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Abstract for Binghamherst 2008  
Euripides' *Bakkhai* and the Colonization of *Sophrosune*:  
Masters thesis, completed February 2008

The first section of this thesis was developed from two major papers I had written during my coursework for the degree. The first, entitled "Orientalism and Dionysos: a look at translations of Euripides' *Bakkhai*," was written for Edwin Genzler's Translation and Postcolonial Theory class in the spring of 2002. The second, "Postcolonial Greek: Hellenism and Identity in the Early Roman Empire," was written for Maria Tymoczko's Translation Theory and Practice class in the spring of 2007. Together, they argue that Greek literature is postcolonial in that it was used by the Roman Empire to certain ends, which resulted in its interpretation being influenced and changed by means of that Roman power and legacy throughout Western Europe, and that Euripides' *Bakkhai* in particular was misinterpreted for centuries as a result of that influence.

The second section of my thesis is a translator's note, which discusses the particular theory behind my translation strategy, as well as the choices I made concerning spelling, lines missing from the manuscript, et cetera. The third section of the thesis is the translation itself, on which I began in the fall of 2002 and finished this past summer.

The final section of this thesis is a commentary on the play itself. I have focused on the concepts of *sophrosune* (safemindedness) and *paideia* (education) around which to weave my analysis. The central idea is that the play serves as a lesson to the audience that *sophrosune* is part of Dionysos' sphere, and to deny the life-affirming nature of his ritual is to court danger—the danger of rigidity and oppression. The death of Pentheus, after he rejects this education despite Dionysos' best efforts to dissuade him, is merely an object lesson, not the

repudiation of Dionysos' worship and the Greek gods as a whole that previous generations have held it to be.