

PAPER CHOREOGRAPHY:

My ancestors dance through me

Experimenting with the Unarchival of a South African South Asian Dancer's Family Archive while Exploring 'Indian-ness' and Interwoven Dance Cultures and its pedagogical contribution to or implications for the reconfiguring of the Archive.

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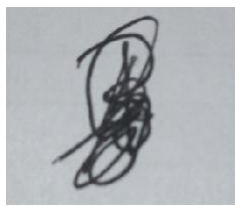
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DEDICATION

Namaste,

I dedicate this thesis to my parents...

My wonderful father, Mr. Dhanabalan Govender,
My rock, pillar of strength and my most ardent supporter.
- I love, respect and appreciate you;

In loving memory of my Mother, Guru, and best friend,
Mrs Luxmidhevi (Rani Nydoo) Govender.
You are with me, always!

My amazing husband, Mr. Bobby Elshove, my truest partner in every possible way.
We finally found each other!

And especially,

To my favourite niece/daughter Savera Moir,
Remember, you are so special, a new breed of South African artist and teacher.
Never fear to dance in the footsteps of the great women and men before you.
I love you to the moon and back!

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to challenge the understanding of the concept of an archive of the indigenous/marginalised in territory that was previously dominated by a western/colonial presence, in places and spaces that are considered non-traditional. To explore the archive as a performative process and expansive practice by answering the question: How can the ‘unarchival’ process be a functional framework with which to make meaning in transmuting or liberating the artefacts of my family archive, my embodied self, and the ‘Indian-ness’ of South Asian dance, through reconfiguration of experimental iterations that reflect the current reality of this dance form as it unfolds and develops in the South African dance industry and academy? The idea was to utilise the artefacts of my family dance archive, in creative ways, to highlight the interweaving of cultures, while also disrupting the notion of purity and authenticity around South Asian dance with a melange interweaving of the archive of dance styles present in my body of work. The research methodology utilised was autoethnography/biography, with yarning/storytelling to acknowledge the genealogy/genesis of the perceived Indian monolithic culture in both India and South Africa. This study focused on the process of the ‘unarchival’ of my physical family dance archive and, my South Asian dancing body which is a palimpsestic, embodied, living archive. This involved curating an online exhibition of groupings of artefacts, of re-presenting and re-storying, deconstructing and reconstructing my family archive, thereby making them both emancipated and accessible. I argued that the archive is not limited to ‘Indian-ness’, but consists of an early interweaving and intermingling of cultures. The physical artefacts were used to create various iterations of “paper choreography” as my creative work activates the family archive, using paper to enable movement/dance. There was experimentation with age-old modes and my curatorial role in preserving and perpetuating my family’s dance origins which intersects with South Asian dance history in South Africa more broadly, and particularly its pedagogy. By researching unarchival as a curatorial process, I have attempted to recreate history and socio-political narratives: on a macro-level (the histories of both the Indian subcontinent - its influences and changes over centuries – as well as African history) and a micro-level (my own history) with a primordial conceptualisation. Three chapters focus firstly on the Unarchival process and its formulation. Next, the exploration of the concept of ‘Indian-ness’ in terms of dance, identity and archival implications for this study. The final chapter explores the interwoven nature of the dance direction my family and I chose to take by incorporating many cultures into our Indian dance core curriculum over 61 years. This creative study addressed the dearth in the field in the South African academy. The relevance/importance of the study to the field is that the unarchival process/act is seen as a relatively unexplored area, not just in reconfiguring an archive, but also the embodiment of the culture and identity of South Asian dance and dancers that are often mis/under-represented and misunderstood.

TABLE OF CONTENTS: THE PERFORMANCE PROGRAMME

Title Page.....	i
Thesis details.....	ii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgement	v
Abstract	vi
Contents Page.....	vii
Glossary of Creative Work - Online Exhibition	viii
Appendix List.....	ix
List of Illustrations with References.....	x
INTRODUCTION: THE CURTAIN RISES	1
Introduction:	1
Aims.....	9
Rationale, Methodology, Conceptual Framework.....	11
• Methodology.....	11
• Significant Original Contribution to Knowledge	17
CHAPTER 1	
Overture: Unarchival - A Performative Act of Seeking, Holding and Freeing.....	21
CHAPTER 2	
Finding My Seat in the Theatre: The Unarchival Dance of ‘Indian-Ness’	51
CHAPTER 3	
The Final Act - Interwoven: The Dance of Many Cultures, its Learnings and Teachings	97
CONCLUSION: CURTAIN CALL.....	139
BIBLIOGRAPHY:	168
APPENDICES.....	201

“LETTING THE FAMILY ARCHIVE OUT OF THE BOX...”

Accessible at: <https://anusiagovenderelsh.wixsite.com/mysite>..... 9

The site contains the following:

Chapter 1: When we dance ...: <https://youtu.be/029aRawjFHw>..... 44

Hands of time: <https://youtu.be/xRpY9gjMXrg> 44

Chapter 2: Alive : <https://youtu.be/1bv7bVPNqYI>..... 63

Zine :
[https://issuu.com/anusiagp/docs/e-zine- anusia pillay - 1917955- phd - ch2](https://issuu.com/anusiagp/docs/e-zine-anusia-pillay-1917955-phd-ch2)
.....78

Chapter 3: Metamorphosis (puppet theatre): <https://youtu.be/tUEOBmklSDw>...124

Showreel of 3 events – interweaving dance cultures:
<https://youtu.be/w0V0BexBBxk>..... 134

APPENDIX LIST

APPENDIX A:	ABSTRACT, MA THESIS (Pillay, 2019: vi).....	201
APPENDIX B:	Thandiwe Princess Mzobe (<i>Post</i> , 3-6 May 1995).....	202
APPENDIX C:	A description of Indian Classical Dance pedagogy in four Indian Diasporas, of my own creation (Pillay, 2019: 69).....	203
APPENDIX D:	Indian Folk Dance Curriculum (N2)	204
APPENDIX E:	Indian Folk Dance Curriculum (N3)	212
APPENDIX F:	Letter of Syllabi Request from Eastside College	220
APPENDIX G:	World Dance Syllabus (Hands Up).....	226
APPENDIX H:	A Selection of My Online Footage and Articles	234

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS WITH REFERENCES

Fig.1: A few pictures from my family archive and a ‘selfie’, taken in a 2020 postgraduate workshop, that reflects on the passage of sixty years of existence to the archive of creative practice (collage from my family archive).....	1
Fig.2: Ken Gampu, Nydoo Sister’s guest of honour Anonymous. 1965. Indian culture: “Dancing Bells” was fitting farewell (<i>The Indian Trend</i> , no date: npn)	6
Fig. 3: The Nydoo Sisters’ Arrangetram programme, picture with their Guru and my mother’s certificate with her dance title, India, 1961	21
Fig. 4: ‘ReAssembling the Archive’ exhibition at the 2019 Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism (Bhatia, 2020).....	33
Fig.5: Screenshots of my conversation with Hanna Miller on my LinkedIn profile (2021) Pillay, A. 2021. LinkedIn. Hanna Miller message (2021, October 13). Available at: < https://www.linkedin.com/in/anusia-pillay-60054721/ >.....	36
Fig.6: Rupī Kaur Kaur, R. no date. <i>Pintrest</i> . Ode to Matisse’s <i>Dance</i> . Available at: < https://za.pinterest.com/pin/707839266411819136/?lp=true >. Accessed 23 June 2019.....	42
Fig. 7: Three generations of dancing feet and bells: (from left to Right) my mother’s, mine, and our late student Renusha Manilall’s, from the family dance archive (collage from my family archive).....	51
Fig.8: The site of the 6000 year-old Shiva Lingam at the Sudwala caves in Nelspruit, South Africa Reddy, A. 2021. ‘6000-year-old Shiva Linga was not discovered by archaeologists in the Sudwala Caves (South Africa)’, FACTLY. Available at: < https://factly.in/6000-year-old-shiva-linga-was-not-discovered-by-archaeologists-in-the-sudwala-caves-south-africa/ >. Accessed: 31 July 2022.....	60
Fig.9: Comic strip circulated on the 160 th anniversary of the indenture Mangena, African News Agency (2020, November 17) 160 YEARS SINCE INDENTURED INDIANS ARRIVED IN SA. Facebook. Available at: < https://www.facebook.com/shika-harrypaul >	61
Fig.10: Collage of pop up book –‘India: A World of dance’ by me.....	65
Fig.11: Screenshot of sculpture indicating a local Indian (Mohan in Youtube, 2014).....	70
Fig. 12: Sculpture indicating European presence and a coin as comparison (Mohan in Youtube, 2014) (screenshots have been reconfigured by me)	71
Fig. 13: Sculpture indicating Indo-African interaction (Mohan in Youtube, 2014).....	73

Fig.14: Cover of zine	
Pillay , A. 2022. <i>The Unarchival Dance of ‘Indian-ness’</i>. Isuu. Available at:	
<https://issuu.com/anusiagp/docs/e-zine- anusia pillay - 1917955- phd - ch2>	79
Fig.15: Page two of zine	
Pillay , A. 2022. <i>The Unarchival Dance of ‘Indian-ness’</i>. Isuu. Available at:	
<https://issuu.com/anusiagp/docs/e-zine- anusia pillay - 1917955- phd - ch2>	80
Fig.16: Page three of zine	
Pillay , A. 2022. <i>The Unarchival Dance of ‘Indian-ness’</i>. Isuu. Available at:	
<https://issuu.com/anusiagp/docs/e-zine- anusia pillay - 1917955- phd - ch2>	82
Fig.17: Page four of zine	
Pillay , A. 2022. <i>The Unarchival Dance of ‘Indian-ness’</i>. Isuu. Available at:	
<https://issuu.com/anusiagp/docs/e-zine- anusia pillay - 1917955- phd - ch2>	84
Fig.18: Page five of zine	
Pillay , A. 2022. <i>The Unarchival Dance of ‘Indian-ness’</i>. Isuu. Available at:	
<https://issuu.com/anusiagp/docs/e-zine- anusia pillay - 1917955- phd - ch2>	86
Fig.19: Page six of zine	
Pillay , A. 2022. <i>The Unarchival Dance of ‘Indian-ness’</i>. Isuu. Available at:	
<https://issuu.com/anusiagp/docs/e-zine- anusia pillay - 1917955- phd - ch2>	88
Fig.20: Walker’s mural	
Walker, K. 1994. <i>Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred between the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart</i>. New York , wall installation. Available at:	
<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/110565>	89
Fig.21: Page seven of zine	
Pillay , A. 2022. <i>The Unarchival Dance of ‘Indian-ness’</i>. Isuu. Available at:	
<https://issuu.com/anusiagp/docs/e-zine- anusia pillay - 1917955- phd - ch2>	92
Fig.22: Page eight of zine	
Pillay , A. 2022. <i>The Unarchival Dance of ‘Indian-ness’</i>. Isuu. Available at:	
<https://issuu.com/anusiagp/docs/e-zine- anusia pillay - 1917955- phd - ch2>	93
Fig. 23: Screen shot of my DNA test results (www.myheritage.com)	95
Fig.24. A tribute to the Indian Indentured in a scene from ‘Evolution of the Rainbow’, Roodepoort Theatre, 17 July 2019. Directed by Anusia Govender-Pillay.....	97
Fig.25: Interwoven artefacts from the archive by Anusia Govender-Pillay (2020)	97
Fig. 26: ‘Illumination’ from NNTV programme called “Blase”(1996).....	102
Fig. 27: Renusha Manilall (Pillay, 2019: 137).....	114

Fig.28: Timeline of the various syllabi/curricula formulated to formalise Indian dance in the South African education system that were never actioned, created by Anusia Govender-Pillay in 2022.....	118
Fig.29: My ancestor's record on a ships list (Dept. of Home Affairs,1988).....	123
Fig.30: My story box and shadow puppet theatre.....	124
Fig.31: 'Shiva- Parvati', Nydoo Sisters, 1960s (from the family archive)	124
Fig.32: First Indo- Zulu concert in Chatsworth, Neighbour News, 1995	128
Fig.33: Anavarata Dance institute, Mauritius, 1995.....	129
Fig.34: Anavarata Dance institute's logo created in 2011 by Prenuka, Rajarathnam, Naufal Khan and Anusia Govender-Pillay	137
Fig.35 : Curtain calls over 60 years: from The Nydoo Sisters in 1962 to present day, Anavarata's most recent performance at 'India Day', 13 August 2022 (collage from the family archive)	139
Fig.36: The cover of Tony Joseph's (2018) book depicting the 'dancing girl' statue.....	158

INTRODUCTION: THE CURTAIN RISES



Fig.1: A few pictures from my family archive and a 'selfie', taken in a 2020 postgraduate workshop, that reflects on the passage of sixty years of its existence to the archive of creative practice.

BACKGROUND

When we dance...

we communicate,
we exchange,
we hurt,
we bleed,
we heal,
we grow,
we share,
we conflate,
we are broken open,
we are family,
we are visible,
we resist,
we persist,
we are continuum,
we are powerful,
we are free,
we are one!

- Anusia Govender-Pillay (2020)

To me dance is life. I am the progeny of Luxmidhevi (Rani Nydoo) Govender (1944-2005) who, as a 13-year-old, made her first sojourn to India in 1959/1960. She was among the first

three South Africa Indians to study a full repertoire of Bharata Natyam¹. Rani became the first documented South African pedagogue, aged fifteen, of the dance form, amongst others to formally teach Indian dance at the *Nydoo Sisters School of Dance* in Durban (1961)². This does not negate contributions of Indian nationals and other South Africans, nor does it rule out the possibility that there were others amongst the indentured that may have had some training in the classical dance form. My mother kept a well-documented record of their experiences and career in what began as scrapbooks and evolved into a family archive that spans 61 years. Consisting of pictures, posters, programmes, articles from newspapers and other publications, books, choreographic notes, sketch books, video footage, costumes, tin trunks, props and jewellery, it documents a generational history. It is situated in various locations in my home, in portions at the 1860 Documentation Centre in Durban and the Gandhi-Luthuli Documentation Centre of the University of KwaZulu-Natal³ in Durban⁴. I returned to the academy in 2018, after 25 years, to attain my MA degree in Theatre and Performance⁵, this became my initial design to my local academic performance, focussing on the ellipses in South Asian Dance history and pedagogy through my mother's posthumous voice in the archive. It traced my family's dance evolution and questioned the future pedagogical value and implications for decolonising Indian dance (and those of other marginalised communities) in postcolonial/indenture, and post-apartheid South Africa. I curated the physical artefacts to document a neglected South Asian portion of South African dance history. As a cathartic process, it freed me up to delve into the lingering feeling that

¹ The other two young girls were Sulochana Naidoo (16) and my aunt Prema Nydoo (9), who all studied at Sarawathy Gana Nilayam in Triplicane, Chennai together. My mother and two of her sisters were accompanied by their mother. Sulochana returned to South Africa in July 1961, while my family returned in October 1961, after my mother received advanced training with Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam after completing her initial training. My mother studied drama, music, drawing and painting alongside her dance training as well.

² "They opened a dance School in the early 1960s. Their first student was Vasugi Singh (nee Devar), author of this book" (Vasugi Devar Singh, 2019: 60).

³ This was the former University of Durban-Westville. It became amalgamated with the University of Natal to form the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

⁴ These institutions have copied portions of the archive, both physical and digital, since the 1990s. This is found on the Gandhi-Luthuli Documentation Centre website: <http://disa.ukzn.ac.za/gandhi-luthuli-documentation-centre/rani-naidoo-dancer>

⁵ My Master's thesis is entitled *My Mother Dances in Me: A history of South Asian Dance by South African Indian Women Through the Lens of a Family Archive as a Lived Experience* (2019), accredited to Wits School of the Arts.

the archival exploration was still unfinished. Interestingly, the name *Nydoo* (meaning ‘justice’ in Telegu) was originally *Naidoo*, and was changed by my late maternal grandfather to indicate the trajectory of our family’s drive. It was also to create our own marker of identity – we would be able to know our kin anywhere in the world. With this study, though still based on my family archive, I, like my late grandfather, am creating a new entity or performance based on the re-configuration of the old and expected. I created a new identity marker or story for myself, the field of dance and the academy. This is where the curtain rises on this study, on a new theatre performance or as in the old days, a cinema screening – setting the stage for the process of realising the potential of, and seeking something more substantial in, my story and my family archive.

This study covers a few key concepts from my life, work and family archive that incorporate aspects of South Asian/Indian dance (used interchangeably in this study) and its deep-rooted storytelling component. Firstly, my pursuit of this type of research would not have been possible even a few years ago as ‘unarchival’ is a relatively new and untapped area of study. With ‘unarchival’, the experimentation with the spatial orientation and placements of artefacts within the archive could expose the materiality to the inner workings of an individual, just as movement gives expression through the dancing body. The website *UNARCHIVAL.com* is a visual research project by RDYSTDY video artists Hanna Miller and Jacob Perkins who state their purpose as being, “To change our course for the future - and our reflexes in a present moment - by reclassifying the past. Placing old objects in new contexts” (unarchival.com, 2020). My intimate knowledge of both the physical and embodied archives aided in animating the artefacts of my family archive to unite both iterations into a third. What may appear a simple feat of re-assemblage on the surface is far more complicated in

reality. How do I take apart complex bodies of knowledge? My creative approach is similar to the concept of creating the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. In the act of extraction and reconfiguration of various artefacts, to provoke innate possibility, would these pieces eventually fit together to reveal a new story or picture? This approach considered the cultural seepage in India from multiple migrations and invasions in a similar way that has happened in the South African context. *By researching unarchival as a curatorial process, I have attempted to recreate history and socio-political narratives: on a macro-level (the histories of both the Indian subcontinent - its influences and changes over centuries – as well as African history) and a micro-level (my own history) with a primordial conceptualisation.*

Secondly, the influence of various cultures makes up a strong DNA⁶ thread over time. DNA is not just taken in the clinical sense in this study but rather as a basic denominator or composition of culture/art that is described as Indian (it is believed that DNA itself dances⁷). Video dance art scholar Jeannette Ginslov (2016) believes that, “Through our bodies, we make contact, contain, remember and remake living stories, create memories, narratives and meaning for ourselves and others”⁸. It could also refer to cell memory transmission that is programmed into our DNA. Anthropologist/dancer Claire Vionnet (2018) refers to the dancing body as a “living archive”, saying that, “my body carries the souvenir of dancing and ethnographic experiences. My body is shaped by past performances, dancing skills and encounters with dance pedagogues who taught me”⁹. Temporality, its traversability and connotations are vital to this study and its creative processes. Inma Álvarez (2009: 1), a dance

⁶ According to geneticist Adam Rutherford (2018), “DNA is the code in your cells. It is the richest but also most complex treasure trove of information that we’ve ever attempted to understand.”

⁷ “DNA flows inside a cell's nucleus in a choreographed line dance, new simulations reveal. The finding is the first large-scale explanation of genetic material moving within a working cell. ...The dancing DNA may play a role in gene expression, replication and remodeling, though the exact effects remain unclear, the researchers reported online October 22 in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*” (Simons Institute, 2018).

⁸ <https://medium.com/the-politics-practices-and-poetics-of-openness/p-articipate-body-of-experience-body-of-work-body-as-archive-b19446c9ce5d>

⁹ <https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/rai2018/paper/40741>

and culture pedagogue, referred to the “aesthetics of time” as she conceptualised the meaning of the time strand, exposing how various sub-strands connect together. In a similar manner, the artefacts of the family archive, memory, lived experience and learnings form temporal strands that, when linked through the curatorial/choreographic act, create new avenues to the unarchival process. This study also draws inspiration from the questions raised by author of *Les Danses du Temps* (2004), Geisha Fontaine, “does time shape dance or does dance shape its time? Is time in dance comparable to time in the other arts or does it display unique characteristics? What variations of time are introduced by each choreographer? What are the temporal openings specific to choreographed movement?” (Fontaine in Ivarez, 2009: 2). The composition of current Indian dance as the product of the intermingling of cultures over time, established a genealogy that is refuted or erased as taboo by the local Indian dance community on the basis that traditional is equated with the ‘pure’ and even sacred. Finally, this study explores the interweaving of other cultures into our dance performances. Would this be viewed as globalisation¹⁰? What was the motivation for the deviation from ‘Indian-ness’? What compelled us to defy the norms of socio-political expectations?

There were hints of this deviation very early on in my mother’s career. I found an image of South African actor Ken Gampu on the same stage as my mother and aunts at a time of racial segregation. How was this possible? Gampu (1929-2003) was a teacher who became an actor, “one of the first black South Africans to work alongside stars such as Edward Robinson and Burt Lancaster”¹¹. My grandfather’s links to the film industry¹² made this a

¹⁰ “Globalization is defined by dictionary.com as “the act of extending to other or all parts of the world”. In the case of dance, globalization takes place when dance companies go on tour, students go abroad or travel, and particularly since the dawn of the internet. Dancers may adopt movements from foreign genres, may train completely in various styles, and some will even work to adopt the cultural behaviors associated with a dance style” (Marcoux in <https://sophia.smith.edu/blog/danceglobalization/2012/04/29/the-globalization-of-bollywood-dance-2/>).

¹¹ <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0304027/bio>

¹² Director of the *Rani* (Clairwood) and *Vijay Cinemas* (Asherville) in Durban.

natural and conscious move to support black artists in their promotion and success, as ‘celebrity-dom’ facilitated a different process to everyday life. I often wonder what the trajectory of Indian dance in this country would have been if it were not for my grandfather’s sudden passing in 1966 and his efforts in retarding the effectiveness of the Group Areas Act of 1950, which effectively limited such interaction and resulted in artists making work for, and within, their own cultural communities.



Fig.2: Ken Gampu, Nydoo Sister's guest of honour (The India Trend, 1965).

Having grown up with this archive, with stories like Ken Gampu's and the pride taken in this act, revealed that my family was not ashamed of the relation or of them performing for any audience, which facilitated my own inter-racial views and teaching in the townships around

Gauteng. This makes it possible to use my intimacy with this family archive to read through it in different ways - to re-create and re-imagine a meaningful way of situating Indian Dance in the current South African cultural/arts landscape. The archive evidences a steady increase in delving beyond what we were told we should/should not be.

Increasingly, the pedagogy and scholarly investigation of the arts is viewed as an arena of reclamation, self-actualisation and decolonising of the previously disenfranchised, subjugated and marginalised. “The challenge for arts educators... is that such an approach might require relinquishing what we seem to hold most dear - the very discourses of the arts through which we construct self-identification as artists and arts educators” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013: 227). Radical pedagogy scholar, Rubén A. Gaztambide-Fernández (2013: 211) asserts that,

Rather than seeing culture as asset of values, norms, and customs that define the essence of a given group of people or as a collection of artifacts that represent their shared characteristics, such an approach seeks to account for the patterns of interaction that evolve in different contexts and under particular material and symbolic conditions (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013: 226).

Gaztambide-Fernández can see a shape to collection, but does not offer a method. My critique of Gaztambide-Fernández is not just about the description of method, but rather how the decolonial method is made. The search is for an alternative instrument, as I have explored decolonial/radical pedagogical¹³ practices in this study in a way that allows it to, “devise its own institutional framework, mission and modus operandi at the crossroad of knowledge

¹³ “On the basis of theoretical and historical analysis it is shown that the ideas of the radical reconstruction of the education system and teaching practices have deep historical roots. In modern pedagogy the concept of “radical pedagogy” is understood in two ways. It is defined by some theorists as the notion that secures the changing views about cognitive capacities, conditions, and factors forming human exposure that indicates the system of pedagogical measures and solutions. The second group of researchers interprets this term as an uncompromising commitment to achieve real transformation in accordance with the views on the development of socio-political, ideological and economic spheres. On the basis of content-analytical study of special publications of the journal “Radical Pedagogy” it is shown that currently, this conceptualization is in the stage of intensive growth” (Fedotova & Nikolaeva, 2015: 785).

production, art and activism. ...that allows us to decolonise cultural paradigms and forms of teaching, building an autonomous space of mutual teaching and learning between students, activists and scholars” (Micciarelli, Prodromidis & Mollona, 2021: npn). To address the erasures and ellipses that our past and current education systems have reduced the contributions of the marginalised, and the South African Indian contribution to this country in particular, to ‘non-events’.

The goal was not to regurgitate the details and techniques of Indian dance or the chronological recounting of my family history, which has already been achieved. Rather, the focus was and possibly still is on the archive which is usually locked away in rooms and basements or behind glass for their protection. That inaccessible archive is in keeping with philosopher Jacques Derrida’s notion of the archive as “domiciliation” or under “house arrest” (Derrida & Prenowitz, 1995: 10). Here, I am focusing on the liberation of the artefacts - adaptation, transmutation and re-animation as a curatorial act - the unprecedented experimentation and exploration of ‘if’ and ‘how’ the ‘unarchival’ process can be applied to my family archive. The application of the unravelling of a systematic ordering does something to the family archive, as a different re-ordering. Translation itself is a form of making; reading of experience; as well as notions around original work. Although one can argue that there is violence in the interpretation of a state of being in terms of the status quo and patterns in a dredging/digging or archaeological framework, in this study, it is a redemptive violence. Meaning that the violence that is imposed on the archive through its translation becomes redemptive. This process asked questions around translation of the archive, and that became important to this enquiry.

I am a dancer. I had received no formal training in visual arts prior to joining the PhD programme at the Wits Fine Arts department in 2020. This was done with the view that the innovative techniques and flexibility with the abstract would enhance my exploration and experimentation in interdisciplinarity, which it did. However, a deficit in formal training; the fact that I would disadvantage myself by being examined as an expert in that field; led me to the realisation that this study and I are better suited to the Theatre and Performance discipline. In order to realise the creative vision I had with paper and deriving the maximum benefit from its ability to move, as well as to give my basic artistic knowledge a more polished feel, I completed two courses online via international experts, Karishma Chugani and Silvia Hijano Coullaut at Domestika, i.e. *Paper Cutting Techniques for Storytelling* (22 April 2021) and *Pop-Up Book Creation* (30 July 2021), respectively. I learnt useful techniques in paper engineering and layered storytelling in order to realise the creative pieces that evolved out of this study. An online exhibition of all my creative pieces in this study, titled *LETTING THE FAMILY ARCHIVE OUT OF THE BOX...*, have been housed together in a website (<https://anusiagovenderelsh.wixsite.com/mysite>) as well as embedded in the relevant chapters that they bear kinship to. The performances, stories and motivation were designed to be relevant to all age groups, especially young school-going children to support their early exposure to dance and culture. A vast amount of my body of work was established and cultivated outside the academy until mid-2018 to these types for family-oriented audiences.

AIMS

The objective of this study is in keeping with the many changes in social and political status, geography, and circumstances that my ancestors and their dances had to adapt to. This resonates with the way dance scholar Jay Pather described his creations as being “prepared to

deconstruct and reconstruct” (in Devar Singh, 2019: 125), similar to the manner that I consider mine. The focus is “less about fusion than about juxtaposed forms - telling a story” (Pather in Devar Singh, 2019: 124). As curator, I wanted to experiment with the artefacts in an unusual and creative manner as I do with my dance practice - breaking it down to basic pieces to reconfigure/re-create or choreograph the artefacts in an abstract manner. *To get paper to dance*. To achieve a metamorphosis/transformation of the archive.

This study, therefore, aimed to “challenge the perception of “archive” as something closed, orientated for exclusive usage by experts or locked containers of “historical truth”, and see archives as reflective process and communicative practice” (Center for Urban History of East Central Europe website, 2004-2021) in relation to my family archive, in order to trouble the notion of the purity and authenticity of a perceived monoculture, such as that of India and “Indian-ness” in terms of dance, by harnessing the unarchival of artefacts of the archive as a ‘DNA test’/stage production. It also aimed to explore unarchival in relation to artefacts, stories, traditions and dance performances of interwoven dance cultures to reconcile/reclaim the identity that my body of work is synonymous with. Notably, the creative praxis centred around the connection or the threads/yarns of each creative piece, to find how the links between storytelling, ‘yarning’ and choreography are interwoven to support the choice of ‘paper choreography’ in various iterations of the ‘unarchival’ process within the South African arts and culture tapestry.

RATIONALE, METHODOLOGY, CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study allowed the past to speak to the present, while exploring the deconstruction and re-configuration of my family dance archive by asking: How can I transmute and transform the archive, the dancing body and the cultural ancestry and influences to create other iterations through an ‘unarchival’ process, in the South African context? This is how I navigated it:

- **Methodology**

The underpinning to the enquiry was qualitative research. The choice of this method was because of its “rich tradition in the study of human social behaviour and cultures. Its general aim is to develop concepts which help us to understand social phenomena ... to gain an understanding of the experiences, perceptions and/or behaviours of individuals, and the meanings attached to them” (Agius, 2013: 204). The overarching method of choice was auto-ethnography, as it contains a strong hint of the biographical, “an umbrella term for an assembly of loosely related, variously titled activities: narrative, life history, oral history, autobiography, biographical interpretive methods, storytelling, auto/biography, ethnography, reminiscence” (Bornat, 2008: 344), and interdisciplinarity. Retired dance ethnographer, Deidre Sklar (1991: 6) describes the meaning of ethnography as “‘portrait of a people’ ... for an ethnographer seeks not only to describe but to understand what constitutes a people’s cultural knowledge. The ethnographer wants to know... how a given group of people find or, more accurately, *make* meaning” (italics in original). Here auto-ethnography is based on my lived experience as both dancer and curator, as well as, in terms of my interest in the pre-colonial ‘DNA’ of Indians and the resultant dance forms that emanate from the Indian sub-continent. My reason for this choice is shared by ethnographer Carolyn Ellis, “it combined my interests in ethnography, social psychology of the self and role-taking, subjectivity and emotionality, face to face communication and interaction, writing as inquiry

and for evocation, storytelling and my social work orientation toward social justice and giving back to the community” (Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2016: 17). The relevance of this description is that I come from a social work background which greatly influenced the direction and choices in my dance pedagogy. It is my goal to delve into the artefacts in the archive to find their value in my own story in the manner that subjectivity in the arts stresses “that values are dependent on the relative modes of human experience and are ... the reflections of the feeling, attitudes and responses to the individual” (Arnold, 1995: 61). I wished to explore if, where and how these values appear in my own story in a meaningful way. In order to do that there was an extraction for modification, for practice-led research (PLR)/ performance as research.

PLR is ‘the desire to create artefacts and present them as part of the “answer” to research questions posed at the outset of the creative endeavor. In this sense, the practice-led enterprise is different from many other approaches since it does not simply use objects as evidence, but attempts to present the objects created during the process as *arguments*’ (Biggs in Rutten, 2016: 301) (*italics in original*).

In this study, PLR provides an answer to the construction of a creative jigsaw puzzle.

According to Research for the Creative Industries scholar Brad Haseman (2006: 3), “Practice-led research is intrinsically experiential and comes to the fore when the researcher creates new artistic forms for performance”. His view aligns with that of the creators of *UNARCHIVAL.com*, from the stance that the researcher “may be led by what is best described as ‘an enthusiasm of practice’: something which is exciting, something which may be unruly, or indeed something which may be just becoming possible as new technology or networks allow (but of which they cannot be certain)” (Haseman, 2006: 3), in order to translate and mediate between research and practice. The ethnographic narrative speaks to activation of deconstruction and the personal sharing of creative practice around this study. It is it’s translation that helps make meaning from gaps in the archive.

According to art scholar Nalini Moodley-Diar (2021: 30), “Omissions, apparent marginalization, and invisibility of the visual culture of Indian South Africans needs exploration particularly as their contribution to the South African art history is somewhat silent”. This is the gap that the unarchival process can stop when applied to archives, especially those of the marginalised. The combination of history and art has the potential to catalyse the archive. Tarquam McKenna and Davina B. Woods (2012: npn), authors on ‘Artful ethnography’, describe the process in the following way, “art brings with it an invitation to witness what is often in the unconscious realm of the researcher and researched alike; art accelerates management of the physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being as it brings into consciousness that which is not ‘known’”. This could be that answer to breaking the silence that Moodley-Diar refers to. As a dancer there are constant stories being told in the form of ‘conversations’ with fellow performers, music, the audience, and the current and historical forms of Indian dance. The archive is no different, as each artefact narrates its own story. “Narrative methodologies emphasise the temporal quality of both lived lives and told stories, and the meaning making processes” (Bradbury, 2017: 14). Here, I discussed a variety of positions on narrative methodologies and considered the possibilities that unarchival offers for intertwining narratives and further object/subject relation into movement. In using the term Indigenous¹⁴ in this study I acknowledge that,

The common currency of all of these terms—Aborigine, Indian, Indigenous, or First Nations—their uses and valency in government, legal and scholarly contexts, are often offensive to tribal groups especially when used in an international, totalizing and universal way to define radically different groups because they have the effect of homogenizing peoples in ways that early imperial anthropology created ‘others’ as ‘indigenous’ in differentiation and opposition to colonial settlers, often using these labels for legal, educational, administrative and policing purposes (Peters & Mika, 2017: 1).

¹⁴ For the purposes of this study, “As commonly used, ‘indigenous’ means something similar to the older word ‘native’; nowadays not considered ‘polite’ given its overtones of meaning of ‘primitive’ and all the associated negative implications. But this likeness to older words such as ‘native’ does not capture the full meaning described by ‘indigenous’. Indigenous is a primary adjective that does not stem from a noun: Despite the emergence of ‘indigene’ for an indigenous person/people and ‘indigeneity’ for the quality of being indigenous, it is the adjective ‘indigenous’ that remains the dominant usage” (Stewart, 2018: 470).

This study further acknowledges that the concept of indigeneity holds differing definitions in divergent countries, incorporating language and bloodlines. The distribution of indigenous peoples in 2012 was as follows: 70% in Asia; 11% in Latin America; and 1.5 million in North America (Joona in Sarivaara, Maatta & Uusiautti, 2013). There has been little if any change in the status or conditions of the indigenous in the past decade as the most current statistics indicate,

There are 476 million Indigenous people around the world and spread across more than 90 countries. They belong to more than 5,000 different Indigenous peoples and speak more than 4,000 languages. Indigenous people represent about 5% of the world's population. The vast majority of them – 70% – live in Asia (Amnesty International website, 2022).

United Nations special reporter, José Martinez Cobo's (1986) group-level definition is,

Those communities and peoples, who still have continuous historical connection to the societies preceding colonization, who developed on areas populated by these peoples and who consider themselves as clearly separate from other societal structures currently prevailing in the area, are indigenous. In addition, indigenous peoples are not in a ruling position in the modern society and they want to maintain, develop and transmit the inherited lands and ethnical identity to the future generations. Their ethnic identity forms the existence of the people as one, unitary population in harmony with their own cultural practices, social institutions and legal systems (in Sarivaara, Maatta & Uusiautti, 2013: 370).

On an individual level, a more subjective definition is offered by way of the person identifying him/herself as a member of the indigenous group. According to the UN Declaration's (2007) Article 9, "Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right to belong to an indigenous community or nation, in accordance with the traditions and customs of the community or nation concerned, no discrimination of any kind may arise of such right" (in Sarivaara, Maatta & Uusiautti, 2013: 370). My question is: What of the Indian Diaspora that was forcibly removed to other parts of the globe, including South Africa? Are we relegated to the status of perpetual ethnic minority? Even though I am a naturalised citizen of South Africa, after four generations of the indentured Indians official arrival here, I and several generations hence are still unable to access the rights enshrined in the country's constitution

in terms of the right to have access to and practice our individual culture and heritage within formal structures. An example that will be unpacked further in chapter three of this thesis, is the absence of Indian dance as a subject in schools/basic education despite the existence of syllabi/curricula that my mother and I created in 1996. The snowball effect is that I and many of my dance peers were unable to obtain degrees in dance locally as it would consequently not be offered as a course at tertiary level. We have been forced to pursue any further training outside this country at great expense. Such policies only serve to keep the artists of the other on the periphery of the relevant industries and ultimately of social and economic activities - an act of disenfranchisement.

What is interesting to the ethos of this study is the method of Yarning. Yarning is a theorisation of Australian Aboriginal origin, a “synonym for ‘talking’ and/or ‘storytelling’ ... capturing not only the sense in which the ‘threads’ of a story may be ‘woven’ together to create a ‘fabric’ of narrative, but also drawing forth associations with storytelling techniques stretching back to and beyond narrative artefacts” (McKenna & Woods, 2012: npn). Of further interest to the ethos of this study, is the way various appropriate processes are taken into account when conversing:

When an Aboriginal person says “let’s have a yarn”¹⁵, what they are saying is, let’s have a talk or conversation. ... Similarly, in Botswana the language that is spoken is Setswana; a Setswana phrase “A re bue” means “to talk”; when a Motswana says, “tla re bue sanye” they mean “come and let’s talk” (Bessarab & Ng’andu, 2010: 38).

The ‘conversations’ I envisaged were not the standard interview, but rather a “jugalbandi”¹⁶.

¹⁵ As a point of interest, in parts of northern England people talk about ‘spinning a yarn’ which means to tell a good story, one that may not be altogether true.

¹⁶ The rhythmic cycles go back and forth, culminating in joint expression. “The self-esteem of a musician is inevitably reflected in his creations, but in case of jugalbandi the mental and emotional issues of the musicians need to maintain a close harmony between the self-esteem and respect for the co-musician. Such duets become a magnificent musical experience for the ardent connoisseurs, as they get the opportunity to observe and listen to the musical dialogue that envisages the exquisite

(where artists execute a non-verbal conversation between two or more instruments, dancers or a combination of the two) between the physical artefacts, temporality, cultures and the various iterations of the archive in a textual and visual format. This is also implied in the interweaving of cultural dance styles and the conversation that they allow within societies that are melting pots of culture. Is this a unique modern phenomenon, or a deep response to dance of DNA that has been globalised throughout the passage of time? “The creative process is life-enhancing and ultimately awakening for the researcher into alternative ways of knowing” (McKenna & Woods, 2012: npn).¹⁷ Art in various forms is viewed as literacy for the individual and societal in a way that is rooted in the traditions of the indigenous so that “over thousands of generations Indigenous cosmologies and belief systems were respectfully illustrated in paintings, carvings, and especially in dance” (McKenna & Woods, 2012: npn). Thus, the dancing body offers a multitude of interpretations as an archive in the current time and setting.

The dancing body enacts a process of explanation and evokes storytelling. “The word ‘Kathak’ literally means “storyteller” referring to the ancient narrators of the Vedic scriptures, legends, folklore and mythology” (Govender & Govender, 1991: 10).¹⁸ Every author on the Kathak style, which is over 2000 years old, writes that storytelling is a vital part of this dance tradition. It is part of a living archive, an oral embodied repository - “of the social reparation of injustice, and knowing of ‘otherness’ that the artful practice we are espousing sees as its goal” (McKenna & Woods, 2012: npn). As performance studies scholar

manifestation of the musical art emanated through their body, mind and spirit – integrated and strongly focused on experiencing the beauty of their creation” (Banerjee, *The Hindu* website, 2017).

¹⁷https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251878997_An_Indigenous_Conversation_Artful_Autoethnography_A_Pre-colonised_Collaborative_Research_Method

¹⁸ Information on Kathak and its storytelling quality is also found in books in the archive by Singha and Massey (1967); Projesh Bannerji (1982); Sunil Kothari (1989); Shovana Narayan (1998); Massey (1999); Samson (1987); and Devar Singh (2000).

Rebecca Schneider (2014: 106-107) describes, I will use the “remains differently or in difference, the past performed and made explicit as performance can function as the kind of bodily transmission conventional archivists dread, a counter-memory, almost in the sense of an echo” in my creative work. It will be a retracing of the echo through experimentation with dance, memory fragments, and cultural traditions, while making curatorial choices around digitisation and groupings of artefacts.

I, as the subject/beneficiary/curator, am re-telling my own story, acting as the translator of the archive. Translation studies scholar, Lawrence Venuti (2000: 11-14) states, “Translation is a focus of theoretical speculation and formal innovation ... translating is useful in challenging the complacencies of contemporary culture because it fosters a “historical consciousness” that is lacking... translating can introduce a critical difference into the present”. This study is the translation of choreography/genealogy from embodied presentation to the ‘dancing’ in paper choreography resulting in an innovative creative form. The proposed play with, and unfurling of, the family archive allowed the envisaged focus to be on the dichotomy of agency and tradition, as well as the complexities/violence related to identity that I and my ancestors have experienced.

- **Significant Original Contribution to Knowledge**

My original contribution to the field is partly genealogical as a descendant of the first recorded South African Indian Classical dance teacher and being a local originator in Odissi (1986); even though Merle O’Brien (a PhD candidate at UCT at the time) laid claim to that title in an interview with Santham Pillay of the *Sunday Times* of 26 June 2011. I also became

the first exponent of Sufi Kathak (1990s). These salient aspects of my career were documented in an article titled ‘Best foot forward’ in *The Independent on Saturday* of 16 January 1999. My mother and I compiled Indian dance syllabi for the National Education Department (1996) at technical college level, and Gauteng Department of Education (2001) for secondary schools. These pilot projects, which had not been done before, were unfortunately, never actioned by the relevant bodies. Further, my MA thesis was one of the earliest ‘more formal’ recordings of an entire family archive based on South Asian dance in the local academy, spanning the entire life/career of an originating member of the South African Indian Diaspora. This allows me to position myself “as a container and transmitter of memories and histories” (Hellier-Tinoco, 2019: 12), to provide a fresh and rare perspective that possibly few South Asian dance scholars in this country can, as there is no undergraduate South Asian dance syllabus implemented at tertiary education to date.

In addressing the gap in scholarship, firstly, there is a well-known dearth of scholarly work in this field in South Africa. “Indian dance i.e., dance emanating from the South Asian continent, also thrives in South Africa particularly in Durban and Johannesburg ... However, very few scholarly accounts of Southern African Dance exist within a rich, complex, diverse and highly contested terrain” (Samuel 2016: 3). Over the years, the study of complete Indian classical dance repertoires were relegated to outside of South Africa, while being limited to informal pedagogy within the country. It is only recently being studied at the local academy at postgraduate level¹⁹. Building a local knowledge base around the subject allows further

¹⁹ Vasugi Devar Singh completed an MA in Education at University of Durban-Westville, with a focus on Bharata Natyam in 2000. This was converted to a book in 2019. Currently, postgraduates in the field of South Asian Dance at Wits University are Reshma Chhiba (MA attained in 2013), with Reshma Maharaj, and myself currently in the PhD programme. In addition, I was recently contacted by Saranya Devan, who was a Masters student at UCT in 2021, researching around the changes in the pedagogy of Bharata Natayam over the period of time that it has been present in South Africa. Further, I also had a conversation recently with a South Asian Classical dancer, who attained an MA degree in India and is hoping to pursue a PhD degree at the local academy, yet is finding it almost impossible to find a suitable supervisor in the field. There

study in the field. Secondly, unarchival is a relatively new and unexplored territory in general, outside of the computing field. This is particularly true in terms of South Asian dance. Finally, Indian dance has been viewed stereotypically as sacred, and South African artists who delve into the unrecorded origins or trouble the secular are seen as ‘blasphemous’. Undertaking this study is to aid in transforming this field into a less contested area of scholarship and create room for future scholarship of marginalised dance forms in this country.

The design of this study is as interwoven as the dance making that my family and I practiced, with regard to the theoretical and creative components. Creative Industries scholar, Haseman, “found that current curators and learning designers had some way to go in making the transition from their existing modern archive to a re-imagine network archive” (Cameron, Anderson & Wotzko, 2017: 167). With this in mind, the creative portion of this study, utilises the concept of “*Network archives*: online archives like YouTube or more broadly the internet as a platform, organized around the uncertain probability of finding material, with users co-creating widely accessible and potentially reusable content” (Cameron, Anderson & Wotzko, 2017: 162) (*italics in original*). Parts of the interweaving are composed of the fragments of my re-memorising of the family archive, myself and the dance element that are housed on Youtube and curated on a single website as an online exhibition of these works.

This thesis unpacks the various issues of this study in three chapters focussing firstly on the Unarchival process and its formulation. Next, the exploration of the concept of

is also a dearth of suitable supervisors and examiners in the field in the local academy, which results in this specialised field being treated generically.

‘Indian-ness’ in terms of dance, identity and archival implications for this study. The final chapter explores the interwoven nature of the dance direction my family and I chose to take by incorporating many cultures into our Indian dance core curriculum over 60 years. This includes the learnings and teachings derived from the attempts to incorporate the Indian dance syllabi (artefacts from the archive) at basic education level in South Africa. This thesis is given the format of a programme to a dance recital, as each chapter felt like a different stage or act of a dance theatre production. Each has its own area of focus, yet it comes together to tell a new and completely unique story with all the passion, flair and twists that we infused our productions with.

CHAPTER 1

OVERTURE:

UNARCHIVAL - A PERFORMATIVE ACT OF SEEKING, HOLDING AND FREEING



Fig. 3: The Nydoo Sisters' Arrangetram programme, picture with their Guru and my mother's certificate with her dance title, India, 1961

above all now I know
how often beyond the shores of a word
lies a sea I do not understand

- Shabbir Banoobhai (in Naicker, 2011:6)

Like my indentured ancestors who embarked on a sea voyage to parts unknown, I was aware that a journey awaited me the details, however, remained a mystery. This chapter is based on mapping out or building the architecture of ideas in the evolution of the unarchival process.

This is the overture of this study - the opening piece to this performance, preparing the audience for an uncharted quest of my family archive. In choosing to create a new path in my field of expertise, I had also chosen to step into the unknown and be submerged in its currents

and depths. In many ways I was assailed with the same feelings as I experience for about five seconds before I step on stage – anticipation, excitement and a few butterflies of trepidation. This unease of entering into a contested space includes coming up against concepts like John Donne’s work titled *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions and severall steps in my Sickness*²⁰ (1624). Part of the unease is the constant presence of whiteness and masculinity in the archive that have contributed to the erasures of the recordings of indigenous history.

Human history is about the future. Whiteness is about entrapment..... It is the most corrosive and the most lethal when it makes us believe that it is everywhere; that everything originates from it and it has no outside. ... because democracy in South Africa will ... be built on the ruins of those versions of whiteness (Mbembe, 2015: npn).

Mark Payne (2017) has suggested in the paradigm of depressive anthropology that the engagement produced by the researcher can induce a sense of shame as a haunting, “as a haunting not only haunted by the past as affect but what has also been erased” (Taub, 2023, unpublished). Is it survivor’s guilty, a sense of helplessness and impotence rising from the traps of tradition and social expectation, the inability to realise one’s potential due to political manoeuvring or purpose as a result of death? Payne also suggested that “the idea that shame is the route by which we access the capabilities of living that are abrogated in modernity” (Payne 2017:1). The ironic tensions of using the words of the white male frame or templates to contextualise my study is not lost on me. I rather chose to use the words of this chapter’s opening lines as, “for us, the marginalization of our lives and contributions speaks to a different reality. Namely that, despite the long history of black scholarly contribution, and despite the trending importance of diversity, the academic space is still the stronghold of capitalist white supremacy that it always has been” (Biswas, 2020: npn). It is

²⁰ No man is an iland, intire of it selfe; everyman Is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee (Donne in Young, 2018: 303) (italics in original).

the irony of its connection to my study that first beckoned me to utilise it in a subversive manner “to calibrate and neutralize the purpose of diversity and difference... The subversive intellectual seizes her place in the university, but refuses to be defined by it.” (Biswas, 2020: npn). The pictures in fig. 3 are obviously of women of Indian origin - my mother and aunt were fifteen and eleven years old respectively at the time it was taken, making them children. The fact that these girls took on the arduous task of journeying across the very waters that separated them from their identity and cultural moorings and assigned them the task of spreading their acquired knowledge in an environment of hostility and discrimination (the apartheid era) is testimony to their strength and tenacity, traits attributed to and reserved for the white male enclave. In this study, and Indian dance in particular, bells are symbolic of life and rhythm given to a dancer’s feet and body - an act that conjures up primordial sounds, shapes and movement. A revolutionary act for people of colour as will be observed in the creative performance related to the next chapter. My time spent on two seemingly contrasting continents and traditions, since 1978 until 2014, to study the dance forms of my heritage, may appear juxtaposed to each other. However, it is that very experience of shared histories and cultures that have shaped not only the family archive, but also my personal and artistic development as a South African dancer, as well as this study.

This chapter will therefore focus on the scholarly and creative choices made to find and conceptualise a study that is as embryonic as the unarchival process itself. Excavating the unknown and still to be created in terms of my role in this story.

PRIOR TO COLONIALISM...

Colonialism acted in the way that most diseases do, as in the case of my paternal ancestor who told of famine and disease eroding his entire family - leaving him as the sole survivor. “And I anchored in Durban... in the dust of waves. To be scattered in the gales of continents. In the currents of colonies” (Torabully in Naicker, 2011:30). The system attempted to erase

indigenous identity by the colonisers, white males, keeping their own records of the colonised. One example of this is the fact that my family surname ‘Govender’ does not exist in India. The closest we could ascertain is that it was an anglicised version of ‘Govinda’. There is evidence that in the many invasions of India, the structures that generally recorded such history or cultural evidence were mutilated, whether for perceived wealth or malice may never be fully understood. By extension, the malady lies in the manner in which indigenous/first people or peoples of colour, and by extension their art forms, have been historicised, labelled and categorised as people without a valid heritage. This was done through a colonial lens, despite a litany of evidence to the contrary, which is highlighted in this study. Just as disease has the power to obliterate scores of lives, so too did colonialism, yet there have been survivors who live to tell the tale. They left traces, like hauntings, their stories, in prehistoric stone paintings of lifestyle and even dance on the cave walls at Bhimbetka (Madhya Pradesh, India) and the South African Drakensberg Mountains, “Rock art created by First Nation peoples over the millennia are more than decorative.

Sites of heritage such as temples and caves ... act as encyclopedias or archives of world occurrences, as well as being repositories of dance knowledge. In ancient times, artists were afforded elevated status in this society, however, like all things they experienced an ebb and flow of fortunes for various reasons and purposes (Joseph, 2018: npn [in entire book]).

These clues in stone form part of a puzzle that archaeologists, historians and scientists have been piecing together over centuries. “Non-Indigenous archaeologists are beginning to appreciate how they constitute an Indigenous archive of memories, histories, and relationships to the land and Ancestors” (Rademaker, Maralngurra, Goldhahn, Mangiru, Taçon, & May, 2022: npn); to ancient carvings on Indian temples such as Chidambaram (9th century), “What makes these Chidambaram karana reliefs so particular is that they are accompanied by inscriptions of Sanskrit verses from the Natyashastra. Thus they form a kind of an illustrated dance manual carved in stone” (Miettinen, 2018: npn). This

results in a complex, complicated and palimpsestic, inscription on and in me, instigating an investigation into the connectivity of all aspects of my heritage and lived experience through the interplay between archive and dance.

THE ARCHIVE

The construct of the archive is central to this study. “Our primary access to the past of dance is always through sources, whether written, pictorial or embodied” (Morris & Nicholas, 2018: 3). Dance researcher, Bertha Bermúdez Pascual (2016: 1331), defines archive as “the collection of official documents, where descriptions of legal, social, commercial and administrative events are collected”. Archival scholar, Achille Mbembe posits,

Our capacity to make systematic forays beyond our current knowledge horizons will be severely hampered if we rely exclusively on those aspects of the Western archive that disregard other epistemic traditions. Yet the Western archive is singularly complex. It contains within itself the resources of its own refutation. It is neither monolithic, nor the exclusive property of the West. Africa and its diaspora decisively contributed to its making and should legitimately make foundational claims on it. Decolonizing knowledge is therefore not simply about deWesternization (Mbembe, 2002: npn).

We have a multiplicity of origins, as humans, yet are relegated to a single entity when identity and history are considered. Archivists, Michael Moss and David Thomas’ book *Archival Silences: Missing, Lost and, Uncreated Archives* (2021) clearly highlights the global silences or absences that exist in the archival act. This serves to legitimise the non-recording of human atrocities creating crevices that perpetuate an exclusion of the other. They recommend the development of alternate methods of engaging with archives broadly in order to requite the silences, gaps or absences in the archive. This study ascribes to the notion of writer, James Ngugi wa Thiong’o who asserts that “it mostly means developing a perspective which can allow us to see ourselves clearly, but always in relationship to ourselves and to

other selves in the universe” (in Mbembe, 2002 : npn). Archives and history are read and viewed in their complexity over time, thereby translating and re-translating their meaning. It is this notion that is further explored in this study.

Pascual (2016) posits that archival practices date back to 3000 BC, adding that, “Revisiting such documents, cultural characteristics arise since one cannot detach culture from human life. Dance is a cultural event and its first records within an archive date back as the origin of the archive itself” (Pascual, 2016: 1331). Dance scholar, Prarthana Purkayastha (2018: 4) highlights how the documentation of dance of the Indian subcontinent has been constructed as part of a binary notion of East and West, invented by western scholars, and therefore not integrated into the historical narrative. According to authors on reconfiguring the archive, Michael Moss, David Thomas, and Tim Gollins (2018: 4) “Histories ignored or suppressed are the results of specific ideologies that conceive of dance history from a Euro-American viewpoint”. They acknowledge the expansion of the archive as having “moved from being a collection of largely administrative records to become a collection of data to be made sense” (Moss, Thomas, & Gollins, 2018:131). The unarchival process, thus, calls for an approach that “will require a shift in approach from archivists, who will need to view archives as collections of data to be mined and not as texts to be read” (Moss, Thomas, & Gollins, 2018: 118). Having lived in Johannesburg, the city renowned for its gold mining industry, for twenty three years, I drew inspiration from the treatment of gold ore or diamonds as raw materials. By cutting, honing and polishing, their worth expands with each step in the refining process, so too are the artefacts of the family archive given different value and meaning in its new iterations. While both are acts of extraction, I wanted to format something active/performative, rather than passive from the numerous artefacts available to

me. The unarchival process allowed me the opportunity to extend the lifespan of the archive while making it more accessible to current and future generations.

THE FAMILY ARCHIVE

On an existential level, life, death and dance are constituents of aspects of my identity, culture and artistic choices, not just in material/physical terms, but also as a living, embodied²¹ archive. My family archive is symbolic of a series of rites of passage. Life, as this study was birthed more than sixty years ago when my mother first conceptualised the archive as proof/record that we were here and made a significant contribution to this country. Death, as I contemplated the notion of a formal recording since my mother's passing in 2005, as well as the realisation of my own mortality (and the archive's) without ratifying the knowledge passed down to me - that would be an act of selfishness. "Living in the 'Anthropocene' the need for a whole new perspective on humanity and its relation to the non-human world becomes pressing when we want to prevent our own extinction" (Mbembe, 2015: npn). As an act of rebirth, the archive was nurtured and given documented shape in my MA thesis (APPENDIX A). In seeking to go beyond a chronological documentation of the archive, I had to first ascertain a non-identical approach (from the MA thesis) to dealing with the artefacts. "To reassemble the archive today asks how the selection and ordering of information can be situated as a discourse that is inclusive to a range of voices and their corresponding forms of information" (Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism, 2019: npn). How could I include the stories of ancestry, legacy and heredity, without drowning out my own voice?

²¹ There is a recognition of the boundaries of embodiment, accompanied by the experience of the body as unsatisfactory and in need of modification, which is rendered as normal, thus operating as a strategy of resisting and evading those very forces which seek to normalize and discipline"(Budgeon, 2001: 35). This has bearing particularly on the colonial and apartheid restrictions on my lived experience.

[W]e must become aware of how many voices from the past have been historically inhibited by social and political power. Oral history projects documenting the participation of the many whose names are not 'writ large' by conventional histories are important, both to provide sources for future histories and to affirm the worth of individual lives in dance.... Other voices are commonly obscured by racist and colonial ideologies' (Morris & Nicholas, 2018: 4).

Having grown up with the artefacts of my family's archive, curating it, I feel as if I have become it. "[O]ral histories, rituals, and gestures are all strategic for the transmission of knowledge among communities that do not traditionally have archives or those privileging physical forms of transmission" (Giannachi, 2016:154). The archive provides evidence of the rich and robust pedagogical contribution that not just my family, but the Indian Diaspora made to the cultural landscape of this country that goes largely unacknowledged until the annual 24 September commemoration of Heritage Day in South Africa. The curatorial choices made first by my mother, then me, challenge the idea of invisibility, tokenism and citizenry. Visual artist and fellow South Asian classical dancer, Reshma Chhibha (2019: 35-36) describes curatorship as confronting "tensions between tradition and contemporary, mythology and reality, feminine and masculine, Black and Indian and artist and curator, by centering questions of gender, ethnicity and race. In turn, our roles as curator and artist are also in question and under scrutiny". These tensions are evident when pondering the longevity and relevance of the archive through my dancing body. In the South African Indian dance world itself, I am viewed as treading a fine line between traditionalist and popularist or non-traditional approaches, utilising a vast vocabulary of World Dance styles. I found in this study, as in my choreography, that I am constantly looking at reconciliations, of bringing things that appear to be estranged, incompatible and opposites of one another together in dance and choreography. An example would be merging Indian classical dance with African and western contemporary dance, and in the same dance piece combining Indian Folk dance

with Korean, Chinese and Taiwanese styles to a melange of music that I remix - going against the grain as it were.

ARRIVING AT THE UNARCHIVAL PROCESS

The act of exploration of the deconstruction or difference in the curation of the archive becomes a characteristic of the unarchival process. That process became a very sensory experience - in the sitting, touching, looking, smelling and the linking together of it all. The realisation that I was experiencing a transfiguration throughout my career, while completing the recording of the archive, was accompanied by the churning up of mixed emotions. This was underlined by awareness that there were missing pieces to the puzzle that I was composing - a liminal space. A persistent sense of ellipses in my work with the archive was present, implying a pause or omission, even while my thesis was in examination, even after I graduated. A transformation and metamorphosis of questioning began. For example, I became aware, during the completion of my MA degree, of erasures and omissions, especially around the pedagogical focus of Indian dance both within the local academy as well as the South African Indian Dance community itself, and began to be more vocal in questioning it in educational, policy and industry forums – an archive of absence. I became what anthropologist Victor Turner referred to as ‘liminal personae’.²² (in Davis & O’Mara, 2021: 1). Turner’s comment, “during the intervening liminal period, the state of the ritual subject . . . is ambiguous; he [sic] passes through a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state” (in Davis & O’Mara, 2021: 1) comes closest to explaining the state that I found myself in. I knew that there was much more to be done as I found ellipses for making meaning of my own journey beyond my mother and the documented archive. In arranging and telling my family’s story, I discovered that it was only

²² “The attributes of liminality or of liminal personae (‘threshold people’) are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these personae elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed” (Davis & O’Mara, 2021: 1).

partially my own. What remained of me and the concept of an archive was, like tendrils of smoke, visible yet illusory, just out of reach. A concept I could not encapsulate, hence my choice of a creative study. Another phrase that could apply to the sense of the unfinished, holding resonance with me in the course of this study is “a fetishising of the unknowable past” (South African Art Historians (SAVAH), 2022: npn). “The stories of heritage affect the senses and emotions as much as the intellect. They combine to make up a shared memory that gives meaning to identity in the present” (Chetty in Vahed, Desai & Waetjen, 2010: v). In its reassemblage the archive presented me with an opportunity to deconstruct and reconfigure/refigure not just the archive, but myself and the remnants of a colourful ancestry that is artistically, geographically, historically and politically classified as ‘Indian’.

Consider that for the first century of Indian experience in South Africa, only a limited number of individuals received a secular education. Though materials were archived by officials trying to manage ‘groups’ of peoples, including Indians, there were no libraries or museums, and very few trained historians, interested in presenting critical or celebratory ‘Indian’ histories. ...fortunately ... there have been, and continue to be, individuals with a passion for preserving family history and the ephemera of their own life and times, which have greatly helped to reconstruct a more nuanced and comprehensive past (Chetty in Vahed et al, 2010: vi).

Amidst the uncertainty of citizenry and the violence of the colonial and subsequent apartheid system (where during police raids, the seizure and destruction of records were common place), it took a century before Indians in South Africa could look beyond survival to self-actualisation (Desai, 2018; Pillay, 2019). This is exactly the time that my family decided to study dance in India and return to propagate it within the South African Indian Diaspora. It is also the time that my mother, an educated Indian woman, had the foresight to begin recording what evolved into an archive worthy of study.

As the holder of a body of personal, cultural, and historical knowledge, I am creating a transmutation of a physical archive and myself. The archive and the eclectic nature of my dance repertoire took on the guise of clues or a portal to the discovery of my cultural heritage and identity, “at a new level, beyond the limits of borders and nationalities” (Runardotter, Mirijamdotter & Mörtberg, 2007: 47) - “thus the traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel” (Benjamin in Pearson & Shanks, 2001: iix) - as a dancer/choreographer, I perform the emotions, rites of passage and the cyclical nuances of life from birth to death. The physical artefacts are transformed into moving pictures and a story that is mostly wordless, yet the resonance, though ephemeral – an invisible signature, is branded in the psyche of both the audience and the performer. There is transference of the artists’ and audience’s collective life experience and stories - even if these stories have been experienced repeatedly, each experience unfolds a new and different dimension to the experience - an imprint is made. As an extension on Benjamin’s statement, about the potter’s handprint being a part of the pottery created, Hindus believe that life is cyclical, a process of birth, death and re-birth, yet each new life is a pursuit of a freedom from this cycle - *Moksha*. “The literal meaning of moksha (derived from the root muc) is ‘to let loose’ or ‘to let go’ or ‘to free’. In common parlance, moksha is widely regarded in the sense of liberation” (Mishra, 2013: 23). This study could be based on that philosophy. Each lifetime’s imprint is left on the psyche and whispers to the present incarnation. It leaves a trace, no matter how disjointed, clues to how we become who we are. I wish to ascertain whether the archive can attain Moksha through its own performance in the form of an unarchival process. Alternatively, the determination of one’s genealogy factors into Moksha for one’s own body and career trajectory.

CURATOR/CHOREOGRAPHER

By researching unarchival as a curatorial process, I am attempting to disturb and disrupt the stereotypical, distorted history and socio-political narratives. This is in order to give my family archive a fresh treatment, an incubated idea since I applied to attend an Arts Research Africa (ARA) Winter school workshop in 2019, while I was still in examination for my MA degree. This led to the materialisation of this study. However, once enrolled in the PhD phase of my studies, I found that theorists and literature covered the areas of unarchiving in the computing field. “**Unarchive** is a term used to describe the process of restoring files from an archive (compressed file) or backup to their original location, usually a hard drive” (Computer Hope website, 2017) (bold and underline in original). While, ‘dearchiving’ which focuses on the “the new aesthetic orders of accumulation” (Moya, 2012: npn) of images and film. “*De-archiving* is the process of taking old assets out of “cold” storage and putting them in “hot” storage where they can be properly managed and, eventually, monetized” (italics in original). Authors of the book *Refiguring the Archive*²³, Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Jane Taylor, Michele Pickover, Graeme Reid and Razia Saleh (2002: npn), wrote the following: “Traditionally archives have been seen as preserving memory and as holding the past. The contributors to this book question this orthodoxy, unfolding the ways in which archives construct, sanctify, and bury pasts”. In an attempt to release the hold of the past on my family archive, I also considered the appropriateness of the term “archiveology”,

Archiveology, in its most succinct form, refers to the reuse, recycling, appropriation, and borrowing of archival material that filmmakers have been doing for decades. Archiveology traverses experimental, documentary, and essayistic filmmaking, moving beyond the categories of found footage, compilation and collage (Russell, 2017: npn).

²³ Which materialised from a 1998 seminar series held at Wits University

which according to the practice of Walter Benjamin²⁴ and film studies scholar, Catherine Russell is what I planned on doing with artefacts of the family archive. Even though Russell's medium is film rather than dance, her opinions of the archive resonate with my notions of this study in the following manner, "The concept of the archive continues to be rethought and revised as artists, scholars, and historians gain new access to the documents of the past", as well as, "The archive as a mode of transmission offers a unique means of displaying and accessing historical memory, with significant implications for the ways that we imagine cultural history" (2017: npn). Neeraj Bhatia (2020: 117), architect and urban designer, who was part of the team²⁵ of the *ReAssembling the Archive* exhibition, posits that "There is no political power without control of the archive".

Going beyond the archive as a static container of information and transitioning the building from a site of power to a place of empowerment, *ReAssembling the Archive* situates the archive as a place of discourse and public assembly. By doing so, it brings this space to the foreground of the public sphere and allows for the reordering of information to construct new histories and knowledge. Inserting the contemporary subject as a participant in assembling the archive, information can now be questioned, critiqued, and reordered as an act of knowledge production. (Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism, 2019: npn).



Fig. 4: 'ReAssembling the Archive' exhibition at the 2019 Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism

²⁴"Walter Benjamin's conceptions of memory, document, excavation, and historiography tend to be articulated differently over the course of his career, and there are a host of interpretations and glosses on what he might have actually meant" (Russell, 2017: npn).

²⁵ProjectTeam: Neeraj Bhatia, Cesar Lopez, Bomin Park, Ian Erickson, Douglas Lee, Shuang Yan, Hayfa Al-Gwaiz, Mia Voevodsky, Caleb Bentley. Curators: Beth Hughes and Francisco Sanin.

The project team designed what appeared to be a block of stairs on castors. The interesting aspect was that it consisted of four pieces that could be taken apart and re-arranged in various configurations; much like a kaleidoscope would arrange pieces of glass, just without the light and mirror effect. Bhatia goes on to note that, “Every archive is a product of exclusion. Through the selection of information, only particular histories are deemed to be valuable and thereby only certain vantage points are represented and preserved” (Bhatia, 2020: 117). The unarchival process required a re-assemblage of the artefacts and the chronology of the family dance archive, while being cognisant of the terminologies referred to above as well as Bhatia’s concerns. Re-positioning, rearranging and remaking of the archive felt appropriate to the vision that was forming within me, as they had a mutable creative energy that resonated with this study.

The archive as a form of performative making remained elusive until in sheer frustration I conducted an online search for various versions of the word ‘unarchival’ and came across the website *UNARCHIVAL.com*. ‘Te Papa Tonagrewa’ translates to ‘container of treasures’ or archive. It is also the name of the Museum in New Zealand that spawned the *UNARCHIVAL.com* website that finally provided me with the inspiration and justification around this study. The website was a visual research project by RDYSTDY, based in Wellington, video artists Hana Miller and Jacob Perkins who stated their purpose as, “To change our course for the future - and our reflexes in a present moment - by reclassifying the past. [By] Placing old objects in new contexts” (Miller & Perkins, 2020). They utilised moving image to allow audience interaction with its artefacts in a rather engaging manner, such as re-animation of fossils or preserved artefacts. They posed a question similar to the one that I was attempting to formulate: “How to make our own ecologies visible by making

visible the ways we make meaning of an object that may or may not be culturally and historically significant to us?” (Miller & Perkins, 2020). In terms of associations with Indian dance and unarchival, the only reference that I encountered in subsequent online searches is Odissi pedagogue, Aadhya Kaktikar’s²⁶ discussion of the intersection of traditional Indian academy. She never used the term again in the article addressing the tensions that exist in “decolonisation as an epistemological move towards understanding, living and moving beyond the colonial translation” (Kaktikar, 2020:1). This study addresses the tensions in the following manner, “This un-archival unruly lived experience of decolonization proposes a possibility of evoking Indian pasts against the misuses of the present. Arguing for an un-archival response which mediates the insertion of traditional oral mnemocultres into academia, enables knowledge production through heterogeneous modes of practice sustained by an embodied relation with generativity” (Kaktikar, 2020:1), in the South African context. In keeping with her statements, I wanted to craft and experiment with the artefacts myself, as a dancer, using the principles of “error, risk and imagination” that the *UNARCHIVAL.com* website extolled in order to activate an unraveling of the archive. In preparation for my PhD proposal presentation, I contacted Hanna Miller on LinkedIn, on 13 October 2021, to gauge how long this work had been going on, as no date was listed on their website. This is the conversation that ensued (Fig. 5):

²⁶ From an article in *Research in Dance Education* titled ‘Choreographing Decolonization: pedagogical confrontations at the intersection of traditional dance and liberal arts in higher education in India’ by Kaktikar (2020).

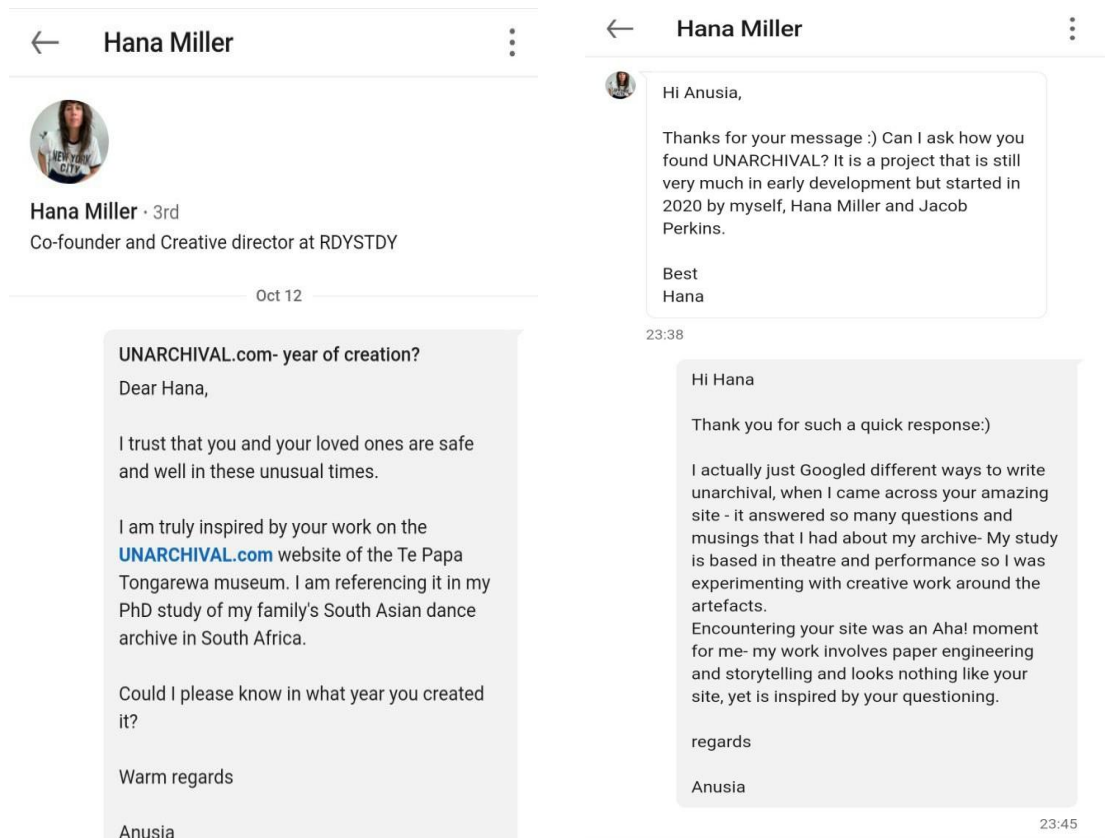


Fig. 5: Screenshots of my conversation with Hanna Miller on my LinkedIn profile (2021).

If like me, one believes in serendipity or synchronicity - this felt like a neon sign from the universe that this study and all of the many areas it embraces, was meant to materialise. It also meant that the site could be taken down from public access until it is fully developed, now that she was aware of my access to it (as at 2 January 2023, the website is still accessible).

Unarchival is being developed as a process of remaking and forming, yet relevant to current times, and future pedagogy, with my family archive. The following terms then become relevant to the process: Deconstruction, emancipation, re-/animation, re-configuration, adaptation, transformation, transmutation, metamorphosis, reconstruction, re-storying, re-imagining, when considering the question: **How can I ‘challenge the perception of ‘archive’ as something closed, orientated for exclusive usage by experts or locked**

containers of “historical truth” and see archives as reflective process and communicative practice in relation to my family archive? “Through collecting, archiving and writing, ... through photography and community participation and performance, people contribute to the story of heritage by what they do and what they care for” (Chetty in Vahed, Desai & Waetjen, 2010: vi). As this has not been attempted in this field previously, and for the purposes of this study, the ‘unarchival’ process equates to an unpacking in the following manner: First, traversing uncharted routes into time, history and heritage utilising fact, fantasy or forbiddance to tell my story requires malleability and re-invention. Then, creating an opus or a set of compositions/reflections based on previous documentation, current interaction with the family archive, as well as allowing room for the instinctive and intuitive. Finally, it becomes the opposite of the unarchiving process where rather than deletion or erasure, there is an excavation (Foucault, 1969), and resurfacing of ideas and research-worthy issues prompting further/future pedagogy. Peeling back the layers of erasure to generate new/alternative knowledge in my field, this will be expanded upon in the next chapter of this thesis.

The literature that I engaged with had diverse attitudes to the subject, especially around the assumption that the concept of an archive is a western trope, as opposed to that of indigenous peoples. This is proved to be untrue by the careful documentation of events by people of colour since before Christendom such as the Egyptians, Incans, Mayans, Indians and other ancient cultures. There is evidence engraved in stone or written on palm leaves, as noted by Pascual (2016), dating back to the earliest civilisations and, in the case of Indian dance, preserved in ancient texts and temple sculptures. Despite all of this, indigenous people have been described by the western world as “uncivilised”, reducing them to people

without agency²⁷, erasing them from history, and thus current social, political and pedagogical structures. The ripple effect is still felt today in the form of continued exclusion of the marginalised - “Cloaked as neutral repositories, the assembling of information within an Archive was not innocent—it reflected how different societies structured their world and acted within it” (Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism, 2019: npn). Curator, Nontobeko Mabongi Ntombela’s (2013: 9) study, *A Fragile Archive: Refiguring, Rethinking, Reimagining, Re-presenting Gladys Mgudlandlu*, states that “archives are understood to function as evidence used to support, prove, establish and construct information that can be used towards further research and writing”. This is supported by Irit Rogoff (2006), a visual culture theorist, who speaks of the power structures that remain in the act of archiving that perpetuates marginalisation and the violence of the colonial monopoly on the act of preservation and documentation. This study is concerned with the unravelling of western notions of literary and conceptual archiving. Indigenous studies scholar Lynette Russell (2013) writes that archival recordings about indigenous peoples and cultures were as a result of western or colonial observations of them. Therefore, “these were archival texts within which indigenous people were the object (and subject) of the gaze of colonial authorities and ‘experts,’ and from which indigenous knowledge, perspectives and voice were excluded” (Russell, 2013: 161). The unarchival process relates to the curatorial act of re-imagining the customary narrative, historical ellipses and traditions that surround dance and, in particular, South Asian dance. Even the ancient cave paintings found in both South Africa and India form part of the act of archiving - a message to future generations from our ancestors, the act of memorialising or remembrance. “Significantly under-represented in the past, more material records of dancers and dancing from various Diasporas are currently being collected and catalogued. The concept of archive also extends beyond the official documents, to

²⁷ In this instance the use of the term is in accordance with author and trauma scholar, Bessel van der Kolk’s (2014: 95) definition: “‘Agency’ is the technical term for the feeling of being in charge of your life: knowing where you stand, knowing that you have a say in what happens to you, knowing that you have some ability to shape your circumstances”.

encompass the memories” (Society for Dance Research, 2016: npn). The manner in which we present and preserve that knowledge is significant. The concept of curatorial choices around an archive, for a person of colour, then becomes an act of defiance.

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (ICH)

In this study, the unarchival process is viewed as a novel act in my field of expertise, contributing to the development of the archive in dance pedagogy in terms of the implications for the future of creative and archival scholarship by the introduction of such an act. It is not seen as a collection of fossils or mummified objects or even relics of the past. The materiality exposed in this case through paper, storytelling and dance help the translation of the conduit between unravelling and reordering the physical, cultural and embodied archives.

Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of object[s]. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts (UNESCO website, 2021) (underlined in original).

This study also inadvertently focuses on issues surrounding Intangible Cultural Heritage. According to ICH scholar, Mairéad Nic Craith at a TEDx event at Heriot Watt University (Craith in Youtube, 2016), ICH is about social inclusion and memory. She goes on to state that by destroying the memory of the people, colonialism attempted to destroy tangible heritage of the indigenous as well as their interpretation of their past. Therefore the unarchival process is about ICH as, “It thrives on its basis in communities and depends on those whose knowledge of traditions, skills and customs are passed on to the rest of the community, from generation to generation, or to other communities” (UNESCO, 2021). With UNESCO’s (2021) listing of the following characteristics on their website, “Traditional, contemporary and living at the same time,... Inclusive, ... Representative, ... Community-

based” (UNESCO, 2021), ICH is a tool of reconciliation or conflict amelioration, which is of particular importance to the South African context. It “is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization. An understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life” (UNESCO, 2021). Unarchival attempts to delve into ICH, assuming the nature of a palimpsest. The process is thus viewed as living, complex and layered, offering many vantage points - much like my choreography.

All peoples have oral tradition in common, especially the indigenous, as a passing down of unwritten cultural, traditional, and familial practices generationally. It is a path to finding our way back to ourselves. “The dancing body embodies all past stories shared with others. ...the body is a living archive, still in movement, continually in transformation into new forms of being. Rather than archive as static repository, I argue that the body is an archive in motion that provides knowledge” (Gehm, Husemann & Von Wilcke in Vionnet, 2018). This could encapsulate translational aspects such as trauma and violence from slavery, the holocaust, war, famine and apartheid. “The modern concept of trauma points to an occurrence that both demands representation and refuses to be represented” (Roth, 2005: 233), in my case as a descendent of the Indian indentured system. Colonialism brought my ancestors to South Africa from 1860 to the early 1900s, to work in the sugar cane fields, of the then Natal, for the British Empire, providing its own accounts of pain and trauma.

History, like the archive, has been the property of the victorious. They had the power to control and shape the history of the vanquished (subaltern) in any way they desired, even

though historian, Daniel Sims (2022) writes in his opinion piece titled ‘History isn’t written by the victors, it’s written by people who want you to believe it’, May 7 in the *Prince George Citizen*, “History is actually written by whoever decides to actually take the time to write it down, nothing more, nothing less”. This study involves taking the time to record the archive in ways that honour the Diasporas that were taken from their natural homes and had to adapt and survive, then thrive in alien surroundings. Anne Makkonen (2010: 21), theatre scholar, in conversation with her colleague Hanna Järvinen attempted to answer the question “Can We Dance History?”²⁸: “They reveal a past which is somehow still present, not as it was, but as we are recalling, imagining, interpreting, presenting and dancing it at the present moment”. The traces could also contain the successes, triumphs and contributions to a field of study from unexpected sources. This study makes meaning of the Indian dance foundations, and the “hidden” influence that predates the linear knowledge systems that western history alludes to, “history is that which transforms documents into monuments. In that area where, in the past, history deciphered the traces left by men, it now deploys a mass of elements that have to be grouped, made relevant, and placed in relation to one another to form totalities” (Foucault, 1969: 8).

In *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972 [1969]), Michel Foucault offered one of the most radical reflections on the archive as “the general system of formation and transformation of statements” ...For the field of dance studies, this concept has been particularly influential because it revealed that the body is an archive and choreography is a dynamic system of transmission and transformation useful to turn abstract concepts, verbal statements and written documents (including choreographic *scores*) into corporeal actions and kinetic events. ...The metaphor of the “body as archive” or the “body archive” refers to the idea that the body can be understood as a “storage place” of corporeal documents and therefore of incorporated knowledge. Through this lens, the body retains sensory, emotional and cognitive experiences that are accessed as movements, gestures, patterns and rhythms (Franco & Chernetich, 2022: npn) (*italics in original*).

In the re-cognition that bodied or embodied archives, as repositories, have been maintained by ancient peoples before its western conceptualisation and continue to re-shape them, I

²⁸ Conference Proceedings Compilation: Dance History Conference, 13 March 2010.

began with Walter Mignolo's process of "delinking" (2007: 453), described as "people taking control of their own destinies" (Mignolo, 2017: 41) - an act of disobedience. The evolution of human history is so layered and sedimented that we sometimes struggle to pull things apart in the *mélange* that it presents. The experiment is as much about how to separate the artefacts, as it is to re-configure them. The dialectic between the separation, the reconfiguration and the translation becomes the data in the unarchival process. The embodied archive is the focus of how we trouble the hegemonic notions around purity and authenticity, culture and tradition.

THE CREATIVE OR PERFORMATIVE

The initial inspiration for the creative work in this study was 'Instapoet', Rupi Kaur (Carlin, 2017: npn) whose combination of verse, image and dance prompted me to explore Indian dance in ways that brings various genres together (Fig. 6). Canadian based, Kaur, began her work in 2009 by writing short, compact Instagram-ready verses that she pairs with her own sketched illustrations like figure 6. Her work is considered "bold and vulnerable" (Raman-Wilms, 2022: npn), attracting predominantly women readers. She also uses her work in stage performances. Her work and this creative project are seen as "re-enactments, as "will to archive," invest in creative re-turns precisely in order to find, foreground, and produce (or invent or "make", as Foucault proposed) difference" (Lepecki, 2010: 46).

upon my birth
my mother said
there is god in you
do you feel her dancing

- rupi kaur

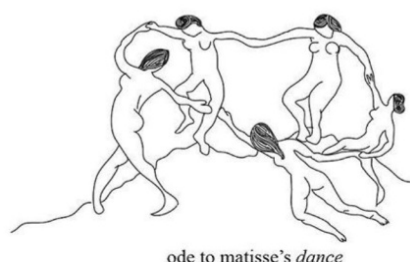


Fig.6: Rupi Kaur (pinterest.com).

The remaking in this image allows me to see my experimentation with dance in a unique manner, challenging stereotypes around how dance and the dancer can be seen, heard and

presented. On further consideration, this image led to the realisation that this study “necessitates a broader definition of possible objects of retrieval, new approaches to the characterisation of behaviour and action, different **ways of telling** and different types of recording and inscription, which can incorporate different orders of narrative” (Pearson & Shanks, 2001: 131) (bold in original). The added challenge was to do so under Covid-19 restrictions, where digital presentation was a growing requirement rather than a creative choice.

The majority of the family archive consists of ‘paper’. Forests have to be grown and decimated to create it, it can be used in numerous ways from a roll of toilet paper, to acts of violence in which our ancestors were fixed and recorded (often biographically incorrectly) by violent systems, to creating the most celebrated piece of art and then in a flash it can be destroyed by fire and other elements; yet it can be re-cycled to tell stories all over again. Its transformative properties of creation, erasure and reconfiguration motivated its choice as my medium of ‘choreography’ - to employ paper.²⁹ artefacts to create works that bring dance to life through storytelling. “Paper choreography” was coined at my first open studio in the Visual Arts department when discussing my early story boards. I had experienced a serious accident in September 2020 that I am still recovering from. It, therefore, prevents me from physically dancing at an optimal level. Paper is seen as an alternate medium to introduce dance as a diversity that unifies, rather than culturally divorced entities as was indoctrinated by apartheid policies. Like my dance choreography, I planned on interweaving various layers of paper to create imagined conversations between artefacts, evocation of time and the cultural influences that both the archive and Indian dance is composed of.

²⁹ Pictures, collages, newspaper and magazine articles, concert programmes, choreographic notes and synopses.

The video I created was birthed on paper as choreographic notes for the live performances, along with other artefacts. It is a microcosmic representation of the family archive (<https://youtu.be/029aRawjFHw>). I began to experiment with the spoken word in the form of “poetry, as distinct from other imaginative modes of writing such as fiction or drama, concerns itself chiefly with “the expression of feeling and emotion”” (Eliot in Naicker, 2011:2). I felt that it was apt for “the exploration and articulation of the intimate voice ... a space in which expression is charted, and identity constructed” (Naicker, 2011:2). The challenge here was how to combine the material artefacts with the embodied and lived experience. I began the process of experimenting with the physical artefacts around mid-2020 creating a freer product each time. The abstraction of playing with the pixilation of photographs and documents, interspersing it with movement to words rather than music was an evolution from the paper to a choreography of it, yet at the same time a modernisation of taking paper into a digital space. It is an attempt to combine the physical (visual) and embodied (audio) archives through unarchival, both celebratory and melancholic. I found myself attempting to recreate the footage filmed by my maternal grandfather, lost in a fire at his furniture factory in Durban, where they were, ironically, stored for safe keeping. I find our grief echoed in the words of feminist author bell hooks (1994: 389), “This was for me a terrible loss, an irreconcilable grief. Gone was the image of myself I could love. Losing that snapshot, I lost the proof of my worthiness”. This created a profound sense of loss in me - of memory - of a piece of my ancestry - a part of my heritage. It inspired me to create a version as an act of healing through the use of generations of hands that the archive has passed through (<https://youtu.be/xRpY9gjMXrg>), my father who represented my mother’s in her absence; my sister’s, brother-in-law’s (the white hands) and my niece who is the

representation of the intermingling of cultures (this will be unpacked in detail in chapter three of this thesis). These hands of mine that are classically trained and steeped in tradition are also the hands that are used in my creations in a similar manner as my childhood. “As “documents,” the images collected in archiveological films acquire meaning through their ability to awaken, stimulate, or attune the viewer’s belief in their indexicality. They are not to be taken for granted, but to be recognized as passages into the past” (Russell, 2017: npn). I learnt how to ‘play’ again. “While the term ‘play’ might evoke a sense of good natured exploration and healthy fun it must be recognized that, like many human social activities, play can represent a spectrum of behaviours, and mean different things to different people” (Cameron, Anderson & Wotzko, 2017: 183). I had to achieve an infantile state in re-imagining the family archive, learning through my hands again with paper, scissors, puppets, colours and textures. This was not in the reverent way that I was taught this intricate art form, but rather a naive, tactile manner through my hands, and like with my dance impetus, I used an eclectic collection of artistic elements to bring a novel flavour to my creations.

In the pursuit of novelty or difference, Morse Code was used in the opening and closing credits of the first film piece. The choice of the colour red for the code acted as symbols of the bleeding of culture or as ‘bloodlines’ that run deeper than the veins. It is not just a form of telegraphic communication, but also encoded messages from the past sending information to the present and future via rhythm and signals. It is found in the music and dance of slaves and the oppressed, whether in America or in the Cape or the sugarcane fields of Natal, as an act of resistance. The great ambition of Samuel F.B. Morse was to be an artist. He was a painter of portraits in particular and pursued several other interests, “Morse studied mathematics and philosophy at Yale, where he enjoyed painting miniature portraits far more

than attending class” (Cain, 2017). After his stay in Europe, he dabbled in electromagnetics, which led to the invention of the telegraph or Morse code, a system “of dots and dashes still in use by radio operators today” (Cain, 2017). The relevance of Morse code to this study is the innovative re-engineering of something that is taken as a norm or stereotype, and re-purposing it to suit a need, environment or circumstance, over and above meeting the human need for communication.

As an allegory³⁰ of the body, we find this phenomenon in South Africa in the form of Gumboot dancing, which began during the Johannesburg gold rush since 1886. Born in the darkness of South African gold mines during apartheid, gumboot dancing sprung from the basic need for exploited miners to communicate in what was a harrowing environment, where they were forbidden to even speak to one another. Workers decided to let their boots do the talking for them, and developed a type of Morse Code from the noises made by the stomping of their rubber Gumboots or Wellingtons, “their form of communication in the underground took “body language” to a whole new level and inspired an entirely new form of dance” (Knapp, 2018: npn). As an extension to this act of resistance or defiance, the dancers used metal bottle caps on wire loops around the ankles of the boots to enhance the sound and musicality over time, in a similar way that South Asian dance has done for centuries with bells or jingles, “by slapping their gumboots to send messages to each other, the enslaved workers were rattling off the very chains that bound them.... it was also a testament to the miners’ strength and staunch fight for self-expression” (Knapp, 2018: npn). A similar occurrence was seen for centuries in India, the rhythm of bare feet stamping to the sound of

³⁰ “The Oxford English Dictionary defines “**allegory**” as a “**story, picture, or other piece of art that uses symbols to convey a hidden or ulterior meaning, typically a moral or political one.**” In its most simple and concise definition, an allegory is when a piece of visual or narrative media uses one thing to “stand in for” a different, hidden idea” (Bude, 2022: npn) (bold and underlined in original).

various cycles of bells and percussion instruments. This is a form of communication of the mood and motif of the dance piece, whether a devadasi, tawaif, a high-born Brahmin exponent or a descendent of the Girmitya. Whether in praise or resistance, “The Body should catch up to the tune, the hands must explain the meaning, the eyes must speak the emotion, and the feet must beat the time- measure” (Natyashastra in Vanama, 2012: 216). There is a tie in to the emotions, where South Asian dance possesses a “silent” language of the body, i.e. the positioning of the hands (mudras or hastaks) and facial muscles (abhinaya or navras/nine emotions) , where a rhythmic movement of the feet and bells transmits a narrative to the audience. Contemporary dance scholar, Gerard M. Samuel (2016: 54) in his PhD thesis referred to dance as a “cultural marker - as language that unifies and separates”. The unarchival process became a performance of resistance.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This chapter was the most difficult, complex and messy to write. There appeared to be so many options available to me in configuring this study, and yet at the same time there appeared to be none. The opening prose to this chapter aptly expressed the difficulty and challenge I faced in allowing my family archive to be accessible, free and to live beyond me - a sense of utter vulnerability and discomfort. It was only towards the end of my research, in November 2022, that I encountered the term *affective archive* which is described as ‘a repository “of feelings and emotions” (Cvetkovich in Colmenares, 2019: 7) that are “found in the places, objects, and gestures of a public culture” (Cvetkovich in Colmenares, 2019: 256). I found a kinship with the questions that Razak Khan of Center for the History of Emotions, Societies Freie Universität Berlin posed in a workshop announcement,

In what ways do researchers construct or unmake their archives, and, in turn, are affected by the archives? Does the form or medium of archival residue (paper documents, auditory clips, and visual capsules) have any bearing on the varying levels of engagement with the archive and/or the sensory experience of the researcher? What concomitant effect may it have on

research outcomes? In what ways does a researcher who studies culture from “within” or “outside” ascribe or deny affective meanings to an archive? (Khan, 2015: npn).

These thoughts and enquiries were exactly what I was asking myself, and pivotal in the formulation of my creative work. Encountering the Society of Affective Archives (2022) website *Affective Archives* which stated that, “the “affective” archive is proposed as a prism for the imagination and a means of envisioning both the past and the future” with an emphasis on “technical know-how and the handmade, ... the media of public art, sculpture, artist books, film and performance”, further affirmed this study’s ambit. This aided me as a researcher with the freedom to produce knowledge in various ways.

It felt like the creative process and writing flowed into each other, as well as independently,

Work that takes place inside archives and work that is designated as art are often perceived as conceptually distinct practices, yet it is possible for the two to share common techniques and methodologies ... It is also important to note that these works make space for complex and abstract thinking around images and image sets, and around language itself, whilst still maintaining the structural discourse of the archive at some level (Birkin, 2015: npn).

I was, however, still left with the sensation that there was more to providing new life to the family archive, beyond Vionnet’s (2018) reference to the dancing body as a “living archive” in the introductory chapter of this thesis. The curiosity buoyed my interest in locating more treatments for the family archive, which led me to the fortuitous discovery of *living archives*, “practices and environments that connect the organisation, curation and transmission of memory with present-bound creative, performative, and participatory processes (Living Archives in Sabiescu, 2020: 497). These archives require interdisciplinarity to enable their complexity to be appropriately understood. Observation and experimentation are crucial to such practice and research. This term had a profound impact on me as this allowed for the creative use of artefacts as “cultural tools” (Wertsch in Sabiescu, 2020: 497) “that mediate

meaning-making, knowledge and memory transmission, and which can encompass equally physical objects, texts in literal sense ... and even human bodies” (Sabiescu, 2020: 497). The Royal Court Theatre In Sloane Square, London focuses on writers, and states on their website that living archives “resist the idea of ‘canon’”, and their questioning also aligns with the crux of this study, “Who gets to decide what is remembered and what is archived. What has been forgotten and what should have existed” (Royal Court website, 2022). My creative process, while inspired by various artists like, primarily Hanna Miller and Jacob Perkins’ website, Kara Walker’s silhouette murals, amongst others, was largely directed by instinct and intuition, the yarning with my inner self and my ancestry, attempting to create places and spaces that I would have wanted to see myself as well as my art and culture – in the country of my birth. Like with my dance- if it did not exist – we created it.

The theoretical backing for the creative process was limited. My body and embodiment took over and created a map for me to follow, which involved ‘play’ as incidental learning that materialised from a combination of choreography and impulse.

At the core of the performative approach is the link between practice and research, thinking and action. This implies that “whatever is being studied is regarded as practices, events and behaviours, not just as ‘objects’ or ‘things’. This quality of live-ness – even when dealing with media and archival materials – is at the heart of performance studies” (Schechner in Sabiescu, 2020: 499).

In my research, I encountered a similar leaning to that of Adrian Palka’s multimedia *Bark and Butterflies* (2013), a performance installation that used the family archive to “evoke and honour memory” (Sabiescu, 2020: 497) of Polish persons that were deported from labour camps in World War II. “To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognise it ‘the way it really was’. It means to seize hold of memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger”

(Benjamin in Hall, 2001: 89). This is similar to the concept of *Jetztzeit*³¹ or present time that requires an artist's intervention to disrupt the passage of time.

History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now [*Jetztzeit*] The awareness that they are about to make the continuum of history explode is characteristic of the revolutionary classes at the moment of their action (Benjamin, 1942: 7).

For me the extinction of my family archive is dangerous. Through my lived experience and during the considerations of this study, I have come to the understanding that memory or memorialising is equivalent to my mortality or the immortality of my family archive. As such, none of us – neither the archive, dance nor a family, nor an individual exists in isolation. We are a part of this palimpsestic existence on a planet shaped by cyclical events. So too is the process of unarchival – each creative piece, chapter and artefact are layered and connected to various aspects of the stories that churn up from the archive and me. “The topic of archives has never been as inflationary as it is today. At the turn of the millennium, the archive transforms the questions of memory, recollection, and the preservation of traces into a cultural obsession” (Ernst in Birkin, 2015: npn). These branches of the archive's conceptualisation in creative, different and unique ways – “as a departure from the norm” (Birkin, 2015: npn), are congruent with the ideation of this study and are dealt with in this manner in the subsequent chapters of this thesis, giving the archive a voice, thereby ensuring a more contemporary iteration of the family archive – contributing to its longevity.

³¹ “Walter Benjamin uses this term in his ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’ to describe a notion of time that is ripe with revolutionary possibility, time that has been detached from the continuum of history. It is time at a standstill, poised, filled with energy, and ready to take what Benjamin called the ‘tiger's leap’ into the future. It isn't naturally occurring, however, and takes the intervention of the artist or revolutionary to produce it by ‘blasting’ it free from the ceaseless flow in which it would otherwise be trapped. Benjamin contrasts *jetztzeit* with the ‘homogeneous empty time’ of the ruling class, which is history written from the perspective of the victors” (Oxford Reference, 2022)

CHAPTER 2

FINDING MY SEAT IN THE THEATRE:

THE UNARCHIVAL DANCE OF 'INDIAN-NESS'



Fig.7: Three generations of dancing feet and bells: (from left to right) my mother's (1961), mine (1990), and our late student Renusha Manilal's (1995), from the family dance archive.

The dancing foot, the tinkling bells,
The songs that are sung,
And the varying steps,
Find these within yourself,
Then shall your fetters fall away

- 'Peasant's Prayer' (in Mulk Raj Anand, 1957: 9)

This peasant's prayer could very well have been the motto of my ancestors as they worked in the fields of their peaceful, or possibly not so serene (dependant on the socio-political time and era), rural villages in India for centuries, since time immemorial. Colonialism changed all that for a once flourishing and wealthy nation.

The pre-colonial era for India was indicative of prosperity, abundance as well as expansion and contestation of territory. There is sufficient evidence on temple structures, where carvings not only reflect the opulent arts and culture, but also the tenets that the lifestyle of the ancient kingdoms was built on (Joseph, 2018: npn).

According to Shashi Tharoor, former UN under-secretary-general and human-resources minister of India, in *An era of darkness*, "some 17 million Indians died of hunger in the years 1891 to 1900. In 1943, the Bengal Famine killed another 4 million people" (Dembowski,

2017: npn). Life on this planet was never the same since the tyrannical hunger for power, land and wealth were an obsession for the Western colonists - where the subaltern was viewed as chattel or livestock – the Indian Diaspora scattered across the globe in the pursuit of ‘white gold’³². “There are details of travel, international connections and intermingling of races from Europe, Asia, and even Egypt and sub-Saharan Africa. The Indian, if not global idea, of identity has been as diverse then as it is now” (Joseph, 2018: npn). India, a country and its people, were pillaged, plundered and raped of its resources by the British Empire. In the course of this study, I find myself in a predicament - that would possibly seem strange to my transoceanic forebears - I am freeing myself from the ‘fetters’ of this family archive and finding myself in more ways than I could have imagined, while liberating the components of my family archive. This chapter documents my exploration of the concept of ‘Indian-ness’, the movement and continuum of colonisation and migration, and will demonstrate how the Indian Sub-continent, that was a prosperous hub of trade and travel, was reduced to poverty, death and dislocation of vast numbers of its people. In this chapter, I explored my historical and dance positionality, which felt very much like trying to locate my seat in a darkened theatre - I knew it was in a certain direction and vicinity, finding the actual seat was a bit tricky.

In the multiple forays into my family archive, I keep coming back to a single question in the ‘finding’ process: What does it mean to be Indian or a part of the Indian Diaspora that views dance as a sacred part of their cultural and religious practices along with heritage and identity?

Tanno (1997) identified several ways in which ethnic identity is evolved: identity as symbolic themes, such as a common language, rituals, or shared world views; identity as historical

³² Sugar

consciousness, which can be described as a sequence of events and struggles over time that reflects continuity from past to future; and “identity as social consciousness manifested through seeking communal or group acceptance (in Tsetsura, 2010: 28).

When deciphering the conundrum of ‘Indian-ness’, statements such as those of dancer/author, Vasugi Devar Singh’s (2019: 144) come into play, “This ancient, pure unadulterated dance art, Bharata Natyam with its strong roots in religion and spirituality, will also be affected by changing times” is an example of the contradictions in the perceptions of, and attitudes towards, South Asian dance. The juxtaposition of authenticity and change provides the tension for this study. This conjures up images of yoga, temples and an almost asexual, sterile approach to the art form. The reality could not be further from these images. The changes to labelling, classifying and compartmentalising are acts that began in the 1600-1800s, according to Mignolo (2007) and were solidified at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. This is when each nation at the conference was given a piece of the African continent. The colonisation of Africa could have begun with the Portuguese King John I’s desire to control the gold producing areas of West Africa. This was also in response to the extreme costs of utilising the silk and spice trans-Saharan routes to the East being controlled by the Arabs. The British Empire then seized these territories and controlled India and the global sugar trade for several centuries, which wrought severe changes in the cultural freedoms of indigenous people. As a result, both India and South Africa are multicultural in their composition and history, both formal and undocumented, which led to a fascinating exploration of comparativeness in my creative component of this study.

In relation to this study, Cultural Identity scholar Vivian Hsueh-Hua Chen (2014: npn), postulates that, “Cultural identity refers to identification with, or sense of belonging to, a particular group based on various cultural categories, including nationality, ethnicity, race,

gender, and religion”. She believes that this is produced and perpetuated via a collective sharing of knowledge. “In the globalized world with increasing intercultural encounters, cultural identity is constantly enacted, negotiated, maintained, and challenged through communicative practices” (Chen, 2014: npn). Globalisation appears to be the current buzzword, especially with the advent of the world-wide-web. In the unarchival process, there is the questioning of the concept of ‘globalisation’ being relevant to every era or time, dating back to pre-history and prior to that.

Globalization, i.e. the world we live in, can also be viewed as a challenge to think cultural heritage, in particular the archive, at a new level, beyond the limits of borders and nationalities. In light of this context, the concept of identity assumes new directions, and hence the same cultural legacy, with different types of heritage in articulation, acquires a renewed relevance and scope, mainly through recent attempts of appropriation and embodiment. ... based on the assumption that the archive is constantly evolving and changing, we have to think that the researcher of the performing arts is under the influence of new forms of archive ... it allows us to propose new relationships between identities, events, circumstances, helping to foresee a past also in change towards a future that can only be guessed (Pinto, 2017, 507).

Its value for the unarchival process lies in the implications for cultural identity and its ownership. Chen (2014) goes on to explain that,

One's cultural identity is created in relation to others within a unique social context. All cultural identities are defined by recognizing others' presence and cultural practices. Intercultural dialogue is essential to constructing cultural identity as it encourages individuals to see similarities with and differences from others and define who they are. Intercultural dialogue produces a contested space where cultural identity is constantly redefined and negotiated (Chen, 2014: npn).

By an exclusion of this type of knowledge from basic to tertiary education structures, we stunt future generations' ability to acknowledge the importance of sharing cultures. By maintaining cultural silos, we perpetuate the colonial perspective, when not providing the appropriate environment/interaction to decolonise young minds. Acknowledging a few traditions, based on demographics, still remains an act of exclusion for the already marginalised, who are regularly provided with mixed messages as to where one stays rooted

in one's own culture in a globalised world. I am attempting to answer the question: **How can I trouble the notion of the purity and authenticity of a perceived monoculture such as that of India and “Indian-ness” in terms of dance by the unarchival of artefacts as a ‘DNA test’ and/or stage production to provoke the archive?**

TEMPORALITY

The evocation of time is a constant theme in my creative pieces as I contemplate whether history truly is a thing of the past, or is it evidenced in the way time comes to impinge on ideas of the colonised, exoticised and diasporic communities possibly adjusting them in various ways.

Traditionally, in the field of dance there has been a limited reflection on the artistic potential of time as its fourth dimension and of the representation of time in dance pieces, on how the artistic manipulation of time affects our understanding of the works and our aesthetic responses to them (Ivarez, 2009: 2).

The concept of time in this study is derived from the African word “*Sankofa*”, an ancient philosophy of the Akan people from Ghana. Even though its usage may appear strange to some, it is still part of me and my African-ness. Moreover, it is best suited to this study as it is symbolised by a mythical bird with its feet facing forward, while the head is reaching backward to retrieve a golden egg. Author Yonah Matamba (2020: 115) describes it as, “The oxymoron ‘gazing back and moving forward’”.

The word is thusly derived:

SAN (return),

KO (go),

FA (look, seek and take).

(Carter G. Woodson Center, 2021) (Bold in original).

Like the Akan tradition, it is the notion that a sturdy future is guided by the past that underpins this investigation – bringing the past into the present and future. “The Sankofa has also been used as a symbol whereby knowledge of the past can be utilised to map out the future; or where a mistake has been made, the wrong can be rectified and lessons can be learnt from the experience” (Slater, 2019: 2). The unarchival process involves the disruption of time, history and other impinging forces on the family archive. Similarly it, “draws its inspiration from this collision of time, of Jetztzeit, and its variable tenses, also as an embodiment of the collision of performance, fantastical fiction, fine art and the nature of historicity, embedded in a series of deeply researched moments and spaces” (Taub & Lamprecht, 2022: 35). This chapter examines the influence of temporality the intermingling of various cultures in the pre-historic and post-colonial world.

Prehistory” covered the entire human past up until Mesopotamians started writing things down, about 5,200 years ago. After that, it gets complicated, as different peoples in different parts of the world adopted written literacies, or not, at various times. “History” had different start dates, depending on the particularities of whether and why people wrote, or encountered others who wrote about them (Rademaker et al, 2022: npn).

This involves looking at pre-historic³³, ‘proto-history’³⁴ and pre-colonial times and re-tracing cultural intermingling through the medium of dance. “What Jetztzeit does is to create a dissonance between the present and the future; the sacred and the profane; the mountain and the abyss. In essence, it is a location for charged interactions between what has been and what is to become” (Taub & Lamprecht, 2022: 35). Temporal erasures, ellipses and re-creations, migrations, and invasions, that exist in the art form in India, and the implications for the dance form in the South African context are addressed as a palimpsest, defined as “a manuscript that was erased in order to create space for more writing” (Norrieaga, 2020: npn).

³³ “The evidence in prehistory comes from fossils, archaeological excavations of ancient human settlements, various objects made by humans, like tools, and, increasingly importantly, the DNA of both ancient and present-day individuals” (Joseph, 2018: npn).

³⁴ “...some historians... use the label ‘proto-history’ to describe the period between pre-history and history” (Joseph, 2018: npn).

In ancient times, when paper was not yet invented or incredibly expensive to create, animal skins or parchment were used and then washed clean and re-used, still with a trace of what was recorded before. The meanings and implications go deeper. The surface of the earth can also be considered as palimpsestic, where the landscape is susceptible to natural disasters, erosions, wars and human architecture - embodied as schema or strata.

No place, space or people go unaffected by this cyclical act of destruction and reconstruction that still leaves hints of what existed before. French founder of impressionist painting, Claude Monet (1894), asserts that “Everything changes, even stone” (in Getty Museum Collection, 2001: npn). Some historians use the term in the same way people view time - as a layering of experiences over remnants of the past, as a representation of lived experiences and memories. “Our DNA is a palimpsest of our history [hence]... The social structure, possibly coupled with large ecological heterogeneity, has resulted in considerable genetic diversity and local genetic differences within India” (Majumdar & Basu, 2015: 1). The archive offers a similar palimpsestic experience for my family, ancestry and dance path. Therefore, Indian dance can be viewed as more complex than its movement, codification, geography or originators - layers of interaction. Several posthumous analyses have been made of the concept of ‘palimpsestic time’ in Ralph Ellison’s (1914 – 1994) book *Invisible Man* (1952). In his article titled “‘A Slightly Different Sense of Time’: Palimpsestic Time in *Invisible Man*’, English scholar, Marc Singer (2003: npn) wrote that the continuum implied, by Ellison, by the temporal palimpsest may, in the fullness of time, transcend racial boundaries. Ellison was a Black American author who wrote about race and related social issues in his works of fiction which were based on real history. “A framing of time and realities as palimpsestic, or imperfect erasure, suggests that the past is visible and acting upon

the present” (Okello & Duran, 2021: 1). To an artist the concept of time and history is malleable. History is usually the victor’s narration of the vanquished’s stories and has far reaching consequences for the indigenous inhabitants of disputed territory.

[I]ndigenous peoples are a dynamic element of modern and centuries-old movements of peoples, raising questions for policymakers, indigenous activists and researchers alike. Why is indigenous migration important? How is indigenous migration changing indigenous cultures? Do they lose their identities as indigenous peoples when they leave their traditional lands? And how can we analyse indigenous migration according to existing categories of migration? (Trujano, 2008: 8)

Cultural dance did not escape these distortions wrought by a transplanting of people. It “can be identified and thus manifested in traditional, or folk, music heritage, such as singing and dancing. First, shared world views, values, and beliefs traditionally were expressed through ritual dancing and performance (Tsetsura, 2010: npn). The suppression of the arts is a suppression of a people’s expression of identity, ethnicity and, ultimately, humanity. “Dance as an expression and practice of relations of power and protest, resistance and complicity, has been the subject of a number of historical and ethnographic analyses in recent years...particularly in the areas of ethnicity, national identity, gender and, less commonly, class” (Reed, 1998: 506). One has great difficulty in viewing official history and temporality without realising that it is reductive and homogenising in nature for the indigenous, forcing them into either complacency or action.

MARKERS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

The various markers on Indian identity represent the intermingling of cultures to create the kind of eclectic influences we experience today. French ethnomusicologist Denis-Constant Martin (1999) refers to this as ‘creolisation’, a concept arising from the colonisation and intermingling of cultures in various colonial plantation areas, and stemmed from the French

language being integrated with the indigenous languages, such as in Mauritius. In terms of the South African arts evolution, this theory put forward by him is more in keeping with these interests:

Because the colonisation of South Africa began at the Cape, because slavery developed at the Cape, because all kinds of people, coming from a great many places within and without the borders of contemporary South Africa, met and mingled there, Cape Town was the first outpost of creolisation in what was to become South Africa (Martin, 1999: 382).

The bleeding of culture or globalisation has been occurring centuries before Vasco Da Gama sailed to KwaZulu-Natal and then India in 1497.³⁵

It is also important to appreciate the historic blood relationship between the Indian and Coloured communities whom apartheid has tried to separate - and the significance of resistance by slaves in the history of the freedom movement in South Africa. ... to shed the false notions of race purity and superiority if the hopes for a new non-racial and democratic South Africa are to be fulfilled (Reddy, 1991 :46).

Local activist, and member of the United Nations secretariat, Enuga Sreenivasulu Reddy (1991: 42), traced the unofficial Indian presence in this country to long before the official arrival of the indentured Indians in 1860, “Soon after Jan van Riebeeck set up a Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, to supply provisions to Dutch ships plying to and from India and the East Indies, people from India were taken to the Cape and sold into slavery to do domestic work for the settlers”. Records indicate that marriages between the Dutch settlers and Indian women³⁶ took place from 21 May 1656 onwards. Archaeology reveals interactions between Indians and Africans taking place even earlier than this, thus having a South African Indian presence and therefore cultural infusion long before 1860, the official documented arrival of indentured Indians to this country.

³⁵ Jauregui-Lobera (2018) and <https://www.thesouthafricaguide.com/famous-south-africans-and-history/south-african-history-discovery-of-south-africa-vasco-da-gama/>

³⁶ Freed from slavery



Fig.8: 6000 year-old Shiva Lingam at the Sudwala caves,Nelspruit, South Africa(Reddy, 2021)

An example is the discovery of a naturally formed stone Shiva Lingam at the Sudwala Caves is estimated to be 6000 years old. “In the epic Purnic and popular religions saivism, Shiva ... is often worshiped as *linga*, a phallus shaped stone” (Michaels in Keyser, Kaiser, Poetschat & Taylor, 2008: 183) (italics in original). Linga is an “aniconic representation” (Rhys, 2022: npn) considered as “the sign of Shiva” (who in his Nataraja form is “the Lord of the Dance” (Coomaraswamy, 2014: 2), and is given many forms made from various materials. Rather than a phallic symbol, it can be equated to the cross in Christianity, where it is “used by the meditant to concentrate the spirit” (Storl in Keyser, Kaiser, Poetschat & Taylor, 2008: 183). The lingam’s origins are still being debated as older and older versions are currently being discovered, such as the 500-year old Shiva linga found in Ambur in Tirupattur in 2022 according to *The Hindu* of April 16, 2022. Cyril Hromnik, a Slovakian historian³⁷, who came upon this site at the Sudwala Caves in 1987, estimated that Dravidian Indian seafaring traders, known as “komatis” were travelling to, and living in, South Africa some 1,800 years ago. This remained largely undocumented until the lingam’s discovery, reiterating the fact that “connections between India and Africa are poorly accounted for” (Hawkes & Wynne-Jones, 2015: npn; Karmwar, 2010: npn). These threads weave together a tapestry of a world that is far more diverse than colonialism and hegemonic socio-political entities would have us believe.

³⁷ SABC television programme “Sadhana – The Inward Path”, posted on YouTube on 31 August 2018



Fig 9: Comic strip circulated on the 160th anniversary of indenture (MANGENA, Facebook, 2020).

“Healing is the process of delinking, or regaining your pride, your dignity, assuming your entire humanity in front of an un-human being that makes you believe you were abnormal, lesser, that you lack something. How do you heal that?” (Mignolo in Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2014: 207). The reaction to and vilification of the Indian, as depicted graphically in Fig.9, has led to great pain, trauma and uncertainty for the Indian Diaspora. It was the fiftieth anniversary, in 2022, of the expulsion of the Indian Diaspora from Uganda by Idi Amin on 4 August 1972 (Hanspal, 2022; npn). Although the government welcomed the diaspora back, the situation is similar to Tanzania, where Indians have migrated to since the nineteenth century - “insecurities still linger” according to *Economist .com* in an article dated 17 November 2022.

In Tanzania and across East Africa, the identity categories of “Asians” (or “Indians”) and “Africans” constitute ethnic references imbued with racial overtones through which people commonly identify one another. Present-day Tanzanian society is not a melting pot in which people of different backgrounds blend together peacefully; it rather exemplifies a plural society or double-faced communitarianism in which people live side-by-side but separately – at least when it comes to “Indians” and “Africans” (Brennan in Fouéré, 2015 : 359).

The worst of this latent aggression was witnessed in South Africa during the 1949 riots and the July 2021insurgence in reaction to Pres. Jacob Zuma’s incarceration, both in KwaZulu-

Natal and Gauteng. The latent racial tensions between Black and Indian South Africans spilt over in a destructive manner due to the fact that people of Indian origin are still viewed as ‘outsiders’. As a naturalised, fourth generation, descendent of the indentured indigenous, there is contention about South African citizenship. “I have been defined as the other: Indian, non-white, and exotic, during South Africa’s apartheid era” (Samuel 2016: 6). The ravages of colonialism echoes through “the legacy of apartheid, the weight of history is substantial and systemic; entrenched in the racialised economic hierarchy, inscribed in the spatial architecture of “separate development” and in the transmission of psychic scarring” (Bradbury, 2020: 155). According to a paper produced under the auspices of International Organization for Migration (IOM), “International migration has not commonly been considered as part of the indigenous experience. A widespread view of indigenous communities freezes them in time and space, as static groups, deeply rooted in their territories and customs, and reluctant to accommodate change” (Trujano, 2008: 7). Therefore, power dynamics cannot be ignored. According to Goolam Vahed, Ashwin Desai and Thembisa Waetjen (2010: xxviii) a great concern to the people is that “racialised identities” within the South African historical context provides “the possibility that can easily become a basis for division, economic gain and political mobilization”. As artists of colour, my family and I could not help but react to this impetus, leading to a defiance of the status quo and assuming the stance that, “decolonial thinkers (artists, curators, activists, art and literary critics, philosophers), have to delink from that legacy of modern aesthetics...to review and remake the legacies” (Mignolo in Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2014: 201). The unarchival process that I envisage is the act of remaking the artefacts of the past into works of restitution and reclamation.

My travels to India since 1977 for training were immersive experiences. From the Ellora and Elephanta caves to the temple sculptures at Konark and Chidambaram, I was surrounded by people who looked like me. During the apartheid era I felt a sense of safety and humanity there that I rarely experienced in the country of my birth. I was raised on two continents (opposing ideologies), which brought a stark reality, when confronted with the colonial desecration of the Taj Mahal. At the age of seven I saw the marks left in holes in the marble that once housed precious stones which were gouged out of this tomb by British soldiers to enrich themselves. On my return to the Taj Mahal at fourteen-years of age, I noticed that the holes had been filled with semi-precious stones while the gouge marks were flawlessly repaired. The sense of erasure of this type of violence occurred to me at that tender age, that the very people that oppressed people of colour were also part of their composition. By this I mean, Indian genealogy consists of varied bloodlines including that of the DNA of the European colonialists - an enmeshing.

GETTING PAPER TO DANCE

The performative piece (<https://youtu.be/1bv7bVPNqYI>) addresses the stereotyping and “boxing” or compartmentalising of the culture of the Indian-subcontinent as a monolithic one through childlike, playful interaction with the artefacts. At the same time the outside of the box is covered by silhouettes from various world dance cultures, and its spinning represented the globe spinning on its axis. The box was created in 2018 to reflect on the journey I wanted to take with my family archive. The inside is black and white, while the outside is characterised by bursts of colour, silhouetted dancers from various parts of the world, as well as quotations about dance. There are various types of silver anklets, used in daily life by women in India and dancers in their performances, suspended from its lid. Each tiny jingle on them became the voices of the dancers carved on temples, devadasis, tawaifs, and the

women who sustained dance throughout its history, trapped in a cycle that tried to erase them from existence to the point where, in more recent history, a male lineage headed up the transmission of dance knowledge. The sound of my jingles that were passed down to me by my mother - a part of the archive, becomes the narrator to a performance in paper. This is not to be confused with artist Joseph Cornell's (1903- 1972) famous boxed assemblages, which involved items of everyday life from his time (Solomon, 2015). Both our mediums of praxis around 'the box' are juxtaposed to each other. Cornell's work, while classified as art, acts as a closed off archive of objects of his time, while my box deals with the release or liberation of the artefacts of the family archive. The pop-up book within is a metaphor for the archive as well as Indian dance. It is removed from its container by my father's hands that stand-in for my late mother's. It transforms into a stage for a performance in paper (digitised, printed artefacts), and focussed on re-imagined, re-animation of cultural seepage. Pop-up or movable books were created more than 800 years ago using some of the same construction principles that are found in pop-up books today. Movable books consist of mechanisms and engineering using "flaps, pull tabs, and wheels called volvelles, while pop-ups employ V-folds, stage sets, and box and cylinders forms – all to create movement on the page surface" (Kenneth E. Behring Centre. n.d.: 3). These books were used as far back as the thirteenth century to demonstrate complex systems, relating especially to medicine, science and technology. This felt like the ideal modality to make various types of paper move and especially dance.



Fig. 10: Collage of pop-up book 'India: A World of dance' that I created.

Each page of the pop-up book (Fig.10) forms part of a staged dance performance and each item in the performance is named as it would be in a dance programme. It begins with notions around the stereotypical Indian national pride of dance, on the first page. The use of the sponged-on tricolour harkens back to the national flag of India to create a feel of colour in the play of Holi³⁸ (like springtime, a re-birth of a Nation), which has the Ashoka wheel at its centre. The wheel as a mode of movement becomes a spinning top, tucked into a pocket of the fixed wheel at the centre of the page. On its periphery are silhouettes of women dancers in six of the eight traditional Indian Classical dance costumes and poses that move when the

³⁸ "Holi is a festival of colors, fun, joy and harmony. It is celebrated by throwing scented colors, powders and perfume at each other" (Sharma & Saxena, 2013: 129)

wheel is spun on a central axis. It is the only page that does not feature an artefact from the archive. It is however, inspired by my family's pictures of their first sea-voyage to India to study Bharata Natyam, as it is questioning the image that most people associate with a picture of purity and national pride surrounding the dance styles and Indian-ness itself.

The performance proceeds to then reveal the various layers of cultural infusion and influence by various other interactions such as Africa and the Middle East on page two - *Dance like an Egyptian*. This is a conflation of the African/Egyptian and Indian/Rajasthani connection of far more than deserts. The tradition of the whirling dervishes in Sufi practice is highlighted by the spinning movement created (by a silhouetted practitioner of the tradition and me in a Sufi Kathak performance). Amidst the camels, pyramids, palm trees, and other Egyptian iconography is a popular Sufi mosque in India, 'Nizamuddin Auliya' in New Delhi, with pilgrims in prayer. These are traditions that are still popular in India, Africa and the Middle East currently. These form part of the cultures of Mughal invaders that were absorbed into the traditions of India.

On page three, *Gypsy Jugalbandi*, of the pop-up book, the Gypsy/Banjaara (Renusha Manilall and me), and Kathak (my mother) influences at the base of a tiered stage allude to the foundations/beginnings of the Spanish Flamenco (drawn accompanied by a moveable fan used in the dance form at the pinnacle of the stage) dance tradition in Europe. In the recesses of this cubic structure are musical instruments and architecture in the form of arches that have bearing in each tradition to reveal similarities between the continents and cultures. "Of all percussive dance forms across the globe, it is curious that two such geographically distant

genres as kathak from North India and flamenco from Southern Spain have such striking similarities — in fact, more than other forms of percussive dance” (Phillips, 2013: 398). It has been suggested by many authors and practitioners of Flamenco that the dance form evolved out of the ancient interactions between Spanish gypsies and those who travelled across the land mass from India to Spain. “Both dance forms have a word for “footwork”— in kathak it is tatkar, in flamenco taconeo (heelwork) or zapateado (shoe work). The footwork highlights the dancers in their simultaneous roles as musicians” (Phillips, 2013: 400). There is a kinship and similarity from my experience and work with Flamenco dancers. Hence the connectedness of the gypsy caravan, with a drawing of a bullock, by my mother, which was used to transport the Indian gypsy carts.

Pictures and drawings from the archive are inserted to demonstrate the multi- and intercultural influence of the Greco-Roman Empires on page four – *It's All Greek....* The scene is of a Greek temple, with its impressive pillars, opening to reveal a statue of the Buddha within, symbolising the assimilation of Greek culture into the Buddhist Indian society of the time. There is also a waterfall mechanism depicting the invasion of India by Alexandra the Great and associated Greek iconography in silhouette. “The advent of Greeks in India dates back from 6th century (BC) to 5th century (AD) as an outcome of Greek expedition towards Persia” (Firdos, Wenjie & Sangyi, 2017: 195). On the opposite side is a pencil sketch of a rural scene from the family archive, by my mother. The sketched village water-bearer is collaged with a picture of Thandiwe Princess Mzobe (APPENDIX B) our first African Kathak dancer in a Garba costume highlighted by a moving ferris-wheel, with both Indian and Greek traditional dancers, in circular motion. This is surrounded by tie-and-dye fabric that the Gujerat and Surat areas of India are famous for. The effects on the arts and

sciences that evolved from the Greco-Indian infusion into the Indian sub-continent are still seen in present-day India, this is highlighted by the shades of blue on the page.

The Chinese and South East Asian presence in the art and architecture of Kerala state, especially, are depicted on the final page of the book, *Enter the Dancing Dragon*. Trade between China and India over land routes can be traced back to the last few centuries BC. “This early trade ... was mainly in raw silk, silk thread and silk fabrics” (Varrier, 1990: 128). This can be seen in the dragon dance on Chinese New Year (I built a smaller, fifteen-metre-long dragon for stage performances, and my niece, who was five years-old at the time, christened her Smokey) or the Fan and Lion dances associated with the Chinese dance and theatre traditions (I was trained in Malaysia in these dance styles in 2001). The two masks are symbols of the theatre or operatic traditions of each culture.

Kutiyattam is a popular dance-drama from the South-western Indian state of Kerala. The word Kutiyattam literally means “Drama Play” ... performed in the temples of Kerala. Chinese Opera on the other side is a famous art form of the world that represents the culture and tradition of Chinese and it conveys the traditional values of Chinese Culture. ... called as 戲曲(Xìqǔ). Notably, both art forms are recognized as an intangible cultural heritage by United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Purushothaman, 2018: 2) (Chinese font in original).

The mask, popularly used in the masculine, Kathakali, one of the main classical dance styles of India, open out to reflect the ‘Vaddakkunnathan Temple’ in Thrissur (picture from Ram, 2018, NativePlanet website) inspired by Chinese architecture of a pagoda that the Chinese mask opens out into. The other dance style is attributed to feminine qualities of Mohiniyattam. The picture of the women in white is from one of my performances of Kaikottikali or Thiruvatrikali from the ethnic or ‘folk’ traditions, where the performance

takes place around a lit lamp. Fireworks are common to both countries during festivals. In India it is commonly associated with the festival of Diwali or Deepavali.

While they originated in China, the crackers soon made their way into India through trade and military contact. The earliest evidence we have of fireworks in India dates back to the Mughal times. Some historians have pointed out that the knowledge of materials used to make firecrackers existed in India as long ago as 300 BC (The Heritage Lab, 2016: npn).

The template for the fireworks portion of this final page is attributed to a YouTube pop-up card tutorial by Peter Dahmen (Peter Dahmen Papierdesign, YouTube, 2015), allowing the paper performance to end with a bang!

The bells/jingles, a traditional accompaniment to Indian dance (symbolic of ancient sculptures and sounds found in temples - the sacred), are re-purposed as a medium of bringing the past into the present, acting as *Jetztzeit*. The various cultural groupings of artefacts address the ellipses in linear history as a result of temporal erasures, the traditional with a contemporary treatment. The box, a part of the archive, becomes the symbol of the oppression and stereotyping that the art form has endured by various forces at play on it. This became an act of unarchival of both the archive and my own constitution. The box like paper, are examples of the use of materiality to harness translation. Attempts to loosen the colonial grip on the thinking around the erasures and ellipses are demonstrated by scholars,

The human gene history only a decade ago was considered by scientists and historians as 4,00, 000 years old. They traced Africa, the Middle East, and India and returned back to Middle East. The first man was considered as an African. On further research it has been established that the human gene is millions of years old (Mahalingam, 2010: 3).

When considering Anita Ratnam's opening prose (in Chapter 3), time and migration factor into the cultural interactions that have taken place long before the colonial era, and during it. Human beings are by their very composition jigsaw puzzles and palimpsests. The arts

and dance, particularly of the Indian subcontinent and the South African Indian Diaspora could evidence more our similarity than our differences.

HISTORY?

One of the people challenging the currently accepted theories is author of *Coral Castle: Everything You Know Is Wrong* (2016) Praveen Mohan, who is “an explorer of ancient megalithic sites and appeared on History Channel's Ancient Aliens TV show in September 2016” (Amazon.com, 2022). Having travelled to several countries, he documented his findings on his YouTube channel, that has a following and viewership of tens of millions. He has “researched several historic mysteries ...[and] also discovered Out of Place Artifacts which prove the existence of ancient European and even African presence in India” (Amazon.com, 2022). His observations of the Brihadeeswara Temple located in Thanjavur, Tamilnadu boasting the largest Shiva Linga in India’s Dravidian culture, is of particular significance,

Built by King Raja Raja Chola I between 1003 and 1010 AD, it is a part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site ... It was known to attract scholars, craftsmen, merchants, musicians and particularly served as a platform for Bharata Natyam dancers. As a rule, only Gods, Kings and saints were carved on temples. ... there is evidence that Indians were ...connected to the rest of the world (Mohan in Youtube, 2014).

To obtain a clear understanding of the significant differences in the cultures documented on these temples, one needs to set a baseline.

[In] this carving in the same temple which shows how ancient Indians looked and dressed. You can see how they wore a lot of jewellery, but usually did not wear shirts because South India is a very hot place. Notice the hairdo where they pull up the hair to the side... and it also shows a broad nose (Mohan in Youtube, 2014).



Fig.11: Screenshot of sculpture indicating a local Indian (Mohan in Youtube, 2014).

This representation of Indians in various forms is consistent throughout the temple which makes any variation prominent, “histories that centre on objects rather than records of trade can evoke a richer world of connection” (Hawkes & Wynne-Jones, 2015). This is a repetitive occurrence in the vast array of Indian temples in terms of the intricate and detailed carvings still available from ancient times. When one compares this carving with a coin from France in the same period depicting Robert II, one notices the opposite of the carving of an ancient Indian:



Fig. 12: Sculpture indicating European presence and a coin as comparison (Mohan in Youtube,2014) (screenshots have been reconfigured by me).

Notice that the beard and the hair of the King matches with the carving. Even the long sleeves and collar are consistent. The only difference is that the King is shown with a crown in Europe, and here he is shown with a hat. It is likely that this carving shows King Robert II of France (Mohan in Youtube, 2014).

The question that remains is how would an Indian sculptor know what the King of France in 1010 AD looked like, unless he had encountered him in India? Also, one needs to question why a foreign ruler was given such a place of honour on an ancient temple, not just the usual hospitality afforded to royalty. There are several other such recordings that are vital to the procession of time and the resultant bleeding of culture. Arabic and Chinese sailors acted as seafarers for Europeans and their respective nations and helped to navigate their successful world voyages and that is due to the fact that many first nations were sailing across the world along with those who were all successful boatmen with Empires³⁹ that traded with the Arabs, Chinese, or the Indus Valley, and even South America. They were known to have colonies outside of the African continent. This is in stark contradiction to the colonial rationalisation for the first western contact that linked the Indian and African continents as our history text books tell us that the first European to reach South India was Vasco Da Gama in 1498.⁴⁰ however the Brihadeeswara Temple was built 500 years before his arrival at either South Africa or India. The recording, like that of the King of France, in stone on an Indian temple allows us to date and subsequently correct western claims to the history of the other.

It is claimed that the Konark Temple in Odisha was built long before what is thought to be a restoration in the 13th century AD, by the son of Lord Krishna. Although its once

³⁹ According to Toyin Falola and Tyler Fleming (no date), "Egypt, Nubia, Ghana, Mali, Carthage, Zimbabwe, and Kongo. In West Africa, the empires of Sudan, Ghana, Mali, and Songhai all flourished. In Southern Africa, Great Zimbabwe emerged as the most complex civilization throughout Southern Africa. In East Africa, plateau regions were suitable for cattle grazing. The dense forests of the Congo Basin, on the other hand, made herding nearly impossible. Other states, empires, and kingdoms dissolved throughout the era. In Central Africa, the Kongo, Loango, Ndongo, and Tio states dissolved by the mid-seventeenth century as economic, military and political systems shifted due to the slave trade's impact".

⁴⁰ Subrahmanyam, 1997

sophisticated architecture now lies in ruins; it showcases one hundred and twenty eight carvings of postures of the local classical dance style called Odissi. More than that, it also acts as an encyclopaedia that provides education for every phase of human life in ancient India, with each level that rises from the ground upwards. On the tier that focuses on governance, politics, war and international connections, one finds a carving that is baffling to western historians who claim that Africa never had a flourishing civilisation.



Fig.13: Sculpture indicating Indo-African interaction (Mohan in Youtube, 2014)

This sculpture (Fig. 13) indicates Indo-African interaction at that time (1010 AD). The giraffe, highlighted in yellow by Mohan (2014), is proof of this as this species is only found in the sub-Saharan region of Africa. Further, the distinctive cultural differences indicate that the negotiations involve Indian royalty in the elevated position on an elephant. South Asian culture/intercultural communication scholar, Renata Czekalska (2016: 189) claims that, the initial migrants “from Africa to the Indian Subcontinent took place about fifty-sixty thousand years ago”, while the most recent Indo-African inhabitants of India only arrived there in the past five hundred years. She posits that, “They became naturalized to both the Indian culture and the Indian way of life reasonably quickly, they became involved in politics and social disputes, and many of them rose to a high authority in the Indian society” (Czekalska, 2016:

189). This could well be the case, when we consider that from Ethiopia, “Malik Ambar in Ahmadnagar (in western India), went on to become [one of the] important rulers and military strategists. Ambar was known for taking on the powerful Mughal rulers of northern India” (Pandey, 2014: npn). African figures arrived in India as traders, artists, musicians, rulers, architects, soldiers and reformers from the 14th–17th centuries. Many of them “of the past have not been forgotten but their ethnicity has been erased, consciously or not” (Pandey, 2014: npn).

Award-winning author, Tony Joseph’s (2018: npn) theory of the four waves of world migration, claims that this occurrence goes further back in time, than Czekalska claims. “India has been ever-changing, and its story is definitely not one of decline. India’s history has been dynamic, as full of energy and full of contention as any lively society’s history would be – and this, despite the dead weight of casteism that we have carried for two millennia”. His evidence is supported by studies conducted by leading Indian and world historians, archaeologists, geneticists (based on ancient DNA from various world sites), linguists, and epigraphists.⁴¹ “The best way we can describe ourselves is as a multi-source civilization not a single-source one, drawing its cultural impulses, its traditions and its practices from a variety of heredities and migration histories” (Joseph, 2018: npn). Joseph distilled all of this into his book, *Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From*, claiming that the first wave was a small sub-section of Africans who moved from Africa to India.⁴² “The Out of Africa migrants, the fearless pioneering explorers who reached this land around sixty-five millennia ago and whose lineages still form the bedrock of

⁴¹ “**the deciphering and interpreting of ancient inscriptions.** — epigraphist, epigrapher, n.” (Farlex, 2022: npn) (bold in original)

⁴² Geneticists estimate that 70,000 years ago the Out of Africa migrants would “...have take the Southern Route that would have brought them from Africa (specifically, from modern-day Eritrea and Djibouti) into Asia(modern-day Yemen) through Bab el Mandeb at the southern tip of the Red Sea” (Joseph, 2018: npn).

our population” (Joseph, 2018: npn), became the common denominator to the next three stages/waves leading to India’s current population. These subsequent waves are summarised by journalist, Sudipta Dutta, in *The Hindu* on 1 February 2020. The second wave was

a population related to the farmers of Iran who were in the northwestern region from around 12,000 years ago and who mixed with the First Indians and together created the agricultural revolution that resulted in the Harappan Civilisation.

Third, a migration from East Asia around 4,000 years ago that brought Austro-Asiatic languages such as Khasi and Mundari to India. And last, central Asian Steppe pastoralists from regions now known as Kazakhstan who brought Indo-European languages to India 4,000 to 3,500 years ago and called themselves Arya. Almost all population groups in India today are a mixture of these four components, in differing proportions (npn).

The Indian geographic distribution was also recently revealed to have a wider spread over the Asian subcontinent than its current borders. There has been a spate of lingams being unearthed that attest to this, “Specimens of various types have been traced at various levels of the archaeological strata all across Asia (Mediterranean rim included); mostly from the Indian sub-continent... (some of great antiquity)” (Bhattacharya, 2012: 9), including Afghanistan, Vietnam, Indonesia and some, as far afield as parts of Europe and Ireland (Thakur, 2017). These threads weave together a tapestry of a world that is far more diverse than colonialism and hegemonic socio-political entities would have us believe. This then leads to more questioning regarding the impetus of my creative work in dance: Is the urge to create dance that is based on integration really new? Are world history and notions of civilisations cyclical in nature? Is my evolution from South Asian dance into a more encompassing practice a natural reflection of my being a product of cultural bleeding, infusion or permeation? Is it a deep seated, unconscious acknowledgement and recognition of my own actualisation through my dance making? In attempting to answer the question: **How can I trouble the notion of the purity and authenticity of a perceived monoculture such as that of India and “Indian-ness” in terms of dance by the unarchival of artefacts as a ‘DNA test’/stage production?**, I considered this statement,

settler colonialism is a philosophical stance, it's a stance towards the Earth, it's a way of understanding one's subjectivity as being bound up with what one possesses, it's a way of understanding knowledge *as* possessing... so that that transcendental clue we get when we have a grasp on something, is *connected* to this. It's a way of situating yourself in relation to the Earth (Moten, 2016) (*italics in original*).

American cultural scholar, theorist, and poet, Fred Moten's analysis, and my study, demands new forms of thinking and knowing, new ways of being in relation to ourselves, to each other and to the planet that we are component of "new materials need new frames to be contained. The type of information a dance document contains can't be compared with a notarial act, thus new templates and new ways of navigation and dissemination need to be created" (Pascual, 2016: 1343). The complexity of emotions, time, space and cultural influence of dance are very dissimilar to a newspaper article or journal. My resultant stance on unarchival is as a probe, to physically examine and explore the configuration and re-configuration of the family archive that like a time-capsule will have the potential for new discoveries and refinement in the future, to the core components of both material or physical and embodied archives.

My contemplation on this unacknowledged/ignored evidence, an example of which can be found in history scholar, Nomalanga Mkhize's⁴³ book, *In Africa with Avi and Kumbi* (2018) designed to narrate African history for eight to thirteen-year-olds. What it does not stipulate is that it is focussing on Africa as if it was only composed of Black Africans, with Europeans only being portrayed as colonists or enslavers, which was correct at the time. The Sugar trade, on page twenty one begins in the 1400s with Prince Henry the Navigator initiating the spice trade. It focuses heavily on West African slaves who were taken to the Caribbean in the 1500s to grow sugar. No mention is made of any other culture's arrival (the Indian indentured in 1860 or those Asians that were brought as slaves to the Cape prior to

⁴³ written under her pen name Khize wamaZambezi

that) or contribution to the continent. It mentions Arab trade, and it is only on page thirty two where the apartheid system is discussed that suddenly political activists⁴⁴ of all cultures are illustrated and named along with Black Africans. The deleted intermingling and international diplomacy of various civilisations turn to considerations of my own genealogy and career curve. “I am the sum of my parts. Everything I’ve ever done and everything I’ve ever achieved and everything I have ever been” (Larsen, 2015). Through oral tradition/yarning with family members who sought out our ancestral home in Tamilnadu, India, it was revealed that I have a French ancestor named Simone in my paternal lineage. This is not impossible when one considers that prior to the colonial era; India has had Mughal, Mongol, Chinese, Greek and Roman invasions and Dutch, French and Portuguese trade, amongst others.

ZINE

What are the implications of unarchival on perceived culture and tradition? How does that affect the translation of the intersectional modes of praxis? I created a zine as a point of reflection and questioning. “Zinesters are creating their own narratives, which subvert and challenge mainstream viewpoints and realities: this counters the hegemonic stronghold of cultural production and expression” (Ramdarshan Bold, 2017:226). I had never explored zine-making before, and on researching it further, I was convinced that it would be a worthy medium as, “Historically, zines have been an alternative outlet for niche topics, or writers and writing, that are ignored by mainstream media” (Ramdarshan Bold, 2017: 215) . I, like zine artist Stephen Fraser, “liked the idea of having a performance as something you read, as opposed to something you just watch” (Harrison, 2021: npn). The zine allowed me to subvert the stereotypical act of journaling using my own art creations to tell my story. The

⁴⁴ Rahima Moosa, Helen Joseph, Sophie de Bruyn, Ahmed Kathrada, Imam Abullah Haron, Fatima Meer, Ruth First, Strini Moodley, Yusuf Dadoo and Bram Fischer.

scenography.⁴⁵ and silhouettes allows vignettes to be created on each page of the zine, in a manner that is reminiscent of acts or scenes in a play, while the words and phrases allow the audience to unravel the implications of the words, acting as a script of the play. The electronic zine was created, first as a traditional paper version, (<https://issuu.com/anusiagp/docs/e-zine- anusia pillay - 1917955- phd - ch2>) as a response to the question: *Am I just the story that has been told to me or do I determine my own past, present and future?* To create this zine I used pictures/collages and poetry of my own creation, words and phrases to shape my thoughts around this study, “a place to begin reflecting on theatre and performance as a vital human space to reflect self back to our world, to reflect our world back to self, and to try and make sense of our physical, lived in realities” (Loots, 2018: 58–59). The story is of my own origins - as human and as dancer.

At its core, theatre and performance is an act of storytelling. Sometimes we tell our own story, sometimes we tell stories reflected in the imagination of our dreams and nightmares, sometimes we tell the stories of our own personal and shared histories and politics, and sometimes, we tell the stories of the lives of others” (Loots, 2018: 58–59).

In re- imagining the story of the zine, I look back on the various stages and phases of the “interculturalism”.⁴⁶ from before prehistoric, proto historic and pre-colonial trade and domiciliation between India and Africa; of caste inequalities and culture; and indenture. The act of *unarchival* is set in motion, repositioning and re-claiming beyond the colonial ‘trap’- a step back in time to imagine what the potential was and could have been and to tell the tale from a dancer’s perspective.

⁴⁵ “Scenography is the most eloquent visual aspect of the theatre. It involves situating a performance within a specific and identifiable environment as well as the delineation of the characters as it concerns costumes, with its attendant accessories and properties and the proper illumination of the performance to enhance the audience’s appreciation of the said performance. The practice of scenography therefore, involves an adequate knowledge of the principles and elements of design as well as a fair knowledge of graphics and the rudiments of carpentry, fine and applied arts, tailoring, and electrical engineering in addition to a mastery of architectural principles. The scenographer therefore must be a rounded artiste with immense creative potentials.” (Okeke, 2019: 313).

⁴⁶ “the idea that each individual is always already an intercultural composite, a uniqueness produced by the combination of several cultural resources with which he or she has been confronted, and which he or she has metabolized. I define interculturalism as the process that produces new cultural elements, which enables the appropriation of an environment’s multiculturalism (interculturalism between groups and between individuals, but especially intrapsychic interculturalism)” (Denoux in El Sayed, 2019: 491)

As a person of colour, on the cover page, I am questioning my own ‘composition’ - as boxes that we have been forcibly placed into - taxonomy and categories- a single thing, two? Or a combination of all things? “[Z]ines have long been a way for marginalized communities to record their stories, spread information and organize” (French & Curd, 2021: 1).

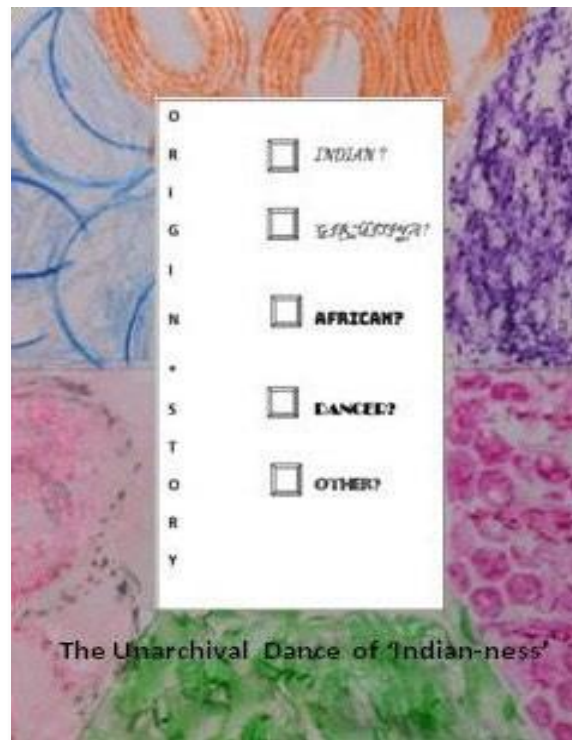


Fig.14: Cover of zine

The crayon rubbings are of various items in the archive: jewellery and beads - earrings, bangles, bindis, bells and jingles- essential Aharyam¹ that turns a person into a performer. “Identities are forged, re-forged and challenged in the stories we tell. ... the making and telling of narrative is about ‘situational self-positioning’ and that ‘identity thus becomes a reflexive project, open to self-analysis and self-scrutiny’” (Kraus in Loots, 2018: 59). The multiple choice-boxes are reminiscent of a population census form or a multiple-choice test - the act of creating options for me, where I was previously deprived of choice as a brown person.

A popular conception of ‘Indian’ has been embraced as giving definition to a community with common sets of interests, experiences and transoceanic references. The term has also operated

as a race classification and has been used by the State to count, to exclude, to calculate, to apportion, to isolate, to privilege, to discriminate, to control. 'Indian' is politicised in minority party politics and affirmative action registers; it is a box that can be ticked on official applications and forms... it operates in economic discourse both as a market and a brand, invoking styles of entertainment in cinema, sport and music, as well as radio and television media programming" (Chetty in Vahed et al, 2010: v).

I am interested in my 'origin story'. The palimpsestic, cyclical and restorative (erasure and re-building) nature of time and the earth itself, has many 'hidden' components to humanity's evolution. The historical and current documentation by the 'powers that be' of my ancestry leaves a plethora of questions in its wake, yet there are traces of evidence over millennia.

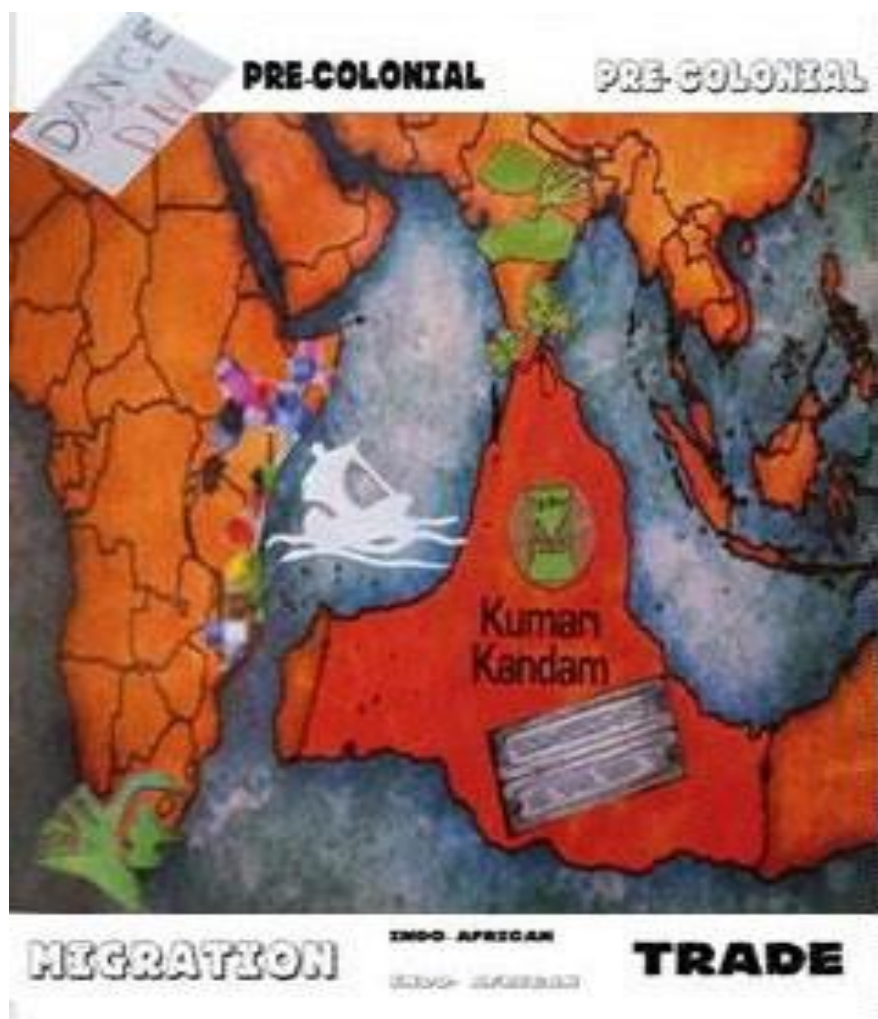


Fig.15: Page two of zine

Page two depicts pre/proto history (Joseph, 2018: npn) and indicates the cyclical nature of Indo-African migration/trade.

[S]tories that speak into the gaps within histories written by imperialists, colonizers and those who have silenced or subjugated us. Writer and activist like Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o (1981), for example, ask us to 'de-colonise the mind' so that we, as Africans, can begin to re-remember and re-tell our stories in a way that sheds the legacies of colonial 'cultural bombs' that have annihilated our stories, and our ability to tell them (Loots, 2018: 59).

All of this was a time before the East India Company was even an idea. Kumari Kandam is said to have been a land of nine powerful kingdoms that joined India, Africa and Australia. Where knowledge repositories were both rescued to India and lost to the ocean. The late Indian educationist, Nachimuthu Mahalingam (1923 –2014) posited that,

“Kumari Kandam”, the land that lay to the south of India and, which later submerged in the Indian Ocean, has been a matter of conjecture for a study by scholars. ...From Kumari Kandam, South of Tamil Nadu, about 15, 000 years ago people moved to Africa and became Sumerians and those who moved from Africa to Arabia became Jews. ...due to a tsunami, people moved to Bengal and became Cholas and those who moved to Sind and Punjab became Cheras (The Hindu, 23 June 2010: npn)

The trade, medical and technological exchanges between the great nations in Africa and India, included beads from India along the east coast of Africa and spices. With archaeological finds at Great Zimbabwe and the Sudwala Caves in South Africa, there is a plethora of clues to signify a longstanding relationship between these lands. Why then are we choosing to ignore this in the decolonial drive in South Africa?



Fig.16: Page three of zine

Page three is a collage of excerpts from the spoken word piece ‘The Spirit of the Rainbow’.⁴⁷ written and performed by me, as part of a multicultural interpretation of the colonial South African story, originally for the ‘Goree Island Diaspora Festival 2016, Senegal’. It was reworked in 2020. Dance Scholar, Llianthe Loots’ *Flatfoot Dance Company*, which included a rapper, Iain Robinson as well as Manesh Maharaj, a Kathak dancer⁴⁸, and

⁴⁷ Sanibonani, Dumelang, Hello, Namaskar!
I live in time, tears, smiles and You
Africa is my home- through Triumphs and atrocities- HOME.

I am the muse to artists of this soil.
They are peacemakers, revolutionaries and activists.

A wise man called Marty Rubin once said: “Dance is more than an art form, it is life itself.”
Dance NOT War,
Dance NOT hate,
Dance not Subjugate.

Through time, dance and the beating drum have been symbols of freedom to my people,
A symbol of Hope, that everything’s gonna be alright...
Just dance! (Anusia Pillay, 2016)

⁴⁸ “I opted, alongside FLATFOOT, to collaborate with two Durban based artists with whom I have worked before and whose unique voices inspire me. Both Iain ‘ewok’ Robinson (spoken word poet, author and actor) and Manesh Maharaj (impresario Kathak classical Indian dancer and teacher) came to the project with the brief that this work would begin to explore the more (politically and historically) familiar notions of home (and South Africa) as set up by histories of colonization and Indian

Anavarata Dance Institute was “invited by the National Arts Council in a diplomatic linking of Goree Island to Robben Island” (Loots, 2018: 67) to represent South Africa at the festival. “We were travelling to a historical French colony (and thus little English) but most significantly, we were stepping into one of the worst affected countries to have borne the brunt of colonial slavery” (Loots, 2018: 67). The significance of this to me as a descendent of the indentured inspired this piece, as well as the choreography that included the current marginalised communities, that were brought to South Africa as servants of the coloniser (Indians, Malaysians, the resultant Coloured community, etc.), but also the coloniser (a contemporary Afrikaans song was used to depict the seafarers who brought them to African shores). “most of all we were deeply reminded that the human body, my body, your body, the dancing body, and hence the performative body, is rooted in real social practices where the body is not something we ‘have’ but rather something we ‘become’” (Loots, 2018: 69). In a strange way it became a story of celebration of how we have evolved into Africans and integrated into our home, in spite of the trials and tribulations faced. The audiences’ reaction to our brand of inclusivity of as many South African dance cultures as possible was reaffirming. While standing on an island that promoted slavery, I felt a sense of freedom to explore my academic aspirations.

indentured labour. I chose to work with these two performers before setting up space to rehearse with the dancers as I knew, going in, that their embodied race, history and gender, would be a guiding place/space to work on” (Loots, 2018: 65-66).



Fig.17: Page four of zine

Page four depicts the plight of the devadasis in the Indian milieu. Was it systemic abuse of dancers or a systematic suppression of feminine power? “Meduri’s study of the construction of the *devadasi* in the 19th and 20th centuries shows the ways in which identities of indigenous dancers shifted as they became implicated in changing discourses of colonialism, nationalism, and Orientalism” (in Reed, 1998: 507). Two very contradictory scenarios are highlighted, set around the silhouette of the ‘Yellamma Temple’ in Saundatti in Karnataka, one of the current devdasi sites. The scene portrays piety and devotion through dance on the right side (pun unintended) of the temple, where daughters of the lower (dalit) classes of society are offered in service to the presiding deity of the temple. On the left hand side, they also fall prey to the temple officials and archaic practices. “When these young girls attain puberty, their virginity is sold to the highest bidder as dictated by the devadasi system. The

younger ones face the worst form of exploitation, forced to become sex slaves” (Shaji, 2019: npn). Prior to the Madras Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act (enacted on 9 October 1947), these women were seen as independent, educated, landowners and to a certain degree powerful in their own right with the ability to subvert the acceptable norms of society in terms of sexuality and gender. The Act saw most practitioners plunged into poverty and prostitution. The system still continues in current times in areas of the states of Goa, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. “the transfiguration of the devadasi from her precolonial practice as a temple ritual performer to her naming, in the 19th century, as temple “prostitute” or “dancing girl” and finally, in the 20th century, to emblem of the nation” (Meduri in Reed, 1998: 508). The greatest irony is one of classism, as in the 1930’s Bharata Natyam was revived as ‘Sadir’ by dancers such as Rukmini Devi Arundale who belonged to the Brahmin caste in Tamil Nadu. “Yet in a very real and practical sense it is only the devadasi dance they are perpetuating” (Srinivasan, 1985: 1875), despite the puritanical veneer that their status afforded the dance form.



Fig.18: Page five of zine

Page five, depicts a scene of courtesans⁴⁹ entertaining British officers. While the devadasis were known for the dances of the South of India, the tawaifs or bajis held the monopoly on Kathak in the North of India. Like their southern counterparts, they too were “associated with moral depravity” (Purkayastha in Morris & Nicholas, 2018: 127), as is seen in the zine under the word ‘tawaif’.

The suppression, prohibition and regulation of indigenous dances under colonial rule is an index of the significance of dance as a site of considerable political and moral anxiety. ... dance was also a site of desire, and colonial accounts record that male colonists were often captivated by “native dancers,” sometimes even joining them in dances. Thus, in many colonial arenas, dance tended to generate multiple and contradictory policies and attitudes (Reed, 1998: 506).

In the mid 19th century, Calcutta, then the seat of British power saw the beginning of modern drama and theatre under the direct influence of British theatrical tradition. This was solely for

⁴⁹ ‘Nautch Girls’ (British) or Tawaifs (Mughal)

the enjoyment of the British officers, and the local Bengali intellectuals and aristocracy were not permitted to visit the theatre. “Theatre activity was generated by the visiting British companies and some amateur theatre activity by British Clubs” (Amazing Thoughts Theatre Group, 2011). Their exposure to Indian performance tradition was restricted to the ‘nautch girls’, who were skilled in the music and dance arts, “scholars who establish “normative expectations” for “traditional” performances perpetuate colonial thinking by valorizing one version of performance as “true” while dismissing others as corrupted” (Schechner in Reed, 1998: 507). It should be noted that the other invaders, such as the Mughals and Mongols also left their mark in the form of the ‘tawaif’ tradition on Indian culture, prior to the British occupation of the country. “Dances of the colonized were often appropriated and refigured as adjuncts to the civilizing mission, variously reinforcing stereotypes of mystical spirituality and excessive sexuality” (Reed, 1998: 509). There was also a clash between British Christian beliefs and those of the indigenous belief systems. The Tawaif traditions became immortalised in Indian films such as *Mughl-e-Azam* (1960) and *Umrao Jaan* (1981 and 2006).

Page six focuses broadly on the Girmitiya, their sea voyages and their ultimate Diasporic existences as sugarcane-field labourers in South Africa and other parts of the globe. This is recounted by the late Durban historian Shireen Sarojini Munsamy (1995: 13), “On official and unofficial levels, it was stressed that in the continued presence of Indians lay the economic prosperity of Natal”. The pursuit of ‘white gold’ also had a sinister side to it as observed in the top right hand corner of the page.



Fig.19: Page six of zine

The acts of violence and sexual abuse of slavery revealed in artist, Kara Walker's work, echoes the experiences of the Indian indentured - my ancestors. This is what inspired the use of silhouettes in this zine. "Through their use of a silhouette, these artists take an art form, which would normally convey depthlessness, and reconfigure it into an icon that instead conveys complexity and purpose" (Gaetano, 2016: 51). The use of silhouettes alludes to something that is more than meets the eye - offering anonymity, yet at the same time being anyone. I used silhouettes since 2015 in the artwork for a stage production titled *Sawubo-namaste*. My later inspiration was Walker, whose murals made bold statements about African American slavery, femininity and sexuality, echoing my indentured ancestors' stories.



Fig.20: Walker's mural (1994), (Gaetano, 2016: 49)

Though she uses a singular color to equalize the value of each human being ... This quality allows the viewer to decide for his or herself who should be considered worthy of depiction in art. Walker's use of silhouetting wrestles with the question: who should be honored in art, and who should be omitted? (Gaetano, 2016: 48).

“There were certain sugar barons who demanded that an indentured woman spend her wedding night with him. Overseers who brazenly raped women on the sugar-cane field” (Desai, 2018: 6). Desai goes on to explain that the silences of these women were guaranteed by threats of violence and death. The implication, like with American slavery is that the paternity of the South Asian Diaspora is questionable on two fronts: firstly from the Indian perspective, and then in the South African context due to the rape of both slaves and the indentured alike.

Further, any form of enjoyment of cultural and traditional expression was brutally quelled, “legislation banning dance and drumming was enacted as dances came to be seen as likely sites for plotting insurrections, or even the occasions for the insurrections themselves”

(Hazzard-Gordon in Reed, 1998: 506). This is likened to the ‘Chapati Riots’, in the 1850s and 1860s in northern and central India, and link to how the ‘natives’ can never be trusted, as there is always a possibility for rebellion. In Homi Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture* (1994: 286), he refers to the story of the circulation of flat, round bread, and the activity of systematic chain-like distribution of the chapatis as “the ‘symbolic’ transmission of rebel agency”. He further describes it as “the *circulation* of the chapatti that initiates a politics of agency negotiated in the antagonisms of colonial cultural difference” (Bhabha, 2019: 287) (*italics in original*), and “*contagion*, links it with panic – as one of the *affects* of insurgency” (Bhabha, 2019: 286) (*italics in original*). Any form of cultural identity was suppressed in an attempt to snuff out the heritage of the Diaspora as a symbol of humanity. “Historical records reveal that despite the warnings and violence meted out by the bosses, in their limited time-off, the indentured used drama and music to keep their spirits going” (Desai, 2018: 6). They were generally prevented from using dance, music and singing as a respite.

Desai’s (2018) article also reveals that it was only in 1910 that Indian labourers were given the day off to celebrate Diwali in Durban, fifty years after they arrived in South Africa. Prior to that, “The only time the indentured could leave the plantation was for three days to celebrate Muharram, what the whites called “coolie Christmas”. Despite being a Muslim celebration, indentured of all religions arrived in the city to celebrate” (Desai, 2018: 6).

In the act of the burning of the indentures’ material belongings, the colonisers failed to erase their sense of identity – it was immortalised within them, a part of them - nor could they delete their various art forms that survived the boat trip – the embodied archive was what people were able to carry with them when they were able to carry so little. Their bodies carried their stories, song and dance from their countries of origin. Traditional/ethnic dance

and music were preserved and cultivated around temples that were built, mosques, and church festivals as a form of worship. In these gatherings, they were able to celebrate identity, community bonds and not be the other but the self. The socio-economic conditions in India, as well as the deceit and lies sold by the British Empire, made the conditions of my ancestors' indentureship 'slave-like'.

[S]lavery is "the permanent, violent, and personal domination of natally alienated and generally dishonored persons....Indentured servitude was not permanent. It was violent, but only up to a point. And servants were not natally alienated, which is to say excommunicated from family and society. Dehumanized. Turned into animals (Wolfe, 2018: npn).

This was not the case for the indentured Indian Diaspora. One can argue that the lack of English language skills, as well as, the duplicitous information given to the indentured about their destinations, made this system no better than slavery. A thumb-print as a confirmation of something that was not adequately comprehended, constituted a legal and binding contract; and the disease and death brought about by a forced famine in India, made the indigenous Indians easy targets. Additionally, South African citizenship was grudgingly granted to the South Asian Diaspora a century after they were first brought to South Africa, in 1960 by the apartheid government in a system that was possibly worse than the contentious practice of indenture, which according to my paternal great grandmother and historians was no better, that slavery.

Page seven is symbolic of the return of South African descendants to India as a possible act of self-actualisation. This was around the time that India had attained its independence from the British Empire on 15 August 1947, and began using the arts to showcase National Pride.



Fig.21: Page seven of zine

Were these acts of the various Diaspora (APPENDIX C) as a response to this call to Nationalism, or was it a herald of an age where the excluded and oppressed Diaspora could empower themselves by these acts of assertion/healing? The ideation of Indian nationalism by the Girmitya in their various countries of settlement, where strides were made in all of the three countries in terms of arts, culture and heritage pedagogy where the Diaspora was in the majority, especially via the medium of dance, is not the case for the Indian Diaspora in South Africa. I am also questioning my family's urge to go to India and study a dance culture that they had been deprived of for almost a century. Were they seduced by the glamorous images that a movie theatre screen produced, at my maternal grandfather's cinemas, at the time, or in response to the wave of Indian nationalism that swept both Indian and its Diaspora since the 1930s, or was it a panacea for the South African Indian community in particular?

On page eight the mudra depicted is symbolic of the lotus flower that grows from murky waters – those are my hands – my reconciliation with my identities, heritages, art and self. Something within me appears to have been lying dormant through the annals of time, like seeds exposed to the elements begin to germinate.



Fig.22: Page eight of zine

This is the similar treatment which I used in the telling and re-storying of the South Asian cultural and artistic configuration, of their dogmas in the light of not just letting go of an external archive, but also the infusions of intermingling throughout time, “local peoples also adapted, imitated, and transformed the dances of colonizers, and many contemporary dances are social texts that embed long and complex histories of intergroup relations” (Reed, 1998: 509). The gaze used is that of dance, specifically South Asian and African, and how I highlighted this aspect of infusions of culture in my creative work/s. I took South Asian dance

and revealed these international connections that are relevant to my dance making in South Africa - the points of “bleeding”, and insert my own perspective and themes into it.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

All the research, creativity and discussion around heritage and identity in this chapter, prompted me to find concrete answers to the question I had posed on the cover of my zine, *What is my origin story?* I decided to literally and scientifically answer that question by testing my DNA for ancestry and ethnicity on the website www.myheritage.com, on 31 July 2022. It felt like the most natural evolution in this study. The method was via cheek swabs that were couriered to me and then back to their laboratories in Houston, Texas on 12 August 2022. I received my DNA test results at 4 a.m. on 2 September 2022.

This screenshot (Fig. 23) of my results reveals that I am 99.1% South Asian (highlighted in pink on the map), which did not come as a surprise to me considering my known ancestry. The 0.9% Melanesian portion (highlighted in blue on the map), was an anti-climax for me. I have always been told that I looked ‘Muslim’ or ‘Thai’ or even that I had very ‘oriental’ features, however I have to admit to a momentary twinge of disappointment that the African side of me was invisible, as was French great- great-grandmother Simone. Reminding myself that it was ONLY an online test, I proceeded to research the origins of Melanesians.

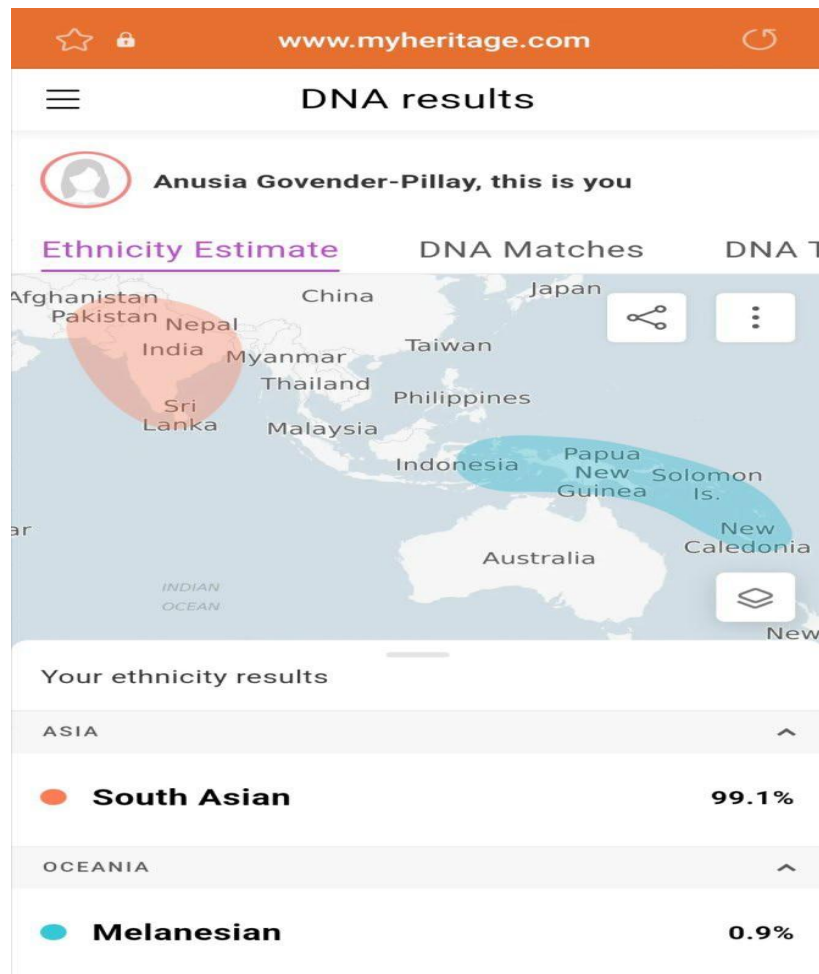


Fig.23: Screen shot of my DNA test results

Melanesians could also be viewed as “Pacific Islanders” (Kabutaulaka, 2015: 110) who have long faced challenges due to negative representations - economically and socio-politically.

Researchers at Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin Universities have generated new DNA evidence that confirms that present-day humans stem from a common origin by studying DNA samples of Melanesians from New Guinea and Aboriginal Australians. According to the University of Cambridge website,

The research confirms the “Out Of Africa” hypothesis that all modern humans stem from a single group of Homo sapiens who emigrated from Africa 2,000 generations ago and spread throughout Eurasia over thousands of years. ... The results showed that both the Aborigines and Melanesians share the genetic features that have been linked to the exodus of modern humans from Africa 50,000 years ago. ... The study is reported in the new issue of Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (University of Cambridge website, 2022: npn).

The DNA result map may not have highlighted Africa or Europe however these findings indirectly connect the ‘dots’ (my very own Morse code) of my heritage together in a far more effective manner than I could have hoped for. Now I am able to tick ALL the boxes on the cover of my zine without reservation. There is a great relief/ease in that acknowledgement – I finally feel whole and vindicated in the choices that were made evident in my family archive. In addition, Tony Joseph’s writings on the multicultural nature of Indian-ness, along with the other theorists that have been read and/or referenced in the crafting of this chapter, have been ratified. The sense of completeness and jubilation I am experiencing as I write this, in the early hours of the morning, is inexplicable yet introspective. The instinctive and intuitive aspects of embodiment that I have felt for most of my life, and that has been reflected in my mother’s and my choreography kept pointing to this urge to stop the gaps that we experienced in our learning, training and subsequent pedagogy.

CHAPTER 3

THE FINAL ACT:

INTERWOVEN: THE DANCE OF MANY CULTURES, ITS LEARNINGS AND TEACHINGS



Fig.24. A tribute to the Indian Indentured in a scene from 'Evolution of the Rainbow', Roodepoort Theatre, 17 July 2019. Directed by Anusia Govender-Pillay.



Fig.25: Interwoven artefacts from the archive by Anusia Govender-Pillay (2020).

The body travels. Constantly. Within known and new vistas. The body absorbs, assimilates and remembers. It is the body's memory that holds the deepest knowledge and the most secret experiences. As time and history spiral into unknown spheres, we are reminded that our bodies are the trees and branches of our earth.

The diaspora body is intersected with location and dislocation – of an uprooting and a transplanting in distant and strange soils. Migration has been a recurring motif in human history and the South African experience from South India has a particularly fascinating trajectory.

- Anita Ratnam (in Devar Singh, 2019: Foreword, para.1 & 2).

Dance scholar, Anita Ratnam's foreword in Devar Singh's *Bharatanatyam: An Ancient Indian Classical Dance: A journey from India to South Africa* (2019) attempts to describe the

toll of migration on the ‘diaspora body’. In my case, this becomes a congruous description for the South African Indian dancing body - my body and its creative convictions. In a BBC television interview posted on his Facebook page (3 April 2020), Ismail Mohamed, Director for the Centre for Creative Arts at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), speaks about the power of the arts as a tool for societal transformation, “The artist who wants to make a living in the arts sector is the artist who can adapt to change”. He posits that the adaptability of artists to various factors such as the political landscape, changing economies, audiences, and technology amongst others is what ensures artistic longevity. How does an artist of the other adapt to continuous exclusion by the powers-that-be? In this chapter, I will highlight various dance practitioners, with their names in bold type (pun intended), who have been involved in interdisciplinary contributions/development to the field and pedagogy, both locally and internationally. This was done as they are each in their own right crucial elements to how the interweaving of dance styles has evolved globally, while also influencing and being influenced by genealogy, pedagogy and politics as structures or modalities, of their, and my own, era. Another theme of this chapter is the inclusivity, adaptability and resilience of our dance industry and pedagogical proliferation of South Asian dance in this country that the archive reveals was formally commissioned in 1995 for implementation in 1997, yet never implemented. It also focuses on how my family and I (and the artefacts of the family archive) have taken steady steps to ensure that this could be made possible for the dance cultures of the marginalised, starting with Indian Dance and expanding into World Dance. In this chapter the intersectionality of the discussions around the engagement between dancing bodies; artefacts; archives; absent and living archives as well as education and curriculum are revealed as a more holistic view or purpose of my mother and me, as the embodiment of all of this - living, dancing bodies, archives and pedagogues that can exist beyond a single individual’s lifetime.

INTERWEAVING DANCE CULTURES

My interaction with the family archive led to encountering video footage of an introduction made by author, journalist, and retired SABC staffer, Fakir Hassen at ‘The Indian Cinema Centenary Awards’ held at the Killarney Cine Centre, Johannesburg on 17 October 2012. In presenting me with an award for our contribution to the Indian Film Industry in South Africa, he introduced me in the following manner:

Ever since I met Anusia, she has done something unique. I don’t like the word fusion...Fusion means you take two things ... you melt them together and make one thing. I like integration more than fusion. Integration takes two things and makes a third thing which incorporates the best of both those items....Nobody has done that better for dance in South Africa than Anusia Pillay (from my family archive, 2012).

The significance of Hassen’s statement is not about vanity, but rather about the viewpoint of a consistent audience member of authority. It is a humbling acknowledgement of my family’s and my own multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary body of work that had gone unacknowledged for 51 years – this was the first official public acknowledgement of its kind. It is also the recognition that as a second generation South African dance maker of Indian origin with a South Asian dance inclination, I have a passion for expanding my knowledge base and creative expression both around the various styles available within the South Asian dance ambit, as well as beyond the South Asian label. This could be attributed to my earliest training, which was received from both my mother and my aunt respectively. Raised by a mother who had studied not only dance, but drama, carnatic music and singing, and fine arts in India, I was encouraged to learn other forms of dance. I was exposed to drama tutelage, dance and music of the East and the West, as well as stage productions of various cultural dance traditions, such as *Ipi Ntombi* (1974) and *Swan Lake on Ice* (1970s and 80s), both locally and internationally. Such an immersive experience of the arts sparked an interest in various creative impulses within me. It became a regular way of how I lived and dealt with the world, as well as a changing sense of self. This spawns the overarching question that this

chapter endeavours to explore: **How do I explore the unarchival process in relation to artefacts, stories, traditions and dance performances of interwoven dance cultures to reconcile/reclaim the identity that my body of work is synonymous with, especially in the scholarly/pedagogical arena?** I found two avenues to deal with this enquiry, the first being the eclectic and melange nature of my choreography and the second being the resultant evolution of the artefacts found in the archive - dance curricula/syllabi commissioned by various governmental organisations, as well as the latest syllabus that I developed independently.

In order to subvert the prescribed, accepted and hegemonic dance styles one needs to know their rules/roots, which I endeavoured to master across the canvas of my life time. Even though I now prefer terms like interweaving, interspersing, or World Dance in addition to integration, taxonomy for our brand of dance was not so easily accessible at the time that my mother and I were experimenting with our vast vocabulary of dance in South Africa. It was not quite traditional and at the same time not quite contemporary in nature. Dance maker, scholar and cultural worker, Pallabi Chakravorty (2000: 109), proposed the term ‘Interculturalism’, “Commonly explained as cultural borrowing, interculturalism poses serious questions of cultural appropriation when located between unequal relations of power, such as between the Western nations of advanced capitalism and the developing world”. While, late anthropologist, Andree Grau cautions that, “It would be naive to see interculturalism as an overriding global phenomenon that transcends the differences of class, race and/or history. The implications for interculturalism are not the same for people in impoverished countries as for people in technologically advanced societies” (in Chakravorty, 2000-2001: 109). In addition, Theatre and Performance Studies scholar Rustom Bharucha argues that, “interculturalism is an ahistorical appropriation of Indian cultural forms in the

West, where the forms have been abstracted from their original context to be used as performance models in Euro-American cultural centers ... [It] celebrates transculturalism rather than specific histories” (in Chakravorty, 2000: 109). What happens when someone who is descendant of the Diasporic indigenous begins to utilise heritages that they were born into, to connect to embodied memories and primordial dance urges in their creative process? Upon reflection of these theorists, I realised that we then had to question whether what we initially viewed as a celebration and acknowledgement of other cultural dance styles was a form of appropriation. Where is the line drawn between a deep urge to respond to something so much a part of oneself, yet be restricted by the tide of whatever socio-political current was pervasive in any given time or era? Our take on the globalisation of dance still left us in an uncomfortable space of either being too far ahead of the norms of the society we lived in, or in direct opposition to the ‘accepted’ standards for dance and its makers.

This could be explained by my mother’s penchant for all things creative, and that was visible in her dance. When I was in primary school (1975-1981), I was often given performing roles in the annual concerts as the principal, the late Mr N.T. Moodley, was aware of my mother’s dance, drama and fine arts credentials from India. He would adapt popular stories into South Asian or South East Asian versions, and would task my mother and me with the choreography of Indian, Japanese and even Snake dances. She would accept these challenges with glee. Unsurprisingly, she was drawn to the work of **Uday Shankar**⁵⁰ that was not limited to South Asian dance and training, and visited his troupe regularly while she was in Delhi in the 1980s. As an Indian national, Shankar’s work was situated within the

⁵⁰ “Uday Shankar, a dancer who spent a great deal of his life outside India, improvised new forms of dance and music that he designated as representing Indian culture. Launching his career in Europe and the United States, Shankar adopted his ideas to the availability of local resources including musicians, instruments and set and lighting design” (Bhattacharjya, 2011: 482).

context of cultural interchange towards the end of British rule in India. Shankar's early projects include collaborations with ballet dancer Anna Pavlova in 1923, as well as philosopher and poet Rabindranath Tagore around 1933. This influenced his aesthetic development significantly.

Shankar's innovations in set design, music, choreography and even film directing establish him as a modernist in the 1930s–1940s. Shankar's role in creating new forms of music, especially while he was abroad, led to a particular conflict in his relationship to previously defined categories of national identity. This conflict resulted from Shankar's attempt to define Indian culture in a manner that fell outside officially sanctioned terms of 'Indian tradition' and 'Indian culture' – as understood in India, as well as abroad (Bhattacharjya, 2011: 482).

Even though my mother's earliest training may have been influenced by the Indian Nationalism wave that was heavily depicted in films such as 'Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baaje' (1955) that she was exposed to at that time, our work was an ode to Shankar's style of thinking, creating and performing from this time. This is evidenced by "Illumination" that we choreographed for our 1995 tour to Mauritius, as part of their Independence Day celebrations set to an eclectic music piece by composer Bhashkar. Shankar's influence was felt in a piece that had us perform in black costumes (not too different from cat burglar suits with an Indian touch), silhouetted, with a headdress of lit candles and long foil finger nails that resembled the Thai tradition to catch the light in its movements.



Fig. 26: 'Illumination', from NNTV programme called "Blase" (1996).

When interviewed for the 1996 NNTV programme called “Blase”, on Prof. Elizabeth Sneddon’s recommendation, I described it as ‘lighting the path to a brighter future’ for South Africa. That was an example of South Asian contemporary dance that attempted to encompass as many of the styles of World dance that we had been exposed to and that existed in this country in some form or another.

DANCE OF MULTIPLE ORIGINS, IN-BETWEEN-NESS AND THE PLURALITY OF EXPERIENCE

Choreography is a sensorial, curatorial act, yet it requires deep communion between emotions, body and context or environment. Despite the variety in my dance repertoire, to my frustration, I find myself constantly boxed and labelled as ‘Indian’ in my choreographic treatments. British choreographer, **Shobana Jeyasingh**, is also a dancer of “multiple origins” (Medhuri, 2008: 225), having grown up in Sri Lanka and Malaysia and then migrated to the United Kingdom in the late 1970s. Her explanation of her dance influences puts paid to the notion of cultural appropriation, and could very well be my own,

For me my heritage is a mix of David Bowie, Purcell, Shelly and Anna Pavlova, and it has been mixed so subtly as a somosa has mixed itself into the English cuisine in the last ten years or so: impossible to separate. But it is surprising how to many people my heritage could only be Indian So, for me Purcell, like Shelly like David Bowie, is not ‘the other,’ – it is part of my heritage. And in dance terms, Rukmini Devi and Merce Cunningham are also part of my heritage (in Medhuri, 2008: 225).

This engaging via one’s body and listening to one’s inner voice are significant parts of the foundation of dance and hence dance is the essence of embodiment. Dancers are better at thinking through their bodies as they live more fully with their bodies already while outside of dance we are often taught to suppress this embodied knowing and thinking. I find myself

engaging with paper in the similar manner as I would choreograph a dance piece. I, like Jeyasingh, am materialising the belief that,

Identity ... is something quite banal, ordinary, and emerging itself from the everyday urban experience ... Questions revolving round her identity appear suddenly like a ‘flash’ in her choreographies works, are ever present as a disappearing, signature trace which is here now and gone suddenly. Yet this trace in identity, or identity as trace seems to define Jeyasingh’s work and vision in that it impinges itself in the eye/I of the spectator and troubles the imagination (in Meduri, 2008: 226).

Various authors who subscribe to Jeyasingh’s standpoint, “talk about how the idea of being embodied also implies being embedded since we all as humans are fundamentally embedded in a society with existing structures, ideas and meanings that are tied to the physical, kinetic, spatial and temporal” (Block & Kissell in Pai, 2021: 17). Dancers who used this stance and dared to challenge the ‘authentic’ and ‘pure’ in the dance community by “interweaving of dance cultures” (Brandstetter, 2011; 2018) do exist. They, like me, indulge in contested performance and pedagogical choices. Here I use their experience and accolades to discuss the career and embodied choices made by both my mother and me. The international influence was ironically more accessible to us, first in our travels to study abroad, books from various countries and then the internet. In India, the exposure to a smorgasbord of national and regional television channels on Doordarshan⁵¹ and a multitude of live performances was a feast for a deprived artist like me. The exposure was not just to the Indian arts, but various World Dance performances as well.

⁵¹ “In the initial phase, the target audiences of Indian television were the poor, the illiterate, and the deprived masses, but in course of time, that agenda got eroded. The television industry underwent a massive transformation, from a tiny monopolised government controlled propagandistic establishment to a highly market-centric, investment oriented one feeding on advertising revenues. This meant that television programme genres originated from its popularity rating by an ‘audience’ that represented the Indian consumer market. In order to promote programmes of substance, Doordarshan began to broadcast quality programming, but most of it catered to the intellectual appetite of a section of the urban and semi-urban elite and middle class, leaving the poor and the illiterate, mainly residing in the rural areas, untouched.” (Chakrabarty & Sengupta, 2004: 1).

My memory of watching Ballet, Bharata Natyam and Odissi exponent, **Ramli Ibrahim**⁵², is as vivid today as it was in my early twenties. He is a Malaysian of Islamic origin who studied engineering in Australia, while receiving Ballet training. Later, he studied Indian classical dance styles in India. When asked the question “**You are trained in classical, folk and contemporary dance styles. How do you strike a balance between them?**” in an interview with NARTHAKI.COM (2001) (bold in original), his response was:

We learn various art forms and perform them as per our choreography. It is the critics who attempt to compartmentalise and put our style of presentation into various slots. In some items, the music may be Odissi like in 'Pallavi', but I have deconstructed it and given it a contemporary layering. We can define contemporary aesthetic now from an Asian point of view and not from a Euro-American stance (Venkat in Narthaki.com, 2001: npn).

Seng (2019: 1) confirms this stance in an interview with Ibrahim, “The West has homogenised the East as “a single formation” ... and in contrast to the assumption made, Ramli Ibrahim’s *In the Name of Love* epitomizes the “plurality of experience”. This dance drama focuses on three indigenous women from different cultures, “who are barely made visible in the colonialist discourse...as they struggle to maintain their own heritage, cultures and traditions” (McRae in Seng, 2019: 1). The area of this work that has direct bearing on this study, is where I found myself as a South African artiste, “Being caught in the in-betweenness ... and the importance of preserving the different cultural identities” (Seng, 2019: 10). Ibrahim currently runs world-famous Odissi dance organisation *Sutra* in Penang, Malaysia, which has survived despite social opposition and political challenges from an Islamic-based government for his practice of a Hindu-based dance form. His skill, tenacity and grace became a symbol of what integration of various identities and cultures meant to me at that early stage of my career, more than that he became a pedagogue in trying circumstances.

⁵² Ketu H. Katrak, 2016, <https://www.rem.routledge.com/articles/ibrahim-ramli-1953>

Anita Ratnam, like me, has a variety of Indian dance training to her credit - Bharata Natyam, Mohiniyattam, Kathakali, Kalarippayattu, and T'ai chi. She coined a unique taxonomy for her dance style - "Neo Bharatam". The author of two bestselling books, both titled *Narthaki* (1992 and 1997); she later converted them to an Indian dance website - NARTHAKI.COM. According to her, humour is an important tool in her work. Hailing from a theatre background, she worked in the digital space as a television producer in New York for ten years. Her improvisations of themes and music in solo performances tell stories with global themes that have long memories. She believes that we need to acknowledge the Devadasis, whose art it is that we are now dancing as they so richly upheld the ancient dance traditions. She along with **Mallika Sarabhai**, are some of my foremost dance heroes. Sarabhai's mother was a renowned Bharata Natyam dancer yet, she did not force her children to follow her profession. She went into acting and performed with her mother, even though she never learnt dance directly from her mother - neither did her son learn from her. She indulges in 'exploration', as she first trained in puppetry and music. She, like Ratnam, also studied Kalarippayattu. In her intersectionality endeavours, she likes "to learn new things to be able to expand my palette of possibilities and that is something that excites me" (Sarabhai in Youtube, 2020: npn), and as a politician, she is actively involved with women's, humanitarian and marginalisation issues. She became the first Indian classical dancer to perform a rape scene in her depiction of a religious re-enactment in her Tedtalk titled 'Mallika Sarabhai: Dance to change the world' (in YouTube, 2009). She has attempted to demystify dance for non-dancers and bring awareness to social issues through dance and theatre.

Locally, **Suria Govender**, dancer, scholar, actress and director of *Surialanga*, is known for her performance at President Mandela's inauguration in 1994. According to Bharata Natyam exponent/scholar, Smitha Radhakrishnan (2007), "Govender ... choreographed a Bharatnatyam dance piece to Johnny Clegg's classic anti-apartheid song, with English and Zulu lyrics, Asimbonanga. ...Some said Govender was ahead of her time, others disapproved of what she'd done, feeling that her choreography lacked 'purity'"⁵³. This criticism is one that my mother and I faced consistently in our careers, even before Govender's attempt, as we stepped outside of our linguistic and 'North or South Indian-ness' within our Diaspora as far back as 1963. In a monograph delivered as a paper at SADDYT/ADDSA UBUNTU Conference at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 13 - 16 July 1994. Govender states,

The one factor above all that validated the Asimbonanga intercultural experiment was the fact that dancers of Indian descent who live in KwaZulu-Natal were meeting what was a historical necessity. Although they have lived closely with Zulus in this region, the parameters of their relationship - that of master and servant - was fashioned generally by the policy of apartheid. They were given an opportunity to refashion their relationship with this group of people by exploring local Zulu culture through the interpretation of their language and music. The practice of Indian classical dance demands a very close relationship between the music and dance, the word and the gesture, therefore the dancers were expected to imbibe every aspect of the accompanying music and lyrics (1994: npn).

Radhakrishnan published two journal articles based on her participation in the *Surialanga* Company. She wrote the following based on her experience,

The choreography and productions always forged new connections between the dancers—who kept changing—and the audiences, who were also changing over time. And yet, *Surialanga's* connection to the democratic, intercultural promise of the new South Africa has been sustained, even as the country, and that promise, faces grave challenges (Radhakrishnan, 2020: npn).

This is of particular significance when one considers the recent unrest and looting in July 2021 that despite having political agendas and alleged insurrection was conveniently reduced

⁵³ <https://international.ucla.edu/institute/article/99207>

to racial tensions between South Africans of Black and Indian origin (Makonye, 2022; Kalina, 2021). Many of us have and continue to utilise dance to subvert these attitudes. Although an important factor to consider, it should be noted that endeavours such as these in integrating Indian and local African cultures began with my family and Mr. Gampu in the 1960's and continued into the new dispensation, as demonstrated in both my MA and this study. Mention must also be made of **Jayespri Moopen**, Artistic Director of *Tribhangi Dance Theatre*, who began works similar to Suria Govender around the dawn of a new democracy in South Africa. "Since Moopen began exploring her roots as a South African, with her Indian classical dance heritage, way back in 1989 with Circles and Squares, this process of discovery has been a long and patchy one" (IOL, 2009: npn). Also a trained Bharata Natyam dancer, for thirty three years, she has experimented with "Indian, Contemporary, African and Afrofusion" (Creative feel, 2019: npn). We have had the opportunity to perform at many common dance events.

Jay Pather describes himself as a "choreographer, curator and academic" (Pather, 2020: npn). He describes the Indian Diasporic journey as "part of a global entanglement",

Entanglement is a condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with; it speaks of an intimacy gained, even if it was resisted, or ignored or uninvited [while considering] these possibilities of an unstoppable entanglement looking at the limitations and pitfalls of artistic and cultural homogeneity (Nuttall in Pather, 2020 : npn) (italics in original).

As director of *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre*, he conceived of a work in 1999 called "A South African Siddhartha"⁵⁴, based on Herman Hess' novel⁵⁵. Pather, although of Indian origin is not trained in Indian dance, worked with dance artists from India⁵⁶ and his company,

⁵⁴ a story that almost parallels the Buddha's story in India. Ironically I was offered the female Odissi dance lead, by Jay, for the Grahamstown Festival in 1999. I had to unfortunately decline as I had already committed to our Malaysian and Mauritian Indian Folk Dance tour that was also scheduled for July 1999.

⁵⁵ Siddhartha (1922)

⁵⁶ Vaibhav Joshi and Jayathi Bhatia

including various cultures and themes in his innovative body of work. This production was first performed at the then Grahamstown Festival in July 1999. Pather also worked with local Indian dancers in several of his other local and international productions. In a similar vein, dance scholar and director of the Jomba! Festival at UKZN, **Lliane Loots**, received a few months of Odissi training at Nrityagram in Bengaluru, India around 1998/9. According to *The Conversation* website (2022), Loots, a contemporary dancer, founded the *Flatfoot Dance Company* in 2003 as a dance training programme that started in 1994. She won numerous awards and commissions and has travelled extensively to champion various aspects of dance.

POLITICAL

In attempting to ascertain how similar or different these dancers' motivations and aspirations are to mine, or how both the accolades and censure that accompany the intersection of ideologies in their processes are addressed, I found that the gaps expand further when one attempts adopting a more eclectic approach to dance. I said in an interview with *City Press's* "I" journalist Mokgadi Seabi, "Show me any kind of dance and I'll do it. Its in my DNA, I suppose" (2012: 15). There are mixed reactions to attempts at combining cultures and traditions. This could present as a layered approach to three or more world dance styles and the result is confusion, censure and a 'non-entity' status or label for the other, yet western styles were lauded for stepping into other territories. "Most people expect to see Indian dancers when we perform, but dancing has nothing to do with your race or nationality, its about how that art reverberates with you" (Pillay in Seabi, 2012: 15). Publications⁵⁷ by South African Indian dance exponents and writers use terminology such as 'fusion', 'multicultural',

⁵⁷ Scholars such as Nalini Moodley- Diar (2021) and Lliane Loots; Journalist, Yogan Devan (2016) and authors Devar Singh (2019) and Fakir Hassen in several of his books.

‘integration’ or ‘globalisation’, when describing the intermingling with other cultural dance genres.

Dance creates opportunities to stress our interconnectedness, resist the narrative of “us” and “them,” and echo the peace marcher’s placard “*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*”⁵⁸. As a nation of peoples who were defined by our appearances—and our accents—by a fascist racist state, it is vital that we seek out and stress our interconnections with others; to be us, we have to stress how we South Africans are *Makwerekwere*⁵⁹, too (Castelyn, 2019: 40) (italics in original).

The multitude of languages and cultural ideologies in a single nation is a nexus for both India and South Africa, creating opportunities for what dance scholar Gabrielle Brandstetter (2011: 2) has termed ‘interweaving of dance cultures’ referring to “encounters between cultures”. She best addresses my area of interest as, “Processes of interweaving cultures have a history that is older and deeper than the discourses on globalization” (Brandstetter, 2011: 7). This venturing outside of perceived borders of tradition usually elicits a binary response: ‘good’ or ‘bad’, like the article by journalist, Yogan Devan (2016), which speaks of the globalisation of dance cultures as if it is a new occurrence within our current time frame. The move toward purity and authenticity in the build up to the 1930s and post-independence India spawned a wave of national pride, which led to the traditional art forms attaining the exalted stature that many practitioners in the field aspire to. Devan’s stance is further destabilised by the current avalanche of dance shows/competitions on Indian and international television and online platforms that make interweaving or an amalgamation of dance styles a desirable norm rather than an exception. Again this type of globalisation requires mastery of each style explored. According to Indian dance author, Utpal K. Banerjee (1983),

Purity of styles is a moot point, since most styles have evolved gradually over time. What is considered pure today, perhaps passed through a change only a few decades ago and could certainly undergo enrichment today in the hands of gifted and well-meaning choreographers.

⁵⁸ a person is a person through/because of (other) people; you are who you are because of how you relate to others around you.

⁵⁹ foreigners

Purity is a relative term and its association with old traditions is often misleading (in Devar Singh, 2019: 145).

All of these arguments, though sound, have the potential to leave not just lay-people, but trained dancers themselves dazed, disorientated and bewildered at their own prospects in an already charged and contested field/industry. What, then, is the antidote to this state of bewilderment?

DANCE PEDAGOGY IN THE LOCAL ACADEMY

Education and exposure to various dance styles and cultures are essential to hone a dance practitioners skills and sensibilities. In both South Africa and India, “Outside the university, traditional dance practices are [for the majority] taught within a mytho-historical framework” (Kaktikar, 2020: 9). Apart from dance, there are several gaps that exist in the education system in South Africa. Profound change in education curricula is needed in terms of the content to thwart the hegemonies that remain at play in this country, especially around history and the arts, and dance in particular.

the determined efforts of the apartheid regime to induce intellectual stunting and emaciation through its tribal colleges on the one hand, and the resistance in varying degrees and forms against such engineering on the other — we now have to take a hard look at ourselves living in the post-colony (Govinden, 2011).

The education system plays a vital role in ensuring that artists not only make art but are also actively preparing the future generations for an inclusive and humane society to self-actualise. As Pierre Lombart from Southern African Foundation for Contemporary Art (SAFFCA) highlights:

Education today is based on pure accumulation of knowledge. If you want knowledge, you can get the answer instantly from a machine. Art, music, teamwork and sport is what you need to teach to kids, because that’s what the machines won’t do. We have to adapt our way of thinking to what mankind, at its core, means (in Im4theArts, 2020: npn).

The same can be said for dance however, technology does not necessarily provide academic skills. We are witnessing, increasingly, specialised areas of study being absorbed into generic departments. Dance is being sublimated, and almost morphed into ‘movement’. The key difference being performance, i.e. dance involves movement, however movement isn’t necessarily dance. It could mean something as simple as walking.

How do we ensure the realisation of what Article 11 (2005: 8) of the *UNESCO Convention on the protection and the Promotion of The Diversity of Cultural Expressions* categorically states: “The protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions **presuppose the recognition of equal dignity of and respect for all cultures, including the cultures of persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples**” (bold in original). While Article 10 of the *Charter for African Cultural Renaissance* commits to “protect and promote the freedom of artists, intellectuals and men and women of culture” (2021: 14), and Section 16 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* assures freedom of expression, which includes “freedom of artistic creativity” (1996: 7). Then, there is also the message from the then Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Dr. B. S. Ngubane (from August 1994 until 31 August 1996):

The Ministry will actively promote the Constitutional right of every learner in the General Education and Training Phase to access equitable, appropriate life-long education and training in arts, culture and heritage to develop individual talents and skills through the transformation of arts education within the formal school system and the development and extension of community based arts education structures. The rich and diverse expression of South African arts, culture and heritage shall thereby be promoted and developed (South African Government website, 1996: online).

With all of these guidelines and commitments available to us, one would expect that education in arts, culture and heritage would readily create and support opportunities for making, performing and learning as well as preserving the myriad expressions of South

African cultural heritage to ensure the right of all South Africans to participate fully in, contribute to, and benefit from a more inclusive South African culture and sector. Sadly, with all the effort and sacrifice that South African artists have made to secure a democratic way of life, they still remain on the periphery as an afterthought. The lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, that we experienced, only served to magnify the fact that in many ways it is the academy's esteemed role to ensure and facilitate that process - to encourage the consistent disruption of the established disparities. Blatant ellipses in recognition and representation have been longstanding and this study will hopefully join the ranks of those that are addressing cultural and pedagogical gaps locally.

Several reasons are listed as to why Indian dance has not been included in either basic or tertiary education curricula in South Africa. These range from - there are no qualified teachers, assessors, or examiners in the particular field to, the person responsible for pilot projects/curricula/archiving has passed away. The former is easily refuted by a litmus test in the form of our late student Renusha Manilall. She studied Kathak at Bangalore University as the first South African Kathak recipient of an ICCR scholarship. Having received training from only my family and with no prior exposure to any direct training in India, she passed both her entrance exams (theory and practical) with flying colours. She went on to attain a 'first class' pass in her undergraduate degree in 2004 (Fig.27).

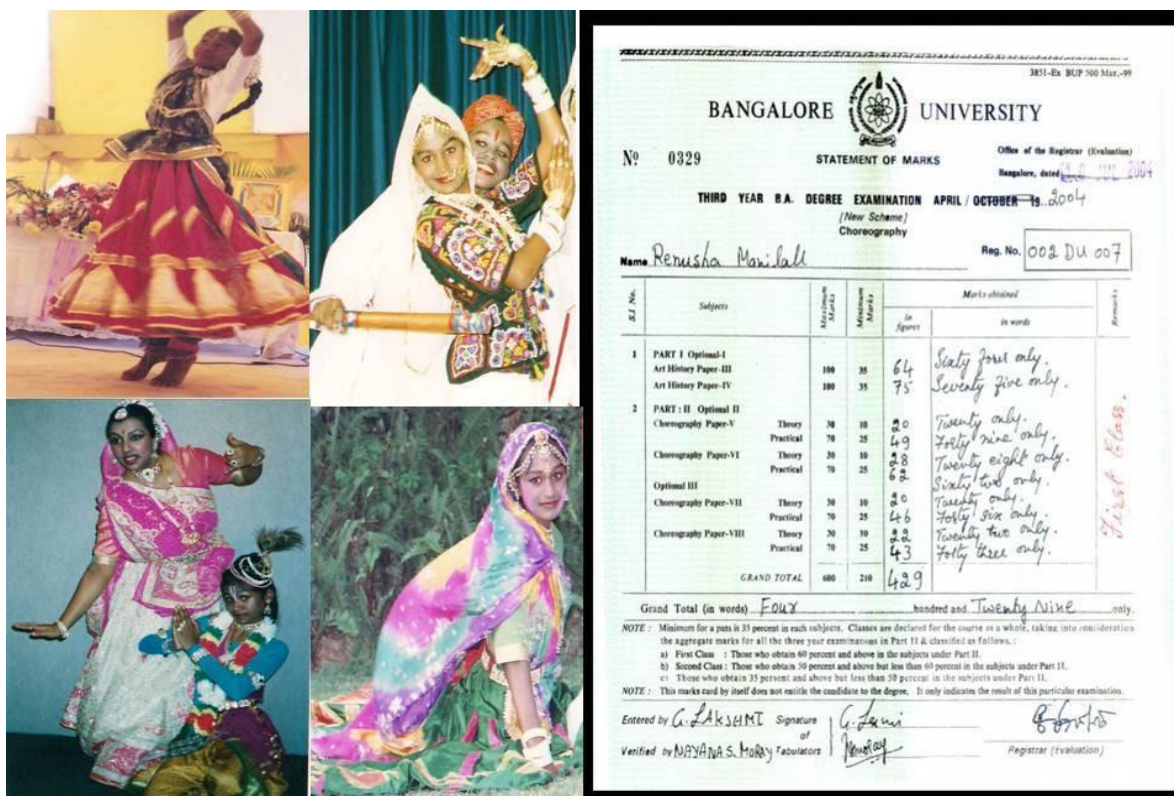


Fig.27: Renusha Manilall (Pillay, 2019: 137).

She gained many accolades and as her final performance exam, utilised our multi-cultural training to present a dance drama based on Nelson Mandela's life and release from prison. She worked with world renowned Salsa dancer Lourd Vijay in Bangalore, and danced in the film "The Myth" with Jackie Chan. She returned to South Africa when she was diagnosed with lymphoma at 21. She always told me that her fight against cancer was as a result of the dance training she received from my mother and me. She passed away at 27 years of age, still involved in training and choreography with me and the urge to recover so that she could dance again. As sentimental as this re-telling is, it is evidence of the efforts of my mother and I to create quality students and proficient future bearers of a Dance legacy (Pillay, 2019: 137-138).

The presence of an educated and advanced calibre of Indian dance expertise in this country, when measured up to western forms is automatically found lacking, often leading to the unnecessary need for expert supervision from Indian nationals. Or is it a convenient hegemonic dereliction or abdication of responsibility to a portion of the other? Kaktikar, an Indian dance pedagogue in higher education posits,

the curriculum is the defining framework of educational practice frames: the teacher, the student, the audience as well as the artist. ... [it] is a process of recontextualization of knowledge so that it becomes accessible and transmittable ... by framing what is taught (and not taught) within

specific contexts, the curriculum is a powerful tool for creating, sustaining and subverting power relations across society and history (2020: 9).

Further, if the person/people are worthy of creating curricula/syllabi in a particular subject, why then are the very same people not capable of managing and implementing such a project under the commissioning authority?

My mother and I compiled syllabi for the Republic of South Africa Post-School Vocational Education at Technical Colleges under the auspices of Eastside College. They were at National Intermediate certificate level for Bharata Natyam, Kathak and Indian Folk Dance (N2 [and N3 levels]). This Syllabus was meant to be implemented in January 1997, with the first examination taking place in November of the same year. My mother and I travelled to and researched the viable options and resources in India. The other project, that never materialised, was the Gauteng Education department's pilot project for secondary schools in Indian Classical and Folk Dance in 2000. The approach to this project was different in that a group of prominent South African dancers made contributions to the Bharata Natyam Syllabus, while I compiled both the Kathak and Folkdance syllabi. The coordinator was a dancer, educator and a friend, Sumaiygai [Paideya], who passed away suddenly a few months before implementation. The project was then shelved. Although these academic forays have been made, they were firstly expected to be voluntary, and secondly, never utilised the practical expertise of dancer/s that helped create these programmes to share in its execution. Thus leaving the promise of formalisation of Indian dance unfulfilled in South Africa. Again, Eurocentric and now Afro-centricity in dance has taken centre stage, minority dance forms are still not invited to "sit at the dance pedagogy table" (Pillay, 2019: 124-125).

Since I wrote this in my MA thesis, and building up to my PhD study, I made contact with several members of the archives division of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to obtain copies of these documents, since the beginning of July 2022. I had to resort to this as the computer that housed these documents was struck by lightning soon after I submitted the curricula to the GDE. All my information was irretrievably lost, except for the hard copies of the NED Folkdance syllabus.

CURRENT DANCE STUDIES LOCALLY

In the process of trying to attain these documents, I have learnt the following:

Firstly, there appeared to be no trace of these curricula that we created and submitted, in spite of a code being allocated to them (I only have a hard copy of the Indian Folk Dance Syllabus from the 1990s [code no.: 03010182 (N2) and 03010263 (N3) respectively], in my possession. I was informed by the DBE that the person responsible had been tragically killed and a replacement for him was not yet found. This led to interesting encounters with a string of DBE employees, retired employees, scholars and professionals who in some obscure way are related to dance, dance studies or dance scholarship. I found myself networking with dancers from all around the country. This proved to be both blocking (every person led me back to the same place I began) and beneficial (a network of dancers with a passion for its formalisation began to form). The general reaction to my request for information was one of generosity from everyone that I encountered. The mutual dedication and passion for the art form seemed to engender a wide circle of support in this endeavour.

Secondly, it was only in (21-22) November 2020, during my participation in one of the panels, “Where To From Here?” and questions on the future of Indian Dance in South Africa by young South Africans’, with South African dancers at the South African Indian Dance Alliance (SAIDA) online conference titled, *From Indenture to Stage ... voices across waters* that it dawned on me that no one was aware of, acknowledging or had even checked with the DBE if a curriculum existed. One of the attendees commented that my co-panellist, Sarveshan Kumar Gangen, will be the first to focus on a Bharata Natyam dance curriculum in his honours studies. I mentioned, at this panel, that curricula had been created and lodged with the National Department of Education by my mother and me, while questioning directly why more is not being done in the field for a majority Diaspora outside of India as there were several dance pedagogues attending the conference. It is surprising to me that archives exist

of western dance styles in tertiary institutions such as the University of Cape Town (UCT) that has housed a dance studies department for years, yet very limited research is documented or included of the other. This includes Wits University's *Ar(t)chive* which "is an independent South African Contemporary Dance and Physical Performance archive currently based at WITS University's School of Arts" (THE AR(T)CHIVE, 2012: npn), since 2012. This project on contemporary dance contained a spattering of dancers from an Indian dance background that were known to them. I tried making an appointment to include more information of this nature in the project however appointments were postponed, resulting in this never materialising.

Thirdly, the two sets of curricula created by us were not the only ones submitted at provincial level more than a decade after my second submission to the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). Two more were created, and were sent to me in my search for copies of the documents I was requesting from our educational authorities. Both the creators of these curricula are familiar to me based on our interactions as part of the Indian dance community in South Africa. Darshana Rama, an engineer and ex-principal of *Vadhini Indian Arts Academy* in Cape Town, was approached in 2011 by Carolyn Holden of *La Rosa*, a flamenco dance school, to assist with SAQA accreditation. The aim was to create a curriculum around dance appreciation that included various dance styles, including the basic aspects of both Bharata Natyam and Kathak. According to Rama, it was designed for post-matric students who could not access dance education at UCT, and not for the provincial education department. Carolyn Holden passed away a year before the programme was meant to be implemented and it was never pursued. Shika Harrypaul, a Kathak exponent and educator, approached the GDE in 2016 to create a curriculum for implementation at secondary school

level. She was told that she needed to approach schools to canvas interest for the subject and had to find someone to run it. She was pregnant at the time and saw these as evasive manoeuvres on the part of the GDE. She was disappointed that after all the work invested in a comprehensive curriculum nothing had materialised. I assured her that I was not interested in using her version as part of this study, but was rather interested in the timeline that was emerging from my various interactions with dance professionals. Both Rama and Harrypaul described their experience of the treatment of Indian dance pedagogues as “bottom of the food chain” or as dance “interlopers”. Neither of them was aware of the pre-existing curricula that my mother and I had created, and none of us were aware of the others’ work. Is this silo mentality beneficial?

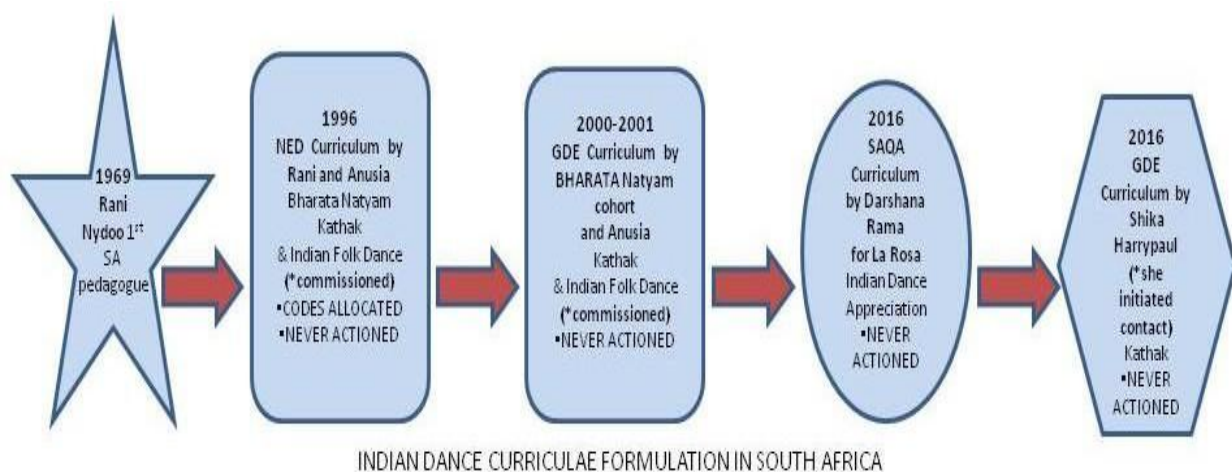


Fig.28: Timeline of the various syllabi/curricula formulated to formalise Indian dance in the South African education system that were never actioned, created by me in 2022.

The timeline of development of curricula in various iterations of Indian dance, above (Fig.28), is a stark and graphic reality faced by the South African dance community – none of them were ever actioned or implemented. It demonstrates a steady, determined and impassioned effort on the part of practitioners of Indian dance to formalise its presence in the education system of this country for over two and a half decades that they volunteered to give off their time, knowledge and selves to create a potential path time and time again. It is

evidence of continuity and a persistent drive to obtain acknowledgement and realise the promise of this country's constitution. It is these type of assumptions made in our own field of expertise that clouds the concept of research to facilitate its expansion. This is exclusion by dismissal and disregard of what is already in existence in favour of what is familiar and known as yardsticks to measure all other dance modalities by.

Finally, I learnt from my discussions with Susan Botha, scholar and co-author of the textbooks for Dance Studies at National level, that the subject has been offered at secondary school level, from around the same time as our inaugural dance syllabi of 1996. This was a boost for the local acceptance of dance at that level. It should be noted that the dance styles that were eligible for this programme were Ballet, Contemporary and Flamenco - Euro-centric dance styles. The table below is an indication of the current provincial status of dance styles as dance studies majors offered at matric level from Botha:

PROVINCE	DANCE STYLE
Western Cape	African Hip Hop
Free State	Ballroom
KwaZulu-Natal	African dance
Gauteng	Will soon be offering Hip Hop

The current curriculum in *Dance Studies Dance Theory and History Study Guide Grades 10 – 12* (Western Cape Education Department, 2007) consists of three components:

- Safe Dance Practice: focuses on dance anatomy, injuries, and the principles of the chosen dance major.
- Composition: includes basic elements, music, stimuli, dynamics and contrasts.

- c. Dance Literacy: consists of history, comparison to other dance forms (how are they different from each other), stage craft, and analysis of dance work (classical and contemporary ballet).

There is an equal emphasis on performance arts assessment tasks such as choreography, theory and the learners' ability to put them into practice; and practical class. The end of year exam is based on major dance principles, which includes solo work and improvisation.

From our syllabi development, one is able to note an evolution from the NED syllabus (APPENDICES D and E) for implementation at Technical College level in 1997 where we were requested (APPENDIX F) to create a syllabus for Indian Classical and Folk dance. Here the instruction was to stick stringently to the perceived traditions and knowledge base of the dance styles, very much along the lines of the old dispensation (apartheid). Next, the GDE pilot project in Indian Dance had the Bharata Natyam portion jointly created by a group of exponents of the dance style, which included Jayespri Moopen, Seema Lalla, and me, amongst others. I vividly recall that the locally-trained and India-trained dancers were engaged in a debate around 'South African Bharata Natyam' versus Bharata Natyam - the method of study in India and worldwide. It was established that the 'roots' of a dance form are vital to introduce the basic rules and parameters that define it, however there was a great urge to showcase and encourage the South African-ness of our own identities. It was here that it was suggested that at matric level of the syllabus, a practical choreographic project would be set to encourage the integration of a local dance form with the Indian Classical dance form to create something with a unique flavour. At the time of writing this chapter, this jointly formulated curriculum, as well as the ones for Kathak and Folk dance styles that I compiled

and submitted to GDE cannot be located by the educational authority. In contrast to the previous two sets of curricula, the 2017 ‘Hands Up’ syllabus (APPENDIX G) that I formulated for *Anavarata*’s 55th anniversary, building up to the 60th Anniversary in 2022, is a formalisation of the techniques and levels of interweaving that has been the hallmark of an amalgamation of my mother’s and my learning and training over a period of six decades. This particular dance programme, “is explicitly committed to an educational project that opposes traditional schooling, particularly the technocratic view of schools that has yielded standardised testing, tracking, continued segregation, and extraordinary gaps in academic outcomes” (Gaztambide- Fernández, 2013: 216). These various pedagogical translations, as in the case of teaching languages (David, Pacheco & Jiménez, 2019), are offered to strengthen the various dance learning objectives, assuming the stance that educational inclusion of the other is equated to their embedded-ness in the society that they have been born into. We presented locally designed options that merged new practices with already tried and tested instructional methods from our training in India. Other dance organisations were interspersing western performances with interludes of classical dance, or taking South Indian dance to the boards alongside Zulu dancers, something that I still see as separate entities sharing a space, ironically art imitating life. It is a technique that I use very conservatively and cautiously to avoid a visual representation of separate entities or apartheid. My mother and I were driven by a need to blur or erase those barriers and boundaries after instilling the ‘roots’ of a dance style in the teaching process. In so doing, the words of Fakir Hassen about my integrative and interweaving of cultures at an optimal level, at the beginning of this chapter, finds context.

PERSONAL AND DANCE GENEALOGY

My practice, therefore, tends to align itself with that of Jay Pather's (in Devar Singh, 2019: 125) stance when he refers to how he approaches his work with Indian dance, "you've got to pay respect to the authenticity of that dance form", while he also notes that "dancers from India were far more flexible, and less precious about holding on". It is my urge of letting go of the "precious-ness", as done in my dance theatre performance that I have experimented with in paper choreography. Here I envisage the ancient art of shadow puppetry of India which is rooted in the rituals of the rural people. "The regional variation in theme and style can be explained by the socio-political system, the religious doctrines and the nature of the patron class. The puppet theatre has shown remarkable staying power against vicissitudes of time" (Das in Pandey, 2017: 359). My creations involve ancient paper cutting traditions from Uttar Pradesh called "Sanjhi paper cutting" (Singh & Rishi, 2009: 197). This is inspired by the act of cutting sugar cane by my indentured ancestors⁶⁰ and the manner that the Indian indentured were recorded.

Drawn from geographically distinct regions of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, as well as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, they bore difference of caste identity, cultural tradition, religious practice and language. The system of indenture was designed to erase these histories and traditions and upon their arrival in Natal they were incorporated into a labour system as an undifferentiated and racialised mass (Vahed et al, 2010: 2).

The ships list is the only evidence of their existence. My maternal ancestor, although named, was registered like livestock. According to my late Aya (great-grandmother), the indentured were lined up on their arrival from a long sea voyage in often inhumane conditions, publicly stripped and inspected for identifying markings/scars - a symbolic cutting away of human dignity. Their belongings were then burnt.

⁶⁰ Authors: Lommarsh, Roopnarine (2014); Newspaper articles by Munsamy (1995); Govender (2010); Desai (2018)

B.M.25

DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS - DEPARTEMENT VAN BINNENLANDSESAKE

COPY OF SHIP'S LIST OF INDIAN IMMIGRANT

Serial Number	: 231
Colonial Number	: 36132
Date of Arrival	: 06:03:1888
Name of Ship	: BARQUE ZUATH LAMBA
Place of Registration	: —
Date of Registration	: —
Number in Register	: —
Name	: M. RAMAYAH
Father's Name	: M. APPAYAH
Age	: 18 YRS.
Sex	: MALE
Caste	: KAPUDANUM
District	: GUNTAM
Thanna/Taluq	: KARAKAVALSU
Village	: RAVICHANDRI
Height	: 5'2"
Bodily Marks	: FACE PITTED WITH SMALL POX
Name of Next-of-Kin	: M. DULAPEE - BROTHER
Relations Accompanied	: —
Small Pox/Vaccinated	: VACCINATED
Remarks	: —

Certified a true copy.


 REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

BINNENLANDSESAKE
 DEPT. VAN
 1988-10-06
 HOME AFFAIRS (48)

Fig.29: My ancestor's record on a ships list (Dept. of Home Affairs,1988).

The migrants can't use these certificates, they do not know their contents; nor will they ever know that they will be preserved in colonial archives so that their children and grandchildren would dig them up some day to legitimate their own lives ... they nevertheless function as erstwhile documents through which a certain (retrospective) humanity may be given to a people without 'history' (Vahed et al, 2010: 3).

This ships list is a modern day copy of the original registration of the emigration certificate, very much as descendants are updated versions of our ancestors. Most of the indentured were functionally illiterate as far as the English language was concerned. With all the modern technology and advancements along with talk of inclusion and decolonisation, those histories, my history remains hidden in the veil of time and colonialism. We can tell our story of attempted retrieval, yet it remains a game of 'Join the Dots'- just out of reach. By extension dancers of the other are viewed as tropes - either accultural beings, token displays of social integration or non-entities.



Fig.30: My story box and shadow puppet theatre



Fig.31: 'Shiva-Parvati', Nydoo Sisters

The creative process that lends itself to this chapter took place in two stages: first, a 'bozetto',⁶¹ or sample story board - a theatre book⁶², and then the subsequent adaptation/theaterisation of the story and poetry (<https://youtu.be/tUEOBmklSDw>). It is inspired by my experiments with silhouettes, shadow puppetry, theatre books⁶³ and story boxes in an attempt to create a dance drama in paper. This is based on the 'Shiva-Parvati' performances of my family, reminiscent of the 'Ardhanarishwara'.⁶⁴ story passed down from my Aya and Amma⁶⁵. Drawn from ancient scriptures, it may appear a love story on the surface; however it has deeper connotations for my melange heritage. "All photographs do work in revealing messages, intended and unintended. Asking *why* a particular photograph was taken is also to ask *what* of value and meaning was being preserved by the people in that moment. All images have many stories to tell" (Chetty in Vahed et al, 2010: vi) (italics in original). I utilised and adapted digitised pictures from the various stage performances and my parents' wedding album in the archive that are relevant to the story in a simulation of Indian puppetry. The storyboarding is metaphorical/allegorical to create narratives. The

⁶¹ It is an Italian word for the initial sketch made before paint is applied to a canvas.

⁶² https://youtu.be/yi-JQ-9S9_Y

⁶³ Author, Karishma Chugani Nankani is the inspiration, as we share similar intertwined Indian and African cultural heritages (karishmachugani.com, 2017).

⁶⁴ This story is based on a 10-11th century Hindu scripture, *Kalika Purana*. It tells the tale of Shiva, the Lord of dance, and his consort Gauri merging into a single being, "*Ardhanarishwara*" - half man and half woman as a solution to the pain of separation.

⁶⁵ Mother

Ardhanarishwara is symbolic of how I always wanted to dance - merged identities, rather than being forced to hold separate identities, development, entities - divorced and devoid of union, the manner in which my family attained a certain level of cultural hybridity via dance.

Cultural hybridity constitutes the effort to maintain a sense of balance among practices, values, and customs of two or more different cultures. In cultural hybridization, one constructs a new identity that reflects a dual sense of being, which resides both within and beyond the margins of nationality, race, ethnicity, class, and linguistic diversity (Banks in Sage Reference, 2012) (italics in original).

The intention with the paper iterations, as a process of making, is to provoke and play while creating a palimpsestic interpretation of the archive, which is the unarchival process, where the intention was to,

move beyond understanding the archive as a reservoir of objects, digitized and ready to be consumed along a predictable pathway of knowledge acquisition. The challenge will be to design open-ended and playful experiences which are inherently unstable and inject emergence and ambiguity into the child's encounter with them (Haseman in Cameron, Anderson & Wotzko, 2017: 167).

This demonstrated multifaceted and multilayered techniques as representations of the intermingling of genres and styles that are synonymous with my dance practice. There was a fulfilling flow that developed including a childlike exploration of awe and wonder in creating a puppet theatre performance that is suitable for young children to the elderly. In my case, it acts as a metaphor for the inherited pain of my ancestors, as well as my own as a South African of Indian origin. It represents my ancestors' struggle to reconcile their Indian identity with their new and foreign environment in South Africa. It also highlights my experience as a South Asian dancer navigating dance in South Africa and interweaving the various cultures and identities that I was born into. There was a definite assuaging of the ruptures in my ancestry by turning the making and filming process into a family affair (which is completely diverse in cultures), including my fourteen-year-old niece, Savera Moir a budding artist herself, who became extremely invested in the outcome of this dance drama. This allayed the

initial sense of isolation that I felt in taking on this creative study that was so new and unfamiliar to me. The challenge was to open up both myself and the family archive with both rudimentary and sophisticated treatments. The culmination of the performance is freed from the walls and corners of a theatre space to be a representation of how I perceive dance as unifying, healing and liberating - that is an ode to the type of socialisation that both Jeyasingh and I were exposed to.

What then is the taxonomy or metonymy for this brand of ‘Indian dance’ that is contemporary yet traditional, integrated and merged with the cultures of the countries, which have become the homes of migrant Indians, yet mindful of the significance of individual culture and heritage? SanSan Kwan, Theater, Dance and Performance Studies author and researcher on East-West intercultural collaboration explains contemporary dance as:

an adjective appended to a regional form (i.e., contemporary African dance, contemporary Asian dance, contemporary Latin American dance), reminds us of the complex legacies and negotiations, distinctions and exclusions that postcolonialism and globalization have wrought on taxonomies of dance (2017: 38).

Kwan (2017: 39) raises a crucial point around Contemporary dance - it “is dominated by Euro-American artists, questioning whether artists who do not fit the prescribed style are then not “contemporary”?”, and goes on to argue that it “risks excluding an artist whose work does not align with what we have determined to be contemporary”. The import of this questioning is that if the contemporary is dominated by Euro-American artists, then it is dominated by Euro-American dance styles and sentiment, most probably it is performed by Euro-American bodies, who then also teach the dance form as well. How does this dominance affect curricula development and decolonisation? In my experience there have been a few recurring determining factors related to acceptance of artists such as Anita Ratnam [a possible fixation

with all things foreign?] yet a lack of it for many local artists who are not seen to be firstly academically or endemically trained by a member of the contemporary dance collective. Secondly, an avant-garde style that is locally developed by a member of a collective of the other who has not had the benefit of local academic training and or has developed the style on the academic periphery. The general inference is that recognised past learning (RPL) is irrelevant or immaterial unless and until it is acknowledged by the local academy. The final and more obvious is the notion that international artistes' work is superior to locally generated styles and works, which has direct bearing on Kwan's various comments on contemporary dance.

“South African contemporary dance has been, to a large extent, a political act of defiance and activism” (Castelyn, 2019: 39-40). This statement holds true for the anti-apartheid struggle, as well as against vital issues such as gender-based violence, yet the question remains: for whom? In a country and world that boasts a multitude of dance specialisations, genres, or styles, the notions of classification, recognition, and integration are still superficial. “How do we speak of ourselves and represent the interwoven, textured, coloured narratives which are our lives? ...to remember our fractured selves and our histories...a textured re-telling to capture a spirit rather than accurate detail - for after all, too often those facts have been lies” (Khan, 2019: 12). The questions remain for me: what am I? Where do I fit in/belong? How am I a South African dancer of the traditional/pseudo-traditional/contemporary? This takes me back to the zine I created

https://issuu.com/anusiagp/docs/e-zine- anusia_pillay - 1917955- phd - ch2 - a

formulation of possible multiple choices available to me. This experience distilled the journey of not just my family and me, but of every dancer of colour or the other in South

Africa. “How to speak as an inside-Outsider, an outside-Insider? to peel back the layers only to find more. To excavate and discover more dirt, more earth, more Self” (Khan, 2019: 13). The fact that after twenty eight years of democracy we are still faced with exclusion in the so-called Dance Industry serves to showcase the fact that the colour of the dancing bodies may have changed, however the colonial and western hegemony has not. Have we now replaced an overarching coloniality for a polarised mentality? Where is the practical application of decolonialisation, inclusion and social cohesion that the South African Constitution calls for?

Like the final scene in my puppet theatre piece, we had to create our own platforms, opportunities and careers in order to be able to receive a modicum or iota of acknowledgement in the land of our birth. A progression of thirty years saw a freedom for collaboration with artists such as Woza Africa and India-trained Carnatic singer Patrick Ncgobo in a full scale stage production which were fundraisers for our international tour to Mauritius in 1995.



Fig.32: First Indo- Zulu concert in Chatsworth, Neighbour News, 1995.

We, unfortunately, could not raise sufficient funds to take these artists with us as we received no governmental funding, however, we honoured the initial spirit of a South African identity by including a Zulu-inspired performance by our junior students, a majority of Indian origin and our black South African troupe member Thandiwe Princess Mzobe, to a ‘Mahlatini and the Mahotella Queens’ song. A review in a Mauritian newspaper article in the archive described the appreciative response in the following manner:



Fig.33: Anavarata Dance institute, Mauritius, 1995.

“The other enthralling items were a Zulu dance by twelve girls aged ten to twelve ... It reflects a remarkable effort made by Indians in South Africa to integrate harmoniously the New South African Nation” (Boodhoon, 1995:6). Again, the idea of integration and inclusion was the primary motivator based on the premise that all South Africans should have the freedom to express their creativity via whichever medium they choose. This is ultimately the goal of the arts, not just to see ourselves reflected back to ourselves, but to have the freedom to choose what is reflected back, and change that reflection if we so choose.

THE COLLECTIVE

The collective implies a sharing. A “collective” represents the meaning and importance given to ideas, symbols, ideologies and values decided by a communal entity over the course of

time, not just a single individual. Dance, like any grouping, implies a measure of difference, whether linguistic, ethnic, racial, religious beliefs and sexual orientation.

Culture is not limited to knowledge traditions shared by clearly delineated populations. There are knowledge traditions that go beyond physical and geographical boundaries as people are linked by the same set of ideas and practices instead of common history, geographic location, or physical characteristics (Leung, Chiu & Hong, 2010: npn).

It is only very recently that our own stories are being told, a familiarity and recognition of a South African identity. With the advent of the internet these stories are personal and highlight the value of uniqueness in our diversity, while still belonging to a 'Global Village'. The collective expands its reach. We are creating our own content in varied spaces and places; and recently with the COVID-19 lockdown, more so, on the digital platform. It is a catalyst to utilise the embodied in our creative processes - "it allows us to propose new relationships between identities, events, circumstances, helping to foresee a past also in change towards a future that can only be guessed" (Pinto, 2015: 508). As South African dance makers we need to trust our urge to incorporate our own identity/identities into our work, as it adds a richness and quality that is not found anywhere else in the world. This was my own experience when I directed and performed in "Celebrate South Africa" (2004), at the Wits Great Hall, which was a Dance Theatre adaptation of excerpts from President Thabo Mbeki's (1996) "I Am an African" address, delivered on the occasion of the Constitutional Assembly's passage of a new constitution for a democratic South Africa, and utilised as "its construction of a narrative history of South Africa that, modelled on Scripture, celebrates the South African people's past, present, and future" (Scheckels, 2009). Journalist, Yogen Devan's (2016) article 'Time to save Indian dance from globalization' reflects a fear of the unknown and succour in the familiar - not realising that for the better part of a century after indenture - the Indian classical dance forms were also unfamiliar to naturalised South Africans of Indian origins. The Indian Film Industry changed all that by exposing the Indian Diaspora in South Africa to a glimpse

of what they could aspire to be in the Indian government's drive for Nationalism that promoted a homogenous culture, as mentioned in the previous chapter. That could be the basis of comments such as Devan's,

I cringe when Bharatanatyam is fused with Zulu dance to make a feeble, politically-correct statement about social cohesion. ...In a multicultural country such as South Africa, it is good to appreciate and be inspired by everything around you, but it is essential to maintain the identity and sanctity of your art. We have no right to tamper with the rich legacy handed to us for safekeeping for the future... With dance being such an integral part of the community's life, it is only correct that every effort is made to supervise the well-being of the art to ensure it is not dumped or vulgarised (2016: 15).

My mother and I became accustomed to accusations of 'diluting' the Indian classical dance form by various South African Indian dance exponents. First by merging various schools of Indian dance within the same genre such as Kathak (I am trained in all three gharanas as well as Sufi Kathak), and then various Indian and World dance forms. I have experienced resistance to newer Indian dance forms such as Odissi or Mohiniyattam, to a slightly lesser degree than having Black South African dancers performing them or other dance styles that hints at South Asian origins. This is often upended once their performance is experienced, generally leading to the very same people becoming fans of the Institute. This is reminiscent of a Youtube clip that I watched of Mamela Nymaza's participation in 'Superstars of Dance',⁶⁶ an international dance competition from a few years ago. She performed her own contemporary interpretation of *Swan Lake* (1877) as an African Ballet with a chicken as the central character rather than a swan. She was criticised by the two European judges for detracting from the entrenched classical dance piece. Her response to the interviewer in the same YouTube footage revealed that she remained steadfast in vocalising that she thought purists did not like to see their dance forms re-configured. It is here that Devan's trepidation of extinction of traditional forms becomes obvious and almost understandable. I share the

⁶⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AswRJtS9_eg

standpoint that roots, origins and traditions are vital to any dancer and dance style's longevity, as is innovation for its survival – a balance is required.

Cultural capital and identity form the cornerstones of one's heritage. I can understand the stance that Devan assumes when speaking of a singular culture, however, today most geographical countries are not only composed of various ethnicities and cultures, but with technology and information available at the touch of a button, we are exposed to and influenced by global culture. In India, this was popularised by the music and dance of the Indian film industry in over a century of its existence. Beyond that, the genetic and archaeological evidence that is rapidly surfacing only serves to prove that each iteration of arts and culture was influenced by constant socio-political and cultural interaction going back to the beginning of human existence. This then begs the questions: whose identity? and the sanctity of which era? It would be naïve to assume that the legacy of any people is a singular static one. Who is to say that multiple expressions of genetic and emotional palimpsestic remains on a dance maker are not the correct/accurate legacy? Will the future generations of artists not impregnate today's traditions with their own creativity?

Bodies tell stories about – and cannot be studies divorced from – the conditions of our existence; bodies tell stories that often – but not always – match people's stated accounts; and bodies tell stories that people cannot or will not, either because they are unable, forbidden, or choose not to tell (Kreigar in Loots, 2018: 61).

The juxtaposition of dance traditions is not always ill-received. In 2019, after years of being one of the two groups that integrated Indian and South African cultures at the annual India Day Celebrations (India's Independence Day celebrations, August in Johannesburg by the Indian High Commission and India Club SA), I witnessed a group of Indian nationals include a few traditional Zulu and Pantsula dancers in their performances. That moment and the audience's encouraging response was truly a life affirming one for me and the work that my

mother, and then I, embarked upon. Previously, we were the oddity being exoticised and criticised for having black South Africans perform impeccably intricate and diverse Indian dance works. Ironically, this year's (2022) India Day celebrations had the very same Indian dance exponents who were so critical of the 'dilution' of our dance style, merge their dance form with African and western dancers and dance styles to meet the theme of 'Cultural Diversity'.

For dancers, acknowledging our differences, yet seeking coalition "explores body movement as an expression of historical and postcolonial identities" (Teaiwa, 2012: 65). It allows dynamic opportunities for the work to generate new perspectives of collaboration and exchange. It is a catalyst for creation and transmission to better reflect the diversity of practices and outcomes generated in subsequent iterations. This is what sets **Alfred Hinkel** apart in the South African dance landscape. A winner of several lifetime awards in his field, "Hinkel is known for his creativity and commitment to pushing the boundaries of dance" (Arts & Culture trust, 2015: npn). In my conversations with him, to obtain information on my missing Indian dance syllabi, we realised that we had been doing much the same thing on different ends of the country, only he is at least twenty years my senior. Now in his 70s, he acknowledges his white male privilege openly. As a classically trained ballet dancer at UCT, he has been part of the Western Cape's dance scene for most of his career. Being born in rural Namaqualand, his focus has always been on local dancers, from his time at *CAPAB* and *Artscapes*, where he incorporated Savithri Naidoo's⁶⁷ Bharata Natyam training along with traditional African dance into his curriculum. Currently, he has returned to his roots with the *Garage Dance Company* where his emphasis is on the strong gestural foundations of the mudras of Indian Classical dance. He believes in creative collaboration with dancers of other

⁶⁷ She immigrated to Australia, and runs an Indian dance school there.

cultures and styles. Those are the strong threads that connect our work. I have included a show-reel of three recent events, as a ‘full-circle’ experience, that highlights the calibre of interweaving of dance cultures, with commentary from the organisers and guest speakers at these events that reflect their experience as an audience member/event organiser of this genre of dance (<https://youtu.be/w0V0BexBBxk>).

Being a descendent of a lineage of educators and dance pedagogues, it is not surprising that teaching evolved into a passion of mine from a very young age. At the time of contemplating the next step after my MA graduation, I was left with the choice of either a PhD or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). I applied to my alma mater for both courses of study. Whilst I was accepted for my current course of study, I was informed by the School of Education that only my undergraduate courses would determine my areas of specialisation, despite my motivation of being a product of the apartheid system and completing my Honours degree in 1992. What became apparent is that Wits and other tertiary institutions have not updated their requirements to include past recognised learning (PRL) outside of the academy for a certificate, whereas, there is acceptance of this form of knowledge development to obtain a Masters degree in the humanities. No concessions are made for students such as me, who were not given much of a choice in an apartheid system, and had to develop their knowledge independently of the presiding educational system. By that I mean that the South African governing body for educators, SACE, stipulates that one will not be able to teach at schools without a PGCE – in my case despite having created curricula, twice, for the country’s national and provincial educational authorities or recognition by the highest dance authority in the world- UNESCO (CID) Council of

International Dance, my artistic expertise and achievement is almost completely ignored - the exclusion continues.

As with Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche's (2014) notion of "a single story", "Your effort to remain what you are is what limits you" (Remme, 2017). The impetus of this study is to trouble the notions of the perceived authenticity or purity of an art form that is more than 5000 years old and its blatant dismissal by the educational system in favour of Western ideology. We have to consider the fact that every artist 'borrows' inspiration from other artists and various influences both within their own life experiences as well as those inherited, whether via history or oral tradition. Nothing is static, and in most instances, the best form of preservation is not just imitation but adaptation and popularisation of an art form by keeping it current and relevant, an example of which could be the much contested Bollywood or Indian Film industry's influence on the definition of global Indian culture over 106 years of its existence. Change is necessary – without it, the already dire state, highlighted during the COVID-19 lockdown and the resultant lack of resources to theatre making, and more recently the persistent rolling blackouts, 'loadshedding', leaves the artists in this country with severely frayed tenacity, or is that the purpose? The suppression of the creative drive or the surge of artistic perseverance.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In her consideration of the Indian/South Asian label afforded to Indian dance, in an article titled 'Labels, Histories, Politics: Indian/South Asian Dance on the Global Stage', Meduri (2008: 223) poses the question, "What's in a name?", and deepens that inquiry by asking,

“How did Indian dance forms acquire this double prefix, who renamed these forms, when and in what time in history, and what impact did the re-naming have on the history, and identity of these forms?” She found “that this re-labelling occurred in the 1980s emergent stage of globalisation” (Meduri in Meduri, 2008: 223). Is naming an act of conformity or rebellion/disruption? “Names are important. Your name is a part of your identity, and not just because it is what you call yourself. Your name may tie you to the culture or the land of your ancestors, or it may speak of your special connection to those you love” (Butler, 2019: npn). A moniker denotes identity or a sense of belonging.

Ramli Ibrahim’s response when asked, “How would you describe some of your innovative productions?” was,

To make new rules or break them in order to do something new, you have to know your stuff. The balance happens then. In contemporary work, you are the sum total of your experience. If you want to express something, what comes out then, modern, classical or folk have to come out. Then you have achieved the challenge of choreography. ... The choreographer does what he is supposed to do. He creates the work. He's not going to categorize it. He'll just go ahead and create (Venkat, 2001: npn).

At *Anavarata Dance Institute*, we have applied a similar approach over six decades.

Institutions such as dance companies take care to transmit the memory **as** history of their institutions through education and commemorative events, such as archiving, galas and repertory revivals. Established dancers pass on their traditions to younger ones, including memory in the body (Nicholas in Morris & Nicholas, 2018: 16) (bold in original).

When contemplating the question that I posed earlier in this chapter, around IF and WHAT a metonymy and taxonomy for the dance institution created and evolved by my family in South Asian dance in South Africa, much like Ratnam did with her “Neo Bharatam” style of dance, I found the answer while preparing a synopsis for our 60th anniversary performance at India Day 2022. It lay in the logo that I had formalised at our 50th Anniversary celebrations -

Marueafrica, meaning ‘The skies of Africa’ – in line with the saying ‘the sky is the limit’⁶⁸. It had been coined in 2000 by my student Oupa Makwena and me, when I started a class in Soweto at an orphanage in Thokoza Park. We saw a multitude of possibilities to those born under the mantle of our skies. We chose to be limitless, to break the mould after creating it in terms of the underlying ‘Indian Classical-ness’ of our teaching techniques.



Fig.34: Anavarata Dance institute’s logo created in 2011 by Prenuka, Rajarathnam, Naufal Khan and Anusia Govender-Pillay.

In the logo (Fig.34), the Indian ‘female’ dancer was created by my aunt Prema’s eldest daughter, Prenuka who is also a dancer, while she was in school in India in the 1990s. She kindly allowed me to use it as our logo. The dancer faces left symbolising the past - the ‘sanctity’ and ‘purity’ of a traditional dance form that is still preserved as the ‘roots’ of our institution. The ‘male’ dancer, could be of any cultural background, but was specifically selected online because of the South African connotation of the melting pot of heritages that constitutes the population. He is facing the right, the future, and below him is the present and future name of who and what we had transformed/transfigured into. The Triskelion, an

⁶⁸“It originated at a time of optimism and progress - in the USA just before WWI. The earliest citation I can find is from the New York newspaper *The Syracuse Herald*, September 1911”(Martin, 2022: npn)

ancient Celtic symbol⁶⁹, the triple spirals, “also known as the "spiral of life", appears in many early cultures” (Judge, 2017: npn). They are said to symbolise both the inner and outer worlds, around themes of birth, death, and rebirth, the unity of mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of a person, as well as representing the cycles of life, according to ancient beliefs. Being both “active and passive” (Slideshare, 2021: slide1). All these elements are encompassed within a circle, alluding to ancient and integrated ways of performing within a circle in the folk/ethnic cultures. It is symbolic also of oral cultures being passed down from generation to generation - continuity and perpetuity - the circle of ‘unendingness’. In Hindi, it means “continuous, incessant, unremitting” (wisdom library.com, 2022), so it is no coincidence that *Anavarata* is the adjective used to describe Lord Shiva’s eternal Tandava⁷⁰. The recognition and execution of the trajectory of the dance forms we embraced always lay inside me - an embodied, living archive. Tacit knowledge⁷¹ waiting to take shape could well be the basis of this study.

⁶⁹“Other artifacts bearing identical symbols have been found on coins from Lycia (1250BC-546BC) and vessels of the Mycenaens (1600BC-1100BC). It thus appears clearly that the Celtic triskele knew how to go beyond their simple cultural border to become a lucky charm to several people” (Slideshare, 2021: slide 8). This evidence of time and the potentiality to unravel the secrets that it have been hidden by it in the prehistory of the world- in particular identity and dance- is of particular significance to this study.

⁷⁰ “The Tandava is the frantic, but divine dance of Lord Shiva with ecstasy and bliss. All dualities and antagonism merge and become one in the perfect combination of frantic body movement and ecstatic rhythm of the mantras. In this regard of frantic as wild but natural and rhythmic as the beauty of creation, this is the cosmic dance to create, evolve, sustain, veil, and unveil the creation. Lord Shiva is Nataraja, the cosmic dancer who is both the destroyer and creator. He destroys to create. His cosmic dance is the dance of entire creations and universe, and the dance of atoms as per modern physics. It is the symbolic pattern of cosmology postulated in the Vedic philosophy with manifold transcendence of time and space and it has become the metaphor of creation in the modern world” (Bhandari, 2021:100).

⁷¹ “all our transactions with the world around us, we use our body as our instrument...It jointly interprets dozens of clues in our eyes, in our memories, in muscles of every kind and in the labyrinth inside our skull” (Polanyi, 1967: 303).

CONCLUSION: THE CURTAIN CALL



Fig.35: Curtain calls over 60 years: from The Nydoo Sisters (1961) to present day, Anavarata's most recent performance at 'India Day', 13 August 2022.

TO DANCE IS HUMAN, and humanity almost universally expresses itself in dance. Dance interweaves with other aspects of human life, such as communication and learning, belief systems, social relations and political dynamics, loving and fighting, and urbanization and change.

- Judith Lynne Hanna (1987: 1) (capitals in original).

This chapter is the curtain call for of this study. 'Taking a bow' is not just an act of acknowledgement and respect for the performer and the audience, but for the dancers and people who paved the way for its existence. This is by no means the end of my work with the family archive and dance, as this study allowed me the opportunity to engage with my family archive as if I was experiencing it for the first time, creating new ideas and insights around it. Absences are highlighted in the re-configuration and re-imagining of the praxis of dance and choreography. The praxis results in the archive becoming the instrument of the unarchival process. The prose by Banoobhai (in Naicker, 2011) that I began chapter one of

this thesis with, as well as that of Donne (1624), spoke of isolation, mortality, pain and suffering – of the unknown nature of our identities and artistic practice and praxis, which is where I found myself in questioning the need for such a study. Hanna’s (1987) words, above, although seemingly in opposition to his stance, ties into Donne’s words “*everyman Is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine*” (Donne in Young, 2018: 303) (italics in original), which acknowledges the humanity in what most people may dismiss as a frivolous pastime or hobby – dance. Yet, to many it is their livelihood and purpose for being and, like me, the way in which we connect to and make sense of the world – it is life. When asked, by my supervisor, why I was conducting this study, my response was that it was to determine what the purpose of my family archive is beyond the fact that it exists, beyond being evidence of two generations of a family that largely has been acknowledged on the periphery of a dance community and industry as a way of legitimising certain publications or conference proceedings yet erased when it does not fit the narrative. There were several problems that this study located with the notion of the traditional archive – generally restrictive, manipulated, objectified, marginalised and limited to the his/story by hegemonic forces. The purpose of this study was to make the archive accessible, relevant and useful in the process of current and future pedagogical goals. According to sociologist, Tracy Brower, in an article in *www.forbes.com* of 22 August 2021,

purpose is a belief that your life matters that you make a difference... being guided by meaningful values and goals. Purpose can be related to families or parenting, career, religion, activism, artistic pursuits or other contributions to community. In Japanese the word *Ikigai* describes a reason for being, or a reason to wake up in the morning (Brower, 2021: npn).

Dance and its integration into the South African cultural tapestry, became that purpose for my family’s archive and me. Elements of purpose include alignment, motivation and engagement with effort and time and “which ensure the greatest match between values, talents and contributions. ...we will be happiest and most fulfilled when our choices and actions are

aligned with a clear purpose” (Brower, 2021: npn). In this study my aim was to move beyond the documentation, storage and academic presence of the family archive – “domiciliation” (Foucault, 1995: 10). I was interested in it being useful, relevant and as original, performative and tenacious as the dancers’ lives and careers that it evidenced. Furthermore it is an intersection between the archive and dance.

As I began my study and creative process the overarching determinant was what process to use to achieve this, giving rise to the research question, **How can the ‘unarchival’ process be a functional framework with which to make meaning in transmuting or liberating the artefacts of my family archive, my embodied self, and the ‘Indian-ness’ of South Asian dance, through reconfiguration of experimental iterations that reflect the current reality of this dance form as it unfolds and develops in the South African dance industry and academy?** There was a driving need to have the work of not just my family or ancestors become visible and accessible in places and spaces where we have been historically, politically and socially excluded and/or marginalised. The purpose of this study was to ensure the longevity of the family archive through a creative process of utilising artefacts that were digitised from or to paper iterations and manipulated in artistic pieces to animate the archive - to ultimately attain a living archive that transcends my mortality for the purpose of future pedagogy in the field. On a macro level, initially, the academy’s only focus was on white, male scholarship or western studies, writings and intellectual pursuits about the indigenous. These studies were deemed acceptable. With the rise of a Nationalism drive (1885–1920), resistance to the colonial manipulations and ravaging - the indigenous writings saw resurgence as did dance as a ‘cultural’ symbol of this movement, in India. South Africa took 100 years to join that nationalism/cultural renaissance movement since 1860 as, “the two

countries witnessed a 46-year-interval in their relations between 1946 -1994, due to sanctions imposed by India on Apartheid South Africa” (Moroe, 2021: 2). I reflected on the effects of these sanctions on my field of expertise in my presentation at the *From Indenture to Stage ... voices across waters* (21-22 November 2020) conference in 2020:

When we consider our cultural heritage in the context of now, we need to acknowledge that the prolonged lack of diplomatic and therefore cultural ties with India is what sets the South African Indian Diaspora apart from their counterparts in other parts of the world. It has led to confusion in our interpretation of tradition, religion and culture. The earlier “scouts” were left to their own devices and adapted by trial and error thus allowing the current dancers far more confidence and skill with the benefit of their wisdom (Govender-Pillay, 2020: npn).

It is this tradition of trial and error of our dance forebears that was applied to the family archive in this study. The oppression of voice and body (both social and political), ignored the fact that the body has the ability to speak without words, as with Indian dance and Gumbo dancing, as well as the Cape slave communities. In the South African context, this led to dance as expression, movement of the body to subvert hegemonic systems, migration and any other challenge to the human spirit by modes of connecting across perceived cultural boundaries that helped gather the broken parts together to attempt to create or make meaning, to return to a holistic entity. Dance is a pursuit of humanity, a refinement of spirit. It is that spirit that gave rise to the general unarchival process, the metonymy that I borrowed and that I built on from the work of Hanna Miller and Jacob Perkins’ website (2020) around the artefacts of the *Te Papa Tongarewa Museum* in New Zealand, “with digital liveness the archives are no longer just about what objects can be physically stored, just as performance is not bound by traditional notions of theatre and social ritual” (Cameron, Anderson & Wotzko, 2017: 185). An archive of the indigenous or first people, whose artefacts were literally re-animated and given new life,

while museum audiences may recognize and understand the imaginative, playful, and poignant powers of the archives they visit and engage with, ... the performative turn in archives is now being shaped by the transformative powers of networked digital technologies towards the playable archive (Cameron, Anderson & Wotzko, 2017: 185).

The digital treatment of museum artefacts became the link to the change that brought new perspective to this study - a change that needed to be embraced. In the concluding comments of chapter three, the embracing of my own metonymy of the body of work that my mother and I were earlier too inhibited and reticent to embrace took on a stark realisation that in order to claim it, we have to name it. The simple and childlike creative pieces of this study awoke that realisation for me.

SIGNIFICANT ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

My original contribution to the field is as the progeny of the first recorded South African Indian Classical dance teacher, who happened to be my first Guru, and as a local originator in Odissi (1986) and Sufi Kathak (1990s) myself. My MA thesis, being one of the earliest recordings of an entire family archive based on Indian dance in the local academy, spanning the entire life and career of an originating member of the South African Indian Diaspora afforded me a rare positionality as not just a curator of a family archive, but also as “cultural translator and negotiator to democratize dance knowledge without being submissive to the culturally imperialistic, globalized power” (Nakajima in Brandstetter et al, 2018: 203). This study marked the transformation of my role as curator, facilitating accessibility for the archive. “Curatorship now serves as a metaphor for the performative self-representation of identity... through collecting, repurposing and sharing all kinds of digital media across many different social and mobile media platforms” (Cameron, Anderson & Wotzko, 2017: 163). This study became as complex as my curatorship, addressing the scarcity of dance styles of the other in basic education, resulting in a well-known dearth of scholarly work in this field in South Africa. The overriding significance of this study is in building a local knowledge base around the subject in a relatively new and unexplored territory within the dance and

archival fields, thereby transforming this field into a less contested area of scholarship as well as to provide opportunities for future scholarship of marginalised dance forms in this country.

ALLEGORY OF THE BODY: A SITE FOR ARCHIVAL AND UNARCHIVAL

In the unarchival process the ‘un’ represents the undoing of the chains of the archive on both the artefacts and the curator – an act of liberation. “What is dance? It is the physical expression through movement and rhythm of relationships, feelings and ideas. Nobody invented dance” (Robinson & Aronica, 2018). The ‘ownership’ of a specific style or form of dance has been a controversial area, often extricating the humanity from the dancing body. A profound observation with regards to generational approaches to Indian dance was made,

second-generation artists’ openness in working collaboratively, sharing their skills and resources. Such collaborative synergy is very different from first-generation teachers of Indian traditional dance who commonly (with exceptions) remain tied to their own gurus and individual styles. But for the second-generation, creative energy is exploding in the meeting of minds and bodies among dancers and writers, visual artists, musicians, poets and filmmakers (Katrak, 2011: 220).

I was fortunate to have a mother who was an exception to the first generation of Indian dancers. While still maintaining the utmost respect for her gurus and early teachings, she encouraged forays into choreography as acts of integration and inter-culturism which involved pulling various dance styles apart and putting portions of them together to form a fresh new flavour to our work. The realisation was that we, and then I, have been utilising the unarchival process for a long time, I am only now putting the act into words. The body became a container for memory and re-enactment, yet remained on the periphery of my creative work. The body is still used in choreography, via the act of making the various creative versions of pulling the artefacts apart and then creating the jigsaw pieces with them to materialise an alternative version through memory and embodied activation in creating dance in various forms of paper – that medium which is synonymous with documentation and recording. In South Africa “dance makers have

been increasingly challenged to re-appraise how dance has been traditionally composed” (Friedman, 2012: 7), and the same applies to my family archive. Dance choreography is synonymous with geometrical formations or lines that are not just spatial but vectors are formed by various parts of a dancer’s body. These create connections in the pieces that then form a cohesive picture, theme or concept in the choreography.

Choreographer, Diana F. Green (2010: 4), describes choreography as, “far more complex and defies boundaries” rather than “the arrangement of movements to express an idea or concept”. By using and substituting various forms of paper for the dancing body, what my creative online exhibition became was pieces and fragments of the archive, and myself, which evolved into a complete story in its unfolding.

As a person of colour, I was able to give resonance/audibility to a voice that largely remained silenced. As a child of apartheid and a descendent of the Girmitya, I felt invisible, except for when I danced. Was it my resistance or persistence? I, initially, saw myself as two very separate entities - seen and unseen; Indian and African; scholar yet not in the field of my most advanced training, highly skilled yet not professional enough to be acknowledged alongside my western-trained counterparts. Our basic education system is fraught with erasure, mis-interpretation and therefore misunderstanding of the concept of South Asian culture and dance due to a lack of its presence or an unbalanced accounting of it. The academy became an embattled space for me - always striving to be able to ground the diversity in my country of birth yet not having sufficient western training, appropriate subject supervision (I consider myself fortunate to have the supervisors that I had in both my MA and current studies, who despite not being dancers maintained a respectful receptivity and

curiosity about my field, in addition to the current one being an expert in the field of theatre and performance and archives), examiners or basic understanding and support in various instances; constantly having to defend my presence and worth - an autodidact – a pariah. The remnant and hints of tokenism survive from the colonial reference to highly skilled dancers in India as ‘Nautch girls’.

The word ‘nautch’ is an Anglicised form of Hindi/Urdu word *nach* meaning dance. The ‘nautch’ represented the cultural interaction between the native and the early English settlers in India. Its professional exponent, the dancing girl in her new incarnation emerged as the ‘nautch girl’ (Nevile, 1999: npn) (*italics in original*).

South Africa is a country whose constitution ‘guarantees’ my cultural and religious freedoms yet, as with my peers we had to find an alternate way to further our dance studies, a back door as it were, via Theatre and Performance or Visual/Fine Arts to achieve our scholarly ambitions – an attempt to ascend to something more than a ‘nautch girl’. In this study, through the process of creating – writing – creating, I realised that my deep understanding of my cultural heritage is now a single person/psyche consisting of many inseparable layers, shades and nuances. “Dance, Bharatanatyam in particular, is often one of those reference points, especially within the “Indian” community. This art form, despite the presence of the South Asian Diaspora in South Africa for 160 years, is still a form of dance that remains on the margins of contemporary dance practice in the country” (Chibba, 2020: npn). By actively honing my South Asian, local and World Dance styles, I was able to recognise the gaps that existed not just in my training, but for my local students. I also ensured that the curricula were documented as it evolved outside the academy. Just as we cannot and should not exist in isolation, my family’s changing view of how we needed to integrate all aspects of our surroundings locally and then globally began to create a ‘yoga’⁷² of understanding and

⁷² Union

healing through a body of work⁷³ that spanned 60 years. It faced censure, praise and then recognition. In concluding this study, the circle is complete - as am I.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS – PLAYING AND LEARNINGS

One of my postgraduate colleagues at the Visual Arts department suggested that I get my text to dance as much as I could. Still at the very beginning of my PhD journey, I was not sure what he meant. Curatorship, “suggests not just writing or producing but also *collecting, distributing, assembling, disassembling, and moving* media artifacts and content across different stages” (Potter in Cameron, Anderson, & Wotzko, 2017: 163) (italics in original). As the proposal process, creative practice and then thesis production evolved, I began to see that the dance flowed, like choreography - the archive as the body, and the movement and dance became a mode of thinking, making and writing. “Experiences with artistic forms cannot be guaranteed; even with the most carefully planned arts-based interventions, an experience cannot be predicted or planned or assumed to be good just because it involves something called “the arts”” (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013: 231). My initial choice of pursuing this study through the mode of Fine Arts proved to be one of the greatest

⁷³ ONLINE FOOTAGE & ARTICLES:

- **Radio Veritas Interview (Womems Day Profile 2019):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCUM4fTvtns&feature=share>
- **International Article 2017:** http://www.thewomenz.com/read_story/38
- **Sawubonamasté Tour Launch 2015:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UjJeUNohyDo&feature=youtu.be>
- **Saxxy Africa:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDM_R4SdWqw
- **MZANSINDIA @ State Theatre 2013:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LnvR09KvtU>
- **CNTV INSERT 2014:** <http://english.cntv.cn/2014/11/20/VIDE1416419520303883.shtml>
- **Cape Town Diwali Festival:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7mlyFqd3cE>
- **CITY PRESS ONLINE, SA TATTOO 2012:** <http://youtu.be/hxCAlC0PlSQ?t=1m11s>
- **ADI Fifty Year Profile 2011:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ov25YZFcHN8>
- **Sufi Kathak:** http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMK3uFe_Vt4&feature=relmfu
- **Integrated Faith Performance:** http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hktj_nnFiM0
- <http://youtu.be/hxCAlC0PlSQ?t=1m11s>

contributors to this study, yet the area of greatest resistance in the formulation of this study. The postgraduate cohort and the vast amount of exposure to a field that was largely alien to me challenged the use and generation of novel approaches and ideas in the introduction of uniqueness and a different treatment of the family archive. My spinal injury in the first year of my PhD added to a feeling of frustration at not being able to utilise the skills of my knowledge base or physical body to the effect that was required. As a space of comfort I found myself going to a default setting of my childhood while I kept thinking as a theatre-person, “theatre presents and embodies culture and technology in its completeness. It reflects the total life of its age and place and therefore embodies the ultimate in culture and technology” (Eni in Okeke, 2019: 321). This is evidenced by the use of the ‘black box’.⁷⁴ treatment of my pop-up book and puppet theatre. This black box mentality served as a sign that the time I spent at the Visual Arts department had come to an end. I needed to be in an environment that supported my expertise and the move spurred my study on from the proposal phase to completion as an interdisciplinary study.

In my creative process I found a conflation of time, space, identity, history, ancestry and dance. In the announcement of the exhibition titled, *The Archaeology of the Self: Archives, Anarchives and the Artist*, curator Arshiya M. Lokhandwalla states,

Art Historian Hal Foster ... emphasizes that "archival artists seek to make [visible] historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present" through the archive. ... Undoubtedly, the archive is defined by the past, represented in the present and anticipates the future. In a similar manner, as we move into the future at lightning speed aided by technology, our obsession and need to engage with the past in the form of the archive only grows stronger (in *The Archaeology of the Self: Archives, Anarchives and the Artist*, 2023).

⁷⁴ “Black box theatres are a semi-recent trend in the performance industry. The genesis of these, which can also be known as an experimental theatres or flexible theatres, stemmed from the need for different, smaller productions when the main performance space is not appropriate for the performance... The name “black box” comes from the fact that the room is typically, but not always, painted black which gives the appearance of anyplace. This way it’s easier to make the audience feel like they’re actually in the location of the performance since these theatres have limited props” (StageRight, 2019: npn).

Utilising the concept of ‘Jetzzeit’, the aim of the unarchival process was to make the archive accessible and contemporary. Jetzzeit acted as an interlocutor in the archive as a splitting of time, an interstice to break the grip of colonialism and marginalisation that this field is plagued with. The way to achieve this was to give the artefacts their own voice in animating them and bringing them into this current time. “Digital liveness makes an argument to view performance and documentation as interwoven cyclical states” (Read in Cameron, Anderson & Wotzko, 2017: 164). There was a conscious choice to record my creative pieces on my mobile phone; use Youtube as a repository platform; create a digital zine to allow for movement; and create short, almost Tik Tok-like experiences in a single online exhibition (website) for the audience. The key determinant in the evolution of each piece, I found was in the selection and use of scenography, creation of alternative ways of cultural production - the technical treatment, and orchestration of the performance space - by drawing from my lived experiences, *“moving toward this new way of understanding practices and processes of symbolic creativity is critical for expanding our vision for the arts in education”* (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013: 211) (italics in original). Further, “Digital archives are well positioned to be ‘living’ archives of performance that can expand to capture and re-present more content as desired” (Cameron, Anderson, & Wotzko, 2017: 181). This is also true for what is viewed as the traditional performing arts, which has for the longest time been viewed as ephemeral, creating a transformative influence on how the practice and aesthetics of the arts can be preserved and re-visited by more than one sitting of an audience.

In creating such performances, for me, the separation of the artefacts proved to be the most difficult act – how does one isolate aspects of oneself? As Ariella Aisha Azoulay (in Barbieri, 2022: 31) writes, “museum and archives are institutions predicated on the

destruction of existing worlds, ‘which could not have been pursued if the separation between people and their objects, and between people and their world, had not already been institutionalised’. With the dance drama of the Ardhanarishwara, I found myself developing the final product over the course of more than a year. In that time my personal life changed in the most unexpected way – I met my life partner, got engaged and should be married by the time this study is submitted for examination. This life experience also contributed to the evolution of this study by extending the personal archive. As I developed this thesis, I found that I was making regular additions and changes to the meaning and approach of the creative pieces. It was complex in the sense that evolution, conflation of the past and present, and continuity were required. I found myself again defaulting to the treatments of religious films from the Indian film Industry, that were popular in my childhood and that I was regularly exposed to, in my puppet-theatre production. This was the last creative piece to be formalised, with the awareness that I am neither a professional film-maker nor puppeteer. It was vital to me that I do all the necessary steps myself to attain an immersive state that would be the equivalent to the manner in which I curated the artefacts in my previous (MA) study, “The scenographer must be in command of the theatre, its master. The average designer is simply not that concerned with theatre” (Svoboda in McKinney & Butterworth, 2009: 5). Going through both the successes and failures allowed me to make connections in the process that I would not have been able to experience if I had hired professionals to enact these pieces for me. It also resulted in the revelation of yet another vital transition in the development of my body of work, from me transitioning from a puppet to a puppet-master. My creativity in the unarchival process is viewed as the destruction of old ideologies by the choices made in my dance choreography. The creativity and diverse methodology used in the unarchival process provides possible method that could benefit Archival or Documentation centres, as well as arts and cultural bodies in determining connections between individual archives for

the collective identity. The break-up and reconfiguration of the archive in an inclusive, re-imagined, re-cognised manner provided me with a rare opportunity - a decolonisation of my own notions of the archive, both physical and embodied.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TELLING OUR OWN STORIES THROUGH THE ARCHIVE

Storytelling is a vital aspect of this study. The challenge I faced was which stories to focus on and how would they begin? I am South African of Indian origin – what does that mean? How do I strive to be seen differently from my basic dance training – my ‘Indian-ness’? The book *Many Lives: 150 years of being Indian in South Africa* provided direction for this line of questioning, as well as examples of the multiplicity of identities in India/Africa.

On South African shores, the designation ‘Indian’ has had many meanings. It identified individuals by geographical origin; also those whose parents, grandparents or earlier forebears came from India. ‘Indian signals a range of specific cultural influences and practices: the ring of languages, the savour of food, a flare of fashion, relations of family and kin, styles of worship and religious belief, musical traditions and so on, which are associated with the diversities of the Asian subcontinent (Chetty in Vahed et al, 2010: v).

One might ask what Indian-ness has to do with the unarchival process? For the process to be effective it is not only the physical artefacts that require deconstruction, so does the embodied. Inadvertently, I am, as the curator also an artefact – part of the archive as much as it is a part of me. In re-orientating the dance archive, I re-orientate myself – as willingly vulnerable as I am in dance – I became “a “vehicle of memory” and touchstone of her community’s profound historical consciousness” (Rademaker et al, 2022: npn). Dance is as much a part of my identity as the cultures and heritages that shaped me.

By establishing a teaching institution, the Nydoo Sisters attempted to avert a situation that we currently find ourselves in. As an Indian dance community we are performance heavy, which is a salutation to the dancers of yore, however, we also need to focus on knowledge transfer with equal vigour. When my mother and I were studying dance in India there were no degrees

conferred in the field. The first time this was offered in India itself was in 1986, by which time I had already completed my Odissi training. There is still a dearth of Indian dance presence in the academy in our own country of birth. The ICCR has enabled the local youth to take greater strides since the 1990s, however, collaboration between local universities and those based in India will most certainly see the numbers of trained, as well as academically sound exponents and teachers increase in the local academy. We should not have to leave our country to appreciate, honour and embed our heritage and memory in our Diasporic homes (Govender-Pillay, 2020: npn).

This then gave rise to the question: Having been born on the African continent, at what point can a “naturalised” person ever become indigenous to a country, and who or what is African?

What is theoretically innovative and politically crucial is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These in-between spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—that initiate ‘new signs of identity’ (Bhabha in Meduri, 2008: 226).

In looking at both the archiving and unarchival processes, I realised that these are inclusive processes that are marked and affected by every person, era and socio-political change in the course of the archives’ and curators’ lifespan. Each generation and iteration leaves an inscription of clues and echoes of who we truly are, on an existential level. We are able to see direction, purpose and value, creating living archives, unravelling the established order of things - especially identity. It has the potential to become a vital pedagogical tool. “Dance, a marker and symbol of identity, is powerful in creating, reinforcing, and changing identity. How we learn who we are, who we should be and how (attitudes, acts, and emotion) are rooted in the brain, the images we see, and learning pedagogy” (Hanna, 2019: 2). According to collinsdictionary.com, “The identity of a person or place is the characteristics they have that distinguish them from others” - in this case, the perceived monolithic culture of the Indian subcontinent and the Indian Diaspora. It also has relevance for how and where we see ourselves represented and/or acknowledged. In so doing, we need to heed author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche’s (2009) and dancer Shobana Jeyasingh’s warnings of listening to or creating a single story about another person, culture or country, in doing so we risk a

critical misunderstanding. A single perspective has the ability to “grant cultural legitimacy to certain bodies, while denying it to others” (Purkayastha in Morris & Nicholas, 2018: 129). I prefer what author Chinua Achebe calls “a balance of stories” (Fetters, 2013: npn), with “individual stories [it] is also in their power to surprise and contradict as much as to affirm, what we have been taught about the past” (Chetty in Vahed et al, 2010: v). By interweaving dance cultures together, we break the grip that a singular story has on us, as individuals, creatives, collectives and living archives. In concluding this study, I chose to pursue the guidance of local author/scholar, Barbara Adair, who at a workshop with second-year theatre and performance students on 15 October 2021, stated, “Write your own story take back your power”⁷⁵.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHIVE OF INDIAN ORIGIN

I think of myself as a dance rebel, similar to the description of the ‘Chapati stories’ as “‘symbolic’ transmission of rebel agency” (Guha in Bhabha, 1994: 286). This quality could also be attributed to the dancers that I have acknowledged in chapter three. It is the resultant suspicion and distrust of the other, the reason for exclusion or keeping of exotic, ethnic or indigenous dance forms as opposed to the perceived status, legitimacy, acceptance, familiarity or security that western dance has been bestowed with in South Africa (or globally). Homi Bhabha (1994: 283-284), questions “historical agency” and how historic events are “historicized” - there is a “time-lag” in the “production of political and cultural agency”. The re-orientation of a traditionally documented archive of a female artist of colour, this study as an act of rebellion suggests “Intentionality and purpose – the signs of

⁷⁵ I served as a sessional lecturer in the Concepts in Theatre and Performance IIB Course, convened by Dr. Myer Taub, to second-year students at Wits University, where several South African short stories are adapted into theatrical, digital or blended performance pieces. Authors of these short stories are invited to interact with the student cohort. Barbara Adair, author of ‘A Boy is Boy is a...’ (2013) presented at the 2021 and 2022 sessions.

agency – emerge from the ‘time-lag’, from the stressed absence that is an arrest, a ceasure of time, a temporal break” (Bhabha, 1994: 284). As with author Toni Morrison’s works of fiction,

The act of ‘rememoration’ (her concept of the recreation of popular memory) turns the present of narrative enunciation into the haunting memorial of what has been excluded, excised, evicted and for that very reason becomes the *unheimlich* space for the negotiation of identity and history (Bhabha, 1994: 284) (italics in original).

In her book, *Children of Sugarcane* (2021) local media personality, Joanne Joseph, unpacks the suffering of Indian women who worked on the KwaZulu-Natal sugar farms, as a work of fiction based on her great grandmother’s indenture. In an IOL interview she said, “I hope the book opens up a conversation about shared history, and perhaps there are some useful societal conversations that can emanate from that”. She went further to state that “when people examine the past, they must consider shared identity and ask how our personal histories converge into a collective South African history” (Joseph in Naidoo, 2021).

The preservation of these rich sources of history is crucial because the telling of history is never finished and done: new questions about the past require new encounters with documents so that path-breaking and revised interpretations of the past can continue to be written. These archival spaces have made the historians’ undertaking considerably lighter” (Vahed et al, 2010: xv).

An enormous archive can, possibly, be a demonstration of colonial cultural privilege, particularly from the perspective of colonised and displaced people, whereas a more intimate archive, such as my family’s, affords an in-depth account of various aspects of the Diasporic experience of the other. Muthal Naidoo, playwright and author, wrote the following excerpt in an email dated 20 October 2010,

As South Africans of Indian origin are a tiny minority, it is a struggle for them to penetrate the consciousness of the nation, consequently South African Indian writing, theatre, dance, music, art, etc. tend to be ghettoised. ..Since 1994, the situation has improved slightly but work by Indian South Africans, unless it conforms to stereotypes and tradition, has little chance of being accepted. Without stock characters and stock situations, even Indians in general are not interested. As Indian cultural traditions are different from the Western traditions practised by most South

Africans, Indians are seen as exotic and to some extent still remain outsiders in the society... Most Indian South Africans still think of themselves as Indians and this is how the rest of the population designates them (in Vahed et al, 2010: 350).

In response to this Vahed et al (2010: 350) wrote, “While this is largely true, exceptions to Naidoo’s observation are slowly becoming more common, as Indian artists break out of an ‘ethnic’ mould”. While Vahed et al’s book claims to be “a portrait of many lives” (Vahed et al, 2010: v), it is highly based on the political history with a spattering of social and cultural features which are derived from mostly *Drum Magazine*. While claiming to focus on the Indian in South Africa it then appears to be replicating exactly what Muthal Naidoo was talking about. The rather extensive archive of newspapers such as *The Leader*, *The Graphic* and *The Post* have rarely been mentioned or researched leaving a chasmic-sized gap in a book created by academics. These publications were renowned for covering issues of the South African Indian community. This is where the impetus of my family’s work began - in seeing ourselves first as South African and then of Indian origin – the urge to reconcile both these identities in turbulent times became the catalyst to moving beyond the Indian-ness we were tagged and labelled as - to embrace and enact transdisciplinarity.⁷⁶

LIMITATIONS

This study is by no means the final word on the subject as a few limitations were encountered. Firstly, except for the UNARCHIVAL.com website and a single journal article abstract, there is a dearth of theory around this subject. I set up daily Google Scholar alerts for at least two years which continues currently, and no theorists, journal articles, etc. could

⁷⁶ “Transdisciplinarity has been described as a practice that transgresses and transcends disciplinary boundaries, ... and seems to have the most potential to respond to new demands and imperatives. This potential springs from the characteristic features of transdisciplinarity, which include problem focus (research originates from and is contextualized in ‘real-world’ problems), evolving methodology (the research involves iterative, reflective processes that are responsive to the particular questions, settings, and research groupings) and collaboration (including collaboration between transdisciplinary researchers, disciplinary researchers and external actors with interests in the research)” (Russel in Evans, 2014).

be found as the concept is fairly new and unexplored both in terms of the archival and dance fields, especially South Asian dance. Secondly, due to the digital nature of submissions – the readers and examiners are not able to interact physically with the artefacts of the archive, and play with some of my creations such as the pop-up book and the puppet theatre as I do. Therefore a certain portion of the experience is lost in the digitisation process. The labour intensive nature of presenting in a manner that I would like to, the possibility of transforming the pop-up experience into a staged performance with a life-sized book with dancers, proves to be impractical at this point in time (inclusive of the COVID-19 lockdown period).

Translating the conduit between deconstructing or unravelling the archive (as concept and structure) in order to reorder or restore familial and innate archives is both research and praxis. The translation modes occur in the body-led practices like dance along with the materiality of paper and box so as to activate and even demonstrate the realisation of restitution. The possibility that a new methodology could emerge from the unarchival process itself, as well as in the field of Indian dance and its composition on various levels, allows limitless opportunities to play with the archive - my family's in particular. Further, as a result of a silo mentality and treatment of Indian Classical dance itself in South Africa – there is a sense of an inaccessible, elitist club. When speaking to the average member of the Indian Diaspora, who may be part of the academy, I am struck by the fact that they rarely understand the basic differences of dance styles or the categories that exist on the Indian sub-continent - even in this age of technological advancement and instant access. While imitation is often considered the best form of flattery, what we have found is that often times teachers and students are both teaching and learning by rote or 'parrot fashion'. The true embodiment of physical, mental and emotional yoga is becoming more and more 'absent' inspite of the fact that experimentation is increasing. Is this possibly why members of the South African Indian

dance community see themselves as a species that have the potential for extinction (Devan, 2016)? This is not a stance that I subscribe to.

because South Africa has long been organized around divisive group identities as a distribution strategy for political control and for organising labour exploitation, there yet exist – in the post apartheid context – rewards and disadvantages forged through group-identity claims and concepts of the past. For this reason, while an Indian heritage in South Africa can be celebrated, it can also be put to critical scrutiny. Often, important historical events are commemorated in a way that takes poetic licence with hard facts (Vahed et al, 2010: xxvi).

This does not detract from the lack of exposure at various levels of the local education system, which has relegated the Indian culture, history and heritage to the political arena or the ‘tokenism’ of a concert for Heritage Day celebrations and have been promptly put back into the ‘use when required’ box and stored away – erased, excluded and invisible – yet again.

OBSERVATIONS

As I watched Vincent Mantsoe, a South African contemporary dancer for thirty years who now lives in France, on online JOMBA! Live Stream at 3pm on 29 August 2020 (YouTube) in conversation with Llianne Loots, I felt a deep sense of kinship. I was reminded of Gerard Samuel’s (2015: npn), opening address at the conference titled *Confluences 8 – Negotiating Contemporary Dance in Africa* – ‘BLACK BODIES MATTER: WITH APOLOGIES TO BEYONCÉ.’, expression of concern at the “way in dance, some bodies seem to matter more and by implication how other bodies matter less”. Samuel goes on to state,

The arts industry is a small one. We are a community that needs to be more aware and mindful of what our contemporaries are doing with an intention of looking at how we can develop together. I’m sure that, if this were the case, the ‘powers that be’ would not be so easily dismissive of our industry. Because that they are (Samuels, 2015: online).

This statement is further underlined by Mantsoe, who spoke about creating work in lockdown conditions in a digital space. His feelings of separateness and lack of inspiration as he put it, a sentiment that dancers of the other have expressed often as, a “different sense of how things are going to shape up”. He became extremely emotional when talking about the future of dance in South Africa:

It is not going to be possible for anybody to do this alone; it’s going to be impossible. So it is going to be very important for all artists, especially dancers, and I am speaking mainly about South African dancers, to realise that.... we have to be a community no matter what, because....we have to come to our senses that ...no one is better than the other one. We are all the same. We have to build ourselves together as a community, not as individuals because this is what is killing the South African dance. People have been so negative to each other for so long and not supporting each other, either by institutions and individual companies. So it is going to be important that we pull these things together as a community, supporting each other because we are in a dark moment where if we are not careful, we are not going to get out of it (Mantsoe in Jomba!, 2020: online).

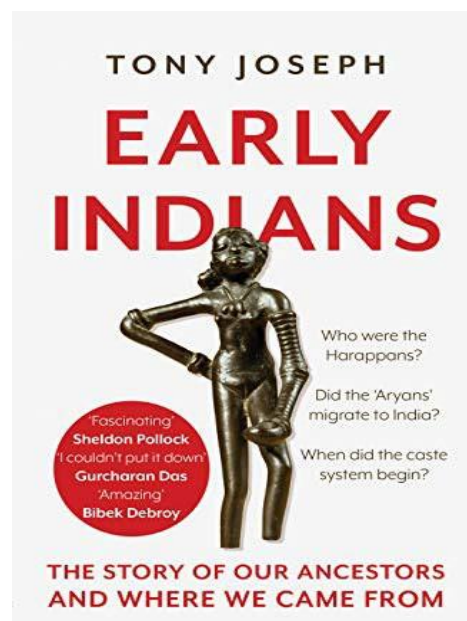


Fig.36: the cover of Tony Joseph's (2018) book depicting the 'dancing girl' statue.

As dancers, that sense of togetherness should be derived from our origins or DNA of both ourselves and our chosen form of dance expression - reflections of invisible vectors. There is satire in, Indian national, Tony Joseph's (2018; npn) observation: “How appropriate it is then that the most recognizable image of the Harappan Civilization is the ‘dancing girl’ (cover

image [Fig. 36]) who could very well be a tribal girl”. This bronze statue was found as part of the excavation to locate the Indus Valley Civilization in what is today Pakistan (formerly India). It is estimated to be 4,500 years old. The term ‘tribal’ suggests that she could have been one of the people of “Out of Africa” origin. She is assumed to be dancing as she is in a pose that is still used in the Odissi dance style currently - Tribhangi⁷⁷. My DNA test in conjunction with my research has led me to agree with Joseph (2018: npn) when he states that “we are all interconnected – genetically, culturally and historically – far more than we imagine. And even ‘time immemorial’⁷⁸, it turns out, can increasingly be pinned down, dated, analysed and grasped”. No more can falsities, erasures and myths be propagated in the face of the genetic sciences’ evidence, evolution and progress.

THE FUTURE: DANCE AND ITS PEDAGOGY

I find myself increasingly averse to being labelled as *only* an exponent of ‘South Asian dance’ or ‘Indian’ dance - I am so much more than that. “People have multiple identities that can be expressed in the same or in different dances. There may be a difference between dancers’ expressions of identity and audience perceptions. Continuity and change can occur over time and simultaneously” (Hanna, 2019: 2). Pedagogical variation is the only way to guarantee a progressive rippling transformation for generations to come. We constantly ensured this for our students at *Anavarata Dance Institute* as I outlined our approach to dance pedagogy in the following manner in my MA thesis:

The Institute’s syllabus and repertoire, although firmly grounded in Indian Classical and folk dance, ensured that our students were exposed to as broad a dance base as possible. This was and still is reflected in the assortment of themes and performances we embraced. On 4 September

⁷⁷ Tribhangi, is a standing dance posture that consists of three bends in the body at the head/neck, hip and the knees.

⁷⁸ “The new nationalisms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries built on a... to make everyone believe that the newly created ‘nations’ they belong to were infinitely superior to all other nations, and that they had always existed, from ‘time immemorial’...In fact, ‘time immemorial’ is the phrase we hear most often when we try to grasp our deep history” (Joseph, 2018: npn).

1999, the Institute hosted a workshop on “Cross-cultural similarities – An experience of Unity in Diversity”, with the world-renowned Emmanuel Gommado of “The Odehe Dance Company” from Ghana, accompanied by an American drummer. We focused on the similarities and differences in Indian, East African, and South African folkdances, as well as their symbolism and meanings ... Many revelations in the kinship that our styles share; such as the rhythmic drum accompaniments, the emphasis on footwork and the cultural significance of story-telling through the medium of dance; arose out of this. It was a micro-example of what can be achieved in our country on a macro-level, with the assistance of arts and culture, and dance in particular (Pillay, 2019:119).

Change is something I have witnessed by virtue of having lived for 53 years, yet with change so many vital aspects of hegemonic systems remain alive and thriving. Inclusion in mainstream basic educational structures is vital to feed into the demand for a subject around the dance cultures of the other. No university is going to consider a course that does not have a presence at secondary school level. This then explains the scarcity of accredited supervisors and examiners in the field in the local academy. My call, via this study, is to every dancer, dance maker, pedagogue and dance supporter of the other in South Africa, who champions inclusive learning, to make this known to the powers that be. To keep that flame burning in any and every way possible. The archive, in all its iterations, becomes a powerful tool for activism where this is concerned. Like Kaktikar,

I have argued how traditional dance practices and the modern university are sites for a continued colonization. They are also therefore the sites from which culturally relevant strategies of decolonization emerge in a pedagogical moment positioned at the intersection of these two enduring legacies of colonialism (Kaktikar, 2020: 11).

The dearth of qualified pedagogues and examiners in my field, especially at the higher levels of postgraduate studies, in our local academy is a direct result of the non-implementation of the syllabi that were created by my mother and me in 1996. Although in the beginning of the democratic South Africa, its non-action and subsequent neglect to the point of its total disappearance in a bureaucratic system is a legacy of lingering colonialism. I, for example was examined by an expert in Ballet and contemporary dance in my MA degree. The argument is it is all dance, however in the academy would a mechanical engineer be allowed

to examine a chemical engineer? It is still all engineering – is it not? A conscious act is required for a radical change, and that action of my family is something that I am humbled and empowered by. I had the opportunity to be able to be the change that we collectively envisioned for ourselves and our people (South Africans).

A decolonised dance history field is one which resists the fetishisation of non-western heritage forms, challenges dance history conferences to rethink their ‘world’ or ‘ethnic’ dance panels, and enables future scholars to engage with the ‘impure’ traces of dances that emerge out of unfamiliar bodies, illegitimate archives and forgotten histories (Purkayastha in Morris & Nicholas, 2018: 134).

I have since a young age had the ability to learn a range of dance styles, hence my drive to adapt or reconfigure the classical Indian dances with African and World Dance styles to the point that they have become woven into a local and distinct dance style that is no longer South Asian or African alone.

Like other aspects of our society, arts, culture and heritage must undergo a fundamental transformation if they are to achieve the vision embodied in our commitment to human dignity, the achievement of equality, and advancement of human rights and freedoms. In so doing, the basis will be laid for an exciting, vibrant artistic practice and cultural life in which artists realise their full potential, the nature of our democracy is enhanced and a better quality of life for all is attained (South African Government, n.d.: npn).

In engaging with the family archive and the history of South Asian dance in South Africa, I am reclaiming dismissed and/or erased histories. The interweaving of dance cultures, unpacked in chapter three, represents my re-imagining and re-storying of the physical, embodied and living archives, are palimpsestic and temporal. “[T]heatre presents and embodies culture and technology in its completeness. It reflects the total life of its age and place and therefore embodies the ultimate in culture and technology” (Eni in Okeke, 2019: 321). All of my creative pieces were an amalgamation of the family archive, lived experience, training and instinct. The overall combination lends itself to the unknowns that existed in my story prior to the commencement of this study. The interdisciplinarity in the treatment of the family archive by means of the Visual Arts with Theatre and Dance is

included in all my creative pieces and brought an added dimension to the manner that dance can be seen, performed and taught at basic education and tertiary institutions in conjunction with the knowledge base that has been developed outside the academy.

I posited in my presentation at *From Indenture to Stage ... voices across waters ...* conference (2020) that,

Interdisciplinarity is essential for expansion and longevity. The dance community needs to embrace the introduction of more of the eight recognised classical dance styles of India into our local dance menagerie. Our individual ambits of knowledge should not be the yardstick by which we measure the abilities of other exponents of styles that we have either not been exposed to or received training in. Fortunately the current dance community has the benefit of Google, YouTube, facebook and other online platforms that have shrunk the international dance community to the size of a screen. That is something that a few generations removed were not able to benefit from (Govender-Pillay, 2020: npn).

From all of the evidence presented in this study, one can in fact, argue that South Asian dance was ‘returning home’ to Africa when my family (and Sulochana Naidoo) travelled to India to study and returned to spread these teachings. Indian or South Asian dance could therefore be viewed as a form of indigenous African dance – granting cultural legitimacy to people of the Indian Diaspora and practitioners of the dance styles of the Indian sub-continent in South Africa.

A cross-cultural conceptualization of dance [which] allows us to have a consistent meaning: dance is purposeful; uses intentional rhythm; has cultural influences; uses nonverbal body movement in time, space and effort; communicates through locomotion, gesture, posture, stillness, the senses (sight, sound, touch, smell, kinesthesia), music and costume; and has standards for each genre (Hanna, 2019: 1-2).

When we view the ways in which we express ourselves through dance – the manner in which we stamp our feet, use hand gestures, movement and rhythms - these are parts of world cultures in which we are all related in a shared history. “The Western process of archiving

presumes a linear notion of time in its record-keeping practices. Documents are said to progress through a “lifecycle.” The metaphor is cyclical, but the concept assumes linearity; there is no rebirth in this cycle” (Rademaker et al, 2022: npn). This study encourages the disruption of linearity – narrative is not linear - it is susceptible to a multitude of interpretations and realities. The future generations can take that which is perceived as solidified or petrified in an archive, and open it up for the further examination and incorporation of new evidence to unfold their stories beyond this study.

According to traditional Western understandings of archives, they should ideally be “byproducts” of human activity. That is, they should not be created with their future as a record in mind. It is this unselfconsciousness that enables them to provide rich evidence for past human activity—they are documents created without thought to influencing future historians. ... Yet some of the art is future-oriented, created with the express purpose of embedding memory (Rademaker et al, 2022 : npn).

This type of work can help us to think, make and act differently about ourselves, in a similar manner that the Aboriginal archive is viewed as “a different kind of repository, for a different kind of history, grounded in a different kind of time than the limited pasts many Australians (and academics) are used to knowing” (Rademaker et al, 2022: npn). Inscribing and changing the hope of the past into a future of promise - of meaning making. “We are limitless – so why is it that we limit ourselves by dogma? There is an abundance of examples of how learning from India was reconfigured into a South African-friendly format. This was from the point of view that dance was a form of communication, and we the translators” (Govender-Pillay, 2020: npn). This then lends credibility to Lorraine Nicholas’ (in Morris & Nicholas, 2018: 17) statement, “as dance artists, dance scholars, enthusiast lay dancers and followers of dance in performance we should look to our own memories of a past in dance to find a prototype for a usable dance history that gives meaning to individual experience as part of wider historical forces”. This study provides opportunities for new ways of learning and teaching, and therefore aligns itself with Gaztambide- Fernández’s stance (2013: 231) when referencing the

fairytale of *The Emporer's New Clothes* (Anderson, 1837), if “all the new evidence and all new finely woven arguments are just the newest clothes of our emperor, we ought to think about writing a new story”. To tell those different stories from the ones we have heard all our lives. Storytelling is about the hearing, understanding and recognition of voices that can enhance our knowing. With yarnning, storying conveys the research in storytelling with the ability to contain and sustain culture. We are establishing the textures, shape, and structures outside colonial frameworks. We become vulnerable in the process, yet not alone. Just as dance and my family archive have created portals to various eras and time-scapes to unfold the contents of this study, “Memory provides us with the somatosensory body we can use imaginatively in the time travel that is both history and memory” (Nicholas in Morris & Nicholas, 2018: 1600). In re-storying we are transforming communities, connections and temporality. Time, like the Sankofa bird is viewed from ancient, primordial times to the present,

Jetztzeit in the various Benjamin suggestions of the term is that which affords transmission in time because it is not only a presentation of the now through the rupture or leap made by an optical interference of past and present, but it is also the meeting point of the sacred and profane” (Taub & Lamprecht, 2022: 35)

looking back to look forward - to ensure an inclusive future in this country marked by absences of identity and so much else.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This study engaged with the notion of ‘unarchival translation’ through an interrogation of pre-existing, absent and living archives; occurring literary studies, auto-ethnographic analysis and practice of re-establishing the archive through choreographic-theatre making methodologies. All of this provided relevant insights into the alterity and absence of the

archive and its re-imaginings. If I was to encapsulate the impetus and motivation of the family archive and my work into a single word, it would be EMANCIPATION. In many ways it conjures up images of being chained, imprisoned, enslaved, or trapped. In my case it conjures up images of my indentured ancestry, colonialism, political regimes, social inequalities, my physical injuries and the state of the arts and artists in this country. The notion of an archive has been harkened to a formal structure by Achille Mbembe,

The term 'archives' first refers to a building, a symbol of a public institution, which is one of the organs of a constituted state. However, by 'archives' is also understood a collection of documents - normally written documents - kept in this building. There cannot therefore be a definition of 'archives' that does not encompass both the building itself and the documents stored there (in Hamilton et al, 2002: 19).

As much as an archive is meant to preserve and safe-guard its artefacts, does it also not keep them jailed, locked away in storage? This aligns with Derrida's writings of the archive as "domiciliation" (Derrida & Prenowitz, 1995: 10). Our history, status and now the COVID-19 pandemic is no different to the status of artists; South Asian Dancers in South Africa, or any other marginalised art form, and has left us all feeling like refugees. In an article based on a study conducted in Norway amongst asylum seekers from Asia and Africa, titled 'Theatre as liberation, collaboration and relationship for asylum seekers' (Horghagen & Josephsson, 2011: 168) in *Journal of Occupational Science*, the following themes emerged:

waiting for a future,
making narrative turning points,
becoming visible through participation and
creating meeting places with possibilities through theatre (my own re-arrangement).

These themes impact the arts and its practitioners globally and locally. Ironically, the notion of freedom is also linked to this - what does that mean for a post pandemic world? How do we as artists prevent the loss or suppression of works that are viewed as contentious? We record, preserve and store them for future audiences and scholars to make their own conclusions about them.

Research is needed in order to dig in the memories the documents collected, creating an important link between the archive, power institutions and academia. The archive is the resource environment for administrations and universities where multiple paths lead to past memories through their reconstruction ...Facts and interpretations need one another to re-enact the past (Bermúdez Pascual 2016: 1331).

These documentations allow for the embodiment of lived experience for generations and contribute to the building of new knowledge so that future artists do not have to feel like aliens in their own skins and lands of birth. “We have lost ... cultures and in doing so they turn into more valuable than before. ...we have realized that we reconstruct history through the different layers that makes us human and that the memories are of gold value to reconstruct our identity” (Bermúdez Pascual 2016: 1343). This sense of liberation is highlighted in my creative work in chapter one, when I state that ‘I am not restricted by corners....limitless, timeless and boundless as the human spirit’, “The theater of the future will be one that actively engages its audiences and probably breaks not only the “fourth wall” (the imaginary “window” of the proscenium) but the other three as well” (Lambert, 2012: npn). Dance has enabled me to undo a certain amount of hegemonic conditioning, culminating in giving movement, voice and life to a process that has taken a lifetime (mine) to formulate in words. In breathing life into the artefacts, they too are emancipated with infinite creative and pedagogical possibilities, as is witnessed by the layered nature of my family archive that steadily evidenced a progression of social justice through the medium of dance in challenging circumstances. This study addressed “multimodal storytelling encoded in Indigenous artifacts and traditions” (Reader & Fee in Camlot, Langford & Morra, 2022: npn); and wished to assist in ameliorating the failures of Western/colonial historians, libraries and educational institutions “to accommodate these protocols” (Reader & Fee in Camlot, Langford & Morra, 2022: npn). Archives of any shape or form allow us to tell our stories in a manner that marks our presence and contribution to a community, society and ultimately a sense of belonging and identity. In

telling our stories we attain visibility, authority and continuity for our life's work - for ourselves and the ancestry that dances through us.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1: A few pictures from my family archive and a ‘selfie’, taken in a 2020 postgraduate workshop, that reflects on the passage of sixty years of its existence, and my role in it (collage from my family archive).

Fig. 2: Ken Gampu, Nydoo Sister’s guest of honour

Anonymous. 1965. Indian culture: “Dancing Bells” was fitting farewell (*The Indian Trend*, no date: npn).

Fig. 3: The Nydoo Sisters’ Arrangetram programme, picture with their Guru and my mother’s certificate with her dance title, India, 1961.

Fig. 4: ‘ReAssembling the Archive’ exhibition at the 2019 Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism (**Bhatia**, 2020)

Fig. 5: Screenshots of my conversation with Hanna Miller on my LinkedIn profile (2021)

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Fig. 6: Rupī Kaur

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Fig. 7: Three generations of dancing feet and bells: (from left to Right) my mother’s, mine, and our late student Renusha Manilall’s, from the family dance archive (collage from my family archive).

Fig. 8: Fig.8: 6000 year-old Shiva Lingam at the Sudwala caves, Nelspruit, South Africa

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Fig. 9: Comic strip circulated on the 160th anniversary of the indenture

Mangena, African News Agency (2020, November 17) 160 YEARS SINCE INDENTURED INDIANS ARRIVED IN SA. Facebook. Available at: <<https://www.facebook.com/shika-harrypaul>>.

Fig. 10: Collage of pop up book – ‘India: A World of dance’ by me.

Fig. 11: Screenshot of sculpture indicating a local Indian (Mohan in Youtube, 2014).

Fig. 12: Sculpture indicating European presence and a coin as comparison (Mohan in Youtube, 2014) (screenshots have been reconfigured by me).

Fig. 13: Sculpture indicating Indo-African interaction (Mohan in Youtube, 2014).

Fig. 14: Cover of zine

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Fig.15: Page two of zine

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Fig. 16: Page three of zine

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Fig. 17: Page four of zine

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Fig. 18: Page five of zine

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Fig. 19: Page six of zine

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Fig. 20: Walker's mural

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Fig. 22: Page eight of zine

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Fig. 23: Screen shot of my DNA test results (www.myheritage.com)

Fig. 24: A tribute to the Indian Indentured in a scene from 'Evolution of the Rainbow', Roodepoort Theatre, 17 July 2019. Directed by Anusia Govender-Pillay.

Fig. 25: Interwoven artefacts from the archive by Anusia Govender-Pillay (2020).

Fig. 26: 'Illumination' from NNTV programme called "Blase"(1996).

Fig. 27: Renusha Manilall (Pillay, 2019: 137).

Fig. 28: Timeline of the various syllabi/curricula formulated to formalise Indian dance in the South African education system that were never actioned, created by Anusia Govender-Elshove in 2022.

Fig. 29: My ancestor's record on a ships list (Dept. of Home Affairs, 1988)

Fig. 30: My story box and shadow puppet theatre

Fig. 31: 'Shiva- Parvati', Nydoo Sisters

Fig. 32: First Indo- Zulu concert in Chatsworth, Neighbour News, 1995

Fig. 33: Anavarata Dance institute, Mauritius, 1995.

Fig. 34: Anavarata Dance Institute's logo created in 2011 by Prenuka, Rajarathnam, Naufal Khan and Anusia Govender-Pillay

Fig. 35: Curtain calls over 60 years: from The Nydoo Sisters in 1962 to present day, Anavarata's most recent performance at 'India Day', 13 August 2022 (collage from the family archive).

Fig. 36: The cover of Tony Joseph's (2018) book depicting the 'dancing girl' statue.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ABSTRACT, MA THESIS (Pillay, 2019: vi)

This research draws on my mother's and my own life-long experience as Indian Classical dancers. Born to the initiator of Indian Classical dance in South Africa, I grew up, as a descendant of indenture, in the Apartheid system; I witnessed the devastating effects it had on our country, as a result of colonialism and imperialism. My family has been intrigued by the role of Dance as a healing art form. This has resulted in the accumulation of an archive spanning 2 generations and 59 years. During apartheid there appeared to be a trend in the field of dance, where anything deemed "different" was also seen as "unworthy". South Asian Dance pedagogy has been a neglected area of scholarly work in South Africa, despite the Indian Diaspora's presence in this country for 158 years. A strong historical record and archive of the advent foundation of Indian classical dance, especially the contributions by South Africans in reclaiming their cultural rights and identity from indenture, is a scarce resource in the South African dance community and academic landscape to date. Historical distortion/manipulation of facts and events, as well as the realisation that my family and I are cultural/dance activists, have brought me to a point in my life and career to be able to ask pertinent questions such as who/what constitutes "pioneering" in this field? And why is the South African dance community using western/colonial values to measure all other dance forms? As a tool of healing, Dance is viewed posthumously through the experiences and events documented by first my mother, both of us, and then myself on her passing. The archive is viewed through a historical (the traditions and developments from ancient Indian), activist and; feminist lens to recount the contributions of women of colour or the other to the South African dance and socio-political landscape. As an instrument of Peace and Nation building, dance has been and is employed to deal with life crises; for conflict resolution, to revitalise the traditional, and to transform the present and future - in my family's case both professionally with students and practitioners and in a personal capacity. This work, an auto-ethnographic, case study, is a celebration of the pioneering work started by my mother and aunt (in 1959) in Indian dance, and the ensuing evolution into Multicultural and Intercultural dance. It traces the pioneer that I have become as a result - a journey from personal to cultural significance; a worthy contribution to the rich arts and culture tapestry that encompasses the South African identity and future South Asian dance pedagogy- a lived experience or process.

APPENDIX B: THANDIWE PRINCESS MZUBE (POST, 3-6 May 1995)

MAY 3 - 6 1995

POST

THE PAPER FOR THE FAMILY

Thandiwe WOWS 'em with fancy footwork

By Aldrin Naidu

RHYTHM is common to all cultures. It comes as no surprise then that Thandiwe Princess Mzobe, 10, has taken naturally to the classical dance form of kathak.

She's possibly the only kathak dancer of African descent and caused a stir when she performed with 20 other local students at the recent independence day celebrations in Mauritius.

Thandiwe actually began dancing in the style more than two years ago at the Cato Manor Technical College in Quarry Road, Clare Estate, where her dad, Mr Derrick Mzobe, 37, is the caretaker.

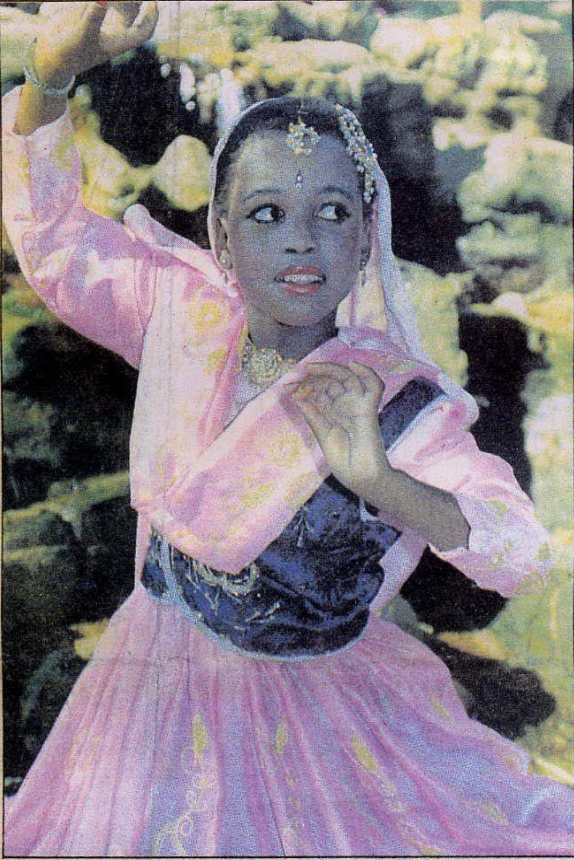
"I used to stand outside the door to watch the dancers train on Saturday mornings 2½ years ago. It was very beautiful to watch the girls have fun in lovely, colourful outfits. I wished I was one of them," she said.

Her dreams came true.

Inside the classroom were dance tutors Mrs Rani Govender and Mrs Anusia Pillay who had a keen eye on the girl's body movements.

Said Mrs Govender: "Thandiwe used to stand at

Turn to Page 3



From Page 1

Fancy footwork is Thandiwe's forte

the door and her body used to move in synch with the pupils. She seemed very fascinated and she moved naturally. I asked her if she wanted to dance and she said yes.

"She was very interested and needed no motivation. Both Anusia and myself stayed on after hours to give her free private tuition at the college. This year the staff decided to sponsor her dance tuition considering she is very keen in the field," she said.

For the Mauritius trip Thandiwe's fellow pupils at Palmiet Primary School in Clare Estate helped her raise the necessary finance.

"They helped to raise more than R1 000. I was very happy about that," said Thandiwe who is in standard 1 at Palmiet Primary School.

Her Mauritius experience was an eye-opener according to Mrs Govender.

"She really behaved like a model pupil during our travels. She was placed under the care of Mrs Renuka Singh and made the best of the experience. She went on excursions and even visited the temples with us."

Thandiwe, together with the rest of the troupe, appeared on Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation in a television magazine programme called Pathrika, and was also featured in the Mauritian newspaper *The Sun*.

Thandiwe will make her local debut performance at Elizabeth Sneddon's National Creative Arts Youth Festival on May 12 and 13.

Thandiwe 'Princess' Mzobe, 10, South Africa's first African kathak dancer

Picture: DEENA PILLAY

APPENDIX C: A DESCRIPTION OF INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE PEDAGOGY IN FOUR INDIAN DIASPORAS, OF MY OWN CREATION (Pillay, 2019: 69)

MAURITIUS - Indians arrived between 1830 and 1834 - 1964- Indian Nationals, Mr. and Mrs. Nandkishore began teaching music and dance in Mauritius - Currently Tertiary training takes place at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (1970) and Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture (1987) in Bharata Natyam and Kathak (BA; MA PGCE). - Majority of the country's population (68%)	SOUTH AFRICA - Indians officially arrived in 1860 - 1961- Nydoo Sisters taught first full repertoire of Bharata Natyam - 1965- Nydoo Sisters studied Kathak in India - 1986- Anusia Govender first Odissi Dancer - Largest Indian concentration of population outside of India - No tertiary training in the country in any Indian Classical Dance form. Bursaries for study in India are offered at undergraduate level by the Indian government (ICCR). - Minority in South Africa (2.6%)
CARRIBEAN - Indians arrived in 1838 - First teachers: Satnarine Balkaransingh in Kathak (1976) and Rajesh Seenath (1981) (Kuchipudi). There is a larger preference for folk and lately Bollywood dance. - Dance is taught at Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Cultural Co-operation in Trinidad. Such cultural centres exist around the world, and there is also one in Georgetown, Guyana; set up by the Govt of India (ICCR) - Majority of the country's population (42%)	MALAYSIA - Indians arrived between the 18th and the 20th centuries - First teachers of Bharata Natyam: K. P. Bhaskar (1952), V. K. Sivadas (1952/53), and Gopal Shetty (1954) - 1983- Ramli Ibrahim - doyen of Odissi - 2008- the Ramanaidu sisters introduced Kuchipudi - University of Malaya offers training in Indian Classical dance - 5th largest Indian population in the world - Minority population (7%)

APPENDIX D: INDIAN FOLK DANCE CURRICULUM (N2)

20 May '02 10:55

EASTSIDE COLLEGE
6140049

FAX 6140049

P. 1

SYLLABUS

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

POST-SCHOOL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION :

TECHNICAL COLLEGES

INDIAN FOLK DANCE N2
NATIONAL INTERMEDIATE CERTIFICATE

CODE NUMBER :03010182

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION
JANUARY 1997

DATE OF FIRST EXAMINATION
NOVEMBER 1997

INSTRUCTIONAL OFFERING : INDIAN FOLK DANCE N2

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR SYLLABUS

- 1. AIMS**
- 2. PREREQUISITE FOR ADMISSION TO THE INSTRUCTIONAL OFFERING**
- 3. DURATION AND TUITION TIME OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL OFFERING**
- 4. EVALUATION**
- 5. EXAMINATION**
- 6. LEARNING CONTENT**
- 7. DETAILED SYLLABUS**

INSTRUCTIONAL OFFERING : INDIAN FOLK DANCE N2**1. AIM****1.1. GENERAL AIM :**

To assist students in the optimal development of their talent and physical ability, in understanding and appreciating Indian Folk dance as an art form, in attaining the necessary skills that are needed in the dance world, in realising their potential as positive, self-disciplined dancers coupled with understanding of the demands of the profession and to nurture an enquiring mind.

1.2. SPECIFIC AIMS :**1.2.1. To develop :**

- * Muscle control and work for co-ordination
- * Style, quality and special relationship to other dancers
- * An awareness of the texture of movement
- * An awareness of importance of sound and rhythm

1.2.2. To become familiar with the various techniques with the application of 1.2.1.**1.2.3. To acquaint students with the terminology and background information applicable to practical work.****1.2.4. To enable students to apply this art form in their own culture.****1.2.5. To make the students understand the difference between "Film" dance and pure Indian dance.****2. PREREQUISITE FOR ADMISSION TO THE INSTRUCTIONAL OFFERING :**

Standard 7 and a practical audition.

3. DURATION AND TUITION TIME OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL OFFERING :

- * The recommended duration of the instructional offering is 34 weeks and the tuition time is 2 hours per week for practical and one-hour per week for theory. (3 only)
- * It is recommended to study Indian Folk Dance simultaneously with Bharatha Natyam or Kathak.

4. EVALUATION :

Progress tests will be conducted on completion of each element of a module to determine

the rhythm, fluidity, spontaneity and grace of the student. These marks will be used in accordance with the weighted value of the specific module to compile a year mark.

5. EXAMINATION

5.1. EXAMINATION OF PRACTICAL :

An internal practical evaluation will be conducted at the end of the year by a panel consisting of the lecturers to determine an examination mark. Technique as well as performance skills of each student will be examined in a group performance. Total duration of the practical examination is one-hour.

Each student will be evaluated in a group performance at the end of the second semester.

5.2. EXAMINATION OF THEORY :

The students must conduct a research project during the first semester. An internally set, written theoretical examination paper of one-hour, marked internally will be conducted at the end of the second semester. The ratio research mark to written examination mark is 20:80.

5.3. PASS REQUIREMENTS :

5.3.1. To pass the instructional offering, candidates should obtain 60%.

5.3.2. The ratio year mark to examination mark is 40:60.

5.3.3. There will be no supplementary examination as the students acquire these skills over a period of time.

6. LEARNING CONTENT :

WEIGHTED VALUE :

6.1. MODULE 1 : INDIAN FOLK DANCE

[60]

LEARNING OUTCOME OF THE MODULE.

Students should gain expertise in the following aspects of Indian Folk Dance so that they can facilitate an authentic performance.

- 6.1.1. Warm-up exercises
- 6.1.2. Development and control of muscles and muscle groups
- 6.1.3. Texture of movement
- 6.1.4. Fundamentals of movement
- 6.1.5. Dynamics of movement
- 6.1.6. Application and combination of movements applied in the different techniques for the following Indian Folk Dances :

7. DETAILED SYLLABUS FOR INDIAN FOLK DANCE N2

7.1. MODULE 1 : INDIAN FOLK DANCE

CONTENT	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
7.1.1. Warm-up exercises	Students should perform a number of physical exercises in order to warm up various parts of the body so that the mobility of the body is enhanced.
7.1.2. Development and control of muscles and muscle groups	Students should demonstrate their control of muscles and muscle groups through a series of movement and exercises as basic dance movements.
7.1.3. Texture and dynamics of movement	Students should demonstrate the texture and dynamics of movement through various exercises in order to show an understanding of the nature of movement as well as express tempo, rhythm, flow and weight through movement.
7.1.4. Fundamentals of movement	Students should demonstrate their understanding of gravity and of the ability of the body to carry out the movements unique to the following dances : * Gobbi or Kaikottikali * Garba or Lambadi so that it becomes natural, fluid and spontaneous.
7.1.5. Dynamics of movement	Students should express through dance movements the interrelationship between body movements and gravity.
7.1.6. Application of techniques	Students should demonstrate the ability to apply the principles of and working towards the following techniques at an acceptable level Interpretation of the music Particular rhythmic structure of music Internalizing of the movements of each dance Ability to contribute to group cohesion

7.3. MODULE 3 : APPLICATION OF THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

CONTENT	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
7.3.1. Costume and make-up applicable on the following dances * Wedding * Birth * Christening * Funeral/mourning * Festival	Students should gain knowledge of the costumes and make-up applicable on the various folk dances * demonstrate the ability to choose the correct dress and jewellery for each dance * demonstrate the ability to do the make-up and hair styles * demonstrate the ability to choose appropriate music for each dance. * demonstrate the use of clapping and sticks in dances * demonstrate correlation of movements and actions as a group.

7. DETAILED SYLLABUS FOR INDIAN FOLK DANCE N2

7.1. MODULE 1 : INDIAN FOLK DANCE

CONTENT	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
7.1.1. Warm-up exercises	Students should perform a number of physical exercises in order to warm up various parts of the body so that the mobility of the body is enhanced.
7.1.2. Development and control of muscles and muscle groups	Students should demonstrate their control of muscles and muscle groups through a series of movement and exercises as basic dance movements.
7.1.3. Texture and dynamics of movement	Students should demonstrate the texture and dynamics of movement through various exercises in order to show an understanding of the nature of movement as well as express tempo, rhythm, flow and weight through movement.
7.1.4. Fundamentals of movement	Students should demonstrate their understanding of gravity and of the ability of the body to carry out the movements unique to the following dances : * Gobbi or Kaikottikali * Garba or Lambadi so that it becomes natural, fluid and spontaneous.
7.1.5. Dynamics of movement	Students should express through dance movements the interrelationship between body movements and gravity.
7.1.6. Application of techniques	Students should demonstrate the ability to apply the principles of and working towards the following techniques at an acceptable level Interpretation of the music Particular rhythmic structure of music Internalizing of the movements of each dance Ability to contribute to group cohesion

- * Gobbi or
- * Kaikottikali and
- * Garba or
- * Lambadi

6.2. MODULE 2 : HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

[20]

LEARNING OUTCOME OF THE MODULE.

Students should gain a thorough knowledge of the regions of the folk dances and the nature of the people who perform these dances by exploring the following aspects :

- 6.2.1. Geography
- 6.2.2. Climate
- 6.2.3. Customs pertaining to the region/state
- 6.2.4. Development of costume and make-up
- 6.2.5. Music and instruments

6.3. MODULE 3 : APPLICATION OF THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

[20]

LEARNING OUTCOME OF THE MODULE.

Students should gain knowledge of the different types of costume and make-up to wear during various occasions within the different Indian Folk Dances.

Students should gain experience in the choice and or production of the various costumes and application of the skills required for the applicable make-up styles.

APPENDIX E: INDIAN FOLK DANCE CURRICULUM (N3)

20 May '02 12:00

EASTSIDE COLLEGE
6140049

FAX 6140049

P. 7

SYLLABUS

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
POST-SCHOOL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION :
TECHNICAL COLLEGES

INDIAN FOLK DANCE N3
NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE

CODE NUMBER : 03010263

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION
JANUARY 1998

DATE OF FIRST EXAMINATION
NOVEMBER 1998

INSTRUCTIONAL OFFERING : INDIAN FOLK DANCE N3

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR SYLLABUS

1. AIMS
2. PREREQUISITE FOR ADMISSION TO THE INSTRUCTIONAL OFFERING
3. DURATION AND TUITION TIME OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL OFFERING
4. EVALUATION
5. EXAMINATION
6. LEARNING CONTENT
7. DETAILED SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTIONAL OFFERING : INDIAN FOLK DANCE N3**1. AIMS****1.1. GENERAL AIMS :**

To assist students in the optimal development of their talent and physical ability, in understanding and appreciating Indian Folk Dance as an art form, in attaining the necessary skills that are needed in the professional dance world, in realising their potential as positive, self-disciplined dancers coupled with understanding the demands of the profession and to nurture an enquiring mind.

1.2. SPECIFIC AIMS :**1.2.1. To increase the already established development of :**

- * body movements
- * the texture of movement

Basic movements for each type of folk dance

- * an awareness of sound and rhythm

The different approaches to the use of costumes and make-up

- * the individuals' ability to contribute to group cohesion

1.2.2. To make the students familiar with the various techniques in the application of 1.2.1.**2. PREREQUISITE FOR ADMISSION TO THE INSTRUCTIONAL OFFERING :**

Indian Folk Dance N2

3. DURATION AND TUITION TIME OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL OFFERING :

- * The recommended duration of the instructional offering is 34 weeks and the tuition time is 3½ hours per week for practical and one-hour per week for theory. *4h only*
- * It is recommended to study Indian Folk Dance simultaneously with Bharatha Natyam or Kathak.

4. EVALUATION

- 4.1. Progress tests will be conducted on completion of each element of a module to determine the rhythm, fluidity, spontaneity and grace of the student. The marks will be used in accordance with the weighted value of the specific module to compile a year mark. The ratio year mark to examination mark is 40:60.

5. EXAMINATION**5.1. EXAMINATION OF PRACTICAL :**

An internal practical evaluation will be conducted at the end of the year by a panel consisting of the lecturer and or a senior lecturer in Indian dance to determine an examination mark. Technique as well as performance skills of each student will be examined in a group performance. Total duration of the practical examination is one-hour.

5.2. EXAMINATION OF THEORY :

The students must conduct a research project during the first semester. An internally set, written theoretical examination paper of one-hour, marked internally will be conducted at the end of the second semester. The projects as well as the examination paper must be moderated externally by a senior lecturer in Indian dance. The ratio research mark to written examination mark is 20:80.

5.3. PASS REQUIREMENTS :

5.3.1. To pass the instructional offering, candidates should obtain 60%.

5.3.2. There will be no supplementary examination as students acquire these skills over a period of time.

6. LEARNING CONTENT**WEIGHTED VALUE :****6.1. MODULE 1 : INDIAN FOLK DANCE [60]****LEARNING OUTCOME OF THE MODULE.**

Students should be conversant with the following and exercises :

- 6.1.1. Exercises for the warming up of the muscles of all the necessary parts of the body.
- 6.1.2. Development and control of muscle and muscle groups
- 6.1.3. Texture and dynamics of movement
- 6.1.4. Co-ordination of movements with the music
- 6.1.5. Movements unique to the following dances :
 - * Koli or
 - * Ghummar and
 - * Bhangra-Giddha

6.2. MODULE 2 : HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**[20]****LEARNING OUTCOME OF THE MODULE.**

Students should gain a thorough knowledge of the states or regions of the folk dances and the nature of the people who perform these dances by exploring the following aspects:

- 6.2.1. Geography
- 6.2.2. Climate
- 6.2.3. Customs pertaining to the region/state
- 6.2.4. Development of costume and make-up
- 6.1.5. Music and instruments

6.3. **MODULE 3 : APPLICATION OF THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**
[20]

LEARNING OUTCOME OF THE MODULE.

Students should gain knowledge of the different types of costume and make-up to wear during various occasions within the different folk dances. Students should gain experience in the choice and or production of the various costumes and application of the skills required for the applicable make-up styles.

7. DETAILED SYLLABUS FOR INDIAN FOLK DANCE N3**7.1. MODULE 1 : INDIAN FOLK DANCE**

CONTENT	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
7.1.1. Warm-up exercises	Students should perform a number of physical exercises in order to warm up various parts of the body so that the mobility of the body is enhanced.
7.1.2. Development and control of muscles and muscle	Students should demonstrate their control of muscles and muscle groups through a series of movements and exercises as part of basic dance movements.
7.1.3. Texture and dynamics and of movement groups	Students should demonstrate the texture dynamics of movement through various exercises in order to show an understanding of the nature of movement as well as express tempo, rhythm, fluidity and grace through movement.
7.1.4. Co-ordination of movements with the music	Students should express through dance movements the interrelationship between body movements and music
7.1.5. Movements unique to the following dances * Koli or Ghurmar * Bhangra-Giddha	Student should demonstrate their understanding of the techniques of the dances and the ability of the body to carry out the movements unique to the dances so that it becomes natural and spontaneous.
7.1.6. Application of techniques	Students should demonstrate the ability to apply the principals of and working towards the following techniques at an acceptable level : * interpretation of music * particular rhythmic structure of music * internalizing of the movements of each dance * ability to contribute to group cohesion

7.2. MODULE 2 : HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

CONTENT	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
7.2.1. Appreciation of Indian Dance History	Students should conduct a research project on the history of folk dance in India including the following : * geography * the climate of each state/region * customs pertaining to the state/region * development of costume and make-up * music and instruments

7.3. MODULE 3 : APPLICATION OF THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

CONTENT	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
---------	---------------------

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>7.3.1. Costume and make-up applicable on the following dances :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * planting * harvesting * hunting * thanks giving * tribal and folk mixture | <p>Students should :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * gain knowledge on the costumes and make-up applicable on the various folk dances * demonstrate the ability to choose the correct dress and jewellery for each dance as well as the prescribed make-up and hair styles * demonstrate the ability to do the dance * demonstrate the ability to choose appropriate music for each dance. * demonstrate the use of clapping and sticks in dances * demonstrate correlation of movements and actions as a group. |
|--|---|

APPENDIX F: LETTER OF SYLLABI REQUEST FROM EASTSIDE COLLEGE

1995 15:52 0116140049

EASTSIDE COLLEGE



EASTSIDE COLLEGE

46 Pretoria St, Troyeville

Eastside College, P O Box 53636, Troyeville 2139
Phone: (011) 614-4125/614-9831 Fax: (011) 614-0049

Ref.E194/95

24 April 1995

Mrs RANI GOVENDER
% Mr D. PILLAY
FAX (031)305-9424

Dear Rani,

NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR DANCE N2, N3, NIC, NSC.

Thank you for your participation in this project. As founding principal of Pelmama Academy Soweto and Eastside College, I have been trying for a number of years to get National Education to approve the drafting of a National curriculum for Dance for Colleges. Finally this is about to happen.

I would very much appreciate it if you could assist with all aspects of Indian Dance under the elective National Dance Practical (and Theory) which will constitute one of the four Dance offerings in the General Dance field. You are the expert in this field and you know best what is suitable for your students.

Please note the following :

1. Everything is, at this stage, open for discussion and comment.
2. I am attaching a proposed structure for the two fields vis. Classical and Contemporary Dance and General Dance. Please comment if you wish.
3. The course will be vocational in emphasis.
4. Time is of the essence if we are to have these programmes ready by 1996. Could your Synopsis be ready by the end of April?
5. The first priority is to submit a Synopsis (See page 5 of The Contents of a Synopsis).
6. Please therefore consider carefully which Dances you wish to offer. One offering could consist of a number of Dances as in Ballroom (4 Dances). Latin American (6 Dances) and Freestyle (an amalgam of many).

-1-

Registered as a technical college
Reg no 87/823483

-2-

7. The main consideration is how much can be taught in, say, 340 hours per year (ie. 10 hours per week).
8. You may build in a formal preparatory or bridging course of, say, one year if you feel it is necessary.

I will wait to hear from you. Please fax me at (011)614-0049 after which I will phone you regularly in the mornings and fax any further information.

Thank you once again.

Yours sincerely


MICHAEL MULLER
(PRINCIPAL)



EASTSIDE COLLEGE

46 Pretoria St, Troyeville

Eastside College, P O Box 53636, Troyeville 2139
Phone (011) 614-4125/614-9831 Fax: (011) 614-0049

NATIONAL INTERMEDIATE CERTIFICATE

CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DANCE		GENERAL DANCE	
BUSINESS ENGLISH	5H	BUSINESS ENGLISH	5H
SAKE AFRIKAANS OR VERNACULAR	5H	SAKE AFRIKAANS OR VERNACULAR	5H
CONTEMPORARY DANCE PRACTICAL	8H	GENERAL DANCE ELECT TWO (5H EACH) TAP DANCE THEORY & PRACTICAL NATIONAL DANCE THEORY & PRACTICAL BALLROOM, LATIN AMERICAN, FREESTYLE THEORY & PRACTICAL	10H
CLASSICAL DANCE PRACTICAL	8H	CREATIVE DANCE	6H
THEORY OF DANCE	2H	*APPLIED PERFORMING CRAFTS	2H
ANATOMY	2H	THEORY OF DANCE	2H

NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE

CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DANCE		GENERAL DANCE	
BUSINESS ENGLISH	5H	BUSINESS ENGLISH	5H
SAKE AFRIKAANS OR VERNACULAR	5H	SAKE AFRIKAANS OR VERNACULAR	5H
CONTEMPORARY DANCE PRACTICAL	8H	GENERAL DANCE ELECT ONE SPECIALISATION TAP DANCE THEORY & PRACTICAL NATIONAL DANCE THEORY & → PRACTICAL BALLROOM, LATIN AMERICAN, FREESTYLE THEORY & PRACTICAL	10H
CLASSICAL DANCE PRACTICAL	8H	CREATIVE DANCE	6H
THEORY OF DANCE	2H	*APPLIED PERFORMING CRAFTS	2H
REPERTOIRE	2H	THEORY OF DANCE	2H

* APPLIED PERFORMING CRAFTS

1. MAKEUP AND COSTUME DESIGN (NIC) ✓
2. STAGECRAFT AND LIGHTING DECOR. ✓
3. CHOREOGRAPHY ACTING AND
MIME (NSC). ✓
MUSIC ADAPTATION AND
ARRANGEMENT (NIC).
4. MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT (NSC).

TOTAL = 60 hours

2. THE CONTENTS OF A SYNOPSIS

Given the facts in par. 1, the following framework for a synopsis should be used:

2.1 General aims of the instructional offering

2.2 Duration of the instructional offering (semester/ trimester/year)

2.3 A list of the modules of the instructional offering

2.4 Details regarding each module

2.4.1 Title (of each module) - Module $\rightarrow$ level of competency.
minimum

2.4.2 Specific aims (of each module) - Broad or specific

2.4.3 Weight value (%) (of each module) $\rightarrow$ Prioritising $\rightarrow$ movements

2.4.4 Learning content (of each module).

The content of a module must correspond with the stated aims and it should consist of a delimitation of the minimum content to be covered, as well as an indication of the level thereof according to which specific objectives that reflect the desired outcome are to be attained. These levels should at least provide for

knowledge/recall,
comprehension,
application, and
evaluation.

Theory - oral examination
Internal - internal moderation
External - external moderation
Approved: external moderator
we can determine who will moderate this

ISC - DANCE (2)

SCHEDULE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE DANCE N2/NIC AND N3/NSC PROGRAMMES

DATE	TASK	PERSONS INVOLVED
19 May 1995	Concept documents to the coordinators for distribution amongst all ISC members	Workgroup lecturers
31 May 1995	Distribute concept documents to all ISC-members	Dr Strydom Mrs Buys
1 June 1995	Discuss concept document on Framework committee meeting	Mrs Buys Dr Strydom
6 June 1995	Meeting ISC-members Bring comments along	Room 1070 Debruynpark building
22 June 1995	Final documents to all members, private sector and Technikon for comments	Dr Strydom Mrs Buys
23 July 1995	All comments back to coordinators	ISC-members
August 1995	Finalising of programmes	coordinators
September 1995	Programmes serve before the Framework committee for Arts	Mrs Buys
5 October 1995	Present programmes to CCVE for approval	Mrs Buys

Thank you for your co-operation.

Mrs M J Buys
w3m06905

APPENDIX G: WORLD DANCE SYLLABUS (HANDS UP)



WORLD DANCE SYLLABUS 2017- 2022

“HANDS UP” PROJECT:

SKILLS RETENTION; COMMUNITY & HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION



Our former President, Mr. Nelson Mandela very aptly stated: “Society without The Arts has no soul”. Using both him and his 46664 project as our symbol of inspiration, we see the term of “HANDS UP” as ‘a helping hand’, not just to our members of Anavarata, but utilising their training process to assist our fellow artistes within our Arts, Culture and entertainment industry (Creative Sector) to help grow interest within previously disadvantaged communities. As an Industry, we are losing trained artistes; repositories of heritage, skills and talent due to financial and economic challenges within this industry. We need to make this a viable Industry for young school leavers.

There is great concern around the issue of a dearth in development of young untapped talent in our country. The end result of syllabi of this nature should be the recognition; advancement of talent via training; and an ability to utilise those skills to train and up-skill others with the same lack of resource and recognition in the Creative Sector. Dance and Dance Theatre is our sphere of expertise. The premise is that without roots, one cannot develop wings, therefore the various Heritage and cultures of the people of South Africa’s Rainbow Nation- as we have also picked up trends of the Youth shying away from their heritage toward more Euro-centric and “Americanised” culture – a sense of identity is vital to a healthy society.

In our 55th Anniversary, we are offering skilled, semi-skilled and totally untrained artistes an opportunity to learn, grow and develop into marketable members of the South African Arts & Culture Sphere. The training of unemployed and semi- skilled artistes takes the form of advanced/ master classes and a short cut to success.

The training is free to all participants and will culminate on our 60th anniversary.

The trainees/interns in this programme will in turn be teaching the children and Youth in these earmarked previously disadvantaged areas to connect to the joy, healing and freedom of Dance and Dance theatre. Each participant becomes an active agent of change; transformation and Social Cohesion- an Ambassador of Peace and Nation- Building.

OBJECTIVES:

- To Train and develop artists, who are not afforded the opportunities of privileged society.

- To contribute to a job creation effort by retaining the services of a majority of unemployed dancers in South Africa.
- To reflect South Africa's commitment to Peace & Nation Building
- To share a stage with other cultures and countries on an international level
- Liaise with the various cultural, Consular and Embassy authorities, as we already do, to learn and promote culture
- Expose members of the Project to regular Workshops and collaborative Productions with local & foreign artists
- **Issues answered and covered comprehensively in this syllabus:**
 1. Project to reflect new ideas, scientific and technical approaches.
 2. Project unique and no duplication of work already undertaken.
 3. Project reflects a component of viability, innovation and originality.

KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION:

Learning new dances requires attending, concentrating, memorising, sequencing, motor planning and the ability to follow verbal instructions. Development of these skills thus prepare the pre-vocational skills of the learner for formal employment. Formal operational thinking is developed through the awareness raised by participating in dance classes, which enabled them to think about the influence of this participation. The syllabus/ repertoire they are taught is Multi- and Inter-cultural in nature, so not only are they learning about their own country, life skills and social etiquette, but about the world through Dance and Dance Theatre.

Phase 1(*1 year) of a 5 -year programme

- Training trainers to pass on the skills and knowledge afforded to them, free of charge in multi-cultural and Inter-cultural Dance repertoires, to receive ADI [UNESCO (CID) Council of International Dance certification on completion of 5 years as this will have to be paid for in EUROS].
- Training to become professional artistes (training manuals are provided to cover the theory to the practical training provided), to be retained and employed within this industry.
- Learning a holistic (physical, mental, psychological, and emotional) approach to the performing arts
- Learning performance arts and putting them into practice in local and International performances
- Job Creation and Empowerment via a renewed interest in the Industry, by networking with established professional artistes; arts organisations; professional agents and governmental agencies – both foreign and domestic.
- *Training culminates in a professional showcase of the training received and given. This is held at a Theatre.*

Phase 2 (*2 years): *continues on Phase 1's foundations, the escalation is that the Trainee trainers not only widen their knowledge base of the basic introduced in to them in Phase 1, but also expand their training skills in Provinces where there is a shortage of these services to the Rural and Urban areas of the Provinces of this country that requires this level of support to the Creative Sector. Phase 2 onwards requires more funding and support due to Honoraria, travel and subsistence for the trainers of the programme. The reach out is via established community, governmental and Municipality resources.*

Complete Repertoire/ Syllabus:

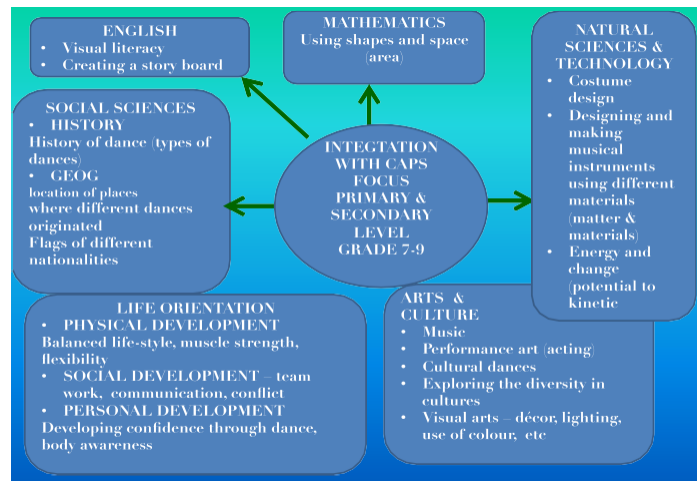
INDIAN : Bharata Natyam; Kathak(incl. Sufi); Odissi; Kuchipudi; & Authentic Indian Folk & Tribal Dance
BOLLYWOOD: North & South Indian; Afro-integration
ORIENTAL & EASTERN: Chinese; Indonesian; Malaysian; Thai; Japanese: Belly dance; Sri Lankan
AFRICAN: Ethiopian; Mozambiquan; Batswana; Zimbabwe; Nigeria; Mauritius

SOUTH AFRICAN: Afrikaner Volkspele; Sesotho; S'Pedi; Shangaan; AmaXhosa; Gumboots; Kaapse Klopse; Pantsula; Zulu; Kwasa Kwasa (Township Jive)

WESTERN STYLES: Ballet; Modern; Jazz; Contemporary; Hip Hop; Salsa; Portuguese; French; Nordic; Polynesian

INTERCULTURAL DANCE PIECES: ADI is regularly commissioned to create special and unique inter-cultural, and inter-faith pieces – that is the Institute's forte'.

Further, Assitej has selected Anavarata's productions for performance at schools around the country as we tie our projects into various aspects of the Pre -school to secondary school curriculae. This will feed into this project as well.



Mentoring component :

Since its inception 55 years ago, community service has been a priority of ours by means of free lessons to those who could not afford to learn about their culture, and charitable performances in aid of welfare organisations. This was a hallmark of our founders. There has always been a passion to teach in the most disadvantaged communities in KZN and Gauteng. We even gave performances in the rural sugar cane villages in Mauritius as well as in the remote areas of Malaysia on both our International Tours to these countries. It was one of the most rewarding experiences of ADI's career.

The Trainers/ mentors have also had extensive performance exposure on tours, like the one we completed with the ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural relations), where they performed and held workshops in various urban and rural settings. They have already experienced urban training where they are part of the dance training team at the National Childrens' Theatre's holiday programmes and Saturday workshops in Johannesburg. About 80-100 children aged 7 – 16, and divided into 4 age groups, which rotate each week. We taught 3 Classes every Saturday over 8 weeks, 09:00 – 12:00. Concentration on technique and a fourth session focused on training for Musical theatre.

The communities of other provinces will be taught by Youth like themselves who have successfully completed the exact same programme as they have and have excelled. The trainers are selected for their achievement, personalities and commitment to the Project. Community service has been instilled in our members since their training began. ADI students are passionate and excited about the prospect of passing on their knowledge-paying it forward/mentoring.

The idea of peers who have been through the exact same training and are now training students is a hugely positive component of the success of the programme, as the participants already have example and role models to look up to and emulate.

PHASE 3 (*2-years):

This is where the dancer chooses to move into a professional development track as opposed to the previous 'hobby' orientation. The areas of focus are:

- Choreography- merging and integration of dance styles
- Professional performance experience
- Teacher training
- Theatre production development
- Technical advancement (audio-visual)
- Stage management
- Direction

THE PROFESSIONALS INVOLVED IN TRAINING:

We have drawn from the best and brightest talent that this county has to offer. They are both seasoned as well as upcoming young talent that have very different methodologies in teaching and performance methods and techniques:

COLIN HEANEY: MUSICIAN & MOTIVATIONAL FORMULATION

Colin Heaney hails from the UK with a background in Hydraulic Engineering, and made South Africa his home. Passionate about drumming of all kinds, he is also an International motivational speaker, who is in great demand. He is renowned for his many Theatre Shows; TV appearances; motivational drumming Seminars; and Corporate Events.

He has created many productions for Stage and Corporate events, with his work at the Barnyard Theatres. His various International performances include a memorable Seychelles performance for an Arab Sheikh.



Some of his credits are introducing guest speakers such as David Monroe (CEO Standard bank corporate banking 2006) and such high profile World-renowned speakers such as Sir Bob Geldof (Sun City Superbowl 2006).

Other credits for Colin are creating concepts, and shows to launch new logos for Liberty Life (6 roadshows-2006), Ford Mondeo Launch; New Beetle launch amongst others. DRUMTALKERS is an organisation created by Colin running a leadership development self empowerment program aimed at schools, NPO's and corporate market both in innovative Life skill development and Corporate branding concepts and important issues dealing with public awareness programs (Drug abuse, crime, etc).

Communication skills over the past, many years on stage and in the public eye both developed or taught Colin how to be a diplomat, having a love of people and developing people skills, both verbally and in gesture without dialogue e.g. Drum Shows, Audience interaction and initiating interaction from audiences of various cultures.

He has Co- directed Anavarata's stage production "SawoboNamasté" for the international market with Anusia Pillay, bringing innovative, exciting and very out-of –the box; corporate ideas to the public.

TUMELO SETLOBOKO



Tumelo Setloboko, from Alexandra Township, is 33 years old and has worked consistently and diligently as a promoter and practitioner of South African Dance and culture. He was trained at Moving Into Dance Mophatong in Edudance; Afro fusion; Contemporary & Traditional Dance(Zulu; Tsonga; Sestswana), as well as trained as an Events co-ordinator. He has served as chairperson of Publik Kreativitey Drama Krew, specializing in Dance, Drama, Music, Drumming, etc. He also volunteered at Thusong Youth Centre from 2009 to 2004. He has worked as a Life skills coach at Grass Roots Soccer and for the City of Johannesburg- Sports and Recreation from 2015

His television work includes educational sketches for 'Vukuzenzele' and 'Education Express' seasons 2 & 3. **Tumelo is working with Anavarata on honing the dancers African traditional dance skills.**

CATHY DEL MEI



Vibrant and vivacious, Cathy Del Mei is an exciting saxophonist with years of experience. Cathy has played both locally and internationally for top selling shows.

As a keyboard player and Saxophonist, she has performed in theatre shows such as 60 Something, Beatlemania, The Meatloaf Tribute Show and Feelin Groovy; gaining critical acclaim for her extrovert performances and outstanding Sax solos. On the Barnyard Circuit, Cathy featured in the show Glory Days and Natural Woman. Cathy has performed with artistes such as P J Powers; Vicky Sampson and Duncan Faure (Rabbit; Bay City Rollers and songwriter for Madonna).

She performed with top club/ corporate band Avalance, at Sun City Montecasino, Vodaworld and many others. They spent 3 months in the Middle East in 1999. Her qualifications include a 3 year National Diploma in Light Music from Pretoria Technikon and a Certificate in Basic Sound Engineering(1 year) from Inhouse Audio Training. Cathy's versatility is evident in her ability to team up with dancers, singers and instrumentalists. From laid back to more hi-tech funkiness, a sincere performance is guaranteed. **She has teamed up with Anavarata for a South African and African music and dance Revue called "SAXY AFRICA" for the corporate stage; which has already been launched at the World Body Building Championships, 2015 at UNISA, Pretoria; the NEDBANK GOLF CHALLENGE at Sun City in Dec, 2015 as well as Pick 'N Pays services awards in 2016.**

BIANCA OLIM

Bianca has been in the entertainment for 14 years in SA & The UK. Her forté is Cabaret and experience spans a huge variety of stage shows and dance styles available including Britains got talent. Her work and professionalism speaks for itself, both locally and abroad. She has benefitted from both small and big events as they all contribute to us gaining experience and satisfaction from what we do. She loves to share her talent with all and bring joy, laughter and wonder to all types of audiences.

ARABESQUE BALLET ACADEMY

This school was founded in Midstream in 2006 and has another branch in Pretoria. They follow the Cecchetti method of dance, which is popular all around the world as well as here in South Africa. They are associated to Cecchetti London. The school is owned by Joy Cooper and her daughter Brileen White. They also train trainers and we will network with them to bring their Senior trainee teachers into our programme. The featured style will be Advanced Ballet and Contemporary dance to facilitate body conditioning and discipline.

LIEZEL STEYN



Liezel is a Contemporary Sultry Jazz Artist, Actress, MC, Presenter, Studio & Session Vocalist(All Genres). She is one of the Founding members of Eleganza at Eleganza Voices. Her experience includes Broadcast Media, Chamber of Commerce, Conference & Event Organizers, Conference & Meeting Planning and Entertainment. She will be coaching the participants in vocal training. Her experience includes Broadcast Media, Chamber of Commerce, Conference & Event Organizers, Conference & Meeting Planning and Entertainment.

ANUSIA

GOVENDER

PILLAY

This programme is created and managed by Anavarata's director, Anusia, who studied Bharata Natyam and Kathak under both her mother and aunt, since childhood. This resulted in Pillay literally following in her mother's famous footsteps. Both mother and daughter advanced their Kathak knowledge under Guru Rajender Gangani of Kathak Kendra, in New Delhi, and studied and researched the various folk and tribal art forms of India. Pillay became the first South African exponent of Odissi.. Anusia was selected as the first South African Trainer and **Principal Dancer of the official Malaysian Cultural Dance troupe in S.A and received training by the Malaysian Arts and Culture Department in Kuala Lumpur in 2001.** Her additional training included Modern Dance and Jazz under Desire' Pickering, and Drama under Saira Essa at the Upstairs Theatre in Durban. She worked on two of Disney's productions in South Africa namely the "The Lion King" in 2006/7 as lead choreographer to the child artists, and "Beauty and the Beast" in 2008/9. She also served as SA JUDGE for Dance India Dance on ZEE TV in GAUTENG 2010. She is still an avid student of dance and has studied South African, African and Latin styles of Dance, amongst others. All her current experience has added to the portfolio of the Anavarata Dance Institute. Anusia will be responsible for Oriental; Indian; Sri Lankan and the combination of all aspects of the training process.

CAPACITY BUILDING & APPLICATION:

One of the central aims of the Anavarata is to build South African human and skill capacity for the development of Performing Artists and trainers in Multi-cultural and Inter- cultural Dance and Dance Theatre in the Creative Sector (**creative; administrative; technical and management.**). Professionals and employment will be created and sustained. Our core team will travel to each province every week/ fortnight to supervise training both administrative and creative. We will be adding to our small team in a large way. Where necessary, Anavarata will be looking to partner with National and International counterparts to ensure learning and skills are transferred and remain in South Africa at the conclusion of the training period. To ensure this aim is fulfilled and

that the participant leaves an artistic and cultural legacy in South Africa, a multi-dimensional capacity building programme is underway involving:

- Free Internships/Bursaries
- Teacher training
- Pilot programmes at school level
- Professional performance troupe(practical experience with a basic honorarium where payment is received)
- International UNESCO (CID) council of International Dance certification at the end of the teacher training period (3 years)

In recent years we have found that issues around distance, venue accessibility; late performance call times and transport at those times, that have prompted the Institute's leadership to look at alternatives to these issues.

OUTCOMES

- Training and employment
- Passing on training and
- Preserving heritage for and with future generations
- Youth Mentoring themselves

TIME FRAMES:

This project is going to be dealt with 1 calendar year at a time, however we would like it to be on going and far reaching for a 3- year period. This will facilitate full and complete training.

TRAINING SYLLABUS:

- **Ballet & Contemporary; Horton Technique** by Arabesque Ballet Academy
8weeks x 3hrs training in the following: Beginning 1 April 2017
practical examinations were held at the end of the session
- **Hip Hop; Burlesque** by Bianca Olim
- **Indian Classical: Kathak Training and Choreography** by Anusia Pillay
- **Kizomba & Bachata- Anusia Pillay**
- **Performance technique; Musical & Vocal training-** with Cathy Del Mei & Liezel Steyn
- **Malaysian** by Anusia Pillay
- **African & South African Indigenous dance** by Anusia Pillay and Tumelo Setloboko
- **Train the trainer sessions in Sandton and Roodepoort: India Day Project**, June – Aug 2016.
Trained 17 children from ages 5-11 years for India's independence day Celebrations at Zoo Lake = supervised by Anusia Pillay and the group co-ordinator Mrs. Sushree Das.
- **South Indian Classical, Folk and Bollywood dances for Harvest Festival** by Anusia Pillay
- **South East Asian and Sri Lankan Dance styles** by Anusia Pillay
- **Introduction to Stage usage, Dance for Health and Performance Etiquette** by Anusia Pillay
- **The Power to overcome: Emotional & mental health of performers** by a trained psychologist
- **Choreography of pieces and productions -that will be staged, as practical assessments-** by Anusia Pillay
- **Professional mind set; ethics and etiquette-** Colin Heaney

PROPOSED VENUES: Klipfontein View, Midrand; Brits and or Mahikeng; Middelburg

REPRESENTATION:

It is clear from all of the above information that this project recognises political, geographical and cultural diversity of the country in its training syllabus; trainers (across race; genre and gender); and in our sphere and scope of the project plan.

Percentages will only be finalized at the beginning of the training sessions when our registers are finalised- it is Female and Youth orientated.

***Women**

Our Organisation was founded 55 years ago by pioneering women, and has always been headed up by a woman. Our Female membership and trainer numbers always exceed the number of Males. The large no of female headed households, as well as the increasing incidents of violence and sex-related crimes against women, require that we empower women to increase their self worth; self – esteem and self image. Cook, Ledger and Scott (“Dancing for Living”, 2003) based on a study of dance to 5 rhythms’ with a group of women in Britain and found that dance enhanced their self development and they had become more expressive, spontaneous, powerful or assertive and direct with people. They felt that this energised them and benefited their physical and mental Health; using Dance as a tool or resource to look after themselves and their emotional wellbeing, even a form of healing: the transforming nature of the dance.

Youth

A study by Katz, M. (2008). Growth in motion: Supporting young women's embodied identity and cognitive development through dance after school. Provided the following findings:

“This research’s interest in embodied teaching and learning contributes to scholarship on multimodality in education. The findings demonstrate that interactions and multimodal learning opportunities in afterschool programs have the potential to support youth in positive identity formation and cognitive growth. These are particularly important benefits for youth who are “at-risk” and struggling with relationships, school and difficult circumstances at home. Notably, the benefits gained from learning dance extended beyond achievements in the dance studio; dance provided them with powerful tools for developing a sense of agency and self-efficacy along with positive identities that supported them in other areas of their lives.”

Adolescence is characterized by physical and conceptual change; becoming a member of a peer group and forming sexually-related relationships. High risk behaviours such as crime and gangsterism ; alcohol and drugs ; sex and sexual harassment; child- headed households and teenage pregnancy are throwing children into adult activities with out adequate preparation. Participation in dancing, may become an important method for acquiring the knowledge, skills and attitude for mastering age-relevant challenges and encouraging the development of relationships with peers- **empowers, self-esteem; problem and conflict resolution- harmony; teamwork and leadership; committment – dance teaches how to break down a problem to basics and literally put the pieces together 1 step at a time.**

Although the programme is designed for Women – centred training. Our main focus is amongst the Youth. The male -female interaction in a mixed training environment has led to many benefits in our many years of training:

- Self respect and a sense of self-worth
- the de-sexualization of the human touch and interaction
- respectful & healthy relationships: trust, anti-abuse of each other
- a professional regard and family –based environment

Disabilities

- *None of our current membership has any pronounced or obvious physical or any other disability. We have had students with physical and mental disabilities in the past year, and have taught hearing impaired students as well. ADI is therefore well equipped to accommodate any disabled members. Programmes are designed for anyone with a disability.*
- *We will ensure all training and performance venues are accessible and inclusive.*

Job creation:

ADI is committed to bettering the circumstances of all its members through skills development and creation of self-worth. Our students are taught to “Dream Big, work hard, and you shall achieve Big!”

Trainers will receive international certification; be paid for training sessions and develop marketable skills. All participants will be provided with a certificate of attendance. The outstanding and interested will be ear-marked for either performance troupe and/or teacher training to allow the programme to become self-sustaining. During Local and International performances participants will receive on the job training; honoraria; and per diems where possible (Budget permitting).

Previously disadvantaged artists

This project focuses on the disenfranchised, South Africans from Previously disadvantaged communities, mostly of indigenous origin. The unemployed and their upskilling and diversification of raw untapped talent; while encouraging formal education; is a priority of the Project. Those who cannot afford formal training are also included. Those who need to sustain their career choice in the Arts and culture field - need to uplift their status and irradicate the stigma of poverty that surrounds Artistes in South Africa and Africa.

Previously disadvantaged communities

The geographical areas in focus are low socio-economic and township/rural in nature. Characterised by under-development, scarce resources, restricted opportunities for development and included individuals who participated in high-risk occupations, which made the environment. Described by local Police officers as “a potentially unsafe and dangerous place to live”. Rural areas are defined by the South African Government as “areas that have the lowest level of services, and the greatest average distance to the nearest service points. In South Africa 57% of the people live below the poverty income line and of these, 43% live in rural areas, such as the rural township in this study” (Schwabe C. Fact Sheet: Poverty in South Africa. Human Sciences Research Council. 2010). Rural outreach programmes, by undertaking development activities and providing services aimed at improving the lives of the rural poor, offer opportunities for the growth of individuals and communities by, amongst others, facilitating changes in the way that people relate to each other and participate in their daily occupations.

CONCLUSION:

We are a very PROUDLY South African dance company that has continued to display our love for dance and music intrinsic to the South African way of life. *According to our audience feedback: The performance training allows the performers to exude Joy – we keep the audience spellbound with high energy and lightening fast changes- allowing the audience to leave with a sense of patriotism and that “Wow!” factor. We have found an exciting way of inter-linking traditional and contemporary styles of Dance tradition. The storyline is a theme that inspires our own personal stories - that celebrate our “South African-ness”, and evokes strong emotional reactions to the performances. The energy is contagious as they learn about their own country’s cultures in an entertaining manner. This results in Social Cohesion, when they realise that there are more similarities than differences between us as a Nation, thereby engendering a well- rounded, multi-cultural approach that is not sectarian, but inclusive and respectful of all the peoples of our country and the Globe.*

APPENDIX H: A SELECTION OF ONLINE FOOTAGE AND ARTICLES THAT HIGHLIGHT MY CAREER

Radio Veritas Interview (Womems Day Profile

2019): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCUM4fTvtns&feature=share>

International Article 2017: http://www.thewomenz.com/read_story/38

Sawubonamasté Tour Launch

2015: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UjJeUNohyDo&feature=youtu.be>

Saxxy Africa: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDM_R4SdWqw

MZANSINDIA @ State Theatre, Pretoria

2013: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LnvR09KvtU>

CNTV INSERT 2014: <http://english.cntv.cn/2014/11/20/VIDE1416419520303883.shtml>

Cape Town Diwali Festival: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7mlyFqd3cE>

CITY PRESS ONLINE, SA TATTOO 2012: <http://youtu.be/hxCALC0PlSQ?t=1m11s>

ADI Fifty Year Profile 2011: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ov25YZFcHN8>

Sufi Kathak: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMK3uFe_Vt4&feature=relmfu

Integrated Faith Performance: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hktj_nnFiM0
<http://youtu.be/hxCALC0PlSQ?t=1m11s>