and Julia Mead cite Eva Fodor's argument that, during this time, "the Austrian state was invested in keeping women out of the workforce" (2018). On the contrary, the Hungarian socialist state promoted female emancipation by recognizing the biological differences between the sexes through access to reproductive control, public childcare, maternity leave, and access to abortion, as well as through the "top-down" emancipation policies including, but not limited to, promoting women's employment in higher positions through workplace quotas, investment in women's education, and legal gender equality. At the same time, grassroots women's self-organization for equal rights in Austria only began to appear in the 1970s, alongside the emergence of second-wave feminism. Kristen R. Ghodsee and Julia Mead do not dispute that full equality has not been achieved. In Hungary, for example, men were two to three times more likely to hold managerial positions in 1972, but in Austria, the ratio was more than five times as high. Thus, we conclude that the factual position of women under socialism was often more favorable than in neighboring capitalist countries in the same historical periods. Mihaela Miroiu's critique does not provide a

comparison between the descriptive positions of women in two types of socio-political organizations, capitalism and socialism. Instead, it compares the descriptive analysis of women in communism with the normative concepts of its ideologues, such as Alexandra Kollontai. The latter, normative theories, provide value guidelines for political course choices rather than direct guidance for action, therefore this type of comparison is not methodologically accurate.

While elaborating on this idea of normativity, it is also relevant to recall that the Soviet Union was viewed as a transitionary period toward communism. Thus, we need to keep the specific temporality of a communist project in mind. The transition issue is also raised in Anne E. Gorsuch's article (1996) through the example of ignorance toward the family law or labour division in the Bolshevik Code on Marriage. The reason for the latter was that Alexander Goikhbarg, the author of the original document, had expected the family relations issue, particular to Soviet Russia, to become irrelevant once the transition to communism was over. Similarly, one might respond to Kollontai's criticism of her neglect of the division of domestic labor—the issue should have lost its relevance with the advent of the dictatorship of the proletariat due to her proposals of socializing reproductive labor throughout the system of public services, such as canteens, laundries, etc. This line of argument is deemed to partially address the criticism raised by Mihaela Miroiu and Jodi Dean concerning the difficulty in altering the private structure of the family and the distribution of labor within it.

Furthermore, the division of labor within the family, as well as the status of motherhood, radically varied between proletarian and bourgeois families everywhere, especially in Imperial Russia. This is elaborated in the article "Working Woman and Mother" by Alexandra Kollontai (2006a), where she not only retrospectively reviews different types of womanhood experiences determined by the class dimension in pre-Soviet Russia, but also puts it into comparative perspective with some other states that had partially implemented the welfare system by 1916: "In all countries where the capitalists control the economy and the workers sell their labor power and live in poverty, the percentage of babies to die in early childhood is very high. In Russia the figures are higher than anywhere else. Here are the comparative figures for the number of children that survive early childhood: Norway 93%. Switzerland 89%. England 88%. Finland 88%. France 86%. Austria 80%. Germany 80%. Russia 72%" (Kollontai, 2006a). Comparing child mortality rates and their correlation with the overall welfare of the family, as well as the availability of maternity protection and insurance policies within the state, Kollontai posits that the privilege of

experiencing motherhood without the need to provide an income or perform domestic labor was only available to bourgeois women. Meanwhile, from the time of industrialization, most proletarian women were compelled to work double shifts in harsh conditions of factories or bourgeois households. These conditions often included a lack of legal protection from sexual assault, a standardized workday, access to medical care, or the possibility of adequately caring for their children and their own health. This resulted in record mortality rates among proletarian mothers and infants in comparison to the bourgeois ones, as well as long-term health consequences: "The children of working men and women die like flies. … there are several provinces in Russia, especially those with many factories, where 54% of children die at birth. In the areas of the big cities where the rich live, child mortality is only 8-9%; in working·class areas the figure is 30-31%" (Kollontai, 2006a).

Therefore, Mihaela Miroiu's argument that the professionalization of women's labor for the sake of modernizing the Soviet economy resulted in a double burden and the impossibility of providing personalized care for children appears elitist. It seems to dismiss the lived experiences of working-class women who never had access to these privileges. It also overlooks the state's efforts in protecting women's rights and wellbeing, which included the establishment of civil marriage and divorce laws, access to medical care, education, and high-ranking positions within the party. Additionally, partially realized measures such as state-provided motherhood monetary support, and socialized reproductive labor—through systems of nurseries, schools and kindergartens in a narrow sense, and through public services like canteens and laundries in a wider sense—should also be acknowledged.

In conclusion, Mihaela Miroiu's critique of "state patriarchy" in socialist states veers towards oversimplification by attributing obedience and self-sacrifice to feminization. In evaluating women's reality in socialist states against normative theories, Miroiu overlooks the relative progress made compared to contemporaneous capitalist states. Her analysis misses the increased autonomy women gained under socialism and disregards the ideological variations on parental influence in child-rearing, as well as the factual differences in motherhood experiences across the upper and proletarian classes. While the socialist project did not completely resolve the issue of double burden, this problem was prevalent among lower-class women even before the proletarian revolution. Moreover, Miroiu's critique does not adequately account for the distinct temporal and

transitional nature of socialist projects. Therefore, her perspective is somewhat limited and calls for a more nuanced assessment.

Conclusion

In this study, we explored the primary aspects of Alexandra Kollontai's scholarship as a normative theorist of early 20th-century Marxism-feminism in Eastern Europe. Despite her lifelong reluctance to identify herself as a feminist, a stance attributed to the marginalization of this ideology as bourgeois, imperialistic, and singular, Kollontai made significant contributions towards incorporating feminist reforms into the Bolshevik Party's program of that era.

Kollontai's work currently presents an invaluable resource for envisioning a regionally specific feminist ideology that diverges from the Western-centric narrative. It highlights an alternate trajectory for women's rights and freedoms in Eastern Europe, taking into account unique challenges peculiar to the regional logic of historical development. Furthermore, it enables a recontextualization of feminism as an ideology deeply embedded in regional history and praxis. This perspective rejects the right-populist portrayal of the women's emancipation movement as a Western neoliberal import that only emerged in the region during the 1990s and 2000s.

Furthermore, Kollontai's work offers a robust counterargument to the fallacy that the USSR achieved comprehensive gender equality through the legal establishment of formal indicators of female equality, a perception that can erroneously suggest that there is no longer a cause for contention. Although socialist governance significantly improved the status of women during its time, including the introduction of voting rights, civil marriage, education and labor market access, and social support for motherhood, Kollontai herself persistently stressed that the USSR was merely in the incipient phase of its journey towards establishing gender equality. She outlined a broad range of future endeavors spanning both the economic and sociocultural domains.

Furthermore, Kollontai contested the claim that the USSR promoted the notion of achieved gender equality to legitimise the double exploitation of women, a view that could ostensibly be mitigated by reassigning women to the private sphere. This argument is reminiscent of the first wave of retraditionalization as described by Ghodsee (2021), and forms part of an escapist fantasy currently reflected in media discourse through the idealisation of the "IT wife" status. Contrary to the notion of returning to the private sphere as a route to liberation from the so-called double

burden - a proposal as implausible for the proletarian class in the early 20th century as it is today for the working class - Kollontai advocates for the socialisation of reproductive labour. Such an approach would alleviate women from the onerous demands of the double burden, thereby enabling their self-actualisation as independent individuals.

Potential areas of future research could include an examination of Kollontai's work as an alternative to liberal feminism, particularly in relation to Women-of-Color feminism and intersectional feminism, both of which emerged in America as reactions to suffragist and second-wave feminism; as well as the discordency in relation to the continuity of the feminist movement in Eastern Europe.

Another intriguing avenue for analysis lies in how Kollontai's work can be conceptualized within contemporary feminist thought. Many of her innovative ideas find echoes not only in Marxist and socialist feminism but also among cultural radical feminists, existential feminists, and care feminists. Cultural radical feminists resonate with her ideas about motherhood and the necessity for systemic change. Existential feminists align with her perspective on marriage as a mechanism for transforming voluntary emotions into obligatory duties. Care feminists can relate to her principle of comradeship, which foregrounds a style of moral reasoning identified by scholars Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings as typically feminine, in particular, the prioritization of relationships and individual needs over abstract principles such as autonomy and rights, focusing on tangible harm rather than the violation of abstract legal constructs (Tong & Botts, 2017).

In conclusion, by delving into Kollontai's visionary ideas and their relevance to contemporary feminist discourse, we ignite a dialogue that transcends temporal and geographical boundaries. Through her work, we can continue to explore the nuanced intersections of gender, class, and politics, creating a legacy of thought that both honors the past and paves the way for a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable future.

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Dumbing it Down: The Case of Dubbing Hollywood Films to Hindi

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The question of whether a translation should be intended for a target audience or not is an old one and different schools of thought answer it accordingly. Walter Benjamin (2000) starts his seminal text "The Task of the Translator", by writing "In the appreciation of a work of art or an art form, consideration of the receiver never proves fruitful… No poem is intended for the reader, no picture for the beholder, no symphony for the listener" (p.15). The film industry, on the other hand, relies heavily on its projected financial success. Taking the particular case of India with the ever-increasing multiplexes in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities the option of watching a Hollywood movie in its original language (English) is now reaching a wider audience by the day. Due to this particular fact, translations of Hollywood films fall prey to a very specific target audience that is a 'non-English listener' i.e., those who do not have access to the English language but have a certain interest in Hollywood films. In this context we have a clear answer to Benjamin's question "Is a translation meant for readers who do not understand the original?" (2000, p.15). The effect of this particularity will be discussed in detailed subtopics through a close reading of some of the popular film franchises of Hollywood in the Hindi Dubbing Industry. I would like to mention that almost all the examples used in this paper are not cherry-picked, as numerous similar examples of each category can be found easily, however, the scope of the paper will allow me to include only a limited number of films and their dialogues. As a text-only format the paper will have limitations in bringing details which must have been retained if this were a video essay, but keeping Jakobson in mind we will move forward as the process will be "intersemiotic transposition—from one system of signs into another, e.g., from music, dance, cinema, or painting into verbal" (2000, p.118). The paper will try to explore the translation of dialogues across the different genres of Hollywood films while investigating the creative reinterpretations and challenges of diverse dubbing projects.

Time Restrictions

Dubbing is a crucial process that enables viewers to understand audiovisual content in different languages. It requires linguistic expertise and cultural sensitivity to accurately convey the intended meaning and emotions. Precise timing and concise expression are key to providing an immersive and accessible experience for the target audience. In their essay "Politeness in Screen Translating", Basil Hatim and Ian Mason emphasize "the pragmatic dimension of context and the constraints of particular communicative tasks affect variously the textural devices employed both in original screenwriting and in the writing of subtitles" (2000, p.430). Any form of translation has a certain limitation of time and space depending on the source text. A translated chapter of a novel or an essay certainly has the most freedom in utilizing the assigned space, the length of the sentences can change to a great extent, and so does the paragraphs and the text in its entirety and still the change will not be noticeable. The case of translating poems has its own peculiarities; even prose poems contain a certain structure let alone the established 'forms' such as sonnets and villanelles. The translator can choose to retain the structure, but the choice is always there to tamper with the given space. Such a choice is absent in dubbing, the dialogues are synced to a fraction of seconds. This syncing should not be confused with lip-syncing which is almost impossible to attain as Eugene Nida has written "No two languages exhibit identical systems of organizing symbols into meaningful expressions. In all grammatical features, that is order of words, types of dependencies, markers of such dependency relationships, and so on, each language exhibits a distinctive system." (2000, p.126). Every phoneme is produced with different positioning of the mouth and rounding and closing of the lips. Hence it becomes theoretically impossible to come up with a translation which is not just syntactically and semantically correct, but which also matches the movement of the mouth and lips of the utterer. In Dubbing the main objective is to maintain the economy of the words even at the cost of faithfulness, appropriateness and accuracy. This tight restriction plays a huge role in the translation as we'll see in the following topics.

The Translators in Hindi Dubbing

Though many a time the translators of films are uncredited but in most of the big budget films the job of translation is not given to Translators per se but to those who have established

themselves as dialogues writers in the Hindi Film Industry. The dubbing of recent Marvel films was accredited to Manoj Muntashir a well-known dialogue writer, accused of reusing popular lines from the Hindi Cinema in places where they had no connection to the original whatsoever. According to Muntashir however 'Literal translation is a mistake" as per the Scroll article (Ghosh, 2018, para 11). In another interview with Film Companion, Muntashir claims "Translating humour is a very very difficult task. But I use Indian context and references. If they talk about an American pop star, I can talk about Sonu Nigam. But it's not necessary that you must do that too. You could avoid that route and create some other lines which work equally well" (D'Mello, 2018, para. 6). Muntashir is notorious for replacing lines and lines from the original, so much so that the final output becomes more of a rendition than a translation. However according to one of his such renditions though *The Black Panther* (2018) did a total earning of 38 Crores on the Indian Box Office (BOTY,2018). How much of this financial success owes itself to Muntashir's translation is up for debate but Marvel's decision to keep him for the sequels does not give a convoluted signal.

Jokes losing details

When jokes are translated, they often lose their nuances and subtleties. The cultural context, wordplay, and idiomatic expressions that make them funny in one language may not be easily conveyed in another. In her groundbreaking essay, "The Politics of Translation", Gayatari Spivak does a deconstruction of the process of accessing a translated text. Spivak writes: "Logic allows us to jump from word to word by means of clearly indicated connections. Rhetoric must work in the silence between and around words in order to see what works and how much" (2001, p.399). She emphasizes how actual meaning in rhetoric resides between the syntagm of words and not necessarily in them, as Spivak goes on to say "The jagged relationship between rhetoric and logic, condition and effect of knowing, is a relationship by which a world is made for the agent so that the agent can act in an ethical way, a political way, a day-to-day way; so that the agent can be alive, in a human way, in the world"(2001, p399). I argue that Fanon's concept of 'disalienation' is at work when it comes to the translation of jokes in dubbing as an attempt to minimise alienation. One can sense a clear intention to make the agent more alive and human, removed from its foreignness. There is a deliberate attempt to use 'lowly' words for the target audience which are not in the registers of day-to-day conversations let alone standard or '*Maanak*' Hindi. In *Kangaroo*

Jack (2003) a comedy film, there is an elaborate joke on the word 'barber', there is a setup, a context and then the punchline (McNally, 2003, 00:06:22). In the Hindi dubbed version, however, the following line is used "*main ek Hajjaam hun*" (I am a Hairdresser), the target audience is supposed to laugh at this word, there is no other punchline, and the setup is replaced by some banter, so the context becomes absent, and the joke lays flat. One can only speculate whether the translator hoped that the sheer iconicity of the word would save the joke. The use of such instances is innumerable, and here I will focus more on variety.

Puns are linguistic gems that often thrive on wordplay, cleverly relying on specific cultural or linguistic nuances. However, when translated, they can lose their essence. The intricate details, double entendres, and subtle humour often fall by the wayside, leaving behind a mere shadow of their original wit, lost in the vast realm of translation. Jakobson remarks that "The pun, or to use a more erudite, and perhaps more precise term—paronomasia, reigns over poetic art, and whether its rule is absolute or limited, poetry by definition is untranslatable, only creative transposition is possible" (Jakobson, 2000, p.118). This transposition can be seen in another action film titled *Fast and Furious: Five (2011);* there is a scene where the car and the apparels of a certain duo of characters are to be mocked. In the original, the dialogue goes "When are you going to give Martin Luther King his car back?" and in reply, the character says, "As soon as you give Rick James his jacket back" (Lin, 2011, 00:42:30). This dialogue in the Hindi dubbed is translated as "*ye Baba Adam ke zamane ki jacket kyun pehni hai*?" (Why are you wearing a jacket from the times of Adam). Sure, the underlying idea has been translated in this instance, but it is the specificities that are prone to get lost in most Hindi dubbing cases. As in this example the character was indeed wearing a jacket which was popularly worn by 1950s American singer Rick James. Simplification is always at work in situations like these, but in the translator's defence if the targeted audience is bombarded with foreign references successively then the threat of losing narrative cohesion is increased. It can be argued that such simplifications are made at the cost of specificities because the stakes of the plot not being followed by the targeted audience are simply very high. The *Ocean's* series is notorious for its use of name-dropping of people in American pop culture, one example being "We offer Bank a Billy Martin" (Soderbergh, 2007, 00:08:21). It alludes to the story of baseball player Billy Martin, who was dismissed and subsequently rehired by New York Yankees owner Steinbrenner multiple times. It signifies the act of granting someone another

opportunity or a second chance. As Muntashir acknowledged such culture-related lines are always difficult to translate, but what is sad to notice is the fact that instead of attempting to find an equivalent name from the target culture or elaborating on the name's significance it gets replaced by totally unrelated, and sometimes unbearable, banter.

Another example is from *Captain America: Civil War* (2016) where a character's GPA on a 4-point scale and his particular achievements are reduced to "*padhne mein hoshiyar*" (smart in studies) in the Hindi version from the original "Oh, that's Charles Spencer by the way. He's a great kid. Computer engineering degree. 3.6 GPA. Had a floor-level gig. An Intel plan for the fall" (Russo, 2016, 00:29:06). There is a clear absence of mentioning the chip manufacturing company Intel as if it will be too much to comprehend for the Hindi dubbed audience. Examples of simplifications and sanitization are also prevalent where the mere mentions of alcoholic drinks are replaced by Indian cuisine such as '*Biryani*', and so on and so forth.

Localization

So far, I have only mentioned instances where the translation process was miserable, to say the least. But that is not always the case, there are some brilliant works of translation which have been produced by the Hindi Dubbing Industry, one example being *The Pirates of the Caribbean* series which manages to translate the Western folkloristic elements while maintaining the humour. Words and concepts are borrowed from Indian astrology and folk beliefs like *shagun, nazar, shubh,muhurat, shapit etc.* In *Curse of the Black Pearl* The dialogue "Cursed pirates sail these waters... It is bad luck to have a woman onboard too, even a miniature one" is translated as *"Shapit lutere is ilaake mein ghumte hain...bhot bura shagun hota hai jahaz par ek aurat ka hona, phir chahen wo choti hi kyun na ho"*(Verbinski,2003, 00:01:16). The careful use of the word *na* (no) does not comply with the original on a syntactic level but it manages to capture the sneer, a difficult thing to retain otherwise. It is small details like this which make a translation appear not jarring and synthetic. In the following example from the animated film *Coco, "*What colour is the sky" is translated as "*Kaho taaron ko tum chand"* (You call the stars the moon) i.e. verses are changed semantically but the pragmatics are conserved by retaining the analogy and maintaining the poetics (Molina&Unkrich, 2017, 00:51:28).

Original	Hindi Dubbed	Translation of Hindi Dubbed
What color is the sky ¡Ay, mi amor! ¡Ay, mi amor! You tell me that it's red ¡Ay, mi amor! ¡Ay, mi amor! Where should I put my shoes ¡Ay, mi amor! ¡Ay, mi amor! You say put them on your head ¡Ay, mi amor! ¡Ay, mi amor!	Kaho taaron ko tum chand Aye huzoor aye huzoor Ya kaho din ko raat Aye huzoor aye huzoor Hai meetha samandar Aye huzoor aye huzoor Maanu har ek teri baat Aye huzoor aye huzoor	You call the stars the moon Your grace, your grace Or call the day a night Your grace, your grace The ocean is sweet Your grace, your grace I follow whatever you say Your grace, your grace

The translation here stands true to Jakobson's remark that "In poetry, verbal equations become a constructive principle of the text. Syntactic and morphological categories, roots, affixes, phonemes and their components (distinctive features)—in short, any constituents of the verbal code—are confronted, juxtaposed, brought into contiguous relation according to the principle of similarity and contrast and carry their own autonomous signification. The phonemic similarity is sensed as a semantic relationship." (2000, p.118) This Phonemic similarity is abundant in this animated musical film by Disney titled *Coco* (2017) with phrases like *'tum taal mein ho kankaal'(you are in rhythm Mr Skeleton)* . The dubbing of animated Hollywood films is almost always better than their live-action counterparts. Thankfully there exist some works of dubbing which pay immense importance to delicate nuances and subtleties as can be seen in *Finding Nemo* (2003) where characters have accents viz. Australian, French, and Italian are replaced by stereotyped Punjabi, Bhojpuri, Bengali, Gujarati and Tamil along with respective syntax and register.

The attempt at disalineation in dubbing also takes place by using certain registers and accents of Hindi, one of the most popular examples of this is the overuse of the Mumbai (thug) Street Talk also known as *Tapori*. The source film does not necessarily have to have characters

that are street thugs, the *Tapori* language finds its way in many of the action films nonetheless. Marvel's *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015) has twin characters with an Eastern European accent, Aradhna Sound Services Mumbai decided to give them a Haryanvi accent and dialogues as absurd as its Hindi title *Angare bane Sholay: Kalyug ka Mahayudh*. Surely one can argue that it is a subjective matter but to most people, their dialogues and their accents feel out of place and overdone, to say the least. Interestingly their Haryanvi accent is phased out in the sequels of the film. The preceding title bears resemblance to the morbid but not macabre titles of Hindi dubs of other action films like Detonator as *Maut Ka Tandav* (Dance of Death), Deep Blue Sea *as Maut Ka Samundar* (Ocean of Death), Planet of the Apes as *Vinash Ka Arambh*(Inception of Destruction), Ghost Rider *as Mahakal* (Ultimate Destroyer), Legion *as Maut Ke Farishte* (Angels of Death), Resident Evil *as Maut Ka Bulawa* (Invitation of Death) which to most Hindi speakers are hilarious and for sure lacks subtlety and come across as overdoing of a repeated formula of using language which celebrates violence and death, and the luring inherent connotation of action-filled adventure. I argue that the dubbing industry has identified its target audience for each genre of films and certainly has a preconceived notion of what the target audience wants regarding content and its delivery where registers, lexical fields (word choice) and accents are its main constituents. Surely an analysis pertaining to the Frankfurt School of Thought is required here but is beyond this paper's scope. I would conclude by saying though the translation of these dubbed films will never be appropriate for those who can access the original, in a comparative study such dubbings will often be found unfaithful, lacking tones present in the original or specificities but as a standalone product these dubbings work for the most part. They prove themselves successful in terms of financial performance and providing the targeted audience with an experience of their own.

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On the Ambiguity of Touch: A Genealogical Summary of Oppositions

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Introduction

One's very initial engagement with the world is conditioned by the sense of touch. The skin that envelops the organism is both a place of primary love and intrigue: if, on the one hand, the skin sustains the mother-child couple connected through the nurturing touch, it also introduces a locus of separation between them as well as between one and the world. Touching objects, people, animals, plants, or ourselves is thus, even before other senses are developed, a form of preliminary formulation of subject emergence, for it is both what connects and what demarcates one from the enigmatic Otherness. The touch, which will represent the thematic nucleus of this text, functions as a precondition of the outline of the subject. The mentioned is implied by Didier Anzieu's concept of "the skin ego" (Anzieu, 2016). The ambiguities of inner-outer, subject-object, I-other, which are both sustained and collapsed through touch as - in a literal sense - a contact between porous surfaces, make it a sense that eludes placement within clear conceptual categories. The tendency to ordeal what escapes firm meanings, the tendency to deal with "anomalies" (Douglas, 1966), or "abjects" (Kristeva, 1982), can be clearly detected when the wider social perspectives on touch are examined through a historical, narrational lens.

Human relationship to touch, which is essentially conditioned by the human understanding of its own carnality, can be summarized through a genealogy of opposites. Since the emergence of the "hierarchical social" until today, one can trace radically contrasting conceptualizations of touch: be it sublime or repulsive, the ultimate instrument of verification of truth or an instance of the primordial, a source pleasure or humiliation, touch is an utterly ambiguous term (Šterk, 2020). Such opposites have either coexisted within a single notion of touch or, together with certain ideological shifts, changed with different historical periods. The aim of the following paragraphs is thus to unfold the socio-ideological determinants behind the hierarchy of the sensory-perceptual modalities. The latter is, as claimed by Constance Classen in her monograph *The Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of Touch* (2012), always reliant upon the socio-cultural factors. Moreover, a

hierarchical classification of the senses in both Western metaphysical tradition as well as a general social (dis)regard towards specific modes of sensory perception has been oftentimes grounded in a conceptual opposition between the sense of sight and the sense of touch. Our attempt to comprehend historical and contemporary attitudes towards the senses is thus not aimed at a mere reveal of the place of touch within the mentioned hierarchical structures of the senses. Instead, we wish to place an emphasis on the wider social significations of the well-known antinomy between the skin and the eye and point towards a synesthetic bridging of such a distinction of the senses. Such a bridge, we claim, lies within the understanding of touch not as something tactile, but as haptic. In addition, we strive to avoid tackling touch as either a pure philosophical or metaphorical concept, stripped of the phenomenological and literal, or as something that can only represent its most literal meaning. Touch combines, we claim, both metaphorical and carnal, and the suspension as well as reconstitution of the subject. It is, thus, a place of elusive ambivalence.

According to Iris Young (1988) "haptic" is related to the sensorial as such and entails an inclination towards annihilating the distance between the Gaze and the object, producing an affective response. Haptic can be understood as that which functions beyond the logic of the "phallic economy" and its separation between the subject and the object (Marks, 1998). Our understanding of touch as haptic (and not solely as tactile) aims not at disregarding touch as something deeply intertwined with skin and the bodily. Instead, "touch as haptic" allows us to pay special attention to an ethical dimension of touch, the dimension which, through a suspension of the distinction between the subject and the object, opens space for an empathetic dialogue. Therefore, this text postulates touch as an interplay between proximity, the body, the senses, and the subject and the object whose clear demarcation is, when touch occurs, eradicated. There is, after all, a possibility of "the touch with the eyes".

Although the haptic presupposes a certain dynamic, common to touch, to be attainable through other senses, touch is also, essentially and originally, tactile. A meditation on touch as both haptic (eradicating the demarcation line between the subject and the object) and tactile (executed between living bodies) is nowadays utterly important, if not even crucial. In the era where migrant and minority bodies have become numerical units to be captured by media statistics and where "online solidarity" is mostly blatantly oblivious to the palpable, embodied realities of people, writing of touch aims towards producing a certain Brechtian "alienation effect" that would reveal the

common disembodied passivity propper to the scopic observer of the virtual sphere. Furthermore, to speak of touch means to put into question the concept of touch itself. Conceptualizing touch as something that bridges the distinction between the subject and the object and as that which is inherently connected to the empathetic and ethical, uncovers certain brutally tactile facets of touch. To think of touch is therefore to consider how it (dis)connects from the "excessive touch" of violence and war or from the "untouchability of the marginalized" as a political strategy of oppression. The duty to examine the nonsensical excess touch of war or the nonsencial untouchability of the marginalized is connected with subverting the notion of people as numbers in the metonymical functioning of the world wide web.

If all of the listed (one could speak of "skewed" forms of touch) had already taken place in the past, it was only the recent COVID-19 pandemic that, through prohibiting physical touch, revealed its long-lasting absence from contemporary life. The absence of touch and virtualization of bodies in which actual palpable and corporeal realities are overlooked, became heightened and thus revealed in all of their harshness. The imperative of a 1.5 meters of distance between moving bodies may have eradicated touch. But it has also made us more attentive to its individual and socio-political dimensions and its position in the contemporary era. As commented by the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy, the pandemic "offers us a magnifying mirror of our planetary contagion" (Nancy and Lawtoo, 2022). Our undertaking to trace a genealogy of touch is consequently an implicit reconsideration of contemporary socio-political production of subject/object categories and the way bodies and the world are interwoven precisely through touch, be it tactile or haptic. But what exactly do we mean when we say "touch"? If touch is the absolute minimum for existence without which no organism can survive, its destruction necessarily putting the latter to death (Aristotle), then perhaps its dense intertwinement with birth, death, separation and individuation makes it difficult to be grasped by simple definition. Our approach is based on a philosophical delimitation of touch that understands it in an ontological (crucial for the subject and their empathetic development) and phenomenological (dependent on the senses and embodiment) perspective. As such, touch is always a failed endeavor.

Touch as failure

The possibility of the body to touch uncovers its porous nature. Such porosity, symbolically limited by the skin (itself being porous), represents a place of endless displacement of the subject. It

presupposes, namely, constant encounters with various forms of Otherness and a never ending process of redefinition of the subject. Furthermore, it demands a constant engagement with one's task to separate what we conceptualize as "touch" (a haptic empathetic response where subject and object are not fixed categories) from excess, violent touch. As remarked by Jacques Derrida (2005), touch is essentially what fails, for it is untouchable and fugitive in its unwillingness the stabilize the passive relationship of the "touched" and the active relationship of the "touching". A touch devoid of mutuality, therefore, in philosophical terms, is based on a violent fixation of the two poles of touch. This violent touch was, concretely speaking, addressed with the #*MeeToo* movement. To consider how touch is conceptualized within different historical discourses is also an attempt to highlight the limit between "touch", which we understand as an empathetic encounter, and "excessive touch".

The first finds its philosophical resonance in some aspects of Emmanuel Levinas' notion of the "caress". The caress is a gesture of seeking that respects the plurality of what manifests itself to the subject as Otherness. Thus, in a mutual touch with a loved one, there appears something unreachable. The subject is moved (touched) by the endless processes of meeting the never completely knowable Other. What we postulate as touch is consequently characterized by a functioning different from that of "hold (on to)", whose etymological roots describe it as "to contain, to grasp, to retain". This failed touch, around which we weave our essay, may find itself, besides caress, close to "contact". The Latin *con* (together with) and *tangere* (to touch) are, in a etymological sense, congruent with the nonpossessiveness embedded in our understanding of touch.

Touch is the unclosable opening of a subject to the world. Even if one closes their eyes, wears earplugs, or is unable to taste and smell, there is always a part of them that is touching (both physically and metaphorically, as a living being in the world) an object or the rest of existence. As disclosed in previous paragraphs, touch can be usurped, skewed and locked within stiff categories of activity and passivity and thus a source of violence and trauma. However, an empathetic touch is a basic precondition for the feeling of safety. The mentioned relates not only to childhood years, but is paramount in all life stages. As some studies have shown, physical touch, such as a simple tap on the shoulder, promotes somatic and emotional well-being (Morrison, 2016); (Burleson and Davis, 2014). Notwithstanding its importance for subject formation, the touch as a theme of inquiry

had for centuries been omitted from Western metaphysics, grounded in the uncoupling of the mind and the body.

Touch in contemporary humanities

This radical separation of the psyche from the corporeal that privileged the first at the expense of the latter, can be traced back to Plato (2021). In the *Republic*, the philosopher presupposes the existence of the world of Ideas one can reach only as long as they fulfill a certain precondition. One must be freed from the "cheating senses". In order for the soul to touch the truth, we have to give up the carnal touch.

This dualistic legacy and the degradation of touch as the most irrational of all senses was further solidified with the rationalistic project of the enlightenment. During the last decades, however, the phenomenon of touch has been gaining relevance in academia, art, and technology. Undertakings common to haptic philosophy, carnal hermeneutics, haptic technology, and numerous performances and contemporary artistic projects and practices that deal with touch as the core of their work have played an important role in alleviating the dominant audio-visual culture of the modern world. A good example is the performative dance project *T-dance* by the German dancer and choreographer Vera Tussing. The performance features four dancers connected with one another by wooden sticks between their shoulders. As they move, careful that the sticks would not fall, they underline the questions of touch at a distance, the interplay of personal and collective in touch, and the virtualization of contemporary society who, one may say, is still searching its ways to touch within the spatio-temporal coordinates of the internet. Even though we are "chronically online" and attempt to draw alternative ways of touching (such as ASMR) in this new context, the time-space categories that define touch in the physical space are totally different to those that frame virtual worlds. With their immediacy, the space is radically shrunk, if not nullified. But so is time. The flickering images represent a constant stringing, which makes any sort of slow and thoughtful contemplation seem really difficult. So, touch is to be either recreated in the context of the internet or redefined or reawakened in the physical world. The once absent attention contemporary humanities have started to place on touch and the body are thus of little surprise.

However, with some of the focus on touch, one cannot but shake the impression that touch is utilized as a niche peculiarity, which is always thought of in opposition to the ruling or the authoritative structures of society. In accordance with such an apprehension, touch remains locked

within a constatation of conceptual binarisms and imputed with an inability to escape its own marginal condition. Therefore, it gives an impression of an irrational Otherness, sacrificed for the needs of a performed institutionalized subversion.

Instead, we claim, touch is neither quite opposing nor dominant. The importance to meditate on it lies in the fact it falls into an ambiguous place of intimate and political, of personal and social. If the mere existence of touch represents the absolute foundation of corporeal and subjective autonomy of a person (if I can touch, I am not an amorphous entity), touch is also something that constitutes a community (Aumiller, 2021). The codification of touch, which installs the way in which we are allowed to touch, represents a non-verbal corpus of community. A violent touch can be executed on a systemic or on a personal level, but, intertextually speaking, these layers always intersect. A touch may therefore be more or less intimate, but it ultimately almost intertwines with wider social codifications of touch. The acknowledgement of the importance of the embodiment and the touch is thus crucial, for it unveils the real, palpable existence of human beings that bear the weight of society (nowhere else but) on their physical bodies, connected with the world through touch.

The eye vs. the skin

The centuries-long obliteration of touch from the Western *episteme* is well expressed in the hierarchical opposition between the skin and the eye. Ocularcentrism as a distinctive characteristic of the Western metaphysics (Jay, 1988) has been further exacerbated by the scopophilic arrangement of modern technology, in particular social media. Initiated by Plato and perfected with the enlightenment project, ocularcentrism enthroned the sense of sight as a principal mechanism of rational access to the sensible reality. This supposition of the inherent overlapping between sight, science, and rationality that is based on the imperative of preserving distance between the subject (active) and the object (passive) of perception as something that according to the Western epistemological tradition all three have in common, caused the erasure of tactile and bodily foundations of many paradigms. Paterson (2012) provides the example of geometry and measuring units whose basic principles were at first operationalized through the early mathematicians' interactions with the physical space, body, and touch. Geometry as a prototypical invention of visual abstraction demanded the oblivion of corporeality, touch, and of a diverse spectrum of somatic perceptions as preconditions for the conceptualization of abstract

categories (ibidem).

A wide corpus of antique texts was written alongside with the disciplinary emancipation of Ancient Greek philosophy. These texts, some of them more and others less explicitly, present the rudiments of what one may call tenacious "somatophobia" (Grosz, 2008, 4). The author of *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* Elizabeth Grosz connects it with the "establishment of philosophy as a form of knowing, a form of rationality, only through the disavowal of the body, specifically the male body, and the corresponding elevation of mind as a disembodied term (Grosz, 1994, 4–5). Plato's notion of *chora* – a term that was centuries later adopted and critically subverted by Julia Kristeva – that appears in his work *Timaeus* interweaves a violent splitting of form and matter, body and mind, *soma* and idea, with the binary couple of male and female. Western epistemological thought is therefore rooted in the usage of the dichotomous and hierarchical distinction of "man" and "woman" that attempts to rationalize relations of dominance and submission (ibidem). Touch as the most carnal sense was deemed as "low", "irrational", and belonging to the world of incomprehensible wildness of nature. As such, it was confined within the category of "pure matter" that counted on the concept of logic as its diametrical antipode.

If on the one hand corporeal and material turns in art and humanities delegated attention to both body and touch, the dominance of the visual over the corporeal still remains a symptom even in the 21st century. Stepcounter apps and similar techno-digital inventions that try to capture the body into numerical or pictorial representation very much abide by the notion of the "savage body" whose somatic ferocity must be rationally tamed by the eye in order to function.

The Christian touch

In the reasoning of Christian theology, the contradistinction between form and matter was translated into the separation of soul, granted to the human by God, and the ephemeral, lustful carnality (Grosz, 2008). Nevertheless, Christian messianism concerns a particular ethos of embodiment that merges the divine and the Earthly, encapsulated in Jesus as the central figure of Christian theology. Moreover, the body is of central importance in religious rituals. Namely, it is not only that the engaged, moving body is a requirement for obtaining sacraments. The Eucharist itself is funded upon the notion of the body and its metaphorical passing between the Earthly and

the divine. A similar ambiguity as the one that applies to the body can be detected in Christian consideration of touch.

In the *New Testament*, touch functions as a backbone for numerous religious images and allegories. Such segments of the text that build on the motive of touch as a concept that can symbolize both divine and the sinful, document an utterly ambiguous attitude towards touch. If the touch of Christ heals and cloaks from death and thus acts as a conductor between the mortal earthly and the eternal divine, then Christian ethics can be mostly designated as an ethics of bodily co-presence (Grundmann, 2015). The scriptures we are referring to, namely, portray a moral code of touch, which defies repulsion, fear, and disease[11].

One can, on the other hand, in the *Bible* too, detect representations of touch as a lure into the perverse and forbidden. Unlike those referred to above such passages base Christian religious doctrine on prohibition, regulation, and negation of touch. The most renowned depictions of touch in the religious text in question – at least if we presuppose their usage and questioning in art and philosophy as our main criteria – are most likely to be found in the *Gospel of John*. In all the ambiguity they embody through the reference to touch, the pieces we have in mind were compared and analyzed by Jean-Luc Nancy, "the first proper philosopher of touch", a title he has been given by his colleague Jacques Derrida who had dedicated him the book *On Touching: Jean-Luc Nancy* (Derrida, 2005, 4). In *Noli me tangere,* Nancy (2003) juxtaposes the scene *Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene* to the scene *Jesus Appears to Thomas*, which are described in the 20th chapter of *The Book of John*. The first sequence concerns Jesus' apparition to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection. She is mourning him in the garden and, although he is right there, in the form of a gardener, does not recognize him right away. When she does, however, his response is "*mḗ mou háptou*" (in Greek) or "*noli me tangere*" (in Latin). The most common translation of this phrase is "cease holding on to me". What the mentioned segment implies is a doctrine of faith that rests upon firm trust that gives up any need for tangible confirmation or empirical evidence. "The touch of the divine" that depends on true belief is thus only possible without the demand for material verification (ibidem). Perhaps this void, the emptying of physical touch that stands at the core of religious belief, suggests the ultimate unknowability of God. An ontological puzzle that can only

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[11] A recent major challenge to such interpretation of ethics has been the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the discourse of ethics changed from selfless touch to the prohibition of touch.

ever be felt through phantomable glimpses. Rudolf Otto's *mysterium, tremendum et fascinans*, with which he describes the numinous, cannot be materially touched precisely because of an otherness that is too immense and ineffable (Otto, 1958). The gist is probably, however, in the fact that giving up the ultimate thing that enables one's existence (touch, let us remember, is the precondition of life), represents the greatest sacrifice. Thus, a most notable leap of faith.

If he repudiates Mary Magdalene's plea to touch him, Jesus does not, however, act in the same manner in the scene that is also known under its alternative name *Doubting Thomas*. Namely, Jesus does not refuse Thomas' demand to touch him, but when touched by the named disciple, he speaks the known phrase "/b/ecause you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." A concept of touch that stems from the described two passages is therefore one that confirms the understanding of touch as the ultimate instrument for verifying the truth, while at the same time suggests the renunciation of physical touch as a precondition for the touch of faith.

Yet, this oxymoron of faith draws upon the interplay of material and spiritual touch precisely because, in real life, one should most likely come into literal contact with things (through haptic engagement) when seeking the "truth". This should be so at least when the field of inquiry addresses actual, palpable realities of people. The mentioned mostly relates to ivory towers of academia, when, in fact, the truth always already relates to embodiment and the haptic (as well as tactile) touch between subjects and the world. Touch as haptic is here an important concept because it may be thought of as a bridge between tactile understanding and emotional knowing. If one, we claim, can never fully exist without the other, which makes them more two sides of a continuum of seeking for truth then two distinct things, then it is precisely touch in the sense of haptic engagement that enables them to come together.

Still, one should have in mind constant processes of change and the plurality of what we swiftly term as "truth". Touch oscillates between subject and object, Earthly and divine, and material and spiritual, which makes it an instance of high ambiguity. Nevertheless, touch may be taken into possession and turned into a violent one. When codified, it is also what cocreates communities and thus functions as a bridge between intimate and social. Therefore, as something that testifies about actual realities of people, there is something harshly unambiguous about it.

Tactile cosmology and touching objects

Let us move several centuries forward, to The Middle ages. Historical science's nomenclature that refers to the period in question as "the Dark Middle Ages" suggests that during those times, the corporeal and touch were violently tamed. Classen (2012) problematizes such generalizing, which she refers to as an invention of a post-enlightenment view on history, which essentially conceals the fact that the life in the Middle Ages was defined by a "tactile cosmology" (Classen, 2012, 27). The universe was envisaged through conceptual oppositions of hot and cold and moist and dry (ibidem). Because these sensations are exclusively accessible through touch, touch was acknowledged as the ultimate pathway to truth. Confirmation for such claims can be found in numerous artworks, which depict God and the divine touch in terms of a craftsman, a sculptor, who used their own hands to create Adam (ibidem). Furthermore, in the light of the new interest in the individual subject and physiology, many Christian societies in the Late Middle Ages became fixated on the imaginary of Christ's suffering and its replication on people's own bodies. Christ's wounds, when pressed onto a believer's own body, were believed to bring one closer to an intimate dialogue with the divine (Classen, 2012).

Diptych Löwenstein, which was painted in 1457 and is nowadays displayed in the National Museum in Nürnberg, is composed of two separate, but conceptually intertwined images. The right sight of the diptych shows Count Löwenstein holding a book in an ecstatic manner, and, astonished by something that seems ineffable, stares in the direction of the other image in the diptych. The core motive of the latter is Jesus whose body is encircled with a golden aureole. Blood is dripping out of the open wound on his ribs (Pleydenwurff, 1457).

The described artwork – as well as others based on a similar trope – undermine the idea of the visual image as the necessary birthplace of spiritual and cognitive realizations that dominated in the religious and intellectual discourse of the High Middle Ages. According to Ganz (2017), sight did enjoy the highest status among the senses, but when it came to everyday life, a generally accepted hierarchy of the senses could not be spoken of in the West. A confirmation may be found in the aesthetics of medieval sacral texts: its calligraphy, ornaments, and embroidery that turned mere sequences of letters, woven into tales, into sacred objects able to mediate between the earthly

and the divine worlds (Ganz, 2017). The process of reading such texts was therefore a specific visual and tactile undertaking, a choreography of the seen and the touched.

Away from touch: the supremacy of the rationality and the eye

As claimed by Martin Jay (1993), renaissance and the scientific revolution engendered an absolute supremacy of "ocularcentrism" and the corresponding material dispositif that produces a series of scopic regimes or subcultures of visuality (if we refuse to understand the term "scopic regime" as a monolit). At the same time, the acts and rituals of practicing belief were turned into more individual, discrete forms. Stemming from demands posed by reformation and the protestant movement, such a leaning towards lessering the role of touch and the body in collective religious manifestations not only diminished the importance of physical objects in the processes of worship, but also transformed the practice of collective ceremonies, which had been a privileged field of touch among worshipers (Classen, 2012).

The conviction, which asserted the primacy of reason and the separation between the body and the soul was given its most influential form with the writings of Rene Descartes. Despite it being already present in the philosophy of the Old Greeks, Descartes perfected the arguments behind the idea and adapted it to demands of modern science (as opposed to the Greek *episteme*). Furthermore, he did not merely conceptualize the split between mind and body. His main invention laid in uprooting the soul – or the mind – from nature, in pulling the reason out of the domains of the palpable world, making corporeality and touch forever inferior to consciousness. Touch as the most carnal of the senses was pushed on the lowest position.

Another example of the ambivalent conceptualizations of touch that suggest Western society's inability to conceive of touch beyond passing through oppositions might be found in Hegel. This philosopher agreed with Aristotle's operationalization of touch as the most basic dimension of sensing. For Hegel, the purpose of sense-perception is the translation of the outer conditions of the world into a perfect inner form, which enables the emergence of an "I" as a principal category of consciousness and as a distinctive entity. "*Aufheben*", the core term of the hegelian dialectics, refers to both steadiness and change, to lowering and rising, and is thus conditioned by touch as the force that imbues amorphous matter with difference (Vranešević, 2021). However, Hegel's "Spirit" gravitates towards the abstract. Consequently, Hegel's notion of manifestation of the Spirit

presupposes progressive abandonment of the tactile for the ever more abstract, disembodied, and self-referential abstract (Pippin, 2002). Yet, there is something utterly proper to touch in sublation, as the Spirit, through negativity and resolution, (never quite) touches itself. This "almost touching" is congruent with Jacques Derrida's conceptualization of touch in *On Touching - Jean-Luc Nancy*. As previously shown, the author defines touch as having a structure of an asymptote. Consequently, the structure of touch is that of constantly approaching the line, without ever fully touching it.

Visiting museums in the 18th century was significantly different than today's version of the same activity. Museums not only used to allow touching of the exhibited objects, but invited visitors to touch the surfaces, emphasizing the contact between the human body and museum artefacts as a medium for bringing a certain "then" and "there" into "here" and "now". Such an approach to behaviour protocol in museums underwent a radical change in the 19th century, when artworks and objects came under the exclusive domain of sight. The mentioned shift occurred at the same time as the philosophy of aesthetics was conceptualized not as science of the entire sphere of sense-perception (as the word *aiesthesis* was used in Aristotle's philosophy), but as limited to the field of (especially visual) art (Komel, 2008).

The prohibition of touch that transformed forms of institutional encounters between viewers and objects most likely outgrows the pragmatic tendency for preventing wear of the exhibited objects. The notions of linear time and endless progress, which stood (stand) in the nucleus of implementation of the enlightenment discourse, in the ruthlessness of the colonial grabbing, cemented time and transformed artifacts into documents for justifying relations of domination and submission. One-sided, linear manner of viewing history, dictated the untouchability of objects, which were claimed to precisely narrate history. Not only were time and space moulded into a different relation that served the prioritizing of linear progress, but were also stopped in time (with the untouchable artefacts) and made to support the ideological foundations of the colonial West that declared itself a privileged world of sight and denuded of the bestiality of touch. Because touch was believed to have nothing in common with the cognitive and the aesthetic, it was denied its previous constitutive role in the museum experience.

Alois Riegl, a 19th century Viennese art historian who believed an upward progression from haptic to optic art to be the norm of the developed contemporaneity, claimed that such an evolution of the artistic expression is congruent with certain societal changes. What Riegel was implying, namely, was the existence of an intrinsic connection between the emancipation of mental functions from bodily ones on one and the transformation of art into more abstract (optical) forms on the other side (Lee, 2004).

Avant-garde movements as bodies against war

If the approaches to art and religious practices described in previous paragraphs disregard touch and gestate it as a remnant of the irrational animalism, which the human is to leave behind in order to fully exercise the potential of their intellect, then the horrors of World War I and II highlighted touch and the bodily in all their vulnerability. The corporeal was dragged onto the very stage of war brutality: to the battlefields, concentration camps, woods, hospitals, in front of military machines and other bodies. The body, treated as ever only one of the two extreme endpoints on the life-death continuum, became an inorganic formation, one in the series of machines that are coordinated to serve the tendencies of territory claims and necropolitics[12]. Hence, the body became the ultimate totality: reason as the driving force of human individuals dissolved in front of the absolute mortality of the body that, in spite of being treated and functioning as a machine, drowned out the idea of complete separation and hierarchical relationship between the body and the mind. The body was metamorphosed into a center of action and meaning; as the primary unit of the warring zones it exposed both its vulnerable as well as its murderous facets. Along with the body, the touch, once again, and in an even more explicit manner, became a subject of political manipulation. What can be said about war crimes and war rape if not that they represent a (politically) usurped, skewed, one-sided and utterly excessive touch?

In Europe, the period that stretches between the two world wars marked the origin of avant-garde movements not only as artistic, but also as wholesome socio-cultural phenomena[13]. In terms of the

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[12] Necropolitics is a concept adopted by the Cameroonian theoretician Achille Mbembe. Re-thinking Michel Foucault's theory of biopolitics, he follows Foucault's thinking about the structures of power enabled via subtle control of citizens' lives exercised through normative discursive schemes. Mbembe's central premise concerns the ruling authority's sovereign decision-making regarding questions of who shall live and who shall die (Gržinić, 2021).

[13] The term avant-garde was already used in the 19th century, but had not yet been understood in its social critical role.

extreme accentuation of the body and its appropriation for nationalist and political agendas representative of war's barbarity, the expansion and growing impact of such movements, once viewed through a retrospective lens, most likely do not come as a surprise. Namely, artistic practices and works normally placed under the umbrella term "avant-garde" movements are frequently designated as the "tactile turn in art". One may consider the painter Yves Tanguy who operates with unusual spatial representations to impact the viewer's feeling of their own body in space or the work of the sensual photographer Man Ray. What the two authors have in common is a proclivity to make their – although visual – oeuvre function in terms of reproducing a bodily effect. Furthermore, avant-garde artists were concerned with the impact of the ephemeral presence of their own bodies among the public, with sonic babbling, and with expressive dance, none of which swore by the previously understood "artwork" as produced artifact (Jolles, 2006). Their activity was based on a "shock effect" and thus on the intended stoppage of everyday practice of bodies, with which they called into question what or who "the body" even is. The described endeavor was meant not only to touch the viewer. Instead, the tactile turn offered a space for reappropriation of corporeality that was violently subjugated during the war. Furthermore, the shock as the movements' main principle acted as an appeal to the viewer, to respond to the touch of shock and reappropriate it from the war ideology, which locked the touch into two extremes: the untouchable, dirty, and alienated on the one, and the excessive, violent, and murderous on the other side.

The Austrian painter Maria Lassnig placed the motive of the body at the pure kernel of her aesthetic idiolect. Expressive self-portraits that most often show only one part of the artist's organism, but twisting, minimizing or enlarging it, can be understood as visual representations of touch *par excellence*. As commented by Lettmann (2017), Lassnig's distinctive style, which she named "*Körpergefühlmalerei*" in the 1940s and can be translated as something similar to "painting of the body's consciousness", communicates the feelings and sensations of the author's body during the process of painting. The substance of her work is thus not only about creating a place where a body speaks, translating the carnal into the language of the image, but also about capturing the body in a passing moment. This concept of a "moment" that can be detected in Lassnig's paintings, molds the body into something utterly touchable and thus seizes the untouchable of the body: the touch itself. The structure of touch, as examined by the philosopher Jacques Derrida, has the form of an asymptote: the touching of touch is impossible, for this point where one might attempt to grasp

touch always results in a split between the touched and the touching. A touch is itself an impossibility, an unstoppable, indiscernible shifting between the subject and the object, a symmetrical asymmetry as the phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty suggests. Lassnig defies the logic of the endlessly changing body whose porosity makes it an ultimate object – and subject – of touch. Thus, her invention lies in combining the instantaneousness of touch with a motionless past-presence: a paradox, a shock.

Such a touch-oriented explanation of her work may be better articulated with an argument Merleau-Ponty makes in *Phenomenology of Perception*, namely that the "past time is wholly collected up and grasped in the present" (Merleau-Ponty, 2005, 80). Besides making the transient body of touch the foundation of her visual art, Lassnig transfers her own proprioception – the inner sensation of her own body – that is the most elusive to the eye precisely into the dominance of the latter: she visualizes the unseeable life of her interior. What Maria Lassnig and Maurice Merleau-Ponty have in common is the understanding of touch as a synesthetic experience that precedes any distinction between sensorial modalities and represents the backbone of sense-perception as such.

Merleau-Ponty and the structure of touch

Phenomenology of Perception, which was first published in 1945, is congruent with the art of the same era's gravitation towards addressing the corporeal and the tactile. Merleau-Ponty's focal preoccupation in the book in question is the relationship between senses, the human subjects, their moving bodies, and space. The crucial postulation for the purposes of this essay is Merleau-Ponty's (2005, 106) conceptualization of the general structure of touch, which he arrives at by examining the phenomenon of self-touch:

> My body, it was said, is recognized by its power to give me 'double sensations': when I touch my right hand with my left, my right hand, as an object, has the strange property of being able to feel too. We have just seen that the two hands are never simultaneously in the relationship of touched and touching to each other. When I press my two hands together, it is not a matter of two sensations felt together as one perceives two objects placed side by side, but of an ambiguous set-up in which both hands can alternate the rôles of 'touching' and being 'touched'.

Touch is thus structured as a continuous flowing between subject and object that is impossible to fixate. What is touched is always already what is being touched. From this postulation stems our

previous delineation of touch as different from a skewed, violent touch. The touch we have been focusing on (a caress, a contact) connotes the positive aspects of touch.

For Merleau-Ponty, the dynamics he ascribes to touch represents the prototype for the subject's being in the world, which is always a being through sense-perception. Touch, one can say, is thus proper to all of the senses, as long as neither side takes the place of the dominant, the active, the mastering: the place of subject. The touch as we understand it in our text therefore more often refers to "haptic" than to "tactile". Haptic, namely, does not imply a separation between the sense organs, but suggests an involvement of the non-optical within the function of the eye (Ladewig and Schmidgen, 2022).

If art and certain philosophical directions during the previous century resorted to body and touch as their points of reference, then psychoanalysis' genesis is one that goes away – and not towards – touch. At first, the founding father, Sigmund Freud, practiced psychoanalysis as a bricolage of hypnotherapy and several other techniques that were based on touch. In addition, to defeat the resistance of consciousness blocking the unconscious, Freud utilized a technique of touching his patients on the forehead. His touch served to redirect the attention of consciousness, thus causing a break that enabled Freud to bypass its defense (Anzieu, 2016). However, Freud soon abandoned touch (as well as the gaze), as a mere "trick", insufficient to treat the ills of the psyche. Psychoanalytic treatment consequently became an exclusive technique of speech that was only possible through a prohibition of touch (Komel, 2008). Since psychoanalysis is based on the concept of the "subject", and the touch represents something that, as it pours between the subject in the object of touch, dismantles the subject, such a development of psychoanalysis is of no surprise.

One must still, nevertheless, acknowledge the fact that psychoanalysis, too, hinges on the medium of touch in analyzing how subjectivity comes about. Namely, the sensual surface of the body is the one to inaugurate the relation between the inner and the other, the bond between the subject and the rest of the worlds, which is (the bond) the foundation for the distribution of the drives (Grosz, 2008). The distinction between touch and non-touch (the absence of touch) is a necessary precondition for the establishment of subjectivity and for the self-recognition of the unique

existence of their body. Furthermore, even psychoanalysis and several psychotherapeutic approaches place touch, although touch as prohibited and absent, in the nucleus of their practice.

Artistic sphere in the 1960s produced a new radical move towards the corporeal as the vital force of artistic expression. The "performative turn" comes about in an era of a militant cold-war atmosphere, the placing of television into living rooms and the omni-presence and reproducibility of visual images (Paić, 2013).

In this new logic of reproduction and manipulation of the visual, performance as a new artistic practice opted for representing the vulnerability of the body and the transience of moments. Performance artists gave up a narrative structure that marked traditional performative forms and made their work an encounter between them and the audience (ibidem). Following our stance that conceives touch in terms of hapticism, which embodies all senses, then we might understand performance art as a specific exercise of touch between the artist and the viewer. The relationship between them is defined by ephemerality, discontinuity, and overcoming the distinction between the subject and the object.

In *Rhythm 0*, a 6-hour performance by Marina Abramović, the implicit interconnectedness of performative art and touch is overtly addressed. First, the artist put 72 objects on a table and then motionlessly stood in the center of the room. A hair comb, a rose, a knife, honey, a pistol, a scalpel, and other objects that alternate between violence and softness were placed there for the audience to use them on her in any way they would have liked. One potential interpretation of *Rhythm 0* finds that its disturbing artistic value lies within the performance's radical blurring out of limits. Artists and audience, subject and object, friendly and violent touches became a matter of violent intermixing, producing questions such as "what even is a touch? or "what even is a subject?"

Humanities and social sciences have been experiencing a radical rotation towards the somatic and the material since the threshold into the third millennium. "New materialism", which encapsulates an inflow of the corporeal into the general focus on sign and language, functions in a post-constructivist, ontological, and material manner. It strives to shatter the idea of language, culture, and representation as the only valid fields of scientific social analysis (Treanor, 2015).

Although it seems that the body, and the sense of touch, have finally obtained a firm position within the discourse of the contemporary West, one cannot disregard the fact that it is precisely a form of untouchability, enabled through the virtual disembodiment and the reduction of people to numbers to be captured by statistical data, that is still at work in contemporary geopolitical and social strategies of exclusion. The shoving of the "Other" to the margins of cities and states (one can think of the refugee crisis in Europe that was especially prominent in 2015), and their aseptic exclusion on the edges of society, turns the "Other" into an untouchable category. Even though untouchable, the "Other" is at the same time touched by the excessive touch of a death threat that reduces him/her onto their pure existence. In such cases, we claim, the touch in question is a skewed, one-directional one, which does not acknowledge the subjectivity of the so-called Other. As noted by Aumiller (2021), the idea of community sustains itself through prohibition, regulation, and imperative of touch.

Conclusion

In the present text, we tackled touch as a phenomenon with a very complex genealogy, which is always convoluted with wider social conditions. Touch is, as we have shown, a highly ambivalent concept: it distresses the categorical borders between inner and outer, intimate and political, and subject and object. However, there is also something brutally unambiguous in the direct, corporeal touch. To conclude, we present one final example of the ambiguous position of touch in society: if contemporary art and present-day humanities struggle to revive the focus on otherwise neglected meaning of touch in the human life, then the predominant audio-visuality of modern technology generates a general absence of touch from our everyday lives. The outlined fact was highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemics, who produced a certain Brechtian "alienation effect" with regards to the human relationship with touch. It emphasized and widened an already existing cavity in the subject's haptic engagement with the physical space. However, touch is of crucial importance for the emergence and constant reformulation of the subject. Touch is an important reservoir of memories as well as a fundamental way to experience otherness. By touching people, animals, or surfaces one learns about others' as well as their own limits. The subject helps shape and is herself shaped by touching, by entering into contact with the world. A lack of touch, which is accompanied by a "quietness of touch" within humanities, a quietness that has only recently started to be

addressed, is not without consequence precisely because of its constitutive role in the subject's formation. Thus, questions related to touch, as well those that are linked with its place within and in opposition to the digital, should be thoroughly confronted in humanities as well as in everyday life.

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Poetry & Prose

The Crib

Elena sat on the edge of the tall bed that took up almost half of the tiny hospital room. It was not clear how it could ever be brought inside. Even the gurney could not pass through the doorway when her daughter was brought to the department from intensive care. The short, frail doctor had to lift the patient in his arms, carry her through the hallway and carefully lay her down on the bed.

Elena rested her hand on a thick book lying on top of an old Soviet woolen blanket at the feet of her sleeping daughter: "Three Musketeers" by Alexandre Dumas. As a child, Elena loved to read about the adventures of brave, noble warriors, but now the novel seemed naive to her, and even a little silly. But her daughter liked the book, and Elena read it aloud to her. It was a little distracting for both of them and slightly brightened up the room in a shabby hospital of the nineties.

Three days ago, her daughter had surgery, for the second time in four months. She had her spleen removed. Anemia did not allow the child to actively grow and develop physically, and the doctor insisted on surgical intervention. At the age of twelve, the girl looked eight or nine years old and did not gain weight.

The second anesthesia seemed to be tolerated relatively better than the first one. The daughter was on a dropper, which was supposed to wash the traces of anesthesia out of the body and fill it with glucose and vitamins. Some indicators in the blood tests went off scale, while others, on the contrary, did not reach the lower limit. Doctors ran around the hospital in horror and convened councils.

Elena herself was terribly afraid of injections and even fainted when she was tested. And when the procedures were carried out with her daughter, the mother ran out into the hall and, like a tigress in a cage, wandered around in circles, nervously biting the skin on the back of her hands. But she had to be brave and, with trembling hands, learn to regulate the dropper herself, stop it at the right time, and even change the bottles with medicine.

As a child, Elena almost never got sick. And if she caught a cold, then it never occurred to her parents to stay with her on sick leave. Like most of their peers, they were busy building a bright future for new generations of Soviet people, and they had absolutely no time to bother with their own children.

Drip-drop… Time got depressingly stuck in the regulator of the medical apparatus.

Elena was tormented by fear, confusion and loneliness. Her heart was breaking at the sight of her pale, fragile daughter. The youngest son had just started his first grade, and his mother could not be with him in such an important and responsible year. The boy, like a ball, was being thrown from relatives to relatives. And the child was lacking maternal care.

Despite the fact that the father took his son to school and picked him up when his days off fell on school days, he was not there for any of his daughter's surgeries when she needed fatherly support as much as her mother. He dropped by the hospital for a formal visit only once for ten minutes. Duty fulfilled. The relatives cannot complain.

Elena divorced her husband a few years ago, but they had to continue huddling all together in a tiny apartment. The children did not know anything about the official separation of their parents, but they could not help but notice the tense relationship between their parents. Elena and her son once even had to ask her friend for asylum after a fight with her drunken husband.

She felt sick from the memory of that evening and the hateful, repulsive smell of beer emanating from her husband. He got so angry that he started throwing things at the wall. He broke the rotary phone. It became dangerous to remain at home.

Her daughter was visiting her grandmother at the time.

Drip-drop…

Hmm, grandmothers. They once vowed that they would help Elena with her children. They both just cannot get sick at the same time, right? At least one of them will help out. And both grandmothers fell ill in the same year. Diabetes, asthma, surgeries, a wheelchair… They themselves needed constant care. But persistent ladies held on to life with an iron grip. And even tried to help Elena.

Elena wanted to please her daughter in any way she could. But she had no money. She was being torn between home and the hospital, her son and her daughter. She could not work.

Recently, she accidentally found out that her ex-husband, secretly, took possession of her tiny apartment, inherited from her distant relatives, which she rented out and with the money from

which she could somehow feed her children. Elena herself wore a plastic bag in her boot: the sole was getting wet mercilessly. Elena was catastrophically unable to buy a new pair of shoes.

She did not count on pennyworth alimony. It seemed that her ex-husband, stealing from his own children, was taking revenge on *her* for something.

Drip-drop…

A nurse entered the room.

"Mommy, move aside, please. I must give an injection of antibiotics," she said sternly and patted the child on the shoulder to wake her up. "Here you are. How is your scar going, by the way?"

The nurse checked the white bandage with dried burgundy stains on the girl's stomach.

"It seems to have stopped bleeding. Be more careful in the future. Do not strain so much that the seam does not separate even more," the nurse instructed the child. She removed the dropper, measured the girl's temperature (she still had fever), collected medical instruments and left.

"Thank you!" Elena called after the nurse.

"Mom, will you buy me my favorite cake, Bouchée?" Unexpectedly asked her daughter.

"Of course, I will. Once you get better, we'll go to The North Café."

Elena did not yet know where she would get the money for this. In the late nineties, going to a cafe was for her, as for many, a luxury. But she will figure something out. Perhaps, her brother will help her out again. Elena was grateful to him. Her brother often gave her a helping hand.

"Are you hungry?" Elena looked at her daughter in amazement.

"Yes, a bit."

The dark, stuffy, tiny room seemed to light up. The child regained her appetite.

The girl was able to eat just a quarter of a green apple: green ones were her favorite. And she took a sip of sparkling water.

"Will you read "The Musketeers" aloud to me?" the girl asked quietly.

"Do you want it now, darling? Let me read it then."

That evening, after her daughter fell asleep, Elena climbed into a crib with slats that was huddled against the opposite wall in their room. The hospital did not bother to provide a couch for the parents, who were on duty around the clock at the bedside of their children. Therefore, only a chair remained as an alternative place to sleep for the whole month. Elena had to curl up and hug her knees to fit into the tiny space. She gradually began to sink into a disturbing, sensitive sleep...

by Nadezhda Bezuevskaia

a letter

today i wrote a letter

to a woman i never

met

she was given

six years in prison

for the words

she

never

said

i told her

about my job

about my neighbor's

white

rabbits

i often watch from my

window

they like lying in the sun

and munching on sticks

i told her about

how i wish i could read

more marx

(she is also a socialist)

but end up watch anime

i told her about

my favorite poem

that i wrote

i told her to carry on

to persevere

i told her that she was

strong

on the international women's

day

i wished her not

equality

but

freedom

i wish i could tell her

more

but the mail is looked through

by the state

censor

so politics

is a no-no

even for political

prisoners

i told her it was

rainy

today

in yerevan

i told her that many people

gave money to

help refugees

i did not specify

where they come

from

or why they are in need

of a refuge

in the first place

i told her

there's hope

i told her i like diet

coke

i did not know why

i doubt they have coke

in prisons

i didn't know what

to tell her

a woman i

didn't know

a woman given

six years in prison

i feel like i wanna puke

from stress

i wish i knew what

she would tell me

in response to my

letter

but

unfortunately

i couldn't leave

my

address

i wish i could really

help

her

i wish

there was

anything

i could do

other than

write

this

letter

i wish i could write it

better

i wish there would be no

need

for me to write

it

as such

am i asking for

too

much?

By Ivan Ovcharenko

plastic

i go out to the store

in a country that is at war

i buy water

two five-liter bottles

they are heavy

the plastic handle

pierces into my skin

as if

craving for blood

but it's not my blood

befalling the earth

when my bottles are full

i carry them home

just like jesus carried his cross

with a key i open the door

and come in

in the kitchen i

pour some water

into the kettle

and put it on fire

i look at the window

and

i wish i could break

it

and

cut myself with the shards

to feel

what i'm supposed to be

feeling

i feel like kneeling

and praying my heart away

but the windows are plastic

so is everything anyway

in a country that is at war

there's no point in praying

plastic is the god

so is my mother's love

so is her pirozhkis' smell

so are her words

so are the birds

she is feeding every morning

so is her asking me not to worry

in a country that is at war

so am i

wishing that i could cry

wishing i haven't spent all my tears before

in the country not yet at war

i'm afraid of what if

the only tear

i could muster

is also

plastic

By Ivan Ovcharenko

Masterpiece

These stacks of books, hardbound,
a useless usage of paper.

This splendid spread of ink
black spots artlessly spilled.

Their cause is yet to be found.

Some less fortunate experts of poetry and art
for subsistence's sake or perhaps for mere fame
have scattered these lines.

For the crime of reading these lines
countless innocent generations
with a beggars bowl of knowledge, skill and wisdom
have begged for life, throughout their lives
everywhere!

Ah, the eternal torture of time.
The bygone unconscious creator, time.

Devoid of reflections, the darkness praised.

Ah, the crushing loneliness of life
To think, overthink and keep thinking…
The bane of few naïve delusionals.

Today I have finally decided

To take my revenge from time
Through the dusk on a plain paper
I will draw some crooked lines.

By Jaun Eliya
Translated from Urdu by Abdur Rehman Khan

When guilt knocks on the door of your house

Don't pretend that you aren't home.

Let her come inside
ask her for tea
and not just as a formality in sheer hollowness!
Let her feel that it is safe in your home
that her secrets are safe.

Don't judge her on her apparel
talk to her
if she becomes silent don't force her.
During uncomfortable pauses
distract her with banter.

Let her
touch the expensive paintings
make a tiara of flowers plucked from delicate vines
skid on the slippery bathroom floor.
Let her adore herself in the big mirror of the living room.
Play with her.
When she gets tired, let her sleep.
And if you get tired from all this hosting
then gently wake her up
and whisper to her
"guilt I've some work now
if you want to stay then there's a vacant room on the ground floor.
You can come inside the next time without ringing the bell.
We'll meet.
Take care."

By Abdur Rehman Khan

denmark

I.

Tove Ditlevsen is my mother figure

when I loiter in the streets of Copenhagen

little poppy girl

Else Marie Pade is my mother figure

when I stay in Aarhus

a little sound in a city's body

in the mirror

I only see a fragmented body

eyes, lips, collarbones

chunks of chestnut hair

I bet Kierkegaard's bride

always got messy hair

northern wind is severe

my second skin is min nye kjole

a dress for a child born in an empire

my third skin is my room with a view of the construction

my fourth skin is my city

kissed by Kattegat

my fifth skin is this country

where I am no local

my sixth skin is Europe

my seventh skin is the whole world

II.

motherless child

a milk-stepped kitten

kneading on some very soft objects

such as

teddy bears

blankets

rosy cheeks

soft danish sounds

touching the world's body

as if to escape

breadcrumb trail to germany

breadcrumb trail to sweden

I can't hear the borders of the words

when I hear danes speaking

we destroy the borders of the words

when we write poems

we refuse the borders

and slip inside foreign words

without permission

we break the waves of the speech

until we remain speechless

the wind leaves a tear

while gulls are laughing

By Glafira Soldatova

hjemme

home was covered with forests

that's how I want to remember it

every strawberry

every raindrop

I left at night

I saw from a plane window

tomorrow following tonight

fields but no forests

in this language

d becomes l

Danmark

landmark

I fell asleep on the seat

using soft sounds as a pillow

hjemme

hjerte

if home is where it hurts

then I find my home

anywhere

on every tongue torn

on every root bled

in every birdsong

ending with a cry

lyd og lys

lyd og lys

yes thanks

oh how to thank you

more than to miss you

yes thanks

ja tak

ja tak

ja tak skuchaju