Privatized Military Industry

By Sarah Garrod | February 20, 2025

Bandung humanism has increasingly become an integral topic of interest within Global South studies, with various workshops, consortiums, and publications on the subject. Bandung humanism is a fundamental concept for Global South studies, as from the Cold War period onwards various articulations of this reformulated humanism have shaped the central ideological driving force of a wide range of anticolonial movements. This essay considers the distinguishing characteristics of Bandung humanism, defining and examining its four key tenets.

Named after the watershed 1955 Bandung conference (*Konferensi Asia-Afrika*)[1], Bandung humanism as an ideology was built from both the conference itself and a nexus of ideas and movements preceding and succeeding the conference. Humanism, broadly speaking, is a philosophy that places emphasis on the agency of human subjects to flourish as individuals and as a society. Bandung humanism emerged as an anticolonial ideology against the tide of European and American post-war anti-humanism—positivist, structuralist, post-structuralist, and psychoanalytic thought all tend to de-emphasize the agency and autonomy of the human subject. Bandung humanism also arose against the rise of cold war polarity; it refuses this pessimism and divisiveness, seizing instead open possibilities and the desire to break down human divisions. However, Bandung humanism is not simply a reconstruction of European Enlightenment-era humanism. It forces a reconsideration of what bonds humanity and of what constitutes the ideal human subject, departing from the framework of the European Enlightenment. From the Cold War period onwards various articulations of this reformulated humanism have shaped the central ideological driving force of a wide range of anticolonial movements and continue to inform Global South studies today. Four key tenets distinguish Bandung humanism: specificity as a route to universal humanism, cultural cooperation, a nostalgic notion of human solidarity, and an emphasis on spirituality.

Specificity

Instead of a universal humanism that disregards the particular, Bandung humanism fundamentally relies on specificity to encompass its greater humanist vision. The United Nations Charter (1945) greatly inspired the Bandung conference and much of the rhetoric in the Final Communique. However, a key distinction between the United Nations Charter and the rhetoric of the Bandung conference's Final Communique is the emphasis on context-specific examples. Whereas the United Nations Charter focuses on eliminating distinctions by seeking "human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion" (UN Charter 1945, 12), the Bandung conference took a pluralistic, rather than flattening, approach to achieving human rights. For example, the Bandung Final Communique makes specific note of the Anti-Apartheid campaign in South Africa, with a particular racial distinction made to describe those involved: "The Conference extended its

warm sympathy and support for the courageous stand taken by the victims of racial discrimination, especially by the peoples of African and Indian and Pakistani origin in South Africa" (Asia-Africa Speaks 1955, 165). Rather than shying away from giving particular examples of movements and actors in its ultimately universal vision, Bandung humanism suggests that specific movements such as South African anti-Apartheid resistance could contribute to the larger goal of a shared human community. Bandung humanism thus acknowledges specificities in order to navigate the uneven terrain toward achieving its vision of all-encompassing humanism.

This pattern of taking a specific context to connect the whole of humanity reverberates throughout various anticolonial movements. As Anne Garland Mahler notes, inspired by what Richard Wright deemed the "color curtain" of Bandung, within the Tricontinental movement a metonymic aesthetic was utilized to engender a resistant political consciousness that was at once specific to the struggles of a particular group and potentially universal via solidarity between particular groups. Figures representing a specific context would come to stand for a wider movement, for example "the image of an African American protestor signifies the Tricontinental's global and transracial resistant subjectivity" (Mahler 2018, 4). In this iteration of Bandung humanism, a globally-encompassing, transracial and transnational humanism develops out of a particularized signifier. For Bandung humanism, the bonds of humanity do not rely on the flattening of specificities but rather are based on the cooperative acknowledgement and empathetic recognition of contextually specific struggles.

Cultural Cooperation

The European Enlightenment-based formulation of humanism seeks individualist freedom. However, the assumed subject is often the white European man, and such an endeavor rarely considers the contradiction of universal humanism and colonialism/slavery. Enlightenment thinkers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau emphasized the importance of Man's development and individual liberation while excluding the enslaved and colonized from this narrative. Others such as John Locke emphasized the potential for non-Europeans to develop their individual potential only if they were to embrace European culture. Referring to the Native American "Virginia king Apochancana," Locke argued that he would be "a more improved Englishman" if it were not for the fact that "the exercise of his faculties was bounded within the ways, modes, and notions of his own country, and never directed to any other or further inquiries" (Locke 2001, 63).This line of thinking was influential to colonial officials such as Thomas Babington Macaulay, who aimed to uphold colonial rule by creating "a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (Macaulay 1995, 430). As J. Brent Crosson notes, "while western ideals of Enlightened humanism tell a story of Man's liberation, it has also been the story of the violent displacement of humans in the name of capital accumulation" (Crosson 2021, 185). European Enlightenment humanism assumes that European culture is the only culture that ought to be developed and spread to facilitate humanism, leading to the violent dispossession of the colonized.

Bandung humanism, on the other hand, places a strong emphasis on the importance of cultural exchange and pluralism in the development of universal humanism. The Final Communique of the Bandung conference suggests that "Asian and African cultural co-operation should be developed in the larger context of world co-operation" (Asia-Africa

Speaks 1955, 164), considering the development of cultural exchange between Asian and African nations as essential to the global humanist endeavor for "world co-operation." The Final Communique additionally encourages Asian and African nations to develop "cultural contacts with others," suggesting that this "would also help in the promotion of world peace and understanding" (164). Bandung humanism thus emphasizes the importance of cultural exchange and cooperation in order to strengthen cross-cultural bonds within the postcolonial world and beyond.

The journal *Lotus* is particularly illustrative of this tenet. Proposed at the Afro-Asian Writers' Association (AAWA) inaugural meeting in Tashkent in 1958 and first published in March 1968, the journal appeared in three languages (French, English, and Arabic) and featured authors from a range of nationalities, genres, and stances on decolonial practices, including Mahmoud Darwish, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Faiz Ahmad Faiz. *Lotus* additionally presented an annual literature prize to African and Asian authors. Influenced by the Bandung moment, the journal was particularly focused on African and Asian cultural production; however, as Hala Halim notes, *Lotus* "pushed against a strictly Afro-Asian geographical ambit, printing texts from other parts of the Third World or by members of groups in the North with affinities to its project, such as African Americans" (Halim 2017). *Lotus* and other cultural projects with the Bandung humanist tenet of cultural cooperation facilitated a new era of cultural exchange, which has become a central point of interest for Global South studies.

Nostalgia

The rhetoric of solidarity and cultural cooperation within Bandung humanism is based on re-establishing a lost humanism from previous eras. This lost humanism is often attributed to the Afro-Asian world: in Indonesian President Sukarno's opening speech at the Bandung conference, he claimed that "Asia and Africa are the classic birthplaces of faiths and ideas, which have spread all over the world" (Asia-Africa Speaks 1955, 27). The Final Communique further suggested that "Asia and Africa have been the cradle of great religions and civilisations which have enriched other cultures and civilisations while themselves being enriched in the process. Thus, the cultures of Asia and Africa are based on spiritual and universal foundations" (Asia-Africa Speaks 1955, 163). However, it was suggested that these "spiritual and universal foundations" were disrupted by colonialism. Thus, Bandung humanism endeavors to reclaim a lost era of humanism derived from the Afro-Asian world. Duncan Yoon deems this "Bandung nostalgia" (Yoon 2018), a "strategic" form of nostalgia that utilized idealized narratives of Global South history to deal with Cold War neocolonialism.

This notion of Bandung nostalgia is particularly evident in Anuar Alimzhanov's "Through the Ages and Continents" (1973), published in *Lotus* in anticipation of the Fifth Afro-Asian Writer's Conference in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan. In this essay, Alimzhanov stresses the longstanding nature of cultural exchange and peace-seeking, particularly in the Arab world, and suggests that the epoch of renewed Afro-Asian solidarity in the postcolonial era is a continuation of this humanist past. Alimzhanov urges the writers of Africa and Asia to restore the lost path of cultural cooperation that would lead to a "passionate and determined enlightenment" (Alimzhanov 1973, 51), and ultimately humanism, against the oppression of European colonialism. For Alimzhanov and other advocates of Bandung humanism, cultural exchange and cooperation is considered essential to a truly universal humanism, which would be founded on a spiritual return to a humanist past.

Spirituality

As opposed to a rationalist, science-driven notion of humanism, Bandung humanism embraces a spiritual basis in its call for a nostalgic solidarity. In the era of the Cold War arms race and threat of nuclear war, the scientific progress-driven notion of human potential—developed out of Enlightenment-era notions of humanism—was seen to be reaching a dangerous climax. This was a particular point of anxiety for those at the Bandung conference; President Sukarno, for example, stressed in his opening speech that in the era of nuclear weapons, "the unconventional has become the conventional, and who knows what other examples of misguided and diabolical scientific skill have been discovered as a plague on humanity" (Asia-Africa Speaks 1955, 23). As such, Bandung humanism seeks a spirituality that reforms humanism for the benefit of humanity, rather than aspiring toward an abstract notion of potentially destructive progress. This is not to say that Bandung humanism necessarily relied on a *divine* spirituality, but rather that it emphasized the human spirit and soul in striving toward a better world as a counterpoint to more technologically driven notions of progress.

Chinghiz Aitmatov's "Towards Genuine Humanism" (1975) is an especially notable example of this spiritually driven rearticulation of humanism. In his essay, Aitmatov stresses the importance of thinking beyond scientific rationality and progress in the creation of a "genuine" humanism, citing the "lag of moral progress behind the progress of science and technology" (Aitmatov 1975, 169). This, he argues, is due to a crisis of human spirit that arises when "the habit of rationalistic thought […] instills a certain sense of inferiority in man, a sense of his own insignificance compared with the machine which his own hands and brain have made" (169). Culture and the arts are often considered key to constructions of a genuine, spiritually-driven Bandung humanism, and Aitmatov accordingly stresses that "humanist progressive literature of our time should tirelessly remind man of his grandeur and that he is great not only in his intellect, but in […] the soul" (169). As such, cultural production is considered an essential tool of Bandung humanism and its reclaiming of the human spirit.

Like the Bandung movement itself, Bandung humanism was a powerful ideological tool of resistance and hope and has therefore been fundamental to a wide range of movements from the Cold War decolonial period onwards. Bandung humanism renews the hope of humanism but resists the Eurocentric flattening of difference, stressing the power of cultural exchange, reclaiming pre-colonial historical possibilities, and emphasizing the power of the human spirit beyond scientific progress. It gave Global South thinkers, writers, and activists the ability to think beyond the world that colonialism had shaped, and therefore continues to inform Global South studies today.

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[1] For further information on the Bandung Conference and its impact, see Richard Wright (1956), Christopher Lee (2010), Brian Russell Roberts and Keith Foulcher (2016), and Duncan Yoon (2018).

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How to Cite

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This essay analyzes and explains the idea of the "transnational" in cinema studies from the perspective of the Global South. Global art cinema, world cinema, and related research have attracted considerable attention since the 2000s, especially since the global film festival space has evolved from being a mere platform for exhibition to a space that defines cinema itself, along with its intended business model(s), targeted spectators, and possible modes of production. However, what it means to be transnational beyond the purview of exhibition and reception remains an unresolved question in cinema studies. The idea of transnational cinema has a wider appeal to cinema studies researchers as it spans several geographies of film production and is not confined to any specific geopolitics such as the Global South. On the other hand, the idea of a Global South cinema has a transnational connotation, surpassing insular, national cinematic contexts. This essay will examine the formation of both discourses in cinema studies, including those using transnational as a framework and those revolving around the concept of the Global South, moving gradually towards their points of intersection.

Formation of a Cine-Political Context

Addressing the erstwhile Third World, which gradually and conceptually evolved into the Global South after the fall of the Eastern Bloc, requires an engagement with its historico-political coordinates. The term "Third World" remains strongly associated with the non-aligned nations during the Cold War and which originated in the historic 1955 Bandung Conference of African and Asian nations.[1] Hosted by Indonesia and an outcome of the non-alignment ideology that was being propagated by the Prime Minister of the newly independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru, it did not yield much success despite its symbolic significance of bringing several postcolonial states to the same platform, with statesmen such as Nehru, Zhou Enlai, Josip Broz Tito, and others participating. Although the conference was useful for Nehru's diplomatic aspirations and his leadership in India, its political impact was short-lived as its apparent anti-imperialist tendencies were interpreted differently by different nations and alliances (Zachariah 2004, 219-22).[2] However, its ideological impact on the formation of the Global South as a conceptual apparatus in the domain of culture cannot be understated. As Anne Garland Mahler (2018) argues, this legacy can be traced in the Tricontinental Conference of 1966 that was hosted by Cuba, which was more radical in nature, was attended by Fidel Castro, Amílcar Cabral, Salvador Allende, among others and that formed the Organization of Solidarity of the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAAL).

When it comes to the cinematic context, the Global South should ideally be considered both as a "category" and as the evidence of alternative cine-political (and not only geopolitical) formations. The emergent domain of film festival research offers a platform where the efficacy of the concept can be tested and historically traced.[3] Festivals in the USSR in the

long 1960s accommodated films from non-allied nations that were considered friendly towards the Eastern Bloc, and the USSR authorities offered scholarships for budding filmmakers to be trained at VGIK, the state-run film school in Moscow.[4] At the same time, politically active filmmakers from Latin America, such as Fernando Solanas, did not have a sustainable engagement with the Soviet festivals primarily because of their different ideological standpoint, which favored the more radical leftism of Che Guevara and the PRC over the Soviet's peaceful co-existence and imperialist strategies (Djagalov 2020, 177-79). Indian popular cinema from Bombay, meanwhile, had strong appeal for the Soviet audience and several Hindi cinema stars, ranging from Raj Kapoor to Mithun Chakraborty, earned enormous success in the Eastern Bloc.[5]

Art cinema discourse, while being shaped by film clubs, societies, and cinémathèques in the Global South, also betrayed strong evidence of transnational mediations. In the Indian context, festivals and screenings organized by the film societies were mostly dominated by films from Eastern Europe, primarily because of the Indian state's close association with the USSR.[6] It was easier for film societies to procure prints of such films with the help of the embassies, consulates, and cultural centers. Apart from Soviet and Yugoslavian films, canonical works of such iconic auteurs from Eastern Europe as Andrzej Wajda (Poland), István Szabó (Hungary), and Jiří Menzel (erstwhile Czechoslovakia) circulated in the festival circuit. In some parts of Latin America, film clubs were mostly motivated by art cinema discourse arriving from France primarily through the geopolitical and class interests that were formed during the Cold War period, and such European mediation has recently been subjected to film-historical research (Navitski 2023).

Global South cine-political solidarity took a more nuanced shape in the long 1960s. A few years after Bandung, the 1959 Cuban Revolution, and the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, tension between the United States and Cuba led to significant political formations in Latin America. With Che Guevara's internationalist revolutionary mission contributing to insurrections in several parts of the Global South (Congo and Bolivia, for instance), the question of transnational solidarity impacted various domains of culture. Guevara's assassination in Bolivia in 1967, in turn, led to the iconic cinematic representation in the classic radical film by Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas, *La hora de los hornos* (*The Hour of the Furnaces*, 1968). May 1968 in France and its worldwide impact was not limited to the political historical archive either, as Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin abandoned the industry and formed their radical Marxist cinema group named after Dziga Vertov that remained active for the next few years. In 1968, revolutionary Cuba organized and hosted the exhibition Del Tercer Mundo (Of the Third World), which offered a significant platform for agit-prop and avant-garde artists and intellectuals even beyond the Third World.[7]

As Global South cinema went on circulating in mainstream and marginal festival circuits, it included exposure of African filmmakers such as Ousmane Sembène, Dgibril Diop Mambéty and Souleymane Cissé to wider audiences. More organized Global South cinematic networks were formed with the advent of Third Cinema as theory and practice.[8] With the formation of a Third World Cinema Committee, three major Third Cinema conferences were organized in Algiers (December 1973), Buenos Aires (May 1974), and Montreal (June 1974), respectively, where several filmmakers and critics from Latin America and Africa participated, along with producers and programmers from Europe and the United States who remained associated

with Latin American political cinema. The Montreal conference saw the participation of Solanas from Argentina, Julio García Espinosa of Cuba, the Italian critic Guido Aristarco, and Bill Susman, the American producer of Raymundo Gleyzer's cinema. There were several debates on the possible production-distribution-circulation of radical cinema, alternative and militant cinematic initiatives and interventions, and cinema's alignment with the international socialist groups (Mestman 2013-14, 49-50). The major points of discussion included the possible association between post-1968 political cinema in Europe and Third Cinema from Latin America and the exhibition of Latin American militant cinema in Europe. The possibility of a global anti-imperialist solidarity front with effective collaboration between the First and Third Worlds and the formation of the idea of an "Estates-General of Third Cinema" were also discussed (Mestman 2015, 29-40).[9] Producers and distributors from the Global North raised issues related to the possible ways in which European/American exhibition channels and cinémathèques contribute to the making of militant cinema and associated political struggles in Latin America.

Several decades later, resistance to the neoliberal project and to the multinational conglomerates making industrial cinema remains one of the primary concerns of Global South cinema. Although some contemporary research remains unsure about the presence of a distinctively "southern aesthetics" in cinema, this research focuses mostly on Global South cinema's engagement with local forms of aesthetic production and transnational cinematic circulation in an era of streaming platforms as some of the major issues in this context (Menon and Taha 2024).

A Possible Methodology

In order to make meaning of the transnational as a critical concept and method, it should be noted that the idea of the trans-nation and transnationalism has long been prevalent in literary studies, especially in comparative literature. The comparativist framework necessitated the foregrounding of the trans-nation in the discussion of literary associations and waves, with the authority of the nation-state becoming consistently challenged and problematized. Franco Moretti's exploration of world literature (Moretti 2000, 1-12), Fredric Jameson's reading of literatures from the Third World as national allegories (Jameson 1986, 65-88) and Aijaz Ahmad's rebuttal to Jameson (Ahmad 1987, 3-25) are cases in point. Many dimensions of and debates on world literature have continued to proliferate, such as the "world literary space" as a conceptual tool (Casanova 2007), the global politics of untranslatability (Apter 2013), the planetary and ecological concerns in world literature, and so on. Literary studies scholars from the Global South often offer critiques of world literature, tracing the journeys of Western literary forms in postcolonial locations as the latter reshape such European forms (Bhattacharya and Sen 2019).

In cinema studies, invoking a comparative model of research or comparative film studies (Willemen 2005, 98-112) and considering transnational cinema as a method began gaining prominence in the 2000s as a means to counter the hegemonic dominance of the national cinema paradigm. However, even though most contemporary research on transnational cinema finds its place in Western academia, its enormous potential for the Global South remains considerably undertheorized and vastly unrealized.[10] Like the cinema studies academic world in general, scholarship on transnational cinema also remains significantly Euro-American, with occasional consideration of East Asian cinemas having transnational

links with Europe.[11]

On the other side of the spectrum, national cinema has dominated as *the* research framework in such Global South locations as India, where the popular film industries and their complex negotiations with postcolonial nation-state(s) contribute enormously to cinematic discourse (Prasad 1998). Some critics have argued that the old cinematic medium/celluloid used to be intrinsically associated with the nation-state, while the advent of the digital crossed national boundaries (Rajadhyaksha 2011). Very often the idea of the transnational in cinema is reduced to the research on diasporic or exilic cinemas. Hamid Naficy (2001), to give one example, has referred to this as "accented cinema" in the context of Asian/Iranian immigrant/exiled auteurs in the West. However, this essay aims to look beyond such methods and modes, starting with the problems posed by the concept of the transnational in cinema studies, followed by an exploration of its location in and possibilities for the Global South.

The emergence of the transnational in cinema studies has a distinctive trajectory. It raises certain key questions regarding the production, distribution, circulation, and consumption of cinema, as well as of the movement of film publics, apparatuses, exhibitors, genres, and technologies. In the domain of popular cinema, such movements have persisted since the inception of the medium itself. Cinema's invention in Paris in 1895 was closely followed by its global circulation, as a near-simultaneous exhibition model started touring the world and found the fairground as its site of public consumption. In popular cinema, after cinema's institutionalization in Hollywood, several genres emerged, evolved, and were experimented with, with generic elements lending themselves to many filmmaking locations.

The question that emerges in this context is whether transnational cinema can be considered as a method if cinema's transnational travel dates to the very inception of the medium. It should be noted, however, that the idea of the transnational in cinema studies does not refer only to the global history of a given national cinema, by which we usually mean the movements of film-publics and international exhibitions of films produced by that industry.[12] Here, the term "transnational" raises several ideological issues and offers a research method that is gaining ground. It includes particular histories, more nuanced networks of circulation beyond the traditional exhibition space (clandestine cine-political events, for instance), and uncanny geographies (associations between several geopolitical regions without shared histories) that emerged at crucial historical junctures.

Contemporary Transnational Cinema

Several global events since 2001 have challenged the dominance of neoliberal globalization. After the attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, the Global North nations (USA, UK, EU, Australia and Canada) put in place several anti-immigrant mechanisms and anti-terrorism laws that severely curbed individual freedom of movement and expression. The global expansion of multinational corporations, their capital, and the championing of a neoliberal economy did not prevent (and arguably actively contributed to) the rise of militant right-wing nationalisms. Several authoritarian regimes and predominantly male authoritarian leaders have emerged across the globe. During and even after the Covid-19 pandemic, global travel and movement remain restricted. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the resultant political and economic crisis have led to an increasingly unstable world order crippled by jingoistic nationalism. With this resurgence of right-wing nationalism and the

emergence of new Asian nationalisms such as the ones in the People's Republic of China and in an increasingly authoritarian India, where does the transnational stand?

In this rapidly changing and evolving geopolitical context, it may be argued that transnational cinema in the Global South can engender and facilitate significant modes of South-South encounter through histories of movements, aesthetics, politics and ideologies. These histories might not be mediated by the Global North and its dominant cinemas. These encounters may connect such Global South locations cinematically that may not have shared histories of encounter with colonialism and modernity. Contemporary cinema studies research is increasingly taking into account the many associations between several Global South cinemas that went beyond the paradigm of standalone national cinema traditions.

South-South Cine-Solidarity: The Indian Instances

In my own research on the Indian New Wave cinemas of the long 1960s, an art cinema movement partially supported by the Indian state, I have argued that this heterogeneous film movement, despite being scattered over several film production centers and traditions, consistently associated itself with many other cinematic and pre-cinematic traditions of the Global South (Patra 2016). In the case of Mani Kaul and Kumar Shahani, their insertion of Indian/Asian art traditions (in the form of miniature paintings and North Indian classical music) within cinema rejected the Renaissance perspective model, its illusionism, and the standard norms of realism. In the case of the politically radical cinema of Mrinal Sen, his close association with Latin American filmmakers of his time (Fernando Solanas of Argentina, Jorge Sanjinés of Bolivia, Glauber Rocha of Brazil, Miguel Littin and Patricio Guzmán of Chile) can be found in his autobiographical writings. He also mentions his role in the collective protest against the incarceration of Carlos Álvarez by the Colombian state and his encounter with the Argentine radical filmmaker Raymundo Gleyzer in Berlin in 1973, three years before his disappearance under the Civic-Military Dictatorship of General Jorge Rafael Videla (Patra 2023, 143-53). Sen made audio-visual references to films that engaged with Global South conditions and ongoing struggles in his 'city trilogy': films such as *Calcutta 71* (1972) and *Padatik* (*Urban Guerrilla*, 1973). Made in the context of the Naxalite insurgency (a radical Maoist group) in 1970s India, *Padatik* includes audio-visual references to Joris Ivens' documentary on Vietnam, *The Threatening Sky* (1966) and to Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas's *La hora de los hornos* (1968). Such citational engagements with Global South locations and/or cinema contributed to the formation of a transnational film aesthetic.

More visual references to Latin American Third Cinema can also be found in the Indian New Wave, as Ashish Rajadhyaksha has argued:

> ...as we see in several Indian films' disconcertingly direct links with Latin America: the overt quotation in Mani Kaul et al.'s *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1976) to Rocha's *Antonio Das Môrtes* (1969), and the explicit evocation of the Argentinian *La hora de los hornos* (1967) in Saeed Mirza's *Arvind Desai ki Ajeeb Dastaan* (1978). (2009, 240)

Recent cinema studies research, meanwhile, has identified several similar instances of aesthetic association. Lucia Nagib (2020), for instance, offers a provocatively novel perspective, arguing that instead of a general term such as "world cinema," the more theoretically-informed description "realist cinema" is more precise since it goes beyond

questions of exhibition or audience and turns to more precisely aesthetic questions.[13] The rise of "slow cinema" as a global cinematic phenomenon is another example of this tendency, as many auteurs from widely different cinematic traditions (including filmmakers from the Global South, such as the Filipino Lav Diaz, Argentine Lisandro Alonso, or those from Europe's economically weaker nations like Albert Serra of Spain and Pedro Costa of Portugal) are grouped under this aesthetic category, which is characterized often by durational principles (Luca and Jorge 2015). Laleen Jayamanne, in her idiosyncratic style, considers aesthetic commonalities between the "poetic cinemas" of such auteurs as G. W. Pabst, Sergei Parajanov, Stanley Kubrick, and Raúl Ruiz and, in doing so, constructs a film-philosophical framework itself based on such non-Western schools of thought as Maori anthropology and Sufi philosophy (Jayamanne 2021). Jayamanne (2015) uses a similar framework beyond the Western film theoretical canon in her research on Kumar Shahani, who she compared with Parajanov. This unprecedented, unquestionably radical diversification of cinema and philosophy widens our understanding of the transnational and encourages readers to look beyond the Global North while locating/constructing their own film theory. It is perhaps no longer possible to explore cinemas made even in the Global North (or European art cinema) and the latter's many waves without considering the Global South careers of the latter. Their global trajectory and movements, engagement with Global South cine-locations, reception in and impact on local industries, contribute to the transnational reshaping and rehabilitation of this cinema.[14]

In an increasingly totalitarian India where the political climate affects the cinematic scene and film pedagogy, the mode of resistance intimately associated with Global South cine-politics finds the "dead" European auteurs involved in their struggle. Ashish Rajadhyaksha refers to the 2015 student agitation and protests at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) where budding filmmakers clashed directly with the authoritarian Indian state and its right-wing politics that was systematically targeting the campus-nation, with Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Tarkovsky, and several other canonical auteurs resurfacing on the walls and in the sloganeering on the streets, as if "the cinema (and not just Indian cinema) had gone to war" (2023, 38). This is a clear instance of cinematic transnationalism's resistance to dominant nationalisms.

Conclusion

This article proposes an exploration of the multiple possibilities that Global South cinema offers as a key framework in the larger context of cinema studies. It engages with the emerging contours of transnational cinema research, contributes to the political history archive of the long 1960s, and complements the efficacy of the Global South as a concept and mode of resistance to the neoliberal world order and authoritarian politics worldwide. With an emphasis on south-south cine-political associations that existed between India and Latin America, it refers also to possible cases where a new theoretical model in cinema studies can emerge, rejecting dominant Western models for the sake of an effective decolonization of the discipline.

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[1] For more on the conference, the American novelist Richard Wright's accounts of it might be consulted (Wright 1956). The Indonesian documents on the conference have recently been published in English translation and should be considered as a valuable source (Roberts

and Foulcher 2016). For a critical book-length work on the conference, see Christopher J. Lee's edited volume on the phenomenon, its alignments, histories and afterlives (2010).

[2] Apart from the explicit Indo-Pak rivalry, China's attempt at gaining acceptability and the overall problems in identifying a common definition of imperialism for the postcolonial nations, Bandung Conference's impact also faced such global political challenges as the Suez crisis and the Soviet invasion of Hungary, both happening in 1956, a year after the event.

[3] For the contemporary literature devoted to film festival research, see Elsaesser (2005), Valck (2007), Valck, Kredell and Loist (2016), Valck and Damiens (2023). Visit the Film Festival Research Network (FFRN) and the annotated festival studies bibliography on the Oxford Bibliographies Online.

[4] For more on the Soviet's film policy related to curation (especially at the Tashkent festival in 1968 and after) and pedagogy, see Djagalov and Salazkina 2016; Djagalov 2020; Salazkina 2023.

[5] For detailed archival-historical information on the reception of Bombay popular cinema in the USSR, see Sudha Rajagopalan (2008).

[6] Film society magazines often featured festival reports and interviews with activists where such reliance on Eastern European cultural centres and diplomatic units has been emphasized on. Ram Halder, one of the most significant members of the Calcutta Film Society (CFS), recounts his memories of film society screenings. As it shows, a significant number of Russian, Hungarian, Czech and Polish films were shown (2022, 191-214). For a historian's account on the film society, see Rochona Majumdar (2021, 92-123).

[7] For more on the Del Tercer Mundo exhibition in Cuba, see María Berríos (2019, 107-27).

[8] Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's classic 1969 text 'Hacia un tercer cine'/ 'Toward a Third Cinema' that followed their film *La hora de los hornos* (*The Hour of the Furnaces*, 1968) initiated discussions around Third Cinema as opposed to the spectacle-driven Hollywood films and auteur-dominated European art cinema. Solanas and Getino continued to revisit their articles/arguments and published more. Julio García Espinosa's 'Por un cine imperfecto'/ 'For an Imperfect Cinema' appeared in the same year (1969). Such texts are considered as manifestos of radical cinema from the Third World.

[9] Mariano Mestman has published extensively on the 1974 Montreal conference devoted to Third Cinema. All the videotapes of the event have also been archived by his team of researchers at the Instituto Investigaciones Gino Germani, Faculty of Social Sciences, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina (2013-14, 18-78).

[10] See Dennison and Lim 2006; Ezra and Rowden 2006; Durovicova and Newman 2010; Nagib, Perriam, and Dudrah 2011; Stam 2019.

[11] See Hunt and Wing-Fai 2008; Morris, Li, and Ching-Kiu 2006.

[12] An article by Ravi S. Vasudevan might be an instance here. In that article he offers the global history (or one of the many global histories) of Indian cinema (2010, 94-117).

Vasudevan explores the fluidity of the Empire, cinematic forms before the nation-state and the film publics and audience spaces beyond the domain of the national.

[13] The aesthetic considerations might also be critiqued from a gendered perspective, the way Patricia White pointed out the hegemonic status within Nagib's decentering model, focusing more on global feminist filmmaking as a transnational countercinema (White 2015).

[14] Italian Neorealism's global trajectories have been researched from multiple perspectives, considering its impact on several other cinemas around the globe. At least two significant anthologies on the Italian film movement engaged with its impact on Indian, African and Latin American (mostly Brazilian and Argentine) cinemas (see Ruberto and Wilson 2007; Giovacchini and Sklar 2012). Similarly, the French New Wave and the New German Cinema affected cinematic/art cinema discourses in other geographies considerably.

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Theories of critical pedagogy foreground the transformative power of education through consciousness-raising approaches to teaching. Among different approaches to critical pedagogy, there tends to be consistent attention to creating a horizontal student-teacher relationship, seeking new strategies for critical consciousness-raising of institutional structures and social realities, and suggesting methods for integrating social-historical reality into the pedagogical space. In focusing on the liberatory possibilities of education and centering the self-guided education of the oppressed, critical pedagogy is linked to the liberatory politics of Global South thought.

Critical pedagogy was popularized through the work of Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, most famously in his critical work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968), and also

through his many other critical works on pedagogy as well as his field experience in adult education in Brazil. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,Freire argues that through a consciousness-raising approach to pedagogy — an approach he calls *conscientização* — "the oppressed unveil the world of oppression," which creates the terms of education that then allows for a process of transformation (54). Critical pedagogy creates and maintains commitments to radical political projects of freedom and liberation for the oppressed peoples of the world.

Many researchers and educators have written about critical pedagogy since Freire. It remains an important field in philosophy of education with a high volume of ongoing research.[1] Given spatial constraints, this essay aims to offer an introduction to the concept by focusing on three key contributors — Paulo Freire, Enrique Dussel, and bell hooks. The essay starts with Freire then moves to Dussel and hooks to consider how their writings furthered the idea of critical pedagogy. To articulate the features and stakes of the project of critical pedagogy, I examine its key terms and arguments, focusing on *conscientização*, the student-teacher relationship, and the transformative possibility of education. The final section of this essay turns to debates on critical pedagogy in the twenty-first century, identifying the terms of the contemporary debate and positing the continued relevance of critical pedagogy in a changing social and political context.

Conscientização

Conscientização defines the process for critical pedagogy, reflecting its values as a method "from below," in which the students' role in their education is prioritized. Freire uses the term *conscientização* to describe the process of "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (1968, 35). In this description, the act of consciousness-raising is rooted in the social-historical context of oppression. Consciousness-raising is what allows a group of people to "take action" toward liberation; it is a key element of revolutionary praxis.

In his earlier work *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1965), Freire describes the necessity of a pedagogy based in *conscientização*. Referring to Brazil as an "alienated society," Freire suggests that people in an alienated society "seek to transplant from other cultures solutions to their problems" (1965, 10). Because these solutions are "neither generated by a critical analysis of the context itself, nor adequately adapted to the context, they prove inoperative and unfruitful" (10). The context-specific nature of *conscientização* takes on a primary role in developing a critical pedagogy. *Conscientização* is the pedagogic process by which oppressed peoples can be empowered to move away from external solutions for symptoms and structures of oppression and develop their own context-specific solutions instead. This reflects the "from below" nature of a pedagogy centered on *conscientização*. The description and critique of society comes from the oppressed group. Then, the transformation of society is based on that critique. The students' thoughts are centered in this process.

In Freire's thought, the pedagogical format that emerges from *conscientização* is described as a "'problem-posing' education, responding to the essence of consciousness" (1968, 79). This is opposed to what Freire calls the "banking method" of education, where students are seen as sites for depositing information. The banking method of education, thought to be the hegemonic form of education against which Freire forms the "problem-posing" style of

education, furthers a top-down style of teaching and learning. In a problem-posing style of education, the students — through *conscientização* — define the terms of the problems of reality rooted in the socially and historically specific context of oppression. This is the "from below" nature of critical pedagogy.

In his critical work *Pedagogics of Liberation: A Latin American Philosophy of Education* (2019), Enrique Dussel writes about the extent of social transformation made necessary and possible by consciousness-raising. He considers the positioned nature of consciousness-raising as he offers the foregrounding of "Latin American being": "Politically, Latin American pedagogics begins by welcoming the revelation of the 'Latin American being,' *our voice*"(Dussel 2019, 121). By naming the importance of the "Latin American being" and "voice" in his theory, Dussel emphasizes the context-specific stakes of a new critical pedagogy. Dussel's *Pedagogics of Liberation* offers an expansive view of critical pedagogy, taking the discussion from pedagogy to pedagogics to reflect a larger-scale theoretical commitment to the ways in which all social systems and institutions form a disciplinary education for the people. Dussel defines pedagogics as "the part of philosophy (along with ethics, politics, and economics) which considers face-to-face relationships... Pedagogics as we intend it here has a greater significance than pedagogy, covering all types of 'discipline' (what is received from another) existing in opposition to 'invention' (what is discovered on one's own)" (47). Dussel's intervention in a discourse of critical pedagogy via pedagogics prioritizes large-scale social transformations that change the terms of "face-to-face relationships."

Written from the site of the U.S. academy, bell hooks' essays in *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994) consider the possible routes and obstacles to a consciousness-raising pedagogy. Citing inspiration from Freire's work, hooks also critiques Freire and stages the importance of a model that integrates "anticolonial, critical, and feminist pedagogies" (1994, 10). Reflecting the specific context of U.S. higher education in the early 1990s, hooks analyzes the conditions that create inequities in the classroom context with a focus on gender, class, and race. In considering different sites of tension amidst a multiculturalist moment, hooks thinks about the limitations of both teachers and students to participate in a consciousness-raising process of education, suggesting the necessity of discomfort and growth in the process: "Often, professors and students have to learn to accept different ways of knowing, new epistemologies in the multicultural setting" (41). In *Teaching to Transgress,* hooks offers theories and stories from her classroom experience, reflecting the challenges of building a collective interest in such a pedagogy for both professors and students.

The Student-Teacher Relationship

As is suggested in hooks' idea that "professors and students have to learn to accept different ways of knowing, new epistemologies," a critical pedagogy rethinks the roles of teacher and student to arrive at a more horizontal construction. What is so illustrative about hooks' articulation is the notion that in a critical pedagogy mode, teachers and students are doing the learning and accepting together. It is not a situation in which the teacher knows what is correct before the student. In a critical pedagogy, truth is explored and created in "solidarity" between teacher and student (Freire 1968, 77). The idea of solidarity between the teacher and student emphasizes the mutuality of the critical pedagogy approach.

To this effect, Freire develops a useful vocabulary around the teacher-student dynamic in critical pedagogy. In a few instances, he calls teachers and students "co-investigators," reflecting the mutually-insightful process of a critical pedagogy (1968, 81). Similar to hooks' formulation, the new ways of knowing are happening for the teacher and student at the same time. Another term Freire uses to describe the teacher-student dynamic is "co-intentional education," naming the mutual subjectivity and mutual responsibility in the construction of a critical pedagogy (69).

In Freire's articulation of critical pedagogy, dialogue and the centrality of students' role in creating dialogue is central to the project. Stemming from the same logic of *conscientização* that grounds consciousness-raising in the students' perception of social reality and oppression, Freire sees the "dialogical" construction of the problem-posing method as "constituted and organized by the students' view of the world, where their own generative themes are found" (1968, 109). This reflects his larger motivation in rejecting a top-down model of education. In describing the role and responsibility of teachers, Freire writes, "It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours" (96). In Freire's theorization of critical pedagogy, the teacher's responsibility is to create a learning environment in which a dialogue about the world, different ways of understanding it, and new ideas about what a transformed world could look like are able to emerge.

In *Teaching to Transgress*, hooks extends the critique of the teacher-student dynamic to look critically at the role of the broader classroom dynamic in education. In describing a successful classroom dynamic, hooks emphasizes collective participation and presence. To this effect, hooks writes that "as a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence" (1994, 8). The idea of "community" is another term that locates the priorities of critical pedagogy in its collective aspirations.

Dussel's project to think about critical pedagogics brings the critique of the teacher-student dynamic to the level of the state. In *Pedagogics of Liberation*, Dussel argues for the importance of the teacher figure listening to the student figure whether that is in the school setting or in other sites of education in the systems and governing institutions. He discusses the roles of teacher and student on this larger scale, writing that "…the teacher that listens to the voice of the young person, the State that educates its young people and community, must know how to stay silent at times, must leave young people to perform their historical responsibility" (Dussel 2019, 119). This framing reflects the continuity of change and the importance of letting students lead in their education.

Transforming Systems, Transforming the World

The political project of critical pedagogy is toward freedom, liberation, and humanization for everyone. Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* suggests that the "struggle for humanization" can only be led by oppressed people (1968, 44). His idea of a critical pedagogy stakes radical belief in the transformative power of education. Freire argues that in the process of consciousness-raising and dialogical learning, students and teachers are able to critically analyze the contextual situation of oppression and participate in the act of creating a new reality together. As this pedagogy toward a "new reality" is realized, it "ceases to belong to

the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation" (54). This is not a single process, however. Freire emphasizes throughout his work that such a pedagogical approach is an ongoing process.

Reflecting the continuity of a transformative pedagogy, hooks writes about "education as the practice of freedom" (1994, 15). A practice signifies an ongoing process. A critical pedagogy is an ongoing process rather than a singular revolutionary event. Freedom is a keyword across works on critical pedagogy, inflected in Freire's writing in its concreteness and situatedness: "Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion" (1968, 47). Freire's critical pedagogy is interested in how the condition of freedom can be created and continued through the educational setting.

Dussel establishes the imperative of transforming all sites of pedagogy, calling for "a new school, a new medicine, and other new services for the oppressed" (2019, 140). The route to liberation is across sites of pedagogy and requires a transformation of all pedagogic institutions to prioritize the needs of the people and to be sites of continued and sustainable care.

Critical Pedagogy in the Twenty-First Century

This final section reflects on twenty-first century ambivalence and optimism around the political promises of critical pedagogy. As critical pedagogy continues to be a significant force in research and thought on the philosophy of education, scholars wrestle with education's potential to conduct radical social transformation. Early theorists of critical pedagogy, such as Freire, Henry Giroux, and Ira Shor staked their thought in the possibility of social transformation. Skepticism of education's ability to produce such revolutionary futures has become a core feature of critical pedagogy discourse with texts like *Manifesto for a Post-Critical Pedagogy* (2018) articulating an alternative source of hope in the liberatory present of education.

Many contemporary volumes organize their critique of the effectiveness of critical pedagogy around its ability to respond to the conditions of neoliberalism. In his chapter "Critical Pedagogy and Class Struggle in the Age of Neoliberal Terror" in *Neoliberalism, Critical Pedagogy and Education* (2019), Peter McLaren is reluctant to embrace the optimism of the revolutionary promise of critical pedagogy in the neoliberal context. Seehwa Cho's critique of critical pedagogy in *Critical Pedagogy and Social Change: Critical Analysis on the Language of Possibility* (2012) takes issue with the lack of specificity in the articulation of possibility in earlier writings on critical pedagogy, suggesting an emptiness in its political promise in the neoliberal context.

On the other hand, contributors to *Critical Pedagogy in Uncertain Times: Hope and Possibilities* (2012) claim the continued importance of critical pedagogy, arguing that it is "needed to provide a framework for the identification and active responses to neoliberalism's predatory schemes of crises, errant politics, and resultant policies" (Macrine 2012, 4). Tomas Boronski's *Critical Pedagogy: An Exploration of Contemporary Themes and Issues* (2021) establishes a critique of neoliberalism from a British perspective and suggests that the advantage of critical pedagogy is how it creates alternative ways of interpreting "hegemonic

views" of contemporary life through the eyes of oppressed people (4). The same social structures that render critical pedagogy ineffective for McLaren and Cho are the ones that make it necessary and hopeful for Boronski and the authors in *Critical Pedagogy in Uncertain Times*.

Critical pedagogy continues to be debated on its contemporary significance and political viability. By tracking core features of critical pedagogy such as consciousness-raising, horizontalizing the student-teacher relationship, and social transformation, this essay grounds the term in its practical features and stakes. The articulation of liberation that is central to critical pedagogy keeps the theory around it alive as researchers and practitioners continue asking how to most effectively implement it amidst rapidly changing circumstances. Critical pedagogy's lasting focus on liberation, whether in search of liberatory futures or in arguing that education holds the makings of a liberated present, maintains its link to Global South politics and thought.

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[1] Recent trends in critical pedagogy scholarship have involved applying the principles of critical pedagogy to specific educational formations, such as disciplinary fields, student communities and identities, and curriculum topics or teaching methods. Some scholars theorize critical pedagogy in the context of specific disciplines such as physical education (Kirk 2020), nursing (Dyson 2018), and language and writing (Bogdan, et al. 2023). Others take up critical pedagogy in the context of specific populations such as online learners (Oztok 2020), Japanese expatriates in Singapore (Toh 2022), and rural American students (Mitchler 2023). Another branch of critical pedagogy research focuses on re-theorizing its political outcomes. For example, a recent volume examines critical pedagogy alongside the ideas of critical literacy and social justice (Covino and Mulcahy 2024). A recent manifesto rejects the idea that critical pedagogy will lead to state transformation, instead emphasizing the liberatory present of education (Hodgson, et al. 2018).

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To read "globalectically," as the Kenyan writer, scholar, and activist Ngugi wa Thiong'o has urged, is to engage a text "with the eyes of the world; it is to see the world with the eyes of the text" (Ngugi 2012, 60). Ngugi's theory of globalectics, a portmanteau that combines

"global" with "dialectics," proposes an expansive vision for literary studies that is rooted in the interplay between the world and text, paying particular attention to material history, linguistic specificity, and comparative analysis. Though the term itself appears in more recent critical writings following the publication of *Globalectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing* (2012), it gathers Ngugi's long historical engagements with the aesthetics of decolonization. As a significant figure for postcolonial African literature, and the field of postcolonial criticism more broadly, Ngugi's concept of globalectics — much like his novels — functions at a number of levels. It names not only an aesthetic idea but also a mode of reading, an aspirational pedagogy, and a contested theoretical terrain. Globalectics thus extends Ngugi's sustained critique of empire and its neocolonial transformations in the wake of national liberation, to the problem of literary representation under globalized capitalism. This article explores some of these dimensions of globalectics, paying particular attention to its claims, stakes, and potential limitations as a literary concept. In doing so, it seeks to understand how a globalectical reading of the world might offer new orientations for the study of literatures of the Global South.

Dialectics, History, and Interconnection

The challenge of approaching Ngugi's intellectual and artistic practice over six decades stems largely from the range of his critical engagement across a vast oeuvre of novels, plays, and criticism. As the literary scholar Simon Gikandi has argued, a central problem for Ngugi's readers reflects one that the writer has been grappling with throughout his career — that is, how to reconcile the problem of text and context, the conflict between historical necessity and aesthetic autonomy more specifically (2000, 12-13). Ngugi's early formal experiments in the 1960s and 70s emerged in dialogue and often in direct response to the challenge of representing Kenya's fraught historical and social contradictions. Like with many anticolonial struggles for independence in this period, these contradictions were made increasingly evident through the passage of the Kenyan freedom movement, referred to as "Mau Mau."[1] With revolutionary aspirations beset by internal conflict, overlapping claims to power, and the movement's eventual manifestation in the postcolonial nation-state, modern Kenya appeared to adapt the idioms of colonial rule rather than eradicate it entirely. "The wind of change," as Ngugi remarks, "had turned into a hurricane" (2012, 10). It is precisely such transformations, taking shape against ongoing contexts of class struggle, the loss of traditional communities, rapid urbanization, and global impositions of debt, which Ngugi makes the subject of his writing.

These are admittedly broad strokes to provide the general background against which Ngugi emerges as a critical voice in modern Kenya, and consequently in extended exile in the West. However, as the lectures in *Globalectics* show, the closely linked concerns of aesthetic form, politics, and history are as fundamental to the challenges of cultural study in the twenty-first century as they were in the immediate aftermath of decolonization. As recent literary scholarship debates the usefulness of fields like "world literature" against the reified categories of area studies or national literatures, Ngugi offers globalectics as an exercise in the reorganization of the space of knowledge creation. In other words, he urges literary scholars to look beyond the Cold War polarities of center and periphery, nation and region — residues of an era of proxy politics — and turn instead to the interconnectedness of texts, languages, and cultural histories.

This call to think relationally reflects the primary methodological move of globalectics, signaled within the word itself. Throughout the book, G. W. F. Hegel's famous dialectic of master and bondsman reappears in various forms of the colonial encounter, gesturing at the possibilities of its re-appropriation for anticolonial thought. As thinkers like Karl Marx, Frantz Fanon, C. L. R. James, and Aimé Césaire — to name just a few pillars for Ngugi's work — have shown, the master-bondsman dialectic does more than simply outline a philosophical basis of violence and domination. When read from the vantage point of the enslaved, from the basis of material history rather than abstract idealism (a larger dissatisfaction with "unmoored" theory that recurs in *Globalectics*), the relationship between the master and bondsman reveals the dependence of the former on the latter, indicating the possibility of the latter's political liberation through this moment of recognition. Without delving into the many interpretations of Hegel's parable, in a simplified example under contemporary capitalism, Ngugi connects this reorganization of perspective to the fact that "labor can do without capital; but capital can never do without labor" (2012, 30). It is this same project of reorganization that drives him to ask: how can literary education be structured? What might the dialectical reversal look like in the realm of cultural production or artistic representation? What is the relationship between literary knowledge and political freedom?[2]

Detailing the colonial education system and its prescriptive literary canon on which he was raised, the dialectical method brings an expansive mode of reading to reified or canonical Western texts. In a familiar example, Ngugi rehearses Prospero and Caliban's relationship in William Shakespeare's 17th-century play *The Tempest* (1623) as paradigmatic of the way colonial occupation, through the control and privileging of certain modes of knowledge, purposefully obscures other forms of knowing. To read globalectically is thus to look everywhere for the closely linked operations of power and knowledge, for potential connections across geographies, temporalities, and situated histories that might exceed these operations. In its rigorous search for contradiction in the face of social totality, the dialectical tradition from Hegel and Marx to György Lukács and Mikhail Bakhtin offers a particularly suitable method. Yet Ngugi's intervention, following transnational Afro-Caribbean thinkers like Fanon, Césaire, George Lamming, Kamau Brathwaite, and W. E. B. Du Bois, is to bring this tradition into direct contact with the historical realities of race, capitalism, and colonialism.

Space, Time, and the Global

If globalectics is derived from "the shape of the globe" where "there is no one center," then we must take seriously the spatio-temporal implications of Ngugi's concept (2012, 8). Throughout the lectures in *Globalectics* and the recurrence of Hegel's parable that threads them together, there is a continued emphasis on the distinctly spatial structure of knowledge: its ordering, reorganization, and migrations. As in earlier critical works like *Moving the Center* (1993) and *Penpoints, Gunpoints, and Dreams* (1998), spatialized language for Ngugi extends beyond its metaphorical deployment and serves as the grounds on which the politics of knowledge can be — quite literally — staged. Drawing on his work as a playwright and student of performance, Ngugi argues that the organization of theatrical space (as in the novel or cinema) always expresses a "power relationship, consciously or unconsciously intended" that mirrors political space (2012, 36). To say that the plantation, colony, or postcolonial state are spatial entities is therefore not to suggest that they are

limited to territorial organization. To the contrary, it underlines for Ngugi how hierarchies of educational systems or formations of artistic and intellectual knowledge are inextricable from their material realities.

This relationship of power and space to knowledge runs throughout *Globalectics*, which draws heavily on the "Nairobi Document" that Ngugi co-authored with colleagues at the University of Nairobi in 1968. A now-central text for postcolonial literary studies, it outlines a set of proposals calling for the abolishment of the English department, and an inclusive department of African literatures and languages in its place. The call to shift away from the disproportionate attention to European culture and instead "orientate ourselves towards placing Kenya, East Africa, and then Africa in the centre [sic]" reveals how the unequal distribution of space comes to bear directly on the structure of cultural consciousness (1995, 439). The figure of the land — its custodians, inheritors, and rights — also recurs in Ngugi's own fiction and the greater archive of African literature that he analyzes.

The issue of space and time in debates around canon-formation has of course been a formative one for the field of postcolonial studies, which in its early iterations sought to define its scope in direct response to such inequities — we might think here of works like Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983), Ashcroft et al.'s *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), and Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), which tackle these questions explicitly. However, what happens to this problem in the context of globalized capitalism, where the ideal of connection exists alongside the persistence of bounded ideas of nation and region? How contemporary forms of empire both erase spatial boundaries while reifying its underlying hierarchies of power is a key consideration that globalectics brings to the study of literature.

These concerns, it should be said, do not inaugurate a radically new line of inquiry. Indeed, globalectics invokes a lively critical conversation in literary studies that has been concerned with the very question of whose "world" constitutes the field of "world literature." Fundamental debates around world-literary approaches to translation, its flattening of historical difference, and the divestment of political or aesthetic specificity under a new universalist program continue to dominate the field.[3] We can similarly track contemporary disputes around the value of institutionalized categories like "Global Anglophone" literatures, and the potential relevance of the postcolonial as such. Though Ngugi is well-versed in the discourse around these categorical distinctions — assimilated in their very establishment — globalectics is not overly mired in theoretical minutiae. As his lectures demonstrate, these are perennial issues that have changed form over the decades (one particularly memorable version is the controversy over the category of Third-World literature). The concern in *Globalectics* is to thus turn away from the metatheoretical discourse and towards the way literary texts themselves rehearse what he calls (following the Polish theater practitioner Jerzy Grotowski) "poor theory."

Poor theory does not, however, invite a binary distinction between theory and object, which treats the former as instrumentalizing an essential meaning contained within the latter. A dynamic theorist in his own right, Ngugi's notion of poor theory, like its theatrical counterpart, highlights the possibilities of an interpretive method grounded in experimentation with the bare minimum. As with the social realities of poverty under contemporary globalization, where Trinidadian oil workers produce steel drum music from

barrels, or the appearance of a corporate logo on the tattered cap of a Mexican laborer driven from the land by that very corporation, poor theory makes connections where they are unexpected, asserting that "the density of words is not the same thing as the complexity of thought" (2012, 3-4). A globalectical reading then resists theorizing the limits of the world in its study; it seeks instead to make theory accessible, as a tool for clarifying "interconnections of social phenomena and their mutual impact in the local and global space" through an act of reading that is simultaneously "a process of self-examination" (2012, 61).

As a novelist interested in the intersection of social reality and aesthetic form, as we have been discussing, it is the self-critical structure of the novel in particular that comes closest to the utopian vision of Ngugi's globalectics. Fiction, cast as myth, oral tradition, or written text, has always been the "original poor theory" in its capacity to integrate social life within a larger symbolic imagination (2012, 15). But the novel, and particularly the realist novel's embedded history in the European imagination, offers a distinct critical mode when adapted in the postcolonial idiom. As in the work of Achebe, Lamming, or Gordimer, the exemplary postcolonial novel in Ngugi's view generates a multidimensional representation of the complex political and historical world that it inhabits. It is the novel's distinctive capacity to reinvent itself, to make space and time both the limits and medium of its expression, which thus make it uniquely situated as a globalectical form.[4]

We might witness this interplay between world and text on the level of form and content in Ngugi's novel *Petals of Blood* (1977), the last to be written in English before his well-known turn to Gikuyu languages as his primary mode of expression[5]. As with *A Grain of Wheat* before it, *Petals of Blood* performs the spatio-temporal politics we have been exploring, unfolding around a central act of protest that is detailed obliquely through multiple voices, perspectives, and chronologies. In a fitting scene for this discussion of globalectics as theorizing from the South, the idealistic Karega stands in front of a classroom in the village of Ilmorog, caught in the cross-hairs of neocolonial rule in newly independent Kenya:

> He was concerned that the children knew no world outside Ilmorog: they thought of Kenya as a city or a large village somewhere outside Ilmorog. How could he enlarge their consciousness so that they could see themselves, Ilmorog and Kenya as part of a larger whole, a larger territory containing the history of African people and their struggles? In his mind he scanned the whole landscape where African people once trod to leave marks and monuments that were the marvel of ages, that not even the fatal encounter of black sweat and white imperialism could rub from the memory and recorded deeds of men. Egypt, Ethiopia, Monomotapata, Zimbabwe, Timbuctoo, Haiti, Malindi, Ghana, Mali, Songhai: the names were sweet to the ear and the children listened with eager enthusiastic wonder that was the measure of their deep-seated unbelief. He made them sing: I live in Ilmorog Division which is in Chiri District; Chiri which is in the Republic of Kenya; Kenya which is part of East Africa; East Africa which is part of Africa; Africa which is the land of African peoples; Africa from where other African people were scattered to other corners of the world. They sang it, but it seemed too abstract. (1991, 109)

We might see in Karega's pedagogical exercise a prefigurative theory of scale that is more fully unearthed by globalectics. Insisting that the students' lived realities are situated in deeply interwoven histories of the land and its diasporas, Karega attempts to undo the

partitioning logic of the plantation, colony, and nation-state. That this knowledge is conveyed through musical performance gestures at other ways of embodying such histories outside the hegemony of the text and its inherited written forms. Yet, as the denouement of the novel and Karega's own doubts over the abstraction of understanding indicate, the struggle — and even idealized attempt — to reclaim a triumphant past does not always serve the exigencies of the present. The problem of historical recuperation and its uneven effects constitute a central thread in *Petals* and in *Globalectics*, which closes with a consideration of how oral, performative, and written traditions have been complicated or aided in the task of democratic knowledge production in an era of digital technology and techno-capitalism.

Conclusion

If an exact concept of globalectics eludes us, it is partly by design. In Ngugi's book, the interchanging use of globalectics as theoretical method, way of reading, and historical description raises questions about its value for literary study against already existing frameworks of postcolonial, decolonial, or more recently, world literature. How the globalectical imagination differs precisely from these institutionalized fields remains unclear, as do the potential risks of re-inscribing universalist tendencies in its fixation on interconnected aesthetic forms. To underscore non-Western cultural texts as always performing these connections risks flattening them further — a long-running critique of postcolonial theory's early struggles with reconciling difference and universality. Furthermore, the gaps around the uneven effects of modern capitalist society for questions of gender remain outside the scope of analysis.

However, despite these lingering ambiguities, what is most helpful about globalectics is its refusal to fetishize the need for new categories of knowledge, calling instead for an attention to how existing resources might be creatively refashioned and complicated in the spirit of "poor theory." As the scholar of Africana literature Carole Boyce Davies notes, the constructive method of globalectics engages a "variety of cultural and theoretical positions" that brings multiple fields and discourses into conversation (2018, 149). This polyvocal approach, which allows for a comparative study of culture across language and region that are nonetheless linked by histories of racial capital or imperial conquest, is where its significance to the study of the Global South might prevail. As a self-reflexive field that looks for interconnections beyond traditional circuits of politics or nationalist histories that privilege the dichotomies of center and periphery, globalectics — like Karega in *Petals* — challenges us to unlearn sedimented narratives, to register the appearance of power under changing conditions, and to reject distinction for complexity.

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[1] Mau Mau names both the events of revolutionary struggle against the British empire during the emergency years (c. 1952 – 1960), as well as the Kenya Land and Freedom Army, the anticolonial force constituted primarily of the Gikuyu community, Kenya's largest ethnic group to which Ngugi belongs. The complicated impact of Gikuyu nationalism and its discourses on Ngugi's writing are explored in Gikandi 2000.

[2] What remains missing from such considerations of power is a fuller reckoning with the fraught place of gender in Ngugi's work, and in his legacy as an exemplary figure of revolutionary African letters more broadly. Indeed, the concept of globalectics opens up useful and counterintuitive ways to read the world, and yet it must be harnessed to ask what forms of power such a theory itself occludes. Recent conversations around Ngugi's alleged history of domestic abuse and neglect have made particularly apparent the critical task of reading the uneven effects of power across the Global South alongside the internalization of this disparity within narratives of resistance. As Elleke Boehmer reminds us: while Ngugi's representations of women within the fold of a postcolonial liberatory politics are distinct from the work of his (largely male) African counterparts, they nonetheless emphasize a conventional view that "women's emancipation takes a second place to the national struggle against neocolonialism" (2005, 44). Across a number of novels including *Petals of Blood*, which we will consider briefly, Boehmer diagnoses what is an often-overlooked aspect of gender obscured by the patriarchal view of a proper, revolutionary subjectivity. See Boehmer 2005; also see Spivak 1999, for a foundational feminist critique of the masculinist politics of postcoloniality. See Edoro 2024 for a sharply observed piece that takes into account these questions in light of the recent allegations by Mŭkoma wa Ngugi about his father's domestic violence and neglect towards his late first wife, Nyambura. Edoro demonstrates the rifts these revelations have created within the African literary community in which Ngugi is so revered, and the consequent need to expand anticolonial discourses beyond the hagiography of powerful men. I offer this note and these sources as a means to complicate the claims of globalectics that will ensue in this article, as a concept that insists on "self-examination."

[3] Yogita Goyal's essay on the "transnational turn" and the contested position of the postcolonial amongst other emerging categories, provides a particularly helpful diagnosis. See Goyal 2017, and the bibliography for additional resources on critical scholarship on definitions of world literature.

[4] For a more specific engagement with the theory of the realist novel, and the links between globalectics and the spatio-temporal aspects of Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope or Foucault's concept of heterotopia, see Ngugi 2016.

[5] The choice to write in the dominant language of the working-class masses as opposed to in the language of elite, colonial inheritance, is explored in-depth in *Decolonising the Mind* (1986), an essential resource in a long-running debate (notably between Ngugi and Achebe) around the "appropriate" language of African literatures.

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How to Cite

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Within the extensive scholarship on decolonization across the Global South, a great deal of attention has been paid to the high tide of transnational solidarity in the 1950s-60s. Decolonizing nations were faced with the task of not just establishing their newfound sovereignty within an existing global system, but of forging that world system anew. This essay traces a concept history of anticolonial solidarity particularly as it evolved in leftist internationalist politics to define movements such as Afro-Asian solidarity and non-Alignment. Ultimately, a story of anticolonial solidarity focused solely on nation-states as actors would be remiss; this essay will examine how current scholarship explores non-state networks of solidarity, some of which have roots extending into the late nineteenth century.

Theorizing "Solidarity"

In order to draw out a conceptual history of anticolonial solidarity, it is helpful to begin with the history of the term "solidarity" itself. However, "solidarity" must be contextually grounded in the rhetorical constellation of terms and ideas committed to worldmaking and forging affective bonds around a common political cause, from the late nineteenth century onwards. Sven Liedman pinpoints the First Worker's International founding meeting in London (1864) as a crucial juncture in the history of solidarity on the global Left, given that the "provisional rules of the International spoke of 'solidarity among workers of various trades in every country'" (Liedman 2020, 13). Within the ambit of the Western European tradition of solidarity, the term itself is etymologically grounded in the Roman legal concept of "solidum," which Hauke Brunkhorst defines as "an obligation for the whole, cooperative liability, common debt and solidarity obligation: obligation in solidum" (Brunkhorst 2020, 43). In this framework, solidarity is rooted in the idea of social contract, or responsibility to a collective. Nathalie Karagiannis also emphasizes that solidarity "cannot be thought of without the original violence which produces it and without the violence it produces" (Karagiannis 2020, 63). By violence, Karagiannis means the violence of individual revolt in the creation of a social contract or collective interests. Her framing focuses on a more modern framework of solidarity, by Albert Camus, that highlights moments of revolt specifically as both formative of, and justified by, the emergence of human solidarity. This argument, Karagiannis qualifies, applies to a political or social solidarity, as opposed to the sense of community generated by faith.

However, a separation of the sacred from the political falls apart especially when examining religious modes of political solidarity across the decolonizing world, as demonstrated by Talal Asad, Saba Mahmood, and other scholars of the critical secularism studies collective.[1] The history of "pan-Islamic" thought and solidarity is one such example. The term "pan-Islam" has its origins in nineteenth-century British imperial paranoia about a global "Islamic conspiracy," but the term itself was adopted by a variety of state and non-state actors as a means of organizing anticolonial resistance along the lines of religious community (Aydin

2007). Sultan Abdul Hamid II adopted the idea in the late 1870s to bolster Ottoman imperial leadership both as a symbolic and a political Caliphate standing against a "Christian West." It must be noted however that the Ottoman claim to the leadership of a "Muslim world" was certainly contested, from its inception at the end of the nineteenth century through the formal dissolution of the Ottoman empire in 1923. Ideas of a global Islamic *umma* united in the face of Western colonial incursions were by no means a product of state-sponsored internationalism alone; a prominent Islamic reformist and anticolonial thinker by the name of Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani transmitted information about British colonial oppression in India to a growing following of Egyptians as early as the 1870s.[2] Conceptions of a global *umma* or community of Muslims as a mode of internationalist organizing were to play a prominent role in anticolonial and postcolonial solidarity projects of the early twentieth century, including the Khilafat movement in South Asia (1919-1924) and the establishment of the intergovernmental Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 1969.[3]

Liberation theology in Latin America is another significant example of a non-secularist solidarity model. A prominent thinker in this school, Gustavo Gutiérrez, theorized solidarity at the nexus of socialist and Christian thought. Gutiérrez put forward a theory of "solidarity with the oppressed" rooted in theological reflection and Biblical exegesis. However, he was also heavily influenced by Marxist ideas of class struggle and praxis: "The praxis on which liberation theology reflects is a praxis of solidarity in the interests of liberation and is inspired by the gospel" (Gutiérrez 1973, 24). For Gutiérrez, solidarity with the poor was an essential aspect of Christian purpose, and while his argument was grounded in Biblical justifications, it also drew heavily on a social scientific approach to class and poverty. This formulation of solidarity, hinged on the universality of Christian charity, also allowed for an acute criticism of colonialism and its legacies in Latin America. For liberation theologists, the sacred *was* the political and vice-versa.

It is clear, therefore, that in order to accommodate the diverse networks of solidarity that came to define the anticolonial worldmaking projects of the twentieth century, a theory of solidarity must look beyond secularist liberal thought as well as a state or elite-centric view of international solidarity. David Featherstone's definition of political solidarity as an actively constructed "transformative political relation" that "can entrench as well as challenge privilege and can close down as well as open up political possibilities and alliances" is a particularly comprehensive approach (Featherstone 2012, 1). His framework therefore pushes scholars of the Global South to look beyond left elites and leadership and instead towards the *labour* of building solidarity (Featherstone 2012, 46). Featherstone contends that solidarity must be understood within the context of the contested power relations through which it is forged, thereby rejecting a purely horizontal approach to geographies of solidarity.

Decolonization, Worldmaking and Solidarity

The effectiveness of Featherstone's approach to solidarity is especially clear when it comes to twentieth-century decolonization and the efforts made by state and non-state actors alike to imagine and create a new sense of the "global" in a post-WWI juncture. As the Powers at Versailles confronted the task of negotiating a lasting postwar peace in 1919, they were confronted by representatives of colonized populations across Asia and Africa, all of whom sought to assert their claims for a reorganization of global order along anticolonial lines. On one hand, the Wilsonian internationalism of the newly minted League of Nations emerged as

one framework for such a project. Concurrently, a scathing critique of colonialism and the League's liberal internationalism rang forth from the global Left, spearheaded by the newly established Soviet state and its internationalist organ for propagating world revolution, the Comintern. As a successor to the Second International, the Comintern intentionally fostered a broader conception of transnationalism in response to accusations of Eurocentrism in its early program and functioning. As indicated in the organization's Manifesto, there was a commitment to the principle of transnational connectivity within the design of the Comintern's complex bureaucracy, a commitment that was often tested by an acute sense of Moscow-centrism within the organization. Oleksa Drachewych's study of Comintern transnationalism makes a case for a "solidarity from below," fostered through Comintern-affiliated organizations that "took an ideal (e.g. anti-imperialism) and generalized it, developing networks of individuals and groups who mutually championed achieving that goal" (Drachewych 2019, 6). Categorized within Comintern records as "Non-Party Mass Organizations" and "Sympathizing Organizations for Special Purposes," this network included associations such as the "Internationale Arbeiter-Hilfe" (IAH or International Workers Relief).

Vladimir Lenin's "Draft Theses on National and Colonial Questions," presented at the Second Congress of the Comintern (1920), was the first concrete evidence of Moscow's commitment (albeit limited) to integrating input from colonized peoples into Comintern programming. In the debates around this document, several voices from the colonized world emerged to critique, amend, and add to Lenin's theses. Prominent among these responses were the "Supplementary Theses" by Manabendra Nath Roy, a truly transnational figure who would go on to establish the Communist Party of India. Solidarity for the Comintern delegates was a dynamic idea riddled with tensions and contradiction, between a commitment to the "national" versus the "international," and between Moscow centrism versus a multi-centered global system. Moreover, delegates at the Second Congress grappled with the challenge of positioning a leftist solidarity or internationalism alongside other claims to solidarity, namely the various "Pan" movements. The Comintern debates around crafting anticolonial solidarity cannot be read in isolation from these other projects of global order and worldmaking, as evidenced by the fact that Comintern delegates themselves were engaging with, and even placing their own models of solidarity as competition to, these other networks.

Another concrete manifestation of Comintern commitment to anticolonial solidarity was its active support for the League Against Imperialism and Colonialism and Colonial Oppression (LAI), which brought together some of the most prominent leaders of anticolonial movements across Asia and Africa, including Jawaharlal Nehru, Messali Hadj, and Mohammad Hatta.[4] Though short-lived, the League would later become a touchstone for the leaders of decolonizing nations during the heyday of Afro-Asian solidarity at the Bandung Conference (1955).[5] Indonesian President Sukarno opened Bandung with a direct reference to the LAI conference in at Brussels in 1927, thus placing Bandung in a longer history of anticolonial solidarity efforts:

> I recall in this connection the Conference of the 'League Against Imperialism and Colonialism' which was held in Brussels almost thirty years ago. At that Conference many distinguished Delegates who are present here today met each other and found new strength in their fight for independence.[6]

Ostensibly, one of the first international conferences to address solidarity amongst

decolonizing/decolonized nations was the Colombo conference of 1954, often positioned as the direct precursor to Bandung as the idea for an Afro-Asian solidarity conference was put forward by the Indonesian delegation at Colombo. The Bandung Conference was by no means the sole pinnacle of statist solidarity building efforts, as recent historiography has examined several other manifestations of this "Bandung Spirit," such as the conference in Delhi a week before Bandung, the Cairo conference for Afro-Asian solidarity in 1957, and the rise of the Non-Aligned movement. However, the fact remains that Bandung looms large as a standard against which these other gatherings are studied, as Carolien Stolte's analysis of "Other Bandungs" demonstrates, thereby making its scholarship a useful window into how historians have treated the concept of mid-twentieth century anticolonial solidarity at large (Stolte 2019).

Beyond the State

In addition to the notion of solidarity as a tool for building geopolitical alliances through states, the decolonizing moment saw the further proliferation of existing modes of anticolonial solidarity that did not necessarily centre nation-state sovereignty as their ultimate goal. One such axis of anticolonial solidarity was forged along racial lines. From WEB Dubois to CLR James to Eric Williams, various theorists of Black solidarity and Pan-Africanism were forging global networks that would enable a true emancipation from racial capitalism and emancipation that would hold the postcolonial state as accountable as the colonial state. While there was a great deal of ambiguity at Bandung about a definition for imperialism, for thinkers and activists grappling with the "global colour line," imperialism was inextricable from slavery as "a modern form of labour extraction and exploitation," which as Adom Getachew points out is a definition that "transcended the limited definitions of slavery that dominated the League of Nations' abolitionist efforts" (Getachew 2019, 23). The historiography on twentieth-century antiracist solidarity also highlights the Tricontinental movement, anchored around a conference in Havana, Cuba that took place a little over a decade after Bandung. Notably, this was a moment that concretely brought Latin America into the Afro-Asian solidarity compact and led to the establishment of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAAL) in 1966.[7]

Another formation that both worked alongside but also transcended state-led visions of Third World solidarity is that of international feminisms. Chandra Mohanty defines an "imagined community'' of Third World oppositional struggles—"'imagined' not because it is not 'real' but because it suggests potential alliances and collaborations across divisive boundaries, and 'community' because in spite of internal hierarchies within Third World contexts, it nevertheless suggests a significant, deep commitment to what Benedict Anderson, in referring to the idea of the nation, calls 'horizontal comradeship'" (Mohanty 2003, 46). Deeply invested in questions of race and decolonization, anticolonial women's organizations predate the Bandung moment in envisioning emancipatory postcolonial orders, evidenced by Shobna Nijhawan's work on the All-Asia Women's Conference in Lahore (AAWC, 1931). As Nijhawan demonstrates, the conference was "an instance of international relation-building between Indian feminists and feminists from around the world (colonies and nation states) that gained its strength by placing Asia as a centre for international organizing" (Nijhawan 2017, 25).

What did decolonization mean for the formation of feminist solidarity networks across the

Global South? According to Elizabeth Armstrong and Vijay Prakash, the Bandung moment provided international feminist networks with a platform to discard the nationalist masculinist protectionism in global politics, which had resulted in two world wars in the first half of the century (Armstrong and Prashad 2006). Instead, they put forward a new internationalism that would be equally committed to building state welfare infrastructures and world peace. In Cairo, at the First Women's Afro-Asian Conference in 1961, delegates gathered to offer critiques of nationalist projects and prescriptions for how postcolonial states could improve the status of women in their respective countries.

Conclusion

Within the historical scholarship on decolonization and global thought of the twentieth century, there is a popular understanding that while the 1950s represented the height of optimism resulting in a plethora of worldmaking projects, this optimism was to soon dissipate. What with the failure of Gamal Abdel Nasser's the United Arab Republic (perhaps the pinnacle of his pan-Arab project) in 1961 and the collapse of Sino-Indian relations with the outbreak of war in 1962, it was clear that the state-mediated vision of Afro-Asian solidarity eulogized by Sukarno at Bandung was a distant dream. Though the tenuous covenant of Bandung seemed to be in decline, non-Alignment proved to be a longer lasting model for a state-led solidarity pact in the face of growing Cold War polarization and economic pressures.[8] Overall, scholarly consensus points towards a decline of international solidarity along the lines of colonial experience as the twentieth century progressed, in the face of sharpening Cold War geopolitics and the prioritization of national sovereignty above all considerations of broader solidarities. However, if we were to divert our gaze from superpower geopolitics and the nation-state as the sole analytic frame, the many strands of anticolonial solidarity that wove through the Global South endured. Networks that linked subaltern groups across the proverbial First, Second and Third Worlds outlasted the wave of state-mediated decolonization and continued to pursue more radical avenues of worldmaking that required them to hold the postcolonial nation-state regime accountable as well. The literature on correspondences between the anti-caste movement in postcolonial South Asia and Civil Rights activists in the United States is a testament to the transformative capacity of anticolonial solidarity as a language of worldmaking that did not end with the establishment of independent nation-states. The globalized vocabulary of contemporary activism and organizing across the Global South today, from climate activism to international campaigns against racialized police brutality, is a legacy of these conceptual and material networks of anticolonial solidarity.

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[1] Talal Asad's work pioneered a critical analytic for studying "secularism" or "secularity" in conjunction with Western liberal ideas of modernity and laid the foundation for an anthropology of the secular. See Asad 2003. Influenced by Asad's analysis, Saba Mahmood's work further dissects the liberal paradigm of secularity solution to the question of "difference" and religious minorities (Mahmood 2016).

[2] For more on al-Afghani's life and anti-colonial thought, see Mishra 2012.

[3] Beginning in 1919, the Khilafat movement or the Caliphate movement was a campaign of political resistance in South Asia that was varied in its goals and composition. While the movement broadly focused on protecting the Ottoman Caliphate as the anchor of a global Muslim community from Western incursions, it also acquired anticolonial resonances and attracted non-Muslim actors (the most prominent of which was MK Gandhi). For more on the Khilafat movement and its pan-Islamic significance, see Qureshi 1999.

[4] For more on the League Against Imperialism's history and significance, see (Louro et al. 2020). For more on the Brussels conference specifically, see Prashad 2007.

[5] The Bandung conference aimed to broker solidarity among the recently decolonized/decolonizing nations of Asia and Africa, and took place April 18-24, 1955, in Bandung, Indonesia. 29 countries sent delegates to the conference, which was organized by the states of Indonesia, Myanmar (Burma), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India and Pakistan. For more on the Bandung Conference, its lives and afterlives, see Eslava, Fakhri, and Nesiah 2017; Lee 2010.

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[7] For more on the history of OSPAAAL and the Tricontinental movement, see Mahler 2018.

[8] For more on the Non Aligned movement and the model of solidarity it proffered, see Mišković, Fischer-Tiné, and Boškovska Leimgruber 2014.

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Creolization offers a conceptual framework for understanding the ways in which different racialized groups interact to give rise to new social, cultural, and racial formations. Emerging out of the Caribbean, the concept illuminates both a process and, in some uses of the term, a political conviction rooted in the recognition of the historical circumstances of peoples brought together by European colonialism. The plantation complex established through the dispossession of Indigenous peoples was the site for the exploitation of enslaved Africans and eventually, Asian indentured servants. The resultant interactions between Europeans, Africans, and Asians, which were uneven and fraught by their very nature, have been the focus of conversations about creolization. Defined as simultaneously "descriptive and analytical," creolization emerges from the lived realities of subaltern subjects (Lionnet and Shih 2011, 2). Initially used for descendants of European settlers, by the eighteenth century creole came to refer to Black, white, or mixed-race people in the Caribbean, Mascarene Islands, and in the U.S. South (Lionnet and Shih 2011, 22).

Notwithstanding the seeming capaciousness of the concept and its ability to make visible the experiences of various communities brought into proximity with one another through colonization, early theorizations of creolization have been critiqued for their singular emphasis on some groups and relative inattention to others. For instance, some of the seminal works on creolization in the Caribbean focus primarily on the interaction between Europeans and enslaved African peoples. Later scholars have addressed this and expanded the scope of what creolization means in the Caribbean. Indeed, as Shalini Puri usefully

reminds us, "creolization as a figure for Caribbean hybridity has its own complex legacy of exclusion" (2004, 65). The provenance of the term however is not confined to the Caribbean and is frequently used to describe social processes in other parts of the world. Connected by the history of colonialism, the plantation economy, slavery, and indentureship, the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean have served as two of several sites from where creolization has been theorized, often to name distinct rather than identical processes.

As a concept for studying the social, cultural, and racial mixing of different communities, creolization calls attention to a set of cognate concepts such as hybridity, mestizaje and syncretism, to name just a few. Puri (2004), for instance, uses hybridity as a conceptual umbrella that encompasses several identity categories such as creole, jíbaro, mestizo, mulatto, and dougla. A quick look at edited volumes seeking to historicize creolization reveals continuing efforts to understand it in relation to these kindred concepts, each of which has its own situated history and, much like creolization, continues to remain entrenched in different orders of emphasis and exclusion. Ella Shohat's cautionary words about certain modes of studying hybridity and syncretism hold true here: "a celebration of syncretism and hybridity per se, if not articulated in conjunction with questions of hegemony and neo-colonial power relations, runs the risk of appearing to sanctify the *fait accompli* of colonial violence." If used as "a descriptive catch-all term," it fails to differentiate "the diverse modalities of hybridity, for example, forced assimilation, internalized self-rejection, political cooptation, social conformism, cultural mimicry, and creative transcendence" (Shohat 1992, 109-110). Creolization too runs the same risk when abstracted from the material conditions under which different racial groups were made proximate to and interacted with one another. Echoing this, Nigel O. Bolland calls for a dialectical approach to the study of creolization; one that is attuned to the "centrality of relations of domination/subordination, including class relations" in shaping Caribbean society (2002, 37-38).

Terms such as transculturation, acculturation, and interculturation, common to studies of creolization, perform the critical task of naming the specific nature or direction of cultural change. While acculturation has been described as the process by which one culture absorbs another, interculturation refers to a more reciprocal process of intermixture. The term transculturation was first used by Fernando Ortiz (1940) in response to what he saw as the limitations of the term "acculturation." It describes the transition from one culture to another as marked by not just acculturation but also disacculturation that ultimately leads to the creation of new cultural phenomena. Mary Louise Pratt builds on this definition in *Imperial Eyes*, suggesting that transculturation is a constant feature of the contact zone or social spaces "where disparate cultures meet, clash, grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (2008, 7). Pratt's explicit recognition of the asymmetries of power is vital to any understanding of transculturation.

If creolization illuminates how different groups transform under specific historical conditions, how might we understand the terms and nature of this transformation? Do certain groups' cultural forms and practices dominate this process of seeming exchange? Is the creolized identity or social formation a new creation or is it always already marked by dominant power relations? These are some of the questions that studies of creolization have asked and sought to answer, examining materials that range from the most private and quotidian practices to public and collective ones, scholars discuss racial intimacies, language, food, religion, dance,

and music. This essay follows the trails of these questions, rehearses key scholarship on creolization that have come out of the Caribbean and turns briefly to the Indian Ocean in order to historicize the concept and its areas of emphases. It also engages critiques of the fundamental assumptions and blind spots of earlier studies of creolization. The piece ends by reflecting on the affordances and limitations of a somewhat generalist approach to the question of creolization whereby the term is used to describe cultural adaptation and the interchange of objects, information, and capital in contemporary global culture (Hannerz 1996; Sheller 2003).

Creolization in the Caribbean: Definitions

Edward Kamau Brathwaite, one of the pioneering figures in the study of creolization, defines it as a process (rather than a product) that is material, psychological and spiritual, "based on the stimulus/response of individuals...to their [new] environment and to each other," eventually leading to the creation of a "totally new construct" (1971, 11). In *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* (1971), Brathwaite trained a critical eye on Jamaican identity, arguing that people from Britain and West Africa who lived, worked, settled, or were born in Jamaica were responsible for the formation of a society with a distinctive character that was neither purely British nor West African but creole. The specificity of the social context in which creolization takes place is emphasized in Brathwaite's clarification that creole societies are caught up "in some kind of colonial arrangement with a metropolitan European power, on the one hand, and a plantation arrangement on the other; and where the society is multi-racial but organized for the benefit of a minority European origin" (1971, xxxi). The uneven power relations of the colonial context and the heterogeneity of the cultural formations forged under it emerge as key ideas here.

In *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean* (1974), Brathwaite expanded on the concept of creolization to suggest that it:

> may be divided into two aspects of itself: ac/culturation, which is the yoking (by force and example, deriving from power/prestige) of one culture to another (in this case the enslaved/African to the European); and inter/culturation, which is an unplanned, unstructured but osmotic relationship from the yoke (6).

Edouard Glissant recognizes the role of power and subaltern subjects' responses to it as central to creolization when he describes creolization as the linguistic outcome of a "forced poetics," the invention of a language and shared culture under the pressures of historical erasure by European colonists. In *Caribbean Discourse* (1989), he observes that as a cross-cultural language forged as a medium of communication on the plantation, the role of creole was essentially one of defiance (127). Brathwaite too dwells on the question of language in "History of the Voice 1979/1981," where he calls creole the "submerged language" of the Caribbean enslaved population that moves from "a purely African form to a form which was African but which adapted to the new environment and adapted to the cultural imperative of the European language" (Shepherd and Richards 2002, xiii).

Brathwaite's work, scholars have argued, can be read as a response to the "plural society" thesis that informed cultural anthropology of the Caribbean in the mid-twentieth century

(Shepherd and Richards 2002, xii-xiii; Sheller 2020, 279). However, this work is somewhat circumscribed by its attention to only the encounter between Europeans and Africans as the site of creolization (Munasinghe 2006; Jackson 2012). In a less frequently discussed essay published in 1974/75, Brathwaite did offer, if only fleetingly, a more expansive conceptualization of creolization as "a socio-cultural description and explanation of the way the four main culture-carriers of the region: Amerindian, European, African and East Indian: interacted with each other and with their environment to create the new societies of the New World" (1974, 274). East Indians drop out of this theorization soon after and African creolization unfolds at the expense of Indigenous histories and cultures (Jackson 2012). Nevertheless, Brathwaite's scholarship remains vital in conversations on creolization and, as Veronica Gregg observes, continues to offer a discursive space for scholars' agreements and disagreements with his arguments (2002, 149).

Verene Shepherd and Glen Richards observe that the publication of Sidney Mintz and Richard Price's *An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past* (1976) set the stage for subsequent debates between scholars who, like Mintz and Price, understand creole cultures as new creations and those like Mervyn Allen and many Caribbean linguists who stressed "cultural continuity between Africa and the Caribbean and (advanced) Afrogenesis as an explanation of many of the cultural patterns described as Creole" (Shepherd and Richards 2002, xiii). Brathwaite, Shepherd and Richards "came down firmly and unapologetically on the side of Afrogenesis" while "the strongest rejection of the Afrogenetic thesis [came] from the French Caribbean in the form of the concept of creolite" (xiii).

In their 1989 text, *Eloge de la Créolité* [*In Praise of Creoleness*], Martinican novelists Raphael Confiant and Patrick Chamoiseau and Guadeloupean linguist Jean Bernabé declared, "Neither Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians, we proclaim ourselves Creoles" (1990, 886). For these authors, creoleness was "the *interactional or transactional* aggregate of Caribbean, European, African, Asian, and Levantine cultural elements united on the same soil by the yoke of history" (891). Even as they see creoleness as the annihilation of false universality, monolingualism and discourses of purity the authors are careful to clarify that it is neither a uniform process nor a homogenous identity. Rather it is a "double process" that involves "the adaptation of Europeans, Africans and Asians to the New World on the one hand, and on the other hand, the cultural confrontation of these peoples within the same space, resulting in a mixed culture called Creole" (894). Confiant, Chamoiseau and Bernabé's conception of creoleness aspires towards a geographic expansiveness that exceeds the immediate context of its emergence, the French Caribbean, as the foundation for political solidarities. As they explain, Caribbean creoles enjoy a double solidarity: first, a Caribbean solidarity with people of the archipelago irrespective of cultural differences and second, "a Creole solidarity" with all African, Mascarene, Asian and Polynesian peoples who share in the experience of creoleness (894).

As a manifesto, a programmatic assertion of creole identity rooted in testimony rather than theory, *Eloge* has been the subject of both praise and scrutiny. The créolité movement as such has been critiqued by Mary Gallagher who identifies a central paradox in the movement, a "tension between its visionary claims and its revisionist perspective, between its particularistic retrospection and its globalist pretensions" (2010, 98). The latter, she says, is especially evident in their assertion that beyond the plantation system that enabled

creolization, "the entire world is approaching a state of creoleness in that every people and every culture is increasingly entering into relation with others" (2010, 98). Shalini Puri too calls attention to the ways in which the créolistes' seemingly global gaze ultimately remains circumscribed by French ideology and colonial history (2004, 36). Writing specifically about *Eloge*, Gallagher (2010) critiques the historicist frame in which the manifesto places the créolité movement. A teleology in which Caribbean identity moves from negritude (marked by ideas of essence), through antillanité (concerned with the contingencies of existence), to creoleness (where essence tussles with process), she argues, leaves out Glissant's later work that explores creolization more deeply than the créolité movement.

Much like Brathwaite and the créolistes, many of whom were Glissant's students, for Glissant creolization named the production of identities facilitated by the specificities of the New World context. Creolization, he argued, was a process of becoming, a deliberate movement away from the idea of origins: a synthesis of elements, rather than a process of bastardization, in which each element was enriched by the interaction (1989, 8). In this declaration, Lorna Burns reads a direct reference to Glissant's relationship with the negritude movement, more specifically his move away from its principles to suggest creolization, instead, "as a mixed identity that refuses to solidify into a specified fixed model" (2009, 101). Burns further argues that this feature of Glissant's philosophy distinguishes it from Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant's idea of créolité as the successor of both negritude and Glissant's antillanité (Caribbeanness). Even though the créolistes and Glissant may agree in their critique of negritude, they diverge in their conceptualization of creoleness, especially the former's insistence on it "as an achieved state of being." Such a view, however, repeats "a foundationalist politics of identity that is logically equivalent to the Old World identities that are being renounced" (Bongie 1998, 64). Glissant thus emphasizes that creolization is not "a halfway between two "pure" extremes" but the "impossibility of legitimate lineages, pure racial origins, or reified cultural affiliation" (Burns 101-102).

Beyond the European-African Encounter: Creolization's Omissions

With the exception of the créolistes to some degree, the discussion of creolization rehearsed so far confirms Percy Hintzen's observation that "for the most part, the indigenous and diaspora communities with cultural and racial origins outside of Africa and Europe remain, in representation and practice, outside of Creole reality" (2002, 99). How might the conversation about creolization shift were we to turn our attention from the dominant and subordinate group dynamics to lateral relations between different historically marginalized and subjugated groups that shared space in the plantation colonies of the Caribbean? In engaging this question, Viranjini Munasinghe (2006), Rhoda Reddock (1998), Patricia Mohammed (2002), and Aisha Khan (2004), among others, call attention to the historical and ideological circumstances that led these subjugated groups, particularly East Indians, to cultivate deeply complex relationships––irreducible to easy acceptance or rejection––to the idea of racial and cultural mixing.[1]

Viranjini Munasinghe critiques the differential treatment of East Indians in the key texts of Caribbean creolization. For instance, she highlights how in *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica: 1770- 1820* (1971) and in *Contradictory Omens* (1974), Brathwaite presents East Indians as late entrants in Caribbean society who were not only external to the creolization process but who also changed the trajectory of Creole society into a plural one.

He thus ends up reifying the idea "that foundational actors have exclusive rights to the creolization process itself" (2006, 555). Again, Stuart Hall's invocation of "présence africaine, présence europeene, and présence americaine" (the African, European and American presence) in the Caribbean has no room for the Asian presence (2010, 30). It is, however, subsumed within the African presence, as evident in Hall's admission that the présence africaine is not always African in a geographical sense but includes "the powerful voices of the East Indian community" who share similar experiences of dispossession (30). Despite Hall's admission that these communities share a rather volatile relationship, his heuristic model of Caribbean society does not account for Asian presence and participation in creolization (Kabir 2020, 177).

If Munasinghe critiques the representation of East Indians within theories of creolization, Aisha Khan offers an account of how the relationship between Indo- and Afro-Caribbeans (Trinidadians, specifically) have in fact been represented in both colonial and postcolonial discourse. The dominant narrative about this relationship has been one of antagonism "locally interpreted as inherent 'racial' and sometimes 'cultural incompatibility'" (2004, 165). Taking a historical view of such a mode of representation, Khan explains that by the time Indian laborers arrived in Trinidad in the mid-nineteenth-century, Trinidad "was a society already structured by race and class hierarchies" (2004, 172). Indians were not only seen as economic threats to newly emancipated Africans but also "cultural oddities in their garb, their languages (primarily Bhojpuri, but other as well), their cuisines, their forms of social organization (kinship, marriage), and their cosmologies" (2004, 170). This process was hardly one-sided and in response Indians turned "to the discursive weapons at their disposal too: the extant forms of colonial racism against Afro-Trinidadians" (2004, 170). In mobilizing the idea of Indians' inherent racial and caste bias against Afro-Creoles, the dominant view of race relations ignores a range of material factors such as economic competition and lack of mobility on the plantation that could have had serious implications for these groups' ability to mix with one another (Diptee 2000; Khan 2004). Puri offers the useful reminder that colonial claims about the lack of interaction between Indians and Africans depended on ignoring legislation "that was intended precisely to halt processes of cultural hybridization that were generating cross-ethnic imagined communities at the popular level" (2004, 44). Introduced as "buffers" between emancipated African peoples and European planters, the smooth functioning of the plantation was contingent on keeping Asians (Chinese and eventually Indians) separate from other racialized groups (Lowe 2015). The proliferation of ordinances in the nineteenth century aimed at regulating these groups' cultural practices is but one instance of how the colonial government sought to achieve this goal.[2]

Both Khan and Puri argue that despite colonial insistence on the lack of mixing between Indians and Africans, they did in fact creolize. Khan notes that the presence of the colloquial term "dougla," which refers to people of mixed African and Indian heritage in the Anglophone Caribbean lexicon coupled with the presence of "Mixed" as an official category in the Trinidad census "should both serve as good indications that there was more going on than what was apparent to the colonial gaze, and, later, than what Indos themselves would acknowledge" (2004, 171-172). This final comment about Indians' own hesitation about acknowledging mixed identities is crucial as it reveals certain sections of the community's investment in the discourse of social and racial purity which was seen to be under threat in the multiracial plantation colony. Extending this conversation further and offering the sobering reminder

that creolization may not always invite triumphalist analyses, Patricia Mohammed argues that the term creole carried pejorative connotations for the Indian community for whom it was "synonymous with the absorption of Black culture at the expense of one's own" (2002, 130). The mixed-race figure of the "dougla," however, serves as affirmation of racial mixing. At the same time, colonial anxieties around such racially indeterminate figures reveals its transgressive potential. As Puri explains, "if the 'Indian' and 'African' are discursively held apart by a series of stereotypical oppositions, then the figure of the dougla becomes an interesting site for the collision of classifications, for negotiations over the dougla's racial 'value' and place in a racially hierarchized society, and for the disruption of the notions of racial purity upon which racial stereotypes depend" (2004, 192). Beyond racial mixing, East Indians entered the "social space of Creole organization" through a range of other processes including intermarriage, religious conversion as well as the adoption of Creole style and tastes (Hintzen 2002, 99). While the scholars discussed here have focused on some of these avenues of creolization, Veronica Gregg (2002), Sarah Lawson Welsh (2019) and Candice Goucher (2015), among others, have extended the analysis of creolization to the sphere of food and alimentary practices.

Scholarship on creolization not only highlights avenues through which subjugated communities mixed and interacted with one another, but also underscores the necessity of attending to varying degrees of proximity and distance, acceptance and disavowal that these communities entertained towards ideas of social and cultural boundary crossing. Shona Jackson's *Creole Indigeneity: Between Myth and Nation in the Caribbean* (2012)shifts the terms of the conversation to focus instead on the role and place of Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean within discourses of creolization. If Mimi Sheller summarizes becoming creole as a process of achieving indigeneity through the cultivation of attachment to a new place of belonging, Jackson's critique illuminates one of the key modes through which such belonging is cultivated as well as its implications for displaced Indigenous Peoples in Guyana. Jackson argues that creoles (an identity category that encompasses all people of African and Indian descent in her analysis) indigenize through claims upon land legitimized through labor. The postcolonial state, understood to be "the product of the labor of the enslaved and indentured in the Caribbean" is thus designated "an ethnic inheritance for Creoles, not for Indigenous Peoples" (2012, 4). Such a process extends the subordination of Indigenous Peoples that was foundational to the establishment of the plantation complex, in the postcolonial era. Whether descendants of enslaved peoples and indentured servants can be unequivocally called "settlers" as Jackson does, remains a fraught question. Her argument, however, is most persuasive in the way it illuminates material and ideological continuities between the colonial and postcolonial moments that center on the material and discursive erasure of Indigenous Peoples.

Not unlike Munasinghe's critique of the representation of East Indians within discourses of creolization, Jackson too shines a light on the treatment of Indigenous Peoples and their histories in seminal works in the field. In Edward Brathwaite's "Timehri" she sees an elaboration of the same logic of creole belonging through labor that shapes postcolonial Guyana, only this time it is intellectual labor that "secures creole belonging in the colony" (2012, 50). In this essay, Brathwaite's analysis of African and Amerindian interculturation is routed through a discussion of the writer Wilson Harris and artist Aubrey Williams, for whom the source of artistic inspiration was "Amerindian" and not African. Brathwaite claims that

Williams' work illuminated the "primordial nature" of Amerindian and African cultures and that spending time with the Warrau Indians had placed Williams "in a significant continuum" with their ancient art, suggesting that he was able to make it visible to others through his own work. Jackson reads in this an assertion of Creole mediation through intellectual labor––"indigenous people must be mediated by the intellectual who makes it visible in the "Word" with his intellectual labor" (2012, 50). While this section focuses primarily on critiques of the exclusion of East Indians from the conception of creole society, recent scholarship is thinking creatively through the possibilities of cultural, political, racial, and affective alliances across racialized communities beyond the lexicon of creolization.[3]

Creolization in the Indian Ocean World

Scholarship on creolization in the Indian Ocean reveals continuities with the Caribbean on the one hand, and on the other, demonstrates how the concept is expanded upon, revised, and transformed by the specific history of the region. While islands in the Indian Ocean world share the history of European colonization, the plantation complex, slavery, and indentureship with the Caribbean, the history of cultural exchange in the region predates the arrival of Europeans. Thus, understanding creolization in the Indian Ocean, as Françoise Vergès points out, necessitates close attention to a history of "encounter between individuals and groups already transformed by conquest and exchanges, coming from cultures as diverse as the cultures of Madagascar, the Comoros islands, Mozambique, and the south of India" (2007, 137). Vergès and Carpanin Marimoutou describe Reunion Island, for instance, as one "where History has thrown together Malagasy, Africans, Comorans, Indians, Chinese, Vietnamese, Malays, Europeans and French, atheists, Catholics and Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus, animists and polytheists" (2012, 6).

Not unlike islands in the Caribbean, the arrival of indentured servants on Reunion Island, their clashes with emancipated African peoples and their desire to distinguish themselves from the Black population was coterminous with their adoption of creole ways of living (Vergès 2007, 144). On the island of Mauritius (that has its own history of successive Dutch, French, and British colonization), where all inhabitants are descendants who arrived at different times over the past three centuries from France, China, Africa, Madagascar, and India, the cultures of all ethnic groups have been "culturally creolized" (Eriksen 2007, 157). The transformation of the Bhojpuri language spoken by many Indo-Mauritians, through the influence of other languages to such a degree as to be unrecognizable to modern speakers of Bhojpuri in Bihar, is one of many such examples. At the same time, the transformation of Sino-Mauritians' religious practices to Catholicism and their language to Creole while retaining aspects of their traditional kinship organization, material culture, rituals and family ties in East Asia underscores the fact that creolization is neither static nor homogenous within or across communities. Eriksen's observation that despite the persistence of cultural creolization throughout Mauritian society, "it is chiefly the Mauritians of African and/or Malagasy descent who are classified locally as Creoles," is a reminder of the gap between quotidian practices of cultural mixing and formal claims to creole identity (2007, 157). Claims like these emerge out of essentialist thinking, which in the Mauritian context takes the form of assertions by Creoles that "they are the only *vrai Mauriciens*, real Mauritians," the only group to have emerged from the soil of Mauritius. This, while different from attempts to anchor creole identity in an African past, nonetheless is an attempt to "fix and standardize a collective identity" (174).

Claims to Creole identity are nonetheless enacted by those deemed formally outside of it through a variety of quotidian practices including speaking Kreol (Eriksen 2007, 161). In a comment reminiscent of Aisha Khan's observations about Indians in Trinidad, Eriksen notes that Indo-Mauritian communities, especially North Indian Hindus, North Indian Muslims and Tamils continue to share a fraught relationship to Creole and Western languages such as English and French because of its perceived implications for these communities' "cultural purity"(159). Efforts to purify cultural forms seen as "contaminated" thus contribute to cultural decreolization and the entrenchment of boundaries. Ananya Jahanara Kabir however draws attention to the fact that public memorialization projects in the Indian Ocean showcase "the arrival and assimilation of Indians and other demographic groups from Asia" (2020, 181). In this, she reads an "Indian Ocean answer to the exclusions of creolité as a Caribbean identity poetics" (182). At the same time, Kabir is careful to note the "seductive pull of the politics of populism and nativism" that have emerged from the Indian heartland and gained traction globally, including in many recognized sites of creolization (187).

Kabir's scholarship on creolization seeks to illuminate connections between the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds through close attention to cultural productions and embodied practices. For instance, in her analysis, the dance form of quadrille offers "an embodied theory of creolization" across these ocean worlds (2020, 136). More recently, Kabir (2022) has shifted the conversation on creolization from these spaces to the Indian subcontinent. While acknowledging that "creolization" is not a concept customarily applied to the material or literary culture" of India, she makes a case for "Creole Indias" as an analytical and historical category that calls attention to the littoral enclaves where dense inter-imperial exchanges happened both during and before British ascendancy in the region. Routed through an analysis of Franco-Tamil author Ari Gautier's novel *Le thinnai*, enclaves carved out of continental littorals, such as Pondicherry, emerge as "sites where a plurality of possible agents can produce the unpredictable linguistics and social formations characteristic of creolization" (2022, 204). Excavating avenues of cultural exchange between India and the Dutch, French, Portuguese, and the Danes as well as the implications of these exchanges for Indian identity in the present currently informs Kabir's collaboration with Gautier through the cultural platform called "Le Thinnai Kreyol" that they cofounded in 2020.

A Creolizing Globe?: Conclusion

Crucial in these conversations unfolding in different parts of the world is a deep recognition of the material conditions under which processes of creolization take place. Mintz's call to study creole identities "comparatively and differentially" especially resonates here (1971, 487). Despite the call for situated analyses of creolization, what has often followed, Stephan Palmié argues, is a blurring of modern and historical usages of the term and its meanings, including the erasure of regional differences (2010, 53). Another troubling move away from such specificity, one that amplifies a tension between universalism and historical particularism, to use Palmié's phrase, involves a decontextualized, generalist use of the term creolization. As Mimi Sheller points out, from the 1990s onwards creolization began to be used "to refer to *any* encounter and mixing of dislocated cultures, divorced from any connection to the legacies of transatlantic slavery and without citation of the Caribbean theorists who developed the concept" (2020, 283). She presents anthropologists Ulf Hannerz and James Clifford's use of creolization to name contemporary processes of cultural exchange and

globalization as case studies of this tendency. Palmié similarly comments on anthropologists' tendency to extrapolate "localized and historically situated social usages (including more restricted scholarly abstractions thereof) and elevate them to the status of generalized descriptive or analytical instruments" (2010, 50). Sheller asks,

> If creolization has its origins in Caribbean cultures of resistance, in the survival of enslavement and colonial plantation systems, and in movements of decolonization, in what sense can postmodern metropolitan culture possibly share in this dynamic? (2020, 286)

This de-historicization of creolization, its consumption in mainstream culture ultimately strips it of its political edge, theoretical complexity, and its oppositional meanings (273, 284).

This essay tracks the emergence of creolization as a framework for understanding the complex processes of cultural change that accompanied and persisted beyond the colonial encounter in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean world. Vital to this conversation is the recognition of creolization as a process rather than a stable, reified identity category. If on the one hand, scholars have mobilized it to understand and critique the power dynamics that marked the colonial encounter between Africans and Europeans in the Caribbean, they have also expanded the contours of this analysis to illuminate the processes of interculturation and perhaps even acculturation that took place between subjugated communities, such as peoples of Indian and African descent. At the same time, they have also illuminated how concepts such as creoleness have been deployed to maintain ethnic boundaries. As a vital site from where creolization has been theorized, the Indian Ocean world reveals the necessity of expanding both the conceptual frame and the temporal brackets of the concept as studied from the vantage point of the Caribbean.

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[1] Similarly, Christine Ho (1989), Joyce Johnson (1997) and Anne-Marie Lee-Loy (2010) have examined the Chinese community's role and experience within Caribbean creole society.

[2] For extended discussions of these ordinances, see Khan (2004), Puri (2004) and Munasinghe (2006).

[3] See Goffe (2019) on Afro-Asian relations in the context of the Caribbean and Cordis (2019) on blackness and indigeneity in Guyana.

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How to Cite

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The acronym BRICS comprises the nations of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa which represent the five major emerging economies; that is, the countries in the Global South which had the biggest potential for economic growth. According to 2019 World Bank data, these five countries collectively represent approximately 41% of the world's population, 30% of the world's geographic area, 24% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and 16% of international trade. The term was originally coined in 2001 by economist Jim O'Neill to describe the countries in the Global South that had the biggest potential for economic growth. His main thesis was that these nations would grow to dominate global growth. Realizing their potential to form a formidable economic bloc and strengthen the exchange of resources, technology, and skills, these countries moved to formalize their relations in 2006. The original acronym 'BRIC' excluded South Africa, which was added in 2010. Since establishing a formal coalition, the BRICS have swiftly strengthened financial ties, expanded diplomatic relations, and advocated for more prominent roles in global political economy. Their goals are to influence international affairs so that Global South countries can participate more equitably in global geopolitics and international markets.They have repeatedly positioned themselves in support of reforming global governance institutions such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to give a greater voice to Global South nations. Therefore, they have come to symbolize the growing power of emerging economies to potentially impact the global economic and political order. Although the coalition is criticized for being too informal and heterogeneous for continual success, these characteristics are often represented as points of strength rather than an obstacle to future cooperation. The BRICS continue to embark on numerous joint initiatives to achieve their goals.

Origins of the BRICS

The Origin of an Idea. The concept of BRIC nations originated from a series of economic essays by Goldman Sachs economists. In 2001, Jim O'Neill identified Brazil Russia, India, and China as countries in the Global South that collectively had the biggest potential for economic growth, thereby coining the term "BRIC" (O'Neill 2001, 1). The crux of his thesis was that these Global South countries were growing at such a fast pace that their economies would dominate global economic growth in 10 years. O'Neill anticipated that China and India would grow to be the dominant global suppliers of manufactured goods and services. He predicted that Brazil and Russia would supply raw materials to them, thereby making Brazil and Russia the dominant global suppliers of raw materials (O'Neill 2001). He added that with greater cooperation, the economic interdependence of the four countries would inevitably produce the first formidable economic bloc made up of Global South countries. In a follow-up

2003 essay, his colleagues Dominic Wilson and Roopa Purushothaman corroborated these projections, further suggesting that the BRIC economies would in fact surpass existing global economic powers' wealth by 2050, due to low labor and production costs. Whilst some analysts criticized the Goldman Sachs papers as overenthusiastic projections, they did succeed in changing perceptions of financial analysts, investors, and policymakers worldwide about the financial strength of emerging markets (Pant 2013; Stuenkel 2015; Wilson and Purushothaman 2003).

Shifting Economic Power. The O'Neill (2001) and Wilson and Purushothaman (2003) economic papers compelled analysts to take note of the transition that was taking place in the global economy. The global world order that emerged from the meetings at Bretton Woods in the aftermath of World War II established the current international monetary system and supporting institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Largely comprised of Global North countries, policymakers relegated Global South countries to the margins of global monetary system. The emergence of the BRIC economies at the start of this century pointed to a change in this status quo, in which economic wealth concentrated in the Global North was increasingly moving to the Global South (Cutrera 2020; Pant 2013). The Goldman Sachs papers projected that the increasing economic importance of the BRICs would consequently lead to their greater influence in international fiscal and monetary policies. Therefore, O'Neill's suggestion called for the current economic powers to progressively include the BRIC countries in global fiscal decision-making coalitions and institutions: "world policymaking forums should be re-organized and in particular, the G7 should be adjusted to incorporate BRIC representatives" (2001, 1). This recommendation underscored the inadequacies of an exclusionary Bretton Woods global world order long criticized in the Global South for serving the interests of powerful corporations and wealthy elites. Characterized by the promotion of free-trade, open-borders for investment, privatization of resources and an end to social safety nets, the current neo-liberal world order results in uneven and unequal trade. Its critics contend that this world order exacerbates global inequality, fails to mitigate extreme poverty, and leaves fate of the majority of the world at the mercy of the free-market system that serves the interests of wealthy elites and powerful corporations in the global North. The BRICs, positioned at the forefront of pending shifts in the balance of power thereby grew to represent the potential of the Global South to change the global monetary system and their marginalization within this system (Harvey 2005; Stuenkel 2015).

Challenging Power Relations. The Goldman Sachs economic papers determined that a shift in economic power would inevitably lead to BRIC countries having greater influence in international fiscal and monetary policymaking. This implied that that economic power would generate political power, thereby representing a significant change to countries currently dominating global governance institutions. They suggested that the real GDP growth in the BRICs would rival and eventually exceed those of the Group of Seven (G7), an informal political alliance of seven countries which comprise the world's strongest economies: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States (US) (O'Neill 2001; Pant 2013). [1] These Global North countries grew to dominate the global political economy, in part due to the structure of the global monetary system that emerged from Bretton Woods. However, based on economic indicators like GDP growth rates, GDP per capita, and population size, the BRIC countries now stood to challenge their economic dominance,

subsequently, their political influence. As such, the papers projected that the BRIC countries would eventually surpass the economic and political power of G7 (Wilson and Purushothaman 2003). This would signal a dramatic challenge to global geopolitics because the BRIC countries would have greater influence in global governance institutions and international affairs.

For many, the BRICs represent a challenge to the dominance of US-led Global North coalitions on the international stage (Cutrera 2020). Analysts point to the declining capacity of the United States to provide stability on the global stage and the opportunity of the BRICs to fill this power gap (Cutrera 2020). However, critics remain skeptical of the BRICs capacities to fill any power gap. They contend that despite the ascent of the BRICs, they may not necessarily displace the G7, the institutions they dominate nor the neo-liberal policies they advocate. Noteworthy are arguments suggesting that the BRICs themselves are simply the new imperialists and will maintain an exploitive relationship with the rest of the South. In this vein, observers argue that the BRICs represent an alternative option to the current unipolar global governance system and a chance to make it more equitable, rather than a fundamental change to that system (Stuenkel 2015, 167; Wallerstein 2015). They further highlight that the BRICs have not indicated an intention to change the system of neo-liberal capitalist accumulation because they are dependent on it and strive to benefit from it, not overhaul it (Bond 2015). Therefore, critics contend that the BRIC's preference is to keep strategic relationships with the United States and other Global North countries. Regarding regional politics, critics question the respective regional leadership claims of the BRICS, including South Africa (Luce 2015; Pant, 2013,). Regardless of such misgivings, the BRICs have come to symbolize the growing power of emerging economies to potentially impact the global economic and political order.

Inter-State Coalition Forming

Consolidating Cooperation.Realizing their potential for greater economic and political power through strategic cooperation at the start of this century, the BRICs moved swiftly to create a formal platform, facilitating the creation of an economic bloc. By 2006, their foreign ministers started holding meetings corresponding with the annual United Nations General Assembly with regards to crystallizing their role in the global economy (Cutrera 2020). Their inaugural high-level summit was held in Russia in 2009, where the heads of states of members agreed to strengthen financial ties, increase diplomatic relations, and advocate for more prominent roles in multilateral organizations. In a joint statement issued during this initial summit, they called for "a more democratic and just multipolar world order based on the rule of international law, equality, mutual respect, cooperation, coordinated action, and collective decision-making of all states" (BRIC 2009). In line with their desire for a representative alliance, they invited South Africa to join late in 2010, thereby coining the currently used acronym, "BRICS" (Stuenkel 2015). South Africa's inclusion underscores the broader political aspirations of the BRICS. While South Africa was not named in the original thesis, it was used as an example for Global South economies in Wilson and Purushothaman's original essay. South Africa's formal inclusion therefore represented the BRICs commitment to strengthening relationships throughout Africa. As such, the BRICS grew not only to symbolize a fairer, more equitable geopolitical system but also a formidable coalition. Collectively, they represent roughly 41% of the global population, 41% of its currency

reserves, 30% of its geographic area, 24% of its GDP, and 16% of global trade (Ministry of External Affairs 2021; Ricceri 2015; Vanaik 2015). It is noteworthy that when O'Neill coined the term BRICs, it was not his intention to suggest that they institutionalize.[2] Unlike the other groupings, they found it prudent to take ownership of the acronym, evolving into a diplomatic coalition.

Creating Formal Governance Structures*.* The BRICS signaled clear intentions to institutionalize their cooperation, albeit currently operating like a diplomatic partnership rather than a chartered organization. Creating formal structures meant that rather than the BRICS remaining an analytical concept, their aims would be implemented through a formal body facilitating South-South cooperation (Stuenkel 2015).[3] They maintain a physical headquarters, *BRICS Towers*, in Shanghai. Instead of the conventional permanent secretariat, general assembly, or staff, they operate a joint "virtual secretariat": a website portal where they articulate their joint position statements, agreements, and goals from their meetings and summits (Ricceri 2018). [4] Since its inception, the BRICS have also consistently held meetings where they coordinate activities and set their collective agenda. These summits are chaired and hosted annually by member states on a rotational basis. In the early stages, many of the BRICS declarations focused on international trade, economic and financial cooperation with little sign of interest in cooperation in other areas. Increasingly, their declarations expanded to include cooperation in peace, security, development, and international affairs (Cutrera 2020). These broad interests reflect each member country's contribution, as agenda-setting is largely contingent on the summit's host country. Such flexibility in group-decision making and cooperation distinguishes the BRICS from traditional multilateral organizations primarily because it makes them easily accessible to regional organizations who relate to the group's concern for transregional issues like international terrorism, organized crime, and cyber-security. The BRICS' informal structure makes them flexible. which is important for a heterogenous group with diverse interests.

The Challenges of Heterogeneity.Although heterogeneity has its advantages, significant differences exist between the BRICS, which presents challenges to cohesiveness in reaching mutual goals. Critics argue that a lack of geographic, economic, and political cohesion undermines prospects of cooperation. As a transcontinental body, the absence of a regional focus limits the effectiveness of their cooperation as does geo-location due to physical distance (Cutrera 2020; Pant 2013). Critics have also pointed to the vast economic differences between member states, highlighting the unequal development rates and resources between member countries. For example, China and India's growth vastly outpaces that of Russia, Brazil, and South Africa; surpassing predicted growth rates, China alone grew to become the world's second largest economy by 2010. In contrast, South Africa's economy is smaller relative to all other BRICS and several industries there have been decimated by low-cost Chinese exports (Pant 2013). Politically, critics point to the conflicting interests, values and power levels which makes cooperation challenging (Pant 2013). For example, conflicts may arise over how to reform the UNSC since China and Russia hold permanent seats. Critics argue that such nuances and lack of geographical, political, and economic cohesion means that they are doomed for failure (Pant 2013; Ricceri 2018). They also argue that basic political-economic incompatibility rather than organizational challenges will continue to present challenges for them to function as a truly powerful new force (Vanaik 2015). However, despite criticism regarding characteristics like heterogeneity and the

informal nature of the coalition, these are also often presented as points of strength rather than obstacles because it allows for inclusivity and the potential to expand in new directions and into new areas. As such, the BRICS are also often treated as an epitome of twenty-first century international cooperation (Cutrera 2020; Stuenkel 2015)

BRICS In Action

Having evolved into a diplomatic coalition between members states on issues of common interest, cooperation between the BRICS has broadened in a variety of areas. This includes cooperation in health, trade, agriculture, statistics, technology, science, academia, judiciary, cultural festivals, and defense.[5]

Political Sphere.The BRICS have repeatedly acted in concert regarding issues of international affairs such as global security, US dominance, and prioritizing socio-economic development. Although they largely support the central role of global organizations such as the UN in global decision-making, they have repositioned themselves to reform these institutions. For example, signaling their aspirations to play a greater role in international peace and security, the BRICS countries positioned themselves to all hold seats in the United Nations Security Council in 2012 (Cutrera 2015; Pant 2013). They have also stood in opposition of international interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign countries. For example, they opposed the Global North's intervention in Libya in 2011 and US airstrikes against Saddam Hussein in 2003 (Pant 2013). As such, they are often regarded as representing the Global South. They have initiatives actively aimed at engaging with regional organizations in Africa, Asia, and South America such as the BRICS Outreach and BRICS Plus (Cutrera 2019; Ricceri 2018).

Economic Sphere.The catalyst for the BRICS cooperation was reforming the global economic system, and they have made strides towards redefining it. They have jointly blocked policies detrimental to the economic growth of emerging economies such as fighting environmental emissions caps, promoted by the Global North, in 2009 (Pant 2013).[6] They are also becoming a new source of international economic growth, trade, and investment flows. This includes establishing initiatives like the BRICS Business Council in 2013 to facilitate business investment between member countries. Their major accomplishment is forming the New Development Bank (NDB) in 2014 to address challenges that Global South countries face in receiving infrastructure and development project financing necessary for increasing economic growth. Creating the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) in 2014 to provide safeguards to for potential short-term liquidity pressures for member states is another notable development (Stuenkel 2015).

Social & Human Development Sphere.Contributing towards socio-economic and human development projects is a core goal of the BRICS; notably, the NDB was created to provide funding for sustainable development projects. However, they have been recognized for building a fairer development system through other ways as well (Ricceri 2018). They have cooperated by working together on mitigating climate change, public health concerns, injustice in the legal system, food insecurity and other human development projects. This is mostly guided by supporting global initiatives like the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (Lobato 2018; Stuenkel 2015).Other notable projects include launching a BRICS Film festival (2016), academic forum (2009), and BRICS Think Tank (2013), which creates a network of

experts to develop and assess policy options. Despite these strides, the persistence of inequality in the Global South, particularly within South Africa and Brazil, continues to cast doubts as to whether the policies put forth by BRICS are progressive enough to translate to real change (Vanaik 2015).

The BRICS have been lauded for these and other projects, which help strengthen their position in the Global South and the international political economy. Other achievements that have been commended include inclusion in global economic alliances, such as the G20, a grouping of the twenty most powerful economies. They have also delivered on some economic objectives, such as developing the NDB and CRA, which provide tangible goods to the Global South as an alternative to Global North financing (Stuenkel 2015). Critics contend that despite this, the BRICS have made little progress towards achieving their goals and are failing to make a meaningful impact. They point to the BRICS failure to realize substantive structural reforms and policies. Additionally, they highlight their low trade integration, lack of coordination concerning priority issues, relationships with neighboring countries, and their missed opportunity to structure strategic cooperation agreements (Wallerstein 2015; O'Neil 2021; Prashad 2015). For example, they argue that despite G20 membership, the BRICS were unable to influence equitable distribution plan for vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic, which overwhelmed healthcare systems throughout the Global South (as in the Global North). Many attribute this to the BRICS embrace of neoliberal capitalism, which rejects social welfare programs, arguing that it hinders them from achieving their social and human development goals, which in turn impact their economies (O'Neil 2021; Vanaik 2015).

The Future of the BRICS

Although analysts will continue to debate whether, in its current iteration, the BRICS have the potential to make a significant political, economic, and social impact that will displace the current world order, many do agree that they have managed to seriously weaken it and lay the foundation for a multipolar world order (Stuenkel 2015; Wallerstein 2015). For example, during Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014, the shift to a multipolarism became evident through Global North's efforts to condemn and isolate Russia. China, Brazil, South Africa and India abstained from publicly endorsing a United Nations (UN) resolution condemning Vladimir Putin's Ukraine policy, instead, calling for a peaceful resolution without sanctions. BRICS members often decry the use of economic sanctions as a coercion tool and the unequal application of the principles of state sovereignty which they accuse of being tilted towards Global North interests. The BRICS have also been very critical of the Global North's unwillingness to intervene in some situations and eagerness to intervene in others. For example, South Africa has been very critical of North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) 2011 military intervention in Libya. Additionally, many of the BRICS all have separatist movements within their borders such as Kashmir (India), Tibet (China), Xinjiang (China) and Western Cape (South Africa). The BRICS' refusal to isolate a member state served as an example that although supporting state sovereignty, rather than simply accepting U.S.-led Global North hegemony, they would no longer be co-opted to supporting U.S. strategic interests (Stuenkel 2015: Weisbrot 2011).

It is unclear what Russia's 2022 invasion of the rest of Ukraine means for the future of the BRICS alliance as the events are still unfolding. Thus far, the BRICS have avoided directly censuring Russia though a UN resolution condemning the invasion: China, India and South

Africa abstained from condemning the Russians; Brazil voted in favor of the resolution but objected to economic sanctions. Due to the economic costs of the war for all, however, it is uncertain if Russia's unprecedented financial isolation will eventually break their alliance. At the time of writing, the group was exploring alternate channels for continued trade and finance with Russia, signaling a potential renewed commitment towards ensuring a multi-polar global financial system (Binder and Payton 2022). Regardless of their uncertain future, the BRICS began as an economic grouping for the purposes of investment projections at the start of the century, and the group quickly took ownership of the name, evolving into a formidable diplomatic coalition by the end of the first decade. Therefore, they will continue to represent a new era in South-South cooperation, North-South cooperation, as well as an irreversible shift in the global world order.

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[1] Historically, Russia has had the dual role of being an emerging economy as well as a member of the Global North and was thereby a member of the G8. Russia joined the G7 in 1998, and it was known as the G8 until 2014, when Russia's membership was suspended indefinitely, and the group reverted to its original name. Lamb, Zachary 2014. "The Group of 8 Industrialized Nations." New York: Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed September 1, 2021. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/group-eight-g8-industrialized-nationsb

[2] The BRICs was an analytical concept much like other acronyms used to describe other

fast-growing emerging markets coined by O'Neill such as MINTs, (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey) or MIKTs/MISTs – (Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea and Turkey). Pant, Harsh V. "The BRICS Fallacy." *The Washington Quarterly* 36 no3 (2013): 91-105. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2013.825552

[3] South-South cooperation refers to cooperation among developing countries in the Global South through exchanging resources, technology, knowledge in areas such as agricultural development, human rights, urbanization, health, climate change, etc. It is often presented as a positive exchange, yet it is also a contested term because such positive associations imply an assumption that South-South cooperation is absent of exploitation. Stuenkel, Oliver. *The BRICS and the Future of Global Order*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015.

[4] The BRICS joint website is: www.infobrics.org.

[5] *As articulated in* their position statements, the BRICS wish to cooperate in "the sociopolitical, economic, scientific, cultural and youth sphere" and they have indeed made steps towards such cooperation (BRICS 2015b).

[6] At the 2009 Copenhagen Summit on climate change, the BRICS blocked Global North countries from implementing limits on emissions that would be detrimental to countries trying to grow their economies. Pant, "The BRICS Fallacy", 93

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The concept of "coolitude" provides a creative and discursive framework for remembering and comprehending the dislocation and transformation expressed in the literature, art, music, and other creative work of descendents of indentured workers enmeshed in a global scheme of contract labor. As explicated in the work of Mauritian poet Khal Torabully and elaborated by a range of scholars and artists in the decades since, coolitude discourse has come to inform an array of cultural and creative expression in former sites of indenture and

their diasporas across the Global South. Beginning in the 1820s and continuing to 1920, the system of indenture transported millions of workers from South and East Asia — "coolies" in colonial jargon — to far-flung territories across the Global South. As a creative practice, coolitude draws on traumatic memories of the past to inform post-indenture identities, importantly referencing the centrality of creolization and cultural mixing in present-day notions of self and community. As an analytical perspective, a coolitudian approach moreover provides poetic context that informs histories of indenture and post-indenture along creolized trajectories in multicultural, postcolonial societies.

Indenture: Impetus for a Global Diaspora

Nienke Boer defines indenture as "the practice of transporting workers to perform labor in a different part of the world for a fixed period of time in return for passage and wages" (2019). Various schemes of indentured labor were employed in the era of European colonization as both an alternative and corollary to chattel slavery. In the British Empire in particular, slavery was gradually phased out until near-universal emancipation in 1838.[1] At this point, demand for labor from plantation colonies helped drive one of the largest sustained schemes of indentured labor in history. The British (and French from the 1840s-1880s) settled on India as its most reliable and plentiful source of labor in this period largely because their control over government and infrastructure made the process of recruiting and exporting workers relatively easy.[2] By choice or deception, millions of men, women, and children signed indenture contracts and were transported to agricultural and industrial estates across the Global South.[3]

In the British Empire, the largest beneficiaries of Indian indentured labor were Mauritius (about 455,000), Guyana (about 239,000), Durban (about 153,000), and Trinidad (about 150,000) (Northrup 1995, 53). Significant numbers were also transported to Fiji (about 61,000); Jamaica and other British Caribbean islands (about 50,000); East Africa (about 40,000); and various other locales (ibid.). Related schemes of indenture additionally took Indians to non-British colonies including Réunion (about 75,000); Suriname (about 35,000); and the French Caribbean (about 80,000) (Northrup 2000; Hassankhan 2014). In virtually all cases, Indian migrants were regarded as temporary residents of the colonies, this despite most foregoing return passage after their contracts had been fulfilled. This outsider status carried forward intergenerationally, resulting in Indians' marginalization and often outright exclusion in matters of national representation in the era of decolonization.

Beginning in the 1960s, ethnographers, historians, and other academics began centering research on Indian indentureship and its legacy (for example Laurence 1958; Klass 1961; Benedict 1961; Arya 1968; La Guerre 1974; Malik 1971; Mishra 1979; Quanda and Larbi 1979; Subramani 1979; Clarke 1986; Dabydeen and Samaroo 1987). This body of work in part resulted in greater recognition of Indian post-indenture culture and with it greater recognition of diasporic literature, visual art, music, dance, and other creative expression. It is from this context that the concept of coolitude emerged in the 1990s.

Coolitude's foundations in Négritude and Créolité

Coolitude inherits much of its discursive impact from movements that preceded it, namely *négritude* and *créolité*. While négritude writers recognized the irrevocable imprint of

Europeanness on Africa and the African diaspora, their work emphasized the common identity of all black people. In this sense, Aimé Césaire poignantly asks "Who am I? Who are we? What are we in this white world?" (translated in Diagne 2018). Négritude's influence was widespread and remains relevant in critical discourse on race and postcolonialism.

From the 1960s onward, critiques of négritude emerged largely from diasporic writers weary of négritude's Afrocentric politics, necessary in the period of decolonization yet conceptually limiting in the postcolonial era. One of the most structured and impactful critiques came in the Caribbean-centric concept of *Antillanité* ("Caribbeanness") developed by a group of Martinican intellectuals at the Institut Martiniquais d'Etudes established and led by Édouard Glissant. Largely rejecting négritude's emphasis on Africanisms as a basis of identity, Glissant and his compatriots instead emphasized the mixed ethnic and cultural foundations of the contemporary Caribbean. As the wellspring of intergenerational creole identities, the plantation was situated as a literal and metaphorical space where the "rhythms" of culture engage in an ongoing "pattern of encounter and synthesis" (Glissant 1999, 221–22).

Antillanitégained some currency among poets and academics, yet ultimately gave way to the broader concept of *créolité* in the 1990s. In their *Éloge de La Créolité*, Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant famously declared: "ni Européens, ni Africains, ni Asiatiques, nous nous proclamons Créoles" ("Not Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians, we proclaim ourselves to be Creoles") (1993, 13). Essentially an elaboration of Antillanité yet moving beyond it in important ways, créolité provides a theoretical frame for understanding creolization wherever and whenever. With its emphasis on *métissage* (cultural mixing) as a font of identity, créolité figured an important influence in Torabully's explication of coolitude.

Emergence of Coolitude

Torabully first laid out the fundamentals of coolitude in his book of poetry *Cale d'étoiles: Coolitude* (1992) (reissued by Seagull Books in English as *Cargo Hold of Stars* [2021], translated by Nancy Naomi Carlson). In this volume, Torabully both coins the term "coolitude" and poetically establishes the foundational coolitudian symbols of the ship, the voyage, and the plantation as central to an ever-disorienting yet ever-familiar "coolie"-centric oceanic memory. Torabully makes clear that this collective memory spans time and place. The ancestral trauma of dislocation, the treacherous journey across the sea, hardships upon arrival, and ongoing processes of creolization have direct impact on the present experience of post-indenture Indians around the world.

Torabully suggests this traumatic dislocation prompts a "*repli identitaire*," that is "an inward-looking identity" shaped by a ruptured orientation toward an increasingly distant and idealized India and progressively rooted orientations toward hostlands frequently ambivalent to Indian presence (Carter and Torabully 2002, 192). This therefore provides the impetus for creativities that give rise to rearticulated, reconstructed, and newly composed expressions of Indianness, creolization, and national identity. Moreover, this cultural memory finds new relevance in large secondary diasporas in North America and Europe where descendants of indenture face a sense of cultural invisibility (Malhi 2020). Speaking about her time growing up Indian Trinidadian in London, for example, Chandani Persaud laments, "You're never Indian enough to be considered Indian, and you're never Caribbean enough to be considered Caribbean" (Sivathasan 2019). Persaud's experience highlights the kinds of assumptions

encountered by those in the secondary diaspora whose creolized heritage fails to fit neat definitions of race and ethnicity, even in multicultural, cosmopolitan metropoles. As a way of grounding individual and collective identity, many descendants of indenture look to their ancestors' journey into indentureship as methphorical of their own lived experience in the Global North where the history and legacy of indentureship is virtually unkown (Sankar 2020).

In a similar way, *Cale d'étoiles* represents a very personal journey through Torabully's own heritage and sense of self. While his mother was Indian Mauritian, Torabully's father was an Indian Trinidadian sailor who was shipwrecked and eventually settled in Mauritius. As such, his parentage connects to India via a circuitous path indicative of the multivalent trajectories of the Indian labor diaspora. Indeed, Torabully brings his personal experience to bear in an overarching metaphor that focuses on the centrality of the ocean as home for indentureds and their descendants. The title of the book itself is a play on words: "cale" ("cargo hold") and "Khal" are homophones, making an implicit connection between the author's name and the memory of "coolies" as human cargo on ships bound for plantation colonies.

In an introductory statement to *Cale d'étoiles* Torabully writes that his exploration of coolitude is "to lay the first stone of my memory among all memories, my language among all tongues, my share of the unknown that numerous bodies and numerous stories have lodged over time in my genes and my islands" (2021, 10). He positions the practice of remembering, of plumbing the depths of his creole identity, both as an inward journey (one "lodged" in his "genes") and an outward one ("my memory among all memories"). Importantly, the vehicle for this multivalent voyage of remembering is the ship. In Torabully's poetics, the body metaphorically becomes the ship, a vessel that signifies the ancestral voyage while also carrying the memory of indenture into the present and future:

"Coolitude: because I am Creole by my rigging, Indian by my mast, European by my spar, Mauritian by my quest and French by my exile. I will always be elsewhere only within myself because I can only imagine my native land. My native lands?" (2021, 132)

Torabully's methodology recalls tenets of both négritude and créolité. In its insistence on remembering as a way of making sense of the present, *Cale d'étoiles* reflects Césaire's epic poem *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (*Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*), one of the foundational texts of négritude first published in 1939. Both feature an extended narrative, dwell on the necessity of the voyage, cultivate memories of "home," are written in French with some references to Krèyol, and explore the multivalent trajectories of the colonial experience.

Moreover, just as négritude writers appropriated the derogatory term *nègre* as an emblem of bondage to embody and overcome, so too does Torabully similarly aim to recuperate the insulting epithet "coolie" (Carter and Torabully 2002, 214–15).[4] Torabully therefore adapts the semiological and discursive methodologies explicated by Césaire, Glissant, and the créolitistes in analyses of creative expression arising from a global, archipelagic post-indenture diaspora.

Despite the apparent Indo-centricity of coolitude's subjects and symbols, Torabully takes great care to clarify that his use of the term "coolie," an identifier historically linked with Asian laborers within the European colonial system, is meant to encompass all people and

their descendants, regardless of ethnicity, who were or remain enmeshed in systems of exploitative labor (Torabully 2020).

"The term coolie like that of negro, has been used in the past, and continues even today to be used as an insult to the descendants of the overseas indentured labourers. I chose this word because the coolie was essentially the one who replaced the slave in the plantocratic society. The coolie's life-history, albeit in somewhat modified historical circumstances, resembled, in many aspects, that of the slave. The word dignifies this condition and aims to illuminate the plight of, to quote *Cale d'Etoiles-Coolitude*, 'les oubliés du voyage, ceux qui n'ont pas eu le livre de leur traversée' (the forgotten travelers, those who have no logbook to record their voyage)" (Carter and Torabully 2002, 144).

In other words, Torabully's methodology aims to enfold the symbolic, semantic, and poetic legacies of slavery and indenture under the rubric of coolitude. The term "coolie," he argues, at first indicated "an economic status" not an ethnic identity (2002, 144). Indeed, Torabully reminds that "coolies" were recruited from "China, Ethiopia, Brittany, even from Africa" and other places before colonialists settled on India as a primary source of indentured labor (ibid.). Essentially, Torabully looks to recast the concept of "coolie" as an encapsulation of creolization where European, African, Asian, and other places of origin collapse into one another complicating discrete ancestral origins while situating the voyage of becoming creole — or becoming "coolie" — as the central aspect of personal and collective identification.

Applications of Coolitude

While coolitude offers a methodology for framing studies of a range of cultural practices, it has been slow to gain widespread traction outside the burgeoning realm of indentureship studies. In this regard, coolitudian analyses have for the most part been employed in readings of Indian post-indenture literature, largely works written by descendents of indenture but also including literature that engages and responds to indenture in some way, for example Amitav Ghosh's novel *Sea of Poppies* (Lionnet 2015; Mulla 2019). In recent years, coolitude has also been applied to analyses of visual art (Carter and Flynn 2017) and other areas of creative expression including performance art, music, and film (Ballengee and Baksh 2020).

Véronique Bragard was among the first scholars to apply coolitude to readings of post-indenture literature. She highlights, for example, how writers of the 1950s and 1960s like V.S. Naipaul and Sam Selvon express "interest in their Indian heritage" but, like négritude writers of the same generation, largely focus on "their journey to the metropolis, the immigration experience" (1998, 99–10). Bragard suggests Selvon more than any other "should be read… as the precursor of coolitude in the Caribbean" since "his novels offer the reader a comprehensive picture of the life of second generation Indians coming to terms with themselves, acknowledging the past while considering the future in terms of creolization" (2008, 45–46). Selvon's nuanced portrait of Indian Trinidadian identities is evident throughout his oeuvre. Like in his first novel, *A Brighter Sun* (1952), some of his narratives are set in rural Trinidad and focus on the inner struggle between a distant India and rootedness in Caribbean creole society. Meanwhile, other works, like Selvon's most celebrated novel *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), narrate the experience of the West Indian diaspora abroad, in this way sublimating Indian Caribbean identity within the broader West Indian migrant experience. As

Torabully's poetics suggests, it is this recognition of the sometimes antithetical but often comfortable duality of Indian and creole identities that is fundamental to reading post-indenture creative expression from a coolitudian perspective.

A new generation of artists and scholars have embraced coolitude as an approach to their creative and academic work. Among others, Rajiv Mohabir has been at the forefront of this movement as both a poet and scholar. In his poetry collections *Acoustic Trauma* (2015), *The Taxidermist's Cut* (2016), and *The Cowherd's Son* (2017), Mohabir interrogates his ancestors' experience of indenture as foundational to his own post-indenture identity. Reflecting on his creative practice, Mohabir recounts in the essay "Coolitude Manifesto" (2018) how his encounter with coolitude helped give voice to concepts that run throughout his creative and scholarly work:

"When I first read *Coolitude: An Anthology of the Indian Labor Diaspora*, I was transformed. I accepted the trauma of my history as a dreamscape that shades my daily life… What was it like for my own ancestors Latchman and Sant Ram Mahraj to leave their homes, beset by economic dependence on a colonial system? When they landed in Guyana in 1891 and 1885 what did they see? What colors were the ocean? What songs did they sing aboard the ship? What of all my women ancestors that are not recorded in familial lore — what did they survive? What survives in us because of all of these people's strains and triumphs?"

Mohabir works to answer some of these questions in *I Even Regret Night: Holi Songs of Demerara* (2019), his translation of Lalbihari Sharma's *Damra Phag Bahar*, a book of original Bhojpuri- and Awadhi-languagepoems meant to be sung during Holi (or Phagwa). First published in 1916 once Sharma had returned to India, *Damra Phag Bahar* remains the only known work of literature written by an Indian indentured laborer in the Anglophone Caribbean. In *I Even Regret Night*, Mohabir edits, translates, and provides commentary on what amounts to a vivid recollection of indentureship in colonial British Guiana.

Critiques of Coolitude

Some scholars have been critical of coolitude's usefulness as a broad-reaching analytical and discursive frame. This perhaps extends from coolitude's parallels with Negritude and créolité. Brinda Mehta, for example, writes that coolitude is simply "an Indianized version" of négritude that lacks the political dimension so integral to the négritude movement of the late colonial period (2004, 56). Others have also suggested that, just as négritude's Afrocentricity worked to alienate other ethnicities, so too does coolitude's favoring of Indocentric semiology have the potential to alienate non-Indians (Puri 2004, 266; n39), this in turn perpetuating colonial-era racial divides rather than heal them as Torabully claims is an aim of his methodology (Carter and Torabully 2002, 150).

To the contrary, Torabully has taken many opportunities to explain that, despite its orientation toward the Indain labor diaspora, coolitude should be applicable to a much broader range of cultural expression. He argues, for example, that "the coolie symbolizes… the possibility of building a composite identity," one both free of specific ethnic identifications yet simultaneously emblematic of the cultural inclusivity intimated through the processes of creolization (Carter and Torabully 2002, 144). However, if this were indeed the case, there would be very little to separate the tenets of coolitude from those of créolité. In practice,

Torabully's claim to coolitude's breadth is difficult to parse when the weight of the epithet "coolie" is so inextricably linked with the Indian (and to a significant extent Chinese [Jung 2006]) labor diaspora. Indeed, as discussed above, much of the creative and scholarly work of coolitude is clearly centered on ideas central to the cultural memory and lived experience of indentured Indians and their descendants. While Torabully can rightly claim the initial explication of coolitude, it is this wider and more focused body of work that has come to define coolitude as a method for reflecting on post-indenture identities as well as a framework indebted to négritude and créolité that is useful in such analyses of the Indian indenture diaspora.

Relevance for the Global South

Torabully's work is written mainly in French, including numerous scholarly essays and twenty volumes of poetry. In turn, there is an important body of francophone literature engaging with Torabully and with coolitude more generally, this largely centered on texts emerging from Mauritius, Réunion, and their diasporas. However, an increasingly broad range of creative and scholarly writing on coolitude has been done in English, including two coolitude anthologies (Carter and Torabully 2002; Torabully and Carter 2021). The majority of this English-language commentary is centered on Indian Caribbean texts. However, an important strand of creative and scholarly work on indenture is focused on the Indian diaspora in Fiji. Historian Brij V. Lal was a key figure in initiating serious study of Indian indenture in Fiji, which helped spur interest in the history and legacy of Indian Fijian culture. From this context comes Vijay Mishra's concept of "girmit ideology," a notion that closely parallels coolitude but departs from it in important ways.[5] Mishra first outlined the tenets of girmit ideology in 1977, after which it gained some currency in studies of Fijian indenture as well as that of indenture elsewhere. Mishra has since further developed this framework in analyses of Indian diasporic literature (1992; 2007).

Both coolitude and girmit ideology grasp the voyage and the plantation as central icons of Indian diasporic identity. Coolitude seizes upon these as critical metaphors for the ongoing processes of creolization that began when Indians first entered into indenture. Girmit ideology similarly centers these iconic moments yet does so by highlighting the diaspora's continuities with India (or perhaps cultural survivals), its intergenerational trauma of dislocation, and its unending longing to return. In this sense, girmit ideology engages with the general notion of diaspora in a rather peculiar way. Mishra writes, "all diasporas are unhappy," comprising "people who do not feel comfortable with their non-hyphenated identities" (2007, 1). By contrast, coolitude is premised on the idea that those in diaspora can indeed find a sense of anchorage in the complex web of identities engendered by the intertwined legacies of colonization, indentureship, and creolization.

Artists and scholars throughout the Indian post-indenture diaspora have evoked coolitude in their creative practice and scholarly research. In this way, coolitude has become an increasingly relevant frame of reference for the Global South. Indeed, coolitude will likely be engaged more frequently by a new generation of interdisciplinary scholars working to map the trajectories of bound labor, especially in the Indian Ocean. For example, coolitude may prove useful for examining new kinds of inter-Asian migrant labor including Indian labor in the Persian Gulf region.

Just as négritude's critics argue that it over-simplifies and homogenizes the experience of blackness in different regions of the world, there is a similar danger associated with coolitude. The circumstances of indenture around the globe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were similar but not the same. Moreover, the lived experience of individual post-indenture communities are diverse, separated as they are by geography and differentiated political and social developments. Despite its limitations, coolitude nonethless provides a compelling and far-reaching coherency to the experiences of indentured laborers and their descendants across the globe. This is evidenced by the central icons of coolitude—the ship and the plantation—emerging as common tropes of post-indenture identities in popular and academic discourse, simultaneously representing the perilous middle passage, signaling a celebration of arrival, and serving as a powerful metaphor for the forging of new lives and new identities in diaspora.

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