

Momma's Gotta' Let Go:
A Character-Driven Analysis of the
Mother Archetype in Musical Theatre

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Abstract

A focus on character-specific research in musical theatre has often formed a peripheral focus of many scholars. Within this thesis, I aim to explore how a specific character archetype can be explored through its relationship to pertinent social and psychological discourse. For the purpose of this thesis, Rose from *Gypsy* will form a core example upon which discussions of behaviour, identity, dependence and gender will be discussed. I aim to build upon this by cross-examining the behavioural patterns presented by Effie in *Dreamgirls* and explore how identity and the relationship with pregnancy influence her dramatic actions. Social issues surrounding race and gender will be discussed with regards to the two previous examples as well as the cultural implications and impacts of war in the narratives of *South Pacific* and *Miss Saigon*. A broader discussion of the theatrical and performative conventions relating to motherhood will inform a consideration of how social and psychological patterns impact the dramatic developments of mothers in musical theatre.

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Preface

The musical is a vast and varying piece of theatrical history which has become ever more prominent within the public's psyche. Often, we remember a specific performer who has caught our eye or dazzled with an emphatic rendition of a song of substance. Whilst musical prowess and theatrical grandeur create the sensory stimulation of performance, the foundations underpinning the frame of the musical are the characters. Much has been written on the historical developments of the musical or discussion has centred on a specific composer but has often placed character-based developments in the periphery. I wanted to consider how choosing a character descriptor as the fundamental premise for discussion can draw comparisons from a variety of viewpoints. Whilst this could easily take the guise of an historically-plotted evolution of a specific character archetype, the aim here was to extrapolate a character archetype and place it within the context of related theoretical discourse, be that social or psychological, to determine how dramatic and theatrical developments are presented in their respective musicals.

The analysis of musical theatre in this thesis will be character-based, with a specific focus on the developments of mothers in musical theatre. Motherhood will form the basic societal construct upon which the discussion will be elaborated. With motherhood as the basis for discussion, this work will utilise behavioural and identity theories alongside related gender, racial and cultural discourse to consider how the theatrical and dramatic evolution of mother characters in the musical theatre genre. The premise of motherhood has formed core ideals in social and psychological studies and this thesis will aim to expand those ideals into the social and psychological frameworks of a select group of musical theatre characters.

Within the realm of mothers in musical theatre, *Gypsy* is notable for the depiction of the gender crisis of the mother, Rose. The prevalence and importance of motherhood are intrinsic to the narrative of *Gypsy*, and as such, it forms the core of this thesis. Her relationship with her two daughters is convoluted and intense; like a woman with her two favourite toys. Rose will be used to demonstrate how behaviour and identity create

interesting dynamics between mothers and their children. She will also be considered from a feminist and gender-related viewpoint to establish how her character, and the subsequent impact she has on her children, conform to or oppose fundamental principles of femininity.

Race, culture and gender are volatile and emotional areas of discourse that have important links to the historical development of women's equality. In placing Effie from *Dreamgirls*, Kim from *Miss Saigon* and Bloody Mary from *South Pacific* within the fundamental framework of this thesis, discussions arise regarding the intersectional relationships they find themselves in with regards to race, culture and gender. These characters are used to demonstrate fundamental principles that are not as prominent in *Gypsy*. Alongside racial and cultural discourse, the implications of pregnancy will also be considered in relation to *Dreamgirls*.

The social, gendered and identity-influenced writings of Stacy Wolf and Raymond Knapp are important works for understanding how theoretical study can relate to performative and theatrical conventions in the musical. Similarly, the theoretical consideration of dramatic devices and theatrical conventions are perfectly exemplified in Scott McMillin's *The Musical as Drama* – a work will be examined throughout this thesis. Fundamentally, this thesis aims to contribute to and continue the social and theoretical understanding of the musical whilst demonstrating how character-focused analysis provides a foundation for discussion.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support of my supervisor Professor William Brooks for guiding me through this work and supporting my ideas. This project would have been far less exciting without him. I would also like to acknowledge everyone who supported me throughout the writing of this thesis.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Chapter 1. An introduction to the character-focused analysis of mothers in musical theatre and the related discourse pertaining to motherhood

For many, musical theatre exists as an art-form to be watched or performed, and as such, it is reliant on the audience's response to audible and emotional stimulation. From this basic construct comes the reasoning for composers and partners of the musical to create their work, for they are the creators of the audience's escape. They are adapting stories and collaborating with actors and musicians to establish fantasies. However, beneath such fantasies is a reality that reflects strands of society and culture that play a part in the perception of musical theatre. Of particular interest for this thesis is the isolation of characters and their relative positioning within a framework of social and behavioural discourse. The predominant history of musical theatre discourse has revolved around plotted histories of composers or the evolution of musical style (Joseph Swain's *The Broadway Musical: A Critical and Musical Survey*, and Geoffrey Block's *Enchanted Evenings: The Broadway Musical from 'Show Boat' to Sondheim and Lloyd Webber* being prime examples of surveys). However, the discussion of specifically character-driven development is less of a focal point.

The character analysis of this thesis will focus on the role of mothers in musical theatre, positioning them amongst related social and psychological theories. The aim here is to establish social patterns and psychological observations that pertain to motherhood, considering characters' relationships to theatrical practices and narrative developments within relevant case studies. Within the thesis, Rose from *Gypsy* constitutes the central character for theoretical analysis, around whom other characters will be discussed, compared, and contrasted to determine whether there are patterns within the representation

of motherhood characters in musical theatre. This thesis will take into consideration examples of cultural and racial relationships, alongside discussions on gender to explore further facets of social fluctuation that have impacted mother archetypes in musical theatre. Ultimately, this thesis endeavours to outline ways in which social and psychological studies influence how characters, in this case mothers, are presented through musical, theatrical and performative practices.

1.1 An introduction to character analysis in musical theatre discourse

When examining and studying literature on musical theatre, a prominent pattern in the format of the discussions occurs. Authors seem to choose between the historical evolution of the musical, or a selected composer and their works or musical style as particular areas of interest. However, few scholars choose to analyse from a specifically character-orientated viewpoint. Musical theatre provides vast opportunities for this, from discussing character traits (age, gender, appearance, political viewpoint) through social discourse on culture and race.

A predominant reason for choosing to research musical theatre from this angle is the ability to veer away from a purely plotted historical comparison of musical style and instead parallel the character setting and perception across a selection of musicals. Reading the components of the *Yale Broadway Masters* series gives access to composers, contextualising the musicals they created in a historical and compositional respect (Leve's *Kander and Ebb* for example).¹ The editions allow the reader to become fully immersed in the world of musical theatre's most prolific and integral composers. Of particular interest are the conditions of composition and the viewpoint of the composers that the series analyses. John Snelson's *Andrew Lloyd Webber*, for example, discusses Webber's compositional

¹ James Leve, *Kander and Ebb* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

eclecticism from the perspective of his kaleidoscope of inter-genre references,² as well as the use of rock within *Jesus Christ Superstar* as a way of referencing social and political structures that Jesus confronted.³

Identity and gender are crucial to defining what makes a 'mother' in the broad sense. These two areas are acknowledged and expressed at great length in Raymond Knapp's *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity*.⁴ Knapp's exploration of musical theatre in terms of "Idealism and Inspiration" (Chapter 4), "Gender and Sexuality" (Chapter 5) and "Relationships" (Chapter 6) helped form essential foundations for my discussion.⁵ The author chooses to focus specifically on *Gypsy's* Rose in his chapter "Gender and Sexuality", exploring the relationship between Rose and her daughters and the expression of sexual identity in the musical. Rose is similarly considered from the perspective of gender and identity in Stacy Wolf's discourse.⁶

With a specific focus on gender and the role of women in musical theatre, Stacy Wolf's *Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical* is a good example of how gender theories and identity can be used to understand relationships within musical theatre.⁷ A particular area of focus for Wolf is sexuality and its expression in musical theatre, as she discusses the evolution of the female voice between the 1950s and 2000s. Wolf's discussion is centred on performance conventions that she observes in these and how this reflects notions of feminism, sexuality and race.⁸

² John Snelson, *Andrew Lloyd Webber* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 20.

³ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁴ Raymond Knapp, *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 164-310.

⁶ Stacy Wolf, *A Problem like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

⁷ Stacy Wolf, *Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁸ *Ibid.* Examples of Wolf's commentary include the rise of the female duet in the 1950s, the centrality of female characters in the 1960s outside of the normative heterosexual relationship (21), the emergence of female characters in a community in the 1970s (she mentions the emergence of feminism in the mainstream resulting in women and men being presented in more collaborative social units. Women also stepped out of the ensemble to put a more feminine spin on the musical's emotion and political effect) (92). Her chapter "The 1970s: Everything Was Beautiful at the Ballet" highlights the importance that societal change had on the musical theatre genre as she explains how notions of race were becoming more prevalent.

Another work that has influenced my discussion, particularly with regards to sexuality in *Gypsy*, is Stacy Wolf's *A Problem like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical*.⁹ Wolf has done more than any other musical theatre literary scholar in terms of examining gender identity within the setting of the musical. As Rose is a main focus of this thesis, Wolf's discussions of Rose – from her identification as a woman and her role as a stage-mother – shall aid the gender-related examination as well as the performative implications of her character.¹⁰ Wolf specifically references Ethel Merman's Rose in her discussion of the application of gender "norms" within *Gypsy*, further advising us on how we can recognise Rose in a gendered setting and providing a framework which can be applied across musical theatre.

The collection of articles in Raymond Knapp's *The Oxford Handbook of The American Musical* proved useful for understanding theatrical devices implemented in the genre. Stacy Wolf provided further insight into the perception of gender and sexuality, continuing her discussions on how characters are gendered, with particular references to *Gypsy* and Louise's transformation from tomboy to stripper.¹¹ As race and ethnicity form an extremely important facet of my discussion, Todd Decker's discussion on race has to be noted. His chapter in the *Oxford Handbook*, "Race, Ethnicity, Performance" discusses the utilisation of stereotypes to enhance the entertainment value (he notes Hammerstein's list of hateful stereotypes, in particular: the exaggerated smiles and good spirits of black mammy figures, the "wise" Asians, and "lazy" black males).¹² Stereotypes become ever more present when the ideals of 'Orientalism' and 'intersectionality' (to be discussed further in section 1.3) become apparent in *South Pacific*, *Miss Saigon* and *Dreamgirls*. Alongside the areas of social discussion, are the pertinent chapters on theatrical and performative conventions used in the musical. The 'integration' movement, the result of book and music being given equal

⁹ Wolf, *A Problem like Maria*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹¹ Stacy Wolf, "Gender and Sexuality," in *The Oxford Handbook of The American Musical*, ed. Raymond Knapp, Mitchell Morris, and Stacy Wolf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 211.

¹² Todd Decker, "Race, Ethnicity, Performance," in *The Oxford Handbook of The American Musical*, 197-209.

importance, is integral to understanding how narrative and characters have become multi-faceted. Geoffrey Block's chapter on the subject acknowledges the movement towards song, dance and dialogue working simultaneously to create narrative motion.¹³ If 'integration' acknowledges that dialogue, song and dance should have equal importance, then how they are reflected in the musical and subsequently on stage should provide us with a broader function of character. Therefore, aspects of staging and nuance became the concern of the director, which in turn enable the visualisation of social theories and, as Barbara Wallace Grossman analyses in her chapter "Musical Theatre Directors," this visualisation was intrinsic to style.¹⁴ Concerns of direction and style form part of my consideration, specifically with regards to staging in Chapter 3, as they provide a practical reflection of social theory in performance. This is essential to determining how mother characters are vehicle through which social constraints are translated into action on stage.

Whilst literature charting the historical discourse of musical theatre (such as those of the aforementioned Joseph Swain and Geoffrey Block) have their role in analysing the breadth of development in the genre from a musical or stylistic perspective, they proved less useful for the purpose of defining character development within a specific archetype. One work that bridges the gap between discussion of history and narrative developments is Scott McMillin's *The Musical as Drama*.¹⁵ McMillin's book is a prime example of how to cross-examine specific conventions in the musical, and the work proved particularly useful in Chapter 3 of this thesis, where I utilised parts of his discussion to ascertain specific functions of mothers in the musical, notably how they function within 'the ensemble effect' and other musical conventions used in the shows. His discussion on the *diegetic* convention¹⁶ and the deployment of repetition in explaining 'lyric time'¹⁷ were especially useful in creating a more

¹³ Geoffrey Block, "Integration," in *The Oxford Handbook of The American Musical*, 97-110.

¹⁴ Barbara Wallace Grossman, "Musical Theater Directors," in *The Oxford Handbook of The American Musical*, 281-293.

¹⁵ Scott McMillin, *The Musical as Drama* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 102-105.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 31-33.

in-depth analysis on the functionality of the *Dreamgirls* narrative and the structure of 'Rose's Turn' respectively.

Motherhood was revealed to be a particularly fruitful area of consideration with regards to the cross-examination of character archetypes. By selecting a specific determinant, in this case mothers, other relevant areas of discussion are opened up that previously may not have been as applicable to musical theatre. For example, utilising discourse on family orientation and relationships and how this is reflected in character dependence. In this thesis I will directly consider mother-child relationship and sibling relationship studies, which are pertinent to the familial representation in *Gypsy*. Studies such as Rosalind Edwards et al.'s *Sibling Identity and Relationships* discuss issues of identity and the relationship of siblings in relation to their social development.¹⁸ I have used specific studies on sibling relationships such as Bryant and Crockenburg's "Correlates and Dimensions of Prosocial Behaviour: A Study of Female Siblings with their Mothers", who discuss behaviour between female siblings and their mother, a perspective that is particularly relevant to examining the female-centred family unit in *Gypsy*.¹⁹

With particular focus on the four musicals discussed in the thesis, both *Gypsy* and *South Pacific* eclipse the other two in terms of scholarly attention. *South Pacific* is often discussed in relation to the overall output of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein. Geoffrey Block's *Richard Rodgers*, one part of the *Yale Broadway Masters Series*, has a chapter devoted to *South Pacific*, where he covers all aspects of the musical from the novel it is conceived from (James Michener's *Tales of the South Pacific*), through adaptations and the implications of race and culture in the narrative.²⁰ Richard Rodgers' autobiography *Musical Stages* is often mentioned when discussing any work of Rodgers.²¹ For a more in-depth analysis of *South Pacific*, the quintessential guide is Jim Lovensheimer's *South*

¹⁸ Rosalind Edwards et al., *Sibling Identity and Relationships* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁹ Brenda K. Bryant and Susan B. Crockenburg, "Correlates and Dimensions of Prosocial Behaviour: A Study of Female Siblings with their Mothers," *Child Development* 51, no. 2 (1980): 529-544.

²⁰ Geoffrey Block, *Richard Rodgers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

²¹ Richard Rodgers, *Musical Stages: An Autobiography* (London: W. H. Allen, 1975).

Pacific: Paradise Rewritten.²² Of particular importance in his book is the chapter entitled 'Culture Clash,' where he discusses the depiction of colonialism in *South Pacific* and gives a detailed account of Bloody Mary's relationship with both the American Culture and her daughter Liat.²³ Lovensheimer's work has aided and reaffirmed some of my conceptions of Bloody Mary and has helped consider the relationship of Bloody Mary to concepts of feminism and culture.

Gypsy, as previously mentioned, has become a core example for understanding how gender and identity exist within the musical. In both Raymond Knapp's *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity* and Stacy Wolf's *A Problem Like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical*, *Gypsy* constitutes a fundamental pillar in considering the representation of gender in terms of musical composition, the development of relationships and staging, and even the performer themselves. Wolf's discussion is based around the original Rose's performance style. She notes Ethel Merman's "ability to play such an unlikable character and to portray her vulnerability as well as her power received unadulterated admiration".²⁴ Knapp provides a complementary study of Rose in his chapter "Gender and Sexuality".²⁵ Knapp outlines similar conceptions of gender in *Gypsy*, commenting specifically on the relationship between mother and daughter. His analysis is particularly strong with regards to musical representations of gender, acknowledging how motivic development and repetition are intrinsic in depicting Rose's dogged determination and identity fallacy. Both Wolf and Knapp are essential scholars for understanding identity and gender, and they have aided my discussion on the matter not only in *Gypsy*, but across the character type in general.

Whilst *Miss Saigon* and *Dreamgirls* have been afforded significantly less attention in scholarly writing, I feel that they have specific qualities that help illustrate my ideas about motherhood. Across all of the musicals, the romantic narrative and its displacement is a

²² Jim Lovensheimer, *South Pacific: Paradise Rewritten* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2010).

²³ *Ibid.*, 161-182.

²⁴ Wolf, *A Problem like Maria*, 109.

²⁵ Knapp, *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity*, 215-228.

crucial factor to gender and identity. With these four musicals, I can achieve breadth of discussion with regards to romantic attachment and the difficulties faced because of race or ethnicity, a factor that is less pertinent to *Gypsy*.²⁶ The prominent discussion of *Miss Saigon* in musical theatre scholarship has focused mainly on the controversial casting of Jonathan Pryce, a Caucasian man, in the role of the Engineer, a Eurasian man.²⁷ Whilst not specific to my discussion on motherhood, it does relate to the challenges of race and culture within the genre.

The existing studies on gender and sexuality, as well as studies on race and culture within musical theatre provide essential insights into how musical theatre can be further understood. This thesis aims to extrapolate discourse that relates to motherhood and explore how it relates to the performative, musical and theatrical aspects of the musical. This will have particular significance in Chapter 3 where I wish to determine how motherhood and the related discourse are represented through common musical theatre practices. Elements of song, musical style, staging and romantic exploration will be cross-examined through a variety of characters to see how motherhood influences these aspects.

1.2 Mothers and the methodology: placing the characters within the structure of the thesis

The research in this thesis is designed to explore patterns associated with motherhood and apply them to the setting of the musical. The initial discussion is limited to four mothers: Rose from *Gypsy*, Bloody Mary from *South Pacific*, Effie from *Dreamgirls*, and Kim from *Miss*

²⁶ Decker, "Race, Ethnicity, Performance," 209. *Dreamgirls* is mentioned very briefly with regards to the 'Black gospel voice in the 1990s revivals'. Decker mentions Lillias White, an African-American actress who played the role of Effie in the 1987 *Dreamgirls* revival. He also mentions *Dreamgirls* in a fleeting comment about the White people's relatively small moments in a revival of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and the "difficulties faced by the stage musical tradition that has long invested in maintaining a colour line."

²⁷ For a full response to the racial controversy and subsequent juristical judgement, see Lois L. Krieger, "Miss Saigon and Missed Opportunity: Artistic Freedom, Employment Discrimination, and Casting for Cultural Identity in the Theater," *Syracuse Law Review* 43, no. 2 (1992): 839-866.

Saigon. I choose to establish Rose as the focal example from which the other three can be used to draw comparisons. By establishing a foundation for each character, the research is able to draw parallels from multiple areas of study to create a greater understanding and appreciation for the character type. These four mothers are not only important to the genre, but also provide clear and fundamental discursive opportunities on race, gender and culture.

For the first area of discussion, I wanted to acknowledge relationship discourse that related to the family structure, or lack of, in *Gypsy*. Analysing how mother-child relationships are conceived and perceived in various settings could help me understand why the relationships within the musicals exist (I have already mentioned the works of Rosalind et al. and Bryant and Crockenburg in section 1.1 as fundamental examples). As a complementary area of criticism on identity, I wanted to utilise writing on behaviour and identity that were pertinent not only to Rose but also comparable to the situation in *Dreamgirls*. Both musicals will be considered with Stryker's 'identity theory' to ascertain why Effie and Rose occupy their respective social position.²⁸ Similarly, Cartwright and Harary's "Structural Balance: A Generalization of Heider's Theory" mathematical description of Heider's 'balance theory' will be used to demonstrate how the structure of social ties and implicate the social framework of *Dreamgirls*.²⁹ Here, I refer to society with regards to the relationships within the musical, less so the influence of environmental or demographic constructs such as race which became more important later.

Behaviour and social identity were important to gaining fundamental connections to relationship and cognitive thinking. It was from here that social theories of feminism, and racial and cultural discrimination had to be brought into consideration. To analyse mothers, the consideration of feminism was essential. I wanted to consider feminist views that were pertinent to the time of composition and of the musical's context. For this, I turned initially to texts that discussed the transition of a women's identity post-women's suffrage in the 1920s;

²⁸ Sheldon Stryker, "Identity Salience and Role Performance: The Relevance of Symbolic Interaction Theory for Family Research," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 30, no. 4 (1968): 558-564.

²⁹ Dorwin Cartwright and Frank Harary, "Structural Balance: A Generalization of Heider's Theory," *Psychological Review* 63, no. 5 (1956): 277-293.

for instance, Estelle B. Freedman “The New Woman: Changing Views of Women in the 1920s” was useful in understanding how social and economic equality were still difficult to achieve.³⁰ From this, I wanted to understand the transition from the woman of the 1920s through to the 1960s. What impacts her vision of herself and how is she affected by her relationship with her romantic other or her family. This led me to fundamental pieces of literature in feminist discourse such as: Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* as she questions “what is a woman?”;³¹ Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* and her discussion on “the problem that has no name”.³² Further exploration of gender identity and relationships from scholars such as Judith Butler were implemented in discovering how behaviours translate into the notion of gender. I thought it essential to discuss how the central tenets of feminism and gender identity have rooted themselves in the fabric of musicals, as this will have a huge bearing on the way they are performed. These ideals also created greater knowledge on how motherhood is perceived by women. For example, Friedan’s commentary in *The Feminine Mystique* on the “suburban housewife crisis” across America proved an integral concept in explaining why social normality may be met with negativity, especially in *Gypsy*.

Interwoven through feminist theory are ideas about the extent to which women of colour and ethnic minorities are underrepresented in views that prioritise the experiences of white women.³³ Discourse on racial and cultural oppression and their relationship to gender theories will aid my exploration of how the mother’s ability to raise their child is affected. Kimberlé Crenshaw’s ‘intersectionality theory’ will provide a foundation here.³⁴ Both *South Pacific* and *Miss Saigon* contain examples of mothers who are directly influenced by the

³⁰ Estelle B. Freedman, “The New Woman: Changing Views of Women in the 1920s,” *The Journal of American History* 61, no. 2 (1974): 372-393.

³¹ Simone de Beauvoir *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Vintage Books, 2010).

³² Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001, f.p. 1963).

³³ Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill, “Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism,” *Feminist Studies* 22, no. 2 (1996): 321-331.

³⁴ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989 (1989), 149.

impacts of both war and cultural exploitation. These two characters will be used to demonstrate how concepts of Edward Said's (and subsequent scholars of) 'Orientalism' and cultural stereotypes (in performance especially) and oppression (theoretical standpoint) create conflict in depiction and the element of survival.³⁵

Finally, in Chapter 3, I combine views from the theatrical discourse and the social and behavioural discourse to demonstrate fully how motherhood exists in the musical. The discussion will extend beyond the four characters that form the fundamental examples and will acknowledge a breadth of characters to determine how theatrical devices from staging to song have been impacted by social discourse. The characters chosen within this section are used as they complement the four characters utilised within the discussions of Chapter 2. The discussions on identity can be extended to Diana's battle with her reality due to her bipolar disorder within *Next to Normal*, the racial implications of *Dreamgirls* also influence the narratives of *The Color Purple* and *Ragtime*, the relationship of diverging cultures impacts Anna in *The King and I*, and the undermining of gender and the implications of male abandonment affect Fantine in *Les Misérables*. By expanding the discussion to a wider selection of characters, it is possible to demonstrate how social and psychological theories relate, in a broader sense, to specific theatrical practices and dramatic developments in the respective musicals of the mothers. The two prime areas of focus will be the developments of song type and musical style as well as dramatic exploration within staging and romantic narratives. In considering these areas along with pertinent theatrical discourse, specifically that of McMillin, Wolf and Knapp, I plan to create a picture of how motherhood is depicted dramatically.

A limitation within this topic is that the scope for discussion is larger than the framework provided by the chosen music works. This, however, aided aspects of the writing process by narrowing down the case studies and allowing a more in-depth analysis. Whilst Chapter 3 will expand to a greater number of characters, there are a significant number of mothers who could equally form a basis for enquiry in this thesis. For example, Diana in *Next*

³⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

to Normal and her battle with bipolar disorder could potentially have its own section. I have aimed to give a useful and thought-provoking introduction to these characters and to demonstrate how character-driven analysis constitutes a contribution to the scholarly discourse.

1.3 Musical theatre mothers: their placement within social discourse and behavioural identity frameworks

Throughout this section, I aim to outline pertinent discourse surrounding the social and behavioural areas briefly introduced in section 1.2. In order to truly grasp any concepts of motherhood in musical theatre, we first need to acknowledge how mothers are perceived through social and cultural perspectives, and determine the extent to which their identity as mothers impacts their actions.³⁶ So how are these mothers defined socially? All four receive little to no support from the child/children's' father (Rose is the only character who experiences support from Herbie). McLanahan identifies the age and amount of time separated of 'never-married' mothers as indicators that women who have survived on their own over longer stretches of time (she denotes 17 years in particular) are a special group who probably have a well-defined support network (it is important to note that this can only be applied to the two shows based in America).³⁷ She continues by noting that an "underclass" position of the mother leads to deprivation in future generations.³⁸ Are there specific reasons that Louise in *Gypsy* does not conform to this pattern? This is where relationship patterns and psychological conditions come into play for the development of Louise and her relationship between mother and sister.

³⁶ For more material about the perception of women as mothers in society, see Julia McQuillan et al., "The Importance of Motherhood among Women in the Contemporary United States," *Gender & Society* 22, no. 4 (2008): 477-496 and Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, Louise Lamphere, and Joan Bamberger, ed., *Woman, Culture, and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974).

³⁷ Sara McLanahan, "Family Structure and the Reproduction of Poverty," *American Journal of Sociology* 90, no. 4 (1985), 891.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 898.

Sibling-identity discourse will form the basis of why Louise and June have specific and inherently different personalities. Scarr and Grajek concluded that developmental psychologists need to recognise siblings as genetically different people.³⁹ For this reason, we have to consider Louise and June as intrinsically different, for difference is the key in *Gypsy* to divulging the relationship developments between the sisters and mother. In her position as mother, she represents the source of fundamental social provisions such as affection, reliable alliance, enhancement of worth, and instrumental aid (descriptors taken from Furman and Buhrmester "Children's Perceptions of the Personal Relationships in their Social Networks").⁴⁰ The development of relationships within *Gypsy* is influenced by how the provisions of affection and alliance, in particular for Louise's development, are represented/depicted. Bryant and Crockenburg's study also notes the widely-held belief that a nurturing parent-child relationship is basic to the development of prosocial behaviour.⁴¹ The provision of nurturance is a complicated subject for the narrative of *Gypsy* as Rose's conception of nurture differs from that of her children. Nurturance creates specific relationship patterns depending on the perception of parental control whereby negative parental behaviour or a mother's unavailability can result in increased feelings of intrusivity by the child and interaction between siblings.⁴² These ideas will spark discussion on the prominence of bi-directional dependence in *Gypsy*, specifically Rose's dependence on her children. How are the relationships between Rose and her daughters implicated by her control over them and how do they respond to one another? The patterns that arise will be taken into account during my considerations of the musical and theatrical reflections of these relationships.

Where considerations of sibling-relationship are focused exclusively on *Gypsy*, the use of social identity theory and behavioural manifestations will envelop *Dreamgirls* as well.

³⁹ Sandra Scarr, and Susan Grajek. "Similarities and Differences among Siblings," in *Sibling Relationships: Their Nature and Significance Across the Lifespan*, ed. Michael E. Lamb and Brian Sutton-Smith (New York: Psychology Press, 2014), 379.

⁴⁰ Wyndol Furman and Duane Buhrmester "Children's Perceptions of the Personal Relationships in their Social Networks," *Developmental Psychology* 21, no. 6 (1985): 1021.

⁴¹ Bryant and Crockenburg, "A Study of Female Siblings with their Mothers," 529.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 542.

To understand this, I will be using Stryker's 'identity theory' to grasp what factors result in a social hierarchy of identities.⁴³ The premise of the theory states that the parts which can be taken to compromise the self are discrete identities which, Stryker explains, "exist insofar as persons are participants in structured social relationships. They are required that positional designations be attributed to and accepted by participants in the relationships".⁴⁴ His theory can be used in this sense to further analyse the integral relationships of mother and daughters in *Gypsy* by acknowledging the salience in identities and how they form hierarchies that are impeded by expectation and subtleties that reshape interaction.⁴⁵

Whilst the family unit of *Gypsy* is probed by 'identity theory', it is the social structure of *Dreamgirls* that will be looked upon from the perspective of social balance and identity salience to make conclusions on Effie's moment of change. Stryker and Burke note that "from a symbolic interactionist perspective, behaviours also can be characterized as meaningful".⁴⁶ I will outline the way in which Effie's emerging identity as a 'mother' places strain on her identity salience in the sense that her behaviour becomes increasingly fraught as she battles with the burdens of pregnancy:

Emotion is viewed, as due in part to the relationship between perceived self-meanings in the situation and the self-definitional meanings in identity; as such a mismatch or increased discrepancy results in negative emotion.⁴⁷

Alongside the distinct identities mentioned in Stryker's 'identity theory', the acknowledgement of motivation and self-determination has useful deployment in determining why we behave how we do and for what purpose. Edward Deci and Richard M. Ryan's

⁴³ Stryker, "Identity Salience and Role Performance."

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 559.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Sheldon Stryker and Peter J. Burke, "The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2000): 284-97.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 288.

*Intrinsic Motivation and Self-determination in Human Behaviour*⁴⁸ and “Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-being”⁴⁹ explains that motivation can be either intrinsic (the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenge) or extrinsic (performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome). The deployment of intrinsic motivation (in the form of June in *Gypsy*) and extrinsic motivation (in the form of Louise) creates a clear picture of why the girls act the way they do.

Effie proved to be a prime example of the use of ‘balance theory’ and the subsequent ‘focus theory’ to determine social ties. The basic premise of Heider’s ‘balance theory,’ developed as a strand of ‘Gestalt psychology’, is determining how people’s choices affect their subsequent beliefs and attitudes and how we use reasoning to disvalue dissonance in choice.⁵⁰ Whilst ‘balance theory’ can be complicated to understand in analysing relationships, the mathematical approach of Cartwright and Harary provides diagrammatic representations that analyse relationships and their characteristics (are they positive or negative).⁵¹ Their diagrammatic approach makes understanding the complex social relationship that develops in *Dreamgirls* easier to understand. To instigate the issues of *foci* (a definitive point in which social constructs are formed), then Scott Feld’s “Organization of Social Ties” will be used.⁵² His ‘focus theory’ analyses how the mutual relationship to *foci* results in rewarding activity and encourages positivity. From this perspective, *Dreamgirls* establishes the focus of fame through singing, a common goal through which the narrative structure of the musical is formed. This structure, as Granovetter’s “The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited” suggests, is reliant on the predominant presence of *weak*

⁴⁸ Edward Deci and Richard M. Ryan, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior* (New York: Plenum Press, 1985).

⁴⁹ Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 68.

⁵⁰ Irvin Rock and Stephen Palmer, "The Legacy of Gestalt Psychology," *Scientific American* 263, no. 6 (1990): 89.

⁵¹ Cartwright and Harary, "Structural Balance."

⁵² Scott L Feld, "The Focused Organization of Social Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 86, no. 5 (1981): 1015-1035.

ties (a tie that extends outside the central structure) otherwise societal structure becomes fragile; the exact description of what occurs in the narrative relationships of *Dreamgirls*.⁵³ The main section of feminist theory that will be outlined here is the era between the 1920s and 1980s inclusive. *Gypsy* and *South Pacific* are set during the 1920s and 1940s respectively and represent an America that was embroiled in social, economic and cultural flux. Estelle Freedman discusses the impacts of 'separatism' in the 1920s and deduces that the "decline of feminism in the 1920s can be attributed in part to the devaluation of women's culture in general and of separate female institutions in particular".⁵⁴ Nancy Cott's *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* discusses ideas of 'separatism' and the dispersion of sex-consciousness giving rise to female desires of gender equality but through inherent masculinity.⁵⁵ Discussions on Rose and Bloody Mary's "masculine" elements can be taken from this need for parity amongst the genders. In considering *Dreamgirls* and *Miss Saigon* from the 1980s in this thesis, the complexities surrounding the relationship between racial equality and gender equality was far more of a concern. Understanding how these two movements correlate has come under scrutiny in Crenshaw's 'intersectionality theory', where she discusses the greater discrimination against black women who are often marginalised in the way they experience discrimination in more than a unidirectional manner.⁵⁶

There are many influential works that have outlined the intricacies and endeavour of women to obtain equality. Feminist discourse such as Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* all candidly express radical ideas about what it means to be "woman." In trying to define the inherent gender identities of the different mothers, the use of the prominent discourse raises questions such as: why/how does Rose reject Friedan's "suburban housewife" identity, and why does Bloody Mary's imitation of the American GIs

⁵³ Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited," *Sociological Theory* 1 (1983): 201-233.

⁵⁴ Estelle Freedman, "Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930," *Feminist Studies* 5, no. 3 (1979): 524.

⁵⁵ Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

⁵⁶ Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," 149.

dilute her gender identity? De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* discusses the pivotal difference between sex and gender asking the question "what is a woman?" and the resulting virtues of masculinity.⁵⁷ Judith Butler's answers this question in "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*" by explaining "sex is understood to be the invariant, anatomically distinct, and factic aspects of the female body, whereas *gender* is the cultural meaning and form that that body acquires, the variable modes of that body's acculturation".⁵⁸ This is an essential facet of feminism, with the importance of gender and its definition being placed at the fore of many scholars' works. A prime example would be Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, as she comments on the determinants of sex, gender and desire:

A genealogical critique refuses to search for the origins of gender, the inner truth of female desire, a genuine or authentic sexual identity that repression has kept from view; rather, genealogy investigates the political stakes in designating as an origin and causes those identity categories that are in fact the effects of institutions, practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin. The task of this inquiry is to centre on—and decentre—such defining institutions: phallogocentrism and compulsory heterosexuality.⁵⁹

Heterosexuality and conformity will be examined with regards to mothers in general in Chapter 3, specifically with regards to sexuality in *The Color Purple*. Overall, these musicals express the inherent difference in women's identity alongside the prevalent problems with classifying feminism with regards to race and culture. Part of the discussion will therefore examine how gender and sexuality impact these characters and the extent to which motherhood may be implicated.

⁵⁷ de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 25.

⁵⁸ Judith Butler, "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*," *Yale French Studies* 72 (1986): 35.

⁵⁹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2011), xxxi.

The constructs of sex, gender and identity form the core discussion of feminism throughout its discourse. In “Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930”, Estelle Freedman comments on the transition of female identity in three distinct periods: the feminist viewpoint prior to 1870; the evolution in the late nineteenth century; and the aftermath of suffrage in the 1920s.⁶⁰ The second period denotes a transition of separate female organisation and institution building as a response to negative social discrimination from men as well as the positive attraction of female counterparts.⁶¹ The third period is characterised by a perceived social victory with women overcoming adversity to achieve the vote, but failed to continue the strength within woman bonding (the creation of strong female networks of support), thereby excluding black and immigrant women in the feminist coalition.⁶² Freedman importantly notes that women lost the momentum of the pre-suffrage movement as they tried to assimilate into male-dominated institutions.⁶³ She indicates that reinvigorating the nineteenth-century idioms of historical sisterhood could have had greater benefits in achieving the goal of sexual equality.⁶⁴ The fundamental drive behind Rose’s character is a desire for female equality. I will establish the links between the male-dominated worlds of theatre in *Gypsy*. In her quest for this goal, her femininity subsides as she conforms to the harsh brutal realities of the theatrical world. Freedman’s comments on reinvigorating historical sisterhoods has application in the narrative of *Dreamgirls* when discussing Effie and Deena’s rise out of male oppression.

The 1960s are noted in Isserman and Kazin’s *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* as being a time of discernible social change.⁶⁵ Within feminist discourse, one of the most provocative works is Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*. In the book, she notes numerous social patterns that had become commonplace in the fifteen years prior to

⁶⁰ Freedman, “Separatism as Strategy,” 515.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 517. For a more in-depth account of the nineteenth and turn of the century movement for women, see ‘The Birth of Feminism’ in Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 1987.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 521.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 524.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 525.

⁶⁵ Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *The Civil War of the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

publication, with the most notable being experts telling women to seek fulfilment as wives and mothers, in-keeping with the image of the ideal suburban housewife.⁶⁶ Most importantly, Friedan acknowledged that women were no longer discussing their apparent inferiority to men, but instead, were discussing the issues of their social stasis and problems relating to the household, children or the happiness of their spouse.⁶⁷ This social unhappiness was referred to as 'the problem that has no name'.⁶⁸ This view of women was the catalyst for change in a similar vein to the change that was occurring for people of colour and the new youth.⁶⁹ Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* is personal and eye-opening, and encapsulates how mothers, including those in the musical, battle with their desires and the needs of their family. Friedan's views on the need for societal change and strength of identity have had the most profound effect on my views of these musicals. With its situation in the middle of the compositions and in their settings, Friedan's comments on the loss of identity are ingrained in the narrative of all of these mothers. All of them suffer from desires for change but it manifests itself in different actions and emotions. By searching for this desire, we can truly understand how societal implications suppress these women.

As a continuation from the previous point, I think it is essential to disclose societal patterns that have particular significance in the musicals. Whilst a musical like *Gypsy* is rooted in white American culture, the other three musicals consider central themes of race and culture. Both *South Pacific* and *Miss Saigon* integrate cultural conflict, brought on by the onset of war (World War II and the Vietnam War respectively), in a manner that challenges the perception of Oriental cultures by an American. The depiction of Eastern culture in the Western world has been littered with discriminatory and at times farcical implications; Edward Said's discussion in *Orientalism* has come under considerable crossfire with regards

⁶⁶ Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 44-46.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁶⁹ Nancy Fraser, *Feminism, Capitalism, and the Cunning of History An Introduction* (Paris: Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'homme 2012), 5.

to scholarship versus politics.⁷⁰ Coinciding with the concept of 'Orientalism' are the implications of war on American culture. The twentieth-century American was surrounded by the burden of war and all of the implications associated with its repercussions. The Vietnam War of the 1960s was fully ingrained in the American psyche and caused extreme distress to the country's citizens, as the barbaric nature of the war was seen on televisions across the country.⁷¹ From both a political stance and with regards to opinions about security and justice, the war in Vietnam divided many. Phillip E. Catton's *Refighting Vietnam in the History Books: The Historiography of the War* gives a detailed outline of the opinions on the war, questioning why there was American involvement in the first place and why their military power was not enough to preserve Southern Vietnam.⁷² The Vietnam War exacerbated a society set on revolution, and tandem with the discussions of gender equality and the racial revolution occurring in America during the 1960s and 1970s.⁷³

Alongside the Oriental and war-related discussions present in *South Pacific* and *Miss Saigon* are the prevalent social movements on race relations in America. *Dreamgirls* is firmly situated at the height of the racial revolution in the 1960s and 70s, and whilst the history of racial discrimination is vast and harrowing, the mid-late twentieth century marks the birth of social overhaul.⁷⁴ The constitution of society in the 1960s and 1970s, albeit forward-thinking and fascinated with ideals of freedom and peace, still retained notions of restriction. The

⁷⁰ The point of this is not to add further discourse to the undermining of Said's work but merely to acknowledge response. For further reading see Gyan Prakash, "Orientalism Now," *History and Theory* 34, no. 3 (1995): 199-212 and Ilan Kapoor, "Capitalism, Culture, Agency: Dependency versus Postcolonial Theory," *Third World Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (2002): 647-664 and James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

⁷¹ Gunnar Myrdal, "America and Vietnam." *Transition*, no. 33 (1967): 14-18. Myrdal's article outlines the horrors felt by the repressed Vietnamese people and the onlooking American society. He mentions the unbearable suffering brought upon the Vietnamese people whose property and crops are destroyed, the corrupt regime they were left under, and the thousands of married and unmarried women who were brought into prostitution to satisfy the sexual need of forlorn American boys (17).

⁷² Phillip E. Catton, "Refighting Vietnam in the History Books: The Historiography of the War," *OAH Magazine of History* 18, no. 5 (2004): 7-11.

⁷³ Larry H. Addington, *America's War in Vietnam: A Short Narrative History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 173.

⁷⁴ For a complete and detailed overview of racial history prior to the onset of serious racial discussion on equality in the mid-late twentieth century, see Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma; the Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944). For a more succinct overview of racial history in America see Michael J Klamann, *Unfinished Business: Racial Equality in American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

scholarly discourse on race is extensive and also too numerous to disclose in this thesis, but what is important to note and is pertinent to the concepts noted, for example, in Crenshaw's 'intersectionality theory', is the hierarchy that exists between discriminants and how they exist. Racial equality has centred predominantly around the male population of African-Americans whilst feminism has functioned mainly in a white middle-class idiom for equality, so both junctures have problematically precluded female African-Americans.⁷⁵ The intersections of race and gender and their subsequent effects on society have been important throughout American history and will aid in distinguishing how societal pressures converge within race-orientated musicals.⁷⁶

What I hope has become apparent in these opening sections is the potential of a character-driven analysis through the relationships between society and behaviour in the musical. With reference to the areas outlined above, I now wish to focus specifically on narrative and character development of mothers in the musical genre, and extrapolate how we can identify them. There will be a more integrated analysis of the mother archetype with regards to the areas outlined in this specific section. The aim is to disclose the development of motherhood and the adjoining identities associated with it.

⁷⁵ Kimberly Springer, "Third Wave Black Feminism?," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27, no. 4 (2002): 1059-1082. For a specific discussion on Black women within family studies see April L Few, "Integrating Black Consciousness and Critical Race Feminism into Family Studies Research," *Journal of Family Issues* 28, no. 4 (2007): 452-473.

⁷⁶ Avtar Brah and Ann Phoenix, "Ain't I A Woman? Revisiting Intersectionality," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 5, no. 3 (2004): 75-86.

Chapter 2. Mothers and the prevalence of social identity, behavioural traits and relationships: An analysis of motherhood in *Gypsy*, *South Pacific*, *Dreamgirls* and *Miss Saigon*

In Chapter 1 of this thesis, I outlined complementary discourses that align with the four mother characters to be discussed. Having already established that these four mothers exist within the contexts of different social considerations, it is now essential to extrapolate how these implications manifest in the musicals and importantly, in the characters' identities.

Section 2.1 will discuss aspects of relationship and identity between mother and child. In *Gypsy*, where the core of the narrative is the relationship between Rose and her two daughters, understanding the ways in which scholars have considered the relationship dynamic of mother and child is essential to developing a deeper understanding of the musical. I shall consider dependence as a bi-directional force between mother and child in *Gypsy*; a force that manifests itself through action and emotion in the scene including 'If Momma was Married' and the comparable scenes before 'Everything's Coming Up Roses' and 'Rose's Turn'.

In section 2.2, I wish to explore aspects of behavioural theories to determine the reason why mothers act the way they do in the narrative of the musical. By using Ryan and Deci's 'self-determination theory' and subsequent discourse, I will consider motivation and volition as both positive and negative aspects of the mother's persona. Another theory to be considered is Stryker's 'Identity Theory', which will be utilised in order to understand how

behavioural determinants correspond to the mothers recognise themselves. With Stryker's theory, I wish to expand on the relationships discussed in section 2.1 surrounding *Gypsy* and specifically, I will consider how the theory relates to Effie's realisation of her behaviour in 'I Am Changing'. I will also be deploying aspects of 'balance theory' in determining the depiction of societal structure in *Dreamgirls*.

In section 2.3, I have chosen to focus initially on *Gypsy* and how the narrative aligns with the central tenets of feminist ideology. With a character as intricate and complicated as Rose, it is inevitable that social constructs surrounding female oppression will impact her. I want to consider how she responds to male-dominated constructs surrounding theatre and her family, and more specifically, I will analyse 'Rose's Turn' as a depiction of feminist conceptions. I will further consider mothers from the perspective of critical race theory, and will consider their depiction as victims of racial oppression, exploring feminist discourse that accentuates a disparity in concerns of race and culture. I shall discuss Effie as a reflection of the important aspects of racial discourse. This will take into consideration both her race and gender and will also discuss how *Dreamgirls* represents a change in racial opinion and female empowerment as a result of intersectionality. I will then consider constructs of 'Orientalism' to compare Bloody Mary and Kim with respect to identity, and explore how 'Orientalism' and the confines of war impact motherhood in the musical.

2.1 The implications of nurturance and dependence in the mother-child and sibling relationships in *Gypsy*

This first section focuses specifically on *Gypsy* and will discuss the relationships between mother and child. The discussion will vary from sibling relationships, mother-child relationships and then a discussion on bi-directional dependence between the figures, which I feel is a central component of *Gypsy's* narrative. Musically, this section will discuss 'If Momma Was Married' in an attempt to extract opinions on the relationships before

culminating on Rose and the subsequent destruction of relationships. By utilising ideas from the relationship studies of Ferman and Buhrmester, as well as those of Bryant and Crockenburg, I aim to map out ideas about relationships and dependence in the framework of *Gypsy*.

2.1.1 An introduction to mother-child dependence and sibling relationship in *Gypsy*

When young people talk about what it means to be a sister or a brother they inevitably compare themselves with their siblings. Whether we are the same as or different from others is the language often used to think about and express significant questions of connection with others. This is especially so in families, where similarities and differences between siblings are casually and sometimes frequently commented upon.⁷⁷

Of the four musicals, mother-child dependence is most notably depicted in the narrative of *Gypsy*. Rose has been described as the archetypal stage mother in her vehement quest for success.⁷⁸ In *Gypsy*, we see the two contrasting results (of this quest) in June and Louise. Rose's children are reluctantly dependent on Rose, forced into performing an act in which neither wants to participate. Each Act of *Gypsy* has a similar trajectory, in the sense that Rose's unbridled intent on achieving fame results in her children's resentment. In this sense, I suggest that Rose is equally or even more dependent on her children than they are on her. Rose's dependence on the act is fundamentally bound to her relationship with her children. There are few fundamental variables at play in *Gypsy*: both Louise and June share the same environmental influences; Rose has a prevalent bias towards June; June and Louise are the

⁷⁷ Edwards et al., *Sibling Identity and Relationships*, 36.

⁷⁸ Julian Woolford, *How Musicals Work: And how to write your own* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2012), 52.

same sex and are similar in age, with June the elder. Whilst June and Louise have comparable qualities in demeanour and personality, they are presented in two quite contrasting manners; Scarr and Grajek's "Similarities and Differences Among Siblings" discusses the relationship of environment and genes in creating sibling similarities or differences.⁷⁹ They conclude their work by stating that 'all people, even siblings, are genetically different, and that those differences have implications for behavioural development'.⁸⁰ Similarly, Ferman and Buhrmester's "Children's Perceptions of the Qualities of Sibling Relationships" mentions Scarr and Grajek's standpoint and state that siblings may create different environments for each other.⁸¹ This has particular significance for *Gypsy* as we decipher the hierarchy and status of the family and we also understand the personality differences between the two siblings. 'Baby' June is favoured and glorified over her younger sister Louise. Bryant and Crockenburg noted that a nurturing parent presumably contributes to prosocial development in the sense that they receive sufficient reinforcement and support to overcome their self-concerns.⁸² They go on to state that parenting behaviours that facilitate prosocial behaviour in children are nurturance, maternal responsiveness, inductive control techniques, discussion and acceptance of feelings, and reinforcement and modelling of prosocial behaviour.⁸³ June receives heightened levels of maternal responsiveness, discussion and acceptance of feelings to the extent that her behaviour becomes overly confident. Rose allows June to sleep in her bed, undermining Louise's efforts in their performance. Rose is neither responsive, nurturing, nor accepting towards Louise and this naturally results in a timid child that longs for attention. What has to be said of Rose is that her perseverance and dedication to her daughters is commendable; in *A Memoir* by Gypsy Rose Lee, she reacts to her son describing her mother as "nice" by laughing and saying:

⁷⁹ Scarr and Grajek, "Similarities and Differences Among Siblings."

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 379.

⁸¹ Wyndol Furman and Duane Buhrmester, "Children's Perceptions of the Qualities of Sibling Relationships," *Child Development* 56, no. 2 (1985): 457.

⁸² Bryant and Crockenburg, "Correlates and Dimensions of Prosocial Behavior," 529.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 530

Mother had been many things but she had never been “nice.” Not exactly. Charming, perhaps, and courageous, resourceful and ambitious, but not nice. Mother in a feminine way was ruthless. She was in her own words, a jungle mother, and she knew too well that in a jungle it doesn’t pay to be nice.⁸⁴

These ruthless tendencies ultimately fracture the mother-child relationships in the musical.

2.1.2 Exploring the sibling relationship between June and Louise and the influence Rose has on their dynamic, focusing in particular on ‘If Momma Was Married’

Each Act of *Gypsy* arcs towards these aforementioned moments of perceived rejection for Rose and results in her dogged determination to evolve. There are two particular moments of focus for Rose and her dependency on her children, the relationship that develops between June and Louise in the song ‘If Momma Was Married’ and the scenes preceding ‘Everything’s Coming Up Roses’ and ‘Rose’s Turn’. In these sections of the show, the true intentions of all three of these characters become apparent.

The relationship between June and Louise is notably strained, yet they have a mutual understanding. With the mother’s noticeable affinity towards June, it would be understandable for Louise to show signs of jealousy or resentment, but that is not apparent in *Gypsy*. Conversely, June clearly has talent, but she feels she has outgrown the act and wants to pursue theatre further.⁸⁵ Ultimately, the two girls are tethered to an act that they do not want to be a part of, which, theatrically, leads them to sing ‘If Momma Was Married’. This song has particular significance in terms of plot, as it is the last time we see June in the

⁸⁴ Gypsy Rose Lee, *A Memoir* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), 5-6.

⁸⁵ “Grandpa, a man who was strongly against them being involved in theatricals, said to her mother that she may be right about June doing pretty well in theatricals but he does not think it is the life for Plug.” Lee, *A Memoir*, 11.

musical. Table 1 breaks down the characters of Louise and June prior to and post ‘If Momma was Married’ and demonstrates the contrasting personalities of the two sisters.

In terms of sibling influence, the balance of power veers more towards June who dominates their interactions, mirroring the artificial dynamic created by Rose.⁸⁶ Table 1 highlights two specific moments in the scene prior in which the two siblings discuss their relationship: Louise’s lack of jealousy towards June, and the emotional distance between the two sisters. The prior scene shows signs of heightened anger from June, as a result of Rose’s dismissal of Mr Grantziger’s offer of training.⁸⁷ Louise timidly defends Rose’s actions as she has seen the amount of effort placed on the act; this could also be interpreted as shock at June showing her true feelings. The two sisters then have a moment of realisation that they have never truly been close.

	The scene prior to ‘If Momma was Married’.	The scene post ‘If Momma was Married’.
June	Has desires to be a famous actress and understands that Mr Grantziger can make her one. In the section between June and Louise, she has the self-awareness to realise that she is not a star. She explains that she has always despised the act because she has to pretend to be a young girl. <i>She comments on Louise’s lack of jealousy towards her.</i>	We never see June again in the show as she elopes with Tulsa and their new act. In the letter to Rose, we know the sentiment was that Rose could not make her the actress that she wants to be.
Louise	Always possesses a naive quality to herself and a sense of obliviousness to the situation. She also has self-awareness but	She grows an affection for Tulsa who she has been watching prepare his act. She watches him perform the act

⁸⁶ Furman and Buhrmester mention that sibling relationships can be egalitarian or asymmetrical. The relationship between June and Louise as stated veers more towards June, which is interesting when you consider that she is the younger child and could argue that her dominance is greater than in a standard relationship. Furman and Buhrmester hypothesized that they expected the greater status/power would be assigned to the older child in the dyad and it would be exaggerated in wider age gaps. Furman and Buhrmester, “Sibling Relationships,” 448-450.

⁸⁷ Bryant and Crockenburg state that verbal antisocial behaviour between female siblings appears to be a function of mother unresponsiveness and insensitivity in situations of stress and need, rather than a result of adopting negative behaviours modelled by mothers. Bryant and Crockenburg, “Correlations and Dimensions,” 541.

	<p>to the fact that June is the talented one and that she lacks the talent that her mother wishes she had. Louise has more patience with Rose and is more understanding of the effort that she has put in to make the act successful. <i>She admits that she sometimes feels distant from June.</i> Her dream is for a simple life with a normal family.</p>	<p>where he describes a female partner who she pictures as herself - she is unaware that it will actually be her sister. She has to deal with her sister and a boy she liked both eloping whilst supporting her mother. She is excited at the prospect of Herbie proposing to Rose. Rose apologises to her for how she treated her and promises to make her the star of the new act - something that Louise does not want.</p>
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Table 1 - Character development in the scenes before and after 'If Momma was Married'.

When deconstructing 'If Momma was Married', we have the two contrasting intentions carried over from the scene. Louise just wants a normal family environment and June wants her mother to leave her to achieve her goal. It is musically simplistic, set to a waltz with an extended AAB structure. After the B section, there is a comedic waltz reprise of 'Let Me Entertain You' (based on the first incarnation of the song heard in the opening scene) followed by a reprise based around the B section. The two sisters have a childish sense of desire and their interactions are genuine. Jule Styne's music, partnered with Stephen Sondheim's lyrics, effectively demonstrates the similarities and differences between June and Louise. Louise's solo verse harks back to 'Little Lamb' and her love for animals and the companionship she gains from them. It also places emphasis on her desire for a normal family unit. June wants her mother to get married to deflect her attention from her. Sondheim deploys the physical action of June taking hair ribbons out of her hair as a metaphoric representation of her 'getting Momma out too', as well as showing maturity in age. Styne and Sondheim juxtapose the sincerity of Louise's desire for familial stability with June's frustrations towards the childish act her mother has forced upon her. The song implies June's intention to move on from her mother and the act whilst Louise wants a fresh start. Ultimately, 'If Momma Was Married' demonstrates that these two siblings have more in

common than previously implied. It also shows the audience that the two girls are growing older and more mature in a manner that is apparently unbeknown to Rose.

2.1.3 Rose and her bi-directional dependence on her children: The importance of the scenes before Rose's Act-ending numbers

With regards to Rose's role as a mother, the question she asks Louise at the culmination of the show encapsulates the essence of her character: '*What'd I do it for?*' What did she obtain from sacrificing her life, fighting and scheming to give her children everything? In her mind, nothing, but the dilemma with Rose is that she never stopped to see the effect on her children. In her mind, as long as they were performing, they were happy and content, but that was never the case, especially with Louise. Both of her children have their moment of true expression, June in the form of her letter, and Louise in person, which results in Rose's perceived rejection and turmoil.⁸⁸ June and Louise accept that Rose is a strong-willed woman, and have an understanding of the struggles their mother has endured to give them the life they have, but there comes a time where they want to experience life and take responsibility for themselves. Rose firmly believes that she is not only responsible for her daughter's success but that she is the only one who can protect them from the harsh realities of the world of theatre. She is particularly harsh towards Louise, as she remarks that she took her from a 'no-talent ox to a star'.⁸⁹ Rose's overprotection and overbearing presence in the life of her children stem from the environment in which she grew up, with a

⁸⁸ Apfel and Fisher discuss the relationship between mothers and daughters, stating that their relationship is important for the daughter to establish herself as a mature woman, but it is also fraught with the possibility of immense competition. They also discuss how women are socialised to subvert their aggressive feelings. Thus, the negative and hostile dimension of the relationship between mother and daughter has fewer explicit outlets. Roberta J. Apfel and Susan M. Fisher, *To do no Harm: DES and the Dilemmas of Modern Medicine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 69.

⁸⁹ Symonds demonstrates the relationship between a parent and child as an axis balancing dominance and protection. He explains that the point of origin represents the perfect balance of protection and rejection, providing the necessary environment and care for a child's development. He also mentions inconsistencies in rejection and overprotection stemming from a sense of guilt, as a parent who may have formerly rejected their child overcompensates for this by overprotecting them. Percival M. Symonds, "Some Basic Concepts in Parent-Child Relationships," *The American Journal of Psychology* 50, no. 1 (1937): 199.

mother who seemingly abandoned her and a father who did not respect the life she chose to lead. In response to this, she tries to have too much influence on her daughters.

When examining the two scenes that culminate each Act of *Gypsy*, the true complexities of Rose's emotions are revealed. There is a subtle balance of grief, anger, and remorse as she scolds June for abandoning her, whilst simultaneously apologising to Louise for glorifying June at her expense. The dependence balance comes into existence here as she understands that without June she has nothing. The stage direction for her last piece of dialogue describes her as 'an express train out of control'.⁹⁰ Her mind is racing like a relentless locomotive into the future which Louise and Herbie can only cling to. Rose's apology is coupled with a hint of desperation. She is aware that she has treated Louise poorly, and recognises that if she is to recreate her act with Louise as the star then she is going to need some positive reinforcement.⁹¹ Whilst this scene has a relatively positive outlook, at least for Rose, the corresponding scene that completes the show has the opposite effect. Rose transforms from a woman euphoric over the success of her and her daughter into someone that is once again dealing with rejection. The intensity of the final scene is considerably more negative and farcical. She takes on this persona of a grown infant, childishly mocking the manner in which Louise asked her 'I thought you did it for me, Momma..'. whilst spiralling into an episode of madness and resentment at the life she wishes she had lived. This is where the true mother-child dynamic of *Gypsy* is expressed.

To use the example from Richard M. Emerson's "Power-Dependence Relations" where he illustrates the effect of balancing tendencies and how they can be overcome, Rose exists in *Gypsy* as the powerful party (which Emerson labels A) and her daughters exist as

⁹⁰ Arthur Laurents, *Gypsy*, 1st TCG Edition (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1994), 59.

⁹¹ Michael H. Boyle et al. discuss Festinger's 'social comparison theory' explaining that inadequate parental treatment can have negative effects on self-esteem and adjustment for children who see themselves as worse off than their siblings. The perception experienced by one sibling of being worse off is based on a conscious or unconscious comparison of the parenting they see their sibling receiving. Michael H. Boyle et al. "Differential Maternal Parenting Behavior: Estimating Within and Between Family Effects on Children," *Child Development* 75, no. 5 (2004): 1457-1476.

the dependents (B).⁹² This balance exists primarily due to her status as mother and her daughters are dependent on her care. For the purpose of this section I will label this *balancing tendency 1*. When considering the balancing tendency with respect to the act, the roles reverse whereby June and Louise become the powerful party as Rose is dependent on them to perform. This will be labelled *balancing tendency 2*. *Gypsy's* narrative consists of these two forces existing, with one maintaining power over the other. For the entirety of the musical, it seems as if *balancing tendency 1* has more influence on the narrative than *balancing tendency 2*. But we realise that an opposite force has existed in this family dynamic. Rose was dependent on her children to live out her dream but was never prepared for the day that they would no longer need her support. This constitutes the overcoming of *balancing tendency 1* by *balancing tendency 2*. The musical shows that dependence is not a unidirectional phenomenon in which a child is solely dependent on their parent. Rose is an extreme example of a mother who focuses all aspects of her life into her children; they are not only her family but also her job. She exists as a vessel for her children's happiness and what she wants in return are security and affection. Ultimately, this is Rose's ruination, as her unwavering attempts at giving her children what she believes they want actually results in separation; she reconciles with Louise at the end, finally realising that allowing independence could result in the support that she has always craved.

2.2 A discussion on social and behavioural identity in *Gypsy* and *Dreamgirls*: The balance of social structure

There are clear and obvious reasons why understanding behaviour is important in a predominantly performance-based art form. To understand 'how' we need to know 'why'.

⁹² Richard M. Emerson, "Power-Dependence Relations," *American Sociological Review* 27, no. 1 (1962): 34.

What apparent identity traits contribute to social structure and individual action?⁹³ Why are there diametrically different relationships occurring in one similar setting in *Gypsy*? Why does Effie have to completely change the way she behaves around others to conform to “acceptable” social ideals? By considering specific theories on behaviour and identity, I aim to gain a deeper understanding of ‘why’.

Within this section, I want to expand the discussion of the aforementioned relationships in *Gypsy* to include the implications of identity salience and hierarchy. I also want to consider how numerous identities coexist within Rose’s character, resulting in a split perception of her actions. The final consideration of *Gypsy* will discuss aspects of motivation and how they are pertinent to the action of the narrative. As a complementary study, I have chosen to consider *Dreamgirls* and the balance of social structure as detailed in Cartwright and Harary’s “Structural Balance: A Generalization of Heider’s Theory” and a further analysis into the perception of ties in the social structure. Once again, I will reference identity to understand how change is achieved by Effie in Act 2 of *Dreamgirls*.

2.2.1 Behaviour and Identity in *Gypsy*: Understanding the identity and motivation of Rose

As a starting point for the consideration of identity in *Gypsy*, I wish to utilise the components of Stryker’s ‘identity theory’ to create a landscape of, as he labels it, actor and identity, role and position.⁹⁴ Table 2 gives an interpretation of the ‘generalised symbolic interactionist model’ and how it reflects broad behavioural patterns in *Gypsy*. The influential aspect of identity in *Gypsy* is Rose’s ability, or lack thereof, to identify the difference between ‘mother’ and ‘manager’. This is reminiscent of her daughters’ distinction between ‘daughter’ and ‘performer’. Stryker extends the influence of identity into a hierarchy of salience which can

⁹³ Michael A. Hogg, Deborah J. Terry and Katherine M. White, “A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory,” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (1995): 257.

⁹⁴ Stryker, “Identity Salience and Role Performance.”

have structural overlap whereby, in situations where more than one identity is pertinent to the function of a relationship, the resultant behaviour relates to the compatibility of the different identities.⁹⁵ What exists in *Gypsy* is the continuous overlap of identities creating responses to the 'self'. Stryker's final exposition relates to commitment and how it affects the destination of identity relationships.⁹⁶ In considering the salience hierarchy, an interesting dichotomy exists between Rose's identities as 'mother' and 'manager'.

Breakdown of Stryker's 'generalised symbolic interactionist model'.	How this relates to the identities of Rose, June and Louise in <i>Gypsy</i> .
2. a One understands how to classify objects and how to behave around said objects. This is due to shared expectations for behaviour about how the classifications are invoked.	Rose initiates that June can have anything she wants (understood by letting her sleep in her bed after their performance in Act 1 scene 2). She also initiates that Louise has no claim to anything she wants (she is not allowed to sleep in Rose's bed). The shared expectation for behaviour created places importance on June and discredits Louise.
2. b. Amongst the class terms are symbols that designate stable, morphological components of structural components, "positions" which carry the expected behaviour, "roles."	June is firmly placed at the fore by Rose so she claims a position of power and confidence - she assumes the role of confident and desired child. Louise is an afterthought for Rose but she receives a slight position of power (especially when considered to Rose's love interest, Herbie) by the sheer fact that she is Rose's daughter.
2.c Actors name one another, acknowledging position and thus invoking expectation with one another's behaviour	In establishing a power hierarchy amongst her daughters, June and Louise acknowledge that June is the daughter with the talent. Rose as mother, assumes the role of enforcer, creating a scenario whereby her daughters expect her to behave in an overprotective and suppressing manner.
2. d Actors name themselves as well, creating what many refer to as 'self,' creating internalized expectations of their	I am going to assign Rose the title of 'all-knowing manager/mother' which acknowledges that she believes she knows

⁹⁵ Structural overlap consists of distinct relationships are contingent at some point in time and invoke concurrently different identities. Ibid.,560.

⁹⁶ Stryker notes that commitment is measured by the "cost" of giving up meaningful relations to others should alternative courses of action be pursued. Ibid.

<p>own behaviour.</p>	<p>what is best for her children and also what is best for the act. She perceives “self” therefore as devoted mother to her daughters. June and Louise name themselves as frustrated children albeit in different ways. June is frustrated from an artistic respect as she understands her talent and wishes to further this. Louise is frustrated from a stability perspective as she understands that performing is not what she is good at, creating her shy and acceptant behaviours.</p>
<p>2. e. Social behaviour is not given by these expectations. It is initiated by expectation and developed through subtle, tentative, probing interchange among actors in given situations which reshapes form and content of interaction.</p>	<p>The expectation outlined above implies control and power for Rose as the mother and varying levels of submission by her daughters. Rose is strong and protective of her children but her behaviour leads to a behavioural rebellion from her daughters (this outlined in the context of ‘If Momma Was Married’ and the subsequent argument between Louise and Rose prior to Rose’s Turn).</p>

Table 2 - A reflection of behavioural patterns and identity in *Gypsy* as outlined by Stryker.⁹⁷

Rose protests that ‘mother’ is the most salient of her identities. The song ‘Some People’ in Act 1 denotes Rose’s position as devoted mother, determined to try and give her daughters all she can, even if it goes against the warning of her father. She lets Herbie know near the end of Act 2 that he is jealous because her girls come first. However, what Rose is unable to discern in the musical is the level of prominence she places on the ‘manager’ identity. The structural overlap of these two identities renders Rose unable to separate the needs of her daughters’ development from her pursuit of fame. Rose frequently prioritises her relationship as ‘manager’ over her obligation as ‘mother’ with respect to Louise’s discontent as ‘performer’. This example extends to considerations of commitment. Stryker notes, “to the degree that one’s relationships to specific others depend on one’s being a particular kind of

⁹⁷ Stryker, “Identity Saliency and Role Performance,” 559. Also, Stryker and Burke outline how increasing a discrepancy (i.e., problems in self-verification) results in negative emotion; a match or a decreasing discrepancy (self-verification) results in positive emotion. Stryker and Burke, “The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory,” 288. Rose faces issues with self-verification when she is challenged by June, Louise and Herbie - her negative emotion is personified in ‘Rose’s Turn’..

person, one is committed to being that kind of person”.⁹⁸ Rose commits to being a loving manager, determined to get her act recognised. She is also committed to being a loving mother, more so, it would seem, to June, in that she attempts to achieve fame for her and thus garner stability for her family. She is able to commit to these two identities until stasis is interrupted by Mr Grantziger, who offers June training away from her mother. Stryker acknowledges that “the more the perceived consequences of a projected identity change are in the direction of impairing valued commitments, the greater the resistance to that change”.⁹⁹ June’s offer of training from Mr Grantziger throws into disarray Rose’s value of commitment as ‘manager’ but is perceived as an attack on ‘mother’. June understands that she needs Mr Grantziger to make her a star and accepts that her position can be improved. Whilst Rose is partially concerned about her identity as ‘mother,’ understanding that without June, she cannot support Louise, Rose is unable to separate and prioritise the identity of ‘mother’ by not recognising the opportunity for June to pursue her dreams. The same situation arises with Louise at the culmination of Act 2, as Rose is unable to overcome the position she has placed Louise in as ‘dependent performer and daughter’ and fails to allow her to lead her life in her own way. She perceives Louise’s need for development on her own terms as an attack on the commitment she has made to her as ‘mother’. Rose is unable to acknowledge that she has achieved her desires as ‘mother’ in her daughter’s success and instead resents the abandonment she feels.

After considering how identity is manifested in *Gypsy*, it is now useful to determine how it translates into motivation and attachment. Bowlby’s *Attachment* is a vast discussion on the effects of attachment and behaviour.¹⁰⁰ The main considerations are his discussions on the relationships created between mothers and infants. He explains that:

An older child or adult maintains an attachment to another person by diversifying his

⁹⁸ Ibid.,560.

⁹⁹ Ibid.,563.

¹⁰⁰ John Bowlby, *Attachment: Volume One of the Attachment and Loss Trilogy* (London: Random House, 2008, f.p. 1969).

behaviour to include the basic elements of attachment behaviour whilst adding an array of more sophisticated elements organised as plans with set-goals.¹⁰¹

A complementary study occurs in Elliot's "Approach and Avoidance Motivation and Achievement Goals".¹⁰² Elliot notes the difference between approach motivation and avoidance motivation in determining why people behave the way they do.¹⁰³ I believe the descriptors in Elliot's study can be ascribed to the treatment of June and Louise by Rose as outlined by intention in 'If Momma Was Married'. June exhibits secure attachment as a result of constant reassurance and glorification, hence her desires for adventure away from her mother: "I'd get all those hair ribbons out of my hair, and once and for all I'd get Momma out too". Louise, on the other hand, exhibits insecure attachment from the constant reminder that she is inferior to her sister; "If Momma was married, I'd live in a house, as private as private can be..." Louise's lyrics relate to the need for safety and protection, as well as stability.

The final theory I want to discuss is Deci and Ryan's 'self-determination theory'. Deci and Ryan outline the balance between control and self-determination, which constitutes an important aspect of motivation.¹⁰⁴ Deci and Ryan outline what this type of motivation entails¹⁰⁵ and explain that:

Evidence is now clear that the maintenance and enhancement of this inherent propensity requires supportive conditions, as it can be fairly readily disrupted by

¹⁰¹ Ibid.,350.

¹⁰² Andrew J. Elliot, "Approach and Avoidance Motivation and Achievement Goals," *Educational Psychologist* 34, no. 3 (1999): 169-189.

¹⁰³ In approach motivation, behaviour is instigated or directed by a positive or desirable event; avoidance motivation, is instigated or directed by negative or undesirable events (169). He references Bowlby (1969) and the importance of secure and insecure attachment within children (171). Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Deci and Ryan define control as contingency between behaviour and outcome and self-determination is freedom in initiating one's behaviours. They state that control exists when one can reliably yield intended outcomes, but this does not imply self-determination as a person's behaviour can be determined by outcome rather than by choice. See Deci and Ryan, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behaviour*, 31.

¹⁰⁵ The inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn. See Ryan and Deci, "Self-Determination Theory," 70.

various non supportive conditions”.¹⁰⁶

What Deci and Ryan’s study creates is an understanding of how motivation instigates behaviour and how that subsequently affects relationships. The important consideration for Rose is recognising that she acts not out of choice, but for an intended outcome – to achieve success. She exhibits controlled behaviour because she is successful in her aims. Both Louise and June desire self-determination but exist under the control of their mother until moments of revelation. June achieves freedom from control by eloping with Tulsa.¹⁰⁷ We witness Louise claiming her freedom from her mother’s control when she explains to her that she does not need her. Here, the line that is most potent is ‘Momma, I’m having the time of my life, because for once, it is my life’.

Louise has experienced little to no stimulation from the action of performing because she knows she is not as talented as her sister is. Deci and Ryan outline their ‘cognitive evaluation theory’ where competence needs to have some autonomy to enhance intrinsic motivation:

Thus, according to CET, people must not only experience competence or efficacy, they must also experience their behaviour as self-determined for intrinsic motivation to be in evidence.¹⁰⁸

This is pertinent to the situation June experiences as she experiences novelty and challenge in performing as well as competence. However, by the time she elopes she has reached a plateau of motivation due to her lack of autonomy and self-determination. The offer of training from Mr Grantziger acts as a resurgence of intrinsic motivation which is inhibited by Rose’s control. Therefore, by eloping she obtains self-determination and, crucially,

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ They note that a person needs to have control over outcomes to be self-determined in attaining them, but the need is for self-determination more than control. See *Deci and Ryan, Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination*, 31.

¹⁰⁸ Deci and Ryan, “Self-Determination Theory,” 70

autonomy. As a foundation for their theory, Deci and Ryan outline:

The theory argues, first, that social-contextual events (e.g., feedback, communications, and rewards) that conduce toward feelings of competence during action can enhance intrinsic motivation for that action.¹⁰⁹

From the outset of the musical, Louise receives no positive feedback or communication. In fact, she receives the opposite, being openly berated and discouraged during the opening sequence of 'May We Entertain You' where she is told to 'sing out'. We have already discussed how Rose allows June to sleep in her bed after their performance but does not allow Louise the same luxury, thereby rewarding June over Louise for the same action. Louise explains that she also performed in the show but Rose discredits her. It is therefore easy to understand how Louise experiences no intrinsic motivation towards performing, as she considers it neither novel nor attainable, and as such, the parameters of 'cognitive evaluation theory' do not apply.¹¹⁰ Her actions are extrinsically motivated (the performance of an activity to get some discernible outcome). I would argue that she falls under the bracket of external regulation in terms of Deci and Ryan's 'self-determination continuum', as her compliance with performance comes from her desires to support her mother's endeavour, even if she disagrees with them and has little interest in involvement.¹¹¹ What is experienced in Louise is a transition from the extrinsically motivated action of performing in her mother's act, to the intrinsically motivated act of performing as a strip artist; this, like June, is down to the attainment of autonomy. Louise's autonomy allows her to perceive new outcomes for herself whilst allowing acceptance from her mother. Here, she directs action towards her desire to be a famous artist whilst having the support of her mother.¹¹²

Gypsy provides a perfect example of how behavioural and identity theories can

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 71.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 72.

¹¹² Deci and Ryan, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination*, 6.

determine action and nuance in musical performance. Rose establishes multifaceted relationships and behavioural patterns between herself and her children through her assignment, and subsequent acceptance or refusal, of identity positions. I now wish to consider similar notions of identity whilst also introducing ideas of balance in the social structure of *Dreamgirls*.

2.2.2 Effie's behavioural revelation in *Dreamgirls*: Considering 'I Am Changing' as a turning point

Determining Effie's behavioural change in *Dreamgirls* in conjunction to her relationship with her child is more difficult to do as we never see that development on stage. Instead, we have to consider her actions as indications of her identity as a mother. Effie's narrative bears similarity to Rose with regards to abandonment and defiance. Effie's rise in Act 2, for example, resolves in a positive manner unlike Rose's more obscure resolution. I want to contrast the opposing narratives of Effie in Act 1 and Act 2 with regards to 'balance theory' and 'identity theory' respectively.

'Balance theory' proved useful in understanding the social structure and Effie's systematic removal. Whilst the theory was established by the influence of Gestalt psychology on Heider, I wish to focus on the utilisation of the theory in Cartwright and Harary "Structural balance".¹¹³In Cartwright and Harary's study mathematical diagrams demonstrate balance within Heider's "*P-O-X* unit of cognitive field".¹¹⁴ What I am interested in is how the authors visualise the relationships in a given social structure and how balance is obtained. What Effie achieves throughout the opening Act is a system whereby negative feelings are developed towards her, thus she is deemed to have made the system unbalanced. The

¹¹³ Rock and Palmer explain how Gestalt psychology has developed from its use in understanding perception to its utilisation across social psychology. Rock and Palmer, "The Legacy of Gestalt Psychology".

¹¹⁴ Cartwright and Harary, "Structural Balance,": 277.

result, as demonstrated in Figure 1 (see appendix),¹¹⁵ is the systematic removal of Effie from the social group. 'It's All Over' is the musical personification of expulsion.

To understand why Effie's behaviour has social implications, I wish to acknowledge Feld's "The Focused Organization of Social Ties".¹¹⁶ Pivotal to his theory is the concept of *foci*, a definitive point in which social constructs are formed. Within the context of *Dreamgirls*, the initial focus is of a group of three friends who share the common foci of singing and the pursuit of fame. Feld notes the comparison between 'balance theory' and subsequent theories of effective relationships.¹¹⁷ He argues that:

The nature of these relations to objects vary; yet they are abstractly similar in that they may be considered relations to generally defined foci; and they therefore have similar implications for group structure." He continues by noting: "I am suggesting that shared relations to foci create positive sentiments indirectly through the generation of positively valued interaction (i.e., shared relations to foci bring people together in a mutually rewarding situation which encourages the development of positive sentiments).¹¹⁸

The generally defined focus in this regard is the pursuit of fame, as a result of which the group divulge relatively positive sentiments towards it. For example, their affiliation with James Early, whilst initially sceptical, is approved by the group as it is seen as an

¹¹⁵ Figure 1 will be deemed balanced by the same definition that figure 5b is balanced in Cartwright and Harary's study. The resultant balance exults Effie from the group as she seen as negative by all others. Ibid.,284.

¹¹⁶ Feld describes his theory as such: "The theory is based upon the idea that the relevant aspects of the social environment can be seen as foci around which individuals organize their social relations. A focus is defined as a social, psychological, legal, or physical entity around which joint activities are organized (e.g., workplaces, voluntary organizations, hangouts, families, etc.). As a consequence of interaction associated with their joint activities, individuals whose activities are organized around the same focus will tend to become interpersonally tied and form a cluster. The task of the network analyst is the investigation of those social structural characteristics that serve to organize the activities underlying the social ties of a network. Such analysis requires information about each individual's relations to extra-network foci. Without such contextual information, conclusions about networks and their consequences are likely to be incomplete and even misleading." Feld, "The Focused Organization of Social Ties," 1016.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.,1017.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

advancement in their goal. Transitivity is perfected in this social cluster as all the individuals know one another, creating a dense network.¹¹⁹ Feld mentions Granovetter's discussion on ties and local bridges. In Granovetter's "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited", the author discusses the simulation of ties and their subsequent results on societies. He notes that "social systems lacking in weak ties will be fragmented and incoherent".¹²⁰ He also mentions that "bridging inhibits organisation because it leads to fragmentation and distrust of leaders".¹²¹ It is in this concept that the close-knit social structure outlined was always destined to implode. Curtis assumes the role of leader as he is the vessel who can get the group to achieve fame, but his control conversely puts a strain on the group. Social *foci* of friendship and romantic interest become the factors that constitute social implosion. At first, it is Effie who is cast aside as she has the most aggravated ties, that of 'scorned lover' and 'betrayed friend'. As Feld mentions, shared relations to *foci* bring people together, but Effie diverts from the focus as she now has to manage her pregnancy. The result, as outlined in Figure 1, is her expulsion from the group.

The strands of 'balance theory' used above have given a pertinent description of how the social constructs of *Dreamgirls* are created and perceived. This can be used in conjunction with the 'identity theory' model used in the previous chapter to further outline how Effie's identity salience is defined within the musical. Before going straight into the identity salience model, however, it is first important to note two pivotal plot moments in Act 1 to determine Effie's behavioural trajectory. Firstly, the moment in which she is replaced as the lead vocalist of the group by Deena, and secondly, the moment in which she is abandoned and cast aside in favour of a new member. In Table 3, I analyse Effie's positional transitions in Act 1, as this is pivotal to understanding 'I Am Changing'. We need to understand where she is coming from to understand why she wants and needs to change.

¹¹⁹ The network is centred on music and the pursuit of fame as *foci*, which by Feld's terms are highly constricting, thus a close-knit and small cluster is created.

¹²⁰ Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," 202.

¹²¹ Ibid.,204.

Identity salience and hierarchy become increasingly pertinent as Effie's identities of 'singer,' 'friend' and 'love interest' overlap in accordance with Stryker's structural overlap example.¹²² Prior to Deena assuming the lead role of the group, these three identities of 'singer,' 'friend' and 'love interest' existed cohesively for Effie: in any given situation, the identity with the greatest salience was never undermined. Effie's behavioural changes occur through a perceived challenge initially by Curtis and Deena to the 'singer' identity which subsequently impacts her identity as a 'friend' and a 'love interest'. The identity of 'mother' becomes apparent in conjunction with moment two noted above.

Breakdown of Stryker's generalised symbolic interactionist model.	Effie's classification at the two moments noted above.
2. a One understands how to classify objects and how to behave around said objects. This is due to shared expectations for behaviour about how the classifications are invoked.	The learned behaviour of the group prior to Deena assuming the front figure is that Effie is the focal singer. They soon have to learn to classify Deena as the pivotal singer due to Curtis's intervention.
	The group learn to classify Effie as problematic resulting in negative and disapproving behaviour towards her actions. Effie develops a defensive behaviour due to this.
2. b Amongst the class terms are symbols that designate stable, morphological components of structural components, "positions" which carry the expected behaviour, "roles."	Effie resides as the frontal figure of the group. Both Deena and Lorelle recognise that she has more talent and so assume secondary positions. In this dynamic the determinant is talent. The dynamic is shifted with the introduction of Curtis who assumes the dominant position. In changing the position of the group, Curtis alters the roles and with it their behaviour. Effie is expected to adhere to Curtis' direction and accept the backing role she has.
	Effie's position is undermined completely by Curtis replacing her in the group. She has been removed from the structure and with this she experiences multiple behavioural responses; 'It's All Over' into 'And I Am Telling You' create desperation, frustration

¹²² Stryker, "Identity Salience and Role Performance," 560.

	and distress.
2.c Actors name one another, acknowledging position and thus invoking expectation with one another's behaviour	Effie is named as the leader of their group by all involved. The group transitions through a backup position behind James Early. Deena transitions into the lead of the group but Effie is reluctant to accept this as it challenges the dynamic previously established.
	Effie is named as problematic as the group acknowledge that she is no longer desired in the group. Effie's response is naming the group as oppressors, creating behavioural abrasion as she resents how she has been positioned.
2. d Actors name themselves as well, creating what many refer to as 'self,' creating internalized expectations of their own behaviour.	Effie names herself as focal singer and with that comes a sense of entitlement and importance (the group have also named her this, reinforcing this perception). She reluctantly accepts Deena as the focal singer whilst maintaining her previous conception of herself; this gives rise to Effie's abrupt and frustrated behaviour.
	Effie names herself the victim as she is forced out of the group. This gives rise to her survivalist behaviour.
2. e Social behaviour is not given by these expectations. It is initiated by expectation and developed through subtle, tentative, probing interchange among actors in given situations which reshapes form and content of interaction.	The trajectory of Act 1 is personified by subtle transitions and overhaul of the initial positional structure. It is the systematic shifting of position that initiates social behaviour amongst the group. Effie expects that Deena and Lorelle, as well as her brother C.C. would support the position and role that they have created but Curtis names Deena as their only chance at fame. Social expectation is therefore altered amongst the group, with the exception of Effie who rejects this newly-initiated expectation. This results in Effie's expulsion from the social structure as her interaction and subsequent social behaviour is now negatively received amongst the actors.

Table 3 - A reflection of behaviour and identity in *Dreamgirls* as outlined by Stryker.¹²³

¹²³ Ibid.,559.

In not stating her identity as 'mother', Effie is unable to prioritise salience of identity with regards to explaining why she has been behaving in the manner she has. This leads into the song 'I Am Changing'. The identities of 'friend' and 'love interest' are now completely unnoticeable ('friend' is mentioned in the song and regains importance later on in the narrative) and the identity of 'mother' is well established. Stryker's comments on self are recognisable in the sentiment of the song:

The self is, by definition, a set of responses of an organism to itself. The responses are differentiated, as well as in the manner noted above, along cognitive - conative - cathectic lines. Although the meaning of any of these may be said to reside in interpersonal behaviour, the assumption here is that it will make a difference with respect to behaviour whether the organism responds to itself by, in effect, beginning an assertion with the stem "I am," "I want," or "I feel."¹²⁴

This is considerably important in considering 'I Am Changing' as a behavioural and identity revolution for Effie. Effie accepts that she took for granted the friendships that she had, and admitted that she lost her way, but she is ready to put that behind her and move forward. Her behavioural expectation would never have included guidance and subservience in Act 1. She saw herself as confident and independent, but she realises that accepting support is not a sign of weakness. I would argue that this is a result of the 'mother' identity that is now present in Effie's hierarchy, constituting ownership of behaviour. Up until this point, Effie was reliant on the support of those in positions below her, whereas she now has someone reliant on her. In a similar vein to the discussion of Rose in section 2.1, where motherhood was revealed to create dependence, Effie now has more drive and desire to succeed. It is no longer just for her but also her daughter. 'I Am Changing' implies that 'singer' is given the greatest salience in Effie's identity hierarchy with the implied effect of acceptance as 'mother' is introduced.

¹²⁴ Ibid.,560.

2.3 Placing mothers within relative social discourse: The application of feminist ideology and its relevant intersections within race, culture, and identity and resultant impact in *Gypsy*, *Dreamgirls*, *Miss Saigon* and *South Pacific*

The social ideologies of feminism, racial discrimination and cultural appropriation form the discussion in this section. As women and as mothers, all four characters experience discrimination or preconceptions of how they are supposed to act. They may be considered too masculine, or perhaps their actions are not befitting of stereotypical conventions of womanhood. Discrimination may occur unilaterally, as a result of gender alone, or it may be a combination of numerous social factors.

The discussions of *Gypsy* focus around Rose as a domineering woman. She can be considered as someone resisting the suburban housewife trope outlined in Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, or she can be seen as the personification of female endeavour. What I aim to illustrate through my analysis of Rose's character is her position as a woman of her era. Consideration of the transition in the 1920s-1960s and how attitudes changed are relevant to who Rose is as a character. I will also use 'Rose's Turn' as an example of feminist ideology.

Subsequently, I wish to consider the combination of feminism and race in *Dreamgirls* and explore how perceived racial subservience in feminism exists in the musical. Just as I did for *Gypsy*, I wish to extract Effie's battle against male-dominance, both as a performer and in her romantic life, and acknowledge how intersectionality functions within the narrative. I also wish to include her relationship with Deena under this bracket and outline their journey to female empowerment, paying particular attention to the inclusion of the song 'Listen'.

The final consideration included in this section will be centred around how 'Orientalism' can be perceived in both *South Pacific* and *Miss Saigon*. I will consider relationships between mother and child and how cultural stereotypes play a part in creating the feminine "exotic". With regards to *South Pacific*, the focus will be on determining gender with Bloody Mary and the implications it has on her as a woman of capitalist endeavour and as a mother intent on marrying off her daughter. The impact of the Vietnamese War play a great part in my discussion of *Miss Saigon* as gender roles within the show are inherently linked to the implications of combat and the introduction of American GIs in Vietnam. Aspects of sexual manipulation and utilisation of women will be discussed alongside the concept of purity.

2.3.1 Gypsy and the strength of Rose: How Rose's narrative pertains to a feminist character

Rose is a fascinating character from a feminist standpoint. At the time of *Gypsy*'s composition in 1959, the general stasis of womanhood had become, as Betty Friedan coined in the first chapter of *The Feminine Mystique*, 'the problem that had no name'.¹²⁵ Imelda Whelehan describes the years after the Second World War as undergoing "retroactive ideological shift with a revived 'cult of the housewife' creating effectively a consolidated attack on women's new-found freedom" and an ideal that continued throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s.¹²⁶ The introduction of Rose, a seemingly strong, free-willed woman, stripped free of the burdens of housewifery and domestication, was a sign of impending social change. It is also rooted in the 1920s and 1930s feminist ideals of the source material in Gypsy Rose Lee's memoir which accounts for Rose's adversity in the face of the male-dominated institution of theatre which she was trying to assimilate herself into.¹²⁷ Whilst the

¹²⁵ Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 44.

¹²⁶ Imelda Whelehan, *Modern Feminist Thought: From the Second Wave to 'Post-Feminism'* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 7.

¹²⁷ Freedman ("Seperatism") depicts the "new woman" of the 1920s attempting to assimilate into male-dominated institutions in the naive hope of becoming men's equals overnight. Freedman,

behavioural section of this thesis focused on Rose's identity in relation to her children, this section incorporates the overarching pressures of Rose's efforts to assimilate, and how this impacts upon her narrative. The male dominance of the theatres in *Gypsy* range from the small-scale (Uncle Jocko in his vaudeville theatre surrounded by mothers and their children, Mr Weber's vaudeville house in Texas where Rose is initially rejected but reconsidered with the aid of Herbie, and the manager of the strip club where Louise gets her first break who is only concerned with looks) to the large-scale level (Mr Grantziger attempting to take control of June by disallowing Rose to see her). In every facet of *Gypsy*, Rose is confronted by, and attempts to overcome, male-dominance to achieve her goals. The undermining of Rose's feminine strength does occur in her interaction with Mr Weber as it requires a male presence in Herbie for her to be taken seriously. This moment indicates that opposition to female endeavour was still apparent.

'Some People' as a musical number is a riposte to the opinion of Rose's father that Rose's place is 'at home'. Whilst he is referring to Rose's proclivity for travelling around with her daughters so that they can perform, the notion of her staying home harks back to the housewife trope. It is also notable that Rose had been married twice before at this point. Rose's exclamation before the song is one of her most recognisable of the whole show: 'Anybody that stays home is dead! If I die, it won't be from sittin'! It'll be from fightin' to get up and get out!'. Her words have strong connections to feminist ideas from the turn of the century suffrage movement.¹²⁸ Not only are these visceral images attached, but Rose is also defending her decisions against her father, a man who is firmly rooted in the nineteenth-century idioms of housewife and domesticated women. Rose is demonstrating the importance of female volition and pursuing achievement above conformity.

"Separatism as Strategy," 514-515. Also, Freedman ("The New Woman") notes that "the portrayal of the 1920s as a period of equality, when in fact discrimination in education, hiring, salaries, promotions, and family responsibilities was abundant, has perpetuated a myth of equality, one which has helped undermine women's attainment of group consciousness. See Freedman, "The New Woman: Changing Views of Women in the 1920s," 393.

¹²⁸ Cott recalls the words of influential spokeswomen such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Olive Schreiner who stressed the necessity and warrant for economic dependence for women and rejected domesticity as a universal model. Feminist demands for individual autonomy required an economic basis. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 119.

I wish to acknowledge Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and her comments on the inherent 'femininity' assigned from adolescence. She notes that:

For the woman there is, from the start, a conflict between her autonomous existence and her "beingother"; she is taught that to please, she must try to please, must make herself object; she must therefore renounce her autonomy. She is treated like a living doll, and freedom is denied her; thus a vicious circle is closed; for the less she exercises her freedom to understand, grasp, and discover the world around her, the less she will find its resources, and the less she will dare to affirm herself as subject; if she were encouraged, she could show the same vibrant exuberance, the same curiosity, the same spirit of initiative, and the same intrepidity as the boy. Sometimes this does happen when she is given a male upbringing; she is thus spared many problems. Interestingly, this is the kind of education that a father habitually gives his daughter; women brought up by a man escape many of the defects of femininity.¹²⁹

This extract expresses the inherent feminist practice at play for the majority of *Gypsy*. Rose's relationship with her father in the musical is not portrayed as supportive. When sections of *Gypsy Rose Lee's A Memoir* are considered, the support of Rose's father is revealed to be reluctant. *A Memoir* describes how their act made their debut at one of Grandpa's lodges, with his half-hearted permission and his money for costumes.¹³⁰ The importance here is that, even though Rose's father disapproved of the act, he still provided Rose with the ability to achieve her dreams. In this respect, Rose is void of the "defects of femininity" and she is able to retain an element of her autonomy through unintentional or adverse encouragement from her father. Within 'Some People' we witness Rose exercise her autonomy, renouncing

¹²⁹ de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 342.

¹³⁰ Lee, *A Memoir*, 10.

herself from the ordinary life that would be expected of her.¹³¹ In the musical, the views of Rose's father represent the traditional view of women in society, but Rose's masculine tendencies can be considered as a result of their relationship. Applying this masculine/feminine dichotic relationship to her and her daughters also creates an interesting personification of feminism. June is allowed the intrepidity associated with a boy by Rose, as exuberance, curiosity and initiative are present (for the most part) in her performances on stage. Louise, however, experiences all of the qualities of renouncing her autonomy. In performing on stage and accepting that her sister is afforded more freedom and attention, Louise is required to please herself by pleasing others and she has also resigned herself to objectivity in the act (she plays the cow). If you consider Rose's claim over her daughters as a reflection of her masculinity obtained by her father, then it is plausible to claim that her daughters overcome suppression driven by masculine tendencies by claiming autonomy beyond their relationship with Rose.

Undoubtedly, the most intriguing moment of Rose's narrative comes in the culmination of *Gypsy* in 'Rose's Turn'. This moment is musically and theatrically stimulating as the conflict of Rose's emotional state is broadcast for all to see. To refer back to the start of this section, *Gypsy* comes at the beginning of a new phase of feminist and social revolution, and the second half of 'Rose's Turn' reflects this.

The lyrics of 'Rose's Turn'. ¹³²	Implications when considered from a feminist history.
'Why did I do it?' through to 'They take bows and you're battin' zero'.	The foundations of feminism had long been the argument for equality and parity between sexes. They explained that the work they did was equal to what men could achieve. The woman of the 1950s had retreated back into the visions of housewife and devoted mother with fewer women attempting to change these perceptions. ¹³³

¹³¹ Ibid., 154.

¹³² Laurents et al., *Gypsy*, 104-107.

¹³³ Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. Also, Taylor states: "In 1920, with the vote won, the women's movement was left with no unifying goal. Moreover, tactical and ideological differences divided

<p>'I had a dream' through to 'This time, boys, I'm taking the bows and'.</p>	<p>Rose is situated firmly in social stasis, constricted by the grip of those she thought loved her, who she subsequently supported and provided for. I want to strip away the gendered identities of her children and consider Rose as the personification of the 1950s woman and the combination of June, Herbie and Gypsy Rose Lee as a reflection of the 1950s society that has disregarded women and their endeavours. Women from all walks of life, learned and domesticated, experience the same feelings of depression, independent of education level¹³⁴ whilst converse levels of success and "super womanhood" was also depicted.¹³⁵ This stanza of the song constitutes the same connotations as the first but it now acts as a rebellious voice against the submission women were facing. They wanted to pursue new endeavours and achieve what generations before were incapable of.¹³⁶</p>
<p>'Everything's coming up Rose!' to the end.</p>	<p>This passage acknowledges achievement and a positive outlook on the future and yet its message is at times frantic. The exploration of feminism and gender equality raises questions about identity.¹³⁷</p>

militant from moderate suffragists and those who saw winning the vote as a means from those who viewed it as an end." (763) This statement disseminates the frustration of some who pioneered and protested for equality. Taylor also references the opinion of those involved in feminist movements during the 1940s and 1950s: "By the 1940s and 1950s, a core of women in the NWP had devoted a major portion of their lives to feminist activity. Typical participation patterns are reflected in the comments of two members. In 1952, one woman wrote, "Since 1917 I have devoted all my spare time to feminism." Another woman asked in 1950 for a "cure for giving too much of one's time to one thing..." (766). The questions personify a sense of defeat and frustration at the disparaging results of their efforts compared to their involvement. Verta Taylor, "Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance," *American Sociological Review* 54, no. 5 (1989).

¹³⁴ Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 56.

¹³⁵ Meyerowitz expands on the glorification and ideal of how women were portrayed in magazines by Friedan, and states that: "While feminine stereotypes sometimes provided convenient foils that enhanced by contrast a women's atypical public accomplishment, they also served as conservative reminders that all women, even publicly successful women, were to maintain traditional gender distinction." (1460). Her discussion mainly focuses on converse themes to Friedan's "housewife" as she notes how success and endeavour outside of the household "overwhelmingly countered that of non fictitious stories of individual wives and mothers." (1462). Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946- 1958," *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 4 (1993).

¹³⁶ In her essay, Fraser outlines the apparent "tamed social conflict in North America" from gained prosperity after World War II. She continues with the uprising of radical youth in the 1960s who began questioning "core features of capitalist modernity that social democracy had heretofore naturalized: materialism, consumerism, and "the achievement ethic"; bureaucracy, corporate culture, and "social control"; sexual repression, sexism, and heteronormativity. Frasers work accentuates a social revolution that whilst not unified in a common goal, was striving for change. Fraser, *Feminism, Capitalism, and the Cunning of History*, 5.

¹³⁷ "The political assumption that there must be a universal basis for feminism, one which must be found in an identity assumed to exist cross-culturally, often accompanies the notion that the oppression of women has some singular form discernible in the universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy or masculine domination." Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 5.

	<p>In the previous sections, we established Rose as an 'identity crisis' and to an extent, this can be applied to feminists who have often felt underappreciated and underrepresented by some ideologies.¹³⁸ Their voices cry out for acceptance and continue to fight for equality amongst gender, sex, race, and cultural identity.</p>
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Table 4 - 'Rose's Turn' as a base pattern of feminist ideology.

'Because I was born too soon and started too late, that's why!'¹³⁹ This is Rose's exclamation after her argument with Gypsy Rose Lee before 'Rose's Turn'. I believe this to be a matter of visual appearance in Rose's mind and that certain aspects of society glorify aesthetic over all else. In Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women*, the author claims, at the start of the chapter "Work", that men have used women's "beauty" as currency by noting clichés such as "she looks a million dollars, she's a first class beauty, her face is her fortune".¹⁴⁰ In this, women are attributed aspects of power in sexualisation. They can garner the attention of men through flirtation and appearance more so than with intelligence; the beauty myth works against feminism as it uses female beauty as a political weapon.¹⁴¹ Gypsy balances the pursuit of female endeavour with the glorification of the overly sexualised world of stripping. The evolution of Gypsy Rose Lee's act transitions her from a timid ingénue to a confident performer, but in the process, she learns that flirtation and interaction with her male audience equate to positivity and success. Louise's transformation in her strip section serves as a reminder of societal pressure and the

¹³⁸ See Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (New York: Routledge, 2003), 25-28. Also Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," 1989. And Linda Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 13, no. 3 (1988): 405-436.

¹³⁹ Laurents et al., *Gypsy*, 104.

¹⁴⁰ Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are used Against Women* (London: Vintage Books, 1991), 20.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

forced desires of women to be admired by men.¹⁴² It does, however, hold opposite meaning for Louise's feminine identity, as it is the expression of latent femininity suppressed by her mother's necessity to have her "be the boy in the act".¹⁴³ It is this that exacerbates Rose's venomosity towards beauty, in particular her opinions on Gypsy Rose Lee's act requiring no talent. I believe that it is underpinned by the societal expectations of beauty and youth in relation to the value of women, both of which Rose no longer possesses.

2.3.2 An initial exploration of female and racial identity in *Dreamgirls*.

Dreamgirls forms a part of the musical legacy of racial development. Its exploration of Black culture in society and how it is undermined by a white system of power form a core story for racial discrimination in theatre. Alongside racial discrimination, *Dreamgirls* explores the destruction of female solidarity by male oppression and has become a prominent example of female unity equalling power. This section will extend upon the behavioural discussion in section 2.2 by discussing the implications of racial and gender oppression as well as the rise of female empowerment.

It is important to acknowledge that women and feminists of colour have long since faced discrimination on the grounds of both sex and race.¹⁴⁴ By this standard, Black women have suffered discrimination on a heightened level in a society that disallowed them equality from two perspectives. Hazel Carby's "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood" notes:

¹⁴² James R. McGovern, "The American Woman's Pre-World War I Freedom in Manners and Morals," *The Journal of American History* 55, no. 2 (1968): 317.

¹⁴³ Wolf. *A Problem Like Maria*, 125-126.

¹⁴⁴ The Cr Collective affirmed that they originate from a "reality of Afro-American women's continuous life-and-death struggle for survival and liberation. Black women's extremely negative relationship to the American political system (a system of white male rule) has always been determined by our membership in two oppressed racial and sexual castes." Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement," in *Home Girls; A Black Feminist Anthology* ed Barbara Smith (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000); 265. See also, Deborah K. King, "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology," *Signs* 14, no. 1 (1988): 42-72.

History has constructed our [black women's] sexuality and our femininity as deviating from those qualities with which white women, as the prize objects of the Western world, have been endowed.¹⁴⁵

This institutionalised hierarchy prioritises the needs and views of white men, with white femininity considered the most attractive form of beauty.¹⁴⁶ This hierarchy forms core principles in *Dreamgirls* as, much like I discussed with the strip section in *Gypsy*, in efforts to please white men, Deena is preferred over Effie as the face of the group because of her appearance. The exploitation of Deena for her appearance relates back to the beauty myth of section 2.3.1, but here it walks the line into racial discrimination, as Deena's "appeal" to a white audience becomes the focus.¹⁴⁷ Effie is reluctant to submit her art to anyone, especially the man she loves.¹⁴⁸ Initially, Effie and the Dreamettes (original name of the group in the musical) are placed as backup singers to a solo male act, James Early. Whilst I would argue that this is not instigated from a place of suppression, more a place of opportunity, it does allow for Curtis to systematically use Effie and her emotions in order to develop a romantic relationship with Deena.

The first half of Act 1 consolidates white oppression of the black society as James Early and the Dreamettes version of 'Cadillac Car' is covered and replaced by an all-white group, Dave and the Sweethearts. This is the main example of blatant disregard on the grounds of race, as the intellectual property of the Black artists is taken and forgotten. Whilst

¹⁴⁵ Hazel V. Carby, "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood," in *Theories of Race and Racism* ed. Les Back and John Solomos (London: Routledge, 2000), 389.

¹⁴⁶ For a comprehensive example of the relationship between Black culture and beauty within society see Maxine Leeds Craig, *Ain't I a Beauty Queen?: Black Women, Beauty, and the Politics of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁴⁷ "Follow the wake of a beautiful woman, that is, a woman socially constructed to be beautiful, as she walks down a crowded street. The normal eddies and currents of human feelings are changed by her movements. Her walk down the street is experienced by the crowd as a physical sensation." Anthony Paul Farley, "The Black Body as Fetish Object." *Oregon Law Review* 76 (1997): 489. See also Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 123-124.

¹⁴⁸ Collins comments on the personification of African-American womanhood stating: "Black women have been assaulted with a variety of externally-defined negative images designed to control assertive Black female behaviour." Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," *Social Problems* 33, no. 6 (1986): 17.

infuriating Curtis at this moment, he soon learns that corruption and deceit will aid him in his quest for stardom and power. In the *Dreamgirls* narrative, he undermines Effie and her brother C.C.'s version of 'One Night Only' by releasing his own version with Deena (it is important to note that she is unaware of the undermining). This is jumping ahead in terms of the narrative but this mirror in action is important, as Curtis, in blocking Effie's version of 'One Night Only', acted in the same way that the white society did for 'Cadillac Car'. Curtis' unwilling determination to keep control over Effie, even after a substantial amount of time has passed, reflects the struggle of women of colour on the grounds of both their gender and their race.

2.3.3 Effie and Deena: Gender Identity and Black female empowerment: the film and revival versions of *Dreamgirls* and the inclusion of 'Listen'

The relationship between Effie and Deena is created on the basis of Black female community with respect to their close-knit upbringing and solidarity.¹⁴⁹ The pair, along with Lorelle, establish their close friendship and the importance of Black community and music. The music of soul, hip-hop and Motown that permeates throughout the musical stems from the jazz and blues roots of artists such as Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald – music with a distinct racial history.¹⁵⁰ The musical narrative mirrors the development of Motown music in the 1960s and 1970s, which catapulted a number of Black Americans to stardom.¹⁵¹ This musical identity, as was partly established in the previous section, relates

¹⁴⁹ Collins' chapter on 'The Power of Self-Definition' describes "the controlling images of Black womanhood. In response, African-American women have traditionally used family networks and Black community institutions as sites for countering these images." Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 101.

¹⁵⁰ Ron Eyerman, "Music in Movement: Cultural Politics and Old and New Social Movements," *Qualitative Sociology* 25, no. 3 (2002): 443-458. See also Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within."

¹⁵¹ Gerald Lyn Early's book notes the development of the Motown record label by Berry Gordy Jr. Early notes the influence of Booker T Washington and Joe Louis and mentions how the idea of usable black male heroism and the crossover appeal to whites as well as high-class blacks - two models steeped paradoxically in the contrary worlds of straight-laced middle-class respectability and the larger-than-life, street corner world of masculine derring-do - would have an enormous and obvious effect on Gordy Jr. (47) He continues to note W. E. B. Dubois who suggested that a black can be neither just a Negro nor can he be just an American without, in either case, losing a vital dimension of

closely to racial identity, in that the popularity of these artists was dictated by their appealing predominantly to the white audiences.

The exploration of female identity and appearance through Act 1 of *Dreamgirls* is enhanced by a consideration of Effie's pregnancy. She is burdened by the perceived attack on her image and the undermining of her romantic relationship. The song 'Heavy, Heavy', for example, uses the notion of weight as a metaphor for both psychological burden and an attack on her appearance. In the context of *Dreamgirls*, this exchange constitutes the demise of racial and female empowerment, as Effie is systematically forced out of the group in the final exchange of Act 1. 'It's All Over/ And I Am Telling You' reflect a society that has systematically oppressed women of colour. 'It's All Over' is the culmination of male-dominance enveloping all it comes into contact with and ensuring the dismissal of women who constitute a threat to the institution of masculinity.

Much has been discussed on male dominance and female subservience within heterosexual relationships¹⁵² and Effie's pregnancy is a by-product of this.¹⁵³ Pines' "Pregnancy and Motherhood: Interaction between Fantasy and Reality" comments that:

his identity; Gordy Jr. used the examples of Washington and Louis to in essence merge these two identities. He managed to negotiate the African-American's fear of being 'bleached into whiteness' and avoid the white's fear of being Africanized by appealing to an American youth through music that avoids both of these fears (he was accused of doing both during his career). (48-49). Gerald Lyn Early, *One Nation Under a Groove: Motown and American Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004). See also Mark Anthony Neal, "Sold Out on Soul: The Corporate Annexation of Black Popular Music," *Popular Music & Society* 21, no. 3 (1997): 117-135.

¹⁵² Amy Allen, "Rethinking Power," *Hypatia* 13, no. 1 (1998): 21-40. Also, MacKinnon notes a feminist definition of sex in society and then explains how that affects women: "Implicit in feminist theory is a parallel argument: the moulding, direction, and expression of sexuality organizes society into two sexes - women and men - which division underlies the totality of social relations... Heterosexuality is its structure, gender and family its congealed forms, sex roles its qualities generalized to social persona, reproduction a consequence, and control its issue." Catharine A. MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 7, no. 3 (1982): 516.

¹⁵³ Pines notes: "The essential adaptation in her move towards maturation is the achievement of a stable and satisfactory balance between her unconscious fantasies, daydreams and hopes and the reality of her relationship to herself, her husband and her child." She continues by noting: "Pregnancy, particularly the first pregnancy, is a crisis point in the search for female identity. Dinora Pines, "Pregnancy and Motherhood: Interaction between Fantasy and Reality," *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice* 45, no. 4 (1972): 333.

The essential adaption in her move towards maturation is the achievement of a stable and satisfactory balance between her unconscious fantasies, daydreams and hopes and the reality of her relationship to herself, her husband and her child.¹⁵⁴

For Effie, stability becomes unachievable as the relationship between herself and Curtis fractures. Her fight-or-flight instinct creates emotions of anger and desperation as she tries to convince Curtis to change his mind. The concluding sentiment of this train of thought sees Effie's unwavering anger towards Deena and her desperation for forgiveness from Curtis. This marks a significant isolation of identities in the musical as the once close women have now been drawn apart by the male influence.¹⁵⁵

In the film version and the subsequent 2009 US tour and London revivals of *Dreamgirls*, the addition of the song 'Listen' creates a strong vision of what women of colour can achieve as part of a strong network. Freedman mentions that, prior to the 1920s, feminism's strength was its creation of a "strong sense of community unity that helped sustain women's participation in both social reform and political activity".¹⁵⁶ The priority was not having what men had, as "they preferred to retain membership in a separate female sphere, one which they did not believe to be inferior to men's sphere and one in which women could be free to create their own forms of personal, social, and political relation".¹⁵⁷ I have previously outlined the destruction of the female sphere by two young friends through a destructive male presence in *Dreamgirls*. What transpires in Act 2 is Deena's realisation of female oppression and Effie's realisation of identity.¹⁵⁸ Deena's lack of fulfilment compounds

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Freedman, "Separatism as Strategy,"

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 514.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ The duet 'You Are My Dream' in Act 2 is a seemingly loving duet with Curtis declaring that when he laid eyes on Deena she was 'his dream'. A sentiment normally used for love takes on an aggressive undertone of possession as he refuses to let Deena chase her dreams of acting and as she says 'doing something more important'. The submission Curtis is trying to impose on Deena echoes the same trajectory of Effie except he has given Deena far more power as his brand and his future is built around her. This echoes concerns felt by some black men that "the black woman was suppressing him:" "Unfortunately, there seems to be some confusion in the Movement today as to who has been oppressing whom. Since the advent of Black Power, the black male has exerted a

the turmoil faced by women of all walks of life and leads into 'Listen', a song written initially for the film adaptation in 2006 and subsequently added to the US Tour of 2009 and the London revival in 2016. The film version gives a voice to Deena as she finally overcomes her ingrained obedience to Curtis also, as she searches for her own independence. Here, I want to focus on the revised version in the revival, which now takes the form of a duet between a newly reconciled Effie and Deena. The most basic interpretation of the song is two friends admitting they were both wrong. But to ignore the power of this moment is to ignore a history of Black female discrimination. 'Listen' reveals and provides a commentary on a history of Black women who have faced persecution for either their race or their sex. Crenshaw's "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" helps us understand how discrimination in *Dreamgirls* is influenced by race and gender. Deena's resultant fame places her in a privileged category, especially regarding Black women, but she struggles to see past the world created for her by Curtis. She is a symbol for America, of black and white, and of beauty and femininity, and yet her fame is built upon the dilution of her Black identity and the subsequent exploitation by her male superior, Curtis. Effie's discrimination arises through her identity as a Black woman, as her voice is deemed "too powerful" for the white audiences: an opinion instigated by men. Her actions verge on the 'matriarchal' black woman stereotype, which Curtis must "overcome" to achieve his dream (that dream being Deena).¹⁵⁹ Crenshaw acknowledges that this is often considered a problem with racial identity and not a sexist problem, with the "failure" of black women to live up to a white

more prominent leadership role in our struggle for justice in this country. He sees the System for what it really is for the most part. But where he rejects its values and mores on many issues, when it comes to women, he seems to take his guidelines from the pages of the Ladies Home Journal." (168) Beal continues by stating the ludicrous nature of the statement as the black woman is seen as the "slave of a slave," (168) Whilst Deena does not occupy the suppressed housewife mould, the sentiment carries over in the same vein. Frances M. Beal, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female," *Meridians* 8, no. 2 (2008): 166-76.

¹⁵⁹ The 'matriarch' is one of the most widely spoken about analogies for a "type" of black woman who is said to exude authority and dominance. She is someone that needs to be "overcome" by the black man if he wishes to gain control of his destiny. See Robert Staples, "The Myth of the Black Matriarchy," *The Black Scholar* 1, no. 3 (1970): 8-16.; Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," *The Massachusetts Review* 13, no. 1 (1972): 81-100, and Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, Part 2 Section 4 "Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images," 69-96.

female standard of motherhood.¹⁶⁰ Effie overcomes her situation (through the identity change in section 2.2) and uses her experiences to reassure Deena that she just needs to be strong. 'Listen' reaffirms the empowerment of women of colour who suffer discrimination, and it epitomises the continued battle they face to overcome it. It tells any woman of colour who loses her way because of male-dominance or institutionalised racial oppression that she just needs to 'listen' to the voice inside her head and remember who she is.¹⁶¹

2.3.4 Orientalism, culture and war: the female image of *South Pacific* and *Miss Saigon*

In light of the contexts discussed in this thesis, *South Pacific* and *Miss Saigon* bear comparisons due to the fact that both are based during a war-time narrative (World War 2 for the former and The Vietnam War for the latter), and both discuss concepts of intercultural relationships and difficulties surrounding the conception of the opposing cultures.

Furthermore, both musicals employ stereotypical visions of Asian and Pacific women in accordance with discussions of 'Orientalism', and they each contain romantic narratives involving young girls (both considered to be around the age sixteen or seventeen). For these reasons, a cross-comparison of the musicals provides a greater indication of how the notions of the Orient and related discourse on feminism can be applied to the narratives of these two musicals. Edward Said's *Orientalism* describes the Orient as "almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity 'a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences'".¹⁶² In these basic principles, relationships and preconceptions are formed. The romantic narratives of both *South Pacific* and *Miss Saigon* cross the barriers of culture with subsequent questions raised here about how the pursuit of

¹⁶⁰ Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," 63.

¹⁶¹ Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism."

¹⁶² Said, *Orientalism*, 1.

a “better life” is presented in conjunction with the Orient, and how that relates to notions of feminism and identity.

The notion of Purity and its unhealthy manifestation in the actions of men form a central component of the romantic narratives.¹⁶³ It is purity that gives rise to cultural conflict (on an emotional level) and the need for salvation: *South Pacific* corresponds the “pure” Liat with her vulgar mother; *Miss Saigon* corresponds the overly sexualised women of the ‘Dreamland’ club with the virginal Kim. These images have concrete foundations in preconceptions of the Orient, with Bloody Mary’s ‘Dragon Lady’ persona,¹⁶⁴ as well as Liat and Kim’s mystique.¹⁶⁵ Bloody Mary’s perceived vulgarities, such as her shrill cackle, her use of expletives, and her Pidgin English (developed from the interaction she has with the marines), are expounded when contrasted with her daughter’s serenity, which is a result of how little she speaks.¹⁶⁶ Lieutenant Cable’s relationship with Liat provides a stark contrast to the overtly masculine marines, to whom we are introduced to in the songs ‘Bloody Mary’ and ‘There Is Nothing Like A Dame’. In ‘Younger Than Springtime’, Cable reverts away from the brash and virile personification of the American marine with his emerging love for Liat.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Sherry B. Ortner, “The Virgin and the State,” *Feminist Studies* 4, no. 3 (1978): 19-35 and Nur Yalman, “On the Purity of Women in the Castes of Ceylon and Malabar,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 93, no 1 (1963): 25-58.

¹⁶⁴ Term is taken from Lovensheimer, *South Pacific*, 164. Lovensheimer goes on to mention how Bloody Mary is more than the representation of “World War II stereotypes of grinning Chinese peasants.” (170) This will have importance in extracting her stance as opposition to colonial and military power.

¹⁶⁵ Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, 258. See also Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” *Boundary 2*, no. 12 (1984): 352. Mohanty, in discussing the relation of how the “third-world-difference” is produced and considered from Eurocentric assumptions, mentions that: “In the context of a first/third world balance of power, feminist analyses which perpetrate and sustain the hegemony of the idea of the superiority of the West produce a corresponding set of universal images of the “third world woman,” images like the veiled woman, the powerful mother, the chaste virgin, the obedient wife, etc. These images exist in universal, ahistorical splendour, setting in motion a colonialist discourse which exercises a very specific power in defining, coding and maintaining existing first/third world connections”. “Western hegemony functioned by enlisting Westerners in its conquest of the Orient, penetrating it by constituting it as a woman - seductive, mysterious, fecund, devious, and vulnerable.” Prakash, “Orientalism Now,” 209.

¹⁶⁶ She is not granted the same opportunity of expression in the musical as she is in the novel. She is the delicate Oriental girl-woman, betrayed by the Westerner she loves, and she is as sad as she is exquisite. Lovensheimer, *South Pacific*, 171.

¹⁶⁷ Lovensheimer’s commentary on imagery evoked in ‘Younger Than Springtime’ reaffirms those associated with Orientalism of “feminine” exotic which is eventually abandoned by her white oppressor. The narrative between Liat and Cable ends in his death from malaria and the pair never

The relationship between Cable and Liat is controlled by Bloody Mary. As a mother, you could say she was controlling or overbearing, but her relationships with her daughter and the American marines converge on a feminist dichotomy of power and obedience. Bloody Mary personifies the feminist plight of subjectification and disregard, centred in a narrative where men humiliate her on cultural and aesthetic principles. Bloody Mary's complexities come through in overtly "masculine" and "feminine" identities.¹⁶⁸ Along with her gender dichotomy, we see the adaptation of her cultural identity for personal gain.¹⁶⁹ Bloody Mary exists through fluctuating cultural and gender norms, exacerbated by her persistent desire for her daughter's marriage.¹⁷⁰ Colonialism and imperialism accentuate the inherent restraints of gender, binding women into a stranglehold perpetuated predominantly by sexual fantasy and emasculation:

reconcile after he, embroiled in conflict surrounded by racial and gender constructs, refuses to marry her. Ibid., 155-157.

¹⁶⁸ Bloody Mary's "masculine action" are set on by her desire to emulate the American marines, learning their ways to gain economic improvements when they buy her products. She uses sexual, expletive language yet counterbalances it with sincerity and support in 'Happy Talk'. - note the similarities with the previous connection between Cable and Liat.

¹⁶⁹ Lovensheimer notes Mary's dismissal of French colonial rule originates in her pursuit of economic enterprise above and beyond that of a plantation worker. Her efforts to overcome colonial powers, instigated by a male-governed state, are made all the more powerful when historical contexts are placed on them. The bureaucratic hegemony created in colonial states often became associated with sexual and racial obedience, therefore disobeying this notion implies strength and will beyond her social binding. Lovensheimer, *South Pacific*, 165. Also see Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, ed. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 15-21.

¹⁷⁰ I wish to refer to Butler's discussion on the combination of the employment of a "temporal trope of a subversive sexuality." The passage deals with the aforementioned trope with regards to being "outside," "before," or "after" power itself and the employment of a sexuality that may or may not exist outside that power. "We can press the argument further by pointing out that "the before" of the law and "the after" are discursively and performatively instituted modes of temporality that are invoked within the terms of a normative framework which asserts that subversion, destabilization, or displacement requires a sexuality that somehow escapes the hegemonic prohibitions on sex." Butler continues by stating "hence, the sexuality that emerges within the matrix of power relations is not a simple replication or copy of the law itself, a uniform repetition of a masculinist economy of identity. The productions swerve from their original purposes and inadvertently mobilize possibilities of "subjects" that do not merely exceed the bounds of cultural intelligibility, but effectively expand the boundaries of what is, in fact, culturally intelligible." I believe this has tangible applications when considering Bloody Mary's simultaneous masculinity and femininity. Bloody Mary emanates and conforms to the brutish sexuality of the American marines whilst containing visceral sexual appreciation for her child and the lover she wishes for her to have. What I believe is pivotal to understanding Bloody Mary and how Butler's discussion on a subversive sexuality is appropriate is Bloody Mary's ability to portray male and female heterosexuality, initiated by her understanding and replication of the dominant male hegemony as well as her desires for Liat's emotional and sexual awakening. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 38-39.

He [Edward Said] noted the confluence of Orientalism and Sexism: "[Orientalism] view[s] itself and its subject matter with sexist blinders.... [The local] women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy... Thus, the sexual conquest of Asia's women correlates with the conquest of Asia itself."¹⁷¹

Bloody Mary instigates fascination within Cable by awakening sexual fantasy through the mystique of 'Bali Ha'i' and her daughter. As a result, Bloody Mary claims ownership over Cable's ability to instigate his power over Liat. Whilst the pair show their love for one another, albeit full of cultural concerns for Cable, Bloody Mary controls the sexual exploration usually afforded to men.

Racial difference and the post-war female conformity are instigated through the contrasting fortunes of Nellie Forbush and Bloody Mary and Liat. In commenting on Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, Lovensheimer notes how Nellie represents a woman on the cusp of change denoted by Friedan's "housewife of the magazines" and "the New Woman soaring free, hesitates in mid-flight, shivers in all that blue sunlight and rushes back to the cosy walls of home".¹⁷² This aspect of choice for Nellie is instigated primarily by her race. Although she faces the impending doom of the subservient housewife of America's 1950s, it is a "privilege" not afforded to Liat. Liat offers herself emotionally and sexually to Cable, but the racial boundaries cannot be crossed.¹⁷³ Bloody Mary further complicates the matter as she offers monetary support as an incentive for Cable to stay. In this sense, Bloody Mary assumes the role of "economic supporter", a status contradicting the post-World War II housewife. This further implies the masculine-feminine dichotomy in Bloody Mary, who offers economic dependence along with the sexual freedom of her daughter to

¹⁷¹ Sunny Woan, "White Sexual Imperialism: A Theory of Asian Feminist Jurisprudence," *Washington & Lee Journal of Civil Rights & Social Justice* 14, (2007): 282.

¹⁷² Lovensheimer, *South Pacific*, 116.

¹⁷³ The implied sexual encounter between Lieutenant Cable and Liat is discussed in Block, *Richard Rodgers*. Block notes the issues surrounding the scene in the musical as both Hammerstein and Logan needed to ensure the audience were aware that the pair had sexual intercourse without direct graphic representation due to racial guidelines in the Hollywood Code. Block, *Richard Rodgers*, 154-156.

Cable. She tells Cable that she will work for him and Liat so he can spend all day with her, talk about beautiful things and make love, thus contradicting his position as the male source of economy whilst prioritizing his heterosexual prowess over his new wife.¹⁷⁴ In this sense, Rodgers and Hammerstein perpetuate the idea that the American ideal of nuclear relationships equates to happiness.¹⁷⁵

In stark contrast to Bloody Mary's position of power and colonial rebellion, *Miss Saigon*'s Kim experiences great hardship and exploitation in a society ravaged by war. We have already discerned Bloody Mary's balance between masculine and feminine, and in this sense, Kim provides the perfect counterpart. She is introduced, in a similar vein to Liat, as a pure personification of untouched femininity, and she is set in opposition to the overly sexual dancers of the Dreamland Club. Her purity is used as a weapon by her male oppressor (the Engineer) against the American GIs, who postulate their masculinity through acts of sexual debauchery:

Saigon at the height of the war had begun to decay. Its bars were drug marts, its hotels brothels, and its avenues a sprawling black market hawking everything from sanitary napkins to rifles... It was a city for sale - obsessed by greed, oblivious to its impending doom.¹⁷⁶

The landscape of *Miss Saigon* is rife with blatant racial and sexual exploitation, with the American GIs extracting the social constructs of their homeland, exploiting the differences

¹⁷⁴ Lovensheimer agrees with the disruption of the American masculine ideal. He comments on Hammerstein's decision to disband this inevitable happy ending as the American society were not ready for a mixed-race relationship. Lovensheimer, *South Pacific*, 158-159.

¹⁷⁵ "On the surface *South Pacific* paints an extraordinarily bright picture of a human community that knows no barriers of race or culture. In this liberal utopian vision, we learn through education that we are all the same under the skin, with the same basic beliefs, needs, desires, and impulses. Whether we are American, Tonkinese, Polynesian, or French, the play implies that as long as we all believe in the fundamental American values of romantic love, marriage, freedom, and equality, we all deserve (and can achieve) happiness." Andrea Most. "'You've Got to Be Carefully Taught': The Politics of Race in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific*," *Theatre Journal* 52, no. 3 (2000): 312.

¹⁷⁶ Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, (London: Pimlico Random House, 1994), 45.

between man and woman for their own gain.¹⁷⁷ The women of the Dreamland become possessions of the soldiers, who utilise the women's status and their desires for improvements in their lifestyle, particularly with regards to their desire for a new life in America. The familiarity of women desiring a different life, free from mockery and oppression, echoes throughout feminist ideology. Friedan's "problem with no name" and Sojourner Truth asking "ain't I a woman?" are inherent in Kim's identity. Her romantic narrative, with the only GI able to overcome the defined gender roles, escalates quickly and counteracts the destitute women in the Dreamland.¹⁷⁸

Kim's perceived security in identity is destroyed with the fall of Saigon. Just as Liat had to suffer in *South Pacific*, Kim is stripped of her "American salvation" with Chris, with race bearing no significance in this case, given the added plight of the birth of their son, Tam. The Communist expansion of North Vietnam into South Vietnam resulted in a regime of discrimination and extradition of Amerasian children to the fringes of society.¹⁷⁹ Kim protects Tam by hiding him away until the Communist Army and her betrothed cousin, Thuy,

¹⁷⁷ It is here where I believe theories on sexual stratification becomes important for *Miss Saigon*. Collins explains: "The basic feature of sexual stratification is the institution of sexual property: the relatively permanent claim to exclusive sexual rights over a particular person. With male dominance, the principal form of sexual property is male ownership of females; bilateral sexual property is a modern variant which arises with an independent bargaining position of women". (7) Collins mentions later that: "The ideal of female chastity (including premarital virginity) is an aspect of male property rights and is regarded as enforceable only by males; women are commonly regarded as sexually immoral, unclean, and lacking in honour, and hence are to be controlled by force." This definition of sexual stratification provides a deeper understanding of the social positioning of the woman and their increased desire for freedom. The ownership in *Miss Saigon* comes as the result of war and is instigated by a male (the Engineer) who claims direct ownership of the girls. In the case of stratification, the American GIs enter and leave at their own will, claiming their desired woman by force for their own sexual interests. In this regard, they have emotional control of the women whose desires are for freedom and happiness. Randall Collins, "A Conflict Theory of Sexual Stratification," *Social Problems* 19, no. 1 (1971), 3-21.

¹⁷⁸ "Both more and less than a human being, the Asian woman character represents the reconciliation of contradictions within the author. Many Vietnam novels describe "love affairs" between Asian women and soldiers. But the Asian woman character has no real life before she meets her soldier and none that is pursued after; these women seem to fade painlessly (through death, desertion, or transfer of affection) out of existence. Asian women are mirrored as whore, or whore-with-a-heart-of-gold, or inscrutable lover, or will-less mistresses." Kalí Tal, "The Mind at War: Images of Women in Vietnam Novels by Combat Veterans," *Contemporary Literature* 31, no. 1 (1990): 77.

¹⁷⁹ DeBonis' section on "Amerasians in Vietnam" discusses how children often sought their anonymous fathers in an unknown land rather than staying in the land of their mothers. Steven DeBonis, *Children of the Enemy: Oral Histories of Vietnamese Amerasians and their Mothers* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2017).

find her. Kim's strength is demonstrated through her protection of Tam, who she will protect at all costs, as expressed in the song 'I'd Give My Life For You'.¹⁸⁰

Trying to analyse her situation with regards to a defined feminist message is complicated by her constant desire for Chris. Her dedication to her child is a by-product of her relationship with her American lover, as Tam is a constant reminder of the life she could have had with Chris in America. All of these factors contribute to Kim's intersectional identity crisis. Stephanie A. Shields' "Gender: An Intersectionality Perspective" offers a fundamental understanding of how contrasting and conflicting identities can create hybridity in their intersection.¹⁸¹ Whilst Shields understands hybridity as suggesting stability in the newly-formed intersectional category, I would argue that conflict is a more appropriate definition than stability for Kim. She is stable in her identity as mother but is unstable through feelings of cultural instability. Her stable gender identity is called into conflict as she is forced to dance for the pleasure of men. Her purity is no more, instead replaced with sexual flirtation. It is manifest in a club in Bangkok in Act 2 and accentuates the sexual transformation of Kim. We never see her as overtly sexual as the women of the Dreamland, but through sexual awakening by the American Chris, she is outwardly comfortable with her sexualisation. What the composers of *Miss Saigon* do effectively is the musical transition from 'What a Waste' into 'Please' and how it reflects the transition from the tender Kim we recognise from Act 1 to her sexual frivolity in Act 2. Kim's music is softer and more fluid in 'Please', particularly in comparison to the garish 'What a Waste'. The musical subtlety reflects Kim's feuding identity of sensual mystique and submissive yet loving partner and mother.

¹⁸⁰ Ranard and Douglas' article mentions the stories of Vietnamese refugee mothers who escaped persecution for them and their Amerasian children. They state: "While some mothers spirited their children off to relatives in the countryside and others left them in orphanages, most kept their children with them." I told myself, 'OK if we die, we die together!' "one mother said. Others went to extraordinary lengths to disguise or hide their children: "I dyed my daughter's hair black, put soot on her face and cut off her eyelashes," one mother recalled. "And I kept her hidden under a blanket all the time in the house." Donald A. Ranard, and Douglas F. Gilzow, "The Amerasians," *In America: Perspectives on Refugee Resettlement* 4, (1989): 4.

¹⁸¹ Stephanie A Shields, "Gender: An Intersectionality Perspective," *Sex Roles* 59, no. 5-6 (2008): 301-311.

Kim experiences intersectional discrimination as a mother to a Eurasian child, but at the same time, she avoids the kind of discrimination experienced by the other Vietnamese women as a result of Chris' affection.¹⁸² Their relationship is built around a backdrop of desperately sexual women and aggressive, sexually-driven men to which these two belong in theory, but do not belong in practice. The romantic narrative is impossible and yet functions to determine that racial and cultural difference, as well as heightened expectations of gender, can be overcome.¹⁸³

2.4 A summation of Chapter 2.

An overall view of this chapter shows that motherhood is a highly-complicated social identity in musical theatre. In using just four examples, this chapter has deduced multiple facets of the foundational constructs of motherhood. In analysing mother-child and sibling relationships in *Gypsy*, we discovered that bi-directional dependence is highly prevalent in the musical. Rose, contrary to her beliefs, is more dependent on her children than they are on her. Furthermore, the exploration of the sibling relationship between Louise and June reveals that they are significantly more similar than suggested in the script. Finally, Rose's failure to accept the needs of her children results in their separation (complete separation in June and momentary separation in Louise). To use the balancing tendency analogy one last

¹⁸² Risman's states that we cannot study gender in isolation from other inequalities, nor can we only study inequalities' intersection and ignore the historical and contextual specificity that distinguishes the mechanisms that produce inequality by different categorical divisions, whether gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, or class." (443) This reaffirms the importance of understanding *Miss Saigon* in a historical context with regards to the Vietnam War and the treatment of women and how the intersections are then created. Barbara J. Risman, "Gender as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling with Activism," *Gender & Society* 18, no. 4 (2004): 429-450.

¹⁸³ "As long as women and men see themselves as different kinds of people, then women will be unlikely to compare their life options to those of men. Ibid.,432. Therein lies the power of gender. In a world where sexual anatomy is used to dichotomize human beings into types, the differentiation itself diffuses both claims to and expectations for gender equality. The social structure is not experienced as oppressive if men and women do not see themselves as similarly situated." Risman's comment explains how the "impossible" narrative comes to exist. Chris' disgust at the ravages of war and Kim's isolation after the death of her family overcome the 'expected' relationship that we see between the rest of the GIs and the Dreamland dancers: musically this is personified in 'Why God Why?' 'Sun and Moon' and 'Last Night of the Earth' as the pair discuss recurring images that they were not expecting and how they have been changed by the other.

time, the relationship between mother and daughters explored in *Gypsy* indicates that Rose's dependence on her daughters' performance ultimately outweighs that of their dependence on her as a mother. In essence, the implications of *balancing tendency 2* eventually become more influential than those of *balancing tendency 1*.

Following on from this are conclusions on identity. Rose's narrative constitutes the battle between the prominence of 'mother' and 'manager'. The narrative of *Gypsy* is intrinsically linked to the salience of Rose's identity as 'mother' and as 'manager'. *Gypsy* is the systematic journey from the importance of 'manager' to the importance of 'mother' by the culmination of the show. Her actions have particular implications for her daughter's motivations, particularly her support of June and ignorance towards Louise. June is inherently intrinsically motivated in that her actions are predominantly for enjoyment, and Louise is extrinsically motivated (she acts through necessity not through desire). Effie provides the comparison in behaviour as her conceptions of abandonment and undermining are similar to Rose's. Balance theory and identity theory imply that Effie is considered a negative part of the structure, and as such she is dismissed. Her prevalent identity as 'mother' results in behavioural change in Act 2.

The social theories of feminism, racial discrimination and cultural oppression were utilised to cover all four examples in depth. The developments of feminism between the 1920s and the 1980s focus on the return to the subservience of women as outlined in Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, has a blatant impact on the goals of the mothers. Rose endeavours to be part of the male-dominated world of theatre. Effie's fundamental crisis comes through those she holds closest, who are acting on societal pressures. Her expulsion from the group is directly and indirectly influenced by her position as a Black female. *Dreamgirls* also exemplifies how the strength in Black female community corresponds to solidarity and empowerment. The final two musicals have personified how the combination of Asian stereotypes and societal implications of gender identity and war implicate the narrative.

These summarised conclusions will influence the discussions to be featured in Chapter 3, where the focus of my research is broadened to consider examples from a wider selection of musicals. I will consider the utilisation of theatrical practices in the characterisation of these mothers.

Chapter 3: The Mother in Context: An Analysis of Theatrical Practices involving Mothers

The previous chapter focused on how theoretical studies can be considered in conjunction with theatrical practices to demonstrate the diversity of motherhood in the musical. This chapter will further the discussion to a broader collection of characters to compare and contrast patterns of how the trope of motherhood is utilised in musical theatre. I will build upon the theoretical foundations of Chapter 2 by considering new characters, allowing new patterns to be uncovered and new differences to be explored. This chapter is designed to illustrate the broad remit for discussion within one distinct stock character. Emphasis will be placed on contrasting what was previously discussed in relation to the four mothers from Chapter 2 with a larger assortment of mothers from the musical theatre canon. Again, Rose from *Gypsy* will form the integral example around which comparisons will be drawn.

Within section 3.1, I will be focusing on song plotting and motivic developments as well as song structure and style with relation to narrative. I will be analysing the importance of song placement and deciphering whether links can be made between the social implications of the respective mothers and the function of the song. Song convention within the overall structure of the musical will be considered to establish whether social patterns or psychological theories impact these moments of importance. Section 3.2 will expand the discussions of gender, race, and culture to consider how they influence staging and performance. This will cover the mother both as an individual and as an ensemble character, examining how character relationships reference social patterns. I will place particular emphasis on whether traditional romantic narratives (that of a man and woman falling in love) are observed within the narratives of the chosen mothers.

The choice of mothers used in this chapter comes from characters who have a prominent position within their narrative or provide an interesting contrast to the musicals

used in the previous chapter. The characters and areas of interest are Diana from *Next to Normal* and her battle with bipolar disorder, a cultural exploration of Anna within *The King and I*, racial discrimination and the exploration of Celie's sexuality within *The Color Purple*. I believed that it was important to expand the breadth of characters, particularly when discussing theatrical conventions, to be able to create a vibrant landscape of how motherhood is implemented within the musical.

3.1 A focus on song plotting and the impact on the mother's narrative

Within this section, I wish to discuss matters of song and musical style with regards to how they impact the narrative. By utilising further examples of mothers within the genre, I aim to compare and discuss how song and style are influenced by social and racial constructs present in the respective musicals. This will involve questioning how specific conventions, typically found within certain song types and structures, impact the mothers' narratives or identities. This will cover, for example, the use of repetition and its connection to psychological exploration within *Gypsy* and the racial message in *The Color Purple*.

Uncovering the *diegetic* practice of *Gypsy* will aid in understanding Rose's identity crisis and the social implications at play within *Dreamgirls*. The relative musical styles at play will be examined to establish how they reflect the gendered, racial and psychological implications of *Gypsy*, *Dreamgirls*, *Ragtime* and *Next to Normal*. Further to this, I will discuss the specific utility of ballads within the musicals, as they are cleverly manipulated to demonstrate certain aspects of motherhood in the respective works.

3.1.1 The specific utility of the 'I wish' song and the 'eleven o'clock' number within the narrative

In his chapter "Musical Styles and Song Conventions" from *The Oxford Handbook of The American Musical*, Paul Laird gives a succinct description of the variety of musical styles in the genre, outlining various song types and their structural importance to the musical.¹⁸⁴ Of particular importance with regards to *Gypsy* are the 'I want' (I shall refer to it as the 'I wish') number and the 'eleven o'clock number'.¹⁸⁵ By pinpointing specific song types and how each musical utilises them with regards to the mother's involvement, a greater overall picture of character significance can be obtained. This significance will then be cross-referenced with respect to the ideologies presented in Chapter 2.

The most important song type to consider in the primary narrative journey of the musical is the 'I wish' song.¹⁸⁶ In Section 2.3.1, I mentioned the relationship between 'Some People' and its feminist standpoint for Rose in *Gypsy*. Rose's stance against the patriarchy and her conviction of self enlightens the audience to her desires for success. At this point in the narrative, we want Rose to succeed, acting in a sense as a feminist 'I wish' song. This song is essential to establishing Rose as a bullish force of nature who, as Stacy Wolf states in *A Problem Like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical*, "is not like some people".¹⁸⁷ She represents the woman who wants more for herself than housewifery; she is the antithesis of the woman chained by "the problem that has no name" in Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. 'Some People' is however, as Raymond Knapp notes in *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity*, a glorified petition for monetary support from her father. Knapp extrapolates the "triplet" motif that represents her desires (noted by

¹⁸⁴ Paul Laird, "Musical Styles and Song Conventions," in *The Oxford Handbook of The American Musical*, ed. Raymond Knapp, Mitchell Morris, and Stacy Wolf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 33-44.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁸⁶ Woolford defines the 'I wish' song within an overall structure of the musical and states that it occurs predominantly in what he calls the 'Call to adventure'. The 'I wish' song is designed to establish the "hero's" inner desires and dreams. Woolford explains the importance of the 'I Wish' song as it creates empathy from the audience who acknowledge and relate to the character wanting to achieve their dreams. Woolford, *How Musicals Work*, 150-153.

¹⁸⁷ Wolf, *A Problem Like Maria*, 111.

its first example over the lyrics “I have a dream”) and comments that it entwines with Rose’s need for money (“eighty-eight bucks papa”) before she takes his most prized possession, the golden plaque.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, the triplet motif consolidates the male-dominated institution that Rose is trying to break into with her ‘dream’ fixated on the approval and recognition of Mr Orpheum. She believes that, in gaining this recognition, she will be “in the big time”, or on par with the men who rule her industry.¹⁸⁹

This ‘I wish’ song is also essential for establishing the context of the Stryker identity salience table (see Table 2 - section 2.2.1). It establishes Rose’s identity as a ‘driven stage mother/manager’ and positions June as her prime focus; she had a dream all about June with no mention of Louise.¹⁹⁰ Further to this, she possesses the dream and not her daughters, a fact that establishes the relationship dynamic between Rose and her daughters, with her dreams being directly implicated by her dependence on them. The relentlessness of the song is successful in creating the dynamics that will be explored with regards to identity salience and position as it conditions us, as audience members, to crave success, specifically for June. In turn, we subconsciously forget Louise, just as Rose does, which will transition into sympathy as Louise’s need for attention becomes more apparent. In ‘Some People’ we have established sentiments of the ideologically feminist ‘I wish’ mother song, which looks to empower female endeavour rather than basking in their misfortune or male subservience.

To draw a comparison to this, I will consider Anna Leonowens from *The King and I* and her ‘I wish’ song ‘I Whistle a Happy Tune’. In stark contrast to the rousing ‘Some People’, ‘I Whistle a Happy Tune’ is a relatively simple and gentle song with Anna teaching her son that outward confidence can conceal any inward fears that he may have. Within this

¹⁸⁸ Knapp notes how we are disillusioned by Rose’s actions because we are not made to feel angry that she basically stole from her father, we are rooting for Rose to achieve her dreams. Her relentlessness counteracts the implications of her actions. See Knapp, *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity*, 221-223.

¹⁸⁹ “The stage mother taken to the excess, pushes beyond the feminine.” Wolf, *A Problem Like Maria*, 111.

¹⁹⁰ “The character of Momma Rose is a stereotypical stage mother, domineering, dominating, fiercely overprotective and eventually abandoned by one of her daughters and temporarily rejected by the other.” Ibid.

relatively simple number is a message of strength in the face of adversity, and the establishment of Anna's identity as a teacher. Gender and culture are constantly battling with one another as Anna and the King of Siam clash on the role of women, a conflict that is reflected in the shift between Western and Oriental music throughout the musical (the gender conflict will be discussed further in section 3.2). Rose and Anna share similar character traits, the most notable being defiance, but their respective 'I wish' songs dictate how their defiance will be employed. Rose's defiance is erratic, her outward demeanour fluctuating between anger, despair and unadulterated love, whereas Anna demonstrates her defiance in a resolute and calm manner in response to the King of Siam's derogatory view of women. The main cause of this difference is the conflict of identities. It is easy to determine that Rose's secondary identity of 'manager' is not complementary to her identity as 'mother', whereas Anna's identity as 'teacher' is. Anna's 'teacher' identity incorporates itself into the cultural and gender framework of the musical as Anna's relationship with the King and the royal wives and children evolves.

Whilst endeavour and strength were personified in 'Some People' and 'I Whistle a Happy Tune', opposite themes of female despair also exist in certain 'I wish' mother songs. These songs create sympathy and despair for the mother who, most of the time, has established herself as bereft of hope due to her connection with the opposite sex. Both *Miss Saigon* and *Les Misérables* introduce mothers who are negatively impacted by their gender and status within their respective societies. The two 'I wish' songs are highly descriptive, picturing scenes of happiness and contempt, with Kim and her fellow Dreamland dancers imagining a movie with their American GIs, whilst Fantine dreams of a time gone by. The pattern here is the character's happiness is reliant on male dependence. The emphasis in 'The Movie in My Mind' is the subjugation and sexual exploitation of the Dreamland girls by the American GIs. Here, it is the cultural and racial divide that affects the gender identities.¹⁹¹ Their dreams of freedom and happiness are built and systematically destroyed by the American men who have total control of their emotional state. They are sexually flippant

¹⁹¹ Wolf, "Gender and Sexuality," 213.

because they deem that the only way of escape, but they know that will never be a reality. The importance here is the transition from the opening production number, 'The Heat is on in Saigon' into the 'I wish' song, 'The Movie in My Mind'. Here, sexual promiscuity transitions into disheartened despondency. The women are glorified by the men for their demonstrations, but are soon reminded that they are no more than bodies to fulfil sexual fantasy. 'The Movie in My Mind' is predominantly a duet, sung by Gigi, the most featured Dreamland dancer who has just been named 'Miss Saigon,' and Kim, the innocent virginal girl who personifies purity (this idea is reflected in her costume, which is usually white) in a seemingly sexually immoral setting. This song is pivotal in reflecting the destitution of the women. It needs to create a feeling of hopelessness so we can become fully invested in Kim and Chris' unlikely union and her subsequent motherhood. In section 2.3.4, I acknowledged the factual social conditions of Saigon, and the cultural degradation in the face of war. The women are an innocent party, in the sense that the implications of war have been thrust upon them. They now seem to exist as mindless bodies that crave emotional stability.¹⁹² This is reflected in the musical phrasing as both Gigi and Kim build through their verses until they climax at the chorus. The final reprise motif where the ensemble women sing as one emphasises the common desire for security.¹⁹³ Kim's situation in this landscape is fascinating as the audience naturally wants to protect her because of her youth and naivety. Kim's dreams of a man that will fight for her juxtapose the brutality of war with the fragility of emotion. Her wish will come true in Chris, who rejects the notion of war for he has found something special where he did not expect it.¹⁹⁴ 'The Movie in My Mind' is the equivocal version of the desperate 'I wish' song that provides the audience with a desire to see the hero rise to happiness. Fantine's plight in *Les Misérables* is dramatically similar to Kim. The purity of Kim is mirrored in Fantine's daughter Cosette for whom she works to send money.

¹⁹² Tal, "The Mind at War," 134.

¹⁹³ The lyrics here reprise the phrase 'and in a strong GIs embrace'. The quiet dynamic reflects a whispered plea for a better life and yet they also seem resigned to their situation.

¹⁹⁴ Wolf notes that "men in musicals embark on a performative journey that intertwines gender and sexuality and moves from homosocial to heterosexual, from their buddies to a wife." Wolf, "Gender and Sexuality," 213.

We share in Fantine's despair as the loss of her income signals the inability to provide for her sick daughter. 'I Dreamed a Dream' follows the same framework as an 'I wish' song, and we learn of Fantine's desire for a previous life where she was content with a man she loved. Her opening recitative-style passage begins 'there was a time when men were kind'. The poignancy of this for the story arc of *Les Misérables* is vital as it is only through Jean Valjean that Fantine's dreams can come true; in him she has found a man who is willing to show her kindness and care for her daughter after her death. She was betrayed by her lover, thrown aside by the foreman at her job and is subsequently plunged into a life of prostitution.¹⁹⁵ The opening recitative is sung all on the same note with the deviation coming on the phrase 'all went wrong', further stressing the despondency of Fantine's social situation.¹⁹⁶

'I Dreamed a Dream' and 'Some People' occupy opposite ends of the spectrum with regards to the character's intention. 'I Dreamed a Dream' is presented as a passionate lament of what could have been whereas 'Some People' invigorates Rose to make changes for herself. As an audience, we are not allowed to believe that Fantine's dream would ever become a reality as she finishes 'now life has killed the dream I dreamed' and it is here that the difference becomes evident. Rose's pursuit of her dream may be slightly chaotic, but the general feeling is one of positivity. The same feeling cannot be afforded to Fantine. Her 'I wish' song and her character in general is used to instil sympathy for Cosette and honour for

¹⁹⁵ Mary Wollstonecraft's mother's unhappy marriage deeply impressed upon her the dangers and injustices resulting from women's economic dependence on men (7). Craciun acknowledges key passages from Wollstonecraft's works and her influence for her opinion on 'women's spiritual equality'. She notes the French Revolution of 1789 and the San Domingo revolution of 1791 in which slaves rose up and demanded liberty as an important catalyst for interest in the rights of woman. (96) More substantial and closer to the mainstream of the nineteenth-century women's movements, is Wollstonecraft's argument for women's economic independence through increased professional opportunities, beyond that of milliner, mantua maker, governess, and of course the oldest professions, "common and legal prostitution," i.e., marriage (p. 150 of *Vindication of the Rights of Women*). (97) Fantine follows Wollstonecraft's warning of male economic dependence and the burden of childhood as she loses economic stability and falls into prostitution (see Chapter VIII Morality undermined by sexual notions of the importance of a good reputation 146-148). Adriana Craciun, *Mary Wollstonecraft: A Vindication of the Rights of Women; A Routledge Literary Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁹⁶ Referring to Ruthie Henshall's portrayal of Fantine in the 10th Anniversary recording of *Les Misérables*. Alain Boublil, Herbert Kretzmer and Claude-Michel Schönberg, "*Les Misérables* in Concert," directed by Gavin Taylor (London: BBC Video, 1998), DVD.

Jean Valjean. Where we may question Rose's intentions for her children, there is no question that Fantine's identity as a mother is her primary focus.

If the 'I wish' song forms the first impression of the narrative journey, then the song coined the 'eleven o'clock number' constitutes the greatest realisation for the character at the culmination of the narrative.¹⁹⁷ The 'eleven o'clock' numbers presented by these characters predominantly demonstrate moments of great emotional resilience as well as their awareness of their identity or social positioning. Emotional turmoil and sheer exhilaration are the basis for 'Rose's Turn'.¹⁹⁸ The aforementioned 'Some People' introduces Rose as a driven, semi-entrepreneurial woman who has big dreams for her daughters. Rose's 'eleven o'clock' number inverts those traits as Rose's world crumbles around her. 'Rose's Turn' and the preceding scene have been discussed in both sections 2.1.3 and 2.3.1 where Rose's struggle with dependence and the feminist view of the scene are explored. 'Roses Turn' is the turbulent destruction of Rose's strength, as she childishly mocks and venomously berates those she previously held dearest. Along with the test of strength is the test of her identity. 'Mother' and 'manager', as outlined in Table 2 from section 2.2.1, have lost the position as most powerful in the salience hierarchy and Rose's response mimics that of a child throwing her toys out of the pram.¹⁹⁹ Musically, it is a sarcastic collage of previous songs, each one manipulated to create emotional turmoil.²⁰⁰ She asks 'why did I do it? and what did it get me?', questioning the efforts she has gone through to provide her children with their dream lives.²⁰¹ Of course, the distinction between Rose's vision of their dream life and the reality are not the same. To revert back to section 2.1.3 and the discussions on

¹⁹⁷ "The '11 O'clock number' was coined during the period where curtains rose at 8.30pm. The musical would climax with a show stopping number that would send the audiences home with a memorable performance lodged firmly in their hearts." Woolford. *How Musicals Work*. 172.

¹⁹⁸ Woolford calls 'Rose's Turn' the most famous and possibly the finest 'eleven o'clock number' in musical theatre. *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁹⁹ Garebian calls Rose a "perverse mother-child". Keith Garebian, *The Making of Gypsy* (Oxford: Mosaic Press, 1995), 48.

²⁰⁰ Knapp outlines the links to "Some People" and "Ev'rything's Coming Up Roses" with borrowed aspects of "You Gotta' Have A Gimmick." He notes the restless shifting of tempo and mood that has marked previous numbers careens out of control as she shifts from song to song. Knapp, *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity*, 226-227.

²⁰¹ Laurents et al., *Gypsy*, 105-106.

balancing tendencies, this is the precise moment where Rose realises that her children no longer rely on her care; I described this as *balancing tendency 2* overcoming *balancing tendency 1*. 'Rose's Turn' spawns from Rose's inability to accept that realisation (the extent of structure and style in Rose's Turn will be considered further in section 3.1.2).²⁰² 'Rose's Turn' is an emphatic rebellion, epitomising a woman who wants to live her life by placing her own needs first. In Rose's mind, it shows motherhood as a thankless job where you work your whole life to provide for your children who can decide to just cast you to one side. The climax of the song sees Rose's reunion with Louise, after which a symbolic passing of the torch occurs, as she semi-relinquishes dependence to Louise. The final reconciliation provides a moment of relief in the narrative, as the relationship between Rose and Louise finally seems to have reached a place of mutual understanding.

The image of Rose at this specific moment juxtaposes her strength and desperation. She is glorifying herself whilst simultaneously berating her daughters and Herbie. To find another 'eleven o'clock' number as vehement as 'Rose's Turn' is difficult, but similarities can certainly be drawn to Celie's song 'I'm Here' in *The Color Purple*. Whilst we struggle with complex responses towards Rose, with Celie we feel overly protective. Sexual confusion, racial discrimination and domestic abuse suppress her character with the heavy burden of childhood rape and her children being forcefully taken from her. By the culmination of the musical, Celie seems to have finally reached peace in her life, opening her own business and finding happiness with her lover Shug. Shug's promiscuous lifestyle is the catalyst for Celie's 'eleven o'clock' number, as she questions the authenticity of Shug's love for her. The

²⁰² I wish to return back to Friedan, *Feminine Mystique* and introduce what she discusses in her chapter 'The Crisis in Women's Identity' and how it relates to Rose's emotion. Of particular note for me, are Friedan's comments on her decision to leave her career as a psychologist. "She notes after getting a graduate fellowship she felt an uneasiness about her future; she had always thought that she would be more than the 'Midwestern town woman' she grew up around. She did not want to go home and be a mother, a woman of the town, bound to her home, bridge, shopping, children, husband, charity, clothes. But now she has to take the deciding step, she suddenly did not know what she wanted to be." (94) 'Some People' constitutes the same feelings Friedan experienced of ambition to be more than the suburban housewife. Rose embraces motherhood as a means to escape the feminine mystique of the housewife and yet that very factor results in her questioning the effort and sacrifice she suffers through. 'Rose's Turn' is the personification of women questioning their future. It is retrospective; had Rose thought the outcome would be abandonment by her daughters and her fiance who she worked so hard for then perhaps she would have given up on the idea. Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 94-103.

importance of this song with regards to Celie's narrative is her discovery of her own self-worth. Where Rose struggled psychologically with abandonment, Celie's moment is euphoric. 'I'm Here' is Celie understanding that no matter what she has suffered through, she has survived, and she is still here. The most poignant moment comes at the culmination of the song where she softly sings 'I'm beautiful', reminding us that female empowerment can come despite being mocked her entire life for her appearance.²⁰³ The message of female empowerment is also found in the *Dreamgirls* 'eleven o'clock' number 'Listen'. I noted in section 2.3.3 that 'Listen' was not a song from the original production of *Dreamgirls*, but was premiered in the 2006 film adaptation and was later adapted in the 2009 US production as a duet version for the two female protagonists. The original production incorporated the reunion between Effie and Deena into a musical scene where the two reconcile. The inclusion of 'Listen' gives *Dreamgirls* an 'eleven o'clock' number that heightens the emotional and symbolic importance of this moment.²⁰⁴ Similar to Celie's 'I'm Here', 'Listen' tells of the importance of Black female empowerment. Both Deena and Effie admit that they allowed Curtis to control them, but they did not realise the love and support they could obtain from one another. The pair joins together to sing of the 'life Curtis stole from them when they were young' but they are taking control back.²⁰⁵ The song proves that monetary stability does not correspond to emotional fulfilment, and the larger social message is that women have to take control for themselves.

²⁰³ Celie is offered to Mister at the beginning of the musical because she is strong and has the capabilities to care for his family but he mocks her appearance. 'I'm Here at the Makers Conference 2017, "Cynthia Erivo Performs "I'm Here" From "The Color Purple" | 2017," YouTube Video, 12:18, posted by "MAKERS," Apr 4, 2017 accessed Sep 24, 2009. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-Flmo07ddk>

²⁰⁴ The playbill article on the newly included 'Listen' has comments by the director Robert Longbottom on the "raising of two voices in a great moment". He notes that Deena offers a "Didn't-he-do-the-same-thing-to-you?" kind of philosophy." Adam Hetrick and Kenneth Jones, "*Dreamgirls* Tour to Feature Duet Version of "Listen" and New Act II Opener," *Playbill*, Sep 1, 2009, accessed Sep 4, 2018. <http://www.playbill.com/article/dreamgirls-tour-to-feature-duet-version-of-listen-and-new-act-ii-opener-com-164026>

²⁰⁵ The lyrics of the Broadway revival performance are demonstrated in extensive recordings of the 2009 performance by Broadway.com. When the pair merge together vocally they sing 'you [Curtis] will no longer control me'. 'Listen' from the 2009 production of *Dreamgirls*, "Spotlight On: Dreamgirls National Tour," YouTube video, 14:40, posted by "Broadwaycom," Mar 9, 2011 accessed Sep 24, 2009. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJUAgFIVn5o>

3.1.2 Discussion on the variation within song structure and style of mothers

Narrative is driven forward by the scenes but it is music that attains higher emotional importance. Nevertheless, this relationship is more difficult to develop in musicals that have little dialogue or are completely through-composed such as *The Phantom of the Opera* or *Sweeney Todd*.²⁰⁶ The last section discussed specific structural foundations that a musical contains and outlined the relationship of these elements to the narrative journey of the mother characters. This section will go one step further and analyse specific songs of note and decipher how the song is formed.

McMillin perfectly denotes the importance of 'lyric time' and its relationship to performance and gesture, noting in particular the importance of perceived complexity in repetition.²⁰⁷ Repetition is an important tool that the composer must utilise to obtain full emotional impact. A character could repeat a specific phrase and relate different emotions to each exclamation. To emphasise the importance of repetition I want to reconsider 'Rose's Turn' and the implications this has on her behaviour. 'Rose's Turn' has formed part of the discussion across various sections of this thesis and a large part of this is the intricate way it is structured, coupled with Sondheim's lyrical patterns. Discussions on whether the actress should be applauded following the number prove the psychological complexities inherent in the moment.²⁰⁸ Repetition proves to be a vital tool in creating Rose's borderline psychosis. Her reality is falling apart around her, she is questioning her actions and exuding desperation. The build-up to the realisation comes in the repeated 'Momma's...' section. In a

²⁰⁶ Woolford, *How Musicals Work*, 25-26.

²⁰⁷ McMillin, *The Musical as Drama*, 31.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 49-50. Also, Knapp notes the Angela Lansbury London production and the decision to have her bow after the applause, eerily remaining in her own world. This brings the audience out of the illusion of 'the performer' acknowledging the applause and instead, portraying 'an unstable woman' lost in the emptiness of her "dreams." Knapp, *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity*, 228.

defiant stance of anger and childish sarcasm she roars out 'Momma's talkin' loud' and 'Momma's doin' fine' until she dramatically stops when she sings 'Momma's lettin' go'. She nervously restarts whilst the orchestra vamp underneath her, waiting for her to try and regain her stability but again she stutters. Both sections are punctuated with stutters of Rose trying to comprehend her behaviour until she states 'Momma's gotta let go!'²⁰⁹ It is lyrically simple and yet effective. This small section of music encapsulates the narrative journey of Rose. We have spent the entire show wondering whether she would realise her restrictive behaviour on her children was alienating her, and in this music, the use of repetition is deployed to indicate the avoidance of truth. Each repetition is exaggerated and exultant, but through defiance rather than reality. It demonstrates the inherent identity difficulties within Table 2 but it establishes Rose's realisation of her behavioural faults. Her final refrain is where she reprises a section from 'Everything's Coming Up Roses' except now she is seemingly focused on herself (she no longer adds for you onto the end). The repetition of 'for me' becomes increasingly frantic, and it is reflected in the orchestration whose repeated stabs become shorter in length and more abrupt. Repetition is also utilised across Celie's song 'I'm Here'. The repetition here focuses on the use of the first person. Rose's refers to herself in the third person in her repetitions, reflecting her overactive imagination and reluctance to admit that she was ever in the wrong. She appears to be singing about another person whose experiences are loosely based on her own. Celie's repetition in the first person emphasises her strength and confidence. Daniel W Ross' "Celie in the Looking Glass: The Desire for selfhood in *The Color Purple*" notes the way in which Celie's language exists through much of the book without a body or audience, just as she exists without a self or identity.²¹⁰ The author also notes the that, "for many, the turning point of the novel is when Celie asserts her freedom from her husband and proclaims her right to exist: "I'm poor, I'm black, I may be ugly, and can't cook.... But I'm here", which is presented in the musical as a

²⁰⁹ Laurents et al. *Gypsy*, 104-105.

²¹⁰ Ross, Daniel W. "Celie in the Looking Glass: The Desire for Selfhood in 'The Color Purple'," *Modern Fiction Studies* 34, no. 1 (1988): 69.

small musical passage called 'I Curse You Mister'.²¹¹ The repetition of 'I' and the first person personifies the journey Celie has undertaken to discover herself and her identity. She garners strength from her sister and her children, whom she once thought dead, and tells herself that she should be confident, flirtatious (if she pleases), and joyfully sing out, because she has everything she needs to live a bountiful life. Before her final exclamation of 'I'm here', she sings 'I'm beautiful, yes I'm beautiful', encapsulating the message of self-worth in an understated, gentle musical gesture. As an audience, we have sympathised with Celie throughout the musical and this small moment of repetition not only demonstrates Celie's ultimate belief in herself, but also gives the audience a true feel-good moment where we can celebrate with her.

The use of *diegetic* (an awareness of singing) or *non-diegetic* songs, often dictated by the style of the musical, create realism within the narrative. Wolf acknowledges the specific relationship in *Gypsy* between the *diegetic* songs which Rose enables but cannot be a part of, and her own song that expresses emotions, desires, or ideas.²¹² Within the musical it is the diegetic numbers that seemingly frustrate June and Louise, which in turn leads to their resentment of Rose. They mimic the diegetic number 'Let Me Entertain You' during the non-diegetic 'If Momma Was Married' (see section 2.1.2). Louise's development through the diegetic numbers sees her transition from June's timid sidekick to a sexually overt stripper. Wolf describes the transition as Louise attempts to enable her femininity but she is unable to do so until the hyper-feminine June exits the musical.²¹³ She continues by outlining the relationship between Louise's masculinity and femininity; Louise recognises herself as a "pretty girl" and uses the excessive stereotype of "woman" in her strip routine alongside butch elements to reach her newfound stardom.²¹⁴ Louise reverts back to her younger self at the onset of her strip routine, unable to 'sing out' and terrified to perform without her mother's guidance. Louise's transformation throughout this number reflects her development

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Wolf. *A Problem Like Maria*, 110.

²¹³ Ibid., 125.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

throughout the musical from a timid child into a confident woman. It forms a contrast to Rose's transformation, who starts as a woman confident in her conviction and finishes with her childish outburst in 'Rose's Turn'.

The *diegetic/non-diegetic* balance is also pivotal in *Dreamgirls*. The *diegetic* songs of *Dreamgirls* are predominantly used to tell the story of racial or financial struggle ('Cadillac Car', 'One Night Only', the opening sequence) and the differing images of women ('Dreamgirls', 'Hard To Say Goodbye'). It is within the *diegetic* aspects of the show that Effie's oppression is created. It is implied that her voice is "too powerful" and she is not pretty enough for those moments, and her version of 'One Night Only' is stifled because of Curtis' power. However, she ascends to new heights in performance and emotion in 'I Am Changing'. This was noted as a particular turning point for Effie's identity with the inclusion of motherhood in her salience hierarchy. 'I Am Changing' is the first time since the first song that we have seen Effie, in a *diegetic* setting, sing the lead vocal line. 'I Am Changing' creates an interesting two-level response from audience members: on the base level we want the actress to sing well because we want to hear a good performance, and we also want Effie to sing well so she can get her job. This approach is reaffirmed by McMillin as he discusses the 'diegetic convention'.²¹⁵ 'I Am Changing' stands out in *Dreamgirls* because most of the other *diegetic* songs abide by the backstage convention, whereas 'I Am Changing' is essential for outlining Effie's evolution. The *non-diegetic* convention links to the social and gender dynamic within *Dreamgirls* as it is through these numbers that we learn the true emotions of the characters. The emotional climax of Act 1 of *Dreamgirls*, 'It's All Over/And I Am Telling You', portrays the destruction of Effie's stability, both emotionally and romantically. To refer back to the discussion of 'balance theory' within section 2.2.2, the exploration of the social structure and the journey towards the balanced system occurs

²¹⁵ McMillin explains that the phenomenon is seen as a convenience but he divulges that some songs are born out of book without the need for the backstage convention (a musical based on the creation of a musical). He says "I think songs and dances are called for in the books of many shows not because the other convention that of having characters break into song is inconvenient to the writers but because the convention of breaking into song is such a mine of dramatic advantages that it becomes worth attention in the book." McMillin, *The Musical as Drama*, 103.

during the *non-diegetic* elements of Act 1. I noted that 'It's All Over' musically personifies Effie's expulsion but the structure is challenged during 'Family' and 'Heavy, Heavy' as Effie questions her position within the system. As I concluded in section 2.2.2, Effie's expulsion is due to an adverse focus that she now has to manage. Her pregnancy and romantic displacement are her mental focus during 'It's All Over/And I Am Telling You', but she is unable to re-enter the social balance system. In both of these examples, the mother character is restricted within the *diegetic* convention of the musical in the sense that they cannot reach their own desire or full potential. Their social placement within their respective musicals is established within the *diegetic* conventions, and their acceptance in or opposition to that placement is explored during the *non-diegetic* conventions.

The final area of consideration in this section will be the overall style of music in the show.²¹⁶ *Gypsy's* music falls into the iconic jazz-influenced sound of Broadway that was introduced through the likes of Irving Berlin and George Gershwin as the genre grew in popularity.²¹⁷ The narrative is linked to the vaudeville and burlesque scenes of America, and as such, the musical reflects those sound worlds. Whilst the musical style of *Gypsy* does not span a wide array of genres, the impact of the brash jazz sounds with the sultry burlesque music reflects the evolving characters in the musical. Jazz harmony and the specific use of semi-tonal false relations compliment the mental instability of Rose, a prime example coming in her final breakdown section of 'Rose's Turn' with the orchestral staccato stabs answering Rose's cries of 'for me'. The opposite side of *Gypsy's* musical influences comes through in the more conventionally Classical sounds of 'Together, Wherever We Go' or 'You'll Never Get Away From Me'. These songs tend to appear when Rose is focused more on her family unit and establishing some sense of normality. Raymond Knapp comments on 'Together, Wherever We Go', suggesting that:

²¹⁶ Laird, "Musical Styles and Song Conventions".

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*,33.

The song restabilises the group by emphasizing a shared perspective and forgoing the idiosyncrasies of Rose's more typical musical location for something more easily sung together. It shifts the arrival point from the narcissistic 'Ev'rything's Coming Up Roses' to a multilayered emphasis on the collective.²¹⁸

He also notes that even though the music has changed stylistically, Rose is still instigating the music reinforcing her dominance; sentiments that are also present in 'Small World' and 'You'll Never Get Away From Me'.²¹⁹ Like that of *Gypsy*, the narrative of *Dreamgirls* is entrenched in the development of specific musical styles. The concerns here are the development of Motown music and the transition into the disco sound of the 1970s. The music reflects the more conventional song structures of the era as they were intended to be easy listening and recognisable (this is true for the *diegetic* numbers as they are the songs that are for 'public' [the public of the musical] consumption). Effie's displacement from the group is centred around the incompatibility between her voice and the commercial sound. It is known that Curtis has ulterior motives for Deena and is abusing his power over Effie to get to her. Deena's voice is lighter than Effie's and, as such, is the desired sound. But Curtis also wants her because she personifies the stereotypical image of feminine beauty. The musical style and gender identity are so closely related in both of these musicals. The music of *Ragtime* is also intrinsically linked to the racial narrative of the musical, as the relationships between White and Black Americans, as well as those of Jewish immigrants, become more defined. The specific Ragtime sound represents the changing racial tolerance as well as the development of romantic narratives. The song 'New Music' explores the courtship between Coalhouse and Sarah (the primary Black American characters) and the frustration between Mother and Father at Father's inability to accept Sarah and her actions, he is unable to hear the new music.

²¹⁸ Knapp, *The American Musical*, 225.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 224.

One musical where the style of music is intrinsic to narrative development is *Next to Normal*. The breadth and variation of musical style in *Next to Normal* expertly and effectively demonstrates the fragility of Diana's bipolar disorder. It is predominantly set within a standard musical theatre and rock hybrid, but it is never allowed to settle musically. The jazz waltz 'My Psychopharmacologist and I', which fuses together the scat style of singing with its allusion to 'My Favourite Things', musically demonstrates the complexities experienced by patients and their doctors or treatments.²²⁰ The folk-driven 'I Miss the Mountains' demonstrates Diana's desires for freedom from the heavy medication she is on since she misses the highs and lows. The employment of counterpoint or combination song is an important aspect not only stylistically but from a staging perspective.²²¹ 'You don't know/I am the One' is a prime example of a combination song in the musical, as Diana and Dan are arguing whilst Gabe simultaneously sings to Diana. She is furious at Dan's claim that he understands her situation. Throughout the song we see Diana processing Dan and Gabe's simultaneous claims that they are the one that truly knows who she is. Possibly the most important musical quote in *Next to Normal* is the deployment of the toy box motif. Its light, quasi-ethereal presence marks Diana's ultimate realisation; she can no longer hold off the advancements of Gabe into her mind. It is a widely-understood sound, one that is linked to childhood and serenity, but that is not the case for Diana. Whilst it signifies unhappiness, it also allows Diana to realise that the kindest thing she can do is let her family go on without her, so she leaves Dan and Natalie to free them of her burden. *Next to Normal* shows how stylistic interpretations in the music can elevate the emotional impact of the narrative.

When considering a specific song type, the most interest arises when ballads are considered.²²² What becomes apparent when comparing these characters is a clear distinction between how the ballad is used. The ballad within *Gypsy* is used to initiate the romantic narrative between Rose and Herbie. 'Small World' is a traditional love ballad

²²⁰ The musical names this 'My favourite pills' after mentioning the vast amount of medication that Diana takes for her condition.

²²¹ Laird, "Musical Styles and Song Conventions," 41-42.

²²² *Ibid.*, 34.

between two complete strangers and yet it follows similar patterns found in *Gypsy* with Rose dominating the exchange. She is attracted to Herbie and feels he has complementary traits to her but we know that Rose's previous romantic relations have not ended well. 'Small World' unassumingly creates the romantic narrative of the show which will never be totally realised. The romantic narrative and the ballad are vital in the musical whether that be in the creation or struggle. The emergent relationship in *The Color Purple* between Celie and Shug is instigated by a kiss (to be discussed in section 3.2.1) is then explored during 'What About Love'. Whilst 'Some People' is dominated by Rose, this duet equally expresses the dreams of this emerging romantic narrative. The vocal writing builds from two solo verses through to a chorus where the voices sing in harmony. It is the first time we see Celie truly explore her sexuality and express feelings of happiness and content. Celie's opening lyrics "is that me who's floatin' away" show a woman who has finally experienced sexual freedom, and as the song develops, she wants to learn more about what love can be.²²³ The ballad also explores negative emotions towards romance, some more extreme than others. I discussed 'I Dreamed a Dream' within the 'I wish' segment of section 3.1.1, and mentioned the descriptive expression of a previous love. This ballad is even more effective when it is juxtaposed with the frivolous and at times grotesque music within 'Lovely Ladies', as Fantine descends into prostitution to provide for her child.

Two further ballads that revolve around the life of the mother's child are 'I'd Give My Life For You' in *Miss Saigon* and 'Your Daddy's Son' in *Ragtime*. Kim's song in *Miss Saigon* centres around her promise to protect her child even in the aftermath of war. Kim has been abandoned by Chris, and at this stage, her innocence is being replaced by undying devotion to a child who is now completely reliant on her. This ballad has narrative importance as it foreshadows the final moments of the musical, where Kim kills herself to ensure that her son is taken to America with Chris. Sarah's song in *Ragtime* comes after we discover that Sarah tried to kill her child by burying him alive. 'Your Daddy's Son' is extremely complex as it carefully balances despair, terror and frustration. The ballad takes on a quasi-lullaby feel,

²²³ 'I'm Here' at the Makers Conference 2017.

before Sarah descends into complete horror and uncontrolled remorse, as she realises what she has done before crumbling over the realisation that she buried her child. The power of this ballad comes in the conflicting emotion it makes the audience feel. Whilst we are supposed to be horrified by her actions, we cannot help but feel sympathy for Sarah; these are emotions that Mother and Father subsequently argue over. Horror and despair are also felt during the ballad sections of *Next to Normal*. The eclectic style of the musical was mentioned earlier, and it is within the ballad that some of the harrowing effects of Diana's depressive episodes occur. 'I Dreamed a Dance' is used to denote Diana's seemingly unbreakable emotional link to her dead child. The 'ballad' is interspersed throughout the musical, often at times of distress and depression, the most extreme example being 'There's a World' where Gabe convinces Diana to try and commit suicide.²²⁴

3.2 Matters of staging and narrative development: discussions of race, culture, feminism and behaviour

After considering song plotting and musical style in a broader sense, I want to more closely consider concepts of staging, and consider how specific staging devices reinforce the theories discussed in Chapter 2. This section will be broken down into considerations of how each theory is made manifest, for example stage isolation and its relation to suppression. There are many gestures that are utilised in theatre from the most subtle action to large-scale interactions that undoubtedly have an effect on the development of racial and cultural conflict, as well as the gender identities presented in these musical.

A fundamental component to all of the constructs mentioned above is the deployment of the romantic narrative. The increasing desires to explore romantic narratives outside of the traditional heterosexual relationship has become increasingly prominent as musical

²²⁴ Fifteen percent of bipolar patients commit suicide and the risk is at its greatest during bipolar depression. Lakshmi N Yatham and Gin S. Malhi, *Bipolar Disorder Oxford Psychiatry Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 50.

theatre has developed. I want to consider how perceptions of gender and racial identity influence the romantic connections between these mothers, whether that be in a heterosexual or homosexual relationship.

3.2.1 Considerations of gender, race and culture and how staging and performance are implicated

Racial and cultural differences have long been vital to the musical idiom. I want to consider theatrical practices that have exaggerated or undermined racial and/or cultural tolerance in the musical. Some musicals expose discrimination in overt spectacles, whilst others choose subtlety and implication to heighten the battle for equality. I am interested in the latter.

Raymond Knapp's *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity* explores the important notions of idealism and inspiration.²²⁵ The author explains how these two notions function in the American musical to represent qualities of courage, heroic resolve, and the capacity to overcome difficulties.²²⁶ He notes the use of "ideal" to denote "separateness from reality and the aspiration to change reality, bringing it in line with an internal vision of what *might* be".²²⁷ This becomes essential in musicals where racial equality and female empowerment are perceived as an "ideal". The fundamental concept of "ideal" is ingrained in the source material of *The Color Purple*. Alice Walker's novel, written in the format of letters, demonstrates the brutal reality that Celie faces and her dreams of a different life.²²⁸ Idealism has intrinsic links not only to Celie's sexual enlightenment with Shug Avery, but it also demonstrates her rebellion against the oppression she receives as a woman of colour. In "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence

²²⁵ Knapp, *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity*, 164-204.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 164.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 165.

²²⁸ Alice Walker's novel juxtaposes the daily struggle of Celie as a young girl who was raped by her stepfather and the forced marriage she has with 'Mister'.

against Women of Color”, Crenshaw outlines the importance of *The Color Purple* for portraying the images of violence in minority communities and how the suppression of these voices could be costly.²²⁹ This is what raises Celie from a character of intense struggle to a victorious character. She has to comprehend her identity as a homosexual woman being forced into a heterosexual relationship, as well as being subjected to violence by male oppressors. Stacy Wolf’s “Gender and Sexuality” makes the argument that “all characters are gendered, some musicals actually present the process of becoming gendered as the central narrative”.²³⁰ Celie’s self-discovery of her homosexuality is explored through her interactions with Shug Avery. The most subtle gesture has the largest implication for Celie’s enlightenment: the kiss. This instigates the duet ‘What About Love’, in which both Celie and Shug undergo a transformation. Celie experiences sexual enlightenment, as the kiss has confirmed her desires for a romantic relationship with Shug. Shug is questioning everything she has understood about love, she has always been sexually overt but has never experienced unconditional affection as she receives from Celie. Staging, in this regard, is simple because the intention behind the words is powerful.²³¹

The same is true for the majority of *The Color Purple*, where simplicity is essential to allow the power behind the words to speak for themselves. This is personified in Celie’s exclamation ‘I May Be Poor’. Celie’s journey to overcome oppression is becoming a reality (references back to her “ideal”). She is becoming confident in her identity despite being degraded her whole life. Her confidence is punctuated by the curse she places on Mister noting that she may be poor, black and ugly, but she is here (foreshadows her ‘eleven o’clock’ number) - Referring back to the discussion of autonomy in section 2.1.2, ‘Celie’s

²²⁹ The portrayal of black battery in *The Color Purple* came with its problems. Crenshaw discusses Alice Walker’s novel and the issues surrounding Walker’s portrayal of “black male brutes.” Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241-1300.

²³⁰ Wolf, “Gender and Sexuality,” 211.

²³¹ Using the video released by the Official *The Color Purple* revival youtube channel you can see the simple staging at the culmination of the song. The Color Purple, "What About Love" Featuring Cynthia Erivo and Heather Headley | THE COLOR PURPLE on Broadway," Youtube video, 0:51, posted by “The Color Purple,” Jun 7, 2016, accessed Apr 24, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-lbZiiEKE>

Curse' represents Celie exercising, what Deci and Ryan refer to as, *integrated regulation* in realising her self-worth.²³² Celie identifies that she is more than the degrading insults and aggression that she has suffered through. In stating 'but I'm here' she is exclaiming that she is all of those "terrible" (terrible in the sense that they imply undesirability or a handicap) things, but most of all, she is a person with human feelings, and she has finally accepted that. Similar gender clashes exist in relation to *Gypsy's* Louise, whose difficult relationship with her mother affects her identity salience and sexual freedom.²³³ The performance therefore is intrinsically linked to the performer themselves. *Gypsy* has received many revivals with numerous stars playing Rose. Wolf breaks down the responses towards Ethel Merman's original portrayal of Rose, the most notable being how the audience could not identify with desire ("I want her") or admiration ("I want to be like her").²³⁴ Wolf discusses Merman's Rose in the context of Cold War America:

Merman's performance resonated with anxieties about gender, about motherhood, and about the nuclear family. From a contemporary perspective, Merman's performance offers a refreshing queer image of femininity.²³⁵

The juxtaposition of strength and vulnerability within Merman's performance reflects the desires and reality of the 1950s woman. It explores the themes of the housewife in Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, questioning the mundane lives that some people live. In a similar fashion, the performance of Jennifer Holliday as Effie in the original *Dreamgirls* exaggerated

²³² They describe the "most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation as *integrated regulation*. This integration occurs when identified regulations are fully assimilated to the self, which means they have been evaluated and brought into congruence with one's other values and needs." Deci and Ryan, "Self-Determination Theory," 73.

²³³ Wolf, "Gender and Sexuality," 211. Also, Knapp identifies the combination of societal pressures and her own ideals in Louise's identity development: "Louise's formation of her "Gypsy" identity may thus be understood not only in terms of her relationship to her mother but also in terms of societal expectations for the presentation of femininity, similarly carried to grotesque extremes, and thus drawing a connecting rather than a dividing line between striptease and accepted modes for performing femininity." Knapp, *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity*. 220.

²³⁴ Wolf, *A Problem Like Maria*, 109.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

the desperation and conflict of the character. In a review of the original production of *Dreamgirls*, Walter Kerr describes the “rasp of rage” in Jennifer Holiday’s performance of ‘And I Am Telling You’, and continues by wishing that “the sheer pressure of the outburst had been more carefully shaped, but the passion is there and we are on board”.²³⁶ Kerr’s description of Holliday’s performance, and his comment on wanting more shape, I believe, slightly undermines the context of the moment. It is understandable to want a performance to be polished, but to expect a controlled performance of a song depicting a black woman, discriminated by those she held closest in every possible way, relinquishes the desperateness of what is at stake. Holliday performed her rousing number at the 1982 Tony Awards, demonstrating how desperation in oppression is manifest in her jolted movement (brought on by Effie’s pregnancy discovery) and her frantic and, at times erratic vocalisation which, contrary to Kerr, I believe heightens the emotional stakes.²³⁷ It seems logical, but we must not underestimate the importance of a performer connecting with audiences, for the true extent of emotional degradation cannot be obtained without it.²³⁸ As the ensemble disappear from the stage, Holliday’s mannerisms become more laboured and desperate as the realisation of Effie’s social expulsion become apparent. This also links to the pain she is suffering through as a result of her pregnancy. As her attention shifts from Curtis to the audience as he leaves the stage, Holliday’s outburst is vehement and the connection with the audience is important for us to believe that she can undergo the identity change in Act 2.²³⁹

I believe the most pertinent staging device to create convincing emotional states is the use of ensemble and space, in particular the juxtaposition of the crowded stage and

²³⁶ Walter Kerr, "STAGE VIEW: 'Dreamgirls': Rich Dessert Without the Main Course," *New York Times*, Jan 3, 1982, D3.

²³⁷ *Dreamgirls* Tony Awards, “82 Tonys--Dreamgirls “And I’m Telling You,” YouTube video, 8:33, posted by “room 317,” Feb 22, 2006 (originally aired: CBS June 6, 1982), accessed Apr 24, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kC_u_q-iND0.

²³⁸ Wolf discusses the importance of Ethel Merman with understanding who Rose is: “While the musical tells the audience to distance themselves from Rose, Merman does the opposite - drawing them in and seducing them Wolf. *A Problem like Maria* Wolf 110. See also, Wolf, “Gender and Sexuality,” 220.

²³⁹ *Dreamgirls* Tony Awards.

isolation. To briefly mention the historical development of the musical, two important aspects of the musical became crucial for how the genre developed: the concept of ‘integration’²⁴⁰ and the emergence of the director as an artistic contributor.²⁴¹ The harmony between scene and song is the essential way musicals portray their message. McMillin explains that integration is actually the result of improvements in the book, and a move away from scanty plots that he describes as “scaffoldings on which songs and dances will be hung upon”.²⁴² As a result of this better book came the utilisation of ensembles, in both scenes and dances, to create landscapes and relationships in which focal characters exist. This is where the ensemble becomes crucial to establishing the dilemma faced by the focal character, in this case, the mothers.²⁴³ For example, Bloody Mary’s entrepreneurial capitalist mindset would not be effective without her relationship with the American marines.²⁴⁴ The use of ensemble is particularly pertinent in *Next to Normal*’s small cast of six.

The creation of a seemingly normal, nuclear family unit of four at the onset becomes increasingly fractured as we learn that Gabe is in fact dead. The original Broadway staging had Gabe present on stage, but as a spectre infiltrating and toying with Diana’s perception of reality, physicalising the depressive side of her bipolar disorder (Gabe is the instigator of her manic-depressive episodes). The presence of an ensemble member that we can see but the majority of the other actors cannot create a tangible focus that we want Diana overcome and yet her dependence on Gabe means we want her to hang on to his memory. *Next to Normal*’s subject material is sensitive to discuss, but the musical explicitly portrays an honest

²⁴⁰ Block, "Integration." and Geoffrey Block, *Enchanted Evenings: The Broadway Musical from Show Boat to Sondheim and Lloyd Webber 2nd Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2009), 195-214. Like Block, McMillin notes the emergence of integration and its development into concept musicals (1-30). He mentions developments through the book as well before moving into discussions of what he calls “lyric time and book time” and the subsequent implications on integration in his second chapter “The Book and the Numbers” (31-53). McMillin, *The Musical as Drama*, 1-53.

²⁴¹ Grossman. "Musical Theater Directors."; Block focuses on Joshua Logan and his contribution to *South Pacific*. He gives an insight to rehearsals as well as issues he had with his fellow contributors, Richard Rodgers in particular. Block, *Richard Rodgers*, 133-138.

²⁴² McMillin, *The Musical as Drama*, 15.

²⁴³ McMillin notes that the musical fulfils its intentions in the teamwork of ensemble performance, no matter how many good solos are heard along the way. *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁴⁴ Lovensheimer outlines Bloody Mary’s capitalist entrepreneurial mentality, rousing her fellow Tonkinese women into a task force to meet the demand of the marines who have come to their island with money and a desire for souvenirs. Lovensheimer, *South Pacific*, 165.

representation of what bipolar disorder can do to a family situation. It does not have a happy-ending, it instead personifies the reality of coping. It is here where isolation comes into effect, as Diana is constantly battling with the opposing “answers” to her condition from the ensemble, particularly her husband Dan, thus alienating her from the other characters. As an audience, we focus mainly on her, a staging choice that achieves another pivotal narrative trait in Natalie’s feelings of rejection and invisibility.

From our perspective, it is dramatically ironic that Gabe, the child who is technically invisible, should receive more attention than their existing child (this instigates the song ‘Superboy and the Invisible Girl’), and yet we do the same. We are fascinated and horrified by Gabe’s ability to control Diana’s mental processes, which is at its most horrifying when we witness her attempted suicide, as well as her recollection of the night her infant child died. In a musical where the ensemble is so small, the development of clear and stimulating relationships is the most vital aspect of dramatic success. What *Next to Normal* achieves perfectly is the constant isolation of characters allowing for alternate relationships to either flourish or suffer. The nuclear family dynamic adds an extra layer of recognition from us as audience members, because it is something we all recognise and feel comfortable with. *Next to Normal* tests our resilience towards normality. In presenting a seemingly normal nuclear family the audience relaxes due to perceived expectations of behaviour, but *Next to Normal* (as the name suggests) unnerves us through exaggerated ensemble responses, be that frustrated exuberant or trepid, to Diana’s manic and depressive states. We can only watch whilst the familial foundations are torn apart by ensemble conflict.

Diana and Rose also undergo dramatic isolation and narrative control. Both characters are the focal points of the narrative, with all the other characters influenced by their actions, and yet they are narrative outcasts. Rose, as previously discussed in the context of *diegetic/non-diegetic* songs, is unable to participate in the performative aspects of the *diegetic* moments, but only enable them, which makes her the vessel for her daughter’s performance whilst she herself is alienated from their affection. Diana’s battle as a mother is the conflict between mothering Gabe and mothering Natalie. If we apply this across the

musical, the narrative balances her identities as 'Gabe's mother,' 'Natalie's mother' and 'Dan's wife'. A true salience hierarchy is never achieved as we leave the musical with Diana leaving her family for their own benefit. Diana removes herself from the situation to allow Natalie and Dan to try and experience normality. In this sense, she attempts to remove herself as the focus and into the periphery of the narrative.

3.2.2 The implications of gender and identity for the romantic narratives of mothers

Both the micro-scale employment of dramatic isolation and the involvement of the ensemble have been used as vessels for the development of romance in the musicals. Implications for the romantic narrative could come in the form of ensemble scenes such as the wedding scene in *Show Boat*, or solo moments such as 'And I Am Telling You' in *Dreamgirls*. What is found in the romantic narrative of some of these mothers is a divergence away from the tradition which Wolf describes as:

Heterosexual relationships, romance, and marriage provide the narrative spine of most musicals, typically the story of a couple's initial antipathy followed by a series of complications that eventually lead to their admission of love.²⁴⁵

Rose is the quintessential example of romantic divergence. It is established at the beginning of the musical that she has been married previously and that her mother has left her. These are the two single-most important plot points to understand Rose and Herbie's romantic narrative. Rose is determined to give her children everything and romance cannot factor into this. However, Herbie's inclusion creates a new dynamic for Rose, as she now has a man who cares for her and her children. Their relationship is instigated with insecurity and is

²⁴⁵ Wolf, "Gender and Sexuality," 213.

seemingly incompatible, as stated in their first interactions. However, the fundamentals are ignored as Rose convinces Herbie, and herself, that they share many common traits. For example, he is a man who likes children, and she has them. Herbie becomes swept up in Rose's continuation towards success as the manager who just wants marriage. The narrative makes it increasingly clear that Rose will not marry Herbie: 'You'll Never Get Away From Me', a sweet, comedic and yet desperate song comes after Herbie's first indication of leaving her.²⁴⁶ Rose's inability to see past her dreams and acknowledge that Herbie can provide her and her daughters with a happy life ultimately separates the two from one another.²⁴⁷ Knapp once again notes that Rose's marriage is to her children which the author defines as a triangle in which Herbie is the third leg.²⁴⁸ Herbie could never overcome a character as strong as Rose because the audience would never believe it.²⁴⁹ I would describe it as a triangle in which Rose is the overbearing first leg, desperately attempting to convince those around her that her ideas are the only way to success. As I have mentioned, for Rose, success is valued above the emotional fulfilment of Louise and Herbie.

When difficulties regarding culture and race are present, the romantic narrative often revolves around overcoming or succumbing to the differences. Anna and the King of Siam participate in a romantic narrative that never comes to light as the attraction between Anna and the King of Siam cannot develop into romance.²⁵⁰ Block points out that Anna and the King never kiss and touch, apart from on one occasion, when they are dancing in 'Shall We Dance'.²⁵¹ Just as *Gypsy* presents a romantic narrative with unconventional gender roles, the relationship between Anna and the King of Siam resists the common "man and woman fall in love" trope, due to cultural differences. In "The "Oriental" Musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein and the U.S War in Southeast Asia", Bruce McConachie describes the

²⁴⁶ Knapp mentions that Herbie is in a relationship that is enormously overbalanced towards Rose and he has no chance of overcoming her. Knapp, *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity*, 217.

²⁴⁷ Rose is not content with the "suburban housewife" of Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*.

²⁴⁸ Knapp, *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity*, 217.

²⁴⁹ Knapp, *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity*, 217.

²⁵⁰ McMillin, *The Musical as Drama*, 179.

²⁵¹ Block, *Enchanted Evenings*, 214.

relationship between Anna and the King as “an appealing reversal that fixed the conflict between West and East as a battle between a patient mother and a wilful little boy”.²⁵² He comments on the Anna’s costumes adding mass to her movements creating a masculine force as well as her interactions with the King’s wives who refer to her as ‘sir’.²⁵³ It is not only Anna’s gender identity that conflicts with the King, but also her cultural views. The main difference between the romantic narratives of Rose and Anna are their respective male counterparts. Herbie, as previously mentioned, is not able to overpower someone as strong as Rose, and The King, as described by McConachie “displays potent masculinity on the outside and is a prepubescent child on the inside”.²⁵⁴ The romantic narrative in *The King and I* ends in reconciliation with Anna unable to accept the King’s views on polygamy and slavery, but she can respect his desires to modernise his country. In agreeing to stay and help the King’s son with his decision-making, Anna’s identities as ‘teacher’ and ‘mother’ make their impact on the society.

When race comes into the narrative, the authors and composers often explore how racial oppression blocks or destroys the “standard” romantic narrative. Effie is forced out of her narrative because of her romantic other, whom she begs to change his mind. Effie’s narrative becomes an example of “I can make it on my own”. ‘Listen’ is important for this reason, as both romantic narratives finally converge where the two friends, Effie and Deena, finally learn that they both fell in love with a dishonest and controlling man. In consoling each other, the two girls finally ascend above male oppression. Celie’s narrative in *The Color Purple* is the battle against male oppression and her freedom in homosexuality. *The Color Purple* does not portray either relationship as particularly healthy; Celie’s relationship with Mister is violent and psychologically torturous, and her relationship with Shug, whilst liberating, has its confusion. Much like in ‘Listen’, Celie’s glorious rapture in ‘I’m Here’ exclaims that as long as a woman has self-belief, she can make it on her own. Celie’s story

²⁵² Bruce McConachie, “The “Oriental” Musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein and the U.S. War in Southeast Asia,” *Theatre Journal* 46, No. 3 (1994): 390.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

has the happy ending it deserves as she reconciles with Shug and Mister. In addition, Celie experiences the euphoric moment in which she is reunited with her sister and her grown up children whom she thought were dead.

4. A final consideration of the mother's involvement in musical theatre

In the introduction, I stated that the aim for this thesis was to consider how social, psychological, and theoretical discourse that pertain to mother characters in musical theatre influence theatrical and performative conventions within their respective musicals. I chose to consider one specific stock character to highlight a spectrum of characters that share inherent similarities but can also be contrasted with respect to the chosen theories.

Of the characters chosen, Rose was the most common character found in other scholarly writing, and for myself, she constituted the best example for demonstrating how behavioural patterns and psychological and gender theories impact the way in which a character is formulated in their musical, and how that corresponds to performance. Furthermore, the mother-child relationship is explored to a greater extent in *Gypsy*, as Rose's children are present focal characters. For this reason, discussions about dependence and identity became important to understanding how the relationship between mother and daughters exists in *Gypsy*. Understanding how Rose's identities of 'mother' and 'manager' co-exist in the narrative is crucial to developing a wider understanding of how the narrative works, as it is in both of these identities that Rose engulfs the dramatic action of the musical (this explains why Atkinson's *New York Times* review of the original production claims but "Gypsy" is Miss Merman's show).²⁵⁵ The decision of which identity is most prominent has to be considered from both Rose's internal viewpoint and from our viewpoint. She herself asks "why did I do it" and "what did it get me" during her climactic turn.²⁵⁶ Was it because she was a devoted mother fully invested in her children's success? Or is she just a power-hungry manager forcing her concentrated quest for fame on two young girls who do not share her levels of devotion? The answer here is that both viewpoints have relevance and are crucial

²⁵⁵ Brooks Atkinson, "The Theater: 'Gypsy,' Good Show!" *The New York Times Archives*, May 22, 1959, 31.

²⁵⁶ Laurents et al., 105-106.

for the audiences' reception as well as the performer's conception of the character and their subsequent theatrical decisions.

The musical demonstrates that both identities have become synonymous with one another. This results in friction between Rose and her daughters, as attachment and motivation evolve within childhood (and adulthood for Louise). Rose's moments of mental fragility come in her moments of musical grandeur, and always follow perceived abandonment from one of her daughters. Louise's relationship with Rose is far more intricate than that of her sister, as her journey towards self-determination is more challenging to achieve than June's. June's higher "position" within the salience hierarchy simultaneously promotes and stifles her creative potential, but ultimately allows her to claim freedom from her mother's control due to her competence. Louise is not afforded the luxury of competence initially, as it requires her search for autonomy, which she undergoes as she is thrust into the world of burlesque. Her evolution within 'Let Me Entertain You' and the strip section marks her increase in self-determination. The evolution of behaviour within *Gypsy* has clear links to the gender roles within the musical. Louise's journey for self-determination coincides with Wolf's tomboy to stripper analogy, and in finding what motivates her, she discovers her femininity.²⁵⁷

The significance of dependence within *Gypsy* has a big impact on the theatrical practices at play where the *diegetic* and *non-diegetic* conventions are instigated by Rose's perception of her familial structure. In enabling the *diegetic* components of the musical, Rose compounds her inherent dependence on her children. Comparing Effie with Rose with regards to behavioural patterns highlighted how social strata within the mother's immediate social group is integral to understanding how they evolve dramatically. In both *Gypsy* and *Dreamgirls*, the ultimate goal is the pursuit of fame and this is impacted by motherhood. The social relationships of *Dreamgirls* are not entirely encompassed in a familial setting, and yet the behavioural patterns are equally as extreme as those in *Gypsy*. The introduction of pregnancy into the social formula (even though it is only known to Effie) and the subsequent

²⁵⁷ Wolf, "Gender and Sexuality," 211.

fragmentation of the social structure makes the dramatic impact of the moment far more intense. The comparisons between the Act 1 finale of *Gypsy* (section 2.1.3), and the Act 1 finale of *Dreamgirls* (section 2.2.2), demonstrate the extent to which these two mothers share the same behavioural struggle. The musicals balance perceived positivity (*Gypsy*) and complete negativity (*Dreamgirls*) with the change in social structure and in the salience hierarchies presented in Tables 2 and 3.

When the narrative includes motherhood along with reflections of attitudes towards race and gender, the discussion becomes fraught with balancing how each component needs to be considered. Whilst I did not consider the implications of Rose's Jewish heritage within this thesis, as Wolf does in *A Problem Like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical*, I did want to consider how gender considerations at play in *Gypsy* affect musicals where race and culture are integral.²⁵⁸ The exploration of sexuality and beauty in Louise's journey towards becoming a stripper relates to the exploitation of Deena and Effie on their appearance and their vocal sound. The overt sexuality demonstrated during *Gypsy* Rose Lee's strip routine reflects the exploitation of Deena's beauty, which appeals more to a white male audience.

The most poignant metaphor in *Dreamgirls* is the stifling of Effie's voice. The musical portrays the quest for racial equality through the increase in endeavour and success, but this is played against the damaging effect of male oppression on two women. Effie is told that her voice is too powerful for the target audience and they want a lighter sound. This, coupled with the effects of her pregnancy on her status within her social group, demonstrates how race, gender, and motherhood diverge within the narrative. It also translates theatrically and musically into one of the most defiant and devastating musical theatre numbers with 'And I Am Telling You'. Where 'Rose's Turn' perfectly demonstrates a mother's mental breakdown as the perception of her identity is completely undermined, 'And I Am Telling You' demonstrates how the introduction of pregnancy into an already volatile system of gender oppression will enhance a mother's desire to fight for what she has.

²⁵⁸ Wolf, *A Problem Like Maria*, 111-121.

The three musicals that I used to consider how racial narratives affect motherhood all had the common theme of male oppression or abandonment. The graphic imagery of the narratives within Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and Edgar Lawrence Doctorow's *Ragtime* are portrayed with incredible impact in their musical representations. Motherhood is cruelly snatched from Celie in *The Color Purple* as her children are torn away from her, whilst motherhood for Sarah in *Ragtime* represents fear and resentment to a man she believed to love her and only her. The same theme of racial oppression is explored in *Dreamgirls* and *The Color Purple*, where gender expectations and stereotypes allow men to dominate women. Specifically, within *The Color Purple*, motherhood is both taken from and imposed on Celie as she believes her children to be dead and is then subsequently forced into raising the children of 'Mister', a man she is given to in place of her younger sister. Her journey, just like that of Effie in *Dreamgirls*, is a journey of self-discovery. Effie's self-discovery occurs during 'I Am Changing' and Celie's occurs during 'I'm Here'.

Sarah's relationship with her child is far more disturbing as we discover she buried her child alive. Whilst Effie's pregnancy resulted in desperation for her relationship with Curtis to return to normal, Sarah's pregnancy is a moment of alarm, for her world has been ripped apart due to her relationship with Coalhouse Walker Jr. Heterosexual relationships are portrayed here as a necessity for stability, especially with the inclusion of pregnancy. When these two mothers are abandoned, they are faced with the horror of their realities. 'Your Daddy's Son' was noted for its 'quasi-lullaby style' in section 3.1.2, but its lyrical exploration descends into psychological turmoil as the "unconscious fantasies, daydreams and hopes" noted in Pines "Pregnancy and Motherhood: Interaction between Fantasy and Reality," transition into an uncertain future.²⁵⁹ What is apparent in these three musicals was the need for these three mothers to overcome male oppression and discover strength in their femininity. Although Sarah dies within the musical, her influence enables Mother to find racial acceptance as well as her feminine identity.

²⁵⁹ Pines, "Pregnancy and Motherhood," 333.

The consideration of orientalism and cultural differences in this thesis centred around how perceived notions of gender impact the way in which the characters respond to one another. Again, three examples formed the discussion in Chapters 2 and 3, with specific patterns being demonstrated in reference to Western (Anna Leonowens) and non-Western (Bloody Mary and Kim) mothers. Both Kim and Bloody Mary illustrate how implications of war establish specific gender identities. In Bloody Mary, we witness a mother devoted to her daughter, yet she personifies masculinity in her control over sexual exploration and her disregard for imperialism. Kim represents purity within a setting of war and destruction. This paired with her exotic presence draws her and Chris together in a romantic narrative that is ultimately doomed to fail. Her undying love towards her child is arguably more intense than any other character mentioned in the thesis, as she kills herself to ensure a better life for him with his father in America. The narratives of both of these mothers end in tragedy (Kim's death and the death of Lieutenant Cable) demonstrating the damaging effects of war and the influence when one culture obtains power over the other (in both cases, the western presence over the east). The correlation with Anna and *The King and I* is revealed in her influence as the western presence in the narrative. Where *Miss Saigon* and *South Pacific* present the western presence as raucous American soldiers fixated with sex, Anna is a refined and competent woman, intent on influencing the sexist views of the King of Siam. Their relationship is not built around sexual exploration but the compatibility, or lack thereof, of their cultures. Motherhood coincides with Anna's identity as a teacher to provide inherent femininity to the male-dominated world.

The discussions on theatrical conventions presented in Chapter 3 aimed to demonstrate a breadth of prominent ways in which motherhood can be explored in relation to the theories of Chapter 2. A large amount of the conventions discussed were chosen to demonstrate how the relevant identities are created and explored. The 'I want' and 'eleven o'clock' numbers mark the beginning and end of the narratives, and often indicate moments of importance for the creators. It is vital to establish the important themes of the musical early on to engage the audience, and it is equally important to end the narrative in a

compelling manner. Without 'Some People,' we would not be aware of the extent of Rose's desires to escape the formalities of everyday life, and without 'Rose's Turn,' we would not be able to understand the psychological trauma Rose experiences through her daughter's rejection.

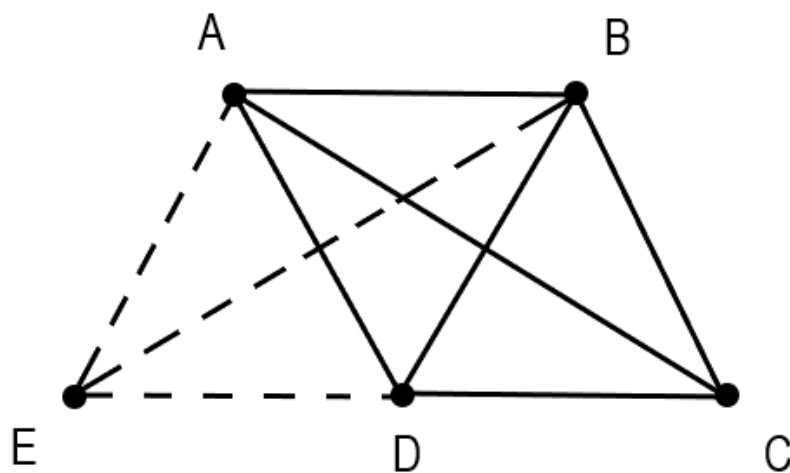
The character-orientated research presented within this thesis was enhanced through consideration of theatrical conventions outlined in works such as *The Oxford Handbook of The American Musical* and Scott McMillin's *The Musical as Drama*. Musical style and song type were essential to determining how race and gender are represented through music. The influence of Ragtime music in *Ragtime* enabled racial viewpoints to be changed, allowing the Mother to reach untold levels of empathy for Sarah even in light of her attempted murder of her own child. Song convention and musical style were also pivotal in determining how identity and behaviour are presented through the mother's music. The complexities and erratic nature of *Next to Normal's* musical landscape reflect the struggles and effects of Diana's bipolar disorder and her relationship with her children. The continuation of this came in performance and staging and how they were influenced by the social and psychological studies. An interesting area of consideration was revealed in the relationship between the individual and the ensemble. Understanding how the character relates individually to each ensemble member aids in portraying how the mother's identity is presented. For example, knowing that Natalie feels invisible to Diana directly influences the performative aspects of Diana, and also pinpoints where dramatic tension is created and released. By bracketing together specific considerations of performance, clearer concepts of the portrayal and importance of motherhood within the respective shows became more apparent.

What I wanted to achieve with this thesis is a contribution to character-focused analysis within musical theatre discourse. Choosing motherhood allowed the inclusion of a vast amount of discourse, but there were numerous other areas that could have been discussed. For myself, a large amount of the discourse that relates to musical theatre is concerned with the historical developments of the musical or highlights influential

contributors and their content. But character development has received much less attention. I believe that analysing the genre from a character-focused viewpoint provides a concrete foundation for theoretical and performative study. This viewpoint can be expanded into performance-specific settings, considering how behavioural patterns, identity and social relationships impact the actions of an actor or indeed the director.

Appendix.

Figure 1 – A diagrammatic representation of balance at the end of act I of *Dreamgirls* as demonstrated in Cartwright and Harary’s “Structural Balance: A Generalisation of Heider’s Theory.”



Within the diagram each letter represents a specific character (A. Curtis; B. CC; C. Lorelle; D. Deena; E. Effie). In accordance with Cartwright and Harary “Structural Balance: A Generalisation of Heider’s Theory”, this structure signifies balance as extracting any three entities with relation to Effie, you will have two negatives and a positive; where dotted lines represent negativity and block lines positivity. They also note that for instance the relationship between E and C is influenced by E to D and subsequently D to C, therefore the relationship between E and C is negative.

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