

Reading the Double Diaspora:
Cultural Representations of Gujarati East Africans
in Britain

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Abstract

This thesis explores representations of culture amongst the prolific twice-displaced Gujarati East African diaspora in Britain. I argue that the paucity of fictional literatures written about, or by, this community demonstrate that the ‘double diaspora’ often favour forms of embodied narrative. Using the literary critical interpretive practices of close reading, I thus analyse a range of cultural ‘texts’. Through this approach of investigating both the written text alongside the non-textual embodied narrative, the thesis broadens the remit of literary studies and subsequently addresses a lacuna in scholarship on cultural representations of the ‘double diaspora’. Whilst the thesis intervenes in contemporary literary postcolonial debate, interdisciplinary connections between diverse disciplines, such as performance, trauma and diaspora studies, are established.

Following my introduction, the thesis is divided into three main chapters: each considers a form of embodied cultural representation significant to the migrant who has been displaced from India to Britain, via East Africa. Beginning with Yasmin Alibhai-Brown’s *The Settler’s Cookbook* – one of the few examples of a written representation of twice-migrant culture – I explore culinary practices as a mode of individuated and collective identity articulation. In my third chapter, I develop my argument to read the Gujarati dances of *dandiya-raas* and *garba*, played during the Hindu festival of *Navratri*. Finally, before concluding, the fourth chapter moves to explore visual materials gathered from personal kinship networks.

In identifying embodied narratives as significant to the double diaspora, my thesis uncovers the performance of complex and multiple selfhoods and collectivities within this community. Whilst there are instances of a surprising convergence of modern and traditional identities, there is too the emergence of an Indian national

identity, which is complicated by regional Gujaratiness. In closing, I propose a Gujarati East African vernacular modernity, which demonstrates how this progress-driven diaspora simultaneously looks in two directions.

Note on non-English terminology:

All non-English terms, generally in Gujarati, have been rendered phonetically, and are deployed as devised consistently throughout the thesis in italics.

Table of Contents

Introduction	8
Researching the Single Diaspora, Overlooking the Double.....	11
The Indian in East Africa: From Railways & Trade to the ‘Brown Jew’	17
‘... and soon we shall be flying’: The Indian East African Arrives in Britain	22
Limiting Language	27
Innovating Methodologies: Discovering ‘Texts’ & Synthesising Scholarship.....	35
Cooking up Identity: Experiencing Trauma, Writing Memoir & Enacting Culture	48
Introducing the Cookbook Memoir.....	48
Colouring and Juicing Cultural Memory	52
Memoir: The New Novel?	54
The Palliative Memoir & Writing Trauma.....	63
Writing Nostalgia, Resistance & Memory: Writing Recipe	71
The Cookbook as Archive and Repertoire	79
Nourishing Embodied Narratives.....	82
‘Jena’s Fish and Chips’	87
Palatabilities of Speaking Out: Culinary Practices Pornographed.....	93
Transcending Limits: A Meta-language of Recognisability	101
Dancing Dandiya & Dressing to Impress: The Performing Body of Navratri. 105	
Dancing Dandiya, Gathering Data	108
Writing Dance Scholarship	114
Navratri: Playing Garba and Dandiya-raas	116
‘One has No Choice but to Think with the Body’	122
Navratri’s Macarena Moves.....	124
Strictly Hindu Gujarati: Strictly Dandia	132
Dancing the Homeland.....	137
Diasporic Dress: Dressing to Impress	145
Sequined <i>Saris</i> , Dazzling Dandiyas: Performing Navratri	151
The Book of Secrets: Covert Culture	159
Corporal Conclusions.....	167
Picturing the Modern Self: <i>Saris</i>, Suits & Commodities in Looking Back & Moving On	175
A Look Back, to Move to Modernity.....	176
Finding Family Photographs	181
Framing Family Photographs	184
<i>Saris</i> and Suits.....	187
Dressing the Body: Sartorial Preferences	195
The Fetish: ‘Flotsam of History’	206
Collecting Commodities.....	216
The Exile’s Mantra: ‘Just in Case’	222
Looking Back, Still Moving On.....	228
Half Packed Suitcases or Ready To Go Bags?.....	231
Conclusion.....	236
Bibliography	248

Appendices	261
Appendix A - Newspaper Articles	262
Appendix B - <i>Nowhere to Belong</i>	270
Appendix C - <i>Navratri</i> Materials	289

Table of Figures & Footage

Figures

Chapter Three

Figure 1 – HLC, 29 th Sept 2011, <i>Aarti</i> in progress	121
Figure 2 – HLC, 29 th Sept 2011, Centrepiece <i>Murti</i> example	121
Figure 3 – HLC, 14 th Oct 2010, <i>Aarti</i> in progress, devotional plates visible	122
Figure 4 – PA, <i>Navratri</i> preparations, India posters in shot	139
Figure 5 – KMH, 16 Oct 2010, Male ‘folk’ dress	148
Figure 6 – HLC, 29 th Sept 2011, Male ‘folk’ dress	148
Figure 7 – HLC, 14 th Oct 2010, <i>Sari</i> and <i>lehenga</i> styles	152
Figure 8 – PA, <i>Dandiya</i> players with plain, wooden <i>dandiya</i>	155
Figure 9 – PA, Child performing <i>Navratri</i>	159

Chapter Four

Figure 10 – PA, Wardrobe with mirror, commodities and two people	175
Figure 11 – PA, Aunt on Kenyan beach in <i>sari</i>	189
Figure 12 – PA, Uncle with four periphery images	192
Figure 13 – PA, Close, headshot of Uncle	193
Figure 14 – PA, Uncle posing outside bank in Kenya	193
Figure 15 – PA, Grandparent in white <i>kurta</i>	198
Figure 16 – PA, Girls and boys wearing western wear, Kenya	199
Figure 17 – PA, Aunt in Punjabi suit, in field, East Africa	202
Figure 18 – PA, <i>Sari</i> clad grandmother in outside kitchen, Kenya	203
Figure 19 – PA, Men and women taking tea in British garden	205
Figure 20 – PA, Kitchen space in India	214
Figure 21 – PA, Family trip, with commodities	225

Footage Disc

A disc has been provided as evidence, and reference, of the video footage captured during my work within the *Navratri* festival in 2010 and 2011.

- Video 1 - HLC, 14th Oct 2010, Macarena
- Video 2 - HLC, 29th Sept 2011, non-Gujarati dance, *bhangra* style
- Video 3 - KMH, 16th Oct 2010, non-Gujarati dance, India orientated
- Video 4 - WLC 15th Oct 2010, *garba* with *bhangra* style
- Video 5 - HLC, 14th Oct 2010, four *dandiya* dancers

Key:

- PA - Personal Archive
- HLC - Harrow Leisure Centre
- KMH - Kenton *Mochi* Hall
- WLC - Watford Leisure Centre

Introduction

[...] Smile away the hurt of their
unfriendly frown
for the sweat is dry
that built the railways,
[...] the time and tide
and the valour of your business mind
condemned the brown jew
to comb his days in commerce and
trade.

[...]now they shall look back in anger
the mercedes-benz politicians,
black suited, whisky voiced, swiss
bank accounted,
searching in vain
for brown liberals behind the counter
and taunt us about commitment –[...]

[...]but my eyes shall burn again,
a resurrection of brown pride

for i see you now, my father,
fling the victoria cross
into dung-heap of the british empire.
not for your valour
was this false honour on your chest,
but for blood discarded
and bodies dismembered
in white wars of yesterday.
why, then, must I,
your latter day blood,
bow to live content
with vouchers and quotas? [...]

[...]and soon we shall be flying,
unwelcome vultures all over the world,
only to unsheathe fresh wrath
each time we land.

Jagjit Singh, 'Portrait of an Asian as an
East African', p. 156-159

These stanzas, by Jagjit Singh, express some of the cornerstone sentiments experienced by the Indian uprooted from East Africa: hurt, anger, and betrayal. In contrast *Hansa's*, the highly acclaimed Gujarati vegetarian restaurant in Leeds, showcases the successes of this diaspora twice displaced, in Britain. Whilst catering delicious Gujarati East African food, sometimes with a western twist, *Hansa's* uses its space and its food to narrate the migration experiences of restaurateur and owner, Ugandan-born Hansa Dabhi, and her family. Charting the initial move from Gujarat to East Africa, and later settlement in Britain, the restaurant space embodies collective experience and identity, as well as that of the Dabhi family itself. Staged as home, the restaurant walls are adorned with family photographs, and the entrance

even houses a small *mandir* that sits in the corner.¹ Diners are simultaneously invited into that space as house guests. The restaurant space, the food and the menu, as well as the two accompanying cookbooks – all successes in their own right – reveal a story of migration, displacement, and resettlement. This is the Gujarati East African narrative in Britain. In representing oneself and community, and projecting successfully this diasporic identity into the public sphere, *Hansa's* encapsulates the modes of cultural production favoured by the double diaspora.

In contrast, the five stanzas of my epigraph, taken from Jagjit Singh's sixteen stanza poem 'Portrait of an Asian as an East African', illuminate many of the concerns and encounters of the Indian community in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, during the African struggle for independence. Though this poem anticipates the multiple migrations that *Hansa's* pertains to, it primarily belongs to a canon of literature that comments upon the experiences of the Indian who migrated to East Africa, rather than the one for whom East Africa was the first of many displacements.² As well as this literature, as this section later demonstrates, there is also historical and sociological scholarship pertaining to what I call 'the singly displaced' East African Indian community. There are, however, paucities in both textual and scholarly interlocutions regarding the two-stage dislocation of peoples from India to East Africa, and thence to Britain. Instead, buttressing a monolithic understanding of diaspora and undermining the complexities of double displacement, it is the linear narrative of success that dominates rhetoric about the double diaspora.

¹ A *mandir* is a Hindu temple. Generally Hindu households contain a house *mandir*, which is a small Hindu shrine dedicated to worship. It will contain figures of deities, images, and articles that enable prayer.

² See M.G Vassanji's fictional works, for example *The In Between World of Vikram Lall* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2003). Whilst Vassanji depicts the Indian East African diasporic community in Canada, his novels also disclose the initial migratory encounter in Africa. Peter Nazareth's novels *In a Brown Mantle* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1972) and *The General is Up* (Calcutta: Writer's Workshop, 1984) also illustrate the position of the Indian in East Africa. Cynthia Salvadori's *We Came in Dhows* (Nairobi: Paperchase Kenya Ltd, 1996) is also a significant text (3 volumes in total), which compiles the narratives of South Asian experience in Kenya.

My research seeks to attend to these silences in scholarship, which surround the Indian East African diaspora's resettlement in Britain, particularly in literary and cultural studies. It is my aim to examine those rich, yet unexplored, modes of cultural production that perform a wealth of knowledge about the double diaspora. In particular I probe how the doubly displaced migrant (re)writes and (re)enacts individuated identity and (re)presents community, having been confronted with these multiple deracinations.

As Singh's poem recollects, the want of indentured labour and commerce played a primary role in the advent of the Indian community in East Africa. After East African independence from British colonisation, Indians, for many reasons which vary from region to region, left their homes in East Africa and relocated, in Singh's words, 'all over the world'. Despite the experience of 'fresh wrath/each time' this diaspora relocated, it is their successes in resettlement that are primarily celebrated. As I shall discuss later in this introduction, their resettlement in Leicester offers a principal example of this narrative of achievement. This dominant narrative of success, as exemplified by *Hansa's*, suggests that the Indian East African is an expert in resettling anew. However, whilst financially and socially the twice-displaced community is highly accomplished, I argue throughout my research that hidden in these achievements are other narratives that convey less positive affects. I unpack these narratives via an interdisciplinary approach, which enables me to deploy a range of disparate secondary materials: from, amongst others, food criticism to trauma scholarship to dance studies. Critical work from these fields is read in conjunction with Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's *The Settler's Cookbook: A Memoir of Love, Migration and Food*; the dance practices of the Hindu festival *Navratri*; and

visual materials from my own family archive.³ Sartorial preferences of the double diaspora during both *Navratri*, and as evidenced in the visual materials, will also form a significant part of my analysis. By synthesising these disparate materials, I aim to establish a better understanding of the Gujarati East African community in Britain, who outwardly appear well settled and liberated from the concerns voiced in Singh's poem. The objective of my scholarship is thus to unveil silenced interlocutions and complicate the image of the 'fortunate entrepreneurial Indian East African' that dominates rhetoric. By doing so, certain traumas of deracination and racism are revealed, alongside the inspiring, creative identity formed by a community continually looking forward, yet also looking to the past.

Throughout the rest of the introduction I will establish my critical approach in the thesis. I begin by highlighting the existent scholarship on the subject of the Indian East African; to then contextualise the work of this thesis I build a historical framework pertaining to the Gujarati East African in Britain. I then introduce my key terminologies and outline the mode of their usage before describing my methodologies and summarising the constituent chapters.

Researching the Single Diaspora, Overlooking the Double

In their settlement and dislocation from East Africa the Indian diasporic community, on the one hand, has been well investigated through both a sociological and historical lens, by, for instance, Michael Twaddle, Yash Tandon, Yash Ghai, Dharam Ghai, Agehananda Bharati, and J.S Mangat.⁴ Research into Ugandan Indian

³ Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook: A Memoir of Love, Migration and Food* (London: Portobello Books, 2009). Henceforth referred to as *The Settler's Cookbook*.

⁴ Michael Twaddle, *Expulsion of a Minority: Essays on Ugandan Asians* (London: The Athlone Press, 1975), Michael Twaddle, 'East African Asians Through a Hundred Years', in *South Asians Overseas: Migration and Ethnicity*, ed. by Colin Clarke, Ceri Peach, and Steven Vertovec, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) pp. 149-67, Yash Tandon, and Arnold Raphael, *The New Position of East Africa's Asians: Problems of a Displaced Minority* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1978), Dharam P. Ghai, (ed.), *Portrait of a Minority: Asians in East Africa* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1965), Yash Ghai, and Dharam P. Ghai, *The Asian Minorities of East and Central Africa (up to*

deracination has enjoyed further scholarship, owing to Idi Amin's infamous expulsion order in 1972.⁵ More generally there is also sociological research on Indians in South Africa by scholars such as Surendra Bhana and Bridglal Pachai.⁶ On the other hand, there has been scarcely any work on the Indian East African diaspora *in Britain*. Where analysis has been undertaken, for example by sociologist Parminder Bhachu, or into the South Asian community in Leicester, there still remains a resounding silence on this topic within the disciplines of literary and cultural studies.⁷ Within these fields, this particular diasporic community has perhaps been overlooked for two reasons: firstly, because of the paucity of fictional writings concerned with this subject, and indeed a disinterest in literary production by this diasporic community,⁸ and secondly, because of the two-fold nature of the migration itself.

This paucity is all the more surprising given the prolific research and fictional writings on the cultural implications of the diasporic South Asian community in Britain. For example, work in this field has been undertaken by Susheila Nasta, Peter

1971) (London: Minority Rights Group, 1971), Agehananda Bharati, *The Asians in East Africa Jayhind and Uhuru* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Company, 1972), J.S Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

⁵ For instance, see: Justin O'Brien, 'General Amin and the Uganda Asians', *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 63:249 (1973), 91-104; Mahmood Mamdani, 'The Ugandan Asian Expulsion: Twenty Years After', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 6:3 (1993), 265-273; Mahmood Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1976).

⁶ Surendra Bhana, and Bridglal Pachai, *A Documentary History of Indian South Africans* (Cape Town: Hoover Institution Press, 1984).

⁷ Parminder Bhachu, *Twice Migrants: East African Sikh Settlers in Britain* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1985). Bhachu's research is also limited to the East African Sikh diaspora in Britain, thus whilst her ethnographic work can be useful in interpreting the wider East African community in Britain, read independently it is unilateral in its focus.

⁸ Kim Knott, 'The Gujarati Mochis in Leeds: From Leather Stockings to Surgical Boots and Beyond', in *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain*, ed. by Roger Ballard (London: Hurst, 1994), pp. 213-30 (p. 223) notes that younger generations of Gujaratis in Leeds generally aspire to study university level engineering, accountancy and 'a range of other science-based subjects', as well as law, highlighting a silence when the pursuit of the arts and humanities is concerned. The devaluation of more creative subjects such as music and dance as a 'waste' by Indian parents in East Africa (Agehananda Bharati, 'A Social Survey', in *Portrait of a Minority*, p. 53) goes some way to foregrounding this later disavowal of the arts and humanities at university level, and perhaps concurrently accounts for the lack of literary production within the diaspora. I return to this idea in my conclusion chapter.

van der Veer and Roger Ballard.⁹ More recently N. Ali, V. S. Kalra and Siddiq Hasan Sayyid have addressed issues regarding the ‘BrAsian’ postcolonial experience in their book *A Postcolonial People*.¹⁰ Yasmin Hussain has further considered the concept of the South Asian Diaspora with reference to gender.¹¹ There has also been reflection on the novels of M. G. Vassanji, an Indian East African who has now settled in Canada. For instance, while in her doctoral research Stephanie Jones is predominantly concerned with East African Anglophone literature, her primary materials do include several of Vassanji’s works.¹² Where Vassanji’s fictional writings are considered, however, the British aspect of this diasporic community is bypassed for the investigation of the Canadian diasporic community, because of the author’s final settlement.

Whilst there are scarce literary examples of self and community reconstructions of the Indian East African in Britain, some excavation reveals a select few texts. These are currently limited to Parita Mukta’s *Shards of Memory*, Jameela Siddiqi’s *The Feast of Nine Virgins*, Sudha Bhuchar and Kristine Landon-Smith’s play *Strictly Dandia*, and the recent work by Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*.¹³ Both Mukta and Alibhai-Brown assume the autobiographical mode and reflect upon a personal history. However, Mukta’s reflections are primarily concerned with experiences that predate settlement in Britain, family life and specifically the pain and hardship of hunger and widowhood, rendering the text

⁹ Susheila Nasta, *Home Truths: Fictions about the South Asian Diaspora in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), Peter van der Veer, *Nation and Migration: the Politics of Space in the South Asian Diaspora* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1995), and Roger Ballard, *Desh Pardesh: the South Asian Presence in Britain* (London: Hurst, 1994).

¹⁰ N. Ali, V. S. Kalra and Siddiq Hasan Sayyid, *A Postcolonial People* (London: Hurst, 2006).

¹¹ Yasmin Hussain, *Writing Diaspora: South Asian Women, Culture and Ethnicity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

¹² Stephanie Jones, ‘Novels of the South Asian Diaspora in East Africa’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, May 2003).

¹³ Parita Mukta, *Shards of Memory: Woven Lives in Four Generations* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002), Jameela Siddiqi, *The Feast of Nine Virgins* (London: Bogle L’Ouverture Press, 2001) and Sudha Bhuchar and Kristine Landon-Smith, *Strictly Dandia* (London: Methuen, 2004).

tangential to this study, as the cultural representation of the Indian East African in Britain is overlooked.¹⁴ Alibhai-Brown however deploys food, as well as autobiography, to shed light on this doubly displaced community, and follows in the tradition of several other diaspora writers who invoke the same fusion genre.¹⁵ Whilst Alibhai-Brown's culinary and autobiographical narratives are helpful in representing the Indian East African in Britain – and indeed it is the cookbook memoir that will form the subject of my next chapter – neither are the fictional writings that literary studies is accustomed to. Siddiqi, and Bhuchar *et al's* texts are fictional. On one hand, Siddiqi's text has not won critical acclaim, and is often unconvincing in its convoluted plot and superficial characters; on the other, Bhuchar *et al's* play derives from a small-scale production concerned with ethnic and caste rivalries. Nevertheless, *Strictly Dandia* represents effectively cultural and socio-religious identity within the *Navratri* space, and this critical commentary is integrated into my readings, and is examined in my chapter on dance.

Where there are limited successful examples of fictional representations of the double diaspora, there is, furthermore, a paucity of culturally significant films interested in this community. Where works such as *Bend it like Beckham* or *East is East* enable insight into the South Asian diasporas they portray, they again are only concerned with those dislocated once.¹⁶ *Mississippi Masala* does engage with narratives of double displacement; however, it is the experience of the Indian East

¹⁴ Taking into account the evaluations of this work, it is perhaps the absence of an embodied narrative in Mukta's representation of the double diaspora, and the dependence upon the written word, that hinders an even-handed approach by Mukta in writing the British Indian East African experience.

¹⁵ See for example Rohen Candappa's *Picklehead: From Ceylon to Suburbia; A Memoir of Food, Family and Finding Yourself* (London: Ebury, 2006), Colette Rossant's *Apricots on the Nile* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), Muneera U. Spence and Lella S. Umedaly's *Mamajee's Kitchen: Indian Cooking from Three Continents* (Kelowna: Umedaly, 2006), and, though not a text concerned with diaspora, but of the same fusion genre, Laura Esquivel's widely acclaimed *Like Water for Chocolate* (London: Black Swan, 1993).

¹⁶ *Bend it like Beckham*. Dir. Gurinder Chadha. RedBus. 2003 and *East is East*. Dir. Damien O'Donnell. Cinema Club. c2001.

African community in the US that is accounted for there.¹⁷ Alibhai-Brown herself tells us that ‘there are no films about our old lives’, and I would argue that indeed there are none about the new ones.¹⁸ In film, consequently, the Gujarati East African in Britain is once more overlooked. The absence of a signature novel or film concerned with the discourse of the British East African Indians, it seems, thus has inhibited palpable literary research. Perhaps this absence, as Mihir Bose suggests, is a ‘necessary amnesia’. Quoting *A Bend in the River*, Bose explicates V.S Naipaul’s argument that there is an ‘Asian inability to record and evaluate; [Indians] rely[...] on Europeans to recognise even their own forebears’ achievements’.¹⁹ Though this interpretation is severe and inaccurate, ignoring the lacuna in scholarship composed by anyone at all and failing to take into account that which does exist, of the fictional text one is compelled to ponder: Where is the iconic novel that attempts to represent the Gujarati East African in Britain? Where is its *Brick Lane* or *White Teeth*?²⁰ And if it does not exist, why not?

In answering these questions this research is stimulated to consider other forms of cultural production that represent twice-migrant identity in Britain. These alternative instances of cultural production – culinary, dance and dress practices, as well as visual materials – are posited within this thesis as ‘texts’ themselves. Though they are *not* text-based, these forms of cultural productions are closely read within this work. It is the critical treatment of these practices and materials that reveal complex, creative and multiple instances of identity amongst the double diaspora. The collective selection of food, dance, and dress as forms of key cultural texts can be understood via the concept of embodiment. However, before I delineate how

¹⁷ *Mississippi Masala* Dir. Mira Nair (USA: Columbia/ Tristar, 2003).

¹⁸ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p.13.

¹⁹ Mihir Bose, ‘The Ugandan Asian Success Magic’, *New Society*, 49, (16 Sep 1982), 456-458 (456).

²⁰ Monica Ali, *Brick Lane* (London: Doubleday, 2003) and Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (London: Penguin, 2001).

embodiment was central to the selection process of my primary materials generally, it should first be noted how the thesis came to explore culinary practices in particular. In beginning my investigation of the double diaspora at master's level, I identified food as a significant form of identity performance by the twice-displaced community in Leeds. Via *Hansa's* restaurant, it was at this stage that I began my study of culinary practices.²¹ Consequently, I recognised how certain forms of embodied practice shape and mediate cultural representations. In distinguishing during my prior studies how culinary practices provided exciting opportunities for close reading, here I have sought to explore how other suggestive forms of embodied practices, as well as food, reveal the complexities of selfhood and collective representation amongst the double diaspora. The analysis of the body thus proved central to the decision-making process of my primary material selection. Given that the texts of food, dance and dress, when closely read, offer exciting opportunities in the task of interpreting culture, I have prioritised the body, and therefore the embodied practice, in my choice of primary materials.

In the close reading of these texts my research not only goes some way to addressing the lacuna in scholarship on the cultural identity of the Gujarati East African in Britain, revealing hidden narratives of the double diaspora, it also complicates the singularity of migratory movement often embedded in the meaning of the term 'diaspora'. Usually understood as the scattering or dispersal of a group of people, the term 'diaspora' privileges singular movement, signposting 'unidirectional' migration, from a homeland to a place of settlement.²² The thesis

²¹ Maya Parmar, 'Self-(re)constructions and collective representations in the double diaspora: The Role of Culinary Practices in (re)writing the twice displaced African Gujarati in Britain' (unpublished master's dissertation, University of Leeds, 2008).

²² Sandhya Shukla, *India Abroad: Diasporic Cultures of Postwar America and England* (Oxfordshire: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 11.

seeks to challenge this understanding of British diasporic communities, and in doing so it illuminates the complexities of this South Asian diaspora who are often discussed in monolithic terms, rendering the multi-dimensional nature of the communities that lie within this umbrella group invisible. This thesis thus intervenes in wider postcolonial conceptual debates centred on the term ‘diaspora’. Later in my introduction I shall foreground the use of these key terms further; however, here I underline a further intervention this work makes. In broadening the literary critical interpretive practice of ‘close reading’ to the analysis of other modes of ‘texts’, which exist beyond the written, I draw from other forms of cultural production to read the double diaspora. This methodology, again discussed later in more depth, enables the twice-displaced community to be investigated whilst capitalising upon key skills acquired within the discipline of English Literature. Before progressing to these sections on methodology and terminology, having stated the context and intervention of the thesis, let us first consider the historical framework pertaining to the double diaspora.

The Indian in East Africa: From Railways & Trade to the ‘Brown Jew’

As I have suggested, the Indian East African community that now exists in Britain, and that is both prolific and celebrated as dynamic, is a product of multiple migrations and resettlements that span many generations. They first migrated from India to East Africa – specifically Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania – in several capacities over an extended period of time. During the late 1800s many Indians undertook both voluntary and coerced indentured labour in East Africa under British colonial rule, as African labour in the region was either ‘unavailable or unreliable’.²³ By 1895 it had been recorded that Kenya had over thirteen thousand of these workers

²³ Bharati, *The Asians in East Africa Jayhind and Uhuru*, p. 8. For further information see also Tandon and Raphael, *The New Position of East Africa's Asians*, p. 6

who constructed the railways that still function in the territory. Figures of Indian indentured labour during this period in East Africa totalled at approximately thirty-two thousand. Whilst some of these workers – who were not only labourers, but clerks, surveyors and accountants – remained in East Africa, others returned to India or died during their service.²⁴

Despite the ubiquitous understanding that the massive importation of labour during the 1890s was the first appearance of Indians in East Africa, Michael Twaddle reveals that ‘one of the essential characteristics of South Asian settlement in this particular region of the world is its antiquity’.²⁵ Long before the introduction of indentured labour in East Africa, there existed Indian and Arab traders and adventurers in the coastal cities.²⁶ Indeed, in 1844 it was estimated that twelve hundred Indians already lived in the region.²⁷ As time went on more members of this community penetrated the interior provinces of East Africa and engendered an established Indian presence. Significantly, these Indian communities, while being religiously, linguistically and by caste heterogeneous, by and large derived from the western region of the subcontinent, primarily Gujarat.²⁸ Geographically speaking,

²⁴ Ghai, and Ghai, *The Asian Minorities of East and Central Africa (up to 1971)*, p. 2. Exact figures are available in J.S, Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa*, p. 39. See also Bhana, and Pachai, *A Documentary History of Indian South Africans* for an extensive study that elucidates indentured condition for Indians, with particular reference to South Africa.

²⁵ Twaddle, ‘East African Asians Through a Hundred Years’, pp. 151-2. See also Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa*, chapter one.

²⁶ Amitav Ghosh’s autobiographical text *In an Antique Land* (London: Penguin Books, 1992) illuminates the significant mercantile activity in the Indian Ocean that existed long before the advent of the Europeans in the area, who – according to the text – upset established and amiable links.

²⁷ D.P Ghai, *Portrait of a Minority*, p. 3.

²⁸ As I have noted in Footnote 65 (p. 27), whilst some migrants came from the Punjab and Goa, amongst the South Asians in East Africa, Gujarati speaking communities accounted for a tremendous 70 per cent of the population. See for instance Tandon *et al*, Y.Ghai *et al*, D.P Ghai and Makrand Mehta, ‘Gujarati Business Communities in East African Diaspora: Major Historical Trends’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36:20, (May 19-25, 2001), 1738-1747. In his first chapter, Bharati also details a clear breakdown of the South Asian community. Writing more recently, Joanna Herbert, ‘Migration, Memory and Metaphor: Life Stories of South Asians in Leicester’, in *Histories and Memories: Migrants and their History in Britain*, ed. by Kathy Burrell and Panikos Panayi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 133-49 (p.134) echoes these assertions that a ‘majority’ of ‘East African Asians’ were Gujaratis, but ‘there were also Goans and Punjabis’.

East Africa is conveniently placed for travel from the West of India – a fact that perhaps accounts for the higher proportions of Gujaratis in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Thus, despite a ‘Eurocentric historiography’ that ignores the presence of a South Asian community in East Africa before the imposition of colonisation, Indians – in particular Gujaratis – have long been in the region and, I would like to suggest, agreeing with Makrand Mehta, have been architects of East Africa’s economy.²⁹ As discussed later, they have not only contributed to building the region’s railways, but further actively provided commerce in the form of *dukas* (shops), and later have contributed significantly to the commercial public sphere in Britain.

The role of South Asians in developing the East African economy can, however, be attributed to influences other than simply the longevity of the population in the region. The western region in India is acclaimed for its commercial endeavours, and within the sub-continent itself Gujarat has thus been identified as the ‘entrepreneurial hub of India’.³⁰ Concurrently, in a similar vein of enterprise, it is not surprising that ‘wherever freed indentured labourers have formed communities of rural labourers, they have been followed by Gujarati traders and businessmen, who supply them with Indian clothes, jewellery and foodstuffs’.³¹ Although here Liz Collingham refers specifically to the diasporas in Mauritius, Trinidad, Jamaica,

²⁹ Mehta’s article, ‘Gujarati Business Communities in East African Diaspora’, firstly outlines the recent return – on invitation of the region’s President – of Gujarati businessmen to Uganda to rejuvenate business. The article secondly suggests that the initial success of the Gujarati as trader and entrepreneur lies in the kinship networks established amongst the community in East Africa. It seems to me, as such, the Gujarati traders were paramount to the economical development of their adopted African homes. In addition, as evidence of ‘Eurocentric historiography’ that marginalises the Indian social and economic contribution to East Africa and refuses their longevity in the region, Mehta also cites James Stapleton in *The Gate Hangs Well* (p. 1738). It is also worth noting, again, Ghosh’s text *In an Antique Land* for the alternative historiography, to Western records, it offers of non-European communities in the Indian Ocean.

³⁰ Dhawal Mehta, and Bhalchandra Joshi, ‘Entrepreneurial Innovations in Gujarat’, *AI & Society*, 16.1-2 (May 2002), 73-88 (73). See this article for a further discussion of ‘entrepreneurial Gujarat’. Also Rachel Dwyer, ‘Caste, Religion and Sect in Gujarat: Followers of Vallabhacharya and Swaminarayan’, in *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain*, ed. by Roger Ballard (London: Hurst, 1994), pp. 165-190 (p. 166) discusses the advantageous geography of the state, which, she suggests, has contributed to Gujarat’s commercial success.

³¹ Lizzie Collingham, *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors* (London: Vintage, 2006), p. 244.

South Africa and Fiji, this is indeed true of East Africa as well, as attested by my own family history. Following indentured labourers from India, who chose to stay in either Uganda or Kenya, many South Asians sought to fill a gap in the market for Indian commodities. They also catered for western settlers and Africans, proving cheap and resourceful in the service they offered. Interestingly, D.P. Ghai describes the *dukas* as being ‘owned almost exclusively by Gujarati speaking Asians’.³² It is these migrants who came to Africa of their free will and formed the overwhelming majority of 360000 Gujarati Indians in the region.³³ The identification of financial opportunity, and the success the Indian community had in seizing this prospect in East Africa, suggests that entrepreneurial skills were transferred from Gujarat to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.³⁴

Indeed, in her recent book centred on pre-colonial Gujarat, Samira Sheikh explains that ‘revenues from trade made a crucial difference to the finances of whatever group was in power in [early] Gujarat. This may be as true of Gujarat of the twenty-first century as of the twelfth’.³⁵ It would seem thus that the Gujarati’s aptitude for trade and commerce extends from skills that have been cultivated since pre-colonial times. These entrepreneurial skills can be associated with the multiplicity and diversity Gujarat is known for. The etymology of the word ‘Gujarat’ in fact signifies the non-static nature of the region: ‘The term Gujarat is widely acknowledged to derive from the Gurjaras or Gujjaras, clans of “cattle-rearers, husbandmen and soldiers” who settled in or passed through north and north-western

³² D.P Ghai, *Portrait of a Minority*, p. 14.

³³ Hugh Tinker, ‘Indians Abroad: Emigration, Restriction and Rejection’, in *Expulsion of a Minority: Essays on Ugandan Asians*, ed. by Michael Twaddle, (London: The Athlone Press, 1975), pp. 15-29 (p. 15). The largest population of Indians in East Africa fell easily to Kenya (2.3 per cent of the population), then Uganda and Tanzania (1 per cent of the population respectively).

³⁴ See chapter three in Bharati’s text for a detailed account of the economic and entrepreneurial endeavours of the Indian in East Africa. Bose, ‘The Ugandan Asian Success Magic’, also discusses the ‘Ugandan Asian’ ‘business-minded people’ in his essay (p. 457).

³⁵ Samira Sheikh, *Forging a Region: Sultans, Traders and Pilgrims in Gujarat, 1200-1500* (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 5.

Indian from about the first century CE'.³⁶ Because people were continually migrating to and from Gujarat, making the region 'virtually a moving frontier of immigration',³⁷ the area was both linguistically and religiously heterogeneous. A legacy of migration, and the multiplicity of identity of early peoples in Gujarat, emanating from their varied origin, perhaps accounts for their successes in commerce: having a varied skill set and being inclined to travel far and wide must have helped in trade. As such, it seems there was a self-prophesising mythologisation of their natural abilities as adventurers and pioneers. The Gujaratis of today, not just in the region but all over the world, are not only renowned for these skills, but are also endowed with them. The economic successes of the Gujarati are thus self-perpetuating: if the nature and self-perception of the community is based on a productive myth of enterprise and entrepreneurial skills, a virtuous circle of further cultural and financial entrepreneurship is entered into. The Gujarati follows in the footsteps of this productive myth and maintains the relevant skills for success.

Furthermore, I would like to suggest that it is this nature and multiplicity of identity that led many Gujaratis to East Africa, where they lived affluently. As successful settlers in East Africa, the South Asian community comfortably composed the middle stratum that created a cushion between the ruling British and the oppressed and subjugated Africans.³⁸ In this privileged position, with flourishing finances, the immigration of Indians into urban areas of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania continued, until the 1940s when the British – in a bid to preserve the social hierarchy – prevented the 'wholly unrestricted immigration from the Indian

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ See Vaughan Robinson, 'The Migration of East African Asian to Britain', in *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration*, ed. by Robin Cohen, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 331-36 (p. 331), Tandon *et al* p. 10 and Mangat p. 131.

subcontinent'.³⁹ This was followed by the conclusion of British colonial rule in the 1960s and subsequent African independence.⁴⁰ As a result of controversial Africanisation policies, large numbers of Indians – long settled in this region – left their homes.⁴¹ Whilst in Kenya and Tanzania the migration of South Asians was due to political upheaval and uncertainty, in Uganda the Indian community was brutally expelled by the dictator Idi Amin in 1972. Accused of non-integration, being 'the saboteurs of the [Ugandan] economy',⁴² and commonly dubbed as 'brown Jews',⁴³ the thirty to fifty thousand strong Indian population in Uganda had just ninety days to uproot, forcing them to abandon any semblance of their settled and established lives and homes.⁴⁴

'... and soon we shall be flying': The Indian East African Arrives in Britain

Exercising their British nationality, over a number of years, as many as 200,000 Indians chose to come to the United Kingdom to start new lives as double migrants – moving first from India and later from East Africa. Others left Kenya, Uganda and

³⁹ Twaddle, 'East African Asians Through a Hundred Years', p. 156.

⁴⁰ For further work on this period see Caroline Elkin's interesting text *Britain's Gulag: the Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005) that discloses the genocidal, undocumented end to colonisation in Kenya.

⁴¹ Africanisation policies primarily sought to privilege the African population over minority groups in East Africa. In the third chapter of *The Asians in East Africa* Bharati outlines some of the initial moves to elevate the African above the South Asian. For example, he delineates the withdrawal of import licences after 1965 in East Africa, which 'automatically "discriminate[ed]" against the Asian' (p. 113). Mahmood Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*, (London: Heinemann Educational, 1976) too outlines pre-independence intentions of elevating the African (chapter seven). He, however, in chapter eight also illustrates post-independence changes. For example he discusses the policies that were introduced to expand the volume of trade carried out by Africans (p. 236). Of course the most notorious of Africanisation policies falls to Idi Amin's act of expelling Indians from Uganda in 1972. He gave the community only ninety days to leave with limited possessions and virtually nowhere to go. According to John Mattausch, 'From Subjects to Citizens: British "East African Asians"', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 24:1, (Jan 1998), 121-141 (134) this period of ninety days was a caustic play on the 90 day credit Indian shopkeepers extended to customers.

⁴² O'Brien, 'General Amin and the Uganda Asians', p. 93.

⁴³ See Bharati's fifth chapter, entitled 'The Asians and the Others: Race Relations', in *The Asians in East Africa Jayhind and Uhuru* for scholarship on Indian relationships with Africans.

⁴⁴ Figures on the number of South Asian Ugandans expelled vary. However the sum of 80000 expellees, according to Tandon *et al* (p. 18), appears to be a misleading exaggeration disseminated by the National Front.

Tanzania to resettle in countries that helped ‘share the burden’,⁴⁵ such as Canada.⁴⁶ For many ‘returning’ to India or Pakistan was not an aspiration, as they had never been to these places, and did not regard them as ‘home’.⁴⁷ As Yasmin Alibhai-Brown’s cookbook memoir illustrates – as I shall explore in the next chapter – ‘home’ was in East Africa.⁴⁸ This affair of dislocation was far from painless, and for the forcibly expelled Ugandan Indian it was fraught with further anxiety given the threats of military camps for remaining members of the community,⁴⁹ and the transition into refugee camps in Britain.⁵⁰ The second migration divided families further, scattering the diaspora all over the world, and resulted in one more life-changing move. It is this traumatic past which underpins the future of the community, and, as the various texts and articulations that I shall examine reveal, this pain is more acute within the double diaspora because of the multiple dislocations it has thereby experienced. As well as these ordeals, reflecting a rejection of responsibility to its minority population in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania that had already long existed and manifested itself in other ways, the British government slowly closed down avenues of migration available to Indian East Africans through limiting immigration legalisation. The changes to immigration law effectively left some Indian East Africans stateless and created further hardship for

⁴⁵ Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *Imagining the New Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 73 (Quoted from an interview with once PM Edward Heath in November 1997, BBC Radio 4).

⁴⁶ For more information see Tandon *et al.*

⁴⁷ See Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa*, p. 175 and Yash P. Ghai, ‘The Future Prospects’, in *Portrait of a Minority: Asians in East Africa*, ed. by Dharam P. Ghai, (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 129-152 (p. 151) for information regarding the younger generation’s differing sense of homeland.

⁴⁸ *Mississippi Masala* exposes a similar sentiment: the father of an Indian family that has fled East Africa to ultimately settle in the US, longs for his home in Uganda and fights to return. In Sugra Visram, ‘Idi Amin gave me a menacing glare and said: “I have been looking for you”’, *Eastern Eye*, 22 August 2003, p. 6, Visram describes a similar sentiment of her heart being Ugandan. This article is provided within Appendix A.

⁴⁹ O’Brien, ‘General Amin and the Uganda Asians’, p. 96.

⁵⁰ Mamdani, ‘The Ugandan Asian Expulsion’, p. 266.

others, who faced a hostile East Africa on one hand and a reticent India and Britain on the other.⁵¹

As with their arrival in East Africa, many of those who migrated to Britain sought out urban areas where kinship networks already existed, such as the Midlands and London.⁵² Extended families bought homes to reside in, and together embarked on commercial ventures, utilising well-honed skills. Parminder Bhachu, who has coined the term ‘twice migrants’, explains that these doubly displaced groups differed from those who migrated directly from the sub-continent, because they not only arrived later, but they also had ‘skills [that] helped them to establish themselves much more rapidly than direct migrants who ha[d] not possessed the same expertise, linguistic facility, and communications network to develop community structures at the same pace’.⁵³ Furthermore, Bhachu points out that, despite diminishing ties with India, the twice migrant is in fact more culturally ‘traditionalist’ than the single migrant.⁵⁴

Paradoxically, and in spite of the ‘stringent’ maintenance of traditions, twice migrants have a longer-term commitment to wherever they settle.⁵⁵ Because the Indian East African in Britain has generally never lived in India and is in the most part unlikely to return to Africa for political and social reasons, Britain becomes a

⁵¹ See Y. Ghai *et al* for details on how the Indian government remained ‘aloof’ during this fraught period of displacement, p. 7.

⁵² See Robinson, ‘The Migration of East African Asian to Britain’, p. 334 for a full breakdown of where Indians settled in Britain. See also Mehta, ‘Gujarati Business Communities in East African Diaspora’, for a discussion of how kinship networks attributed to the economic success of the Gujarati East African.

⁵³ Bhachu, *Twice Migrants*, p. 6.

⁵⁴ Alibhai-Brown herself comments upon this aspect of Indian East African diaspora in Britain when she tells us: ‘Real links [with India] did weaken, but the mythical India kept a hold and has followed us [the Indian East African] here [Britain]’ (*The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 12).

⁵⁵ See Bhachu, *Twice Migrants*, pp. 4-5 for a discussion of the Indian East African diaspora’s paradoxical commitment to ‘fundamental traditions’ and their permanent settlement in Britain.

more permanent residence over previous ‘homelands’.⁵⁶ However, as I shall discuss later in this introduction, and explicate as the thesis unfolds, there is a sense that the twice migrant is continually looking forward. There is a desire to move forward and progress, which could effect further movement. Nevertheless, the diaspora is under no illusion, and the ‘myth of return’ – a phrase popularised by Muhammad Anwar pertaining to the assumption by the migrant that one day they will return to the homeland – does not exist.⁵⁷ ‘The fusion of these factors’, Joanna Herbert explains, ‘facilitated the considerable economic and social success which is associated with East African Asians and enabled them to emerge from one of the poorest minority ethnic groups to one of the richest.’⁵⁸

An example of this success is the city of Leicester, where a large proportion of Indian East Africans have chosen to settle.⁵⁹ The city has been identified as a European role model for multiculturalism. Despite the initial efforts of Leicester council to deter migrant Ugandans from the area through advertisements in an East African newspaper,⁶⁰ Indians are now a significant facet of the landscape and have been congratulated on regenerating failing areas such as Belgrave Road. Commenting upon Belgrave Road, Panikos Panayi indeed notes that ‘East African Asians, especially Hindus, played the most significant role in the initial

⁵⁶ There are of course exceptions to this. Notably, the invitation of return from the Ugandan government to the Indians expellees, see Footnote 29 (p. 19).

⁵⁷ Muhammad Anwar, *The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1979). Interestingly, in my personal experience, I have noted a desire amongst some of the community to invest in property in Gujarat. Perhaps an evolution of the ‘myth of return’, this desire is, however, with a view to having a holiday home in India, rather than an anticipation to return to the sub-continent permanently.

⁵⁸ Joanna Herbert, *Negotiating Boundaries in the City: Migration, Ethnicity, and Gender in Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 18.

⁵⁹ Regarding this success see the newspaper article by Mihir Bose, ‘The Asians of Leicester: a Story of Worldly Success’, *New Society*, 49, (July-Sept 1979), 339-341, as well as Valerie Marett, *Immigrants Settling in the City: Ugandan Asians in Leicester* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989).

⁶⁰ Whilst the advertisement in the Ugandan Argus has been widely commented upon, see Pippa Virdee, ‘From the Belgrave Road to the Golden Mile: the Transformation of Asians in Leicester’, (unpublished working paper, University of De Montford, 2009), for the full wording of the advert, p. 5. Virdee also outlines the support the advert acquired from authorities and other newspapers.

transformation of this part of the city'.⁶¹ There has also been an absence of riots in the area, which have plagued other cities with an ethnically diverse population. On the surface Leicester is an example of racial harmony and multiculturalism; however, it is imperative to note such readings are both cursory and singular, because of the competing discourses they deny.⁶²

These outward achievements, which are achievements nonetheless, mirror those in East Africa of developing the economy and society, and can be traced forward to the demographic of Leicester. The high proportion of Gujaratis that resided in East Africa is reflected in the overall Indian population in Leicester, as the landscape of South Asians consists of predominantly Gujaratis.⁶³ The successes of Leicester's multiculturalism and the major presence of Gujaratis have been linked, and again attest to the entrepreneurial nature of these people, as well their ability to settle and resettle.⁶⁴ It would seem thus the experiences of numerous displacements, alongside a keen commercial nature, have created the Gujarati as an expert in successful resettlement and relocation, a characteristic that has been clearly acknowledged and celebrated within discourses of multiculturalism.

Whilst these are the well-documented accomplishments of the transient Indian East African, there is, I argue, a narrative of trauma that is silenced as a result of the accomplishments that dominate the discourse. It is this traumatic impact and effect of the multiple and challenging dislocations faced by the Indian East African diaspora in Britain that this study is concerned with. These alternative narratives and

⁶¹ Panikos Panayi, 'The Spicing Up of English Provincial Life: The History of Curry in Leicester', in *Food in the Migrant Experience*, ed. by Anne. J. Kershen, (Hampshire, Ashgate Publishing, 2002), pp. 42-77 (p. 68).

⁶² See Herbert's, *Negotiating Boundaries in the City*, for a more vigorous, multivocal examination of Leicester as a multicultural city.

⁶³ Whilst there are no exact figures, writing in 1979 Bose estimates that 70 per cent of the South Asian population in Leicester were Gujarati.

⁶⁴ As well as Bose and Herbert, see Virdee for a further a reading of Asians in Leicester.

articulations must be recognised and elucidated, and my research thus aims to investigate several questions: how does a community fraught with upheaval make and remake individual and collective identity? How are the negotiations of representation and trauma managed? What modes of representation are deployed in a bid for community and self-reconstruction? How can one determine these identities when they are firmly concealed by other hegemonic interlocutions? Finally, what cultural narratives of representation do the favoured forms of social knowledge reveal? In the work of addressing these questions, and revealing the rhetoric that is buried beneath the surface, there are a number of terms that are significant. Their usage in this work must be elucidated, and thus I now turn to the assessment, and reassessment, of these terminologies.

Limiting Language

A central argument of my second chapter, centred on culinary practices, relates to the limitations of language, and the management of representation and trauma, by the Indian East African diaspora in Britain. Whilst these limits bear upon the representation of the community and subjectivity – because they are entrenched in the act of writing – they concurrently affect the articulation of this work. Thus here it is imperative to clarify the terms I already employ, and indeed continue to use throughout the thesis. Whilst some secondary criticism might refer to ‘Asian’, which pertains to peoples and cultures of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, I endeavour to use more specific nomenclature. For example, I refer to ‘India’ and ‘Indian East Africans’ or ‘Gujarati East Africans’, to signify those who have moved from India, and the region of Gujarat, to Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.⁶⁵ With the all-

⁶⁵ Whilst the Indian population in East Africa consisted of a Gujarati majority, there were Indians from other regions such as Goa and Punjab. I choose to illuminate the Gujarati East African experience in Britain because not only am I a member of this community – thus have an invested interest in my research – but also because it is members of this community (Yasmin Alibhai-Brown,

encompassing reference to India, however, problems quickly arise. If it was not for the creation of Pakistan during partition in 1947, the subsequent creation of Bangladesh in 1971, and the non-existence of a unified state during pre-colonial times, the concept of ‘India’, and indeed ‘Indian’, might enjoy more lucidity.⁶⁶ However, unified India is a modern creation, and what constitutes that space itself is often contested.⁶⁷ Its use is slippery; however, within this thesis I use the term primarily in reference to the twice migrant, and thus refer to the Gujaratis, Punjabis and Goans that experienced double displacement. When making reference to the peoples from Gujarat, I use this more specific language. Similarly, my use of ‘East Africa’ is not to suggest the region is homogenous, or that the Indian population that is connected to these parts are in uniformity. Instead ‘East Africa’ is another placeholder: the specificity of the region and its peoples being revealed as each chapter progresses and a precise experience is considered.

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown’s own heritage helps articulate these difficulties of terminology: her father, having disowned the place and the family who live there, was from Karachi and her maternal grandfather was from Gujarat. Whilst according to patriarchal paradigms we might perceive Alibhai-Brown to be Pakistani in identity, owing to the literal presence of her maternal family, coupled with the absence of any relations with her father’s family in Karachi, the author actually

Hansa Dabhi of *Hansa’s* Restaurant, Leeds, Gurinder Chadha) that have produced recent instances of cultural production concerned with the British Indian East African diaspora which I shall incorporate in my research.

⁶⁶ Sheikh, *Forging a Region*, with reference to Gujarat in particular, explains that a unified India itself did not exist in the imaginations of its people in pre-colonial times and that regions were demarcated by princely states that operated independently.

⁶⁷ For example, the region of Kashmir is violently disputed, and divided, between Pakistan and India. See Ananya J. Kabir, *Territory of Desire: Representing the Valley of Kashmir* (London: University of Minneapolis Press, 2009) for scholarship on the subject of Kashmir.

affiliates with her Indian identity.⁶⁸ Concurrently, as evidenced by numerous references in her work, for the writer her Ismaili religious identity is also of significance.⁶⁹ Again, despite the availability of a Pakistani identity – as a Muslim and a Pakistani by paternal lineage – Alibhai-Brown still somewhat paradoxically chooses to assert her ‘Indianness’. Thus to say that Alibhai-Brown, and of course other doubly displaced migrants, are simply ‘Gujarati’ or ‘Indian’ is not ideal, as it ignores the multiplicity of identity. However, it is the aim of this thesis to analyse representations of self and community, and these terms are enabling as placeholders which are the gateways to investigating identity in its complexities.

‘Diaspora’, another significant term that takes its place in the title of the thesis, has, like the term ‘migration’, enjoyed significant scholarly attention and debate. Works such as Sudesh Mishra’s *Diaspora Criticism* and Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan *Diasporic Mediations: Between Home and Location* precede Kim Knott’s more recent collection *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities*. A study of major diaspora concepts and theories, Knott’s collection of essays is multi-disciplinary in its examination.⁷⁰ Mishra’s key work is too an overview of diaspora critical trends; however, this investigation ceases upon a far-reaching range of major theoretical works and thinkers, from Homi Bhabha to Avtar Brah, and Stuart Hall to Arjun Appadurai. Mishra’s complex review is undertaken by dividing

⁶⁸ The preference of the term ‘Indian’ is particularly evident in the early sections of *The Settler’s Cookbook* where Alibhai-Brown outlines the history of the Indians in East Africa. She persistently refers to herself and her community as ‘Indian’, rather than, for instance, ‘Pakistani’.

⁶⁹ For example, Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, pp. 47, 66-67, 98.

The Ismailis, united by their allegiance to Karim Aga Khan – a direct descendant of Prophet Muhammad, are a Shia Muslim subsect. Dominique Sila-Khan’s *Crossing the Threshold: Understanding the Religious Identities in South Asia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004) presents information on this Muslim group, outlining how historically they both cohered with other South Asian religious factions and also faced persecution.

⁷⁰ Kim Knott, and Sean McLoughlin, *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities* (London: Zed Books, 2010), Sudesh Mishra, *Diaspora Criticism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) and Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan, *Diasporic Mediations: Between Home and Location* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

diaspora criticism up into three ‘scenes of exemplification’, resulting in a focus upon these criticisms, rather than on ‘diasporas’ themselves. Radhakrishnan’s earlier work overlaps the frameworks of poststructuralism and postcoloniality to map out identity politics. This account begins with an autobiographical tone, and is often self-reflexive in its readings. For Radhakrishnan, both intellectually and subjectively, ‘the diasporic location is the space of the hyphen that tries to coordinate, within an evolving relationship, the identity politics of one’s place of origin with that of one’s present home’.⁷¹

Here the term ‘diaspora’ provides an interpreting space, which is fluid and open, rather than pre-determined and closed, ‘a constructing space to negotiate many identifications’.⁷² Whilst sometimes ‘diaspora’ might be construed as a byword for dislocation, we see in this work, as the chapters each deal with their own subject matter, how such boundaries are sometimes comfortably traversed. These are instances where the middleman identity politics of Radhakrishnan’s hyphen are no longer relevant. To operate within the limits of the thesis, and with a sense of self-reflexivity, I have narrowed the remit of the diasporic community I consider to the *Gujarati East African in Britain*. In my efforts to attend to lacunas in scholarship, this limitation engenders silences itself. These include other diasporic configurations of a twice-removed nature, and, moving beyond diaspora, the African voice in the narrative of twice migration. It is significant to acknowledge this latter absence, given the painful experiences of the indigenous population of East Africa, who were lodged at the bottom of a colonial, hierarchical sandwich. It is not the aim of this work to provide sustained scholarship on this narrative; however I wish to

⁷¹ Radhakrishnan, *Diasporic Mediations*, p. xiii.

⁷² Shukla, *India Abroad*, p. 14. In her introduction Shukla discusses the term Indian diaspora in depth. See also V.S Kalra, R. Kaur, and J. Hutnyk, *Diaspora and Hybridity* (London: SAGE, 2005).

acknowledge the silences engendered. I would hope that this research has the potential to stimulate new possibilities, and interest, for the investigation of these areas.

The term ‘twice migrant’, as I have already outlined, is one that has been coined and popularised by Bhachu. It pertains to those migrants who have settled in Britain, via India then East Africa. Bhachu primarily writes of the Sikh contingent of the twice-migrant community, though the term is useful in considering the broader diaspora. In addition to ‘twice migrant’, the thesis, and its title, refers to the ‘double diaspora’. Nuancing the term ‘diaspora’, which can suggest a linearity of migrant movement, the use of ‘double’ seeks to emphasise the experience of twice displacement as being distinctive from singular displacement. Whilst the nomenclature of ‘twice migrant’ places significance upon the individuated, or a group of individuals if pluralised, ‘double diaspora’ furthermore highlights the significant *community* dynamic of the group I investigate. The alliterative term, however, does have its limits. Like ‘twice migrant’, ‘double diaspora’ suggests finality. As my fourth chapter shall reveal, for a group that is compelled to look backwards while simultaneously looking forwards, it is ultimately artificial to insist on the sense that the community discussed are permanently settled and are content with twice movement, as the phrase ‘double diaspora’ might convey. The concept of the ‘double diaspora’ remains valuable to this work; nevertheless, as it is distinctly the Gujarati East African currently located in Britain that the thesis investigates. There is, therefore, knowledge of the term’s limits in its deployment within this thesis, but this is coupled with an awareness of its present appropriateness.

I would like to address two other ‘slippery’ terms. The concept of ‘memory’, particularly significant to my second and fourth chapters, has become a mainstay of

many cultural and literary research projects. Being widely acknowledged as made and remade, memory is an unstable mediation experience. Herbert explains ‘the act of recalling past events is intrinsically revisionist. It involves a simplification of reality and a process of editing whereby certain details are selected, prioritised and ordered and others suppressed and omitted’.⁷³ Memory, like remembering, is ‘recognised as an ongoing process’, which is ‘ultimately more interested in serving the present than resurrecting the past, and prone to adapting past events so that they fit more easily with contemporary realities.’⁷⁴ This ephemeral, abstract nature of memory is pursued further in chapter two, with reference to Alibhai-Brown; however, it is significant to note here the relationship of ‘revisionist’ memory to how one projects, and interprets, selfhood and community: ‘Ultimately [...] memories are related to the self and identity and recollections provide a sense of identity in the present.’⁷⁵ ‘The borders of memory and identity are jagged’, Michael Rothberg explains, ‘what looks at first like my own property often turns out to be a borrowing or adaptation from a history that initially might seem foreign or distant’. Rothberg goes on to describe memory as ‘anachronistic’, a ‘bringing together of now and then, here and there’, underlining memory’s ‘powerful creativity’.⁷⁶ It is from this creativity, of memory, that identity becomes mediated. In a bid to recognise this making and remaking I began this introduction with the use of (re)enact, (re)present and (re)write, and having acknowledged the cycle of representation initially, I have dispensed with further parenthetical insistence of this nature.

⁷³ Herbert, ‘Migration, Memory and Metaphor’, p. 135.

⁷⁴ Kathy Burrell, and Panikos Panayi, ‘Immigration, History and Memory in Britain’, in *Histories and Memories: Migrants and their History in Britain*, ed. by Kathy Burrell and Panikos Panayi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 3-18 (p. 14).

⁷⁵ Herbert, ‘Migration, Memory and Metaphor’, p. 135.

⁷⁶ Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonisation* (California: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 5.

In addition to his engagement with the relationship of memory and identity, Rothberg's writings, from *Multidirectional Memory*, offer a theoretical framework for this thesis. Again as I explicate in my second chapter, to reveal hidden narratives of the double diaspora and engage with the complexities of twice displacement, a framework of competition or hierarchy must not prevail. Rothberg makes this point in reference to memory, and whilst the writings here are subject to this principle throughout, I concede to the possibility of failure in some elements of the thesis. By way of example of this framework, in my fourth chapter the category of 'modernity' comes into play. I contend that a modernity, contrary to popular Eurocentric understandings of the ideology, has developed on the sub-continent and has long existed there. This contention refuses the assumption that all things modern began, and remain located, in the west. Via this argument, a hierarchy develops and a background of competitiveness pervades. However, I do not seek to deny western modernity, or its achievements; I simply explore multiplicities, and a synergy of modernities. In this way I have endeavoured to seek out a methodology of non-competitiveness throughout the thesis, yet am cognisant of the magnitude of this task.

Having brought forth the concept of modernity, which warrants careful situation, let us briefly consider the term itself, beginning with two key works. Ashis Nandy's edited collection of essays *Science, Hegemony and Violence: A Requiem for Modernity* explores the entangled relationships of the ideology of development, modern science, nation-state violence and technological intervention. Framed by the 'Indian experience', a cultural dimension that is the backdrop to the collection, the essays offer a critique of the deployment of modern science in both colonial and

postcolonial spaces.⁷⁷ Arjun Appadurai too investigates modernity and the nation-state, but, as the title to the text suggests, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* focuses on globalisation theory and culture. In engaging Benedict Anderson's model on imagined communities, Appadurai considers migration and modern mass media via his five 'scapes' of global cultural flow.⁷⁸

There are more recent critiques of modernity that the concepts within this thesis, particularly in chapter four, develop. These studies position modernity within the sub-continent, and do so through a cultural theory of South Asian visual studies. In conjunction with criticisms by Christopher Pinney, Sumathi Ramaswamy, Peter van der Veer and Ritu Birla, and in contention with Frederick Cooper, I carve out a modernity of the Gujarati East African in Britain via the visual materials of my fourth chapter.⁷⁹ This modernity is an exciting cultural entanglement of the old and new: the looking back to a past of movement and resettlement, to a future of, perhaps, the same. This two-fold retrospection and anticipation is marked both by pain and success. It is a vernacular modernity that is outwardly full of paradoxes and tensions, which nevertheless seamlessly merge.

Finally, an explanation is demanded on the subject of 'culture'. Joep Leerssen describes 'culture' as '*a way of doing things differently, a pattern of behavioural differentiations*'. Remaining another ephemeral designation, 'culture' here is manifested within the practices I discuss throughout this thesis: food, dance,

⁷⁷ Ashis Nandy, *Science, Hegemony and Violence: A Requiem for Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 4.

⁷⁸ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

⁷⁹ Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), Sumathi Ramaswamy, *Beyond Appearance? Visual Practices and Ideologies in Modern India* (London: Sage, 2003), Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), Ritu Birla, *Stages of Capital: Law, Culture, and Market Governance in Late Colonial India* (London: Duke University Press, 2009), Frederick Cooper, *Colonisation in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (London: University of California, 2005).

dress and photography. This understanding of culture is by no means exhaustive; it seeks to highlight those practices that are significant to the double diaspora of this study. My investigations are not intended to homogenise or essentialise cultural identity by the ‘pigeonholing of diversity patterns’.⁸⁰ My observations are of a specific community, which I have experienced, am a member of, have researched extensively, and have attempted to ‘read’ via a carefully selected set of primary materials. And whilst, according to Leerssen, ‘cultural essentialism locates cultural difference *between cultures* rather than *within cultures*’, I seek to shed light on the complexities of cultural identity *within* the overarching Indian diaspora, and furthermore *within* the double diaspora itself.⁸¹ This is a study of complexities and contradictions, rather than simplifications. Moving forward, having already introduced some of the fictional texts that exist centred on the twice migrant in my section entitled ‘Researching the Single Diaspora, Overlooking the Double’, I attend to my methodologies now. Enmeshed within my methodological explanations is a detailed delineation of each chapter’s work.

Innovating Methodologies: Discovering ‘Texts’ & Synthesising Scholarship

It is valuable, in beginning this section of the introduction, to note an important aspect of the methodology that underpins the thesis. Although Yasmin Alibhai-Brown herself has only experienced displacement once – from East Africa to Britain – the displacement from the sub-continent to Africa, as experienced by her elders, I argue can be understood as collective trauma. Ron Eyerman, in discussing black American identity formation, underlines this contention. The critic reasons that the

⁸⁰ Joep Leerssen, ‘The Downward Pull of Cultural Essentialism’, in *Image into Identity: Constructing and Assigning Identity in a Culture of Modernity*, ed. by Edward Wintle (New York: Rodolphi, 2006), pp. 31-52 (p. 34).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

collective memory of slavery forges a shared identity among black Americans, who reinterpret the trauma of slavery to form membership groups. Similarly, Alibhai-Brown herself has not explicitly experienced twice migration, but indeed is burdened with the legacy of her community, which has been multiply displaced. Significant here also is Marianne Hirsch's widely commented upon research on postmemory. This theory outlines how the offspring of holocaust survivors adopt the memories of holocaust traumas in remembrance. Although Hirsch does not comment upon identity formation, she does consider collective traumatic memory and how it can be inscribed into one's life story.⁸² These established criticisms are significant for the ways I approach Alibhai-Brown, and the other texts I read. Though twice migration might not have been experienced directly by the individuals and groups I read, the legacy of two-fold displacement is implicit in a shared identity.

By moving beyond the traditional fictional text – that the diaspora too, seems largely to have eschewed – and thus making imaginative connections between interdisciplinary materials, I explore the effects of two-fold migration on cultural formations and self-representation. Vis-à-vis the genres of autobiography and cookbook, and in the analysis of Alibhai-Brown's *The Settler's Cookbook* in my second chapter following this introduction, I excavate the formation of identity within the Indian East African community in Britain. Whilst this may not be a traditional literary text, because of its declared non-fictionality, the preference for autobiographic prose enables the revelation of more than perhaps fiction is capable of, at least as far as the Indian East African in Britain is concerned. In this analysis, and by engaging seminal autobiography critics such as John Eakin and Nancy K.

⁸² Ron Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Miller, the paradoxical nature of this genre as fiction in the guise of non-fiction is also teased out.⁸³ Furthermore, the exploration of the use of the autobiographical mode in rewriting the Indian East African in Britain brings into play discourses of trauma, in relation to both racism and dislocation. Via the words of Kapasi, an Indian Ugandan, Herbert outlines the pain and trauma of deracination:

The trauma of it and also the anxiety and the suffering which you go through, there is *no way words* can describe those feelings because suddenly you realise that you have to leave your home and you're suddenly, homeless, stateless you don't know where your next meal is going to come from [...].⁸⁴ (my emphasis)

Alerting the reader also to the rumoured racism of Britain, this account is illustrative of some of the pain of double displacement. An established body of trauma scholarship, including that by Leigh Gilmore and Cathy Caruth, enables my research to shed light on how this trauma manifests itself, and how it can be managed. I argue, as Kapasi also indicates, however, that the trauma of this diaspora can never be fully resolved through its representation in language.⁸⁵

Thus although the genre of the memoir attempts to grapple with trauma, the inadequacies of language result in Alibhai-Brown's reliance upon culinary practices. Given that the significance of the cookbook in relating social knowledge has been widely commented upon, it is the dependence upon the consumption and production of food by the Indian East African diaspora – and the cookbook aspect of Alibhai-

⁸³ John Eakin, *Living Autobiographically: How We Create Identity in Narrative* (London: Cornell University Press, 2008), *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* (London: Cornell University Press, 1999) and *Fictions in Autobiography: Studies in the Art of Self Invention* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). Nancy K. Miller, *But Enough About Me: Why We Read Other People's Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002) and 'The Entangled Self: Genre Bondage in the Age of the Memoir', *PMLA*, 122:2, (Mar 2007), 537–548.

⁸⁴ Herbert, 'Migration, Memory and Metaphor', p. 138.

⁸⁵ Leigh Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony* (London: Cornell University Press, 2001). Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) and *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

Brown's text – that is excavated.⁸⁶ Considering first the political act of recipe writing – and its value in manifesting culinary and cultural memory, as well as being a tool of resistance – I highlight, secondly, the act of cooking itself a mode that embodies social knowledge.

Where the cookbook is an accepted convention and has a specific style, for Yasmin Alibhai-Brown these pragmatic practices are entangled with questions of identity. The identity that is presented is on the one hand individuated, but on the other – because of the consumption and production stemming from the recipes in the text, and how they were collected – it is also a collective one. The self thus appears to be paradoxically constructed in relation to the community and collective nature of the recipes. *Hansa's* restaurant, and her representation of selfhood and how this forms community representation, which is mediated very specifically by vegetarianism and Gujaratiness, becomes significant at this juncture. Additionally, a reading of Alibhai Brown's play *Nowhere to Belong* nuances the relationship of the author with her community.⁸⁷ Underlining the secretive nature of the wider twice-displaced diaspora, a theme that reoccurs in chapter three, I examine the act of speaking out against the desires of that community. Returning to the cookbook memoir and *Hansa's* cookbooks, it seems the capitalisation of the exotic nature of food, and the commodification of culinary practices, accounts in part for the act of speaking out. There remains a need to speak out, to account for trauma. I thus consider the importance of culinary practices as a mode of cultural production, and

⁸⁶ Referring to Indian cookbooks in English, Arjun Appadurai, 'How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30:1 (January 1988), 3-24 (22) suggests that recipe books are 'artefacts of culture in the making'. His article also reveals the importance of these cookery texts in understanding nation making. Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), has also underlined how the cookbook can divulge discourses of class and hierarchy.

⁸⁷ Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *Nowhere to Belong* (unpublished play). The written text of the play has been made available, as Appendix B.

unearth how these forms of collective representation enable a doubly displaced community to perform, relocate and rewrite its culture. It is the way in which these dynamic modes of memoir and cookbook combine and perform representation, and indeed how food *is* a form of autobiography, on which I shall close my analysis.

In investigating these genres, the role of cultural memory in recuperation, and the manner it is performed in varying forms of representation, will emerge as highly significant.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the nature of narrated memory and the compromise between what is embraced and what is forgotten reveals a great deal about the trials and tribulations of migration. As well as imaginatively connecting different genres and varieties of writing in the pursuit of shedding light on the cultural and identity practices of the Indian East African in Britain, I shall turn to other highly exciting and distinctive scholarship from disparate fields and disciplines. In particular Diana Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire* shifts the focus of hegemonic western epistemology from the written archive to 'embodied culture', and traditions that 'are stored in the body'.⁸⁹ Although Taylor's work is concerned with performance art in Latin and North America, her suggestion that an alternative system of thought is required in the analysis of how communal identity and memory are preserved and rewritten is important to my research. The arguments within this suggestive text enable me to consider the non-verbal practices of cooking.

Whilst informing my close reading of food as a communal and collective practice, the concept of the embodied text provides a productive foundation for my third chapter on dance practices. Via the 'play' of Gujarati dances during the Hindu festival of *Navratri* the value of other 'texts', beyond the written, are once again

⁸⁸ See Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer (eds), *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (Hanover, NH; Dartmouth College: University Press of New England, 1999), for an interdisciplinary discussion of cultural memory and its relationship to experience.

⁸⁹ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (London: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 17, 24.

showcased. What the body can communicate about the cultural identity of the double diaspora is not only investigated in this third chapter via dance, but also via gendered dress. To explore the embodied practice of dance I closely read YouTube footage, from the vast materials on *Navratri* that exists on this site, and images from my personal archive, an archive that is principal in my chapter on visual materials.⁹⁰ In addition, in my third chapter on dance, I analyse the play *Strictly Dandia* to facilitate a discussion of religion, and how the *Navratri* space is quintessentially Hindu Gujarati. I contend that from an outsider's perspective the *Navratri* space exhibits a unified identity; however, from within there are competing caste claims, which splinter identity further.

My methodology in this chapter also involved the collection of further primary materials. I thus attended celebrations of the Hindu festival of *Navratri*, which is celebrated annually around September and October, in North London during 2010 and 2011. North London was the ideal location for data collection, as this is where my kinship networks exist. As a result I was able to easily access events, as well as integrate with the established practices of the festivals. I attended three different locations in all, and these areas reflected a largely Gujarati population, which too represents my heritage. During my attendance of *Navratri* at Harrow Leisure Centre, the Watford Leisure Centre, and the Kenton *Mochi* Hall, I employed the qualitative research methods of participation observation. Given that the collection of data in this way is an unusual pursuit for a practitioner of literary criticism, I sought out relevant training at the University, and on the 'field trips' I adapted my approach to the research quickly according to the demands of the circumstance. I settled upon participating in dances, talking to attendees when the

⁹⁰ The ethical dimensions of using YouTube materials are noted in my chapter on the same.

opportunity arose, photographing and videoing happenings, and making lengthy notes on the festivities post celebrations. I deliberately eschewed other language-orientated qualitative methodologies, such as interviews, focus groups and questionnaires because, as I shall explain in the chapter itself, these approaches are incongruous with the diaspora's pursuits, and with the nature of *Navratri*.

In my data collection during this period, I enacted the roles attached to my membership of *both* the academic community and my ethno-linguistic community. Though I was traversing these dual positions overtly within the data gathering exercises during *Navratri*, given the topic of my research and my heritage, this element of navigating between various selfhoods is in play throughout the entirety of the thesis. Manpreet K. Janeja, writing on normative food habits amongst Bengalis, too engages with her own culture, negotiating her dual Bengali and her academic identity. Her methodologies, when engaging with acts of cooking, are similar to the ones I undertake within my third chapter, when I dance. Whilst Janeja's work provides an example of how various selfhoods have been traversed in academic research previously, her analysis is primarily anthropological, rather than literary.⁹¹ Though I do not engage in real acts of cooking, in chapters two and four, as well as three, I bring my own personal experiences, mediated by my heritage, to this research. As the thesis evolves this becomes more apparent, with the fourth chapter, on visual materials from personal archives, assuming a tone that reflects the very intimate nature of the subject matter.

Within chapter three, however, I physically negotiate the two roles I describe. Though I undertake participant observation, I do not become a part of the community, like one anticipates in traditional anthropological participant

⁹¹ Manpreet K. Janeja, *Transactions in Taste: The Collaborative Lives of Everyday Bengali Food* (London: Routledge, 2010).

observation, as I *am* already a member of the researched community. In participant observation the self is generally effaced in the process of becoming one with the researched society so as to obtain a degree of objectivity, create a scientific method, and produce a valid output. My position necessitates an adaptation to this methodology. I am able to bring an existent sense of the community to my undertakings, from within my selfhood, which ultimately forges new methodologies. There exists already an element of the trust, and relationships, which are typically cultivated anew. These pre-existent networks enabled me to access information; they also sometimes created some confusion as to the mechanics of my interest, as an interest associated with an ‘outsider’. The specificity of this dual role is explicated in the chapter on dance itself. In my undertakings I recognise my position as ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’. The variant levels of this binary, in my fourth chapter, are furthermore nuanced.

Others, whose research materials similar to those examined in this thesis, have enmeshed their selfhood into their thinking and writing: they include Marianne Hirsch and Annette Kuhn.⁹² Avtar Brah, an Indian East African herself, too writes her introduction to *Cartographies of Diaspora* with the backdrop of her heritage, underlining the significance the ‘autobiography’ often plays in the twice migrant’s writings.⁹³ Overall, my methodology, in this respect, involved the deployment of my membership of the double diaspora to create innovative – and intimate in the case of chapter four – scholarship. Notably, though, whilst my data-gathering methodologies were participant observation, the analysis that developed from these materials was of

⁹² Whilst I discuss Hirsch, *Family Frames* in this thesis, the more recent text Hirsch, and Leo Spitzer, *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory* (London: California University Press, 2010) has a very significant autobiographical tone. Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London: Verso, 2002) is useful to my fourth chapter.

⁹³ Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1997).

literary criticism. I thus transfer the skills of literary criticism to read other forms of social knowledge, within chapter three and throughout the thesis. There is also a symbiotic process of being receptive to new ways of thinking: after all the aims of my research seek to excavate the value of unexplored ‘texts’. It is thus only apt that within my method of critique, I too attempt to mould new systems of analysis.

The two dances I attended *Navratri* to observe and participate in, for my third chapter, are quintessentially Gujarati in their nature. As I shall describe later *dandiya-raas* is a dance that revolves around the use of brightly coloured sticks, where *garba* involves rhythmic claps. There is a construction of nationalism through these community dances. This sense of collective identity, which emerges through community practices, is, however, complicated by the use of *garba* and *dandiya-raas* to also assert an identity related to regionality – a sense of Gujarateness. The way one dresses, as well as the way one chooses to move, during *Navratri* proves significant to the understanding of performative identity in the diaspora. I ask: what can the body communicate within the space of *Navratri*; how are boundaries crossed and identities remade on the dance floor; and in what ways can identity be hidden and revealed in performance? Drawing on the establishment of dance as ‘covert’, I argue that performing identity within an esoteric system is necessary to protect self and community. Despite this strategy, omissions, additions and reworkings of culture are inevitable, from within. How the beats of *Navratri* are entangled with the popularist dance moves of the Macarena and *bhangra*, to perform the intricacies of selfhood, exemplifies these reworkings. A dynamic amalgamation of traditions and innovations by a youth generation is the result. On the dance floor there is a remarkable merging and creating of identity that is complex and ephemeral, ‘written’ by the body.

Whilst previous studies of dance exist in the fields of performance and music, there is often emphasis on music analysis, or a lacuna in cultural enquiry of dance. Bryan S. Turner refers to this gap, and suggests that indeed this absence extends from the lack of investigation of movement in cultural studies, as well as studies in sociology.⁹⁴ *Navratri* scholarly studies are also few and far between: there exist no academic texts in English foregrounding the history of the dances, and very few discuss the dancing body. Ann David's ethnographic work, however, is an exception to this vast absence. Her doctoral work considers the Gujarati dances of *garba* and *dandiya-raas*.⁹⁵ Whilst deploying this useful scholarship in my chapter on dance practices, I shall engage with well-established writings on the transnational forms of dance salsa and *bhangra*. Moreover, chapter three intersects with materials concerned with other traditions, such as Caribbean dance and music theory.

The focus of chapter four is situated within the better-established tradition of deploying literary criticism to consider photographic material. Both Marianne Hirsch and Susan Sontag have embarked upon this work, and their critical works are highly significant and inspirational to my chapter on visual materials.⁹⁶ The images I refer to in this chapter were collected from large personal archives, from both extended and immediate family settled in Britain. The ability to be able to collect such an extensive set of photographs is again testament to the kinships networks I have access to. Via the careful interpretation of selected images, depicting community events, culinary practices, and family gatherings, which span the UK, East Africa and sometimes India, I exemplify some of the practices I discuss within the thesis as a whole. The chapter begins by taking a step back to the concerns of chapter three,

⁹⁴ Bryan S. Turner, *The Body and Society*, 2nd edn (London: Sage Publications, 1996).

⁹⁵ Ann David, 'Performing Faith: Dance, Identity and Religion in Hindu Communities in Leicester and London' (unpublished doctoral thesis, De Montfort University, October 2005). Her post-doctoral research focuses primarily on the Tamil community and their dance practices.

⁹⁶ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 2002); Hirsch, *Family Frames*.

and the understanding of diasporic *bhangra* as a diluted dance form, which potentially pollutes the sacred. In this move it is demonstrated that there exists a basic understanding of 'Indian' tradition as impervious to modernity. Via the works of Sumathi Ramaswamy, Christopher Pinney and Peter van der Veer I take issue with this ideology, positing visual material as testament to a modernity that has long existed in the sub-continent.

In addition to the deployment of visual materials of a personal nature in the fourth chapter, some explications regarding the collection of commodities are made via the written evidence in *Hansa's* cookbook and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's cookbook memoir. In returning to culinary practices I draw my thesis full circle to my second chapter, and once more demonstrate the value of this cultural knowledge to the diaspora, whilst demonstrating how the diaspora perform progress, and ever aspire to it, yet are continually looking backwards. The photographs thus narrate a two-fold inclination towards moving on, in the pursuit of progress, whilst paradoxically also an anxiety of further deracination. Developing this argument I comment upon storage of the material, and the fact that organisation of these numerous archives had to be undertaken before analysis. The vastness of this archive, as well as what the images depict, pertains to the fetish of the collected and hoarded commodity. An eventual return to the concept of trauma, again recommencing an argument left off in chapter two, enables an exploration of the critical material of Rajanna Khanna, in reference to Freud. I suggest the photographs narrate a convergence of divergent identities, and a particular diasporic Gujarati vernacular modernity.

A theme spanning both chapters three and four, relating to this vernacular modernity, is the reading of dress amongst the diaspora. Taking into account Gijsbert

Oonk's recent findings on Indian East African diasporic dress, within my chapter on visual materials, I develop my readings of sartorial preference that are conceived in the previous chapter.⁹⁷ Clothing is often a powerful tool that reflects the vernacular modernity of the diaspora, as well as the cultural, political and generational competing allegiances that the twice-displaced community attend to. Gendered dress is also significant to the understanding of the representations of self and community in the double diaspora, and too the occupation of various roles. It is in conjunction with Parvati Raghuram and Emma Tarlo's individual contributions to South Asian diasporic fashion studies that I forge an understanding of how dress can conceive an identity on the dance floor and in the family frame.⁹⁸ Linda Lynton's interesting work exclusively on *saris* also assists me in explicating my thesis.⁹⁹ In using a broad range of secondary scholarship, in each of my chapters, for instance from autobiography to performance studies to the field of trauma to research on dress, I steadily synthesise disparate material into a viable, innovative methodology. Within this methodology, as I have suggested in my earlier section on terminology, I employ a non-competitive understanding of memory, as Rothberg suggests, but also of identity.¹⁰⁰ Previous understandings of identities replacing one another in the diaspora, it seems, become redundant for those considered within this study.

In closing, it is important to remember that, whilst there exist numerous writings from a sociological and historical perspective on the Indian in East Africa, there are rare examples of this research following the diaspora to Britain, especially

⁹⁷ Gijsbert Oonk, 'Clothing Matters: Asian-African Businessmen in European Suits, 1880–1980', *Comparative Sociology*, 10 (2011), 528–547.

⁹⁸ Emma Tarlo, *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India* (London: Hurst, 1996), Nirmal Puwar, and Parvati Raghuram (eds.), *South Asian Women in the Diaspora* (Oxford: Berg, 2003).

⁹⁹ Linda Lynton, *The Sari: Styles, Patterns, History, Techniques* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002).

¹⁰⁰ Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996) adopts a similar theoretical structure, denying binaries and identifying a 'spatial turn' and a third space.

within the disciplines of literary and cultural studies. As one critic, Michael Twaddle, who has written extensively about the initial migration of this transient community has concluded, ‘much remains to be discovered’ about this diaspora.¹⁰¹ This was written as long as twenty years ago, and pertains to the necessity of updated scholarship. It is my aim to here attend to this absence. The multi-layered, complex manifestations of cultural identity amongst the twice-displaced diaspora, as evidenced in this thesis, are in many instances remarkable and exciting. In these readings of my primary materials, a lacuna in cultural explorations of the Gujarati East African *in Britain* is first and foremost addressed. Through these interpretations I nuance the understanding of the designation ‘diaspora’, to contend that the term can mediate a community who have experienced multiple displacement, rather than a singular scattering. My methodologies reveal narratives of depth and richness by broadening the literary critical interpretive practice of ‘close reading’ to the analysis of other modes of ‘texts’. This work thus establishes cutting-edge connections between many of the diverse scholarly areas it draws its concepts and methods from, such as performance studies, trauma studies, diaspora studies and cultural studies. More broadly, however, the thesis also intervenes within the critical domain of literary postcolonial studies, in order to re-contextualise existent approaches to these established discourses, and shed light on how the multiple axes of diasporic movement engender complex identities.

¹⁰¹ Twaddle, ‘East African Asians Through a Hundred Years’, p. 161.

2. Cooking up Identity: Experiencing Trauma, Writing Memoir & Enacting Culture

And my chutneys and kasaundies are, after all, connected to my nocturnal scribblings -- by day amongst the pickle-vats, by night within these sheets, I spend my time at the great work of preserving. Memory, as well as fruit, is being saved from the corruption of the clocks

(Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, p. 38)

Introducing the Cookbook Memoir

The title of Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's *The Settler's Cookbook: A Memoir of Love, Migration and Food* maps out to its reader the two genres of cookbook and memoir entangled within the text. Although the cookbook generally presents itself as a pragmatic genre that lists ingredients and instructs its reader, I would like to suggest here that 'leafing through the cookbook is like peering through a kitchen window' into the private interior of Alibhai-Brown's life.¹⁰² This intimacy and sense of revelation one experiences in reading Alibhai-Brown's writing emerges from the personal narratives she entangles within the recipes and the prose of her writings. It is this aspect of *The Settler's Cookbook* that performs the work of autobiography. The genre of autobiography and memoir, also commonly known as 'life writing' and the 'confessional mode' because of the revelations and exposures it naturally unveils, exhibits a rather slippery nature.¹⁰³ 'Because the autobiographer often dresses up in fictions', explains Herbert Leibowitz, 'and disguises himself in slanted fact, the reader must pass like a secret agent across the borders of actuality and myth,

¹⁰² Janet Theophano, *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote* (New York: Melia, 2002), p. 6.

Lesley Ferris, 'Cooking Up the Self: Bobby Baker and Blondell Cummings "Do" the Kitchen', in *Interfaces: Women, Autobiography, Image, Performance* ed. by Sidonie Smith, and Julia Watson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), pp. 186-210 considers the interior domain of the kitchen, and what happens when this interior becomes public.

¹⁰³ I shall later attempt to outline the rather confusing demarcation between these terminologies.

following a winding trail of hallowed lies and profane truth'.¹⁰⁴ It is these negotiations between memory and the imagined, truth and fiction, which are implicit in the act of remembering, writing and reading that Leibowitz refers to. These tensions of autobiographical writing, marked by the attempt to recount memory and the experience of reading memoir, merit further excavations; first, though, let us momentarily consider in some detail the cookbook.

As evidenced by innumerable texts produced by a variety of multiply displaced communities, the cookbook, and the culinary practices it records, is commonly highly significant to those who have been displaced. These genre-specific texts include Claudia Roden's works on Middle Eastern food, Madhur Jaffrey's cookbooks and memoir on Indian food, and, interpreting 'text' somewhat more widely, even the narratives embedded in restaurant spaces, such as the example I shall return to later in detail, *Hansa's* Gujarati vegetarian restaurant in Leeds.¹⁰⁵ As outlined in my introductory section, many more such examples exist, including those that can unproblematically be located within the tradition of the cookbook memoir through their incorporation of recipe.¹⁰⁶ These numerous examples of culinary-themed texts suggest there is something of a fashion in producing such works, which satiates the desires of the paying public. In delineating the exoticised commerciality of Alibhai-Brown's work within this chapter, I contend that, however, it remains indisputable that in many ways culinary practices are enabling to the doubly displaced community. Commenting upon the lacuna in remembrance of the double

¹⁰⁴ Herbert Leibowitz, *Fabricating Lives: Explorations in American Autobiography* (New York: Directions, 1991), p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ See Claudia Roden, *A Book of Middle Eastern Food* (London: Nelson, 1968), Madhur Jaffrey's cookbooks that include *An Invitation to Indian Cooking* (London: Cape, 1976) and later *A Taste of the Far East* (London: Pavilion, 1993), as well as her autobiographical text *Climbing the Mango Trees: A memoir of a Childhood in India* (London: Ebury House, 2005). Also my master's dissertation: 'Self-(Re)Constructions and Collective Representations in the Double Diaspora'.

¹⁰⁶ See Footnote 15 (p. 14) for some of these examples.

diasporic experience in his article, Vikram Doctor highlights the significance of the culinary in the representation of identity:

This [paucity of remembrance] makes this [twice migration] story important, and Alibhai-Brown is the right person to tell it, but why with recipes? As an award-winning journalist in Britain, a must-read columnist in the Independent and an authority on multiculturalism and Muslim issues, she hardly needs the prop of recipes to tell her story. Many of them are her mother's, and it is true that this brings out her story, but the book is about more than just one person. Alibhai-Brown could have told this story straight – but I think she chose to go with the recipes from the simple need to stay sane.¹⁰⁷

In asking why Alibhai-Brown incorporates recipes in her text, Doctor presents a very simple answer: to stay sane. He highlights a sense of therapy in writing within this genre. This article only identifies the tip of the proverbial iceberg: indeed, culinary practices have the capacity to do much more.

These practices surrounding consumption possess some distinctive capacity in communicating migrant experience. Susan J. Leonardi proposes this element of cooking is particularly embedded in the recipe, as a 'narrative strategy'. The recipe subsequently has a context, a point, and can manifest a variety of relationships, just like a story. Leonardi foregrounds the etymology of the word recipe: 'the root of *recipe* – the Latin *recipere* – implies an exchange, a giver and a receiver.'¹⁰⁸ It is perhaps this exchange implicit in the act of cooking and recipe writing, and the act of trust between women that the critic also cites,¹⁰⁹ that results in culinary practices emerging as suitable for migrants who attempt to express identity away from 'home'. The act of cooking, eating and writing recipes enables culture to be shared,

¹⁰⁷ Vikram Doctor, *East African Indian Cuisine in Black and White*, <<http://blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/onmyplate/entry/east-african-indian-cuisine-in>> [accessed 15 February 2013].

¹⁰⁸ Susan J. Leonardi, 'Recipes for Reading: Summer Pasta, Lobster à la Riseholme, and Key Lime Pie', *PMLA*, 104:3, (May 1989), 340-347 (340).

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

engendering a trust that transcends the boundaries of race, religion, ethnicity, class and difference.

Equally, in the migrant experience where often relocation is fraught with communication problems, culinary practices can be understood as a form of translation. One critic proposes that in the American Chinese immigrant community there is a double act of translation required in foodways, where both the etiquettes and techniques of Chinese gastronomy and the self are translated.¹¹⁰ The work that Alibhai-Brown is doing in the *The Settler's Cookbook* can indeed be understood in similar terms: whilst she is translating the ways of Indian East African eating habits in Britain, she is also expressing the subjectivity of someone who experiences her heritage as displaced twice: once from India to East Africa, and subsequently to Britain. It seems to me that the fusion genre of the cookbook memoir is particularly significant to this act of double translation, because the two very different genres enable the narration of both the collective and individuated in a single text. If the cookbook represents the collective identity of the Indian East African in Britain, which in the latter half of this chapter I argue it does, the memoir is enmeshed in subjectivity.¹¹¹ The amalgamation of the cookbook and memoir can thus be analysed as a deliberate critical device in the struggle for representation in the double diaspora. Accordingly, to understand the identity formation of the Indian East African diaspora in Britain, I explore these genres; moreover, in analysing how these genres combine in Alibhai-Brown's text, I shall be able to excavate the primary role culinary practices and autobiography assume in representing this diaspora.

¹¹⁰ Theophano, *Eat My Words*, p. 1.

¹¹¹ Towards the end of this chapter I shall comment upon the complex relationship of the collective and the self.

Colouring and Juicing Cultural Memory

Whilst the title of the cookbook memoir alerts us to the significant genre of this work, the first paragraph of the prologue serves to reveal the role of this text that traverses genres:

OUR FAMILY TREE IS puny, barren in large part. The roots don't go down deep enough to produce a plenteous crop of ancestral stories or fruity relatives. The few memories hanging on are losing colour and juice, soon will wither and fall away¹¹²

The vivid metaphor of the family tree with dilapidated roots suggests that the collective experience of the Alibhai-Brown family – and the Indian East African in Britain – is neither firmly anchored, nor has a space of its own.¹¹³ Indeed, it is vulnerable to erasure if a site of location is not identified. The reason for the crisis in belonging, an anxiety that prevails throughout the text, is implicit in this short extract. In describing the superficial roots and the paucity of 'ancestral stories or fruity relatives', Alibhai-Brown alludes to some of the challenges this double diaspora is confronted with: the loss of a place called 'home' and a tangible heritage, because of the multiple dislocations experienced. Consequently, *The Settler's Cookbook* is fraught with the pain of double displacement experienced by this community. As the quotation suggests, this anxiety is also attributable to the invisibility of the Indian East African in certain mainstream and academic discourses. Whereas sociologically and historically the community is accounted for, in cultural and literary studies there is a significant dearth of research.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, as discussed in my introduction with particular reference to Leicester, whilst in public discourses this diaspora is often recognised for its social cohesion, financial prosperity and resettlement success, I would argue in the broader political

¹¹² Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 1.

¹¹³ There is a sense that Alibhai-Brown speaks for the collective in this memoir. Later within this chapter I shall demonstrate how the collective of the Indian East African is represented.

¹¹⁴ See Introduction, as well as scholarship on the Indian in East Africa by Bhachu, Bhana and Pachai, Y.Ghai and D.Ghai.

British landscape they are ethnically and racially homogenised as simply ‘Asian’. For a single migrant – who has only migrated and resettled once – this blanket term already overlooks and flattens ethnic, class and caste difference; the numerous migrations undertaken by the twice-displaced renders this reduction of identity, through such misrepresentation, even more acute in the case of the double diaspora.¹¹⁵

It is these absences in various discourses that Alibhai-Brown seeks to address. The introductory lines of the cookbook memoir quickly and dramatically communicate to the reader that this is a narrative about belonging and the reconstruction of identity: a resistance to eradication and invisibility. The genres of memoir and cookbook fused together help perform this act of recovery by recuperating the ‘colour and juice’ of that which is ‘wither[ing] and fall[ing] away’.¹¹⁶ Whilst this recuperation through representation is necessary for the Indian East African in Britain, to give something colour and juice – to paint and flavour it – nevertheless gestures towards some of the questions that occupy scholarship on autobiography. We must ask: where does the demarcation between fiction and non-fiction lie when one is recovering a past and narrating cultural memory? How can the representation of experience be faithful, or ‘authentic’, when the act of writing inherently affects the writer to paint and flavour? This boundary between fiction and non-fiction within the confessional mode shall be considered in detail in the next section. In addition, later I shall seek to excavate both the term memoir, and the possibilities for healing autobiography offers to the trauma and pain of double displacement.

¹¹⁵ For a short discussion of ‘monolithic and meaningless’ terms such as ‘Asian’ see Ziauddin Sardar’s *Balti Britain: A Journey Through the British Asian Experience* (London: Granta Books, 2008), p. 66. See also Introduction for an explication of my understanding and use of other significant terminologies, such as ‘diaspora’.

¹¹⁶ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 1.

Memoir: The New Novel?

The rise in popularity of the autobiography in the last decade or so would suggest that the memoir is, in a manner of speaking, the new novel.¹¹⁷ Whilst the genre has captured the imaginations of readers both in Britain and the US, resulting in an explosion of autobiographies on the market, as Leigh Gilmore identifies, intellectuals are also contributing to the field:

...even academics, perhaps the group considered the least likely to cross over, are producing personal criticism, hybrid combinations of scholarship and life writing, and memoir proper.¹¹⁸

This preference of the autobiographical mode begs the question: why write, and read, autobiography? What qualities within this genre compel professional writers and scholars, amongst others, to invest in it? The confessional quality of the writing, where the writer discloses personal anecdotes and revelations, intimates that there is something redemptive in producing a memoir. Whilst this motivation and preference of style is significant, in particular to Alibhai-Brown who writes for a living, I will initially turn to other concerns that have preoccupied conversations on autobiography, returning later to the qualities of the genre that make it specifically appropriate to express the identities of the Indian East African double diaspora in Britain.

First, an observation on terminology: thus far this chapter has referred to a range of nomenclature – ‘autobiography’, ‘memoir’ and ‘life writing’ – and shall continue to use these. Sometimes further terms, such as the ‘confessional mode’ and ‘testimonial’, shall also be employed in the thesis. Before we move forward,

¹¹⁷ Ben Yagoda, *Memoirs: A History* (London: Penguin, 2009) and Thomas Couser, *Memoir: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), amongst other recent scholarship, make clear the rise in popularity of the autobiographical form. Yagoda, as the title of this text suggests, provides a historical account of the genre, which is thorough and clear. The critic also delineates some reasons for the ‘memoir boom’ (pp. 238-9). Couser takes interest in the relationship between the novel and the memoir, and early on in his text seeks to clarify any confusion between the two genres.

¹¹⁸ Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography*, p. 1.

consideration of these terms aims to consolidate their use in my thesis, though, as should become apparent, the understanding of these terms is rather disordered in scholarship. According to Judith Barrington autobiography can be demarcated from memoir via the treatment of themes. She suggests an ‘autobiography is the story *of a life*’ whereas the memoir ‘is a story *from a life*’.¹¹⁹ Essentially, in the autobiography there is an ‘attempt to capture all the essential elements of that life’; whilst on the other hand, in the memoir there is no aim to represent a holistic life story, instead there is ‘the selection of the theme or themes that bind the work together’.¹²⁰ Alibhai-Brown’s text certainly prescribes to these differentiations. Identified very clearly as a memoir, it also sets out its themes in the title: ‘love, migration and food’.

More recently, however, Thomas Couser has complicated this understanding, suggesting that memoir was once ‘a *subgenre* of autobiography’, because “‘memoir’ was minor and “‘autobiography’ major; “‘memoir’ subliterary and “‘autobiography’ literary; “‘memoir’ shallow and “‘autobiography deep”; “‘memoir’ marginal and “‘autobiography’ canonical’.¹²¹ Given the recent boom in the industry, which has apparently been characterised by a popular interest in the memoir, rather than the autobiography, Couser nonetheless re-evaluates these understandings. Memoir is now a ‘term of art’, of ‘prestige’, he explicates, ‘[n]o one writes autobiography any more. At least, no one reads it.’¹²² Nevertheless a cursory Internet search of ‘autobiography’ demonstrates that we are in no short supply of recent, popular texts entitled ‘autobiography’, and the proliferation of the genre, particularly around commercial, festive periods, strongly vouches for the popularity of both the memoir *and* autobiography. Thus, the definition between autobiography and memoir

¹¹⁹ Judith Barrington, ‘What is Memoir’, in *Writing the Memoir: From Truth to Art*, 2nd edn (Oregon: The Eighth Mountain Press, 2002), pp. 17-30 (p. 22).

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-3.

¹²¹ Couser, *Memoir*, p. 18.

¹²² *Ibid.*

becomes rather muddled and any specificity of the two terms is compromised. A consultation of the Oxford English Dictionary is equally unhelpful here: autobiography is defined as '[a]n account of a person's life given by himself or herself, *esp.* one published in book form. Also: the process of writing such an account; these considered as a literary genre';¹²³ whilst memoir is simply considered a 'note, a memorandum; a record; a brief testimonial or warrant; (*in pl.*) records, documents.'¹²⁴ It is in its plural that the term is linked to autobiography or the recording of events.

There is, thus, a vast variation of how life-writing terminology is deployed within the genre itself, and beyond. A focus on the term 'memoir', beginning with its etymology, while initially providing yet more complications, eventually offers some clarity. The use of 'memoir' in Alibhai-Brown's title can be aligned with memory, deriving from the French for memory: *memoire*.¹²⁵ As a result, and as I shall explore later, one can expect her memoir to be 'primarily based on memory',¹²⁶ and to be 'resolutely focused on the self'.¹²⁷ To build on how memoir is entangled with memory and primarily with the self, Yagoda quotes Gore Vidal, who says: 'A memoir is how one remembers one's own life, while an autobiography is history, requiring research, dates, facts, double-checked.'¹²⁸ Yet *The Settler's Cookbook* traverses these boundaries: it not only engages in telling stories of others, namely the

¹²³ OED Online. March 2012. Oxford University Press. <<http://www.oed.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/view/Entry/13379?redirectedFrom=autobiography>> [accessed 15 February 2013].

¹²⁴ OED Online. March 2012. Oxford University Press. <<http://www.oed.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/116334>> [accessed 15 February 2013].

¹²⁵ Yagoda, *Memoirs*, p. 2. Again here there are complications and confusions to the demarcation between the autobiography and memoir. In recognising the etymology of 'memoir', Yagoda continues by suggesting that the memoirs, in plural, are synonymous with autobiography. Thus he adds a new dimension to the memoir/autobiography definition, which again creates some inconsistency in the general understanding of these terms.

¹²⁶ Couser, *Memoir*, p. 19.

¹²⁷ Yagoda, *Memoirs*, p. 3.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

author's mother, but too signposts research undertaken to formulate the text. In one instance, the reader is told the author 'sought out some [...older exiles], asked them questions they struggled to answer', to then be beseeched to enter their stories into the memoir.¹²⁹ *The Settler's Cookbook* is then informed by some research, and the stories of others. It too is often interested in dates.

What becomes abundantly clear is the difficulty in grounding the terms memoir and autobiography in *The Settler's Cookbook*, as the categories themselves are inconsistent. If we consider that 'life writing' is an 'umbrella term used to' collectively 'refer to all nonfictional representation of identity', then it can be confidently concluded that Alibhai-Brown's writings can fall within this category.¹³⁰ Furthermore, as the primary text traverses certain boundaries, and critics themselves use the terms with fluidity, within this writing further uses of memoir, autobiography, and beyond, are interchangeable. Because of the relationship of the term to memory, however, 'memoir' remains particularly significant to *The Settler's Cookbook*. With these understandings of terminology in place, let us return to the work of this chapter, and specifically to how the field itself has been treated in scholarship.

Where once the life-writing field 'was considered suspect and largely ignored' as a self-indulgent, lowbrow genre, now, Meta Y. Harris explains, this 'self-ethnographic research tool is considered to be a primary source for the scholarly investigation of peoples and cultures'.¹³¹ However, within the early

¹²⁹ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p.41.

¹³⁰ Couser, *Memoir*, p. 19.

Sidonie Smith, and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001) also treat 'life writing' 'as a general term for writing of diverse kinds' (p. 3).

¹³¹ Meta Y. Harris, *Black Women Writing Autobiography: Autobiography in Multicultural Education*, in *Narrative and Experience in Multicultural Education*, ed. by J. Phillion, M. F. He, and F. M. Connelly (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), pp. 36-52 (p. 39).

explorations of this field, it is the ‘authenticity’ of the autobiographical text that has dominated. Questions over whether the details and revelations of life writing are honest have plagued many works, and criticism over Rigoberta Menchú’s well-known testimony is one of many cases that highlight this pre-occupation with the truth. Amongst other particulars the Nobel Peace Prize winner gave details of her brother’s death, which were later contested by the anthropologist David Stoll. Though Menchú escaped this criticism more or less unscathed, many do not, finding themselves consequently on a literary blacklist.¹³² This preoccupation with authenticity derives from the fact that, as Nancy K. Miller points out, when one reads a memoir ‘you expect to be reading the truth’.¹³³ Because of this expectation a dichotomy between the truth and the imagined is engendered, which quickly calls into question the slippery terms of ‘truth’ and ‘authenticity’. As the ‘truth’ in life-writing derives from the recitation of memory, the quality of that truth is subjective.¹³⁴ One person’s perception and memory of lived reality more often than not differs from another’s, even one who might have shared that experience.¹³⁵

The subjectivity of memory and narration is exemplified in Alibhai-Brown’s texts. In her memoir the political commentator and journalist describes a visit to Britain where a taxi driver takes her fare and throws it back into her face, in a racist

¹³² See Eakin, *Living Autobiographically* circa p. 20, for a discussion of the controversy over Menchú’s text, as well as other works, that have not fared the criticism so well, such as James Frey’s memoir *A Million Little Pieces*. Yagoda, *Memoirs*, too discusses the reception of these texts (in particular on pp. 7, 269-70), as does Couser, *Memoir*, p. 17. Couser underlines the value memoir has as ‘literary property’, and how framing one’s work within this genre can be the key to publishing success.

¹³³ Miller, ‘The Entangled Self’, p. 538.

¹³⁴ The idea of ‘truth’ underpins this foregrounding section. The concept of objective truth itself has been further examined and problematized by various theorists. See Yagoda, *Memoirs*, pp. 170-1, for a brief delineation of some of these ideas.

¹³⁵ See Liz Stanley, *The Auto/biographical I: the Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/biography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), for further considerations of the inevitable limitations of memory when writing autobiography (p. 62).

outburst.¹³⁶ The same event is outlined in one of the author's texts on race, ethnicity and culture, *Imagining the New Britain*.¹³⁷ In the two accounts the minor details of the experience differ: for example, in *Imagining the New Britain* it is the assertion of Alibhai-Brown's origin that provokes the driver's abuse; whereas in *The Settler's Cookbook* a simple look between the driver and passenger sparks racism. Furthermore, in the memoir the author reacts to the racist abuse by running 'off down a small lane feeling doubly bereft', having just lost her father,¹³⁸ whilst in the critical text the moment is remembered as 'very satisfying'.¹³⁹ This striking difference can be accounted for if style and agenda are considered in the act of retelling: in the memoir Alibhai-Brown seeks to underline the moment of dispossession as a child of empire by highlighting her twin grief, whereas in *Imagining the New Britain* the author is outlining a period of change in conservative politics, so the element of satisfaction in the interaction between the driver and Alibhai-Brown, although unsettling, is more fitting as it mirrors her point in that section.

These subtle disparities between two narrations of the same experience serve to highlight that the recitation of memory is a challenge fraught with inconsistencies, and furthermore can be adjusted – both consciously and unconsciously – by the author according to context. Even where one single memory from one perspective is depicted, the details vary according to the time and place it is recounted. Indeed, it is clear Alibhai-Brown is aware of these negotiations when she discusses memories that have been 'gradual[ly] corrupted' through 'years of storage' in her autobiographical text. Agreeing with her sentiments, Alibhai-Brown also quotes

¹³⁶ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 233.

¹³⁷ Alibhai-Brown, *Imagining the New Britain*, p. 74.

¹³⁸ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 234.

¹³⁹ Alibhai-Brown, *Imagining the New Britain*, p. 74.

Nawel El Saadawi who explains that '[t]ruth changes, [and] is never the same, like the sea'. Alibhai-Brown tells her reader that if her son or ex-husband were to write their story, it would differ again from her account in *The Settler's Cookbook*.¹⁴⁰ She habitually questions what she remembers, and the memories others have of her, ones she has long forgotten.¹⁴¹ Indeed, she admits, 'My memories of growing up in the early 1950s in East Africa are too vivid to be entirely accurate.'¹⁴² The author is alerting the reader to the negotiations of writing memory, and adjusting expectations.

Thus, if in one scenario it is a few words that engender an altercation, but in another it is simply a look, it would seem in the task of life-writing the relationship between subjectivity and fictionality is both slippery and symbiotic. Taking into account these kinds of limitations of memory in the act of writing the self, seminal autobiography theorists such as Paul J. Eakin and Nancy K. Miller agree that there is a complication of fiction and non-fiction, memory and imagination. Where Miller recognises that the 'tension between life and text ... is never fully resolved' in 'life writing in its various forms',¹⁴³ Eakin discusses the unfixed nature of autobiographical truth where 'the materials of the past are shaped by memory and imagination to serve the needs of present consciousness'.¹⁴⁴ This 'drive toward [the] narration of the self' necessitates a 'fictive structure' because of the interplay of the act of remembering and the act of writing.¹⁴⁵ In reading life-writing, the reader must

¹⁴⁰ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 358.

¹⁴¹ Examples include Alibhai-Brown forgetting an edible resin she would chew in mosque that an old auntie remembers so vividly (*The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 8), the author's remembrance of fresh meat in Kampala (*The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 27) and Uganda being 'improbably lush' (*The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 42).

¹⁴² Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 110.

¹⁴³ Miller, *But Enough About Me*, p. xiv.

¹⁴⁴ Eakin, *Fictions in Autobiography*, p. 5.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

concede that the autobiographical act permeates the fine line between fiction and non-fiction, memory and the imagined.

Because of the porous nature of the autobiographical genre, the type of identity represented in the memoir in the reconstruction of self and community becomes ambivalent: is it one that is purely created for the purpose of the text, or is the identity a simple representation of subjective ‘truth’ through memory? Where both theorists consider autobiography to manifest fictive elements, on one hand Miller suggests that the product of the autobiographical act is a combination of truth and the author’s agenda, meaning that an identity – of either or both community and self – already exists, and life writing is simply a mode to express it.¹⁴⁶ On the other hand, in later scholarship Eakin disagrees, proposing instead that autobiographers create a narrative identity through writing:

The very phrase “talking about/ourselves” tends to separate selfhood from the act of expressing it, to attribute an independent existence to the “ourselves” we would be “talking about”, whereas the “talking”, I argue, actually calls our narrative identities into being; there is a mutually enhancing interplay between what we are and what we say we are.¹⁴⁷

Whilst Miller states that the author attends to his or her writing with an identity, creating the production of memoir as an expressive act, Eakin argues that narrating itself forms identity.¹⁴⁸ For Eakin, thus, the autobiography presents an opportunity to create the self through language.

As conveyed by the prologue to *The Settler’s Cookbook*, Alibhai-Brown is concerned with the task of representing the self and the collective, and by choosing the memoir mode, it is clear that she, too, favours language to perform the task of

¹⁴⁶ Miller, ‘The Entangled Self’.

¹⁴⁷ Eakin, *Living Autobiographically*, p. 2.

¹⁴⁸ Couser, *Memoir*, p. 14. In his introduction Couser makes a similar assertion regarding the role of autobiography in ‘self-invention’.

recuperation. However, the culinary dimension of the text suggests that the author is mobilising language to narrate with a sense of self and identity as a form of expression, rather than form identity through the act of writing. The presence of recipes – and as discussed later, the way that they interact with the narrative – exposes Alibhai-Brown’s approach to the autobiographical act as one that is loaded with cultural identity and memory. Because, firstly, these recipes have been gathered from friends and family to compile the text, and, secondly, the foods in the recipes are often produced and consumed communally, the culinary instructions and techniques form a collective archive. It would seem thus that Alibhai-Brown is using the autobiographical format to express an individuated sense of selfhood, vis-à-vis the collective.

However, as the prologue suggests, this existent identity is ‘puny’ and unfruitful, incapable of producing ‘a plenteous crop of ancestral stories or fruity relatives’. The author is thus compelled to add some ‘colour’ and ‘juice’ to prevent self and collective representation from ‘wither[ing] and fall[ing] away’.¹⁴⁹ In acts of identity formation ‘part of what we must call healing lies in the assertion of creativity’.¹⁵⁰ This creativity lies in the manifestation of drama in the author’s narration: her writing is often too vivid, of times long gone. The reader can sense the exploitation of events recounted, and indeed Alibhai-Brown, as I have suggested previously, acknowledges the slippery nature of her remembrance. So whilst in one sense, to perform restoration, Alibhai-Brown allows the act of narrating to form her identity, she concurrently attends to the act of writing *with* a confident sense of self, which is deployed from the collective. Apparently then, identity in autobiography

¹⁴⁹ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography*, p. 24.

merges both facets of fiction and non-fiction, a continual negotiation that is present from the outset.

In this negotiation, however, what is revealed in the rewriting of identity remains telling and significant because, as the presence of the racist abuse anecdote suggests, writing a memoir helps ease the pain of dislocation and dispossession through utterance. Whilst the fictive element of the autobiography and its rise in popularity could frame the contemporary memoir as the new novel, its revelatory component – that is also its palliative capacity – constructs it as both attractive to the masses, but also a highly significant tool in managing trauma. Leigh Gilmore suggests that the autobiography thus has a serious role to undertake, besides providing titillation. She argues, however, that language has its limitations.¹⁵¹ It is for this reason that there is a ceaseless tension between writing autobiography, identity and memory. Within *The Settler's Cookbook*, the numerous and habitual retellings of bigoted attitudes and other encounters outlined below does suggest that, in expressing these experiences, one is relieved of pain.¹⁵² But to what extent, and how exactly, does the autobiographical act of ‘painting’ and ‘adding juice’ placate the traumas of double dispossession and displacement?

The Palliative Memoir & Writing Trauma

The unsettling tales of prejudice and racism that emerge in *The Settler's Cookbook* punctuate the narrative frequently. The reader is presented with: a bus conductor who tells off Jena, Alibhai-Brown's mother, for smelling like a ‘curry pot’;¹⁵³ an emasculated Punjabi factory worker, who quits his job because of racism, to only go

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² There is also a continual, repeated narratorial return to Uganda, which I discuss later, that similarly suggests the memoir has a remedial capacity.

¹⁵³ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 10.

home, beat his wife out of frustration and, unaware, miscarry their first baby;¹⁵⁴ a ‘young white man’ on the bus who shouts ‘Fuck your bastard. Don’t touch me again’, to a heavily pregnant Alibhai-Brown.¹⁵⁵ Merely a few of the incidents described – an indication of the endless abuse encountered – this habitual narration is symptomatic of trauma. There are, however, other instances of habitual narration within the text, which suggest a legacy of trauma. These pertain to the experiences of liberated Uganda, and the descriptions, within the very condensed space of ten pages, which are often marked by sexual violence. There is a chilling tale of how a fellow student of Alibhai-Brown’s, part of ‘Amin’s circle of concubines’, is likely to have been murdered by mutilation, disposed of in a bag, ‘all the while her naked sister was made to watch as he [Amin] stroked her’.¹⁵⁶ Though the author wonders how these rumours can be verified, soon afterwards she recounts the story of two sisters disappearing from campus. Here the evidence of what had befallen them lies in the painful shuffle of the sister who returned, and her silence, and the appearance of the other sister in ‘hospital with a severely ruptured anus and bleeding, infected nipples’.¹⁵⁷ There are other incidences involving the author herself: whilst a friend is violated on the way to a lecture, Alibhai-Brown wets herself;¹⁵⁸ and later, again en route, her friends, and perhaps the author herself, experience ‘molesting hands crawl

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 318. I am compelled to include a note here pertaining to the racism encountered by Africans in East Africa. The prejudice against the native people of East Africa was prolific and dealt out by all sections of society. Both South Asian and white settlers adopted a standard practice of subjugating the Africans, and, as Alibhai-Brown points out, often these attitudes remain endemic within the South Asian communities that once lived in these countries. Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, pp. 129-30 recounts an upsetting incident which exemplifies these attitudes: a Ugandan servant is subjected to accusations, swearing and physical abuse for simply wearing the gift of cuff links from his employers. She later, p. 131, outlines Indian East Africans’ continuing prejudice to the Ugandans.

¹⁵⁶ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, pp. 240-2.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

[...] over breasts and faces' checking to see if 'Indian ladies are having bosoms'.¹⁵⁹ These stories gesture towards the landscape of new, free Uganda and the conflict dominating the birth of nation. The conflict is often, and not unusually, played out upon the bodies of the female population.¹⁶⁰ The descriptions are a suggestion of the implication of Africanisation for a people experiencing the transition.

These experiences, along with those of prolific racism, suggest a sense of trauma. Trauma – from the Greek 'titrosko' – once referred to a literal 'wound'; however, now in medical and psychiatric terms it 'is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind.'¹⁶¹ The term has come to name 'a wide spectrum of responses [...] and cover a multitude of disparate injuries'.¹⁶² Here, I would argue, because of their appearance in the text, these demoralising and prolific experiences of racism and sexual violence can thus be understood as internalised trauma. However, they seem to drive Alibhai-Brown, her family and her community on: they are determined to survive and exist as legitimate citizens of Britain. Whilst the proliferation of these experiences, and indeed the repetition of racist encounters in different texts, suggests that there is a need to articulate them, it also accounts for the memoir mode. The confessional genre of writing enables the expression of these anxieties, and again reaffirms the need to speak of them.

Of course, it is not just the writing of these instances that is significant: it is also the act of the reader reading them that provides redemption.¹⁶³ Exploring the contemporary 'coincidence of trauma and self-representation',¹⁶⁴ Gilmore suggests:

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

¹⁶⁰ See chapter four, p. 197, for a brief discussion of gendered violence during the partition.

¹⁶¹ Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 3.

¹⁶² Nancy K. Miller, and Jason Tougaw, 'Introduction', in *Extremities: Trauma, Testimony and Community*, ed. By Nancy K. Miller, and Jason Tougaw (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), pp.1-25 (p. 2).

¹⁶³ See Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), for an established literary discussion of the relation between the reader and text, the process of reading and the aesthetic response.

Autobiography about trauma forces the reader to assume a position of masochism or voyeurism. The reader is invited to find himself or herself in the figure of the representative, or to enjoy a kind of pleasure in the narrative organization of pain, in the case of trauma accounts.¹⁶⁵

The reader occupies two roles: firstly, as the observer of the abuse narrated; secondly, as a surrogate for the represented in the text. In reading, the reader is also invited to, according to Gilmore, take pleasure in the ‘narrative organisation of pain’. Whilst there is certainly an apparent sensationalist characteristic in the confessional mode, I would like to suggest aside from this pleasure, there is simultaneously a resuscitation of pain for the reader who undertakes ‘the figure of the representative’. Thus, in the autobiographical act the reader experiences the pain of the victim, both reliving the trauma to enable comprehension and segmenting it. Through this reciprocal relationship the relief of the trauma of racism is sought. Furthermore, because of the relationship formed between reader and author, as a result of the reader as voyeur and surrogate representative, I would argue that a sense of belonging can be forged.¹⁶⁶

As well as the bond engendered between the reader and writer, the ‘narrative organisation of pain’ is an additionally significant act on the part of the author, because the meticulous regulation of experience exercised in memoir highlights, and executes, the necessity to manage trauma. The highly ordered nature of Alibhai-Brown’s text and the particular placement of recipes, alongside the exacting instructions in these recipes, signify the author’s need to implement control, to

¹⁶⁴ Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22. Miller, *But Enough About Me*, also recognises this relationship between reader and writer.

¹⁶⁶ In reference to memoir, the relationship formed between author and reader, I would argue, also challenges post-structuralist theory such as Roland Barthes ‘Death of the Author’, *Aspen*, 5-6, (1967), <<http://www.ubu.com/aspen/aspen5and6/threeEssays.html#barthes>> [accessed 15 February 2013] because the importance of the author cannot be overlooked.

compensate for prior powerlessness. For example in a recipe for ‘Jaggery Spread’, Alibhai-Brown not only includes the instructions for the preparation and cooking for this sweet paste, but proceeds to outline how to consume the product: ‘Spread on toasted bread ... and *eat fast* before it gets cold’ (my emphasis).¹⁶⁷ The recipes themselves are also carefully placed – generally closing off a section – and are followed by a printed chilli design and/or a page break to indicate the progression of the narrative through discrete sections.¹⁶⁸ The initial example of a racist encounter with a taxi driver where details alter between texts, according to the context, further evidences the authorial need to control the narrative. The attention to detail and imposed organisation extends to the structure of the text. Rather than a chronological structure, the memoir begins *in medias res* describing the author’s arrival in Heathrow, and then the narrative returns to the earlier experiences in Uganda. There is thus a strict organisation of the narrative, which compensates for the lack of agency experienced in everyday life, especially in incidences of racism. In this way life-writing and the agency it presents to authors is a means of managing the traumas of dislocations.

The management of these traumatic experiences through narrative structure is, however, limited. Because, as Cathy Caruth explains, ‘to be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event’,¹⁶⁹ the repetition of events and specific experiences signals that the traumas of displacement have not been overcome. As the racist encounter with the taxi driver illustrates, the reader of Alibhai-Brown’s work is witness to the telling and retelling of the same events in different texts. Further examples of this duplication include other anecdotes in newspaper and magazine articles. For example in a *Daily Mail* article, March 2010,

¹⁶⁷ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 43.

¹⁶⁸ See Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, pp. 166, 196, 311, 376 for only a few examples.

¹⁶⁹ Caruth, *Trauma*, p. 5.

the author relives the day her ‘father, Kassam, cut me [her] off from his life when I [she] was 15, *just 15*, because I [Alibhai-Brown] played Juliet in a school production of the Shakespeare love story and Romeo was played by a black-skinned African’.¹⁷⁰ The same traumatic experience is also outlined in the author’s memoir, but in more detail: she tells of the ‘frightful beating’ and ‘indelible marks’ that remain as punishment for her social transgression.¹⁷¹

As well as rejection, this transgression can further be understood to pertain to the strict social boundaries that existed between the African and Indian in East Africa, enforced here by Alibhai-Brown’s family, and, more broadly, society. The reiteration of this violent act relating to social limitations perhaps refers to a traumatic guilt concerning the oppression of the African in their homeland: particularly, the guilty knowledge that Alibhai-Brown’s own father and family propounded the racist segregation of Indian from African. Here we see the author absorb the collective act, translating it into – and bearing alone – an individuated traumatic guilt. The impact of this event is highlighted again by its appearance in Alibhai-Brown’s one woman show, *Nowhere to Belong*.¹⁷² *Nowhere to Belong* consists of much of the same text as the memoir in describing the beating; though we are told in slightly varying ways about how the memory of the inter-racial rehearsal kisses, morally prohibited kisses, were ‘wiped out’ of Alibhai-Brown’s mind for a long time.¹⁷³ The ‘edit[ing ...] out’ of this painful memory and event, not

¹⁷⁰ Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, “‘How could you be so cruel, Daddy?’” How a trivial teenage row meant one woman’s father never spoke to her again’, <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-1256501/How-cruel-Daddy-One-woman-tells-trivial-teenage-row-meant-father-spoke-again.html>> [accessed 15 February 2013].

¹⁷¹ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 207.

¹⁷² Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *Nowhere to Belong* (unpublished play). The written text of the play has been made available, as Appendix B. As no line numbers exist in the play itself, I shall from here on make reference to the page number as coincides with Appendix B. I will discuss *Nowhere to Belong* later in this chapter.

¹⁷³ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 205.

only highlights the transgression of racial boundaries, but again the slippery nature of memory, particularly those that relate to trauma.¹⁷⁴

Gesturing towards the enduring trauma this event represents, the incident is not only retold within different texts, but, within the memoir, is itself alluded to over and over again.¹⁷⁵ Despite the attempt to alleviate pain, the repetitive return to the experience of being disowned, in the various works of the play, memoir cookbook and tabloid paper, suggests that trauma has not been managed entirely, and as such the traumatised is ‘forced, continually, to confront it [the event] over and over again’ through narratorial duplications.¹⁷⁶ Evidently, the ‘indelible marks’ of Alibhai-Brown’s beating are not only corporeal, but have also breached the mind. Whilst both have healed, this recovery is superficial and limited: the scars remain visible both on the body and in the writing of *The Settler’s Cookbook* and other texts.

Within the memoir there is also another significant experience that evidences this limitation of recuperation. Despite describing her childhood in Uganda and then moving onto her adult life in Britain, Alibhai-Brown returns ‘over and over again’ to her ‘homeland’ of Uganda in her text.¹⁷⁷ Less than twenty pages after she moves to Britain permanently, the autobiographer narratorially returns to ‘the land’ that she ‘had left behind’ after dedicating more or less the first two hundred and fifty eight pages to it.¹⁷⁸ This preoccupation with Uganda is repeated throughout the text: one moment Alibhai-Brown is describing her North Oxford accommodation with a ‘German Jewish scientist and his Quaker wife’ and then lines later the reader is ‘back in Uganda’.¹⁷⁹ Because trauma is a ‘a response ... to an overwhelming event

¹⁷⁴ Alibhai-Brown, *Nowhere to Belong*, p. 279.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 214, 235, 248.

¹⁷⁶ Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 62.

¹⁷⁷ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 286.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

or events, which takes the form of repeated...thoughts or behaviours stemming from the event' and there is certainly an 'increased arousal to ... recalling the event',¹⁸⁰ it is evident that the South Asian expulsion from Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972 is an event that has been far from painless for Alibhai-Brown. Taking into account the 'Romeo and Juliet incident', the narratorial return to Uganda also suggests that there are matters, as yet unresolved, concerning the 'fairness' of the Indian settlement in East Africa. Whilst it is within Alibhai-Brown's narrative that this repeated confrontation occurs, I would argue that because of the collective nature of her memoir and the acts of others it tells, the trauma manifested not only relates to an individuated pain, but also evidences a self-consciously collective trauma.

As I have discussed thus far there is clearly an attempt to reconcile these traumatic experiences. The inability to do so culminates in Alibhai-Brown pondering whether she should 'keep a bag half packed. Just in case' she is thrown out of Britain.¹⁸¹ In these last lines of the main body of the text there is a voiced struggle to belong, which is echoed throughout the memoir and indeed the author's show and talks.¹⁸² At the end of the epilogue Alibhai-Brown complicates this lack of belonging by referring to London and stating that 'the city where no one belongs is where I belong'.¹⁸³ The paradox between these two assertions highlights the ambiguity in her sense of belonging. This confrontation with finding a home extends from a past scarred by dispossession and multiple upheavals. Thus, whilst the memoir form represents a potentially healing process, this quality proves to be only palliative. Perhaps because 'life is multidirectional and complex, sometimes chaotic [...yet] life writing must have focus and form' there is a difficulty in aligning the

¹⁸⁰ Caruth, *Trauma*, p. 4.

¹⁸¹ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 421.

¹⁸² During her talk at Asia House, 6th May 2010, the memoirist again expressed this complication of belonging.

¹⁸³ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 426.

two: ‘Life inevitably far exceeds the capacity of writing to contain it’.¹⁸⁴ Though also the inadequacy of the memoir lies in the limits of language, because, as the evidence suggests and Gilmore explicates:

Trauma is beyond language in some crucial way ...language fails in the face of trauma...Yet, at the same time language about trauma is theorized as an impossibility, language is pressed forward as that which can heal the survivor of trauma.¹⁸⁵

There is thus a necessity to represent, ‘an imperative need to *tell*’,¹⁸⁶ with the purpose of recuperation; paradoxically, but typically, however, language cannot perform this task and fails, resulting in the persistence of trauma. Whilst the inadequacy of language accounts for the problems in recounting memory discussed at the beginning of this section, it also highlights the genre of cookbook memoir as significant. I would like to suggest that there is a reliance on food – manifested in the cookbook memoir genre – that attempts to compensate for the limitations of language in expressing the trauma of double dislocation. With this in mind, it is to the role of culinary practices within the double diaspora – as represented by *The Settler’s Cookbook* – that we must now turn.

Writing Nostalgia, Resistance & Memory: Writing Recipe

Women have conserved a whole world, past and present, in the idiom of food...women have given history and memory a permanent lodging...the knowledge contained in cookbooks transcends generations.¹⁸⁷

I wrote the ingredients down, hardly able to grip the stump of a pencil, the recipes of nameless women – whoever happened to pass by. I kept writing down the ingredients, words enshrouded in secret meaning and language in my mind. They were accompanied by a distant sound –

¹⁸⁴ Couser, *Memoir*, p. 22.

¹⁸⁵ Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography*, p. 6.

¹⁸⁶ Dori Laub, ‘Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle’, in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. by Cathy Caruth, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 61-76 (p. 63).

¹⁸⁷ Theophano, *Eat My Words*, p. 49

the promising, bell-like music of my mother's copper bowl as she beat whites by hand...¹⁸⁸

In her essay 'Wounding Events and the Limits of Autobiography', where my second epigraph is taken from, Marlene Kadar highlights the profound role culinary practices play in maintaining and representing the self in the face of adversity. For the holocaust survivor she identifies that the recipe book is among the most treasured keepsakes. Furthermore, in the communication of personal and historical traumatic events Kadar notes that the recipe collection is a significant 'holocaust genre' that, like Alibhai-Brown's text, is also autobiography.¹⁸⁹ Discussing the cookbook more generally Janet Theophano explains that 'self-conscious or not, recording everyday acts of cooking is an act of autobiographical writing and self-representation'.¹⁹⁰ Culinary practices are thus a tool of recreating selfhood and in the case of the holocaust victim I would like to suggest this tool is all the more powerful because it documents a culture on the brink of elimination.

Before I pursue this line of reading, let us take a significant moment to explicate the deployment of my secondary materials, which are here taken from within holocaust studies. To frame these scholarly materials and distinguish their work in this chapter, I would like to consider Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory*, where he asks:

What happens when different histories confront each other in public spaces? Does the remembrance of one history erase others from view? When memories of slavery and colonialism bump up against memories of the Holocaust in contemporary multicultural societies, must a competition of victims ensure?¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Elisabeth Raab, *Receptek*, as quoted in Marlene Kadar, 'Wounding Events and the Limits of Autobiography', p. 97

¹⁸⁹ Marlene Kadar, 'Wounding Events and the Limits of Autobiography', in *Diaspora, Memory and Identity: A Search for Home*, ed. by Vijay Agnew, (London: University of Toronto Press, 2005), pp. 81-111 (p. 97).

¹⁹⁰ Theophano, *Eat My Words*, p. 121.

¹⁹¹ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 2.

Rothberg continues by asking whether ‘collective memory really works like real estate development’, and whether one memory can literally crowd another memory out.¹⁹² He argues that ‘we consider memory as *multidirectional*: as subject to on-going negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative’.¹⁹³ In taking up holocaust studies to investigate twice migration in the South Asian diaspora, my work is doing exactly this: it is essentially working ‘under the sign of optimism’.¹⁹⁴ It is in the vein of multidirectionality that I posit my arguments, highlighting ‘dialogical interactions’ of memory and sidestepping discourses of competitiveness or hierarchy.¹⁹⁵ I instead catalyse my understandings of this twice-displaced diasporic group, who have been under-researched, by respectfully deploying scholarship that exists in abundance. While Alibhai-Brown herself might be vulnerable to accusations of ‘universalisation’,¹⁹⁶ this work does not undermine, block, or equate the experiences I refer to.¹⁹⁷

With this framework in place, I return to the significant genre of culinary practice and how it has been deployed in holocaust studies. To write these recipes Kadar describes how women in Theresienstadt pursued the task at great risk. Their need to articulate these culinary knowledges entailed secretly scavenging through rubbish bins for scraps of writing paper, such as pay slips itemizing German

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Miller and Tougaw, ‘Introduction’, also reject the peculiar understanding which suggests ‘some experiences count for more on the scale of suffering, when evaluated according to a measurement that places surviving the Holocaust in a universe of its own’ (p. 7).

¹⁹⁶ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 13, moves very quickly, and unsettlingly, between the slave heritage of black Americans to the displacement of white Americans, drawing a comparison with the Indian East African legacy.

¹⁹⁷ I would argue nor does it create a ‘continual reconstruction’ (Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 5) of these memories ‘through their entanglement’ (p. 313). This is perhaps where my application of Rothberg in this work diverges. I simply deploy holocaust scholarship to illuminate a narrative of displacement.

workers' wages.¹⁹⁸ Taking into account the pursuit of recipe writing, by these holocaust victims who were in an extremely perilous environment, concerning their temerity, I am compelled to ask: in what ways does recipe writing represent self and community? What need does the articulation and documentation of culinary practices satiate in those who experience trauma? The latter sentiments in my final epigraph answer these questions in part: recipe writing plays out nostalgia for the past where everyday life and freedom prevailed, allowing the victim to relive normality. These memories are prompted by the recuperation of culinary practices that are often unique to women.¹⁹⁹

The Settler's Cookbook similarly embeds recipes within its prose that are nostalgic of the past, and are significant to the trauma encountered. Woven throughout this text are recipes and gastronomic tales of experiences both in Uganda and Britain. For example, Alibhai-Brown describes a meal made from 'any whole fish which has firm flesh', named 'Fish *Masala*'.²⁰⁰ This tantalising dish is not simply a collection of ingredients and instructions, but an intimate document of the personal, loaded with cultural memory and meaning. As illustrated by Kadar, culinary instructions reignite the past, and, in this case, memories of Alibhai-Brown's uncle, Popat, are entangled in the recipe. He loved the dish, particularly when cooked by the mother Jena. She fed this repast to her brother – a surrogate father after the passing of their parents – whilst he was sick and dying. Through writing about this recipe in her text, Alibhai-Brown reconnects with her family. In

¹⁹⁸ Kadar, 'Wounding Events and the Limits of Autobiography', p. 97.

¹⁹⁹ Whilst Theophano's argument creates an absence in culinary discourse where men are concerned, throughout her text, *Eat My Words*, an intimate relationship between women and culinary practices is drawn. Further, for a brief discussion of the relationship between food and female writers see both Kadar, p. 98, and Leonardi's article 'Recipes for Reading', p. 343.

²⁰⁰ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, pp. 84-5.

addition the experiences the family encountered during difficult years in East Africa are also transmitted through the memory of the recipe.

The personal knowledge mediated by recipe writing, that extends the recipe's generally pragmatic outlook, is reaffirmed by another holocaust victim's story. Mina Pachter – a contributor to the *kochbuch* or recipe book *A Memory's Kitchen* that Kadar writes of – died in the concentration camps, but left her legacy in the form of the recipes she wrote during her incarceration. The compilation later finds its way to Anny, Pachter's daughter, who on receipt of the book feels once again connected to her mother as the recipes 'represent foods they had once shared in their home.'²⁰¹ Indeed, Anny describes receiving the text as a 'hand-reaching out' to her.²⁰² Through the memories they manifest, recipes thus, as my second epigraph suggests, have the capacity to transcend generations and time to reconnect people and places. Alibhai-Brown too uses the pragmatics of recipe writing to re-invoke her late mother, but is concurrently also reconnected with her uncle through culinary ritual. Because these foods are ones that had once been cooked in the family home and accompanied by family stories, the recipe, and indeed the art of cooking, embody memories of times gone by and familial love. As Raab describes in my second epigraph, food manifests memory that, in these instances, recollect freedom and happiness during traumatic events.

As well as these recollected sentiments that are entrenched in the recipes, Raab also expresses that at a time when they were 'being starved, [recipe writing] represent[ed] an act of defiance and spiritual revolt'.²⁰³ Again recipe writing becomes a powerful tool in traumatic circumstances, because, as one critic describes,

²⁰¹ Kadar, 'Wounding Events and the Limits of Autobiography', p. 99.

²⁰² As quoted in Theophano, *Eat My Words*, p. 82.

²⁰³ Kadar, 'Wounding Events and the Limits of Autobiography', p. 97.

starvation imposed by others is the ultimate symbol of powerlessness.²⁰⁴ If ‘hunger means one lacks the control to satisfy one’s most basic subsistence need’,²⁰⁵ then writing recipe, for the holocaust victim represents an opportunity to reappropriate agency. Indeed, the language of the recipe neatly exemplifies this reappropriation of power: the repeated imperative form used within recipes – for instance ‘mix’, ‘pour’, ‘add’ – asserts an agency by commanding the reader.²⁰⁶ This is an agency denied in the camps, and most vividly symbolised by starvation. Confronted with physical and cultural elimination these recipes presented an opportunity to express and record culinary culture and self for the holocaust victim, whilst also representing a resistance to oppression.

I would argue Alibhai-Brown too employs recipe writing in *The Settler’s Cookbook* to defy and resist, and assert her politics and belonging. Her tailor-made concoction of ‘Retribution Beef’ doles out justice to those she feels have wronged her and her family and, as the name suggests, is cooked to execute revenge. The recipe is fiery, including plenty of spices, and furthermore ‘[Three] dried whole hot chillies’. Served to ‘British friends [invited] over to meet the [newly born] baby and tuck into a curry’, Alibhai-Brown makes the dish ‘so hot [that] they burned...and cried’.²⁰⁷ This offering was retribution for Thatcher’s thinly veiled racist attitudes of the late seventies, readily accepted by much of the British public. The pain of dispossession is clear as the multiply displaced Alibhai-Brown writes about her sentiments over Thatcherite discrimination, just after she has given birth:

²⁰⁴ Carole M. Counihan, ‘Introduction – Food and Gender: Identity and Power’, in *Food and Gender: Identity and Power*, ed. by Carole M. Counihan, and Steven L. Kaplan (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 1998), pp. 1-11 (p. 2).

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁰⁶ See Colleen Cotter’s article, ‘Claiming a Piece of the Pie: How the Language of Recipes Define Community’, in *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories*, ed. by Anne L. Bower, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), pp. 51-71, for further exploration of the relationship between recipe writing and language.

²⁰⁷ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 323.

We [migrants] were breeding too much and too fast for this leaderine too. My breasts were bursting with milk as those unforgivable words resonated through the land. She meant my boy and me and his father – who played croquet like an English gentleman.²⁰⁸

The sense of rejection and defiance the author feels is not only manifested in the words of her writing and the recipe, but also in her body: her breasts burst with milk, a metaphor for her overwhelming emotions. Alibhai-Brown's sentiments are transcribed for a third time through the body, where her anger and dispossession are firstly articulated through writing recipe and secondly then cooking the recipe. It is, however, via food that the full extent of the author's vengeful anger is fully communicated. The fiery beef curry embodies her rejection, anger and, finally, resistance to racism as she enmeshes these sentiments in her food and compels her guests to 'cry, pa[ying] them back for Thatcher's words'.²⁰⁹ Alibhai-Brown deploys food to resist, and furthermore defend her family who are under attack. This excerpt not only exemplifies the defence, resistance and defiance manifested in culinary practices in the absence of a political voice, but furthermore begins the consideration of the entangled relationship of food and the body I soon excavate.²¹⁰

Aside from embedding resistance in her writing, there are numerous examples where Alibhai-Brown's recipes are laden with social meaning and experience. For instance, later in the culinary memoir, she outlines a recipe she cooks for her second husband when they argue. 'Potato Paratha' comes with a sub-heading in brackets that explains the recipe contains 'the redemption method and the easier way'.²¹¹ The 'redemption' instructions are long and intricate, spanning a page,

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ This recipe will also be subject to further interpretation, alongside other recipes, later in the chapter.

²¹¹ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 394.

whereas the easier method is fleeting occupying only a quarter of the following side. The two recipes create a similar product, but the instructions that are outlined for each manifest something quite different: one is labour intensive and in that hardship the author atones for her sins, and the other is the undemanding option, suitable for those who are guilt free. Similarly, a recipe of ‘Spicy Stir-fried Veg and Noodles’ mediates the story of Alibhai-Brown’s first husband who left her for another woman, chose vegetarianism like his mistress, and thus refuses to eat the author’s food, despite the offering of a tailor-made meat-free dish.²¹² After noting down the full instructions of this recipe, the author tells her reader that ‘when TL [the author’s first husband] rejected my food, that should have shown me I lost him forever.’²¹³ Not only are the ingredients of this dish loaded with the changing preference of a once meat-eating husband, but also rejection, because the recipe remains unmade, communicating the vulnerability of Alibhai-Brown during her divorce.

The Settler’s Cookbook, read in conjunction with Kadar’s research, therefore evidences recipe writing as a powerful form of social knowledge that both enables the representation of trauma and preservation of memory, as well as the communication of information beyond the possibilities of prose writing. However, a divergence, already alluded to within this section, lies between the recipe writing that Kadar researches and that of Alibhai-Brown’s text. The holocaust victims of Kadar’s research can only *write* recipes: a voice or indeed the act of cooking resulting from their recipes being withheld from them during the war. Whilst this act of recipe writing still represents and preserves cultural memory, for Alibhai-Brown recipe writing is – as suggested by the recipes of ‘Retribution Beef’, ‘Potato Paratha’ and ‘Spicy Stir-fried Veg and Noodles’ – intimately entangled with the act of cooking.

²¹² Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 359.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

The recipes of *The Settler's Cookbook* are not purely written, but are also enacted within the text itself: the reader is told of what happens when foods like 'Retribution Beef' are consumed. Furthermore, like in the recipe for 'Potato Paratha' where Alibhai-Brown gives her reader a choice of recipes, there is also an expectation that the reader shall perform the task of cooking. Thus where nostalgia and the spirit of defiance are lodged within both of the collections of recipes, for Alibhai-Brown there is additionally the act of cooking that too manifests and transmits social knowledge and trauma. It is with the progression from the written document to the excavation of the embodied performative narrative that I now seek to extend my argument.

The Cookbook as Archive and Repertoire

The act of cooking and eating can be – like dancing, dressing and other bodily practices – perceived as performance.²¹⁴ Whilst the written text of the recipe and prose can offer the reader insight into the recreation of Indian East African identity in Britain, as suggested in my initial reflections, these modes of communication have their limitations because they are ultimately enmeshed within language. As I have argued, language cannot fully express the traumas of deracination experienced by the doubly displaced. It is therefore to what I refer to as the embodied narrative – that which is performed and communicated corporally – that I look for further insight into the reconstruction of community and selfhood. Moving away from the

²¹⁴ Terms associated with performance, such as performative and performativity, have been coined by various scholars, including in early seminal work by J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962). Significant to this discussion is also Judith Butler's more recent text *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), which suggests gendered identity is performative and proliferated culturally to fashion masculine and feminine individuality. Finally, Jenny Alexandra Lawson, 'Playing with the Domestic Goddess: Performance Interventions into Contemporary Food Culture' (Unpublished doctoral thesis: University of Leeds, Faculty of Performance, Visual Arts and Communications, 2011) researches food practices, and posits these as performance. The thesis, which has received a recommendation for excellence, though interested in food as performance, does not engage with the embodiment of culinary practices, instead an analysis of the culinary feminine and media representation is pursued.

traditional text, my research shall begin here, and continue in the thesis generally, to offer an understanding of how alternative modes of cultural memory can, in the words of Diana Taylor, help reveal other ‘stories, memories and struggles’.²¹⁵

Concerned with the Americas, Taylor’s research reorients scholarship on performance, or repertoire, in relation to the hegemonic recorded archive. Rather than simply relying on the established dichotomy between the written and spoken word,²¹⁶ Taylor’s performance studies research instead considers the repertoire – that which is ephemeral – and the archive – that which is permanent. The eschewing of the written and spoken word is particularly important for the Indian East African in Britain. If the written word cannot communicate all, the spoken word has the same limitations, as orality is still enmeshed in language. It then becomes somewhat clearer why *The Settler’s Cookbook* relies upon food, and why the double diaspora favour what we may term the embodied narrative. In her research Taylor dispenses with hegemonic binaries that often value one form over the other, to reflect more vigorously on the varying practices of cultural production. Accordingly, an interdisciplinary consideration of the critic’s work broadens my studies on the strategies of cultural recreation of the Indian East African in Britain.

Whilst embodied narratives do valuably offer further insight and material for analysis, performance is also significant epistemologically. Rather than being ‘simply an object of analysis’, Taylor suggests that embodied narratives form ‘a way of knowing’.²¹⁷ The act of cooking, as well as other embodied narratives, thus transmits cultural memory and social knowledge through an episteme which has in the main gone unacknowledged. Asserting that certain forms of knowledge are

²¹⁵ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, p. XVIII.

²¹⁶ Walter Ong’s *Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2002) in particular explores the qualities of oral and print or written culture, in effect framing the two forms as binaries.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. XVI.

undervalued, Bower explains that, traditionally, western philosophy and scholarship have ‘tended to privilege questions about the rational, the unchanging and eternal, the abstract and mental, and to denigrate questions about embodied, concrete, practical experience.’²¹⁸ Taylor suggests these experiences have been largely overlooked because of

the rift...not...between the written and spoken word, but between the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones) and the so-called ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practise/knowledge (i.e., spoken language, dance, sports, ritual).²¹⁹

Because the archive has the potential of permanence, it has been generally privileged over transient practices. It is these former modes of knowledge that have thus become ubiquitous in understanding identity, resulting in the neglect of the repertoire and embodied narratives.

Refocusing upon other epistemes is an essential undertaking, firstly because their study liberates these knowledges from the shackles of hegemonic systems of Eurocentric epistemology.²²⁰ Because these systems value the archive over the repertoire, other forms of knowledge are denigrated, constructing a hierarchy where non-literate communities and their culture are undermined, privileging consequently those in the literate first world. The study of the repertoire, secondly, enables the revelation of other cultural memories and identities, beyond that which the archive can expose. Therefore, as outlined in my introduction, whilst one must look beyond the dominating discourses of successful relocation that often veil the traumas of the twice-displaced, it is an imperative to eventually decentre the hegemonic archive in

²¹⁸ Anne L. Bower, ‘Bound together: Recipes, Lives, Stories, and Readings’, in *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories*, ed. by Anne L. Bower (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), pp. 1-15 (p. 7).

Indeed, the concept that there are ‘other ways of knowing’ has been proliferated elsewhere within postcolonial discourse. For example Erna Brodber’s *Myal: A Novel* (London: New Beacon, 1988) invests in telling ‘the half [that] has never been told’, through both its vernacular style and content.

²¹⁹ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, p. 19.

²²⁰ See Dipesh Chakrabarty, who has propelled this type of thought, in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008).

favour of the exploration of embodied narratives. The move from the archive to the repertoire then enables the former lacunae in scholarly interlocutions to be filled.

Nourishing Embodied Narratives

Whilst Alibhai-Brown chooses the culinary form to express Indian East African identity in Britain, the diaspora too often privileges this embodied narrative in the bid for subjective and collective reformation. *Hansa's* restaurant in Leeds, that has played an integral role in West Yorkshire's culinary landscape, exemplifies this role of gastronomy in the Gujarati East African diaspora in Britain.²²¹ The regional success of the family-run restaurant is evidenced by their regular role in food festivals, the attainment of several accolades, as well as the publication of two cookbooks. Unusually for a restaurant business, *Hansa's* also operates heritage tours to India, for patrons. Over the past twenty-six years the restaurateur and entrepreneur Hansa Dabhi has proliferated Gujarati vegetarian cuisine with an East African, British twist, which stems from the displacements and encounters in those regions. Dabhi has thus captured the imagination of a wider public community through food. Furthermore, by projecting successfully into this discursive space a hybrid cuisine – a gastronomy which intimates a past of upheaval – Dabhi does not only represent a particular diaspora, but also rewrites Gujarati East African identity in Britain.

Through culinary cultural exchange *Hansa's* establishes meaningful encounters with its consumer, creating a counter-discourse to the ubiquitous Indian restaurant. The restaurateur does this via the simulation of the restaurant space as 'home'. Concurrently the space sets out to 'emancipate' Indian women by producing an environment where they can safely utilise undervalued cooking skills and

²²¹ An earlier work has analysed narratives of representations within *Hansa's*: Parmar, 'Self-(Re)Constructions and Collective Representations in the Double Diaspora'. Here I update this research.

honourably undertake paid work. Whilst I have in previous work highlighted the challenges that emerge – namely to do with the negotiation between domestic labour and wage labour, as well as the public and the private – when successfully simulating the home in a restaurant space, it nonetheless remains that *Hansa's* is an instance where culinary embodied narratives are highly significant in recreating the Gujarati East African in Britain. Through culinary practices Dabhi represents the vegetarian Gujarati East African diaspora and constructs a 'home' and 'homeland'. Again, though these formulations are never free from contradictions and complications, as I discuss in this section, her accomplishments demonstrate the importance of food practices in the bid for self and collective identity reformation. Comparative work with Alibhai-Brown's text further illuminates strategies of identity formation within the twice-displaced diaspora.

It is through Dabhi's own individuated sense of self that she forges a collective identity for the diaspora. Because of her own culinary preferences and circumstances she represents her community similarly and according to her experiences. For example, it is to Gujarat that *Hansa's* locates its affiliations. Unlike Alibhai-Brown who returns 'over and over again' to her perceived 'homeland' of Uganda, for Dabhi the African encounter is on the fringes of the narrative she presents.²²² Although the experience of Uganda is proliferated in Dabhi's first cookbook and the restaurant space, by, for example, the representation of a Ugandan heritage in photographs that appear on the walls of the restaurant space, these memories are marginalised within that space. The lone gesture of these photographs, pertaining to an African narrative, though multiple in number, are literally and metaphorically on the edge of that space created as home: it is on the walls, behind

²²² Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 286.

glass, still and inanimate. It is instead a Hinduised Gujarati heritage that takes centre stage.

Thus, on close examination, the gestures towards East Africa are all deeply rooted elsewhere. Uganda is showcased, to then ultimately be deprioritised for Gujarat, and the creation of this space as the homeland. Dabhi thus prescribes to a model of what has been described, by Anita Mannur, as ‘culinary citizenship’. Mannur, a literary critic writing on food in South Asian diasporic culture, explains ‘culinary citizenship’ is ‘that which grants subjects the ability to claim and inhabit certain identitarian positions via their relationship to food’.²²³ The rhetoric of *Hansa’s* culinary citizenship contends that the collective identity of the diaspora is orientated similarly, towards Gujarat. This preference towards Gujarat as the homeland is demonstrated via the food highlighted in the cookbook and menu, and the cartography the menu highlights. It is a preference that not only leans away from Uganda; but also the broader space of India.

Here it is the juxtaposition, via a return, to Alibhai-Brown’s formulations of identity that I would like to highlight. As well as homeland affiliations, there are other ways in which the two presentations of the doubly displaced identity differ. Alibhai-Brown, in her text, offers many dishes that are meat inclusive.²²⁴ In her first cookbook Dabhi, however, explains that ‘about 720 million’ Indians are vegetarian, and the contents of the cookbook, and the food served in the restaurant, mimics this understanding of an Indian diet consisting of purely vegetarian elements.²²⁵ This does not of course account for the twice migrant, whose culinary practices might have been adapted by multiple migratory experience, nor does it account for the

²²³ Anita Mannur, *Culinary Fictions: Food in South Asian Diasporic Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), p. 29.

²²⁴ Though it is worth noting there are no pork dishes.

²²⁵ Hansa Dabhi, *Hansa’s Indian Vegetarian Cookbook: Popular Recipes from Hansa’s Gujarati Restaurant* (Leeds: Hansa’s Publication, 2000) p. 11.

many Indians, including Gujarati Indians, whose staple diet includes the very crucial addition of meat. Instead it represents Dabhi's identity, and the Gujarati East African in Britain's, as homogenous and relating only to a transnational Hinduised Gujarati identity. I take issue with this representation, and it is evident that amongst the double diaspora in Leeds the food offered up at *Hansa's* is not considered representative of traditional Gujarati fare.²²⁶ Indeed, in the play *Strictly Dandia*, analysed in the following chapter, the character Prema airs 'the vegetarian lobby's' complaint over crisp flavours during Navratri.²²⁷ Here the differing attitude to a non-meat diet amongst double migrants is highlighted, whilst significantly illustrating that not all Hindus are vegetarians.²²⁸

Dabhi's overt insistence on vegetarianism is thus deeply rooted in the author's Hinduised identity. The divergence between the foods showcased by Alibhai-Brown and by Dabhi thus can be accounted for by differing religious affiliations. Muslim dietary practices dictate most meats as acceptable, and those which are not do not appear in the cookbook memoir. Muslim and Hindu dietary practices consequently mediate representation of some aspects of identity for these twice migrants. For Dabhi, though, this mediation of selfhood via Hindu vegetarianism is overtly performed; yet for Alibhai-Brown the inclusion of meat in her cookbook memoir is less overt, and implicitly linked to an Ismaili identity.²²⁹

²²⁶ In informal conversation with members of the double diaspora in Leeds, in particular with the Sikh community, these views became clear (25th Aug 2011 and 5th October 2011).

Dhabi herself might allude to differences, which are not necessarily exclusive to the vegetarian/non-vegetarian debate, when she explains in her cookbook that it 'contains recipes of dishes enjoyed by my Gujarati family on a daily basis, *modified* to suit the taste of my customers' (my emphasis).

Dabhi, *Hansa's Indian Vegetarian Cookbook*, p. 13.

²²⁷ Bhuchar *et al*, *Strictly Dandia*. Scene 3, p. 19.

²²⁸ Another character within the play, Pushpa, exclaims to a female friend: 'The way these men want to eat meat. I don't mind it outside. I make sure they cook my corn on the cob before they put on their chicken' (Scene 2, p. 10). These lines are suggestive of the gender divisions in meat and non-meat diets with the diaspora. This division is indicative of gender roles, something I discuss further, with particular reference to dress, in chapter four.

²²⁹ The Shia Muslim subset of Ismailis is described in my introduction, Footnote 69 (p. 29).

Only when the absence of pork dishes is noted and if the contents of Alibhai-Brown's repertoire are contextualised by Dabhi's insistence on vegetarianism, is the author's dietary preference perceived as mediated by religious affiliation.

Therefore, although both women have an experience of twice migration, via Uganda, the representation of identity for each is ultimately splintered further by religious beliefs, whether these affiliations are implicit or explicit. The restaurant cookbook showcases Hinduness and reflects Dabhi's religious and culinary preferences as a diasporic subject who opts for a transnational Hindu identity. Religious affiliations are thus a powerful mode of identification, and a line of enquiry I pursue, in the following chapter, as the concept arises in my analysis of *Strictly Dandia*. However, religion is not the only significant mode of representation deployed by the double diaspora, and it is these other forms of valuable articulations, often overlooked, that this thesis seeks out. Culinary practices are, of course, one of these routes to representation.²³⁰

Thus whilst *Hansa's* insists on vegetarianism as truly Indian, Alibhai-Brown offers many meat-dominated dishes in her cookbook memoir. Where *Hansa's* homeland lies in Gujarat, Alibhai-Brown harks back to Uganda. *Hansa's* claiming of a vegetarian Gujarati Hindu identity via food, her culinary citizenship, which is then proliferated to represent the diaspora, is not simply altered a little and mimicked by Alibhai-Brown to occupy a differing selfhood. Alibhai-Brown does not deploy food to demonstrate and cement a national or regional affiliation. A culinary citizenship is not claimed by Alibhai-Brown as there is, despite her nostalgia for Uganda, ambivalence in her sense of belonging, as suggested earlier in this chapter. This

²³⁰ Mary Douglas, 'Deciphering a Meal', in *Myth, Symbol and Culture*, ed. by Clifford Geertz, (1971) pp. 61-81 (p. 61) posits food as a code in this anthropological work. She says: 'The message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across the boundaries'. The article, via encoded diagrams, progresses to consider Hebrew dietary laws, inserting religious practices into her scholarship.

ambivalence perhaps relates to the way in which, as I discuss below, Alibhai-Brown forms her individuated identity. It remains that *Hansa's*, a restaurant, exists in lieu of a signature novel. In claiming a culinary citizenship, she too represents double diasporic identity via something other than the fictional writing, and indeed this is performed by the culinary. Despite their conflicts of representation, both favour food as a mode of articulation.

‘Jena’s Fish and Chips’

I have argued that *Hansa's* forges a collective identity for the double diaspora, via Dabhi’s individuated sense of self. In contrast, Alibhai-Brown fashions selfhood *through* community. Because the recipes in her cookbook memoir have been collated from family and friends, and the products of these recipes are often produced and consumed communally, the culinary instructions and techniques are of a collective nature. It is vis-à-vis the collective of culinary practices that this memoirist is recreating an individuated sense of selfhood. ‘Jena’s Fish and Chips’ – a collective endeavour in many ways – reifies some of these conceptual paradigms. Not only is the recipe collected for the cookbook compilation from the author’s mother, but it is with Jena after her husband has left her that the author can cook the dish.²³¹ On the dissolution of her marital relationship Alibhai-Brown tells us:

That night I cooked Jena’s fish and chips, an ensemble I had refrained from making for many years. How TL moaned if we left spicy smells lingering too long, and fried food had more or less been banned...²³²

There are many layered narratives of experience and cultural memory entangled in the cooking and eating of this spicy, fried repast.

²³¹ In her talk at Asia House, 6th May 2010, Alibhai-Brown discussed her mother’s support, and ‘fish and chip intervention’, during this difficult time.

²³² Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 355.

Firstly, intertwined within the preparation and eating of ‘Jena’s Fish and Chips’ is the break-up and the tensions of the author’s marriage. Indeed the meal can be understood as metaphor for the divisions between TL and Alibhai-Brown, but furthermore the struggles of relocation. I would like to suggest that where TL manages twice migration through dispensing with what could be termed traditional culinary practices, and becoming a croquet-playing English gentleman,²³³ Alibhai-Brown instead longs to taste and cook these spicy, fried foods. The recipe and enactment of ‘Jena’s Fish and Chips’ is therefore an embodied practice that discloses narratives of dislocation, and the resulting tensions in the couple’s marriage. The dish however embodies the experience of two-fold movement more extensively, by accounting for the mixing often engendered in the diaspora. This narrative is available through the ingredients: the fish is marinated in garlic, chillies, lime and coriander, whilst the ketchup for the chips is spiked with 2 tbsps *garam masala*. This version of fish and chips, a meal noted often as typically ‘English’,²³⁴ has been fused with spices and herbs to create a repast that reflects the movement from India to East Africa to Britain. Generally blander, the English fish and chips is spiked with full, fiery flavours in this Indian East African endeavour. Taking into account Arjun Appadurai’s scholarship on the ‘social life of things’ that suggests ‘meanings are inscribed in their [the commodity’s] forms, their uses, their trajectories’, and given that ‘human actors encode things with significance’, it is possible to think of the fusion in this recipe as a microcosm for the mixing that dislocation engenders.²³⁵

²³³ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 323.

²³⁴ It is worth commenting here that despite common belief, the origins of English ‘Fish and Chips’ lie in Irish, French and Jewish cooking. See Panayi, *Spicing Up Britain*, p. 16-19 for a full examination of this topic.

²³⁵ Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 5.

Like those who make and eat these meals, these foods have also taken on similar qualities and adapted according to displacement.

A final layer of meaning that the embodied narrative of ‘Jena’s Fish and Chips’ produces relates to the power relations within the couple’s marriage, manifested in TL’s rejection of spicy, fried food. Wm. Alex McIntosh and Mary Zey argue that ‘although women have generally been held responsible for these [culinary] roles, men, to varying degrees, control their enactment’.²³⁶ Thus whilst it is Alibhai-Brown’s wifely job to produce meals for the family, this task does not equate to power, as it is her husband who controls what is being cooked and served. In her role as culinary producer Alibhai-Brown was not authoritative, but simply laden with responsibility. Hence while outwardly it might seem that in her role as culinary producer Alibhai-Brown wields some control over her family and husband, she is actually subject to the responsibilities of adhering to her husband’s limiting desires and directives. By making the dish after her husband leaves the author is reasserting power in her role as culinary producer and consumer, by flouting once-imposed hidden rules. She tells her reader that as a result of making her mother’s fish and chips ‘oil had got into and on to everything’, metaphorically insinuating the extent of her transgression. Similar to the resistance I discussed earlier with regard to recipe writing, the symbolic oil also refers to the defiance embodied in cooking a forbidden dish. This dish too being accounted to Jena in its title, also suggests Alibhai-Brown’s shift in loyalties and familial link. The author is once again aligned to her mother, not her husband, as evidence by the recipe and culinary practice.

The power roles manifested between TL and Alibhai-Brown within this act of cooking ‘Jena’s Fish and Chips’, are suggestive of later culinary encounters with

²³⁶ Wm. Alex McIntosh and Mary Zey, ‘Women as Gatekeepers of Food Consumption: A Sociological Critique’, in *Food and Gender: Identity and Power*, ed. by Carole M. Counihan, and Steven L. Kaplan, (Amsterdam: Harwood Publishers, 1998), pp. 125-145 (p. 126).

the author's second husband, Colin. It is when Colin sees Alibhai-Brown make a staple bread of the Gujarati diet that 'he knew he had to be with me [the author], that there was no turning back...[after] watching me [the author] make small *chapattis* on a creaking table...'.²³⁷ The rolling out of the dough, described as the 'nimble, graceful...rhythmic dance of the hands', and the fiery accompaniment of zingy Zanzibari prawns 'reawaken sweet desires' in the cook, and also captivate Colin.²³⁸ He kisses her for the first time during the *chapatti*-making process and it is admitted that 'fourteen years on and this delicate rolling...can still produce an erotic charge in my old man [Colin]'.²³⁹ During the same incident he is also mesmerised by the author's eating habits and as such 'dropped his tools [cutlery] and followed suit' by eating with his hands.²⁴⁰ A seductive undertone, embedded in sexualised culinary practices, pervades this section.²⁴¹ It is manifested in the language, but has been translated from the original acts of cooking and eating. The sexual undercurrent transmitted through Indian East African food ways would thus suggest Alibhai-Brown has the upper hand, dominating Colin and proceedings through culinary practices.

Indeed, later in the same section, the memoirist acknowledges outright these power dynamics that exist in her culinary embodied practices:

Exotic food is erotic, a powerful simulator of ardour and adoration...Knowing this, did I deliberately ensnare an innocent I found at a station?...To have an Englishman fall in love with me, to have him in my hands, may have been settling a score with those ineffable snobs, the colonial administrators who made us feel so insignificant and uncivilised back in Kampala. Ha,...so many of your

²³⁷ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 365.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

²⁴¹ An orientalist reading can, of course, be applied here too, where the stereotypical passive orient can be complicated by Alibhai-Brown deliberately to maintain the dominant role. See Edward Said's *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995). Indeed, I will pursue the idea of self-orientalisation later in this chapter.

[English] heirs are falling hopelessly in love with us natives and their grub which you were so sniffy about? [*sic*]²⁴²

It is clear that the author not only identifies gastronomic practices as a method of exerting sexual power over her new husband, but by extension as a means of exercising an authority denied to her on a larger social and political scale. This power applied through food is rather paradoxical given that food once was an indirect platform to discriminate against and reject migrants. ‘Food’, explains Elizabeth Buettner, once ‘acted as a common cultural barometer charting both the spread of South Asian settlement and white attitudes toward it’.²⁴³ Whilst initially South Asian fare was responsible for an intrusive, olfactory ‘sensory assault on white Britons’,²⁴⁴ and these lingering smells were cited as failure of assimilation on the migrant’s part, later these food ways were not only accepted, but celebrated.²⁴⁵ It was thus through criticisms of strong smells and tastes that racism was implicitly deployed. Indeed, this aspect of British attitudes to Indian food is gestured towards within *The Settler’s Cookbook* through the memoirist’s description of her packed lunch in Uganda. ‘Malodorous Lunches’, that consisted of curry-filled wraps, were both frowned upon and banned by English school inspectors because of their smell.²⁴⁶ Once commonly used to reject migrants and their culture, it would seem Alibhai-Brown has now reappropriated this power through gastronomy in her second marriage. She also recovers a more personal control that was absent in the kitchen during her first marriage. In this sense ‘Jena’s Fish and Chips’ embodies both the

²⁴² Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 377.

²⁴³ Elizabeth Buettner, “‘Going for an Indian’”: South Asian Restaurants and the Limits of Multiculturalism in Britain’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 80, (Dec 2008), 865-901 (875).

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 876.

²⁴⁵ Buettner notes the accusation of lack of assimilation on p. 877. She also explores the role curry has played in Bradford’s cultural scene, where the dish been accredited Northern authenticity alongside Yorkshire institutions such as the dales and the Brontë sisters’ home in Haworth (p. 887).

²⁴⁶ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 175.

limiting and enabling aspects of culinary practices, whilst furthermore speaking to other culinary acts within the text. Valuably these entanglements reveal alternative cultural narratives.

Thus performed in one act of cooking are many layers of meaning and cultural memory, often gesturing towards the communal identity of the diaspora, from which the subjective domain is carved. Embodied narratives commonly concern the collective, because, as Taylor explains, ‘individual instances of performance disappear from repertoire. This happens to a lesser degree in the archive’.²⁴⁷ The paucity of fictional literature suggests that this diaspora primarily favours expressing itself through collective acts. This preference of the collective accounts for the reliance on food, a communal embodied act, in representation by both Alibhai-Brown and *Hansa*’s. It is for this reason that we must look to, as Taylor describes, ‘repertoires’. Indeed, there is perhaps an inclination to why the repertoire is relied upon: we might say that, for the double diaspora, language can represent the individuated, whilst the embodied reproduces the collective. Accordingly, Alibhai-Brown enacts the collective repertoire of embodied culinary narratives to form a sense of her own subjective identity, which is then expressed in the autobiography, or the archive. It seems to me that language therefore fails in more than one capacity: it is not only unable to communicate the pain of discrimination and dispossession, but is neither appropriate for this diaspora that is located in the collective. Consequently, where Taylor refuses to place the archive and repertoire in a hierarchical dichotomy, whilst also refusing the overbearing nature of the permanent, I would like to suggest for the Indian East African in Britain the repertoire is the primary mode of representation.

²⁴⁷ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, p. 20.

Palatabilities of Speaking Out: Culinary Practices Pornographed

As I have already indicated, Alibhai-Brown herself invests, literally, in the repertoire in the bid for representation. *Nowhere to Belong* is the one-woman play Alibhai-Brown tours the country with. The play lasts around an hour, and can only be described as a dramatic fusion of the author as playwright's love of Shakespeare, and her experiences of family relationships and displacement. Acting alone, with but a few props of a bottle, a table and a chair, and improvising various characters, this play is another instance of embodied practice: a communication that is couched in the body, enacted and performed to articulate self and community. The play is also a self-reflexive testimony, a revelation of memory, like the culinary practices I have discussed.

Nowhere to Belong, though, quickly introduces the element of secrecy and shame that pervades the Indian East African community. This element is introduced to the audience when Alibhai-Brown confronts herself, by acting as a character called Humera: 'Go on stage and talk about your family? Have you no shame?'²⁴⁸ The act of speaking experience and history is related to shame here, and reflects the dimension of the diasporic community that would prefer to stay silent. In her cookbook memoir, Alibhai-Brown articulates similar sentiments when she says 'East African Asians have been wary of written words and records'.²⁴⁹ Barrington acknowledges this distrust when she, speaking more broadly about life writing, explains:

[T]o speak honestly about family and community is to step way out of line, to risk accusations of betrayal, and to shoulder the burden of being the one who blows the whistle on the myths that families and communities create to protect themselves from painful truths.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Alibhai-Brown, *Nowhere to Belong*, p. 268.

²⁴⁹ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 13.

²⁵⁰ Barrington, 'What is Memoir', p. 12.

This sense of secrecy I would argue is significant and specific to the twice-displaced diaspora. And, indeed, as I shall discuss as the thesis moves forward, the concept of esoteric culture is central in explicating the deployment of culinary practice, dance and visual material in representing culture.

Paradoxically, whilst Alibhai-Brown attempts to account for the collective via her cookbook memoir, she herself suggests she feels detached from the community. She tells her reader:

The only novelist of merit to come out of the East African diaspora, M.G. Vassanji, has suggested that Asians belong to very closed, and very close, communities, and to be able to write about them would require a tremendous sense of detachment, which they do not have.²⁵¹

By simply pointing out the detachment one must have to write of the ‘closed’ community, and then doing just that, the distance Alibhai-Brown feels from the collective is implied here. At various points in the text she does confirm some relationship with her community; though there remains a resistance to narration by the collective. There is, thus, tension between the self and the collective, and a complex, many layered relationship emerges. The ‘I’ becomes fragmented in the autobiography, being stretched between the dictations and rejections of the collective and the needs of the self.²⁵² Memoir, and indeed the play, breach the relationship between the self and collective for Alibhai-Brown. This fraught relationship is marked by the sense of secret, which persists. How these cultural productions are esoteric, will, in the course of this thesis, help me illustrate how differing modes of articulation enable cultural knowledge to be represented within the double diaspora.

²⁵¹ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 15.

²⁵² Julia Watson, and Sidonie Smith, ‘Introduction’, in *Interfaces: Women, Autobiography, Image, Performance* ed. by Sidonie Smith, and Julia Watson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), pp. 1-46 (p. 9), discuss this idea of the fragmented ‘I’.

Having outlined the tensions that exist in narrating the community's experience, and suggesting that I will consider this sense of esoteric culture in later chapters, first, I wish to probe this relationship between speaking out and the cookbook memoir further. Given that there is a tension in enacting the diaspora's experience, and perhaps a taboo in doing so, as well as a general sense of betrayal embroiled in life writing, why participate in the act of narration? As I have suggested, there is a need to articulate an experience of upheaval and trauma: a necessity to recount these memories. And whilst food is enabling in this articulation, a closer analysis of the relationship of the author and the reader, or the author and the consumer, contextualises the act of speaking further, to frame the double diaspora in a new light.

Some of the recipes, the narratives that accompany them, and the acts of cooking that I have already delineated could be accused of being – literally and metaphorically – over spiced. Take for example 'Retribution Beef': a recipe where the fiery qualities of the dish are highlighted and exaggerated, both within the recipe and on the page. In the modification of the recipe, and the showcasing of it, the exotic nature of the dish is exaggerated and exploited. By magnifying the otherness of the beef dish, one could locate the fare within the discourse of 'food pornography'. Citing Chinese American playwright Frank Chin, Mannur defines this term: 'an exploitative form of self-Orientalism in which Asian American subjects highlight the 'exotic' nature of their foodways by exaggerating the terms of otherness'.²⁵³ Whilst Mannur makes reference to the term as originating from Chin's work and states it is related to the Asian American community, one can transfer the thinking to culinary-themed literary texts, and here the exoticisation of food in

²⁵³ Mannur, *Culinary Fictions*, p. 82.

Alibhai-Brown's representation of 'Retribution Beef'. By over-spicing the dish, the author too locates it within the existing discourse centred on the hegemonic Indian restaurant, which flattens a heterogeneous cuisine and exaggerates the 'otherness' of 'Indian' cooking.²⁵⁴ 'Retribution Beef' in many ways mimics the dishes on the menus of these hegemonic Indian restaurants, which pander to the sense of otherness patrons often anticipate.

These restaurants of course enter into this exoticisation of food to satisfy the desire of the customer, and provide supply to demand. 'Food pornography' of the literary world too performs a similar task. To her definition Mannur adds: Food pornography 'is considered a form of cultural self-commodification through which Asian Americans earn a living by capitalizing on the so-called exoticism embedded in one's foodways'.²⁵⁵ Again, relevant to the diaspora I explore, Alibhai-Brown's beef dish can be read as the creation of a spectacle via the food described, which, like the hegemonic Indian restaurant, is rendered palatable for her reader. The exaggeration of the exotic sells, and this line of thought further frames *Hansa's*. Whilst *Hansa's* restaurant forms a counter-discourse to the hegemonic Indian restaurant, it too can be understood in these terms of food pornography. As I have suggested, the rhetoric of the business emphasises the vegetarian and regional qualities of food it serves, and the diaspora it represents. It magnifies limited aspects of double diaspora cuisine, and it is these aspects which arguably make the restaurant unique, marketable and successful.

The food images the cookbooks feature, in particular, bear the traits of food pornography. In *Hansa's* first cookbook there are many photographs of dishes,

²⁵⁴ For scholarship on Indian restaurants in Britain see: Merle Tönnies, 'Emulating the Empire, Demonstrating Difference or Expressing Equality? Selling and Consuming Indian Food in Britain', *Journal for the Study of British Cultures*, 8.1, (2001), 58-71; and Christina Hardyment, *Slice of Life: the British Way of Eating since 1945* (London: BBC Books, 1995).

²⁵⁵ Mannur, *Culinary Fictions*, p. 82.

alongside the recipes, which are vibrant in colour, and magnified and enlarged to occupy the entire page. These foods display a glossy, appealing veneer, and match the bright marketing colours of the cookbook. The groomed images of food accompanying recipes in the second cookbook replicate the first; however, in the second there are further commodifications of the ‘Indianness’ of the food. For example, there are pages filled with images of an aubergine roasting over coals in a small, rustic barbeque outdoors, as denoted by the pebbles surrounding the barbeque; a display of exotic green, yellow and purple vegetables, which are largely unidentifiable, housed in sacks and on leaves, in what is likely an outdoor market outside of Europe; pots of colourful lentils, again which are largely unidentifiable, sitting on a paper or material featuring Hindi script; and, rice fields on the sub-continent being worked by local people.²⁵⁶ These images all highlight and play on the exotic nature of the food, and showcase them as something ‘other’. The art of the photography in the colours, the magnification and the composition of these ‘foreign commodities’ render that which is on display desirable.

The text that accompanies these images also performs a similar task of cultural commodification. In the first cookbook Dabhi pre-empts the recipe section with guides to ‘Eating Gujarati Style’, ‘Utensils’ and ‘Spices’.²⁵⁷ These sections provide miniature information packs on the various topics. The second cookbook escalates this task, with introductory sections including ‘Why Hindus don’t eat meat’, ‘Spices’ again, and a fairly lengthy six page guide to ‘Ayurveda’.²⁵⁸ With its long section on Ayurveda and the dogmatically titled ‘Why Hindus don’t eat meat’, the second cookbook seems to become more confident in its role of dictating

²⁵⁶ Hansa Dabhi, *Hansa’s: More than just a Restaurant...It’s my Life!* (Leeds: Hansa’s Publication, 2010), pp. 66, 73, 76, 86, 96.

²⁵⁷ Dabhi, *Hansa’s Indian Vegetarian Cookbook*, pp. 16-23.

²⁵⁸ Dabhi, *Hansa’s: More than just a Restaurant*, pp. 18-27.

Hinduised Indian ‘ways’ and ‘traditions’. The success of the first cookbook perhaps confirmed the appetite for this rhetoric, and inspired further instances of magnification of the perceived exotic, to also ensure the second cookbook fared just as well in the retail stakes. Whilst the cookbooks of *Hansa’s*, and what the business more broadly stands for, can be firmly placed with the framework of food pornography, there are caveats that should be acknowledged. *Hansa’s* does not exoticise, or arguably subjugate, its food to create power relations, like those that exist within many Indian restaurants that dominate the market. Any power hierarchies that might exist are quickly challenged by the restaurant space being fashioned as home. Indeed, by providing guides that name utensils, spices, and guiding the reader through unknown practices, there is a degree of demystification of the other. There is thus a cultural self-commodification of foodways via exoticisation, to enable the economic success of the restaurant and the cookbooks, yet this is coupled with a sense of transparency, an openness that is underpinned by the guides that accompany with the cooking experience, and the restaurant space being posited as home.²⁵⁹

Thus far I have considered how Alibhai-Brown’s recipe of ‘Retribution Beef’ can be contextualised further by food pornography, and how the photography and culinary narratives of *Hansa’s* cookbook are too inclined towards this reading. However, how far are these narratives – the actual practices of culinary activity – also exaggerated, commodified and showcased? If we return to Alibhai-Brown’s cookbook memoir, and turn to another episode already examined, the wooing of Colin, ultimately the author’s second husband, food pornography quickly becomes

²⁵⁹ See Graham Huggan, *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (London: Routledge, 2001) for a discussion of the ‘postcolonial exotic’ and ‘the global commodification of cultural difference’, p. vii. Huggan dedicates a chapter to ‘Ethnic autobiography and the cult of authenticity’, which, as the title suggests, is preoccupied with the notion of ‘authenticity’ in relation to indigenous writings in particular.

the pornography of culinary practices in a wider sense. Alibhai-Brown prepares freshly made *chapattis* for her guest in this narration. The creation of ‘small *chapattis* on a creaking table’ from dough rolled out with a ‘nimble, graceful ... rhythmic dance of the hands’ captivates the husband to be.²⁶⁰ The everyday practice of making this Indian staple bread becomes over-sexed, and a spectacle for the reader to salivate over. The *chapatti* making itself engenders a first kiss between the two, consummating the desire created by exaggeration of the otherness of the cooking process. The ‘delicate rolling’ many years later, the author claims, still ‘produce[s] an erotic charge’ in her husband, proclaiming the longevity of the erotic in the exotic.²⁶¹

A further commodification of these culinary practices, reminiscent of one of *Hansa’s* introductory guides, is the way eating habits are presented as ‘othered’. During the same episode Alibhai-Brown explains to her reader ‘we never eat with our hands in front of whites, [we] don’t want them to think we are backwater *desis*’.²⁶² As well as underlining difference, the author goes ahead and eats with her hands, because ‘primal urges took over’ and ‘old intimac[ies]’ were desired.²⁶³ Because Alibhai-Brown surrenders to these primal urges, something which, as the description suggests, must be sensual and exotic for her beau, he too mimics this alien action. On the one hand the author showcases her culinary practices to seduce this man for whom these practices are ‘other’; and on the other, simultaneously, Alibhai-Brown splays this self-orientalisation across the pages of her memoir to create a spectacle of the difference, and seduce her reader.

²⁶⁰ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, pp. 365-6.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 368.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

A consideration of food pornography, which centres on the self-commodification of food culture for economic gain and the desire this engenders on the part of the consumer to ingest that otherness, suddenly becomes directly sexual. In the culinary practices Alibhai-Brown showcases, it is no longer simply about the consumption and commodification of food: culinary practices become sexualised, perhaps because, as an extension of the original agenda of narrating an Indian East African experience via food, sex sells. Retreating from these close readings, and considering the text more generally, there is a drama that saturates Alibhai-Brown's writing, and her performance of *Nowhere to Belong*. This dramatic characteristic, that pervades her articulations, is reflected in the author's assertions that she aspired to become an actress.²⁶⁴ If drama sells, then the exaggeration of the unique selling point of her cookbook – otherness – is arguably within this vein. There is a sense of 'flavor de jour' which surrounds the theme of the cookbook memoir, and other texts like it about the double diaspora, namely *Hansa's* cookbooks.²⁶⁵ These are texts that satiate the appetites of the paying public to consume the other, via their pornographed culinary practices.

I would argue, however, that this model of consumption highlights only a singular dimension. Food pornography, a term that critiques the denigration of culture within culinary themed texts, and here extended to the cookbook memoir and cookbook, represents the obligation to sell. It represents the necessity to enter into the economic market and create financial success to survive via culinary practices, which prove lucrative. This may account for, to return to the opening passages of this section, the act of speaking out by Alibhai-Brown, an act that is rather unpalatable for the community generally. However, as I have foregrounded in this chapter there

²⁶⁴ Alibhai-Brown asserts 'I am going to be an actress' in *Nowhere to Belong*, p. 273.

²⁶⁵ Mannur, *Culinary Fictions*, p. 83.

are other reasons to speak out, which layer onto the necessity to commercialise oneself and one's culture. Many of the recipes and narratives do not fit the food pornography model. 'Fish Masala' is, what seems to be, an honest reconnection with the past: an intimate document of the personal, loaded with cultural memory and meaning. 'Spicy Stir-fried Veg and Noodles' narrates the painful loss of a husband and Alibhai-Brown's rejection. These recipes preserve memory, amongst the many other tasks they undertake. The magnification of the erotic in the exotic, which Alibhai-Brown fully acknowledges, is thus entangled with the need to narrate a double displacement of pain.²⁶⁶ The commodification of culinary culture can also be understood within the terms of a diasporic group that is continually looking forward, finding new ways of modernising themselves and making a success of their adventures. This modernity of the diaspora is something which I shall analyse further in my final chapter; though the close reading here adds new dimensions to how the community has been framed thus far.

The significance of food remains apparent in these considerations. Culinary practices appear to operate on various levels, in order to help articulate the experiences of the double diaspora. Before we move to the third chapter of this thesis, let us momentarily return to the broader canvas of the subjects of the autobiography and the cookbook. If food, and the repertoire, is enabling to such great extents, and to speak out is conversely taboo, let us consider the tangible reasons the archive, in the form of the autobiography, might be favoured as a form of cultural representation amongst the double diaspora.

Transcending Limits: A Meta-language of Recognisability

Because ubiquitous western epistemologies favour language alongside the formal written archive, it comes as no surprise that Alibhai-Brown attempts to couch a

²⁶⁶ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 377.

representation of the Indian East African in Britain within a written text. In narrating memory, and negotiating the tensions that arise from this task, the pain of dispossession systematically moves to the forefront of the text and, I argue, in discourses concerning the two stages of dislocation experienced. However, whilst the memoir mode enables this trauma to be articulated to some extent, there remain silences. Where the Indian East African narrative in Britain, and the trauma experienced, has been successfully communicated in *The Settler's Cookbook*, I have thus argued that, nonetheless, the management of pain is limited. As Leigh Gilmore suggests, the limitations of representing trauma in the autobiographical written text derives from the limitations of language. Taking into account the inability of language in the articulation of this double diaspora's cultural recreation, I moved to consider other epistemologies as represented in *The Settler's Cookbook* – culinary practices. These practices embody narratives that primarily rewrite the collective Indian East African in Britain, later establishing Alibhai-Brown's own individuated sense of self.

I would like to suggest, however, that whilst the excavation of the preferred mode of articulation by the double diaspora, the repertoire, does enable further understanding of British Indian East African representation, there are analytical difficulties in sustaining such a discourse. Given that my research project is, as many others are, entrenched in the archive, the complete illumination of the ephemeral repertoire is problematic, if not impossible.²⁶⁷ However, the reliance on the written word posits several complexities that manifest themselves both in Alibhai-Brown's work and my own analysis of it. Given this latter difficulty, it becomes imperative to explore cultural representations of this diaspora as manifested in 'repertoire'. We

²⁶⁷ Work that traverses the limits of academia, and the archive, is thus significant. My community outreach work undertaken during my doctoral studies, described in the conclusion, does exactly this.

must make this move as not only has the embodied narrative been long neglected within literary and cultural scholarship, but furthermore because it is evidently a preference of this multiply-displaced community. Indeed, it is also important to note that embodied practices offer a preservation of cultural memory that makes the experiences of dislocation and representation available to a wider audience, broadening boundaries and transcending cultural limitations. The common language of embodied practices can then perhaps be re-interpreted as a meta-language of recognisable forms, available to all who wish to access the experience of the Indian East African diaspora in Britain.

Thus, as my epigraph to this chapter, taken from *Midnight's Children*, affirms, both writing and culinary practices undertake the 'great work of preserving'; however, they each have their own possibilities and limitations.²⁶⁸ Where one – the written text – is deeply entrenched within established forms of knowledge, legitimatising its excavation and paving the way for valuable conclusions, the other – the embodied narrative – extends its hand generously to realms and audiences uncharted. *The Settler's Cookbook*, I thus conclude, has, in combining the two genres of cookbook and memoir, not only accessed a wider audience, but formed Alibhai-Brown's own sense of individuated self – as represented through autobiography – vis-à-vis the collective – as manifested in the culinary practices transmitted in the text. It would seem the two forms of social knowledge do their own work and together enable the representation of the Indian East African in Britain. As this doctoral thesis shall continue to demonstrate, however, this work is more often than not imaginatively manifested in embodied practices, making their consideration both imperative and truly exciting. With this in mind, let us turn to

²⁶⁸ Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (London: Pan Books, 1982), p. 38.

chapter three, which excavates the embodied practice of Gujarati dance in diasporic spaces.

3. **Dancing *Dandiya* & Dressing to Impress: The Performing Body of *Navratri***

The theoretical move from the written archive, of which the cookbook genre represented an example, to the repertoire or embodied ‘text’, that I embarked upon in my previous chapter, establishes the progression of the argument through my thesis. Here this move results in a sustained focus on how the body performs a double diasporic identity. In this chapter I continue to investigate that which is communicated corporally vis-à-vis dance practices performed during *Navratri*, an annual Hindu festival lasting nine nights. Avtar Brah rightly identifies the significance of the *Navratri* space as ‘an arena for the play of gender and caste-inflected Hindu-Gujerati identities’.²⁶⁹ Through the two dances of *garba* and *dandiya-raas*, which are ‘played’ during *Navratri*, I aim to illustrate the role of community dance in encoding Gujarati East African identity in Britain. With reference to those communities who are doubly displaced, I examine how ‘[s]ocial dance is inevitably tied to the construction of personal identity, by dancers and the participating audiences who observe them’.²⁷⁰

As my research developed, however, ‘the re-enactment of collective memory and difference [that] occurs through the body and its movements’ in the group performance of *garba* and *dandiya-raas* became significant.²⁷¹ Thus, while in the previous chapter I argued that the subjective is often carved from community practice, here I nuance my argument by entering into an exploration of how collectivity emerges from group performance, and forms a sense of nationalism. I

²⁶⁹ Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, p. 47.

²⁷⁰ Thomas F. Defrantz, ‘The Black Beat Made Visible: Hip Hop Dance and Body Power’, in *Of The Presence Of The Body: Essays On Dance And Performance Theory*, ed. by André Lepecki (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), pp. 64-81 (p. 70).

²⁷¹ Anjali Gera Roy, ‘The Body of New Asian Dance Music’, in Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series No. 122, <http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps09_122.pdf> [accessed 15 February 2013], p. 11.

argue that the dances discussed forge an ‘Indian’ national identity, affording a sense of rootedness to those who have experienced multiple deracinations.

The construction of nationalism through community dance, is, however, complicated by the use of *garba* and *dandiya-raas* to also assert ‘Gujaratiness’. Gujaratiness – a sense of being Gujarati, and not just merely Indian – emerges as a crucial facet of identity for this diasporic group. The study of how identity can be constructed around the notion of Gujaratiness, rather than Indianness, has been little investigated; though more recently there are some articles and chapters that begin to refer to this sense of a regional identity. In her article Jessica Marie Falcone also engages with a sense of Gujaratiness as manifested during *garba* dance, albeit the critic makes reference to North American college competitions. Whilst Falcone deploys the term ‘Gujaratiness’, she generally investigates how the identity category impacts upon membership of *garba* dance teams. Reference is also made to the fragmentation of identity along national and regional lines, and briefly there too is comment upon Gujarati identity as framed by an Indian identity.²⁷² Within this thesis I provide a sustained reading of how a sense of diasporic Gujaratiness exists within the context of a national Indian identity, amongst the double diaspora. I consider how and why a holistic Indian identity is splintered to showcase a Gujaratiness,

²⁷² Jessica Marie Falcone, “‘Garba with Attitude’: Creative Nostalgia in Competitive Collegiate Gujarati American Folk Dancing”, *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 16.1 (February 2013), 57-89. Amanda Gilbertson, ‘Indianness and the Reflexive Project of the Self: Discourses of Ethnicity among New Zealand-born Gujaratis’, in *Gujarati Communities Across the Globe: Memory, Identity and Continuity*, ed. by Sharmina Mawani, and Anjoom Mukadam (Staffordshire: Trentham Books Limited, 2012), pp. 157-175 also makes reference to a sense of Gujaratiness in her chapter. However, whilst she acknowledges this identity category exists amongst her sample participants, Gilbertson chooses not to pursue the specificity of Gujaratiness, instead citing ‘my analysis is of their [the interviewees] narratives of Indianness rather than Gujaratiness’ (p. 160). Tommaso Bobbio, ‘Making Gujarat Vibrant: Hindutva, Development and the Rise of Subnationalism in India’, *Third World Quarterly*, 33.4 (2012), 657-672 also provides some study on the notion of what he describes as a ‘subnational’ identity. This article offers a political understanding of Gujarati identity within India itself, an identity that is framed by economic development and Hindu extremism. In light of the current political climate in India, this is a useful article that speaks to India’s Bharatiya Janata Party’s proposition of Gujaratiness.

which is largely Hindu. The deployment of these varying, often contradictory, categories of regionality and nationality is further contextualised by the spirituality of *Navratri*. As delineated in my previous chapter, the continual oscillation between India (the nation) and Gujarat (the region) is something that has indeed manifested itself in the social text of *Hansa's*.

In these readings of *Navratri*, the performance of festival dress emerges as yet another tool to articulate diasporic identities. This discussion serves to highlight the ‘performance aspect of culture’, by acknowledging the ‘importance of dressing up, [and] of knowing the appropriate social codes’, that are themselves often altered.²⁷³ The performance of dress can itself be considered a form of repertoire. As outlined in my previous chapter, I have theorised how the repertoire can enable the communication and representation of identity in ways that are beyond the capabilities of the written text. It is once again asked: does corporal movement perform representation in ways that are better suited to the Gujarati East African in Britain? I sustain this exploration of how and why embodied practices articulate the self and the collective, via the close reading of dance. I suggest that for a community marked by displacement, the capacity of ephemeral cultural production in performing identity ‘covertly’ is important. This ‘secretive’ nature of the community under discussion, I argue, shapes the alternative ‘texts’ of the dance; but I have found it useful to elaborate this concept through M.G Vassanji’s fictional text *The Book of Secrets*.²⁷⁴ How this private aspect of the doubly displaced community impacts upon the modes ripe for their representation, emerges as significant towards the close of this chapter. As well as considering the relationship between dance and identity, my

²⁷³ Parvati Raghuram, ‘Fashioning the South Asian Diaspora: Production and Consumption Tale’, in *South Asian Women in the Diaspora*, ed. by Nirmal Puwar, and Parvati Raghuram (Oxford: Berg, 2003), pp. 67-87 (p. 76).

²⁷⁴ M.G Vassanji, *The Book of Secrets* (London: Macmillan, 1996).

other research questions include: what does dress in the diaspora expose about the self and community; why are some dance moves favoured over others; and how are boundaries crossed and identities remade on the dance floor? Mimicking the widely acclaimed questions of Homi Bhabha, I also ask: ‘How are subjects formed “in-between”, or in excess of, the sum of the “parts” of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender, etc.)? How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities [...]’?²⁷⁵ As my research in this section attends to that which is performed rather than written, there is an inevitable methodological divergence from previous analysis, principally marked by the type of primary materials I work with, and how these have been obtained. To remain within the research objectives outlined in my previous chapter, throughout this chapter I have employed a self-reflexivity in my analysis. This cognisance begins here with an account of my methodologies.

Dancing Dandiya, Gathering Data

The Hindu festival of *Navratri* is celebrated once a year by the Gujarati community, generally around September and October, depending on the lunar calendar.²⁷⁶ In pursuit of primary material, it was initially during mid-October 2010 that I attended the festival at various locations in North London, then again in late September to early October in 2011.²⁷⁷ The need to compile primary data stems from the scarcity of official archives in English that exist on the two forms of dance I investigate. There are visual representations of *garba* and *dandiya-raas* available on the Internet

²⁷⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, ‘Introduction’, in *The Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 2.

²⁷⁶ See *Navratri*, <<http://www.pushti-marg.net/bhagwat/navratri.htm>> [accessed 15 February 2013]. This website is populated by a cultural practitioner, Bhagwat Shah, who has helped with the work of this chapter.

²⁷⁷ Precisely, I attended festivities on the 14th, 15th, and 16th October 2010, and 29th September and 2nd October 2011.

and, less frequently, within scholarly texts. In this chapter I make reference to an image printed in Agehananda Bharati's very useful text *The Asians in East Africa Jayhind and Uhuru*.²⁷⁸ In addition representations of *Navratri* dances can be located in fictional writings, such as Vassanji's *The Book of Secrets*, and in cinematic form, for instance in Gurinder Chadha's Hollywood meets Bollywood film *Bride and Prejudice*.²⁷⁹ Whilst these examples are valuable, to some extent, in the analysis of dance as a social knowledge, there are other, more prolific, forms of 'informal' documentation that I refer to. A wealth of moving visual material is available on the popular video-sharing website *YouTube.com*.²⁸⁰ This resource is interesting for the breadth and variety of representations it boasts, outside of regulation: accessible are videos from the sub-continent and all over Britain, both new and old of differing communities.²⁸¹ Available also are tutorials on 'how to play *garba*'.²⁸² In addition to these visual archives stored and available publicly, I utilise some images of *Navratri* from a personal archive of visual material gathered from family members. These have been collected over a period of a few years, and made available to me for research, from extended family based in Britain and East Africa.²⁸³

The primary data I principally refer to in this chapter is that obtained through qualitative methods: the observation, participation and documentation of community

²⁷⁸ Bharati, *The Asians in East Africa Jayhind and Uhuru*, p. 252.

²⁷⁹ *Bride and Prejudice*. Dir. Gurinder Chadha. Pathé Pictures International. 2004. The scene of *garba* in this film is set in Amritsar, India, making the representation tangential to this work.

²⁸⁰ *YouTube*, <<http://www.youtube.com/index?gl=GB>> [accessed 15 February 2013].

²⁸¹ There are indeed continuities among these various categories, of who performs and disseminates online and how they might perform, that speak to the discourse of identity and representation, which I later comment upon in the course of this chapter. Roy highlights a similar point regarding the place of the Internet as a 'democratizing hub for the formation of global cultural networks outside of state regulation'. Roy, 'The Body of New Asian Dance Music', p. 5.

²⁸² A note here, referring to this footage generally, regarding the ethical implications of using informal online visual material is imperative: whilst I did attend the available training within the University on the matter, these technologies are still fairly new and constantly evolving, thus the ethics of their use in academic research is yet uncultivated. I therefore carve my own trajectory, cautious to the sensitivities of such qualitative material, nevertheless enthusiastic about what they might offer in our understanding of diasporic identity.

²⁸³ It is these archives that too form the primary materials for my next chapter.

events. In 2010 I attended three evenings of the nine day festival in various North London locations: beginning with the festivities at Harrow Leisure Centre, I then attended Watford Leisure Centre and finally the Kenton *Mochi* Hall.²⁸⁴ In 2011 I returned first to Harrow Leisure Centre, then to the Kenton *Mochi* Hall. I chose these venues, from a huge number of festivities that are organised all around London, as well as Britain, for various reasons. The hall in Kenton was an immediate preference, as this facility was built and attended by my family's community – the *Mochi jat*, or *Mochi* 'caste'. The community that I refer to here, and which attends functions at this centre, is made up predominantly of Gujaratis who have migrated from East Africa to Britain. As a member of this community I have links to the facility, and was duly put in touch with Bhagwat Shah, a friend of the *Gujarati Arya Association* London (*GAA*). Although he is not a member of the double diaspora, Shah is a project manager by trade, and is in addition a 'cultural practitioner' in his free time, teaching classes on Indian culture to children between the age of eight and sixteen at a Hatchend school.²⁸⁵ My attendance at the events held at the Kenton *Mochi* Hall by the *GAA* thus had both a personal and professional quality. Before exploring the significance of this dual role at these cultural and religious events, something we have begun doing in the introduction, let us first briefly look to the other locations I attended and their significance.

Through the abundance of material on *YouTube.com* that was set in Harrow Leisure Centre it became clear that this was a popular location for large, energetic *Navratri* festivities. This fact, coupled with the invitation from a family friend, Anita

²⁸⁴ I located my research in North London chiefly because this is where I grew up and am therefore familiar with the communities. The links that are the fruit of these associations, as I explain, further guide my attendance at events.

²⁸⁵ Bhagwat Shah, born in Mumbai and migrated directly to Britain, has a website showcasing his broad knowledge of culture and religion. As the website's title suggests, there is a distinct emphasis on the subjective: Bhagwat's thoughts, <<http://www.pushti-marg.net/bhagwat/thoughts.htm>> [accessed 15 February 2013].

Shah, who works for the not for profit company Sangat meant that attendance at the Leisure Centre was imperative.²⁸⁶ Anita also alerted me to Sangat's vast newspaper archives that focus on Harrow 'Asians'.²⁸⁷ On occasions within the thesis I discuss these materials and here an article in the *Harrow Observer*, dated Thursday, May 10, 2007 helps us draw an understanding of the attendee's identity at Harrow Leisure Centre. The article centres on celebrations of Gujarati Day in Harrow, explaining that 'Harrow was [...] the perfect venue because of the high proportion of people of Gujarati origin who live in the borough'.²⁸⁸ Despite the invisibility of some identity categories in these spaces of celebration – as discussed later – this article underlines the commonality of Gujarati identity for this community. At this venue I also met Kalpesh Patel, a choreographer with a significant online presence. Finally, attendance at the Watford Leisure Centre came about through another affiliation: my immediate family's local Hindu group, of which my father is a member. The organisation that executed this event at Watford Leisure Centre, the *Watford Hindu Group (WHD)*, also runs Gujarati language classes.²⁸⁹

In 2011 I elected to return to Harrow Leisure Centre because of the remarkable dance formations I filmed in 2010. It was also valuable to return to the Kenton *Mochi* Hall given the subject of this thesis and the overtly Gujarati East African nature of attendees at this venue. In first attending these events I found that the negotiation of the participant-observer role problematic. As an unmistakable member of the Gujarati diasporic community in Britain, my questions concerned with the mechanics of the events were often met with confusion by other

²⁸⁶ Sangat, <<http://www.sangatcentre.org>> [accessed 15 February 2013].

²⁸⁷ Select copies of these articles are available for reference in Appendix A. The original archive is held at the Sangat Advice Centre, Sancroft Road, Harrow, HA3 7NS.

²⁸⁸ See Appendix A.

²⁸⁹ *Watford Hindu Group*, <<http://www.watfordhindugroup.org.uk>> [accessed 15 February 2013].

attendees.²⁹⁰ There seemed to be both an expectation that I implicitly knew the answer to the questions, and uncertainty at the concept of ‘studying’ *Navratri* dance. For example, my initial inquiries on the pedagogy of dance amongst the community’s youth solicited a response from an organiser along the lines of: ‘you know it is our culture, we just know’.²⁹¹ In addition, and rather memorably, one participant understood my research as a ‘school project’.²⁹² Coming from a literary critical background, this foray into ethnographic methodologies proved unsettling to begin with; however, I quickly adapted my approaches to accommodate the events I attended. This evolution involved relegating the overt, data collecting methodologies of note-taking and questioning during the event, in favour of participating in the dances, engaging in conversation about participation (rather than asking questions and interviewing), observing and listening to participants. In essence I ceased to mark myself out as ‘other’ and instead collected data discreetly. After the first evening I did not take along my notepad, but rather made field notes after the festivities. I did continue to employ my camera to document the event; however, it was not unusual to see participants taking photographs and filming during the festivities.

In undertaking qualitative methodologies, it is therefore the participant-observer strategy I have deployed.²⁹³ Because my previous chapter underlines the difficulties of the written text in the articulation of the Gujarati East African in

²⁹⁰ Given that the methodology of participant observation is rooted in anthropology, the challenges I faced as a member of the community, rather than primarily a researcher observing another culture, is unsurprising.

²⁹¹ Harrow Leisure Centre field notes.

²⁹² Watford Leisure Centre field notes. While David Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction* (Sage: London, 2001), pp. 222-23, warns against ‘anecdotalism’ (the ‘tendency to select data to fit an ideal conception’), I would argue that these responses to my research prove integral to the framework of analysis I later demonstrate. They, too, are fairly representative of the responses I received and sensed.

²⁹³ For this research I conducted two University of Leeds Ethical Reviews (Ref: PVAR 11-004; PVAR 10-043), and attended relevant training sessions on participant-observation methodology and ethics.

Britain, I deliberately eschew other, language-orientated methods, including the use of interviews, focus groups and questionnaires. These are methods reliant on language, and therefore inadequate for the framework of my research, concerned with the body as text, and what it can perform. Whilst I have produced what can be understood as field notes that record observations and logistics of the events, these are secondary to the visual materials I have compiled. Primarily, I seek to consider the visual material compiled, as a sense of Taylor's repertoire is available through these sources. There are, nevertheless, inadequacies in this material, owing to the documentary nature of the film and photograph: we steadfastly remain hostage to, in Taylor's terms, the 'archive'. André Lepecki too reflects upon this 'epistemological crisis of writing in motion', referring to a 'crisis of the visible' when researching academically corporal movement.²⁹⁴ The representations of identity, performed by the body, however, cannot any longer be overlooked. These bodily performances, being made available in visual materials, make the reading of these materials imperative. These materials are laden with unexplored richness, and invite analysis into how the double diaspora represents itself.

Further commentary on the methodology of my research – its pitfalls and benefits – is braided together with the close reading sections at the end of this chapter. However, as well as the duality of my role as both academic and community member, and the need to use certain methodologies over others, it is worth noting here the difficulties that manifested themselves in the task of dancing and thinking. Moments to speak to participants were few and far between, and indeed when they arose there was a negotiation between the lively, joyous mood and a moment to

²⁹⁴ André Lepecki, 'Introduction: Presence and Body in Dance and Performance Theory', in *Of The Presence Of The Body: Essays On Dance And Performance Theory*, ed. by André Lepecki (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, c2004), pp. 1-13 (pp. 4-5).

catch one's breath and intellectual probing. The necessary compromises were quickly implemented and a useful set of data was collected in the form of field notes and visual material. As I have indicated, however, the fluidity I have employed in response to my experiences make for interesting analysis, and certainly contribute to the understanding of the Gujarati East African diaspora in Britain this chapter pursues. Through the negotiations of my early endeavours, therefore, I gradually learnt how to transfer my existing close reading skills to ethnographic work.

Writing Dance Scholarship

As Jane C. Desmond explains, the presence of scholarship on dance in cultural studies is relatively modest:

Cultural Studies remains largely text-based or object-based, with literary texts still predominating, followed by studies of film texts and art historical objects. [... T]he complex effects of the commodification of movement styles, their migration, modification, quotation, adoption, or rejection as part of the larger production of social identities through physical enactment, [has not] been rigorously theorized.²⁹⁵

Whilst some work exists in other fields, such as performance studies and music, many of these texts have either an emphasis on music analysis, or do not contextualise dance through the lens of culture.²⁹⁶ Bryan S. Turner extends this argument to consider sociology, underlining that social 'theoretical traditions are indeed analytical cul-de-sacs, which offer nothing to the development of a genuine sociology of the body'. His study as a result argues for 'recognition of the

²⁹⁵ Jane C. Desmond, 'Embodying Difference: Issues in Dance and Cultural Studies', in *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance*, ed. by Jane C. Desmond, (London: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 29-54, (p. 30).

²⁹⁶ For example Rehan Hyder's *Brimful of Asia: Negotiating Ethnicity on the UK Music Scene* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) focuses solely on the Asian music industry in Britain, refusing not only to comment on, for example, lyrics, but also dance.

embodiment of social actors'.²⁹⁷ There is thus a lacuna in the understandings of the body and its movement not only in cultural studies, but furthermore in sociology itself. Upon researching *Navratri* the neglect of scholarly consideration of dance and the body is even more evident. There are no academic English language texts that foreground the history of these festive dances, and certainly very few that discuss the dancing body in any other academic fashion. Ann David's significant ethnography, however, does consider the Gujarati dances of *garba* and *dandiya-raas*, particularly in her doctoral work 'Performing Faith: Dance, Identity and Religion in Hindu Communities in Leicester and London'.²⁹⁸ As well as David's work, my research shall intersect with writings on the popular dance forms of salsa and *bhangra*, both of which are considered as transnational forms that permeate borders and express identities.²⁹⁹ My analysis also benefits from secondary material concerned with other traditions, such as Caribbean dance and music theory.³⁰⁰

It is through dance theory that I forge my understanding that movement can represent community. Barbara Browning's insistence that the body can articulate something that language cannot has been particularly valuable in this task. In applying to my research Browning's scholarship that argues that samba is a bodily writing that documents Afro-Brazilian culture, I reflect upon how this formation of

²⁹⁷ Turner, *The Body and Society*, p. 37. It is worth noting here that this quotation derives from Turner's introduction to his first edition of the text, which is included in the second edition. In his second edition, he admits that there is now more research on the body, but highlights the emphasis on discourses of gender, desire and labour that generate a lacuna in a discussion on movement itself.

²⁹⁸ Ann David, 'Performing Faith'. Her post-doctoral research focuses primarily on the Tamil community and their dance practices.

²⁹⁹ For example, Lise Waxer (ed.), *Situating Salsa: Global Markets and Local Meanings in Latin Popular Music* (London: Routledge, 2002), Christopher Washburne, *Sounding Salsa: Performing Latin Music in New York City* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), Ananya J. Kabir, 'Salsa/Bhangra: Transnational Rhythm Cultures in Comparative Perspective', *Music and Arts in Action*, 3:3 (2011), 40-55, Rajinder Dudrah, *Bhangra: Birmingham and Beyond* (Birmingham: Birmingham City Council, 2007) and Rajinder Dudrah, 'Drum and Dhol: British Bhangra and Diasporic South Asian Identity Formation' in *European Cultural Studies*, 5, 3, 363-383, 1990. Roy has also contributed this field more recently: 'The Body of New Asian Dance Music' and *Bhangra Moves: From Ludhiana to London and Beyond*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

³⁰⁰ Namely Peter Manuel, *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).

cultural identity is strategically deployed and hidden.³⁰¹ By exploring bodily movement, I furthermore illustrate how the ‘traditional’ dress of *Navratri* represents varying identity, vis-à-vis my primary material, in conjunction with Parvati Raghuram and Emma Tarlo’s individual contributions to South Asian diasporic fashion studies.³⁰² Linda Lynton’s interesting work exclusively on *saris* will too assist me in demonstrating my thesis.³⁰³ However, before I begin in the task of analysing the *Navratri* celebrations with the help of these approaches, we must first take a necessary excursion into the logistics of *Navratri*.

Navratri: Playing *Garba* and *Dandiya-raas*

The festival of *Navratri* lasts nine nights and the word literally translates as such: *nav* can be translated from Gujarati into ‘nine’, and *rat* means ‘night’.³⁰⁴ The length of the event is important because it reflects the roots of the festival. In Hindu mythology it is said the Goddess Durga, a beautiful young woman of divine creation combining the powers of several deities, fought the buffalo demon Mahisasura for nine days before killing him on the tenth. On the same day Lord Ram conquered the multiple headed Ravan, and it is for this reason the festival of *Navratri* is often associated with Ram. The length of the battle and defeat are now celebrated as *Navratri*, and the dances undertaken symbolise the conflict. Whilst female power is celebrated, the paradigm of the victory of good over evil is too embedded in the event.³⁰⁵ Kapila Vatsyayan further explicates that although the origin of *Rasa* dances

³⁰¹ Barbara Browning, *Samba: Resistance in Motion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

³⁰² Tarlo, *Clothing Matters*, Puwar *et al*, *South Asian Women in the Diaspora*.

³⁰³ Lynton, *The Sari*.

³⁰⁴ These are also Hindi words, which are Sanskrit derived and hence explicable across North Indian languages.

³⁰⁵ As indicated above, the historical scholarship on *Navratri* is lacking, however there are some online sources that provide articulate reference: *Navratri*, <<http://www.studentorg.umd.edu/desi/article84.htm>> [accessed 15 February 2013]. Other, less useful

can be traced back to Hindu mythology, these moves are also connected to the agricultural cycle.³⁰⁶

Undertaken in many parts of India, *Navratri* varies from region to region in traditions and customs. Where the dances of *garba* and *dandiya-raas* are now prolific in other parts of India, these styles are known for their Gujarati heritage and extraction.³⁰⁷ Originally, only women partook in *garba*, dancing in circles around a centre piece.³⁰⁸ However, now men commonly play in these free-forming concentric circles around a *murti* of Durga, or Amba as Gujaratis might recognise her.³⁰⁹ During *garba* the dancers, or players, revolve in their circles, taking steps forward and backwards, clapping in time. Previously women would have provided their own music, by singing during dance; now religious instrumental bands accompany the participants' movements. The music will often increase in tempo as the dance progresses, and participants increase their pace accordingly, creating a very fast, frenzied, energetic atmosphere. There are several versions of the *garba* and often each is played during an evening's celebration. Interpretations of the moves of the dance vary, as I shall discuss later.

Whilst there are several forms of *raas*, *dandiya-raas* is performed in addition to *garba* during *Navratri*. Although now played all over the sub-continent, originating from Western India, this is a popular dance of Gujarat. The performance involves the use of *dandiya*, which are sticks of varying material and colour around

articles include: *Garba the folk dance of the people of Gujarat*,

<<http://www.exoticindiaart.com/product/BB87/>> [accessed 15 February 2013].

³⁰⁶ Kapila Vatsyayan, *Traditions of Indian Folk Dance* (New Delhi: Indian Book Company, 1976), p. 202.

³⁰⁷ David, 'Performing Faith', p. 133, discusses the 'Gujaratiness' of *Navratri*. Also see Vatsyayan, *Traditions of Indian Folk Dance*, p. 202.

³⁰⁸ In the past, in India, this centrepiece was often a clay vase or pitcher that is said to have symbolised the womb. Interestingly, this symbolism has been lost, a testimony to the clash of the sacred and profane I discuss in the conclusion of this chapter. See Vatsyayan, *Traditions of Indian Folk Dance*, p. 193 for a description of *garba* in India.

³⁰⁹ *Murtis* are sacred representations of deities. See Figures 1 and 2, p. 118-9, for examples of *Navratri Murtis*. I shall explain the significance of the verb 'play' in this context within this section.

twelve to eighteen inches long. The dance style is often referred to by simply this word: *dandiya*. The ways in which the *dandiya* are today made and decorated proves to be an interesting object of close reading. Both men and women traditionally play *dandiya-raas* and the dance operates in pairs, meaning the group must contain an even number. Generally two lines are formed, with partners facing each other:

The lines move clockwise, and each person steps forward to hit sticks with their partner, then moves on two people. At the end of the line, each turns and joins the line opposite, so the movement is continuous. The music starts very slowly [...] It is an eight-beat time cycle called Kaherva and performed in the following manner: on the first beat your own sticks are hit together, followed by right sticks with your partner, then left sticks (or the same stick if using one). Each one then turns away to the left to hit their own sticks together before turning back to the partner to hit right sticks again, and before moving on two places to a new partner.³¹⁰

Again, during this dance the music will increase in tempo and there is license for creativity: some use two sticks, some use one; others might turn on the spot when they step back, others might instead reach and hit the floor with their *dandiya*; some might even switch places with the partner opposite or beside them. These moves will differ from person to person, often changing as the tempo of the music intensifies.³¹¹

The arrangements of this practice are said to symbolise the fight between Durga and Mahisasura, with the sticks symbolising swords.

In interpreting the symbolism of the dance moves, we must note the interchangeable use of the verb ‘play’, in the place of ‘dance’, in my descriptions. A direct translation from the modern Gujarati verb રમવું (ramvu), one ‘plays’ *garba* and *dandiya-raas*, which perhaps, as David’s research suggests, denotes the informal,

³¹⁰ David, ‘Performing Faith’, pp. 138-9.

³¹¹ Vatsyayan, *Traditions of Indian Folk Dance*, p. 203, describes how in the past in India *dandiya* dances often involved a ‘solo dance with [a male player’s] own sticks’, as well as collective dance. Generally, however, in the diaspora, the formation is of two lines facing each other and interactive dance.

pleasure-orientated aspect of the practice.³¹² David's examination of 'play' also proposes that the verb 'dance' is inappropriate for these activities, given the connotations of dancing relating to nightclubs and staged performance. The idea of 'playing' during *Navratri*, however, can further be investigated via the lens of Krishna's *lila*. The Sanskrit term *lila* encompasses the vast possibilities of ancient divine play. However, *lila*, and particularly *rasa lila*, is often associated with Krishna. The traditional story recounts the Hindu deity enjoying secret, spontaneous dance with his *gopis* (cowgirls) throughout one night, which is mythically stretched to last billions of years. The 'play' during *Navratri* can thus be understood as embodying the sacred, ancient Hindu mythology *lila* refers to. Some participants might also feel they transcend the reality of the festival, to instead partake in *rasa lila* with Krishna himself.³¹³ A spiritual element is subsequently embedded in *Navratri*. The religious importance of *Navratri* as a festival adds yet another dimension to the dances of *garba* and *dandiya raas*. A difference exists, however, between *Navratri* as a Hindu festival that is innately spiritual, and the many forms of dance that are inserted into that space. This playful tension of how religion manifests itself, and how it becomes invisible, is pursued later in this chapter in reference to the drama *Strictly Dandia*. As I have described in my previous chapter, religion, however, is a significant mode of identification. Here, I seek to recognise the socio-religious importance of 'play'.³¹⁴

³¹² David, 'Performing Faith', p. 111.

³¹³ This experience might culminate in spiritual possession. Richard Burghart, (ed.), *Hinduism in Great Britain: the Perpetuation of Religion in an Alien Cultural Milieu* (London: Tavistock, 1987), comments upon how 'the Gujarati castes from East Africa [have a] predisposition to becom[ing] possessed' particularly during *Navratri*, p. 43.

David, 'Performing Faith', pp. 139-40 also acknowledges the stories of Krishna and his *gopis*, which the dances of *Navratri* might symbolise.

³¹⁴ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (London: Temple Smith, 1970), is a significant text on 'play'. The critic thinks through play as entangled with society and culture, contending that play has a place in sacred performance (p. 33) and that 'dancing is a particular and particularly perfect form of playing' (p. 189).

During both of these traditions, participants join the groups of dances and leave as they wish, as the performances might last anything from ten minutes to almost an hour. In addition there are attendees, often comprised of men and the very elderly, who are simply watching, seated, from the sidelines: most other attendees, including children from the age of seven and up, will participate at some point or another. With the demand for the events being high and legal regulations prolific, ticketing of these festivities is now ubiquitous. Charges will range from around £2.00 to £5.00 per person, per night, per establishment, with ‘season’ tickets often available for all nine nights at a discounted rate. These tickets can either be bought in advance, something that is encouraged, or on the night at the door: the event generally begins at 7 to 7.30pm, picking up at around 9pm. Conclusion is around 11pm to 12am. Marketing of these events is through word of mouth.³¹⁵ While all the venues I attended had a male presence co-ordinating the ticketing and finances at the entrance, some had additional professional door staff and security. The duties of these men extend to arranging the ticketing of *aarti* plates, a major religious facet of the evening. During *aarti* all other happenings cease, and most attendees either look to the centrepiece or gather around it. A devotional Hindu song of the same name is sung during the practice and a purchased plate with a lit candle, or simply a lit candle alone, will be held out and rotated in front of the *murti*. Figure 1, 2 and 3 illustrate *aarti* in progress, and the deity centrepieces that dances focus upon. All, because of the sacred nature of the gesture, anticipate the fundamental component that is *aarti*. Most attendants will not leave until partaking of *aarti*. While David describes some

³¹⁵ David comments on the deficiency of information on these events and suggests that this is a deliberate strategy to limit the attendance of ‘outsiders’ at these festivities. David, ‘Performing Faith’, pp. 136-7. This sense of secrecy does indeed compliment my later readings, entitled ‘covert culture’.

participants entering into a trance during *aarti*, by invoking the Goddess, I have never witnessed or heard of this during my experiences.³¹⁶



Figure 1



Figure 2

³¹⁶ David, 'Performing Faith', p. 145.



Figure 3

‘One has No Choice but to Think with the Body’³¹⁷

As I have delineated in my previous chapter, how the Gujarati East African community in Britain represents identity is deeply bound up in media that are beyond the realm of language. Jane Desmond explicates why these media are so deeply entrenched in corporality:

And because so many of our most explosive and most tenacious categories of identity are mapped onto bodily difference, including race and gender, but expanding through a continual slippage of categories to include ethnicity and nationality and even sexuality as well, we should not ignore the ways in which dance signals and enacts social identities in all their continually changing configurations.³¹⁸

It would seem that to access certain categories of identity-formation, one is compelled to study the body at play. And in fact to overlook the dancing body is to not only ignore these categories, but to ignore the transforming intricacies of identity, which dance manifests. In her absorbing text, *Samba: Resistance in Motion*,

³¹⁷ Browning, *Samba*, p. 13.

³¹⁸ Desmond, ‘Embodying Difference’, p. 49.

Barbara Browning contributes to Desmond's assertions when she writes of the role of dance in Afro-Brazilian culture. Stating that samba is a form of 'cultural record keeping' in the absence of literary history, she explicates that dance is indeed a superior form of documentation, a kind of 'bodily writing'.³¹⁹ Browning illuminates how only certain knowledge can be articulated through dance, underlining a different system of thought, one that is not linear, language-orientated or thus compatible with western epistemology. It would seem the body speaks what the mind cannot, whilst also, as Desmond demonstrates, marks out social, and I would add cultural, identity through difference.

In her doctoral thesis, David explains that her Gujarati *Navratri* participants in Leicester 'all believed that to some degree, the learning and practice of dance confirms Asian cultural identity', and they also 'viewed religion as being an integral part of dance practice'.³²⁰ Similarly, in a Harrow Leader newspaper article about the festival, dated Thursday October 2nd 2003, an organiser explains that the healthy turnout at the event is 'nice because they're [the young attendees] preserving the culture and traditions'.³²¹ The attendance of *Navratri* by Gujaratis therefore reveals both religious affiliations to Hinduism and an 'Asian cultural identity'.³²² These basic markers of identity are not only exhibited through attendance, but through the participation in the dances: by simply having the knowledge of how to play *garba* and *dandiya-raas*, alongside other customs such as removing shoes before entering the dance space near the *murti*, participants reveal something of themselves to onlookers and other attendees. It is worth noting that these specificities are, however, only available to those that can read them: members of the same community and, or

³¹⁹ Browning, *Samba*, p. xxii.

³²⁰ David, 'Performing Faith', p. 154.

³²¹ See Appendix A.

³²² However, in the course of this chapter the assumption about the religiosity of *Navratri* and the idea that culture and tradition remain static both become unsettled.

those educated in this cultural practice. These basic markers of identity reveal themselves to be further complicated on excavation. Because these dances are a ‘cultural sign of the Indian’,³²³ to the knowing eye at these events there is an indication of religiosity, ‘Asianess’ and ‘Indianness’ through participation and attendance; however, where and how these bodies choose to move, indeed represents other narratives.

Navratri’s Macarena Moves

Harrow Leisure Centre, a community hall that was by far the biggest of all the venues I attended, was my initial location of research. The entrance to the hall had metal railings to control the flow of entrants and those leaving, and was manned by burly security guards, or bouncers. Inside the hall, the room was filled and there were also marshals around the dance area and *murti*, who again controlled the use of the space and those who used it. On an elevated stage the musicians played the music accompanying the dance, and made announcements regarding the commencement of *aarti*. The customary format prevailed: *garba* began the evening, followed by *aarti*, another set of *garba* and finally *dandiya*. This format is more or less recognisable; however, some surprises intervened during the *dandiya* section and after the other Gujarati dances ended. As the tempo of music increased during *dandiya* the choreography became more varied and ambitious: participants would often switch places during the beats and movement was considerably faster, involving turns and spins. Filmed in October 2010 at Harrow Leisure Centre, Video 1, specifically towards the end, documents this frenzied, exuberant and pleasurable stage of the play. Whilst what can be seen in the foreground of the video is not unusual – yet

³²³ Minoru Mio, ‘Transformation of a Dance Festival and the Reshaping of Locality’, in *Minpaku*, Number 26, June 2008, 1-3 (3).

nevertheless must be noted as skilled exhibition of the dance form – what occurs in the background is fascinating.

Behind the proficient *dandiya* dancers are another group of participants, who are clearly not undertaking ‘traditional’ play: instead they are formed in a grid and are executing the Macarena, a popular nineties dance that accompanies the Spanish song of the same name. Throughout the Macarena performance the *dandiya* stick has become redundant, either held by the participant or abandoned completely. As the tempo intensifies this version of the pop dance quickly disintegrates into free form dancing. The Macarena moves are, nevertheless, uncannily in time with the beat, up until its disintegration. Behind the row of girls, the boys can be seen to be moving with a bounce in their knees and their arms outstretched, not horizontally as the nineties version dictates, but at an upward angle. Both of these movements, I argue, introduce an element of popular culture *bhangra* to the European style.³²⁴ Once free-form dancing commences the footage allows the spectator to glimpse unstructured moves, and, in the clapping and throwing of the hands in the air, this section of dance becomes further aligned to pop *bhangra*.³²⁵ The young male participant wearing a chequered shirt and jeans, beside the female dancers, and partially hidden by the *dandiya* dancers, particularly exemplifies this amalgamation of the dances. As the tempo increases, from doing the Macarena, the participant suddenly begins to frantically punch his hands into the air and kick his feet out. This change into

³²⁴ *Bhangra* itself originates from Punjab and was a Sikh celebratory folk dance and song marking harvest. It has now modified paralleling diasporic migrations, and is synonymous with modern ‘British Asian’ culture. For some of the debates concerning *bhangra*, and discussions of its early occurrence in Britain see: *Disorienting Rhythms: The Politics of the New Asian Dance Music*, ed. By S Sharma, J Hutnyk, and A Sharma (1996); S Banerji, and G Baumann, ‘Bhangra 1984–88: Fusion and Professionalization in a Genre of South Asian Dance Music’ in *Black Music in Britain: Essays on the Afro-Asian Contribution to Popular Music*, ed. by Paul Oliver (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990), pp. 137-153; and, Roy, *Bhangra Moves*. See Vatsyayan, *Traditions of Indian Folk Dance* for a discussion of the roots of Bhangra in India.

³²⁵ Vatsyayan, *Traditions of Indian Folk Dance*, describes the *bhangra* style as ‘an abrupt jerky movement of the shoulders and a hop-step: this followed by many vigorous movements of the whole body and the raising of the hands to the shoulders or above the head level’ (p. 126).

bhangra dancing then just as suddenly becomes a faster, more bouncy version of the Macarena once again. The two styles of dances merge into one and seamlessly entangle within this vernacular space.

As I mentioned in the introductory sections of this chapter, a motivation in attending the events at Harrow Leisure Centre was the prolific visual material available online filmed at the venue. There was one moving visual archive that was of specific interest, and indeed the video is significant to this discussion on the mixing of dance forms. Entitled *Garba at Harrow leisure centre*, and available on *YouTube.com*, it focuses on a male and female participant, with others dancing in the background.³²⁶ Typically the young woman is wearing a *lehenga*, a skirt and blouse combination, and the young man dons a shirt and jeans. They appear to be dancing alone, and undertaking *garba* dance. Around 19 seconds, when the male dancer's back is facing the camera, the shoulder jerking associated with the *bhangra* style becomes clear, and indeed, once he turns to face the camera around 23 seconds, the insertion of the *bhangra* style into the *garba* dance is more obvious. The movement of the shoulders in this way continues throughout the length of the video, and can be contrasted with the female participant who does not contract and relax the shoulders muscles, but instead retains the movements of the *garba* style through the length of her arms, while her shoulders remain more or less static.

This penchant for non-Gujarati customs is illustrated again during my fieldwork, later in the same evening. After the two dances were played, *aarti* performed, *fudhri* or *chakri* undertaken,³²⁷ finally another form of activity was executed. Video 2, filmed in 2011 when these moves were repeated from the previous year, captures this: beginning with many participants crouching on the

³²⁶ *Garba at Harrow leisure centre*, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnWDKdMrBeE>>, [accessed 15 February 2013].

³²⁷ *Fudhri* or *chakri* occurs when pairs join both hands facing each other and spin round very quickly.

floor, a slower, elegiac musical accompaniment becomes louder, faster and more joyous. The change in tempo elicits those on the floor to jump up and fling their arms in the air, whilst jumping on the spot in time to the beat, or kicking their legs out and bouncing from side to side.³²⁸ This action, of crouching and jumping, was repeated. These moves – with the arms in the air, the bouncing from one foot to another and the jerking of the shoulders – again refer to pop *bhangra*. In 2010, whilst this section of dance did not last long, its appearance at the end of the festivities was quite a surprise. Once the music stopped, the participants petitioned for another dance to no avail, and finally the hall quickly emptied.

At neither of the venues I subsequently attended in 2010 and 2011 did I experience this last dance activity. As discussed later, there were indeed traces of *bhangra* or *filmi* dance entangled with the Gujarati dances; however, here the digression from what is understood as the norm – and indeed what the other events confirmed as the norm – was extensive.³²⁹ I, however, also later learnt from informal conversation with attendees at Watford Leisure Centre and Kenton *Mochi* Hall that Harrow Leisure Centre was deemed as ‘rowdy’, and a place to avoid.³³⁰ The need for the ample security presence, far more than at any other venue, and the presence of police inside the hall in 2011, would certainly corroborate this idea; nevertheless, during my visit there was no ‘trouble’ whatsoever. The description of Harrow resonates with David’s experience of another hall in Leicester, and I quote here at length both to highlight the similarity, and to take up the opportunity to more comprehensively document the *Navratri* festivities:

³²⁸ There are some instances of groups of women dancing in formation once the music elevates; however, these dances are not *garba* or *dandiya* either.

³²⁹ It is worth noting here the interchangeability of ‘*Bhangra*’, ‘Bollywood’, and *filmi* dance terms, that relates to the nationalisation of the Punjabi folk dance. See Footnote 324 (p. 125) for further discussion and reference to *Bhangra*.

³³⁰ Field notes on Watford Leisure Centre.

Some respondents interviewed commented rather disparagingly about *Navratri* at De Montfort Hall, saying that it was well-known as “a pick-up joint”, and one twenty-two year old girl told me she would never go there, adding that “They're all so snooty, looking at what everyone is wearing and making comments” (author's fieldnotes 10.10.02). The young men are mainly in western clothes, with a few wearing Indian *kurtas*, and with stylishly gelled hair. As previous years have seen some trouble with Asian gangs, there was a tight security presence on the door with bouncers employed and tickets carefully checked.³³¹

As well as the unfavourable reputation that precedes these venues, there is a performativity that parallels the two locations, which conflicts with the spiritual nature of the Gujarati dance practices performed. As indicated by David's interviewees that I quoted earlier, *garba* and *dandiya-raas* are both bound up with the sacred. Underlining the religiosity within sacred dances of another festival, David describes a dancer who evidently does not move for an audience but for spirituality. Referring to two performances the woman explains: ‘in both cases, I did not treat it as a performance, at all. It was not a performance for an audience. The dance was for Siva; *it is Siva*’ (Emphasis added).³³² These dances are thus in effect dedicated to, and a celebration of, a higher being, entangled with spiritual possession. There is, certainly for this ‘performer’, no performativity in dancing these moves. Yet, for the participants at Harrow there is the intrusion of the secular moves of the Macarena, and indeed I witnessed this secular dance during my fieldwork the following year in 2011. This style is wholly performance orientated, and spiritually seems not to be the focus. Similarly, in Leicester David's interviewee laments the exhibitory nature of dress in De Montfort, again signifying the performativity of attendance of this festivity. According to the comments David collects about this event, it would seem that the evening is about seeing and being

³³¹ David, ‘Performing Faith’, p. 137.

³³² *Ibid.*, p. 234.

seen, rather than participating in a celebration of Goddess Durga's triumph over evil, or dedicating the self to God through dance.

The inclusion of the Macarena over, or perhaps in addition to, the worship of the Goddess Durga, of course illuminates a complication of diasporic Indian identity in Britain. The emphasis on dress indicated by the attendees in Leicester, and the inclusion of secular dance, signal towards an identity entangled with popular culture. This is a youth culture where participants' behaviour is fashioned through popular music and an accent on flashy modes of dressing. These additions to *Navratri* festivities reflect vernacular culture that is available on a day-to-day basis. In both venues it is the generations that are born and bred in Britain, and have thus grown up with vernacular culture, not only available to them, but furthermore contributing to this mode of representation, that incorporate popular culture in their identity.³³³ In short, the performance of the Macarena in the *Navratri* space speaks of the cultural hybridity of the 'British Asian' youths who perform them. The term cultural hybridity has, however, often directed these discourses on Indians in Britain to suggestions that there is a phenomenon of 'clash of culture'.³³⁴ The addition of the secular into the non-secular space also quickly brings to the forefront discourses based on competition. Whether the spirituality of *Navratri* is being marginalised for the inclusion of, for example, the Macarena is pertinent to this discussion. However, as I have suggested earlier, in conjunction with Rothberg's work, the framework of

³³³ Kim Knott, 'Hinduism in Britain', in *The South Asian religious diaspora in Britain, Canada, and the United States*, ed. by Harold Coward, John R. Hinnells, and Raymond Brady Williams (NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 89-107 (pp. 95-6) outlines the sources of cultural and religious knowledge for the generation who 'have little or no link to India': festivals, stories, TV, videos, devotional music, periodicals etc.

³³⁴ See Anjoom A. Mukadam, 'Shattering Stereotypes: Post-Diasporic Swaminarayan Gujaratis in London', in *Gujaratis in the West: Evolving Identities in Contemporary Society*, ed. by Anjoom A. Mukadam, and Sharmina Mawani (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 106-126 (p. 107), for a list of critics who have posited this type of argument.

competitive identity need not dominate, and other, less linear, modes of thinking may be more appropriate here.³³⁵

Accordingly, a more useful approach, which moves away from the hegemonic binaries that define western thought, would be to think of cultural hybridity in the Indian diaspora as akin to bilingualism. In his acclaimed text, *Desh Pardesh: the South Asian presence in Britain*, Roger Ballard explicates this metaphor of bilingualism: Asian youths are ‘skilled cultural navigators, with a sophisticated capacity to manoeuvre their own way to their advantage both inside and outside the ethnic colony’.³³⁶ Ballard’s more measured vision of the Indian diaspora in Britain certainly speaks to how the double diaspora manage identity. Nonetheless, although there is no evidence of ‘culture clash’ in the *Navratri* space I consider, I would too argue there is less of the code switching between cultures that Ballard describes. Instead there are signs of the formation of new ethnicities and a dynamic amalgamation of varying traditions.³³⁷ As Desmond, alongside Browning, articulates in the quotes I offer in my opening sections, the body, and the way it moves and dresses, is able to express this multiplicity of ethnic identity, which continually evolves and transforms. On the one hand the attendance of *Navratri*, and the partaking of religious dance and ‘Indian dress’, expresses a religious and ethnic identity, on the other the inclusion of non-secular moves and an emphasis on appearance and ‘flashy’ dress signal towards vernacular culture. The body can thereby express through performance the complexities of identity. However, whilst embodied practices and the expression of hybrid identity can be examined from an academic perspective, there appears to be a correlation between the perceived lack of

³³⁵ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*.

³³⁶ Roger Ballard, ‘The Emergence of *Desh Pardesh*’, in *Desh Pardesh: the South Asian presence in Britain*, ed. by Roger Ballard, (London: Hurst, 1994), pp. 1-35 (p. 31).

³³⁷ Mukadam, ‘Shattering Stereotypes’ makes a similar point, that there is some kind of fusion occurring.

respectability of the events that overtly display vernacular culture, and their lack of religiosity in the mind of certain attendees.

If the representation of vernacular culture marks the events at Harrow Leisure Centre, there is indeed an absence of clarity of ethnic identity manifested at the venue. Because geography is the identity marker that defines the community centre, it is unclear whether the attendees at this centre are of any particular *jat* or ethnicity. Although I have indicated that Gujarat is the common denominator for many Indians who live in Harrow, the hall is filled with single migrants and double migrants alike, as well as those from varying *jats*. In the chaos of *Navratri*, identifying where from, or of what background, the players are, is near impossible. The ethnic identity of attendees at the Watford Leisure Centre is similar: because a local geographically distinct community defines the space, ethnic identity becomes invisible. To the skilled, discerning eye perhaps the region of India where another attendee has migrated from, or whether that person is a *Mochi* or *Lohana* might be clear; however, in a mixed participant group, for the majority the intricacies of ethnic identity are veiled in these spaces.³³⁸

Indeed, this ambiguity was highlighted by the conversation that occupied attendees in Watford. In discussion with another group, the heritage of our family and their own was central to the proceedings. Many of the questions centred on this topic of roots. Nor was this questioning limited to heritage in India. As well as identifying our Gujarati extraction, *jat* information was also sought, in addition to our status as double migrants, and occupations: all of this seemingly hidden in the environment of the community hall. Whilst on one hand the idea of ‘Indianness’ and ‘Hinduness’ can be understood to unite the attendees, on the other hand, this space

³³⁸ Like the *mochi* caste, *Lohanas* are another grouping, who are incidentally prolific in the double diaspora.

emptied of ethnic markers can be read as somewhere identity is deliberately concealed. Interestingly, the sub-text to the questioning of identity related to eager parents looking for prospective partners for their offspring: there was an assessment of compatibility taking place during our conversations. Generally, a first port of call for these explorations would be within one's own caste community; however, as eligible partners are being snapped up and off-spring are more discriminating in who they agree to meet and commit to, parents are compelled to reassess their own understandings of what makes a suitable spouse. As an eager father, attempting to climb the caste system via the marriage of his son, in the play *Strictly Dandia* contends: 'And these days... caste...what does it matter? Shah, Lohanna... I say to Dinesh...Gujarati girl will do.'³³⁹ The mixed participant events in community halls I describe thus present an opportunity to hide and unveil identity as and when is suited. There is too a voyeuristic dimension to this parental gaze searching for a daughter-in-law or son-in-law. These layerings of social interactions in the diasporic *Navratri* space are playfully dramatised in the performance *Strictly Dandia*, which also highlights the capacity of the festival space to hide and reveal identity as occasion calls.

Strictly Hindu Gujarati: *Strictly Dandia*

Whilst acknowledging the significance of communal dance to deracinated communities, the play *Strictly Dandia* also foregrounds the narrative of the twice migration. In the introductory passages to the written document of the play, entitled 'Garbas, Dandias and Bhangras', it is explained that 'communal dance helped [migrants] cope with the loss of homelands and the indignity of arriving in a place

³³⁹ Bhuchar *et al*, *Strictly Dandia*, Scene 11, p. 47.

As no line numbers exist in this written version of the play, I reference Scene and Page Numbers for the play itself, and where no page numbers exist in the introduction prose I reference paragraph.

where they were needed but not wanted.³⁴⁰ The legacy of twice migration is signposted early on in the play when the Gujarati character Bharat, a festival attendee and eager father, exclaims in Scene One: ‘When *olo* Idi Amin chucked me out, I came with just my muffler and anorak, and look where I am now’.³⁴¹ There are numerous further references to the community dramatised being of Gujarati East African heritage. These include family members now located in Canada, community friends migrating from Tanzania, an East African themed *Navratri* evening and a dance to a ‘classic Swahili hit’.³⁴² Via these signposts, and the description of the drama being set during ‘one *Navratri* season in Contemporary London’, later clarified as a venue in North London, it becomes clear many of the play’s characters have experienced twice migration.³⁴³ The hall itself, where the festival comes to pass, is subject to the competing desires of the various community groups who occupy it. The hall’s geographical location, and size, renders it desirable and sought after amongst the characters. The drama presents a mixed-caste *Navratri* community, as the proceedings play out over an ‘intercaste’ dance competition.

The hall is, however, also a space, like *Navratri* itself, where other forms of representation and identity operate. Beyond migration heritage, representation is splintered further along religious lines. Just as *Hansa’s* cookbooks, and her deliberate vegetarian diet, create and showcase a transnational Gujarati Hindu identity, as contended in my previous chapter, here the festival space provides a space to unfold similar identities. Like *Hansa’s* paratexts, it is important to note that the *Navratri* festival space is not only posited as quintessentially Hindu, but simultaneously Gujarati. There is a Hinudisation of the self and community via the

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 1 of 12.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.* Scene 1, p. 5.

³⁴² *Ibid.* Scene 4, p. 21, 23, Scene 8, pp. 33, 37.

³⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 2.

Navratri festival, creating a unified community, which becomes disrupted by the invasion of the other. This other is the Muslim male youth, who enters the festival space allegedly ‘after’ Hindu girls. The Muslim youth is compelled to veil his true identity via the two-fold procedure whereby his Muslim name is effaced, to permit a Hinduised renaming: Raza becomes Raj.³⁴⁴ It is to this outsider that the community appears as such: as an undivided whole of Hindu Gujaratis. This unification is, however, fragmented by the Hindu characters’ caste claims. The divergence of identity along religious lines, if we look within the Hindu community, is thus subject to further splintering. These caste divisions are quickly established for the audience in the first scene. The caste of *Lohanas* is ranked highly, with Shahs biting at their heels, and Patels falling below these two designations. The Hindu Punjabi ranks somewhere in these hierarchies, and is just about tolerated by progressive community members. Each character of the play is pigeonholed according to caste membership in the opening sections of the play, representing the further fragmentation of identity beyond religious lines. This difference is exemplified linguistically later in the play: Hina, a young Hindu woman, tells the audience and her beau ‘What they [Lohanas] call *halva*, we [Shahs] call *halvo*’.³⁴⁵ It is only later, though, through the outsider’s perspective of Raza’s eyes, the audience perceives a unified community of Hindu Gujaratis.

As I have suggested this unification only exists to the outsider, indeed *against* the Muslim outsider. The competing claims of Hindu Gujarati selfhood and community play out within the framework of an intercaste youth dance competition, which is a thinly veiled exercise in marriage partnering. Though the ‘intercaste’ aspect of the competition suggests inclusivity, there remains religious exclusivity.

³⁴⁴ Bhuchar *et al*, *Strictly Dandia*. Scene 7, p. 30.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid*. Scene 6, p. 26.

The idea of an intercaste dance competition also alludes to the caste homogeneity that normally exists in the attendance at these events. Despite the intercaste element to the proceedings, there remains caste rivalry in the competition. Regardless of any infighting it is ultimately the dancing Muslim who is perceived as a threat in the festival space. His presence represents the very height of ‘pollution’, and ‘dilution’.³⁴⁶ This tension of the play serves to highlight the nature of integration in East Africa, and the parameters on which integration has now changed. On meeting Raza and recognising him in the festival hall, the character of Shanti, a Patel grandmother, declares she will keep his identity secret. She asserts: ‘In East Africa we lived side by side. Your people celebrated our Diwali and only because I am vegetarian, I couldn’t eat your *biryanis* on the Festival of Idd.’³⁴⁷ Even though Shanti’s Hindu vegetarianism disabled her from partaking of Idd foodways in East Africa, this is not an inhibiting factor: she does contend that the various religious factions enjoyed some harmony and togetherness. Alibhai-Brown, in her prolonged descriptions of various religious festivals that dominated Kampala Road, suggests a similar sense of religious harmonisation.³⁴⁸ The nostalgia of East African life serves to illustrate the absence of religious harmony in the double diaspora. That different religion groups no longer associate in Britain is abundantly clear within the play.

The tension between various religious groups within the drama thus underlines the exclusive nature of the Hindu Gujarati community in Britain. The play intends to open up this closed community by primarily dramatising the *Navratri* space, but furthermore by including a glossary of terms in the written text. This glossary translates colloquial terms, such as ‘Gujus’ meaning Gujaratis, the odd Gujarati phrase or caste reference, and abbreviations. The introductory paragraphs to

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Scene 2, p. 8.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.* Scene 2, p. 8.

³⁴⁸ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, pp. 169-72.

the written text echo this sense of opening up a now closed community, and the significance of dance in this endeavour:

Dance – conventional and iconoclastic – is centre stage in this production; it gives the story further power, and immediacy. The circles of dandia get broken, re-routed as strangers join in, enticing good Hindu girls. Who knows where that will lead? Hopefully to light, more open spaces, which are truly free and welcoming.³⁴⁹

The symbolism of the closed *dandiya* loop is deployed here to be broken up and infiltrated by the other, to concurrently – rather unexpectedly – allow light and development into the shadows.

This desire to forge inclusivity on the part of the playwrights is born out in the contrived conclusion of the play. On Raza's Muslim identity being revealed to the Hindu Gujarati community he is disqualified from the dance competition, and too the community, whilst his Hindu sweetheart acquires a 'reputation'. Though he withdraws his attentions to the girl and his attendance of the festival immediately, eventually he opts to fight for his love. The union of the Hindu prize partner Preethi and the gallant Raza plays out via their dancing together and eventually winning the competition. Despite the result being rigged by the elders, the initial winners gracefully stand aside, the youth of the competition showcasing merits that seem to have eluded their parents. The younger generations of the play seem to possess more progressive and open attitudes, perhaps suggesting a future that is less exclusive. The elders of the play are less uniform in their endorsement of the new mixed-religion couple. Whilst Preethi's father storms off, her mother leaves the audience with a saccharin sweet moral conclusion: 'I would urge everyone to remember how often we Gujaratis have been outsiders and have asked to be accepted in.'³⁵⁰ Prema, Preethi's mother, rightly makes clear the hypocrisy of the community in their discrimination,

³⁴⁹ Bhuchar *et al*, *Strictly Dandia*, para. 12 of 12.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Scene 11, p. 54.

yet the close of the play, which bonds fragmentations, too quickly dissolves these real tensions.

The play *Strictly Dandia* exemplifies how identities can be hidden on the dance floor, and how this space, despite its overt Hinduisation, can be one of innovation. So too, it illustrates the powerful role of religion in identity affiliations, underlining how these are particularly significant to the festival space. This facet of identity is, however, overwritten by the tensions of caste identity, which evolve as more significant and dominant in the closed space of the festival. The further splintering of identity by caste is only unified when Hindu collectivity is threatened, and it is then that religious identity is brought to the forefront and deployed as dominant. Though a Hindu framework pre-empts the *Navratri* festival, the bodies that move within this space splinter this monolithic quality as and when necessary, reemploying Hinduness when appropriate. Therefore, whilst religion is significant to the double diaspora, and later I do discuss the spiritual element of the festival further, I contend there exist further representations of culture that come to the forefront in reading corporality. It is these readings that I pursue, with an awareness of the inherent importance religious identity manifests in representing the twice-displaced diaspora, as illustrated by *Strictly Dandia*. With this in mind, we return to my participant observer research to investigate the Kenton *Mochi* Hall, whose demographic make-up is indeed the least diverse in terms of caste.

Dancing the Homeland

The final venue of my fieldwork, the Kenton *Mochi* Hall in Kenton, showcases an ethnic identity that is very clearly marked from the outset. Although there is a geographical signifier in the name of this venue, the ethnic identity within the title is

primary. Because the community hall was built via donations from Gujaratis of the *mochi jat*, or roughly translated, the shoemaker caste, it is a sanctuary for this group, that is also located in Kenton. Significantly, the members of this caste and ethnic faction predominantly come from a twice-migrant background, having once lived in East Africa. Attendees here are a member of a tightly knit Hindu ethnic group. In this space there is no hiding the common denominator of ethnic identity, and indeed people often come to relish the comfort of this commonality.³⁵¹ It is thus a very social space, with participants ‘knowing’ each other, without necessarily actually knowing one another. The numerous notices and personal thanks given in between dances in 2010 signify the more intimate feel of the event. Before these speeches, given in English primarily, *garba* was played, this was followed by a children’s fancy dress competition, which marked the final night of celebrations and then *aarti* was performed. After this, as Video 3 illustrates, a dance comprising of turns and leg flicks that neither I, nor my family, had seen before was performed. From an organiser, I learnt that the dance, performed in a far corner in a grid formation, was not a ‘traditional’ religious dance, but one that has new popularity in India, and as such has been latterly adopted in Britain. There was no clear explanation of the purpose of the dance, however. The organiser I spoke to was characteristically British Indian East African, and she pointed out that they did not have the dance in Africa.³⁵²

The inclusion of this dance in the *Mochi* Hall, transported directly from contemporary India by Indian East Africans to Britain, suggests there is a strong connection between the double diaspora and India. Indeed, an image from my own

³⁵¹ The tightly knit community can also, on the contrary, offer a space to veil your identity if you are not a *mochi*, as being in that particular hall already identifies you as a *mochi* Hindu. It is also worth noting that, as we have seen, by avoiding this space one is perhaps in addition sidestepping the claustrophobia the tight knit community might represent.

³⁵² Field notes Kenton *Mochi* Hall.

personal archives illustrates this affiliation. Figure 4 shows a hall where *Navratri* celebrations are being set-up. On the stage a group of performers can be seen practicing for the event, and below the stage framed posters with the word ‘India’ can be clearly seen scattered. The immediate visibility of these posters in this space point very much to a relationship forged with India. This connection remains despite many members of the twice-displaced community having never lived in India, having been born in Britain or East Africa. In this fixation there is a silence on the legacy of East Africa, a place that could itself be deemed as a ‘homeland’ for the length of time spent there and the fortunes reaped. Indeed, as discussed earlier, some migrants like Yasmin Alibhai-Brown do affiliate primarily with East Africa.



Figure 4

I would argue, however, that in the nod here towards India through the performance of this secular dance, the sub-continent is instead created as not only a

‘homeland’, but an ‘imaginary homeland’. This widely used term, coined by Salman Rushdie, refers to:

[the migrant’s] physical alienation from India [that] almost inevitably means that [the migrant is not] capable of reclaiming precisely that thing that was lost [so] in short, create[s] fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind.³⁵³

Because twice migrants have been deracinated twice, and thus have very little intimate knowledge of India, they instead perform a homeland. The miscellaneous dance witnessed at the Kenton *Mochi* Hall corresponds to the concept of an imaginary homeland: there was no real clarity of the significance of the dance, yet it was imagined that the dance came directly from India, endowing the moves with some authenticity and meaning. The precise meaning behind it remained elusive however. Because the double migrant has often not been brought up in India, nor does he or she maintain intimate familial roots there, I would argue there is a fixated need to create a link, here that need is met through dance.³⁵⁴

The relationship of this community to India when in East Africa was very different. Paradoxically, the relationship, as understood through dance forms, was more fraught and ambivalent. In his anthropological work Bharati comments on how families of Indian descent in East Africa had no qualms in allowing younger generations to partake in western dance styles, such as the Twist, but ironically were suspicious of ‘traditional Indian dance forms’, such as *kathak*. These frowned upon forms of dance, like *kathak*, are classical dance styles, which incorporate storytelling. Bharati’s research suggests that this type of dance is disparaged because it is associated with professional singers and dancers, and in turn prostitution. The

³⁵³ Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991* (London: Granta Books in association with Penguin, 1991), p. 10.

³⁵⁴ I would argue that these fixations are linked to the ‘traditionalist’ outlook of the twice migrant, that Bhachu describes, and I have discussed in my previous chapter.

innate social aspect of these dances, and the lively, joyous movement, were all considered immodest. Bharati does, however, point out that:

Indian *filmi* music is all right, and there is nothing wrong with a daughter [...] dancing the *garbha* or *ras* with other Gujarati girls or boys in a group, at festive occasions under the watchful eyes of the elders.³⁵⁵

Bharati explains that because the meaning of both ‘modern’ western and Indian dances and music is not understood, and as the dances of *Navratri* are regulated and within a spiritual space, these dances are all tolerated. Yet other, more suggestive Indian dances are not, however, tolerated. The ambivalence of this relationship with Indian culture is underlined in an anecdote recounted in the text. On meeting a Sikh couple the father suggests to his wife that as it was now the done thing in India, perhaps their daughter should learn classical Indian dance. In response the mother vehemently rejects this idea, because of the implication of ‘bad things’ in these dances.³⁵⁶ Thus, whilst some links were maintained in the initial diasporic space of East Africa, there is certainly an element of detachment from what is deemed as indecent, yet Indian.

To be considered in detail in my section on clothing within this chapter, this motif of a fraught relationship with culture descending from India reoccurs in the preference of dress by Indian East Africans. It is the changing relationship between India and the single diaspora in East Africa, and later the double diaspora in Britain, that I mean to highlight here. In Britain, as evidenced by the miscellaneous dance at the Kenton *Mochi* Hall, the double diaspora forges links with India, and appears not to have the reservations in its attitude to India, as compared to East Africa. Indeed, if we use the *kathak* style to chart this change, the altering attitude in Britain is evident.

³⁵⁵ Bharati, *The Asians in East Africa*, p. 254.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 254-5. The mother specifically refers to the symbolism of ‘Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa making love’ manifested in the dances.

Kathak dance is not only displayed in public events of importance in the double diaspora, but, from the eighties onwards qualifications in these classical forms of dance became available.³⁵⁷ Indeed, it is not uncommon for undergraduate qualifications to be sought in these dances or for young children to be instructed in them as after-school activities.³⁵⁸ It would certainly seem that Indian East Africans in Britain seek to reinforce their relationship with India, through seeking proficiency in dances such as *kathak*. My later discussions on attire, in this chapter, too suggest a similar thesis. This new affiliation with India, through dance such as *kathak*, is perhaps attributable to the adoption of such dances into the national narrative of India. The nationalisation of these dances unifies the sub-continent, by erasing a fragmented history, which is associated with prostitution.³⁵⁹ The reconfiguration of these classical dance styles as quintessentially Indian, now makes them essential to any British diasporic subject wishing to assert their ‘Indianness’ through dance.

There is, however, more evidence to suggest that dance in Britain forges an intimacy between the double diaspora and India. Christopher Washburne’s research on how ‘salsa is engaged for nationalistic purposes’ can be used to support this interpretation. His work also helps us articulate the ways in which dance is deployed in the double diaspora to represent identity. Washburne explains that many Puerto Ricans in New York mark salsa as quintessentially Puerto Rican, and thus use the dance form to incite a diasporic nationalism. As a result the ‘unified public image politically empowers the Puerto Rican community within a larger New York City

³⁵⁷ David, ‘Performing Faith’, p. 20 and 31 discuss the performance of *kathak* in Britain. On p. 146 David describes an event where the dance form was displayed for the mayor and the local GMTV. The diplomas in dance are outlined on p. 150.

³⁵⁸ See Appendix A for newspaper articles that describe classes in *kathak* in Harrow, as well as a degree in the dance sought by a British Indian youth.

³⁵⁹ See Pallabi Chakravorty, *Bells of Change: Kathak Dance, Women and Modernity in India* (London: Seagull Books, 2008), in particular chapter two, ‘From Nautch to Classical Kathak’, that charts this renegotiation of classical dance.

context'.³⁶⁰ Through dancing, and through asserting the intrinsic Puerto Rican-ness of salsa, a community is formed and a heritage is carved out. Similarly, for Gujarati East Africans in Britain, who attend the Kenton *Mochi* Hall, the deployment of 'traditional' regional dances that come directly from India asserts a sense of identity for a smaller community immersed in a bigger, dominant community. Through these dances the complete entity of India is imagined and given life to in its diaspora. Of course this is an imagined homeland, as I have discussed, but a sense of unity can be carved out through the dances.

Minoru Mio, referring to *garba* in South Asia, too writes that 'collective dance often brings about a sense of unity' and 'contributes to the creation of a modern nation as an imagined community'.³⁶¹ There is thus a sense of collectivity that is formed in dancing *dandiya*, *garba*, or indeed the miscellaneous dance that was seen in Kenton. Further nuance, however, must be added to this picture: the dances do not only invoke a national pride, but too refer to Gujarat, through the well-known 'Gujaratiness' of *dandiya* and *garba*. The moves of *Navratri* also pay homage to the region of Gujarat, meaning thus a simple nationalism is not forged through the dances, but indeed a 'regionalism' – where a region is harked back to as 'home'. The application of the dance to invoke a sense of community and identity, however, as Washburne also acknowledges, is monolithic in its endeavour. In the case of the double diaspora, multiple migrations and the experience of East Africa are once again overlooked in the deployment of the dance. Instead a home centred on India and Gujarat is created and an identity is carved out around India alone, forgetting the time spent in East Africa.³⁶²

³⁶⁰ Washburne, *Sounding Salsa*, p. 10.

³⁶¹ Mio, 'Transformation of a Dance Festival', 3.

³⁶² To return briefly to the discourse centred around *Bhangra*; it is interesting how this Punjabi dance has been absorbed into the national narrative of Indianness through nationalisation, whereas in India

As I have suggested, the manifestation of a national and collective identity is particularly evident with respect to the events at the Kenton *Mochi* Hall, where there was a certain adherence to what might be considered ‘traditional’ moves. This claim can be substantiated by comparing the Kenton *Mochi* Hall to the other venues. Whilst the final dance of *dandiya* in the Kenton *Mochi Hall* altered from two hits to three hits of the stick, a standard version of the dance, during this event I saw no participants undertaking ‘hybrid dance style[s] popular in Indian films’, known as bollywood dance, *filmi*, or on occasion *bhangra*.³⁶³ These types of moves were evident at the other two venues: they were marked particularly by light shoulder jerks, bounces in the step and hands held up in the air. Often it was young men, smartly dressed in *kurtas* who integrated these styles into the *garba* dance or *dandiya*. Video 4, captured in Watford, reifies these ideas. In Video 4, from 2 to 8 seconds one young man in a cream outfit can be seen dancing in amongst the rotating group. Following this, from 8 to 20 seconds, a group of five young men move into the shot. In the group’s movements is a hint of the *filmi* style. This style is more apparent when the group’s dance moves are compared with the single male participant’s performance. The single male participant moves fluidly, while the group’s style contains more jerk and swagger that is, on close analysis, marked by a bounce in the step and a soft judder in the shoulders. The inclusion of these styles once unknown to the religious space of *Navratri* is more deeply harnessed at Harrow Leisure Centre through the Macarena, and also in the final dance where people crouched on the floor to jump up and dance *bhangra*.

itself the dances of *garba* and *dandiya* remain regionally specific dances to Gujarat. The questions of why this might be and how this might be, remain to be answered; however, these enquiries are beyond the scope of this work. See Roy, *Bhangra Moves* for a further discussion of *Bhangra* and its evolution.

³⁶³ David, ‘Performing Faith’, p. 6.

Markedly, however, these encroachments of popular culture were less evident at the Kenton *Mochi* Hall. Whilst there was the one miscellaneous dance performance, said to be emanating from a current fad in India, this location did not play host to Bollywood styles. It would seem that in this space that is marked so by ethnic identity, and where the commonality of significant migratory experiences is shared, the assertion of religion, caste and regional affiliation are primary. Through the embodied practice of dance it is ethnic identity that is displayed in the Kenton *Mochi* Hall. Given this role of the *mochi* dance space that is characterised by ethnicity, it then becomes clear how venues like Harrow Leisure Centre offer an opportunity of representation of an alternate kind. If one attends halls defined by local geography, rather than ethnicity, a certain degree of anonymity is available to the attendee. This anonymity offers the opportunity to simply dance, enjoy and perform, because the obligations of other identity labels do not exist: one has the opportunity to reveal forms of identity that are mediated via dance, alongside ethnicity.

Diasporic Dress: Dressing to Impress

Yet in all these spaces, the attire in which the body moves also performs identity. Clothes 'signify memories, pull in families and link us to social networks. They are also a site of innovation and improvisation'.³⁶⁴ Within the discourse of attire, there are of course also the parameters of gender to consider. As mentioned, women, without exception, donned 'Indian' attire. Ubiquitous female dress throughout the

³⁶⁴ Shivani Derrington, 'Wardrobe Stories', in Christopher Breward, Philip Crang and Rosemary Crill, *British Asian Style: Fashion and Textiles/Past and Present* (London: V&A Publishing, 2010), pp. 68-78 (p. 77).

events I attended were pristine *saris*, *lehengas* and *punjabi* suits.³⁶⁵ In her beautifully illustrated text, Linda Lynton opens with a statement that aligns the idea of ‘Indianness’, with a certain way of dressing: the ‘sari is the quintessential Indian female garment. *Nothing* identifies a woman as being Indian so strongly as the sari...’ (my emphasis).³⁶⁶ By donning the *sari*, and the other garments that are modelled on the *sari*, the women at *Navratri* are thus signalling their Indian identity. However, the men’s attire varied: generally shirts or jumpers and trousers were worn, or a *kurta*.³⁶⁷ The women, as exemplified by David’s De Monfort interviewee, were dressed with much more care: not only were outfits cutting edge in style, hair, make-up and accessories were all clearly thought through.³⁶⁸ Whilst the younger men also looked well dressed, this vanity was not sustained with such ubiquity. Many of the younger generation, as well as the parental generation, simply wore everyday attire.³⁶⁹

Referring to the everyday dress of Indians in East Africa, Bharati comments similarly: ‘Asian women are the best dressed in Africa [...] female attire is sheer delight [...] Male dress, however, presents a crass contrast.’³⁷⁰ The critic refers to the largely western dress on the part of the Indian male community in East Africa, and the meticulous ‘Indian’ dress of the women. Outwardly, the preference of western dress on the part of a large number of the male attendees, even in East Africa, could be read as a sign of modernity and the ability of the men to continually transcend

³⁶⁵ *Saris* are long pieces of untailored material wrapped around the body in various styles. *Lehengas* are an embroidered blouse and long skirt combination, coupled with a scarf. *Punjabi* suits are a combination of trousers and a long tunic, also known as *salwar-kameez*.

³⁶⁶ Lynton, *The Sari*, p. 7.

³⁶⁷ *Kurtas* long loose tunics worn with matching trousers, commonly associated with the sub-continent.

³⁶⁸ See Appendix A for a newspaper article, Wembley Observer, 13th November 1986. This archive’s photograph underlines the immaculate ‘Indian’ dress ubiquitous among the female gender, even at a young age, twenty to thirty years ago.

³⁶⁹ Raghuram, ‘Fashioning the South Asian Diaspora’, p. 76, too makes this observation regarding gendered dress in the British Indian diaspora.

³⁷⁰ Bharati, *The Asians in East Africa*, p. 248.

ethnic boundaries. Their dress also suggests that the diasporic Indian male role is adaptable, where, on the other hand, the female role remains static, both in Britain and East Africa. Furthermore, it seems that modernity is first and foremost available to the man: he must be modernised before the woman. Thus, where the male has moved onwards, female identity remains intimately subject to what might be considered traditional dress. This understanding will be developed further in the following chapter.

However, the predominance of western dress on the part of the diasporic male Indian somewhat differs in Britain. Whilst in East Africa western dress was a mark of respectability, and indeed the donning of a ‘coat and tie’ was common and for ‘decent people’, here in Britain at *Navratri* festivities, as I have mentioned, *kurtas* are sometimes seen too.³⁷¹ Also, in amongst the *kurtas* are other modes of dress that can be aligned with India. For example Video 5, taken at Harrow Leisure Centre, shows a group of four *dandiya* dancers playing a very energetic version of the dance. The dress of the participants varies from the majority and this is particularly marked by the male participants’ attire. The same style of garment can be seen in Figures 5 and 6, taken in the Kenton *Mochi* Hall and Harrow Leisure Centre respectively. What characterises the male dress in these visual materials as different from the *kurtas* seen elsewhere is the excessively baggy style of the trousers and tops, the bright colours and patterns, and the sequins and jewels.³⁷² If

³⁷¹ I would like to mention here the newspaper article dated 13 October 1970, Harrow Observer, in Appendix A. In the piece initial *Navratri* celebrations in Harrow are related, and a ‘small hall [...] packed with Indians’ is described. In the hall the Indians ‘are wearing national costumes’. The grainy image that accompanies the article rather paradoxically illustrates men in suits and ties and women in *saris*. The description of ‘national dress’ here thus seems to be rather confused: is the national dress referring to British national dress or Indian? Then does the *sari* become part of British dress, or, indeed, as Bharati’s findings in East Africa suggest, does the suit become inherent in the Indian male sartorial repertoire. These contradictions and challenges embodied in this image and commentary introduce some of the discussion that emerge later in this chapter.

³⁷² See also an image from my personal archive, which features a young man (incidentally my father) holding his *dandiya* stick. In this image, Figure 8 on p. 153, the dress is plainer in colour, however a

we refer back to Video 1, the more ubiquitous western dress, shirt and jeans in this case, as well as the less prolific *kurta*, is captured in the foreground. The *kurtas* are worn by the young male participants undertaking the Macarena in the background.³⁷³ In the same video clip, we also see a participant wearing jeans and the tunic top. These modes of dress prompt a discussion centred on the paradigm of cultural hybridity: I shall shortly return to this important issue. First, let us examine further the specificities of the clothing featured in Video 5 and Figures 5 and 6.



Figure 5



Figure 6

The attire that appears in these materials marks a departure from the ubiquitous western dress and the less common *kurtas*, and I argue that these more

similar style can be appreciated. This style is closely aligned with rabiari styles of dress, as I later discuss.

³⁷³ The donning of this more ‘traditional’ dress whilst dancing the Macarena indeed supports the thesis that these participants are juggling cultural obligations, and are thus acting out several facets of identity at once through the body.

unusual types of garments hark back to India and the regional traditions of the dances at these events: they can thus be understood as ‘folk’ garments. The red and green/black *sari* worn by the participant at the very opening of Video 5 is patterned quite uniquely, and Lynton describes these patterns as *Bandhani Saris*. *Bandhani* work, that translates to ‘tie-dye’, ‘is traditional in western India and appears in many saris used for special and ritual occasions’.³⁷⁴ Though of not exactly the same material and design, the male attire in Video 5 and Figures 5 and 6 too signal towards these styles that are orientated towards festivals and special events. The *dandiya* dancer’s garment, in Figure 5, has some animal iconography on it, and although the exact images cannot be identified from the fast moving video, as Lynton points out, these icons refer to the customs of ‘traditional rural India’.³⁷⁵ The simple dyes and patterns are also closely aligned with the styles set out in the second chapter of *The Sari*, which outlines rural and tribal dress of the ‘The Western Region’.³⁷⁶ This positioning of these garments as folk orientated, tallies with the comments of Bhagwat Shah who identified that people are opting for folk fashion during *Navratri*, making what was once the traditional, now ‘cool’.³⁷⁷ He also referred to the Rabari tribes, who live in the Western regions of India, and would wear these types of clothing.³⁷⁸ Their garments would have been made from coloured wool, and signified the types of jobs they accomplished, for example herding sheep. The context is now, however as Shah points out, lost, with just the colours and icons remaining: it seems in the diaspora, in these garments, the signifier

³⁷⁴ Lynton, *The Sari*, pp. 38-39. These pages also include beautiful colour images of the type of *saris* discussed.

³⁷⁵ Lynton, *The Sari*, p. 161.

³⁷⁶ Lynton, *The Sari*, pp. 25-41.

³⁷⁷ Telephone interview with Bhagwat Shah, 8 October 2010.

³⁷⁸ See Eiluned Edwards, ‘From Gujarat to TopShop: South Asian Textiles and Craft’, in Christopher Breward, Philip Crang, and Rosemary Crill, *British Asian Style: Fashion and Textiles/Past and Present* (London: V&A Publishing, 2010), pp. 30-44 (p. 35) for a visual example of a Gujarati rabari garment. The similarities to what is seen in the diasporic space immediately becomes clear.

exists without the signified.³⁷⁹ Nevertheless, these styles are seen more often in the diasporic dance space, often in simple, less dominant patterns, that give an inconspicuous nod – often without the wearer’s knowledge – to traditional rural dress.

The continued alignment of the diaspora with India, through dress, is complicated if we take a moment to look towards East Africa once again. As Bharati has explicated, the occurrence of western dress in East Africa was ubiquitous, and indeed, commenting on his own experience, the critic explains how in East Africa his hosts once ‘shrieked with laughter’ when they saw him dressed in monastic Indian wear. This reaction was elicited purely as Bharati’s clothing was not considered ‘decent’ or compatible with the ‘modern man’ (read: educated and spoke English).³⁸⁰ Taking into account the preferred male dress here, it would seem the British Indian diaspora have thus lost some of these prejudices. And indeed given that regional Gujarati dress, which is intimately rooted in rural India, is also donned by some it seems that there is a different outlook on ‘Indian’ modes of dress. Instead now there is a preference on the part of some to simulate authenticity. Through donning what are considered to be authentic garments, an imagined link with the homeland is again cultivated. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, a similar motif of affiliation with India in the double diaspora is performed in dance. However, I would like to suggest that despite these preferences if a closer analysis of dress is undertaken, alongside my reading of dance, a sense of cultural hybridity is revealed: it is towards this interpretation that the chapter now moves.

³⁷⁹ Here I refer to Saussure’s widely acknowledged structuralist theory of the sign. See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in general linguistics*, Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (eds.) in collaboration with Albert Reidlinger, translated from the French by Wade Baskin, (London: P. Owen, 1960).

³⁸⁰ Bharati, *The Asians in East Africa*, p. 249.

Sequined Saris, Dazzling Dandiyas: Performing Navratri

Having embarked upon a discussion of male festive dress in the double diaspora, during *Navratri*, let us now consider further the topic of female attire, which enabled the previous discussion. Female sartorial choice at these events, as I have mentioned, predominantly included garments associated with the sub-continent. The preference of these types of clothing suggests that an affiliation with India is sought, and this is performed through the body. Indeed, in my 2011 fieldwork I noted that female participants, more often than in the 2010 fieldwork, donned the patterned dress I discuss in my previous section. The sub-continent is therefore, once again, positioned as the homeland. If, on the other hand, the garments female participants wear are closely read, alternative narratives, which exist beneath the surface, can be explicated. Through the close reading of female styles of dress, and the variety of styles that are donned, in this section I suggest that whilst India is harked back to through attire, there is indeed an ambiguity of this identity. Like the patterns that once symbolised the rural work the wearer undertook, but is now fragmented in the diasporic context, here the styles worn have lost their original signification.

The images and the videos I have thus far discussed illustrate the many styles that are worn by women during *Navratri*. The garments are largely bright, sequin-filled, intricately embroidered or featured ‘cut work’. These were the types of attire favoured, over regional folk dress. The visual evidence also demonstrates the variety of ways outfits are worn, differing from participant to participant. Some, as is the current fashion in western wear, wore glittery elastic belts over their *saris* and suits; others wore their *dupatta*, or *chunni*, around their necks in various fashions, or not at all.³⁸¹ As the *sari* is open to interpretation, with the simplicity of just a long length of material, this garment in particular was seen to be worn in several fashions.

³⁸¹ The *dupatta* is the scarf that accompanies most *lehengas* and *Punjabi* suits.

Because '[t]he *nivi* style of draping the sari is now common among middle-class Indian women', it is this style that is often seen in the diaspora.³⁸² This style entails the participants wearing the end piece of the material, or *pallu*, to the back. However, it is not unusual to see the Gujarati, or northern style, exhibited: here the *pallu* is brought to the front.³⁸³ The *pallu* can then be either draped across the stomach and pinned, covering the midriff or simply left to hang in a more revealing fashion. Figure 7 demonstrates these styles, as well the *lehenga* garment, as seen on the female participant on the far left, in green. She also wears the *dupatta*, around her neck in a loose fashion. The three female participants to the right, however, wear their *saris* in different styles: the participants on the outside wear their *saris* in the *nivi* style, and the participant in the centre, who wears a green and red *sari*, dons the northern style (*pallu* falling to the front).³⁸⁴ The participant behind the woman in the centre, who wears yet another blue *sari*, is also seen to be wearing the *sari* in the northern style.



Figure 7

³⁸² Lynton, *The Sari*, p. 14.

³⁸³ Lynton, *The Sari*, p. 15 very clearly outlines these, and other, styles with illustrations.

³⁸⁴ The image is particularly useful as the participant dressed in blue, with her back to the camera on the left, illustrates what the *nivi* style looks like from the rear, if left simply to hang, while the other participant to the far right, facing the camera, demonstrates the *nivi* style from the front.

The draping styles outlined here are fairly typical: they could be recognised by most people of South Asian origin. The execution of these styles thus once again draws out an affiliation with India; however, I argue that there is a confusion of styles here that pertains to the diasporic element of these participants' identity. From her quotation above, Lynton continues to explain that whilst the *nivi* style is popular amongst a certain class of Indian women, there are other varying 'draping styles' that signify the wearer's 'regional, ethnic and tribal communit[y]'.³⁸⁵ These styles are evidenced in my primary material, as discussed above. The choice between these styles does not, however, appear to have any distinguishing features in the respect to Lynton's comments. The region from which a family descends from does not here dictate the participant's draping style. In short, these participants are not wearing their *pallu* to the front because their roots are in Gujarat or the Northern areas of India, nor do the bodies wearing the *nivi* style belong exclusively to middle class women. There is a mixing of these different styles and the wearers, and once again the signifier no longer contains its signified: the garments worn in the *Navratri* diasporic space do not indicate their original meaning.

Now, instead, rather than being deliberately worn to signify specific geography or class, the *sari* is deployed to simply imply the 'Indianness' of the wearer. Whilst previous meaning is lost, the *sari*, and the multiple styles in which it is donned, now mediate a new signified, relevant to the diaspora. In the diaspora, where a migrated community is the minority enveloped by the majority, the *sari* and its various draping styles manifest the need to mark oneself out as simply 'Indian'. This need supersedes the previous desires to mark out other aspects of identity. Of course, alongside this necessity to maintain ties with the homeland is the

³⁸⁵ Lynton, *The Sari*, p. 14.

inevitability, particularly in the diaspora, of the passing of some of the meanings once prolific. Something that was once significant in the sub-continent might naturally decline in importance with the wearing of time and distance. Where this accounts for the changing meaning of dress styles, alongside the need to mark oneself out as Indian, diasporic identity is represented by attire and signalled by the body. This point is significant to other facets of clothing and accessories donned in the diasporic *Navratri* space.³⁸⁶ By example, the *bindi* is a traditional bright red painted dot worn by women somewhere in between the eyebrows and the centre of the forehead. Its wearing once symbolised a married status; however, just like the wearing of the *sari*, which also once pertained to a married status in East Africa, now a *bindi* is worn by most women as decoration during special occasions. I shall pursue further the role of the *sari* and its meaning in East Africa in my following chapter, however, similarly, the *bindi* no longer pertains to the elevated married status in the diaspora. It instead signals an Indian identity, which is to be performed by the female majority in the diaspora. The exact presentation of the dot has too thus evolved to include jewels, glitter and a variety of colours, with only generally elders sporting the simple red dot.

Let us take one more object of *Navratri* paraphernalia and analyse its presence in the diasporic space: the *dandiya* stick. These sticks used during the dances are considered very auspicious. In the past they have been made from bamboo, and other woods, which were lacquered simply: Figure 8, of two young men holding these sticks exemplifies the simplicity of these older *dandiya*.³⁸⁷ These types of *dandiya* can sometimes be seen during play in Britain; however, other, more ostentatious instruments are often used. These might include *dandiya* brightly

³⁸⁶ Indeed, these observations on dress are relevant to other diasporic events, generally special occasions, such as weddings and gathering, where similar dress is exhibited.

³⁸⁷ This image would have been captured during the early to mid-seventies.

coloured, with glitter, bells and tassels. And, the material the stick is made from has now evolved: some sticks are composed of metal instead of the obligatory wood. Where previously a simple bell attached to the stick might have sufficed, today, reminiscent of the glittery *bindi*, a more ambitious approach exists. These metal sticks, when compared with the wooden versions, give a bolder sound during play, contributing to the lively, chaotic environment of *Navratri*. Videos 1 and 4 both capture the use of *dandiya*, and if closely inspected the very simple plain stick, and the glittery, coloured sticks can be identified during the fast play. Again, we see what can be interpreted as a ‘muddle’ of traditions. However, I would argue again that this amalgamation represents the varied experience of migration, and the diaspora evolving and representing themselves. It would seem whilst some meanings from the sub-continent have passed, there are new emphases in the diasporic community. The *Navratri* festival enables the community to gather and rejoice in their inherited culture, whilst also inscribing their experiences into the tradition. In this repositioning there is a specific accent on social communality and existing as a diasporic Indian in Britain.



Figure 8

As I have suggested earlier in this chapter, these new emphasises, linked to sociability, can be located in a performative aspect of diasporic *Navratri*. Both the changes in dress and the bright *dandiya* sticks point towards this thesis. Video 5, discussed earlier in relation to patterned dress, exemplifies this point further. Here, the male participant's exaggerated moves, not to mention his dress, inclines more towards the idea he is performing to onlookers. As I have mentioned in my introductory sections, during my fieldwork I spoke to this participant, named Kalpesh Patel. Patel is a choreographer and dance teacher, and has a significant online presence. In fact, during my basic searches of 'garba uk' on *YouTube.com* it was Patel's footage that not only appeared, but was the most popular in the ranking, with 127,892 hits.³⁸⁸ The video, entitled *Rass, Garba & Dandia performed by kalpesh & Group in London-UK* (sic), is a montage of clips and dances featuring Kalpesh, both at what can be recognised as Harrow Leisure Centre, and other venues, in 2007. Much of the video is edited: sections are slowed down and some colouring has been manipulated. Of the 10 minute 59 seconds there is also a 14 second introduction with title pages, and the closing titles identifies Patel as a choreographer. Some parts of the video show Patel and other unidentified participants dancing towards the camera, and in all sections of the montage the dancers are dressed in elaborate patterned and styled garments. The dance undertaken in the shots is fast, skilled and flamboyant.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁸ Originally accessed on 22 December 2010, this video had 67, 900 hits. It was again accessed on 15 February 2013.

³⁸⁹ *Rass, Garba & Dandia performed by kalpesh & Group in London-UK*, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMLLyjtn80U>> [accessed 15 February 2013].

Patel also has a *YouTube.com* profile, *kalpesh4bollywood*, on which he has several uploads and over 200 subscribers.³⁹⁰ The nature of the videos and how the dances are executed – from the dress, poses, style and editing – suggest that these dances are performed for the camera. There is anticipation that they will be watched. Of course, this performative element is inherent in the video format and the act of uploading the footage to a public online domain. Describing himself as a choreographer, during both the video and on the business card he gave to me in Harrow, suggests that Patel too thinks of the dances he executes within a performance framework.³⁹¹ The positioning of the dance as such is interestingly outside of the spiritual capacity attributed to the Gujarati dances. Rather than a devotee dancing for the Goddess Durga, or indeed ‘becoming’ the mythologies of the associated narratives, there is not only a sense that he dances for the camera to showcase his skill, but that these dances are co-ordinated and structured. A similar sentiment is embodied in the flamboyant dress, which puffs up and spins out during the fast dance. The architecture of this sartorial choice deliberately compliments the moves of the dance.³⁹² Here, rather than signifying the pastoral regional traditions of India, in this context the meaning of the dress is erased. Instead the dress and dance exist simply to be seen, admired and associated with the category of ‘Indianness’.

As mentioned in the introductory passages of this chapter, Bharati includes one image of *Navratri* dance in his text. The image is captured in Uganda and the caption reads: ‘Gujarati girls dance the *garbhā* to entertain ambassadors [...]’. It

³⁹⁰ This is a page found on *youtube.com*, where a selection of Patel’s videos can be viewed, his work can be commented upon and viewers can subscribe to the page. See *Kalpesh4bollywood*, <<http://www.youtube.com/user/kalpesh4bollywood>> [accessed 15 February 2013].

³⁹¹ Whilst I acknowledge the Hindu rituals associated with spirituality are often entangled with performance, and this chapter speaks to the role of dance within this framework, I refer here to a performance of a different kind, one of showmanship.

³⁹² This dress would not compliment, say, a couple dance, as the flares would have no room to puff out, and thus the attire described here is specifically suited to the *Navratri* dances.

shows a group of well-dressed girls in shiny, stiff *lehengas* dancing in a circle with *dandiya* sticks. In their hair are arrangements of flowers, and they visibly wear lots of jewellery in a decorated room. What can be seen in the image clearly relates to the caption, which states this is a performance of entertainment. Like the dances in the British diaspora, these girls move their bodies to be seen and to perform. The image being taken in East Africa, suggests that the emphasis on performance in the *Navratri* space is not unique to Britain. Indeed, Figure 9 from my personal archives depicts a small female child performing during what seems to be *Navratri*. She wears a *lehenga*, lots of jewellery, befitting adult dress, and her hair is manicured, as well as adorned with flowers. In the background, boys and men watch. There is clearly some performance happening in this East African context. Kim Knott explains that ‘once settled [in Britain], [Indian East Africans] began to reproduce organizations and practices familiar to them from their time in Africa’.³⁹³ Thus the emphasis on performance as entertainment, rather than an interiorised spirituality, is something that could have been carried through migration.³⁹⁴ One reading of my interpretations suggests that in the diaspora much depth of meaning and tradition has been sacrificed, and in its place only the performative remains. However, this interpretation of the evolution of diasporic culture once again falls victim to the linear, competitive patterns of thought that this work attempts to sidestep. By both looking to embodied practices and employing a self-reflexive methodology this chapter has sought to instead explore the boundaries being traversed and the identities rethought, and remade, on the dance floor. With this motivation in mind,

³⁹³ Knott, ‘Hinduism in Britain’, p. 92.

³⁹⁴ Figure 9, from my personal archives, is set in Britain during the nineteen seventies. In this image, the performative nature of *Navratri* activities can be seen again through the extravagant dress and performance captured in the image.

before I move to close the readings of this chapter, let us now turn to a motif gestured towards throughout this chapter: the secret.



Figure 9

The Book of Secrets: Covert Culture

As the title suggests, M.G. Vassanji's 1994 award-winning novel, set in both colonial and postcolonial East Africa, revolves around secrets: the secrets of illicit love and desire across class, race and gender precincts; the secrets of paternity; the secrets of warfare and colonisation. It is not only these secrets that haunt the narrative of the text, but the nature of the unknowable secret itself. As Pius Fernandes, Vassanji's chief protagonist, is told by Rita, his long-time forbidden love: 'There are questions that have no answer; we can never know the innermost secrets of any heart [...] the past matters, that's why we need to bury it sometimes'.³⁹⁵ Of the many secrets the meandering novel – as well as the colonial memoir that much of narrative is built around – embeds within its pages, Rita finally tells her childhood teacher: 'Let it lie, this past. The diary and the stories that surround it are now mine,

³⁹⁵ Vassanji, *The Book of Secrets*, pp. 297-8.

to bury.³⁹⁶ According to Rita the mysteries of the novel, which concern her ex-husband's family, must remain just that: secrets. She insists that Pius hands over the diary, which the narrative of the novel centres around. In addition, he must too give over to her all the additional notes he has compiled: he must give up his attempt to excavate the crossing of Indian and European paths in colonial East Africa. In short, Rita wishes to bury the secrets hidden in the text.

As Vassanji's preoccupation with it in his novel suggests, the secret features principally in the remit of Indian East African representation. I shall delineate here how this facet of culture conveyed covertly, already evident in East Africa amongst the Indians more broadly, is particularly pertinent for the Gujarati East African, now in Britain.³⁹⁷ As I have suggested in the course of this chapter the practices of *garba* and *dandiya* during the *Navratri* festival perform narratives of identity in many ways. For example, these representations of identity manifest themselves in the modes of dress adopted, the styles of dance undertaken and the accessories danced with. Indeed, where one chooses to dance also reveals to the onlooker something of the participant, but, as I have discussed, additionally conceals. These understandings, as conveyed during the festival and the dances, however, are only available to those who can read the signs. One must be knowledgeable in not only Gujarati cultural practices, but also British popular cultures. And the knowledge of migration and resettlement in Britain from East Africa, and previously India, improves the ability to further read the social text of *Navratri*. Thus embodied practices share and transmit knowledge of culture, but only to those who are equipped to do so. The practice of dance can be therefore understood as an esoteric system of knowledge,

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

³⁹⁷ It is worth noting that in *The Book of Secrets* it is Rita, an Indian East Africa now moved to London, that insists upon the burial of the past. There are, however, her predecessors in East Africa who choose to hide their secrets too, for example Pipa.

beyond language. This esoteric system of knowledge fashions an epistemology that deviates from Eurocentric accepted forms of spoken and written knowledge, and which is contained in the body in play.³⁹⁸

Why then, we are prompted to ask again, do the cultural knowledges of the Indian East African in Britain manifest themselves in the embodied practice, rather than simply in forms of communication more readily available to a wider audience, such as forms that use written and spoken language? As I have explicated in my previous chapter, in answer to this question, language comes with its own Eurocentric ‘baggage’: in western epistemology it is endowed with an importance that subordinates the repertoire in favour of the archive. Moreover, it has its limitations in accounting traumatic experience. In this chapter, I would, however, like to extend this argument regarding the capacities of the repertoire, to speak to the secrets of Vassanji’s novel and my observations above. It seems to me that rather than there being a simple necessity of representing identity in the repertoire for the double diaspora, because language cannot account for these experiences, there is a preference to do so in order to maintain a covert culture, which is unavailable outside of the diaspora. In his critically acclaimed essay ‘How Newness Enters the World’ Homi Bhabha makes a related point. He refers to ‘the *medium* Rushdie uses to reinterpret the Koran’ in his novel *The Satanic Verses*, and explains it is this medium that ‘constitutes the crime’. Bhabha elaborates:

In the Muslim world, Samad argues, poetry is the traditional medium of censure. By casting his revisionary narrative in the form of the novel – largely unknown to traditional Islamic literature – Rushdie violates the poetic license granted to critics of the Islamic

³⁹⁸ The archival nature of western epistemology is delineated in my previous chapter on culinary practices. Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995) underlines the nature of the academy which is ‘locked in the written’, p. 216. His work in this text also highlights the capacity dance embodies, and furthermore, like this work has specified in its introduction and second chapter, he advocates a methodology of non-competitiveness. Shusterman denies the hierarchies dividing highbrow art and popular art, bridging this gap in his considerations.

establishment [...] Rushdie performs the subversion of its [the Koran's] authenticity *through the act of cultural translation*.³⁹⁹ (my emphasis)

Here, Bhabha argues that Rushdie incited anger from Muslim communities over his novel, not (only?) because of what he mediates in the text, but because he uses the novel form to make these mediations. There appears to be a violation of hidden boundaries here, through adopting now universalised modes of communication, which enable non-members of the community to access concealed traditions. By translating culture through the novel form, Rushdie has sullied the veiled codes of poetry, adopted by many in the so-called Muslim world to articulate their social knowledges.

These secretive codes of culture form tightly knit communities through their exclusivity. By simply not being available to wider audiences, and only those well-versed in the relevant codes of cultural conduct, a sense of community is formed, reformed and cemented. This framework of esoteric systems of knowledge has been well defined elsewhere. Ananya J. Kabir discusses the '[t]he African-derived phenomenon of "syncopation"' and, quoting Benitez-Rojo, explicates that the code that this unexpected rhythm transmits is translatable only by Caribbean people. This code is not available to the West.⁴⁰⁰ These Afro-Caribbean rhythms have been

transplanted under extreme conditions through the bodies of slaves, who arrived in the new world stripped of everything except their music and dance [...t]he descendants of African slaves lost language and even naming traditions, but, particularly in Cuba, Haiti and Brazil, they did not lose their rhythms.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁹ Homi K. Bhabha, 'How Newness Enters the World: Postmodern Space, Postcolonial Times and the Trials of Cultural Translation', in *The Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 212-36 (p. 226).

⁴⁰⁰ Ananya J. Kabir, 'Embodied Histories: How Rhythm Cultures Challenge Postcolonial Methodologies', (unpublished working paper, University of Leeds, 2010), p. 6.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Dance then, for this deracinated people, becomes not only one of the few cultural knowledges left intact through their trauma, but indeed a system of knowledge that is beyond the reach of the violations of slavery and the rise of capitalism. As a result dance and rhythm become a force to bind peoples together against the odds. There is also the fascinating element of covert culture of it actually being in the public domain: there appears to be something of a public secret about dance.⁴⁰² As I have indicated earlier in this chapter, for the double diaspora, or indeed those singly displaced, the capacity of dance holds similar importance in the formation of community in response to traumatic experience. For diasporic minority communities who have experienced displacement, there is the continual threat of uprooting and, indeed, this is coupled with an anxiety to protect culture against the encroachment of the other and their culture. Thus, the formation of community for identity is important. Whilst the capacity to forge a sense of community on the margins is significant, the implication of locating culture beyond the access of the 'other' is strategically also valuable and again can be aligned with the cultural formations that are commented upon in Afro-Caribbean dance studies. Through positioning culture beyond the decipherability of the West, there is no vulnerability to the violence of cultural destruction by the other. This does not mean, however, that cultural practices and expressions of identity remain static. The visual material compiled for this chapter certainly demonstrates that despite the 'other' being metaphorically barred from reading some cultural practices of the Indian in Britain, because they exist in the repertoire, the self still inserts vernacular cultures that are shared between the two binary identities. The Macarena remains in the sacred space of *Navratri*, not because

⁴⁰² Indeed, Vatsyayan too recognises that regional artistic traditions bear 'testimony as much to a flourishing, collective, participative tribal-rural culture as to a highly esoteric, closed sophisticated culture'. He explains 'the two go hand in hand reinforcing and supplementing each other, rather than mutually negating each other'. (*Traditions of Indian Folk Dance*, p. 21).

the other has, as some might say, violated that space, but because the dancing Indian youth has instead sought to assert their multifaceted identities.

Thus, whilst covert culture can be understood partly as a mechanism to protect a continually migrating culture from violence, the understandings of *Navratri* here demonstrate that culture does not evolve as such. Insertions, omissions and re-workings are inevitable. As outlined in my introduction, nevertheless, a common response to my curiosities on the practicalities and history of *Navratri* during my fieldwork often met with confusion. I have accounted for this by underlining ethnographic methodological difficulties: I suggested that as a member of the community, other members of the same could not fathom why I would ask the questions of an outsider. However, whilst I believe this holds true, I would like to delve a little deeper by contextualising the idea of covert culture with this consistent confusion I was met with on asking these questions.

Through the various contacts I have previously outlined, in each of the venues I attended *Navratri* celebrations I had someone of some authority to liaise with. In an attempt to extract some initial information on the festivities, during my visits I sought out these persons of authority to enquire about the root of the festival and its contemporary meanings. It was the case that during *all* of these attempts I was redirected to someone who was ‘more knowledgeable’. On being redirected I found that the ‘knowledgeable’ person simply avoided conversation, with promises of ‘I’ll find you someone to talk to’, ‘I’ll find you later’, or ‘I’ll talk to you tomorrow when I have more time’; the ‘knowledgeable’ person was versed in other dance forms, such as *Bharata Natyam*, a classical form of dance that, as discussed, has been adopted into the Indian national narrative and enjoyed significant visibility; the ‘knowledgeable’ person had some understanding of one form of dance, *garba*, but

this knowledge had its limits and was chiefly centred on the music of the event, not the dance moves. In addition to this there was one elder that the representatives at Watford Leisure Centre suggested would ‘know everything’ about *Navratri*. In keeping with my other experiences, on later seeking out this member of the community, away from the frenzied, loud space of *Navratri*, I was once again redirected. This time it was to a book that the elder had, yet it never materialised: instead I was sent some basic roughly hand written notes and an article in Gujarati.⁴⁰³

One individual who seemed to have a broad historical knowledge about the festivities, as well as dress and the accessories connected to the event was Bhagwat Shah. Having a personal interest in all things Indian, he was generous with his time and knowledge. The sidestepping of discussion centred on the specificities of *Navratri*, however, suggests to me that there is more than a simple reservation about communicating cultural meaning through spoken language, or a difficulty in the translation of the embodied practice to the medium of language. Indeed, it seems to me that there was a lacuna in the knowledge possessed, thus making it difficult to relate onwards. I would like to suggest, thus, due to the secretive nature of the diasporic group, cultural knowledge has simply dissipated. The reluctance to pass on this cultural knowledge verbally, or indeed in written form, results in the sole mediation of cultural identity in the diasporic body in play. In her novel, *The Woman Warrior*, Maxine Hong Kingston begins with the telling words: ‘You must not tell

⁴⁰³ These notes are available in Appendix C. It was via my father that I sought to make contact with this particular knowledgeable elder. On seeing her regularly at language classes he approached her on my behalf and after learning of said *Navratri* book, asked to exchange numbers so I could follow the text up myself. Rather reminiscent of my experiences, he was however left standing outside her office in anticipation of contact details, whilst she busied herself with another member of the community.

anyone'.⁴⁰⁴ This introduces the novel's recurring trope of the 'secret', as well as the secret of a disowned, forgotten Aunt. The immediate gesturing towards the secret also foregrounds the idea of a forgetting, and it becomes clear that in the talk stories and unusual rituals that are shrouded in secrecy, much is lost. For example, half way through the novel the narrator's mother performs a ritual and is asked the significance of the act. Brave Orchid, the mother, finally responds to multiple enquiries: 'It's nothing', and the narrator comments: 'she never explained anything that was really important'. The reader is told that the children 'no longer asked' about these rituals.⁴⁰⁵

Here, once again, cultural knowledge is hidden within an uncommunicatable system of expression, and thus there is a hidden preservation of diasporic cultural knowledge. Of course, what this work discusses is the embodied practice, which lies beyond not only the written word, but language itself. A similar reticence to pass cultural knowledge on to the outsider remains in both instances, and interestingly the next generation can be understood as part of the 'other' camp. For the double diaspora, however, this discretion does not appear to be deliberate as in Kingston's narrative. On no occasion did it seem that information was being withheld from me, on the contrary participants and attendees were keen to profess an understanding of cultural practices; yet in the end they could not provide the proverbial goods, thus seeking refuge in avoidance. I shall return to this rather ambiguous and conflicting behaviour aligned to covert culture in my closing remarks. Let us first delineate some of the readings in this chapter, and nuance how these readings converge.

⁴⁰⁴ Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* (London: Pan, 1981), p. 3.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p, 121.

Corporeal Conclusions

On his website, regarding *Navratri*, Bhagwat Shah tells his reader that:

Ofcourse, much has been "added on" since and the nine nights are now as commercial as any other festival. The Gujaratis enjoy the nine nights by dancing them away to the blare of loud music and scant attention is given to the spiritual aspect of the festival.⁴⁰⁶ (sic)

This perception is critical and ruthless in its accusation. The language intimates that for the Gujarati *Navratri* is ultimately centred on hedonism, and the religiosity of the festival is not taken account of. I have teased out the relationship of religion in the *Navratri* space, and the dances that are showcased within it, throughout this chapter. There has been a playful tension between the perceived religiosity of the festival, as well as the dances discussed in this work, and the emergence of other representations of identities. Where *Strictly Dandia* brought to the forefront reflections on religious identity, namely that concerned with the ‘other’, and the fragmentation of Hindu collectivity, fleeting references were also made to the religious roots of the festival by participants I observed. Whilst superficially Shah’s accusations might be appropriate, I contend that deeply ingrained in the festival and the dances is a Hindu character. It seems that in the spirit of a festival that is centred on the element of ‘play’, there is a fitting enactment of this spirit in relation to religion. Spirituality is inherently performed within the remit of the festival, whilst it also appears and disappears amongst other identity representations. It is sometimes hidden and sometimes revealed. However, it is the dance forms discussed in this chapter that facilitate the performance of fluid, multifaceted identities.

Testament to these dances’ embodiment of multiple traditions and knowledges is Vassanji’s inclusion of *garba* in his novel *The Book of Secrets*. The text weaves the dance into its structure on three occasions: it is in the first that a

⁴⁰⁶ *Navratri*, <<http://www.pushti-marg.net/bhagwat/navratri.htm>> [accessed 15 February 2013].

fuller description of the event takes place, with the later occurrences being framed by the original description.⁴⁰⁷ From the first appearance of *garba*, there are a few clearly defined categories that become embodied in the dance style for Vassanji's narrative. The description of Mariamu's 'lithe movements of waist and hip', her lips and eyes and her general presence creates the *garba* as a dance of performance and the erotic. There is also a sense of the frenzied, energetic *garba* that I have referred to and my materials have demonstrated:

The tabalchi-drummer beat faster and the agile dancers kept in time, feet thumping, hips gyrating without inhibition, breath drawn sharply, faces glistening with sweat.⁴⁰⁸

In this passage though, not only is the instinctive, fast, chaotic nature of the event drawn out for the reader, but the dance becomes again sexualised through the imagery of 'gyrating hips' and sweaty bodies. The viewpoint is from that of Corbin, an outsider to the community, who duly sees the erotic in these moves. For the community themselves, however, this act is not one that is laden only with sex, but too is linked with the showcasing of marriageable girls. It is in the second instance of *garba*, whilst she dances, that Pipa is shown the same girl Mariamu as a potential wife. In agreement to marry her he is left more or less speechless.⁴⁰⁹ The dance then mediates the seductive nature of female dancers, yet to Corbin who is on the margins of the community this is where the communication of the dance begins and ends. For the elders of the community and Pipa, embodied in the dance is not only the erotic, but the potential of a desirable wife.

These paradoxes of the body are commented upon by Bryan Turner, who explains that:

⁴⁰⁷ The latter two performances take place on p. 142 and p. 246.

⁴⁰⁸ Vassanji, *The Book of Secrets*, p. 43.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

Historically, the most potent symbol of the profane world is the human body. The body is dangerous and its secretions, particularly semen and menstrual blood have to be enclosed by ritual and taboo to protect the social order. Yet, at the same time, the body is sacred.⁴¹⁰

In Vassanji's *garba* scene the female dancing body as sensual and erotic is highlighted, yet it is the body enacting a religious ritual and worshipping the Goddess that is also described. Indeed, it is possible, in agreement with traditional understandings of *Navratri* dance, to read the act of playing *garba* here as embodying the Goddess herself. The binaries of the sacred and the profane thus collide in the female dancing body. Whilst it might seem, therefore, that during the cultural practice of *Navratri* in East Africa, there remained 'scant attention [...] given to the spiritual aspect of the festival', perhaps the spiritual is inherent in these practices.

In Vassanji's text there is a fleeting mention of religion in reference to these cultural dances during their enactment in the text; however, what the reader is told sits rather oddly with accepted knowledge on the dance. First off, rather paradoxically, it is a specific Muslim community of Indians in East Africa that the novel portrays. It is this same community who play the *garba* in the three instances it occurs, and Corbin, as introduction to the event, is told that '[t]he *garba* enacted the first conversions of the community from Hinduism, several centuries ago in Gujarat'.⁴¹¹ Of course, here religion is mentioned, but it could not be more divorced from the Hindu mythological narratives of *Navratri* I foregrounded in my opening sections, and, of course, how Shah understands these practices. Indeed, for this fictional community, who are based on the Ismailis, the dance signifies the move from Hinduism to Islam, producing the style as a Hindu-Islamic syncretic

⁴¹⁰ Turner, *The Body and Society*, p. 101.

⁴¹¹ Vassanji, *The Book of Secrets*, p. 42.

tradition.⁴¹² Alibhai-Brown replicates this stylisation of the dance in her play *Nowhere to Belong*, where in a ‘beautiful snow white mosque’, in Uganda, ‘young couples float on stage to play dandia – the stick dance, followed by the older men and women, dancing their garbas [...]’.⁴¹³ Again, these dances of the author’s own experiences are staged as syncretic traditions, which have been absorbed into the sacred space of the mosque.

I shall not delve into the specificity of this move on Alibhai-Brown’s or Vassanji’s part; instead, what I seek to highlight here is the differing meanings layered in this dance form, and suggest that, corresponding with the concept of covert culture that I have posited thus far, it is possible that spirituality is performed through dance. For Vassanji’s community *garba* embodies the move from one religion to another and this is where its spirituality lies. In addition, it is a performative act, where the female community is showcased. For the communities captured in my visual materials, the dances of *Navratri* mediate contemporary identity, as well as forge a connection with the imagined homeland. And for Bhagwat Shah there is an overt affiliation of these dances with religion, which for him has been overwritten by secular hedonism. These dances thus offer an opportunity to perform multiple identities, whatever they maybe.

However, as I have discussed the dances and the spaces they are danced in offer opportunities to hide identity also. Throughout this chapter I am compelled to refer to Indians, rather than use more specific nomenclature, because it is quite often not clear where a group has its roots. Indeed, even though the dances I refer to have a Gujarati heritage, many of those who practice them are not of this exact root, perhaps instead coming from a more broader North Indian region. There was the one

⁴¹² See Footnote 69 (p. 29), in the introduction, for a reference to the Ismailis.

⁴¹³ Alibhai-Brown, *Nowhere to Belong*, p. 271.

exception, in the Kenton *Mochi* Hall where a particular caste organises the events for their members. Here, I could speak of the Gujarati East African diaspora in Britain, yet in the other spaces I visited I had less certainty of the traditions I was following. Whilst the Kenton *Mochi* Hall enabled me to draw some conclusions about the double diaspora, by collectively considering my experiences and the materials I collected, as they often had commonalities, I also commented upon the Indian diaspora in Britain as a whole. As a result I write with awareness that these groups were comprised of those singly and doubly displaced. Thus Gujarat, and Gujarati identity, as I have outlined in the descriptions of the attended venues in my section entitled ‘Dancing *Dandiya*, Gathering Data’, is a common designation within this chapter, and more broadly within this doctoral research. Gujarat, and Gujarati identity, are, however, a slippery designations: subject to criss-crossings and to contestation.

From this complexity of identification, what can be understood is how diasporic nuances are hidden in the *Navratri* space. Participants were able to traverse different spaces, freely, without the burden of ethnic markers. By comparing the Kenton *Mochi* Hall to the venues unmarked by ethnic identity, some defining points of the double diaspora were nonetheless read. It became clear from the appearance of different dance styles, linked intimately with India, that a link to the homeland of the sub-continent was forged particularly by the double diaspora. In addition, the lack of any defiantly non-secular moves also suggested that in the space of the Gujarati East African tradition certain moves are rejected in favour of what could be considered more traditional moves.

What remains, however, is the desire to communicate the community through dance, vis-à-vis the body. This is particularly important for the double diaspora, as it

is they who lack the iconic novel and, as we have seen, instead favour culinary practices and here dance, to represent themselves. Whilst the single diaspora too articulates identity through dance, many of these communities have their own literary representations. In this chapter I have thus indicated that perhaps the doubly displaced diaspora simply does not want its experiences to be narrated. This may account for the reluctance to speak to me, as well as the lacuna in literary representation. There was, however, an enthusiasm to profess knowledge: the problems only arose in communicating this information. The inability to follow through can be accounted for both by the inaccessibility of knowledge, occurring due to prolonged secretcies, and also to the inadequacy of language to articulate these social knowledges. This then prompts the excavation of the agency dance provides, as well as the sense of community it forges. Where the production of a fictional text that frames a complete diasporic group, written by an individual, often comes under scrutiny by that community it portrays, dance enables a community to represent themselves in unity without an emphasis on subjective commentary.⁴¹⁴ Dance also enables identity formation independent of interference: the community can continue on the margins, yet draw its identity together without the concerns of marketability and commercialbility that literary publication inevitably demands. Embodied practice is thus compatible with the emphasis, by the double diaspora, on the community, opposed to the individuated, as discussed in the previous chapter.

As this chapter so intimately revolves around the personal experiences I cultivated during this research and the writing of the self into these pages, to close it is to the self-reflexive I return. Having been many years since I have attended *Navratri*, on attendance during my research I was compelled to relearn *garba* and

⁴¹⁴ By example, Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* met with such criticism on the publication of the text. See: *Ali's Brick Lane upsets community*, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/3287413.stm>> [accessed 15 February 2013]. Ali also met with opposition on the creation of the film, from the novel.

dandiya. As I participated, the beat picked up and the intensity of the dances grew, one certainly experiences a sense of communality. Adrenalin rushes through the body and that translate into the environment shared with other participants. One can only know this sense of shared experience if one dances the dances: only the body in play can decipher this code. To begin, dancing this way was not easy. There were too many bodies moving too chaotically. I found that often my personal space was encroached upon, and yet worse I had to concentrate deeply to respect other's space. When playing the *dandiya* I watched closely to ensure I did not clip any fingers when sticks met, I was also conscious of dancing in time to the music in both Gujarati dances, to take precaution against stepping on feet, or moving into other bodies. Of course, I did trample at least one foot, and indeed had my fingers slightly battered by an enthusiastic *dandiya* player. For me, the task of dancing alongside others, in a community of dance, proved to be challenging. I very quickly caught on, having had childhood experience of the dances, yet in initiation the prospect of the community dance presented problems. Given that I am more at ease with individual dance, of the popular western variety, and also couple dance, it seems to me that it is here where the friction comes about. Dancing alone compels one to be less aware of other bodies, than in group dance: in dancing alone there is an emphasis on individuated movement in a personal space that is scripted according to personal desire only. When dancing in pairs, there is one other body to negotiate; however, in this format the two bodies are close, against each other. Here, one is held fairly tightly so the deviation from standard practice is not such a concern.

In Video 1 younger participants effortlessly did what I could not. They not only moved from one style of dance to another, but traversed these styles of dance in a moment: *dandiya* within a blink of an eye merged into the Macarena. In these

inconspicuous moves, happening somewhere in the interior of the dance space, there is thus a remarkable movement between two traditions. This was a negotiation I had to consciously move myself through. For these youth, however, the traversing of boundaries seemed to come naturally. This is a far cry from – let us momentarily return to Hong Kingston – the ‘first American generation’ of *The Woman Warrior* who ‘had to figure out the *invisible world* the emigrants built around [this generation’s] childhoods fit in solid America’ [my emphasis].⁴¹⁵ The British diasporic generation I see, from my research, are remarkably able to traverse and interpret this ‘invisible world’. Indeed, rather excitingly, this might not be a wholly new phenomenon after all, and it is the primary materials considered in my next chapter – photographs of anterior generations in East Africa, and of those that allude to the transition from East Africa to Britain – that will substantiate this claim.

⁴¹⁵ Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*, p. 5.

4.
**Picturing the Modern Self: *Saris*, Suits & Commodities in
 Looking Back & Moving On**



Figure 10

Many layers of meaning embedded in the composition of my non-textual epigraph, Figure 10, render it striking. In rifling through hundreds of family photographs, which often demonstrate less expressiveness, I was struck by the modern configuration, signified by the various versions of ‘looking’, of this frame. The use of the mirror, and what is captured in that reflection, introduces many of the preoccupations of this chapter. Alongside the layering of meaning in the image, and its modern nature, there exists, what we may posit as, the traditional. The innovative and traditional sit comfortably together in this Figure, a testament, I contend in this chapter, to the vernacular modernity of the twice migrant. Besides the multiple modes of voyeurism, that which can be glimpsed

stacked on the top of the wardrobe – a collection of commodities – is significant to how the diaspora manages loss. Within this chapter, in reference to the preoccupation with commodities demonstrated by the diaspora time and time again, I suggest that there exists a fetishisation of these objects. My close readings here will be elucidated as my arguments progress, and I shall draw full circle towards this Figure again in the conclusion of this chapter.

A Look Back, to Move to Modernity

First, to introduce another significant theme of this chapter, modernity, let us briefly look back to chapter three. Through this move I aim to also contextualise the legacy of visual culture in South Asia; however, in addition, by ‘looking back’ I perform an act significant to the Gujarati East African, as demonstrated by this chapter. In my previous chapter the inclusion of *bhangra* dance, as well as other dance styles, into the *Navratri* space emerged as significant in the critical observations. By way of introduction it is with a backward glance to *bhangra*, something of a sub-narrative of chapter three, that I shall continue. As I have explicated, there is prolific scholarly research into the diasporic *bhangra* style. Anjali Gera Roy’s *Bhangra Moves: from Ludhiana to London and Beyond* uniquely reflects upon not only the sounds of the *bhangra* style, but also the dance moves. She comprehensively considers the global and local flows of *bhangra* and their role in forming, maintaining and erasing cultural and national identity. In conjunction with previous scholarship, Roy argues that diasporic *bhangra* is a ‘mutant’ form: within the style, for instance, black beats are mixed alongside the reverberations of the dhol drum, a sound that has its roots in the Punjabi harvest time practice that was once exclusively understood as *bhangra*.

The dance and the music associated with the diasporic form, now, however, reflect a sense of hybridity. The critic highlights a reading of *bhangra* where ‘its new features are ascribed to an alien, transgressing modernity that might drive out indigenous traditions’.⁴¹⁶ Given this comprehension of the style as somehow polluted, it follows that when, for example, *bhangra* is inserted into the *Navratri* space – a space essentially spiritual – there is an insertion of the polluted into an arena laden with the sacred.⁴¹⁷ It is perhaps this imposition of, what can be read as, western and secular modernity into the sacred ‘Indian’ space, which ignites concern among some, for example Bhagwat Shah.

These suppositions rest on a basic understanding of ‘Indian tradition’ as impervious to any kind of modernity. Significant critical interpretations, however, contend that culture and economics deriving from the sub-continent should be interpreted as modern in a variety of contexts. Indeed, this is a modernity that has long existed, with and without the interventions of western ‘civilisation’. Drawing on Susan Sontag’s observations, Sumathi Ramaswamy states that ‘[...] a society becomes truly modern when one of its chief activities is producing and consuming images’.⁴¹⁸ ‘Of course,’ she asserts, ‘the inhabitants of the subcontinent produced and consumed images long before the advent of modernity’.⁴¹⁹ In his first chapter of *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*, Christopher Pinney attributes the advent of the photograph in India to as early as 1840, only months after its development in Europe. Used to document the colonial subject and distinguish between tribes and caste, the photograph was considered a more accurate representation than the drawing.

⁴¹⁶ Roy, *Bhangra Moves*, p. 40.

⁴¹⁷ This argument is of course applicable to the insertion of the Macarena into the *Navratri* space, if the west and modernity are aligned.

⁴¹⁸ Ramaswamy, *Beyond Appearance?*, p. xv.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Pinney concludes this first chapter by observing the clinical nature of these initial photographs. As all intimacy was emptied out of these images, they served alongside other technologies of colonisation, like the firearm. Pinney's second chapter recounts the appearance of localised Indian owned photography studios, as early as the mid 1850s.⁴²⁰

Given Pinney's and Ramaswamy's critical accounts, it would seem that the Indian subject has long participated in what can be described as technological modernity. Although this modernity has sometimes been through the imposition of the colonial gaze, it has too been through both the independent proliferation of images, before the arrival of the European ruler and 'modernity', and of photographs after colonial influence. In this chapter, I suggest thus that a sense of modernity is, and was, present in the subcontinent and that, indeed, 'Asians' are *not* necessarily condemned 'to a role of "catching up"', as Frederick Cooper declares.⁴²¹ Taking issue with Cooper's argument that modernity's 'historical origins lie in the West',⁴²² I contend that the historical journeys that brought the Gujarati first to East Africa, then to Britain, were themselves an enactment of modernity amongst this community.⁴²³ In this argument do I by no means suggest that modernity did not exist in the west, nor do I wish to undermine the technological achievements of Europe; instead I seek to highlight the challenges

⁴²⁰ Pinney, *Camera Indica*.

⁴²¹ Cooper, *Colonisation in Question*, p. 115.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁴²³ I momentarily pursue the line of thought regarding *bhangra* and its 'polluting' qualities: given that a sense of modernity exists in the sub-continent, the argument that the insertion of the Punjabi dance – or any other dance style in fact – into the *Navratri* space compromises 'Indian tradition', collapses. If inherently the *Navratri* space is endowed with modernity, via the modern in Indian society, then *bhangra* can no longer stand as a pollutant. It would seem the binaries of tradition and the modern are flawed to begin with.

and contradictions a South Asian-derived focus may pose to a linear, Eurocentric narrative of modernity.⁴²⁴

With reference to religion and modernity, Peter van der Veer has pursued a similar line of thought:

A comparative approach of “civilisations” [...] makes India into a holistic universe, signifying antimodernity, and Britain into another, signifying modernity. However, modern India and modern Britain are products of a shared colonial experience. Key concepts of modernity, like secularity, liberty, and equality are created and re-created in the interaction between colony and metropole.⁴²⁵

A linear approach whereby the ‘colony’ or the ‘metropole’ are designated as modern or secular, and traditional or religious is outdated. Because of the mutual experience and intimate interaction of the centre and margin during colonisation, van der Veer argues both parties were ‘transformed through [this] shared process’.⁴²⁶ In addition, it is proposed that Britain’s journey to modernity was largely influenced by its capitalist interventions with the sub-continent, whereas ‘the East’ had long begun to develop facets of modernity:

...China and India, till 1800, were much more central to the world economy than Europe was, because of their productivity in manufacturing by which they created an export surplus. The history of European dominance is therefore very short and explainable...⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ This modernity in the subcontinent has manifested itself not only in the production and consumption of visual material, but, for instance, through the design and manufacturing of textiles and the trading of spices. My explorations of culinary and sartorial practices, within this thesis, can be understood as relationally representative of these former innovative industries. For further scholarship on these industries, see Breward *et al*, *British Asian Style*, who highlight the impact of Indian fashions and designs, such as the paisley pattern or the chintz, in British style. They too outline the techniques that the Indians pioneered, and the British were quick to imitate. In Jo Monroe’s *Star of India: The Spicy Adventures of Curry* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2005), p.16, it is explicated that the spice ‘trade wasn’t all one way’, inferring that the natives of India traded in their spices to acquire precious goods in return.

⁴²⁵ Van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters*, p. 7.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

By re-addressing how and why certain societies have been dubbed modern, van der Veer destabilises hegemonic stereotypes. Whilst his rhetoric is primarily couched in religious debate, the endeavour in van der Veer's text parallels my own in this chapter. My aim is to fragment the prevailing hegemonic ideology of the modern, by drawing upon a prolific archive of visual material of, and from, the Gujarati East African community in Britain. In doing so, vis-à-vis these visual materials, my chapter shall reveal complex and diverse experiences and attitudes, and shall carve out its own interpretation of Gujarati East African modernity.

In her challenging and rich text, *Stages of Capital*, Ritu Birla too reveals unrecognised discourses on forms of Indian modernity. Her writings, on capitalism, culture and legal systems, are concerned with economic modernity. By considering traditional Marwari kinship networks, which were 'rendered illegitimate' by colonial forces, Birla charts the transformation of this vernacular capital. This transformation, prompted via the introduction of numerous commercial and contract laws, 'required that indigenous economic actors legitimize themselves as modern subjects'.⁴²⁸ Ultimately, the monograph highlights the complex forms of Indian economic modernity – if we are to use western nomenclature – that existed before the imposition of western capitalism. Although scholarly works that consider the various modern interventions of the sub-continent in the global narrative of civilisation are few and far between, there is a more recent insistence on excavating this subject. It is to this growing dialogue that this chapter speaks. In arguing that the traditions and cultures deriving from India have for a long time been endowed with the modern, I

⁴²⁸ Ritu Birla, *Stages of Capital*, p. 5.

explicate a particular sense of vernacular modernity – significant to the Gujarati East African – that relates to progress and improvement. It is a modernity that is bound up with enterprise, innovation, and development. At the same time, it is also a modernity that is entangled with ‘looking back’, to enable a continual ‘moving on’. This vernacular modernity is, as I shall demonstrate, entrenched in the twice migrant’s mentality. As this chapter’s exploration of diasporic culture, multiple identity and visual material shall suggest, the ‘modern’ to which I refer speaks directly to many of my contentions in this dissertation as a whole.⁴²⁹

Finding Family Photographs

In my search for primary visual materials that have been taken by the Gujarati East African community, and have the same community as their subject, I was inundated with boxes and envelopes of images, alongside a singular leather-bound album. Both sent in the post, often by recorded delivery, and given to my parents during social visits, a plethora of hoarded archived history descended into my possession from dusty attics and forgotten drawers.⁴³⁰ In my daunting task of organising these materials – sorting those images that must be returned, from those that had been handed down to me, as well as those that might be ‘useful’ to this study, and those that might not – it felt as if these valuable testimonies had been suspended impotently in their dusty corners. Their journey to my study, and their appearance on my desk, was loaded with a sense of overdue readiness, which pertained to the gap that existed in the analysis that they required. Their

⁴²⁹ Reference must be made to Catherine Ann Lean, ‘Negotiations of Modernity in Contemporary Indian Novels’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2008). The thesis has been hugely helpful in contextualising my initial thoughts on modernity. Whilst considering literature, the work acknowledges a new trend in the ‘approach to modernity’ and the ‘different aspects of Indian society and culture’. In her methodology Lean ‘reworks ’modernity’ to make it ‘more productive’, ‘lucid’, ‘complex’, and ‘appropriate yet functional’, p. 1.

⁴³⁰ Thanks must be paid to my mother, who was integral to this collection process, and who put me in touch with extended family members.

original owners had surely sensed this, and acknowledged it, by sending them onto me. The act of sharing these materials too suggests that there is a collective desire to excavate and share the Gujarati East African experience in Britain. To want to reveal these histories, vis-à-vis visual archives, complicates the conclusions of the previous chapter. This, an interesting tension that has evolved throughout the progressing chapters of the thesis, shall be commented upon later in this section on visual material. I shall also take up the idea of the secret and the esoteric community, in a holistic fashion, in the conclusion to this thesis.

Whilst I have collected the visual materials for this chapter through the archives of my kinship networks, from both extended and immediate family settled in Britain, my explications are also made via the written evidence in *Hansa's* cookbooks and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's cookbook memoir. My methodologies once more utilise the skills I have gathered in literary studies, and I use the techniques of close reading to investigate the themes I have set out. This chapter follows in the traditions of analysing photography in literary studies that have already been established by both Marianne Hirsch and Susan Sontag. These works will be useful in this chapter.⁴³¹ By interpreting carefully selected images of community events, culinary practices, and family gatherings, set in Britain, East Africa and sometimes India, I aim to exemplify some of the practices I discuss earlier, and also delineate the relationship between the Gujarati and their vernacular modernity. As suggested by the critical materials thus far cited, the modern in various forms is of significance to South Asian visual culture as a

⁴³¹ Sontag, *On Photography*, Hirsch, *Family Frames*. My style of writing in this chapter is also inspired by Hirsch and Spitzer, *Ghosts of Home*, which features photographic analysis. Ananya J. Kabir and Jay Prosser's works on photography, as cited later, have also been significant in this sense.

whole.⁴³² I argue that, however, there is a particular pertinence of modernity to the Gujarati identity. The Gujarati East Africans are vanguards of modernity, continually seeking out progress, enterprise and adventure. The numerous and various images that exist hidden away within this community, and are readily and immediately circulated upon request, is in itself a testament to their foresight. The choice to document themselves, and concurrently represent identity through visual materials, demonstrates the Gujarati East African's investment in the modern.

The discussion of 'twice migrant modernity' will within this chapter initially focus upon choices of attire, a subject which I have already considered in my readings of *Navratri*. This excavation will take place via images of my mother's aunt and her husband. Although of my grandparent's generation, in Gujarati (and for the remainder of this chapter) they are addressed by me as aunt and uncle. In reading clothing within visual materials of one particular album I seek to analyse gendered dress later within my argument. I move to subsequently consider the concept of the fetish in relation to the photographs, and the objects the image depicts. Commenting self-reflexively upon how these images became available to me, and how the narratives they contain are accessible, I then illustrate the importance of culinary commodities to the double diaspora. Whilst both *Hansa's* and *The Settler's Cookbook* figure into this discussion, it is Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's recurrent motif of amassed culinary objects that cements my suggestions about the fetish, and frames my further discussion of images. 'Fetishism', as Emily Apter and William Pietz describe, 'has been a key word in the cultural discourse through which "developed" societies have identified

⁴³² Another text that is a major study of South Asian visual culture that must be noted is Kajri Jain, *Gods in the Bazaar: The Economies of Indian Calendar Art* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

themselves'.⁴³³ Their analysis too considers how fetishes are 'sites of displaced lack [...] impregnated with the self-consciousness of *absent value*' (my emphasis).⁴³⁴ In my argument I contend that the self-consciously hoarded commodities cited, and as appear in Figure 10, are relics of the past that pertain to absence, loss and dispossession. Yet, importantly, they too signify the narratives of progress that are woven into the twice-migrant's story. I finally draw these links of vernacular modernity and dispossession together through engaging scholarship by Ranjana Khanna.⁴³⁵ Through this analysis, I aim to explore the incongruities and contestations entrenched in the double diaspora's experience. Let us now turn from finding frames, to the business of framing those that have been found.

Framing Family Photographs⁴³⁶

The images within the archive I refer to have been shot in India, East Africa and in many regions of Britain. In some respects the photos link a community that is otherwise invisible. This invisible community not only spans geographically, but, via the images, as Hirsch suggests, also reaches beyond the constraints of time: '[...I]n lives shaped by exile, emigration and relocation, such as my family's [incidentally both Hirsch's and my own], where relatives are dispersed and relationships shattered, photographs provide perhaps even more than usual some illusion of *continuity over time and space*' (my emphasis).⁴³⁷ This is a community that is linked through a shared experience of deracination and

⁴³³ Emily Apter, and William Pietz, *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. ix.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴³⁵ Ranjana Khanna, 'Post-Palliative Coloniality's Affective Dissonance', *Postcolonial Text*, 2.1 (2006) <<http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/viewArticle/385/815>> [accessed 15 February 2013].

⁴³⁶ This sub-title takes its inspiration from the popular text Hirsch, *Family Frames*.

⁴³⁷ Hirsch, *Family Frames*, p. xi.

dispersion, which finds something of the missing coherent narrative in the photograph. It is a community and experience accessible via the photographs themselves. The Gujarati East Africans in Britain do not speak often via the fictional text, nor are they seen in the blockbuster movie. They are found in these photographs – as well as in their recipes and dances – hidden from the everyday onlooker. Viewing these images feels like looking into another world. As a member of this community I feel it a privilege to have access to these narratives, and indeed be somehow accounted for in the stories that these archives weave.

As I have explained, these photographs are generally stored in boxes and envelopes. One album that did come into my possession was from a close family member, my mother's maternal aunt. This archive has yellowing pages and empty spaces, and is bound by a red leathery cover, which depicts a barely decipherable etched scene of manned horses and men with swords. Presented within this striking album, these images are preceded with a sense of importance: unlike the 'hyperesoteric' boxed images – the 'flotsam of history' – these experiences have been deemed worthy of presentation and examination.⁴³⁸ They are on show, ready to be displayed to a viewer, and indeed are performing within the space of the album. The arrangement of the photographs too infers their performativity. Each picture is carefully placed in symmetry to the other images on that page, and often each page is themed by a set of frames from a family trip or a wedding. The first page is a montage of images that recites the contemporary members of that immediate family: in the centre is a large image of the father, and at each corner, overlapping the larger image, are smaller portraits of his wife,

⁴³⁸ Kabir, *Territory of Desire*, p. 59. The commentaries on visual material in *Territory of Desire* are of a different context to my readings here, Kabir's work being centred on conflict.

and their three children.⁴³⁹ Each is in black and white, and in the smaller pictures each member of the family strikes a similar pose. Throughout the album, the shots sit behind once-protective cellophane, which is now crisp and peeling away. One wonders: who is the compiler of these very well arranged images; who is the author of this performance and narrative; what story is it that they wish to tell? On one count an answer is roughly available. The father in these images, my maternal grandmother's brother in-law, was a keen photographer, and no doubt captured many of these moments.⁴⁴⁰ Thus it is him who more than likely composed this album. His interest in photography perhaps accounts for the differing presentation of these images, when compared to the other bagged and boxed photographs I have been given to analyse.

The narrative that this uncle intended to convey, via these carefully compiled images, too remains undisclosed.⁴⁴¹ The album presents, as my analysis shall explicate, a well-dressed, well-travelled, prosperous family. The individuals and the life they led, according to the text of the album, appear to be modern in many respects. Photographs, however, 'reveal even as they conceal'.⁴⁴² Sontag expresses a similar sentiment of the nature of the photograph's veracity, when she tell us: 'Photographed images do not seem to be statements about the world so much as pieces of it, miniatures of reality that anyone can make or acquire'.⁴⁴³ What is presented, nevertheless, continues to be of interest. One narrative over another has been favoured and within my close readings here, I shall read these

⁴³⁹ An additional child, a son, was born later.

⁴⁴⁰ I will refer to this relative from hereon as Ramanmasa, his name, or as my uncle, which is the translation of 'masa' (literally mother's sister's husband). Ramanmasa was born in March 1934 and died between 2003 and 2005.

⁴⁴¹ I did speak to my aunt, my uncle's wife, about these images and the narrative they represent, she however had forgotten much or was not sure. Her vagueness pertains to the slippery nature of memory.

⁴⁴² Hirsch, *Family Frames*, p. 2.

⁴⁴³ Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 4.

stories which are deliberately presented. I too shall attempt to unveil those that require a little more excavation. Whilst ‘photographs are as essentially constructed as any other representational form, [and] every part of the image can be manipulated and even fabricated’, I must agree with Hirsch, who writes on the family album, that ‘a notion of truth [remains] in the picture’.⁴⁴⁴ It is thus the narrative that my uncle attempts to put forward in the text of the album that shall be excavated here, as well as the one that is only glimpsed on further explication.⁴⁴⁵

Saris and Suits

One image in Kenya, within the red leathery album, catches my attention time and time again. Found three quarters of the way through, and on a page that is missing two of the four pictures that were no doubt originally designated to the page, is Figure 11. Like Figure 10 of my introduction, Figure 11 is startling in its perspective, composition and stylistic foresight. To recite Annette Kuhn’s formulation, from Barthes, the photograph ‘pierces’ me.⁴⁴⁶ Standing on a slightly elevated piece of unidentifiable beach debris, my aunt poses in front of the rolling sea, on what is a beautiful day. The sand and the water merge into one, as do the sky and the sea. The subject of the composition, my aunt,⁴⁴⁷ is standing stylishly off-centre, to the right, and her deep green *sari*, rather wantonly draped, suggestively blows along with the wind.

The *sari* is nothing special, by today’s fashion standards at least, though I contend, as I did in my previous chapter, it is a sign of ‘Indianness’, because the

⁴⁴⁴ Hirsch, *Family Frames*, p. 6.

⁴⁴⁵ Kuhn, *Family Secrets*, too discusses the family album, and in these contexts of ‘cultural construction of family’, p. 20. This work will be of use throughout the chapter.

⁴⁴⁶ Kuhn, *Family Secrets*, p. 18.

⁴⁴⁷ My aunt here is Indumasi, ‘Masi’ translates to mother’s sister, or aunt.

‘sari is the quintessential Indian female garment. *Nothing* identifies a woman as being Indian so strongly as the sari...’ (my emphasis).⁴⁴⁸ In this way the *sari* represents a sense of Indian tradition, and in its simplicity, its lightweight, and unembroidered and print-less character it appears to show nothing of the modern. The blouse could be deemed old-fashioned, with its long sleeves, and simple plain white colour, which does not match the *sari*.⁴⁴⁹ Yet, the way the entire garb is worn, and how the aunt stands conveys a sense far from the ordinary. With her weight on her back foot, her pose is neither timid nor shy. As in all her moments captured on film, littered throughout the album, she looks straight into the camera, with much confidence and character. Her trendily drawn figure stands with authority and her right hand tilts her right shoulder backward slightly by resting on her hip. On closer inspection, this is not the ‘hands on the hips’ pose that is so popular amongst celebrities and those accustomed to posing; the subject of this image is, it seems, loosely grasping her wayward *sari* around the hip.

⁴⁴⁸ Lynton, *The Sari*, p. 7.

⁴⁴⁹ The simplicity of this ensemble is apparent if compared with the dress during *Navratri*, as cited in my previous chapter. Of course, *Navratri* is a special occasion, and such merits elaborate dress; however, the comparison simply serves to illustrate how the dress in this image is starkly simple.



Figure 11

It is a number of facets – the self-assured look alongside the suggestive and stylish pose, in such a dramatic, distinctive landscape – that when coupled with an ordinarily *sari*-clad figure, results in such a striking composition. The simple *sari* is not the only paraphernalia that is suggestive of the ordinary or traditional: the figure wears a large red *chanlo* or *bindi* upon her forehead, that, as previously highlighted much like a wedding ring, denotes she is a married woman. She also has her hair parted, and slickly oiled back, a common hairstyle for ladies of her generation. This sense of the traditional requires further nuancing, however. The *sari*'s colonial evolution necessitates a reading of the garments as modern in some ways. For example, the sheer presence of a blouse beneath the enveloping material is a colonial imposition, which conformed to western social understandings of decency and modesty. In this way the *sari* composition, in the addition of a concealing blouse, was modernised to suit colonial social codes. A white bra strap can also be seen within the photograph,

signifying another intervention of modernity. The garment thus connotes tradition, in it being a quintessentially Indian clothing, *and* modernity. In the *sari* itself the new and old seamlessly merge, representing a never-ending entanglement of the modern and traditional. It is a juxtaposition of the ordinary and evolved traditional, and the conviction and modernity of the poser that must be what fascinates, and compels me to linger upon its meaning. The distinctive landscape is characterised by the seascape. Whilst the sea and sand almost merge into one, the sea itself can be understood to be a symbol of movement and migration; a symbol of bringing people and also taking them away.⁴⁵⁰ The sea in this image, with my aunt posing in the foreground, is thus very poignant.

In particular, how my aunt's *sari* is so wantonly clad seems at odds within the remit of the album. Perhaps she has just taken a dip in the water, and momentarily discarded her *sari*, leaving the blouse and petticoat on, to enjoy the tempting sea? Such a liberty, though, would not have even been entertained. This type of image portrays a family holiday to the coastal regions of Kenya, in either Mombasa or Malindi. A trip away for a few days to these regions would have included a picnic on the beach, and then only a fleeting encounter with the water. Bodies would not have been fully submerged, only feet and hands, alongside the bottom of *saris*, dresses and trousers, would have been wet. For this fleeting encounter with the water young women would have been chastised.⁴⁵¹ In an informal interview with my aunt, I learnt that the image actually portrays a

⁴⁵⁰ In his text *Colour Me English* (London: Harvill Secker, 2011), Caryl Phillips dedicates the chapters 'Men at Sea: African American Sailors' (pp. 72-81) and 'Water' (pp. 163-166) to the significance of this very element. The author underlines how the sea is a symbol of movement and migration. From the slave trade of Africans to America, via the oceans, to the opportunity to contextualise the black self outside of hierarchical America the sea offered to 'coloured' seaman, the oceans are powerful within diasporic narratives. Water is thus a productive signifier, often deployed symbolically in fiction.

⁴⁵¹ This chastisement is of course an example of how gender roles, particularly how women safeguard the honour and the integrity of the family, are maintained. Family honour and gender roles are discussed later in this chapter.

couple's trip to Mombasa, without the parent in-laws they would have lived with. The *sari's* dishevelled look was due to wind on the day and a dip of the feet in the water. Her lone figure in the photograph too stands in an open, confident manner, perhaps aware of the striking composition or the significance of the photographic image. Perhaps the stance is an unconscious acknowledgement, and/or enactment, of the modernity of the Gujarati, who finds themselves in East Africa, in an endeavour to attain increased progress.⁴⁵² The manifestation of the modern, with the traditional, the convergence of two identities, which do not compete, but sit happily alongside each other, are what make this image wonderful, worthy of comment, and eye-catching again and again.

Where the *sari*, and the other marks of tradition, create an image that should be unremarkable yet is strikingly remarkable, the many shots of this aunt's husband within the album are interesting for their shedding of anything remotely traditional. The large image, Figure 12, on the initial page of this album of my uncle is similar to one found towards the end of the album text, Figure 13. Both in black and white, the figure dons sunglasses, which to today's gaze look like retro Ray-Bans. He wears a dark suit, tie, white shirt and has a moustache and short, curly black groomed hair. Each image has him looking away from the camera into the distance, at a slight upward angle. He smiles in neither, but in the second there is less gravity in his countenance. These images, framed in a white border, are again striking for their stylistics. Nothing appears in the background, yet the foreground is sharply in focus and well composed with decent

⁴⁵² In the article 'Gujarati Migrants' search for Modernity in Britain', it is suggested that migration for Wellingborough Gujaratis – who are mostly twice migrants via East Africa – is motivated by a desire for 'progress', 'rather than purely material[ism]'. The Gujarati, it is argued, has left a prosperous life in India to ultimately find a 'modern, clean, 'civilised' country with high morals and plenty of opportunities'. Emma Crewe, and Uma Kothari, 'Gujarati Migrants' Search for Modernity in Britain', *Gender and Development*, 6.1 (Mar 1998), 13-20 (16).

proportions attributed to the face and body. Next to the second image, which is located towards the end of the album – Figure 13, there is another image of the uncle. Here, in Figure 14, he stands on what appears to be sand, in front of a deserted road and a block building. He no longer wears his retro Ray-Ban-esque sunglasses, but instead, a seemingly unlit cigarette – an accoutrement of modernity – hangs from his mouth. He again wears his dark suit, white shirt, tie and polished shoes. He holds something lightly in both his hands, attributing to a stylish, charming pose. Each image portrays the subject as not only smart to the last detail, but also fashionably ‘cool’. The way the sunglasses are worn, the way the body is directed away from the camera, the way the cigarette hangs in the mouth, are all very suggestive of a role undertaken.

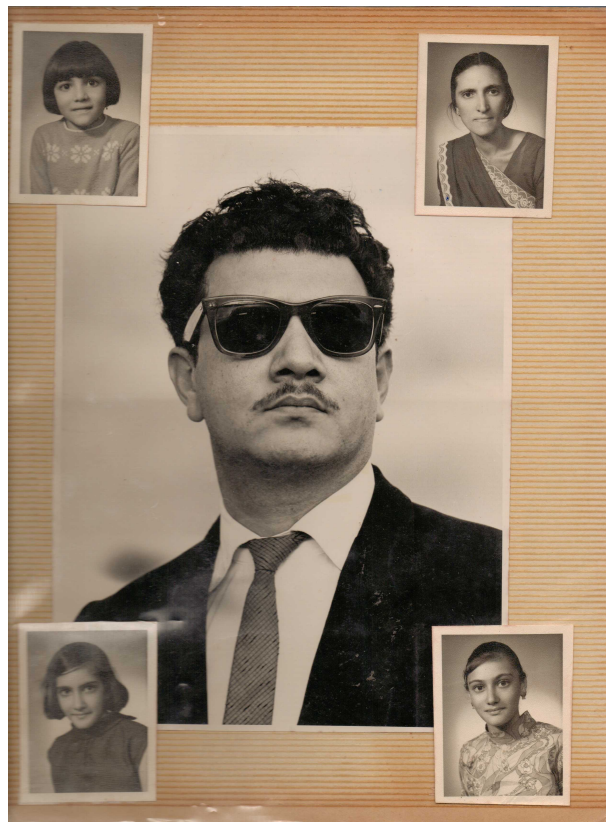


Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14

Within Figure 14 the background too is significant and can be understood as harmonious with the fashionably ‘cool’ figure in the foreground. On close inspection the large block building looks to be a set of apartments on the upper floor, as denoted by the curtains and hanging clothes, and offices on the lower floors. Below the block is what appears to be a row of shops with some pristine cars parked outside. All is well set out and organised by posts and roads: there is a clear regulation, and creation, of the urban city space. Peer a little closer, and the shop appears to be only one outlet, which is a bank: the words ‘STANDARD BANK’ can be seen written in white lettering on the front and along the side of the shop section. Why a picture of this uncle standing outside a bank was taken is unclear, and why it has indeed been deemed important enough to enter the space of album is also unclear. On requesting further information, from close family and in conversation with my aunt, it seems there are few direct links to that bank itself. One other uncle did work within a bank, but which it was is forgotten. The uncle in the image worked in the national post office. The location of the shot, therefore, seems strange, and its appearance in an album filled with family and celebratory event frames, too is slightly odd.

Some continuity between the background and the figure seen in the foreground can be fathomed. Like the confident looking lone figure, the block building is architecturally smart and modern. Further, where the bank can perhaps be read as a symbol of capitalism, and progress, the figure that poses in front of it, by his simple appearance in the Kenyan space, is someone who can be read to seek that progress. His dress and pose suggest that there is something of a symbiosis between the cityscape photographed and his ambitions and narrative. Each component of Figure 14, as well as Figure 12 and 13, points to a singular

desired perception of the individual: he is the ‘modern man’. This final photograph, Figure 14, though, extends this image of the uncle from the ‘modern man’, to the ‘modern businessman’. The performance of the role of modern businessman in these shots is heightened when one looks to the rest of the album where this uncle, Raman Masa, is often captured in family settings dressed in a shirt and cardigan. In these family images, a style that dominates the album, he is no longer acting the part of the suited, booted, progressive businessman. Having had to wear smart dress for work, at the post office, perhaps these images, that portray a modern businessman, were taken when Raman Masa was dressed for work. Their insertion into the album, nevertheless, suggests that the photographs are valuable in what they illustrate. There is indeed a role to be played, and a performance of identity here, in the photograph, and within the album space. An image of progress and modernity is sought to be exemplified.

Dressing the Body: Sartorial Preferences

Let us delve a little deeper into this construction of the modern businessman, and analyse its formulation by probing the black suit, tie and white shirt, which attire the body, a little further. Gijsbert Oonk has recently attempted to address this idea of dress in the Indian East African diaspora. Although the article’s remit in the main overlooks gender considerations, which I shall address here, it does provide some findings on why the ‘western business suit became acceptable among South Asians in East Africa’.⁴⁵³ Oonk suggests there are three reasons for the prevalence of the suit. Firstly, education played a primary role in western ‘dress types bec[oming] acceptable’, because teachers, although from India, often wore ‘British clothes’. This according to Oonk set an example to Indian East

⁴⁵³ Oonk, ‘Clothing Matters’, p. 530.

African families.⁴⁵⁴ I would add that, in addition, school uniforms were generally moulded around the chequered dress and cardigan or shirts and shorts combination, promoting these types of garments amongst the middle class. Oonk, secondly, suggests that ‘South Asian settlers in East Africa developed a gradual economic and social separation from India’. ‘In the perceptions of Asian Africans’, Oonk comments, ‘India was on the decline and the future was in Europe’. Furthermore, after Indian independence, Nehru made it clear to Indians abroad that they should demonstrate their loyalties to their host nations, as India would not be responsible for Indians living outside of the sub-continent. During the same period the *khadi* was implanted within the national narrative of independent India. Oonk argues that in light of India’s turning away from its citizens abroad, middle-class Indian East Africans chose to ignore this lead and forsake the *khadi*. Economically and socially speaking, links with India were on the decline, resulting in the proliferation of the business suit.⁴⁵⁵ This is perhaps why my aunt, in conversation, declared that the ‘*kurta* was for India, whilst western wear was for Kenya’. Lastly, Oonk cites leaders such as Aga Khan III, of the Ismaili religious sect, as directing followers towards western clothing and language.⁴⁵⁶

The choice to wear business suits, and indeed other forms of western clothing, is thus intimately linked with the ideology of progress. These items of dress are associated with being educationally, economically and socially forward. If western wear is metaphorically interpreted as such, the business suit can be understood to be the epitome of this metaphor, which relates to progress. The metaphor of the business suit as symbolising progress does embody the

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 542.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 543.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 544.

ideologies of community very succinctly. As I have suggested previously, vis-à-vis Emma Crewe and Uma Kothari, migration for East African Indians to Britain was often about finding a modern, progressive existence. This ambition, performed through material culture, is also beyond materialism because, as described by Crewe *et al*'s research informants, 'Gujaratis have it in their blood to be enterprising, to migrate and to have a sense of adventure'.⁴⁵⁷ And, as Oonk describes above, the direction of this enterprise was addressed towards Europe, as this was where the future lay, in the minds of the Gujarati East Africans. It would therefore follow that to demonstrate this sense of enterprise and progress, western clothes would naturally be donned, and in particular the business suit. By wearing these clothes for a photograph and in addition inserting them into the framework of the album, it is clear that a particular role is being sought out and demonstrated for the benefit of the album user. Given that the album is a performance in itself, as set out earlier in this chapter, if the photograph is performative as described, then a popular literary convention, of sorts, is being played out here: the performance within the performance.⁴⁵⁸

However, let us now take into account gender considerations: with the sartorial choices of the suit by Raman Masa, in the black and white images, there is a contrast with the choices of dress in the photograph discussed of his wife. Whilst the modern and traditional happily co-exist in the beach image, there is no convergence of identity in the uncle's confident, chic posed photographs. There is simply a presentation of the modern, and indeed cosmopolitan. As it is the particularity of dress in the main that gesture towards the traditional in Figure 11 of my aunt, I look to the rest of the album in this respect. Bar one exception of an

⁴⁵⁷ Crewe *et al*, 'Gujarati Migrants', p. 16.

⁴⁵⁸ The performance within the performance can often be a play within a play, popular in Shakespearean classics, or a novel within a novel.

image (Figure 15) of a grandparent in a plain white *kurta*, which could in fact be mistaken for a white shirt, Indian men within the album don western wear. This is either a suit, or, as intimated previously, a shirt with a jumper or cardigan. Grown, married women too seem to have a preference of dress, and exclusively don *saris* or, less commonly, Punjabi suits.⁴⁵⁹ Girls and young women, however, wear dresses and skirts in the western fashions of the time, that fall just above the knee. They too have bobs, and hairstyles that were fashionable and indeed matched the modernity of their dress.⁴⁶⁰ Whilst this can be perceived within the album and via the images of the girls (Figure 16), this dress would have been the same for the previous generation: my grandmother and my aunt, who within the album consistently wear Indian dress, would have worn dresses and skirts before marriage. Once these girls married, though, *saris* would have been worn, just like a *bindi*, and a requisite for respectability within the domain of marriage.⁴⁶¹



Figure 15

⁴⁵⁹ The significance of the less commonly worn Punjabi suit is illustrated further along in this discussion. Whilst India cannot be perceived as a singular uniform entity, there is some pattern whereby often men favour western dress, and women more often wear 'Indian dress'. There is some conversation here between the sartorial preferences of those in the double diaspora and those in India; however, no research, to my knowledge, on this subject exists, and here lies a lacuna which requires some work.

⁴⁶⁰ It is worth noting that boys, unlike girls, follow the example of their paternal relations and wear western dress. Generally these include shorts and trousers, and shirts.

⁴⁶¹ See Footnote 98 and 99 (p. 46) for texts that discuss South Asian dress.



Figure 16

Given the almost ubiquitous dress of *saris* worn by the Gujarati woman in East Africa, there is some conflict with the image of the modern man, progressive and directing their attention away from India towards Europe, as denoted by the business suit. While the male body embeds within it ambitions of progress and civilisation through the western wear it dons, on the contrary the female body is limited to wearing the *sari* exclusively to protect an Indian identity and safeguard the honour of the family, and indeed the nation. The female body in the sub-continent has, indeed, long been endowed with much significance:

From the colonial period onwards, when the British Empire sought to modernise its Indian subjects, to the anti-colonial struggle for freedom, when nationalist symbols were being created to mobilise large groups, and continuing into a postcolonial period marked by religious, cultural, and national revivalisms, the woman, and her body, have been used to express collective identity, honour, shame, and pride (Sarkar).⁴⁶²

⁴⁶² Tanika Sarkar, cited in Ananya Jahanara Kabir, 'Dis-comforting bodies: Postcards from the Edge in *Between Kismet and Karma*', *South Asian Popular Culture*, 9.1 (2011), 15-28 (20). See also Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1993) for a discussion that concerns female gender, Indian identity and modernity.

The dual potency and vulnerability of the Indian female body has been recognised in scholarship, often via discourses on the bloody partition of India.⁴⁶³ It is the recurring ‘cultural notions of honour and shame [that are] endemic to South Asian societies’ that manifest themselves time and time again in relation to the woman and her body.⁴⁶⁴ During partition the female body became the subject of grotesque sexual violence, an arena where the conflicts of the two emerging nations were played out and the honour of each nation was tarnished via the abuse of these women. This rape and mutilation, which also related to family honour, was suffered in silence, and until recently remained an unspoken and veiled subject. If within this context the female body represents the honour and identity of the nation and family, the static role of the *sari* worn by the female body in East Africa can be understood in similar terms. By donning the *sari* by necessity on marriage, the female body is at this point compelled to safeguard family honour, and that inadvertently of the Indian nation. Within this *sari*-clad body traditions that directly hark back to India are manifested, and the manifestor of these traditions becomes responsible for a cultural legacy that is no longer available via the men of the community.⁴⁶⁵ Women are endowed as the purveyors of cultural identity.

With the traditions of Mother India carefully ascribed and safely accounted for by the married female body, and how that body is presented, the

⁴⁶³ Beyond the debate that surrounds partition, Paul A. Singh Ghuman, *Double Loyalties: South Asian Adolescents in the West* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), amongst others, however acknowledges that ‘South Asian girls often tend [...] to shoulder the *izzat* (honour) of the family’, p. 4.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁵ Referring again to the play *Strictly Dandia*, of chapter three, notably the prized young female character Preethi is ‘like the garbo pot. She has an inner light’ (Scene 11, p. 44). In this simile the female character is inherently sacred, extending the female responsibility of cultural purveyor to the realm of religion. As I have referenced in my previous chapter, this body that safeguards honour, in its various forms, is vulnerable to the contamination by the Muslim other in the play, a storyline that plays out familiar fears that remind the audience of the trauma of partition.

men of the community are free to then explore the arenas of perceived progress and modernity, as symbolised via dress.⁴⁶⁶ Moreover, this exploration can be done without fear of losing a perceived Indian cultural heritage. If we return to Oonk's assertion, cited earlier, that the nationalised garment of the *khadi* was rejected by the Indian East African, yet the *sari* was still a requisite, it is clear that the responsibility to guard and embody national honour and identity lay very much with the woman and her body. This responsibility resonates, and is again cemented, by the narrative that accompanies an image on the very second page of the album, Figure 17. This is the one and only image of my aunt in a Punjabi suit. She stands in a field in a light coloured suit, earrings and sunglasses. The composition is reminiscent of nineteen-sixties Bollywood films that were preoccupied with stunning Kashmiri landscapes, and flaunted lush gardens. In this intertextuality the image speaks of romance, forbidden love and the modernity related to these sentiments. The picture is in black and white, and as usual my aunt looks smart, confident and happy. Captured whilst her parents-in-law were away, my aunt could freely dress as she liked for this photograph. She thus borrowed this Punjabi suit from her Punjabi neighbour, and wore jewellery and sunglasses to pose. Normally, due to the omnipresence of elders, she was compelled to wear a *sari*, be free of make-up and the other paraphernalia worn in this image. According to her elders, the wearing of the Punjabi suit would have

⁴⁶⁶ Interestingly Patricia Holland, 'Introduction: History, Memory and the Family Album', in *Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography*, ed. by Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (London: Virago Press, 1991), pp. 1-14 (p. 7) notes that it is the man's role 'to handle the apparatus that controls the image, to point, frame and shoot'. Whilst it is within the male repertoire to manage the technological quality of photography, yet another signification of his modernity, I would argue women still guard the sanctity of that which is photographed. Jeremy Seabrook, 'My Life is in that Box', in *Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography*, ed. By Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (London: Virago Press, 1991), pp. 171-85 (pp. 172-3) describes a similar point.

signified a change in alliance from Gujarati to Punjabi ways.⁴⁶⁷ Girls choosing this dress would also be accused of being too modern, and reprimanded, as the suit was akin to the western trouser.



Figure 17

There are also other limitations on dress, particularly how the *sari* is worn. Interestingly in Figure 11 of my aunt on the beach, she wears her *sari* in the *nivi* style. As described in my previous chapter, the *nivi* style would have been considered modern, whilst the Gujarati style would have been thought of as adhering more closely to the norms of the regional homeland of the same name. Within the album itself the Gujarati style is generally donned by my aunt in the other shots. Perhaps being alone with her husband, on a trip away far from her parents-in-law, meant that she felt she could bend the invisible rules of dress, pertaining to modernity, which even penetrate how one wears a *sari*. Looking beyond the remit of the album, to a small black and white image of my

⁴⁶⁷ Satwant Kaur Rait, in *Sikh Women in England: Their Religious and Cultural Beliefs and Social Practices* (Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books, 2005), describes the normative dress of the female Sikh community in Britain, who are predominantly from the Punjab, as consisting of the Punjabi Suit, p. 68. Whilst the name of the garment would suggest as much, Rait makes lucid the association of the Punjabi Suit with 'Punjabiness'. She too documents the specificity of this garment, the *sari* and the *lehnga*, which make useful reference points, pp. 68-9.

grandmother in her Kenyan backyard, Figure 18, we can see a *sari* is once again donned. In the left hand corner a man stands in what seems to be a shirt and a dark trouser suit, and individuals can be perceived in the background wearing garments that adhere to the gender divisions discussed in this chapter. Highlighting that the gender roles discussed in this chapter, which are exposed via dress, are in play in images outside of the album, Figure 18 also serves to illustrate the restrictions on female dress. In this representation, like in a majority of the photographs in the album, we can see that the female poser is wearing her *sari* in the Gujarati fashion. In the Figure, my grandmother is in her marital home, surrounded by family members. She is also pictured in the outside kitchen area of the house, where she would undertake her primary responsibilities as wife, daughter in-law, and perhaps mother. It is therefore unsurprising that she might choose to wear the Gujarati style of *sari*, under the watchful eyes of her elders.



Figure 18

Indeed, it has been suggested that on marriage it became compulsory to wear the *sari* in the Gujarati style.⁴⁶⁸ Taking into account how and when certain fashions are worn, and the anecdote of Figure 17, it is clear that any move away from the traditional dress of the *sari*, and indeed the Gujarati style, both deemed most true to Gujarat and its cultures, were frowned upon by elders. To transgress both dress codes and role boundaries is to become too modern, and encroach upon the male terrain. In this limitation of dress, there is a preoccupation with the preservation of both family and national honour. Consequently, the role of the female within the Gujarati East African community – once married and therefore matured – was static despite, and perhaps because of, the ambitions of the community as a collective. If the community were to progress, via the ambitions and activities of the male population, then it seems the woman is bound to guard tradition and culture.

In Britain the exactness of any regulations on how the *sari* should be worn appears to dissolve. Figure 19 depicts tea being taken in a garden in Britain. There is a division between where the women sit on the floor and where the men sit on chairs in the space of the garden. This division is heightened by gendered dress: men, without fail, quite smartly wear shirts, jumpers and sometimes ties; women wear *saris*. These *saris* are not necessarily in the Gujarati style, and there appears to be a mix of fashions worn. Despite some change, the gendered dress codes that existed in East Africa have been preserved during migration. A glance back to the *Navratri* festivities described in my previous chapter suggests a similar pattern of gender roles has been replicated in Britain, but with some differences. Whilst women are still compelled to guard the honour of the family

⁴⁶⁸ In informal conversation with another aunt, dated 2nd Oct 2011, she asserted these norms relating to dress and marriage.

and nation, as expressed by the uniformly Indian attire at these events, men can happily don either *kurtas* or jumpers and shirts. However, the range of 'Indian dress' is broader at these events, with the *saris* worn freely in different styles, and with Punjabi suits being also worn. Such gendered dress exists in Britain notably only during special occasions. Women who once were obligated to wear the *sari* in East Africa, are now, in Britain, compelled to attain further education and undertake paid work, and thus adopt western dress for the working day. This change in daily attire is not to say that the segregated gender roles described earlier have too disappeared: I would argue the Gujarati East African woman is still the purveyor of cultural heritage relating to India, and indeed it remains her responsibility to guard these traditions.



Figure 19

The Fetish: ‘Flotsam of History’

Before we examine how the photograph itself is fetish within the context of the Gujarati East African in Britain, and in addition how the subject of the photograph is fetish, let us first consider in what forms these images came to me, because these contexts speak clearly to the concept of the fetish. It is predominantly to the album text that I have looked to in my close readings thus far. The brief discussions of Figures 18 and 19, however, introduce images that, as I have mentioned, came to me in loose piles stored in envelopes and boxes. Arriving in packs of tens, and hundreds, I collected, and sorted, an abundance of these archives, which no doubt were stored in cupboards and drawers away from prying eyes. Are these photographs therefore, as Kabir describes, albeit in a somewhat different context, the ‘flotsam of history’?⁴⁶⁹ The sentiment of the secret certainly envelops these loose images. Being hidden away, for years, suggests these images, and the narratives they embody, are ‘hyperesoteric’.⁴⁷⁰ They are not available to the home visitor, like the album, and are deliberately absent, unless requested. Perhaps they, as Kabir suggests, are not good enough for coffee tables, and bookshelves, or, indeed, no one cares about these histories enough to make them socially presentable.⁴⁷¹ Although there might be an outward inequity of their use between the photographs I have received and the ones which came to me via the album, it must be acknowledged that when requested all these photographs did find their way to me. As I have suggested in the introduction to this chapter, in giving these photographs to me, willingly and with patience, and with some knowledge of my work, there is intimation that these stories, via the photographs, are accessible at some level. These are clearly

⁴⁶⁹ Kabir, *Territory of Desire*, p. 59.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*

valuable stories, intimated by their delivery method: the photographs were often sent special or recorded delivery, or were only permitted to be collected in person. The owners of these archives are therefore aware of the value of these photographs, and wish to protect them in more ways than one. As a member of the extended family, though, I have access to these archives.

There is an avenue into negotiating these ‘hyperesoteric’ images; an avenue to access is available to the insider, within the kinship networks of the extended family. Paradoxically, in the role of researcher, I am also the outsider. It is this meshing of identities, of insider and outsider, that has again enabled me to access these images and bring them to the attention of the academy. A further self-reflexive discussion of the politics and negotiations of this twofold responsibility will ensue within my conclusion to this entire work. In the context of these images, however, my ‘dual role’ has, it seems, affected less suspicion and enabled the excavation and analysis of these archives. It is worth adding a further nuance, and self-reflexivity, to this position here. As someone who is removed from my aunt, neither a daughter nor a sister, I do not have access to the intimate details of these archives, unless she, or someone else, wishes to share them with me. In one sense I read the photographs as they are, yet I am privy to *some* private information because of my position in the kinship network. The reality of this can be highlighted when Annette Kuhn’s work on the family album, in *Family Secrets*, is positioned within this framework.⁴⁷² This, a scholarly, well-received text, is rather personal in its thoughts, as the title suggests. Referring directly to her relationship with her father and mother, albeit sometimes in the third person, Kuhn’s commentary is centred very much on the

⁴⁷² Kuhn, *Family Secrets*.

intimacies of her childhood, and the aftermath of this experience in her adulthood. In my role as insider, outsider, within the kinship network, yet not a confidant, I occupy a different role to Kuhn: there are various levels of insider it seems. Because this situation, of course, resonates in my output here, it is important to identify the diverse platforms of insider, outsider positions that exist.⁴⁷³

The availability of these photographs, within the safe space of the kinship network, nonetheless, reveals a desire for the narratives they represent to be unveiled. As I have underlined in the introductory passages of this chapter, this desire for revelation differs from the excavations of my thesis on dance practices to a degree. In my previous chapter, I outlined the complex relationship of dance practices and the body to cultural knowledges. The space of *Navratri* was highlighted as a key terrain to both veil and unveil forms of identity via dance and dress. I argued that the body was central to manifesting these identities, as language was not sufficient to convey the multifaceted nature of these representations. When the articulation of these cultural knowledges was sought though, there was a difficulty in communication, owing no doubt to the limitations of language, but also to the dissipation of these knowledges. The community dance space, however, was where esoteric cultures were performed and showcased. Within dance, these knowledges are securely embodied. As a member of the community I had partial access to these identities – even if they could not answer my questions, members of the community wanted to profess the knowledge of these dances and their meanings to me – yet by performing

⁴⁷³ It is also worth noting that a more intimate style is not pursued here, due to the nature of this work. Unlike the published text, the work of the doctoral thesis is a different one, where formality and critical awareness must dominate. Saying this, I have clearly entwined my own experiences and genealogical narratives where appropriate, and where it benefits the aims of this work. Kuhn herself discusses her style in her conclusion chapter, pp. 155-6.

these narratives in the dance, there was concealment from the outsider. These photographs have too been concealed from the onlooker, yet are available to me. There is a confirmation, therefore, that as the insider I have access to these narratives; however, I would like to suggest that the knowledge mediated in these photographs is also more readily available to read, and therefore more readily available for revelation.

Where with the dance practices the articulation of the meaning was problematic, because of the inadequacy of language and the dissipation of knowledge, the visual materials passed to me for this chapter are unburdened from the issues of indecipherable encryption. These texts can simply be given to me, with some contextual information, and it is my task to decipher the codes that they picture. There is no foundation of technical knowledge required for the owner, or giver, of these visual materials: in giving these images to me they are free of any responsibility in deciphering the 'text'. The difficulties of communicating cultural knowledge, for the owner, do not exist and are side-stepped. It is instead left to me to deploy my literary skills to close read the images and call upon scholarly criticism on visual materials to explore them. Thus, perhaps, the visual materials discussed in this chapter represent a desire to be heard and to speak. This desire is sometimes limited by the inability to communicate knowledges that have no place in the written archive, and indeed by those knowledges themselves being unobtainable. After all, in my dealing with *Navratri* participants during no encounter did anyone try to deliberately withhold information from me; they were always keen to profess knowledge or tell me of someone who could help. This maybe owing to my location as a member of the community, an insider, but it nevertheless speaks of a desire to be

heard. There is, of course, the possibility that some images were withheld from me in my research to excavate these materials. If there were instances where I was not granted the privilege of reading some photographs, because of a desire to maintain the confidence of those images, this was never intimated. Indeed, similarly, in my experiences with *Navratri* never did anyone outwardly appear to withhold information. There is therefore some sense that these narratives are inclined towards being told.

Nevertheless, in reaching me, these images in envelopes and boxes appeared in their multitudes. There were hundreds of shots, enveloped both literally, and also metaphorically, in silence and secrecy. Their appearance in these circumstances suggests to me there is some pre-occupation with the collection and storage of these archives, particularly as there materialised such prolific numbers of these images. Before I continue by conceptually aligning these photographs with the fetish, through a contextualisation of my reflections with Christian Metz's study, let us first take into account key works on the theme of the fetish. Fetishism as a concept now enjoys broad applications within cultural studies; however, it is Karl Marx's fetishism of commodities and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical readings of sexual behaviour that have shaped much of the dialogue around the concept.⁴⁷⁴ Freud's widely debated arguments on the phallus and castration bring together prior speculation regarding 'deviant' sexual behaviour. He contends that the male child, on finding his mother has no

⁴⁷⁴ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, ed. by Frederick Engels (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1974), and Sigmund Freud, *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works*, ed. by Angela Richards, trans. by James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1977). Homi K Bhabha, 'The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism', in *Literature, Politics and Theory: Papers from the Essex Conference 1976-1984*, ed. by Francis Barker *et al* (London: Methuen, 1986), pp. 148-72, too engages the concept of the fetish. He argues for a reading of the stereotype via a fetishism/phobia theoretical framework. Bhabha's thesis here revolves around Freud's notion of the fetish, and in particular is interested in the colonial stereotype as fashioned by racial difference, rather than sexual difference.

penis, ineffectively disavows his discovery and appoints a substitute for the loss. Marx, on the other hand, proposes a fetish that is not primarily sexually determined, but instead is concerned with the value capitalist societies universally place in normative commodities and how these relationships efface the exploitative production process. Whilst both Marx and Freud share some ground in their thinking, their agendas are distinctly different. A strand of commonality to their theoretical understandings of the fetish is, however, one of loss and repression. Indeed, it is this strand that is also relevant to the way in which I posit the fetish in relation to the double diaspora. The fetish, for the double diaspora, develops from a sense of loss, which results in a fixation upon the commodity. The commodity then in some ways becomes a substitute for that loss. It is through the photograph, a form of commodity, that I shall now begin to examine how the fetish manifests itself amongst the twice-migrant community in Britain.

In his essay 'Photography and Fetish', Christian Metz considers the concept of the photograph as fetish. He explicates how photography is 'more capable itself [of] becoming a fetish', specifically in comparison to moving film.⁴⁷⁵ Metz suggests that the photograph's relationship to the fetish is more potent than the film, namely because of four reasons: unlike the film, one can linger on the photograph, as 'the photographic lexis, a silent rectangle of paper, is much smaller than the cinematic lexis'; there is a 'kinship' between 'photography and privacy', it is 'real', a 'souvenir, [a] keepsake', whereas film is relative to the collective and imaginary; unlike photography, 'film disposes of five more orders of perception', such as phonic and non-phonic sound, meaning

⁴⁷⁵ Christian Metz, 'Photography and Fetish', *October*, 34 (Autumn, 1985), 81-90 (90).

‘nothing can be *kept*’, or stopped; and finally, film gives life to the dead, whereas the image ‘maintains the memory of the dead *as being dead*’.⁴⁷⁶ For these reasons film does not become the subject of fetish; however, the photograph does. Metz’s observations on the nature of the photograph and its susceptibility to becoming the fetish, has a two-fold connotation: it firstly, and plainly, demonstrates how the photograph itself is fetish, but also relates implicitly to the way in which the photograph is ideal for portraying what is fetishised.

The four reasons that Metz sets out account for why the photograph itself has become a focus for the Gujarati East African in Britain, and can be easily applied to this diaspora’s collection, as it can to images in general. The scarcity of moving images that came into my possession from the community, however, is perhaps because of the unavailability of the relevant technology that would have enabled film production in East Africa. On the other hand, there are further elements of the way in which these photographs reached me, concerning Metz’s theory and otherwise, that locate these images as the fetish. Being hidden away in envelopes and boxes intimates that, as Metz suggests, there is certainly a sense that these images are ‘keepsakes’ that are private and not for public consumption. The advent of these images in loose bundles, as opposed to the album form, also evidences the private, secretive nature of these images. Rather than for display or performance, the overwhelming majority of these shots came to me outside of an album, seemingly fit for private study, albeit on the rare occasion. For these reasons, that precisely call upon Metz’s argument regarding photography and privacy, it seems to me that the photograph for the Gujarati East African acts as a fetish. It is the vast number of images that this community collect, and then store,

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81-4.

as evidenced by the large number of photographs that were sent to me, that cements the medium as fetishised within this diasporic group.

It is not, however, only the photograph that assumes the role of fetish. It is the subject of the photographs that too become fetishised, and it is to these subjects that I shall now turn. Figure 20, which forms part of the loose images in envelopes and boxes, depicts three people sitting in a kitchen in India. A man and a woman are sat in what appear to be folding chairs, and the third person, a woman, is on the floor cooking what is perhaps a *rotli* over a gas flame. They are located in the space of the kitchen, which is denoted by the variety of cooking paraphernalia on the shelves, on the worktop and under the worktop. The photograph was taken in India, and it is a wife who cooks on the floor in her home, and it is her husband with his visiting East African sister sitting in the chairs that are pictured. The Gujarati East African sister depicted is my mother's grandmother, or *motiba*. Not only are a notable number of pots and pans in the background, these are meticulously ordered and placed with precision: on the upper shelves containers sit in their position according to size and finish, with equal spacing between each item. Below the worktop there is less obsessive precision, yet the door-less cupboard reveals a lack of space for the excess kitchen articles, which can be seen piled one on top of another.



Figure 20

The items seen in the background of this shot, and the activities whereby something is being baked in the foreground, return us full circle to the subject of food practices. I would like to argue that in the excessive kitchen paraphernalia captured in this family frame, the importance of culinary traditions is expressed. The kitchen space is an unusual location to record one's vacation, yet this is what is happening here. Indeed, it is the act of cooking that is also proudly exhibited. If the image is examined a little closer, it is in fact not two folding chairs that are pictured. It is but one folding chair and another fully fledged dining room armchair, which would no doubt have been cumbersome and heavy to move into the cramped kitchen space. The efforts to picture the kitchen and its activities, no less during a family holiday, intimate the significance of the kitchen and culinary practices to this double diaspora. Cooking was, and is, central to the way this diaspora want to be imagined, and picture themselves. Yet, the armchair in the kitchen also illustrates a desire to showcase the ownership of such furniture, furniture that elevates the subject in style and comfort from the floor. The

armchair is just a glimpse of what exists elsewhere in the house. Perhaps there is a dining table, a sofa, a TV even, belonging to the family. Such a display too, perhaps, illustrates a narrative of progress in India, intended to be photographed and sent back to those already innovating in East Africa.

The clutter and order, all in excess, heaving in this tiny kitchen space demonstrate a pre-occupation with these things and cooking itself. This is a pre-occupation that was evidenced in the second chapter of this work. The image, though, represents a relationship with food and culinary activities that extends beyond this. The image reveals yet more: on the makeshift cooker, that is connected to the gas canister, sits a pressure cooker. This device, as the name suggests, capitalises on pressurised cooking in a sealed container to prepare foods faster. The contraption, often quite dangerous in the scalding steam it lets off, represents a modern intervention in a kitchen where *rotli* is baked on the floor, by what seems a make-shift camp fire. The use of this pressure cooker happens to be pictured here in Gujarat; however, as I shall showcase later, there are testimonies to the transition of this gadget from India to East Africa, and later to Britain. The pressure cooker has a social life of its own.⁴⁷⁷ Its exhibition in the Gujarati kitchen, amongst an Indian East African, demonstrates a sense of the modern being prevalent in India. At first glance, here is some juxtaposition of the two methods of cooking: the woman on the floor cooks in what seems quite a primitive way, yet the pressure cooker represents an object of advanced scientific knowledge and efficiency, that sits on the modern, elevated kitchen counter. One is cooking over what seems to be a Bunsen burner, a laboured, slow process that requires much manpower relatively; the other is a faster, less laborious, hands

⁴⁷⁷ Arjun Appadurai, 'Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* ed. by Appadurai, Arjun (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999) pp. 3-64.

off, method of food preparation. There appears to be a contradiction of these two methods, which embody varying ideologies. It seems to me, however, that there is instead a fusion of what is considered the modern, and what is not: the merging of the two ways of cooking is a testament to the commitment to modernity by the Gujarati. The modern commodity exists side by side with that of the simpler cooking technology, and the photograph embodies this blurring of boundaries.

Collecting Commodities

In her first cookbook, Dabhi, of *Hansa's* Restaurant, too has something to contribute to the concept of kitchen paraphernalia. Before laying out recipes for her reader, the cookbook includes a double page spread on 'Utensils'. Complete with colour images that demonstrate the relevant cooking accessory, there is also an explanation for each item.⁴⁷⁸ The purpose of the section is to acquaint the reader with apparatus that would no doubt be unfamiliar, the cookbook being aimed at non-Gujarati cooks. Whilst it is not exhaustive, and certainly not fanatical about the objects it demonstrates, the spread hints at the importance of these items in the Gujarati cooking repertoire. The Indian rolling pin is, 'unlike the western cylindrical rolling pin', 'tapered on both sides which facilitates the application of gentle pressure more precisely', and the masala tin is a 'perfect present to ask for' as it keeps spices fresh and helps one assess the quantity of remaining spices'.⁴⁷⁹ The pressure cooker itself is also mentioned, but quite sparingly, in this list of significant kitchen utensils. The section is a brief glimpse of the pre-occupation with the commodities of the kitchen, as illustrated in

⁴⁷⁸ Dabhi, *Hansa's Indian Vegetarian Cookbook*, pp. 20-1.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

Figure 20; however, a prolonged fixation with commodities, kitchenware and otherwise, in *The Settler's Cookbook* cements the concept of the fetish in the Gujarati East African diaspora in Britain.

The fetishisation of the kitchen utensil recurs time and time again within the cookbook memoir. Towards the end of the text Alibhai-Brown describes the 'tricksy contraption[s]' that were accumulated from trips with her mother to Edgware Road or Shepherd's Bush market:

Jena has eleven onion choppers, each promising saved time and tearless eyes. I have even more. And an impressive collection of market-stall lemon squeezers, garlic presses, ironing-board covers, pepper mills, Moulinex food crushers in three sizes, little pointy things to de-pip tomatoes (a con, but I swear I saw the magician who sold it to us doing exactly that), an almond splitter, a special knife to cut through a thick chocolate bar, a nutmeg sling which you bang against a wall to weaken the nut so it yields up more generously, a long comb to separate sticky strands of vermicelli, a pretty wooden spade to dig into and soften butter. More outlandish items lie quiet in the bottom drawer.⁴⁸⁰ (sic)

This list of strange kitchen items is lengthy to say the least, and I have quoted it here at length to illustrate the sense of collection, the idea of hoarding commodities and gadgets, that resonates throughout the text, and indeed the double diaspora's narrative. With a 'bottom drawer' filled with yet more undisclosed items, the fetish for collection is, it seems, endless. The amassing of these goods echoes the hoarding of photographs I outlined earlier. Alibhai-Brown describes this acquisition and collection as 'typically East African Asian'. The diaspora 'cannot resist contraptions, especially cooking appliances.'⁴⁸¹

⁴⁸⁰ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 344.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

‘I am particularly interested in the social disease of nostalgia’, writes the critic Susan Stewart in *On Longing*.⁴⁸² Stewart meditates upon ‘Objects of Desire’, and relevant here, ‘the souvenir’. She tells us this about the souvenir:

We do not need or desire souvenirs of events that are repeatable. Rather we need and desire souvenirs of events that are reportable, events whose materiality has escaped us [...] It represents not the lived experience of its maker but the “secondhand” experience of its possessor/owner [...] The souvenir generates a narrative which reaches only “behind,” spiralling in a continually inward movement rather than outward toward the future.⁴⁸³

Although, it is not strictly the souvenir that is recurrent in the twice migrant’s narrative, the objects commodified and prevalent within this diaspora’s story can be understood within the terms Stewart sets out. Indeed, as I shall explicate in the next section, the kitchen objects listed at length, and owned, by Alibhai-Brown do embody the “secondhand” experience of their owner, and more significantly refer to a lost history. There is a need to collect these objects to narrate this loss, as its materiality has escaped. Framed as such, the hoarded commodities can well be interpreted as souvenirs. If the twice migrant’s collected items are located within this remit, there is only so far that the reading remains intact. Whilst the souvenir, or commodity, reaches ‘behind’ in this community’s narrative, as I shall explicate later, it does not ‘only’ do this. The commodity in fact ‘reaches forward’, attempting to attain progress and improvement, unlike Stewart’s souvenir that is continually moving inward ‘rather than outward toward the future’. Nevertheless, whether the souvenir or the twice migrant’s commodity, these things ‘are rarely kept singly; instead they form a compendium which is an

⁴⁸² Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniatures, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (London: Duke University Press, 1993), p. ix.

⁴⁸³ Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 135.

autobiography’, and this is prevalent throughout the double diaspora’s narrative.⁴⁸⁴

The Settler’s Cookbook illustrates that the same emphasis on commodities existed throughout the twice migrant’s movements. The reader is told that ‘Pressure cookers had been given away as part of girls’ dowries in the 1960s [in East Africa]’.⁴⁸⁵ Indeed Alibhai-Brown ‘remember[s] the day [when] one was delivered to [her] home back in Kampala – Jena was as thrilled as the day her British passport arrived’.⁴⁸⁶ Akin to gaining citizenship to Britain, the pressure cooker is a cause for huge excitement. The simile in this description, in addition, serves to hint at the freedom these devices provided for the recipients. Like attaining British citizenship, that would enable the family to move away from a country that overtly no longer wanted them, the pressure cooker offers a freedom from monotonous, lengthy cooking. Later in the text the liberation these hoarded contraptions represent is explicated via an anecdote about ‘sharp-suited young gals’ in a major publishing house, who insist ‘slow cooking’ is at the height of fashion. Alibhai-Brown’s response to this attitude is, as always, forthright:

“Bollocks,” I thought [...] “You think we came all this way away to toil for hours in the kitchen? What next? Shall we be growing the food and keeping cows in the garage? Making our own flour and spices like our grandmothers used to do – killed them young they worked so hard [...]”⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁴ Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 139.

⁴⁸⁵ David Arnold, at the University of Leeds 26th Oct 2011, lectured on how small-scale technologies became easily integrated into the Indian technological repertoire, during colonial times. He comments upon the impact of this integration on the dowry system. Ultimately these technologies, via their infiltrations into the social system, often re-enforced gender norms. His text is due for publication in May 2013: David Arnold, *Everyday Technology: Machines and the Making of India’s Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

⁴⁸⁶ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 343.

⁴⁸⁷ Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler’s Cookbook*, p. 387.

Alibhai-Brown's irritation at the thought of slow cooking relates both to the on-going narrative of progress that permeates many aspects of the double diasporic story, as well, more precisely, to the desire to make 'life easier'. This desire to simplify the difficulties of kitchen tasks too relates to the gadgets bought in London markets, listed by Alibhai-Brown in her text. Each one of these items proposes to ease a given task and improve the cooking experience. The pressure cooker, in addition, promises to speed the cooking process up: it is the antithesis of slow cooking, representing vernacular modernity. For the author it is an affront to the progress strived for and achieved by her family, to be presented with slow cooking as in vogue.

Represented within these fetishised and hoarded items of kitchenware is the narrative of progress the double diaspora have achieved, yet are continually driving towards. Their quest for progress is endless, with even drawers in Britain becoming clogged up with unnecessary commodities, which in turn become the fetish. In response to the tale of slow cooking, the author asserts that the migrant community 'are in Britain not Jamnagar', a city in Gujarat, and tells her reader that Indian East Africans are 'proud of their modernity'.⁴⁸⁸ For this group, the amassing of certain goods is the equivalent to achieving modernity. They, as a result, invest in every invention that appears on the market, the microwave cooker being a firm favourite.⁴⁸⁹ The pre-occupation with these 'Choppers, liquidizers, electric grinders, skillets, grills, [and] the most expensive Kenwood machines [that] have replaced sturdy old pestles and mortars', I would like to suggest, relates more significantly to the Gujarati East African experience. Not just a replacement for old methods of cooking, which make life easier and denote

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 387-8.

the endless quest for progress, the collection of kitchen paraphernalia is a fetish that speaks to the loss and dispossession of multiple migrations.

Before I consider the fetishisation of kitchenware in conjunction with critical scholarship, let us first consider how indeed the preoccupation with kitchen objects extends to the double diaspora's relationships to commodities in general. Directly relating to the desire for progress, *The Settler's Cookbook* underlines how some objects exemplify the affluence of families. The text describes how glass-doored cupboards take centre stage in Indian East African living rooms, and are crammed full of

Unused tea sets, dinner services, brass statues of angels and gods and goddesses, vases, ornamental chests covered in semi-precious stones, incense holders, over-decorated prayer books, carved oil lamps, sandalwood boxes and [...] cheap souvenirs from Egypt, [...] India and Pakistan.⁴⁹⁰

The amassing of these goods might be interpreted as sheer greed, yet it too testifies to the diaspora's obsession with performing progress, albeit vis-à-vis the acquisition and presentation of material goods. This passage demonstrates that whilst there is an often illustratable fetishism of those commodities connected with the kitchen, indeed, the fetishism of 'stuff' extends across many other realms. There is a trope of 'excessive value [ascribed] to objects considered to be valueless by the social consensus', which can be commonly discerned within double diaspora.⁴⁹¹ Whilst these objects might not make day-to-day life easier in the short term, equating to progress in that respect, they do showcase a more crass power to spend. It can be concluded, thus, that commodities more broadly are fetishised within the double diaspora; however, there is an emphasis on those of the kitchen variety.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁴⁹¹ Laura Mulvey, *Fetishism and Curiosity* (London: Indiana University Press, London), p. 2.

The Exile's Mantra: 'Just in Case'

What does this fixation with commodities and progress reveal about the twice migrant? How is the collection of these objects indicative of a past of deracination, upheaval and loss? It seems to me that confronted with displacement, and the legacy of multiple migration, this community fetishise the commodity, particularly those that belong to the kitchen. This fetish performs a desire, a need in fact, to grasp on to the objects of the past, objects that often embody past lives. There is a tension between this need to mummify the commodities of the past, and the double diaspora's continual quest for progress. Those items that signify progress, like the pressure cooker, as a result, sit quietly next to the numerous pots and pans that clutter the kitchen. These commodities of modernity then simply become absorbed into the narrative of loss, and the fetishisation that ensues.

Alibhai-Brown's writings bring the significance of these objects, in mediating loss, to the forefront. In *The Settler's Cookbook* she quickly brings these themes to the attention of the reader, by introducing the 'exile's survival kit' she carries around with her, only two pages into the text.⁴⁹² This kit is an assortment of archives: a photograph; a job reference; hospital notes, amongst other things. Locating this discussion in Britain, she too describes the 'small [British kitchen] cupboard [that] keeps cooking paraphernalia [she] brought over from Kampala in 1972'.⁴⁹³ These things are kept 'just in case', and are saved 'just in time', during 'cleaning fits'.⁴⁹⁴ Alibhai-Brown is 'unable to throw them

⁴⁹² Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 2.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

away. The motley collection has had several stays of execution'.⁴⁹⁵ The objects are always, unlike the people they belong to, 'returned back'.⁴⁹⁶ There are yet more descriptions of objects that are hoarded and collected, yet what resonates throughout these tales is an attachment to these commodities. They cannot be thrown out, like their owners were, or left behind: they are relics of the twice migrant's past. Indeed, these objects may well be all that the diasporic subject has once again, should the same experience occur.

As well as pertaining to a lost past, an absence, these objects too compensate for loss. Again, *The Settler's Cookbook* frankly evidences this sense of compensation. Interspersed between descriptions of what items are carried around on a day to day basis, and which items are hoarded in the cupboard, is an itinerary of a lost vinyl collection, abandoned in Uganda. Alongside this lengthy list, is an account of photographs and books that regrettably remain in Uganda somewhere in a 'small, red suitcase'.⁴⁹⁷ As these valuable items are now forever missing, the hoarded items in Britain offset this loss. The structure of these descriptions testify to this: it is in between the descriptions of what is hoarded, that what is lost is delineated. The amassing of these commodities seem to provide comfort in the face of deracination. It is as if the collection of these objects, including the accumulation of photographs, provides a security blanket of sorts. For those who have had to leave behind considerable wealth, in both India and East Africa, the hoarding of goods in the diasporic space creates some comfort and security. The management of loss in this way, also pertains to the twice migrant's consciousness that at any time they might be required to leave again. Alibhai-Brown's exile's survival kit is a testament to this. With vital

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

information in the bags she carries around, like a job reference, it seems there is a necessity to be prepared for recurrent dispossession.

Let us return to the photographic text for an additional close reading of the twice migrant and their fetishism of commodities, relating to loss. Figure 21 belongs to another uncle, and to a packet of numerous loose images of all shapes and sizes. The Figure depicts a family trip, perhaps to Mombasa, taken in the nineteen sixties. Small in its actual proportions, the black and white picture shows a car, with three women, three men and a child in various positions around the vehicle, its open doors and boot. Set by the roadside, the car is framed to the left by trees and bush. The image adheres to the conventions discussed earlier in relation to dress: the women wear *saris*, where this information is discernible they wear them in the Gujarati style; and the men wear trousers and shirts. What is notable in this Figure, however, is the quantity of items that seem to be unloaded from the vehicle. Next to the open boot, and in amongst where the women stand are bulging suitcases, full, tied up tatty boxes and various other containers such as a weaved basket and a white oil drum. All these crammed containers are well used and appear to have seen many trips. What the image portrays though could well assumed to be a moving expedition; however, it is only a trip away that is captured. During these trips, with close family members, a variety of cooking equipment – from gas to plates and utensils – would be taken, as all food preparation would have been done on site by the womenfolk. The substantial nature of the goods transported on a simple trip is quite astonishing. Despite the practicalities of transporting this equipment, I argue that there is another side to this story: the goods captured in this image again pertain to the fetishisation of commodities that the double diaspora develops. It seems to

me, moreover, that the fetish evidenced in this image imitates the anticipation of recurring upheaval. The double diaspora forever have their bags half packed: they are always in a state of readiness to leave.



Figure 21

Having their bags half packed, does not only narrate the double diaspora's suspicion of being expelled, or being compelled to move on; it too intimates the narrative of progress that clearly pervades this migrant group's narrative. Whilst there might be a fear that relates to loss and belonging, this diasporic group seeks out progress. To achieve this progress they must, as Crewe *et al's* findings also suggest, keep moving on. They have a sense of adventure and an ambition to find new pastures and opportunities. In the bursting boxes and

swelling suitcases of Figure 21, it is exactly this that is embodied: a spirit of exploration and readiness to progress. Irit Rogoff also suggests that these dualities are signified in ‘luggage’ itself:

“Luggage” is perceived as a multiple marker: of memory, nostalgia and access to other histories. Equally it is as the tool of ideological constructions either of utopian new beginnings or of tragic doomed endings.⁴⁹⁸

Thus whilst the contents of Figure 21 refer to a sense of loss and expectancy of deracination, they also perform narratives of progress, illustrating the tensions and contradictions of the diasporic subject.⁴⁹⁹

In her play *Nowhere to Belong* Alibhai-Brown affirms this entanglement, via the powerful signifier of the suitcase. She asks her audience:

Have you noticed, new migrants always *lug* suitcases, you see them at Victoria station *dragging* them up and down. One day the cases will be full. This testimony is about those *beautiful dreams*, those *glorious ambitions*. My dreams, my ambitions. (my emphasis)⁵⁰⁰

Again the motif of the suitcase, or luggage, appears in the diaspora’s narrative.⁵⁰¹

Alibhai-Brown here links the suggestive visual metaphor to the dreams and aspirations of migrants. Migrating is inherently underpinned by a desire for progress. However, in her use of the verbs ‘to drag’ and ‘to lug’ she implies the hardships that migration contains. The ‘dragging’ and ‘lugging’ of that suitcase up and down Victoria station signifies the pains of displacement, the to-ing and fro-ing, the dislocation. Rogoff thus writes of luggage: it is ‘nevertheless a sign

⁴⁹⁸ Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma, Geography’s Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 37.

⁴⁹⁹ The implicit relationship between photography and loss, and indeed autobiography, is lucidly illustrated in Jay Prosser, *Light in the Dark Room: Photography and Loss* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

⁵⁰⁰ Alibhai-Brown, *Nowhere to Belong*, p. 269.

⁵⁰¹ The metaphor of the suitcase again appears in a 2012 exhibition in Greenham, which marked the fortieth anniversary of Idi Amin’s expulsion order in 1972. Alongside images and text plates, ‘Flight to Greenham’, curated by Sunil Shah, featured a suitcase centerpiece alongside the objects of migration. A digital tour of the exhibition is available for viewing here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDWseognDho> [accessed 15 February 2013].

imbued with an indisputable frisson of unease, of displacement and dislocation *or*, at the other extreme, of excited speculation and expectations.⁵⁰² I argue, however, rather than an ‘either’ ‘or’ visual metaphor, the suitcase for the twice migrant performs both a looking back to what has been lost, and this experience of deracination, which in turn expects further deracination, *and* an ambitious future mediated by successful progress.

A final example, which succinctly embodies this tension of a community that is forward thinking, yet sometimes struggle with a sense of dispossession, is the ‘*mochi* book’. This ‘paratext’ to the community in its name of *mochi* refers to the caste of the shoemaker.⁵⁰³ The paperback book compiles, amongst other details, names, numbers and addresses of *mochi* families all over Britain. It is very comprehensive in its particulars, yet not always accurate. Even so, it is often the first port of call for contacting extended family and those beyond, or simply finding information on where a member of the *mochi* community lives or which part of East Africa or India they have come from.⁵⁰⁴ Its purpose of recording the particulars of the community intimates the desire of this diaspora to form a community. By actively collecting names and addresses of those in Britain, and compiling this data into a text that is disseminated amongst the same group of people, a preoccupation with collectivity is revealed. Interestingly, the ‘*mochi* book’ is an example of esoteric culture that surrounds this diaspora. It is only the

⁵⁰² Rogoff, *Terra Infirma*, p. 37.

⁵⁰³ The term ‘paratext’ was originally proliferated by Gerard Genette in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. By Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Whilst Genette’s term refers to the peripherals that surround the written work, like the title or author name, I use the idea of the ‘paratext’ here in reference to the twice-migrant community. This is as the ‘*mochi* book’, a written text in itself, the ‘paratext’, for the double diaspora exists to ‘extend it, precisely in order to *present* it [...] to *make present*, to ensure the text’s presence in the world’, p. 1. The positioning of the ‘*mochi* book’ as a ‘paratext’, translates the notion of the ‘paratext’ from a purely literary context to the broader canvas of identity.

⁵⁰⁴ This text is produced by Gujarati Associations based all throughout Britain. It is marketed via word of mouth, and is produced every five to ten years.

community members that are aware of the directory, and therefore have access to it. Whilst this textual device is a wonderful example of how the double diaspora form community, and indeed an instance of their ingenuity, it also unveils the *need* to form community. The concern that these links must be sought out and recorded in a text, made available to the members of the community, suggests there is an anxiety over loss. Because of a past marked by dispossession, of both commodities and the security of community, there is a desire to protect against this in the future. This desire is played out by hoarding materials, and by forming a community via the legitimacy of print.

Looking Back, Still Moving On

As I have delineated in my thesis introduction, it is an aim of this work to reveal those narratives that are hidden by the success stories of the double diaspora. Having suggested that the twice-migrant story is marked by a quest for progress and improvement, yet is marred by the dispossession this ambition generates, it is the veiled narrative of trauma that I shall explore further here. Whilst there have been works on the successes of the diaspora, few have really sought to explicate the relationship of this community in conjunction with the ideology of modernity. Via my reengagement with the concept of loss and dispossession hereon in, I shall attempt to elaborate on the Gujarati East African's modernity and cement these ideas.

In the second chapter of this thesis I discussed trauma in relation to *The Settler's Cookbook*. In this previous discussion, having outlined the definition of trauma and a sense of the concept, via scholarship by Cathy Caruth, and also the term's significance in the repetitions of anecdotes that occur in Alibhai-Brown's

writings, I sought to posit the memoir form as a palliative. The inability of language to convey the traumas of the double diaspora made clear the power of food in communicating identity. It was this discussion of culinary practices that ensued. The discussions of loss in this chapter, however, compel me to return to the juncture where the conceptual discussion of trauma itself was left off, in the pursuit of considering culinary practices. With this chapter naturally taking up the cause of loss, to make these intersections in close reading explicit, it seems apt to draw these discussions together. Consequently, as I draw to close my final chapter, before my conclusion, my thesis is satisfyingly drawn almost full circle, towards chapter two, in its thought processes.

The palliative has previously been referred to in Ranjana Khanna's careful theoretical analysis. Her essay, 'Post-Palliative: Coloniality's Affective Dissonance', critiques the premise of postcolonial studies and aligns it with Sigmund Freud's theory on mourning and melancholia. Freud's own theory refers to conscious and unconscious loss, and the consequence of this to the ego and self-regard. Here, it is the facet of melancholia that derives from a loss that cannot be surmounted and, unlike mourning, creates a 'crippling attachment to a past' that I pursue.⁵⁰⁵ In Freud's articulations, as Khanna too outlines, the loss becomes unknown in melancholia. I would argue that for the double diaspora the loss is known, yet I align their experience with melancholia, rather than mourning, as there is a continual harking back to the past.

The amassing of the photograph in vast numbers, very much like the collecting of commodities described in the memoir, is a symptom of the loss experienced in the past, a loss that cannot be overcome. This inability to never

⁵⁰⁵ Khanna, 'Post-Palliative Coloniality's Affective Dissonance', para. 7.

recover from loss is what I refer to as the double diaspora's melancholia. This melancholia is, like the memoir form, only palliative; it creates a multiplicity of that loss. It seems to me that this same process of palliative melancholia applies to the collecting of a vast number of goods, and the inability to discard these goods. It too relates to the amassed goods which appear in the photograph, the photograph form itself being a fetish, and being ripe to enable the fetishising of the object. Palliative melancholia thus only appears to generate the fetish, in the case of the close readings in this chapter. Rather than alleviate the burden of loss, images and commodities are simply proliferated, creating the melancholic state which is only palliative, and results in the fixation on materiality and multiplicity. Thus, whilst the materiality that surrounds the double diaspora could be perceived as greed, it is actually a testament to trauma.

Let us delve a little deeper into this conceptual hypothesis, and capitalise upon Khanna's reformulations of Freud's work. Outlining melancholia's 'crippling attachment to a past', Khanna makes clear that there is more to consider. 'Melancholia's critical agency, and its peculiar temporality that drags it back and forth at the same time,' she explains, 'acts toward the future'.⁵⁰⁶ She continues later: melancholia 'is therefore future orientated as much as it is attached to a past that cannot be forgotten, or recognised within the logic of knowable memory'.⁵⁰⁷ This understanding of melancholia that looks in two directions, rather than one, very much speaks to the position of the twice migrant in Britain. In this thesis I have argued that the cultural texts of the double diaspora demonstrate a consistent looking backwards, a forever summoning of the 'just in case', whilst simultaneously looking forward to new pastures and

⁵⁰⁶ Khanna, 'Post-Palliative Coloniality's Affective Dissonance', para. 7.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

innovation. This memory work is unlike Stewart's souvenirs, which only reach 'behind', spiralling in a continually inward movement rather than outward toward the future.⁵⁰⁸ As I have suggested, the commodities in the double diaspora's narrative, like their double diaspora's aspirations, instead are orientated in two directions. For the twice migrant it seems that whilst looking forward to progress, they are too compelled to always look back towards that which has been lost, and it is the relics of the past that make this possible.

Half Packed Suitcases or Ready To Go Bags?

In this chapter, I began by contextualising the term modernity within South Asian studies. The term modernity is one that is notoriously slippery, and I have openly sought to negotiate the concept on my own terms. These terms have taken into account that which has gone before, and in my introduction I have identified those works. Within South Asian studies, the term 'modernity' is particularly relevant to visual culture: and so it is the photograph that I sought out in my opening sections. The images within this chapter belong exclusively to my family archive. Embarking on defining where and how I gathered these visual materials, I commented self-reflexively. As I have suggested, understanding the position I occupy in the processing of these archives is significant as it frames my readings, by defining what my investment in these materials is and how much information I am privy to. Of course, my private dealings with these images, that crosses into the professional, is complimented by just that: my role as a textual critic. It is my training in the close reading of texts that impact upon my output, and compel me to meditate on a broad platform, to then magnify the details and consider these.

⁵⁰⁸ Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 135.

Within this critical technique, the analysis of sartorial practices proved to provide a great wealth of information. Whilst the modern did sit alongside the traditional generally, where dress was concerned I suggested that an alliance to India is demonstrated via the married female diaspora, by their compulsion to wear certain forms of quintessentially Indian dress in East Africa. This link between the preference of dress and India was further nuanced in the identification that certain forms of 'Indian' dress were not permitted, as they were thought to belong to other ethnic groups. The differing dress of children and men was too commented upon. Whilst the dress of married women formed an association with India under certain terms, the male dress of western wear enabled men to pursue opportunities and the ideals of progress, for the collective. Thus the twice migrant's relationship to modernity and progress, and their Indian heritage, is understood to be complex and multi-dimensional. Interestingly, though, in this discussion of the sartorial practices of the Gujarati in East Africa that calls upon Indian and western dress, there was no opportunity to discuss East African dress. Nowhere was this form of dress adopted, preferred or seen in the images I discussed. Indeed, as I have suggested, in Figure 17, the garden and pose very much recall the Kashmiri landscapes featured in nineteen sixties Bollywood films. The image could easily have nothing to do with Africa, and instead show off the fertility and beauty of parts of India. There is thus a lacuna in the twice migrant's story where the East African dress is concerned. This gap could easily be argued to extend to exist in not only clothing, but the general experience of the Gujaratis in Africa: in their business of settling in Africa, the Gujaratis chose 'to keep their distance' from the indigenous populations.

The choice to not adopt African dress perhaps relates to the cosmopolitanism associated with western dress and the traditional nature of Indian dress. As I have already argued gendered dress modes perform narratives of the pursuit of progress, and the necessity to remain linked to India. If African dress does neither of these, and indeed lacks any sort of status or elegance in the minds of the Gujarati settler, then it is perhaps for this reason that this lacuna exists. Whilst this area specifically, and in fact many areas around sartorial preferences, would benefit from further scholarly interventions, it remains that the concept of progress is central to this diaspora's story and their ambitions. Saying this though, there is ever present the traditional, and a convergence of the two: Figure 20, where the pressure cooker sits quietly alongside the pots and pans of the chaotic kitchen, illustrates this point succinctly; Figure 11 too represents the traditional alongside the modern in its landscape and subject. This discussion returns us full circle to Figure 10, briefly considered in the introduction to this chapter. One can identify similar features in this Figure, particularly when framed within the meditations on Figure 11. The composition of this photograph is highly modern in its style. Yet there are moments of tradition, represented in the image of the *sari*-clad woman reflected into the mirror. Testifying to my conjectures earlier in this chapter, her dress is more traditional, whilst the male figure wears trousers, a shirt and a waistcoat. It seems each have their own role to play, and duties to fulfil, intimated by dress. In addition, the image captures multiple modes of voyeurism, evidencing its modernity. There is the looking of the beholder of the photograph; there is the exchange of glances between the two subjects, the woman looking through the

mirror; the cameraman's gaze; and also the looking into the image that is framed above the male subject.

What also can be glimpsed in this image, on the top of the wardrobe, and hinted at to the right of the composition out of shot, is the collection of commodities. Fairly minimalist in its landscape overall, there is still a sense of collection intimated by these areas of the photograph. From what one can see, it is books that are hoarded here. Stored on top of a wardrobe, in a haphazard fashion, high enough up to make the regular use of the texts unlikely, these objects can be understood in the terms I have set out within this chapter. I suggested that there was a fetish with commodities and their collecting, which related to the loss experienced. Whilst the images in my family archive convey this concept, it was a consideration of Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's text once again that enabled the figures to be contextualised. Via Alibhai-Brown's forthright articulations, it became clear that the hoarded commodity, the 'fetish[,] acknowledges its own traumatic history like a red flag, symptomatically signalling a site of psychic pain'.⁵⁰⁹ They too, however, refer us forward to progress and achievement, motifs that reoccur in, and drive, this diaspora's narrative.

Perhaps with the objects transported from East Africa to Britain, that Alibhai-Brown describes, there is an illicit sense of adventure. There is a sense that what is hoarded is an object from afar, removed 'from its "natural" location' and kept as 'contraband', creating a 'romance' in the collection.⁵¹⁰ The collection and removal of these objects could be understood as a form of neo-colonialism. Here I have, however, demonstrated that these commodities are certainly

⁵⁰⁹ Mulvey, *Fetishism and Curiosity*, p. 12.

⁵¹⁰ Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 135.

significant in terms of loss, melancholia and the palliative. In thinking through these concepts and their meanings towards the end of this chapter, I have sought to bring together several strands, and meditate more broadly the trauma of the double diaspora, developing my arguments from chapter two.

These critical interventions have suggested that like the melancholia that they experience, the subjects of the double diaspora look in two directions simultaneously. They are preoccupied with a past of deracination and relocation, as well as the trials and tribulations experienced by these migrations, yet seek to move forward and progress. Thus whilst they are fixated on the past and their relics, this melancholia is only palliative: it is in their nature to aspire to progress and paradoxically look ahead, and it is this that is also performed in their relics. Surprisingly there often appears, however, no competition between these tensions: the two facets habitually feed into each other, sustaining one another. Looking ahead, whilst looking back are not necessarily binaries here, indeed, the tendency to do both non-competitively produces the complex Gujarati East African identity in Britain. For me, it is here that this diaspora's vernacular modernity is captured. It is a vernacular modernity that is outwardly full of paradoxes and tensions, yet the twice migrant is still compelled to drive forward with what seems no reticence. Or perhaps there is an awareness of the adverse fallout, the pain of relocation and loss, and that is perhaps why some suitcases within the British diaspora are always half-packed, with an anticipation that what once happened, could happen easily again. Or, might it be that these bags are ready to go simply because their owners are too?

Conclusion

Can you eat books or put them in a bank?

Alibhai-Brown, *The Settler's Cookbook*, p. 14

My epigraph to this conclusion is taken from a statement made by an uncle of Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's (aptly nicknamed 'Mercedes Masa'), which she cites in her cookbook memoir. Embedded within her uncle's rhetorical question is a neat encapsulation of how the double diaspora value economic capital over cultural. According to Mercedes Masa, who, in the memoir, represents the values of an older generation who are twice-displaced, writing has no value: you can neither consume it, nor gain financial asset from it. Perhaps writing is thus coupled with food within Alibhai-Brown's cookbook memoir. Through this coupling of the textual and the culinary, a kind of legitimacy is forged, against the framework in which the written word is devalued. As Dan Ojwang explicates: 'If the pursuit of food is, at least in popular consciousness, worthier than writing, Alibhai-Brown seeks as a chronicler of communal history to enlist food in the disparaged work of writing and historiography.'⁵¹¹ In this thesis, I have examined this relationship between the genres of the cookbook and memoir. The role of language, as evidenced by autobiography, was significant to this reading, and it was acknowledged that '[a]ny utterance in an autobiographical text, even if inaccurate or distorted, characterises its writer'.⁵¹² I argued that, however, these utterances had limitations in articulating the pain of deracination. Within this conclusion I shall comment further on the role of language within cultural representations of the double diaspora; however, first let us summarise some of my broader contentions and findings.

⁵¹¹ Dan Ojwang, '“Eat pig and become beast”: Food, Drink and Diaspora in East African Indian Writing', *Research in African Literatures*, 42.3, (Fall 2011), 68-87 (72-3).

⁵¹² Sidonie *et al*, *Reading Autobiography*, p. 12.

Early on in the thesis, recipe writing, using materials from holocaust studies, was investigated as a powerful form of identity representation. How the enactment of culinary practices could represent the Indian East African in Britain on an individuated and collective basis, and the significance of bodily action, evolved my second chapter to my third where Gujarati dance practices were read. Dance, as well as gendered dress styles and preferences of accessories, showcased ‘Gujaratiness’ in the *Navratri* space. The way the body moved within the chaos of the festival, in collective formation, also exemplified an amalgamation of traditions and innovations by the emerging generation. Although these dances were spontaneous in some ways, they were seen year on year in my research. I thus argued that these representations were meaningful, complex, yet ephemeral, and that significantly they could only be manifested within the body itself.

The photographic representations of the Indian East African were, again, beyond the written word; however, the photographs were not analysed as an embodied practice like dance or food had been. The photographs represented embodiment via dress and how the subjects performed a sense of modernity in those chosen for analysis. The ideologies central to the community were highlighted within my fourth chapter, where these qualities of enterprise and progress drive the diaspora forward were further revealed as complicated by gender. My close readings identified fetishisation of the collection of images and commodities, from which I further adduced a profound sense of loss. This multiplicity of materialism was the result of a palliative melancholia. I concluded with the idea of a vernacular modernity pertaining to the double diaspora, whereby the community is always looking back, yet concurrently looking forward to progress and development. There is thus a continual amalgamation of contradictions and tensions within the double

diaspora. Embodied practices such as cooking and dance perform these ambivalences, and, arguably, successfully resolve them.

This two-fold perspective relates to a long legacy of migration and multiplicity, as denoted by the etymology of the word ‘Gujarat’, foregrounded in my introduction to the thesis. Because the term derives from words that pertain to skilled migrating communities, and this identity has been absorbed into the understanding of selfhood and collectivity amongst the Gujarati, it seems to me there is a naturalisation of further movement, via the narrative of progress. Gujarati identity is inherently rooted in this idea of movement and progress. Whilst it has been the British members of the diaspora that I have studied in this thesis, the nature of the diaspora, as evidenced by the term Gujarati, is more than just the *double* diaspora. In my research it has become clear that members of the diaspora have moved on and, as their ideology dictates, continued to migrate. Sometimes this has meant a move back to Uganda, or somewhere in East Africa, sometimes it has resulted in a move elsewhere. There is a sense of modernity in this continual pursuit of progress, in the half-packed bags of the twice migrant. This modernity is, indeed, enacted and brought into being by movement. There is fertile ground to explore how these further migrations, and the pursuit of progress, impact upon representation of self and community: how the move from the double diaspora to the multiple diaspora might affect representations of culture.

Looking ahead, and returning to the concept of language, it would seem there is some shift in attitude from the closed views of Mercedes Masa, where literature is grossly undervalued, amongst the double diaspora. Whilst generally it might still be considered better to train as a doctor, accountant or lawyer, than invest in the arts, there are signs of change. In 1998 John Mattausch hinted at this change: ‘there are

now reasons to believe that in the future the underlying ‘merchant ideology’ which has helped underpin community success in Gujarat, East Africa and in Britain may be undergoing a change of character’.⁵¹³ Culturally, this change is now both marked by an interest in investing in literary forms, and the recognition that these forms can be helpful in articulating the experience of two-fold movement. New work on the horizon by author and playwright Sharmilla Chauhan is a testament to this turning tide.⁵¹⁴ Chauhan is amongst many members of the double diaspora who intend to write the twice-migrant legacy, although her work appears to be the most evolved. She is currently working on one play entitled *When Spring Comes*, and a novel named *7 Mirrors*. Whilst writing these works, in which the storyline revolve around the legacy of twice migration, Chauhan seeks funding to complete the pieces. Whether these endeavours are successful, I suspect, will largely hinge upon two aspects: firstly, how far attitudes towards literature have changed within the double diaspora, for funding from within the community itself, will mediate whether support in theory is matched by support via investment; and, secondly, how the double diaspora serve contemporary models of multiculturalism will influence the available government funding for such projects.

Within this doctoral exploration, nevertheless, there has been a limit on the textual evidence currently available that represents the double diaspora. Despite this limitation, within my analysis, I have often returned to the textual evidence that does exist. *Strictly Dandia*, *Nowhere to Belong*, and, of course, *The Settler’s Cookbook* have enabled further, rich readings. Particularly in chapter four, a return to Alibhai-Brown’s literary work matured my contentions regarding the nature of longing and

⁵¹³ Mattausch, 'From Subjects to Citizens: British "East African Asians"', p. 137.

⁵¹⁴ See Chauhan’s website for further details about the author and her work: <<http://sharmilathewriter.com>> [accessed 4 March 2013].

pain within the diaspora. Because independently the photographs considered did not yield comprehensively to close reading, the written textual document was significant in rendering them lucid. Consequently, there are analytical limitations in the close reading of only the embodied practice. The reading of the written in conjunction with the embodied, in this type of archival work, is a necessity. An oscillation between what Diana Taylor separates out into the 'repertoire' and the 'archive' thus exists. This oscillation has been revealed in the course of my traversal of various forms of representation, through which the double diaspora has been efficaciously explored.

The way in which embodied practices and the written text represent cultural identity suggests that differing modes of articulation have differing currencies. How culinary practices perform identity in comparison to the written document, or how dance practices perform identity in comparison to the written document, varies. How each form of cultural production might operate differently is not something this work has come to any concrete conclusions about. The assessment of the relative value and performance of varying forms of representation is something that is worthy of further research. What is clear is that each form has a value of its own in representing culture. Yet each form encodes cultural representation to render it on many levels inaccessible. Perhaps, then, the twice-migrant narrative does not aspire to or require revelation, excavation or close reading. Indeed, does it instead rebuff this kind of intrusion? In short, are these stories anchored within certain forms of cultural knowledge that deliberately place them out of critical reach? During the process of my research, this question pertaining to the inaccessibility of culture, amongst the double diaspora, has frequently occurred to me. As I have illustrated, however, attitudes towards the recording and historicising of the twice-migrant

legacy are now changing.⁵¹⁵ Being of this twice-displaced heritage, and writing in Britain, I am myself a testament to this break with tradition, and the developing desire to make visible the double diaspora in public discourse. I would like to suggest that thus this research is very timely. Whilst scholarly work pertaining to the twice migrant has been absent in diasporic discourse for too long, this research is indeed at the forefront when contextualised by how the double diaspora itself approaches cultural knowledge.

However, I have embarked upon significant work in the space beyond the academy, and, as I conclude the thesis, it is appropriate to look back to this community project because it was catalysed by this research, and in the process became a productive counterpart of the same. Over forty years have now passed since the infamous 1972 expulsion order by the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. The forty-year milestone, which fell in August 2012, along with the narratives it pertains to, continue to be significant and has thus been subject to numerous and varied memorialisation projects.⁵¹⁶ Of these projects mine sought to address, beyond the academy, many of the veiled narratives pertaining to the double diaspora that are signposted in this thesis. This project, entitled ‘Expulsion: 40 Years On’, took place in June and July 2012, and, as I shall explain, its incidence provides a significant counterpart to this textual research.⁵¹⁷ Before I explain this pairing, first let us consider the aims of the memorial project, how veiled narratives were revealed, and briefly what the project involved.

⁵¹⁵ There are also new scholarly texts on horizon that deal with the twice-migrant legacy, such as Dan Ojwang, *Reading Migration and Culture: The World of East African Indian Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

⁵¹⁶ Examples of these projects include the exhibition Flight to Greenham. Curator Sunil Shah. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDWseognDho>> [accessed 15 February 2013], a symposium at the South Asian Literature Festival 2012 <<http://southasianlitfest.com/event/exodus-40-full-symposium/>> [accessed 4 March 2013], a project in Leicester and a further memorialisation effort located on the social network Facebook.

⁵¹⁷ For the project’s website see: *Expulsion: 40 Years On*, <<http://www.expulsion40yearson.com/>> [accessed 4 March 2013].

As I have suggested, the twice-migrant legacy is often hidden within the narrative of the single migrant who directly moved from the sub-continent. 'Expulsion: 40 Years On' highlighted the legacy of double deracination amongst the wider public, by making the narrative accessible to a broader audience. Furthermore, as I have suggested in my introduction, often the accomplishments of the community are proclaimed publically in terms of social cohesion and economic success. This, alongside the successes of the Leicester Gujarati East Africans, is the dominant narrative that envelops the community. Whilst these narratives of the community are legitimate in many ways, they erase the successes, and presence, of the community in other parts of the country, and too forget the pain of deracination experienced. It is thus these other narratives that I aimed to highlight: of other cities, namely Leeds, that have benefitted from the Indian East African population, and of the story of displacement. The project furthermore sought to capitalise upon the anniversary to not only commemorate the Ugandan legacy; but to recognise the broader experiences of Indians in Britain, who have migrated from all over East Africa. This inclusivity was borne of the fact that of the scant academic and mainstream attention the twice migrant does receive, this is generally centred upon the Ugandan Indian, because of the dramatic expulsion order they suffered.

'Expulsion: 40 Years On', involved two parts. In June 2012 I produced and delivered three primary school workshops in local Leeds schools, which centred on dance, dress, identity and migration. The workshops educated on cultural identity and heritage via the arts, as well as specifically shedding light on the expulsion order and subsequent migration. In Leeds City Museum's Arena, the second part of the project's strategy involved a day event on 14th July 2012. The programme included *dandiya* and *garba* performances by a local Gujarati dance group, themed

storytelling centred on the trials and tribulations of the migrations, Gujarati East African food tasting by *Hansa's*, participatory workshops, and a performance of Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's *Nowhere to Belong*. Various stalls, of archives, and by organisations and movements, exhibited in the Arena, added further layers to the remit of the project. Funded by the Arts Council England, and the University of Leeds, the impact of the day event was beyond expectation.⁵¹⁸

As well as achieving the aims I set out for the project, another element of 'Expulsion: 40 Years On' made it crucial to the wider remit of my research. Being a member of the University of Leeds, and more broadly a member of the academic community, my doctoral work is, as I have suggested, entrenched in the written and archival. However, I have identified the Indian East African community in Britain often favours embodied forms of cultural representation. These forms of cultural production lie beyond the written word, and the fictional text, and are instead embodied within cultural practices such as culinary, dance and dress practices. 'Expulsion: 40 Years On', which included the performance and exhibition of these embodied practices, thus represents a valuable counterpart to the archival research undertaken in this thesis. As the archival nature of the thesis is unable to fully realise the diaspora's tendency towards embodiment, the physicality of 'Expulsion: 40 Years On' is rendered an essential counterpart. Just as I have traversed different forms of representation within this research, as the community itself does, 'Expulsion: 40 Years On' is itself another example of how the narratives surrounding the double diaspora can be rendered visible. My doctoral research and its relationship with my wider efforts to bring this research to non-academic

⁵¹⁸ I was successful in acquiring a majority of my funding from the Grants for Arts scheme, Arts Council England, and within the University of Leeds I successfully won monies from the Higher Education Innovation Fund, Leeds for Life and Arts Engaged. Support totalled circa £19,000, and several partnerships were formed. It was projected that 150 people would attend the July 14th event; however, a total of 219 people were counted on the day.

communities consequently pushed the boundaries of what can be accomplished within the academic space. By shedding light on how this critical space of scholarship can interact with the wider community it belongs to, I hope this dissertation has provided a strategic model for further studies on diasporas, displacement and cultural production.

Finally, let us take into consideration the additional critical interventions this thesis has made, and the questions it has concurrently generated. The cultural practices of the diaspora have engendered an analysis of gender paradigms within the Gujarati East African community in Britain. Via culinary and dance practices, as well as visual materials, I have commented upon differing gender positionalities, and how these have evolved, and are performed, in the various stages and places of the diaspora. Occasionally I have too embarked upon readings of class, ethnicity and religion. The readings of Alibhai-Brown's dramatic experiences as an Indian Juliet in love with a Black Romeo, and of the ethno-religious conflicts in *Strictly Dandia* are examples of how ethnicity, class, and even religion are brought to the forefront of discourse concerning the double diaspora. The manifestation of varying culinary loyalties by Alibhai-Brown and Dabhi too showcased ethno-religious difference. There are, however, further readings available in this vein. Owing to her father's lack of regular contribution to the household income, Alibhai-Brown's position in the class system was below the average Indian in East Africa. Her class positionality is indicative of a hierarchy that existed amongst Indians in East Africa, a hierarchy that related also to ethnic factions. Of course, how caste, ethnicity, and even religion, rewrite one another, conflict and conflate within the dynamics of this community, merits further analysis. Felicity Hand begins this work of reading the complexity of caste and ethnicity in her article 'Impossible Burdens: East African Asian Women's

Memoirs'.⁵¹⁹ Her article does overtly explicate 'female migratory experience', but also seeks out consideration of 'the overlapping and sometimes contradictory labels of class and ethnicity', in her 'two pronged category' 'clethnicity'.⁵²⁰ Her article centres on the Indian East African experience, again proliferating that scholarship which exists on the single migrant's experience.

There is then further occasion for analysis on the cultural identity of the Indian East African in Britain, specifically pertaining to reflections upon class, ethnicity and religion, and their entangling complexities. My research has demonstrated the significance of gender within the remit of cultural representations of the double diaspora; however, the novel *The Feast of Nine Virgins*, a text which in my introduction I suggested suffers from a convoluted plot and underdeveloped characters, does delineate class and ethnicity via its caricatures and storyline. Nevertheless, this novel's depiction is couched within colonial East Africa, rendering any analysis useful, but limited, in a commentary of the British contingent of that diaspora. How class and ethnicity manifest themselves within the double diaspora itself is significant and another lens in which the community can be examined. Indeed, how the parameters of class and ethnicity operate within the wider Indian diaspora in Britain is a further area deserving of research. How is the doubly displaced Indian East African in Britain ranked amongst the single migrant groups that exist in Britain? Do the same factions of religious or ethnic groups within the double diaspora mesh with those of the singly displaced community? I would hypothesise this is unlikely. I do, however, optimistically look forward to scholarship, creative practice and community work that fills these multiple lacunas –

⁵¹⁹ Felicity Hand, 'Impossible Burdens: East African Asian Women's Memoirs', *Research in African Literatures*, 42.3 (Fall 2011), 100-117.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

developments that, I hope, will take its cue from the work I have already produced here, and which, in fact, I already began testing.

In raising further questions, however, I have broadened the literary critical interpretive practice of ‘close reading’ in the analysis of other modes of ‘texts’, which are beyond the written. These innovations in methodology and interventions in wider postcolonial conceptual debate, I hope, will catalyse further discourse. In particular, I hope that the synthesis of a disparate set of primary materials to create a viable methodology, to enable the investigation of a twice-removed diaspora, might enable the research of other multiple diasporic groups. The way in which I have applied critical materials, I hope might also enable further unexpected explorations. By instigating conversation between Diane Taylor’s acclaimed scholarship – predominantly significant within performance studies, in the investigation of the Americans – and South Asian studies and diasporic studies, I unlock new possibilities and readings. I have thus initiated interdisciplinary conversations on modernity, performance and spirituality.

My inquiry has showcased how the Indian East African in Britain represents cultural identity, and what this selfhood and collectivity is, whilst also complicating an understanding of the term ‘diaspora’. By highlighting the multiple axes upon which diasporas exist, my thesis intervenes in wider postcolonial conceptual debates centred on the term. I have critically illuminated some of the complexities of South Asian diasporic life in Britain, revealing hidden narratives beyond the dominating narratives of entrepreneurial success. Within the double diaspora, there has been a negotiation between the competing identity categories of ‘Indianness’ and ‘Gujaratiness’, which I have sought to explore. The recent fragmentation of a monolithic ‘Indianness’, within critical discourse, here has manifested itself in the

investigation of the idea of regional identity. How regional histories challenge, and complicate, the national narrative of India, is an area of study I have here contributed to, giving voice to the particular narrative of the Gujarati in Britain, from East Africa. New critical spaces have been formed. Moreover, new dialogues taking place within the representations of the Gujarati East African diaspora in Britain are here revealed. What Gujarat means to these diasporic subjects, within the wider context of India, will, I am sure, continue to evolve for them, as it does for me, a daughter of twice migration.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Newspaper Articles
(Archived at Sangat Centre)

ASTERN **Eye SAYS** **JUSTICE DENIED**

"His body should be brought back to Uganda and put on display so that we can view the man who killed so many people," Michael Mademaga, a 41 year-old an office messenger from Kampala tells one African paper.

It is a damning testament on international law that, Idi Amin, the brutal dictator of Uganda was never brought to trial for his countless abuses of Human Rights.

Keith Vaz rightly points out that although many Ugandan Asians have provided some of Britain's greatest success stories, the trauma of losing everything they owned and being displaced from their homes, is still felt by many today.

Few could deny the British Ugandan Asian community's right to condemn a dead man, who sent them out of one racist country into another. As recently released documents show, the Heath government tried desperately to find an island for these 'unwelcome immigrants'.

In the end, the harsh climate and xenophobic streets of Britain meant they were jumping out of the fire and into the frying pan.

While the medieval suggestion of Mr Mademaga would not be supported in this paper, it would certainly provide more consolation than knowing that Idi Amin who presided over the deaths of

Mademaga would not be supported in this paper, it would certainly provide more consolation than knowing that Idi Amin, who presided over the deaths of up to 300,000 people and robbed 80,000 Asians, whiled away his final years living in a luxury mansion in Saudi Arabia. Thousands of Ugandan Asians in the UK, Canada and the USA never received compensation from what was rightfully theirs.

This will be remembered as one of history's great injustices.

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Idi Amin gave me a menacing glare and said: 'I have been looking for you'

Sugra Visram was one of Uganda's most respected MPs and a champion of women's rights. Here she tells her story of how Idi Amin forced her to leave her country and why she returned there 30 years later



NEW LIFE: Ugandan Asians arrive in the UK after being forced to leave



HATED FIGURE: Brutal dictator Idi Amin

"Kampala was my home and I adored my life in Uganda. In 1941 I married Haider Visram

the grandson of the great Allidina Visram, who was one of the pioneers behind the Asian economic success story of East Africa. He came to Zanzibar in 1863 and quickly built up his trading business until he was noticed by the British government and asked to provide the man power behind the railways in East Africa.

He was often referred to as the 'Uncrowned King of Uganda' and was a popular man known for his philanthropy. He built schools and libraries in Uganda and Kenya and the legacy of his business continued with my husband and his father before him.

Having both come from progressive families, my husband encouraged me to take a prominent role in social life and community service.

I didn't fit the stereotype of the Muslim woman and enjoyed sports and social activities. I became a founding member of the Ugandan Council of Women, the Muslim Women's Association, the YWCA and the Family Planning Group.

In the 1950s Uganda was on the verge of independence and this was a really turbulent time. There were a lot of meetings called by different parties hoping to rally support. I was invited to one such rally to support the royalist parties of the various kingdoms.

I was asked to make a speech and I reluctantly took to the podium and urged people to support the Baganda King, Sir Edward William Walugembe Luwangula Mutesa III, also known as King Freddie. The Baganda people took a liking to me and were impressed and cheered wildly. They were impressed by my ability to speak in the Laganda dialect. I then began championing the cause of African women and soon after independence I had become a member of Parliament. The roy-

alists had formed an alliance with Dr Milton Obote's UPC (Ugandan People's Party) but there were many differences between the parties. King Freddie was President and Obote was Prime Minister but this relationship would soon disintegrate. In 1966 Obote decided he wanted to change the constitution. He wanted to make the Ugandan parliament a one-party institution and called a parliamentary session where he asked each and

every MP to swear allegiance to his new constitution. One by one, these politicians gave in until it came to my turn. I refused to join the UPC, which by then was facing allegations for misappropriating large amounts of public funds. I told Obote that he should go to the people and ask them before he tramples on our constitution. I walked out of Parliament that day to cheers from the Baganda and Asian people alike and I vowed never to return to Parliament again.

Later that year Obote sought to further consolidate his position by abolishing the old tribal kingdoms. This bloody uprising was personally supervised by Obote's star pupil and chief bully Idi Amin - the man who had full command of the country's army and air force.

During the sixties Obote fell heavily out of favour with the Americans and the British, and became a senior figure in the unaligned Nations. His anti-West attitude made him a target for a coup. In 1971, while Obote was away at a commonwealth confer-

ence Idi Amin used the army and police to stage the coup.

Everyone was pleased to see the back of Obote and welcomed Idi Amin. Nobody had any idea what kind of a brute he would turn out to be.

We had spoken to each other before and he had travelled with myself and other delegates to a conference in London years earlier. He had several wives, but his main wife was a good friend of mine and she was very interested in the many women's groups I was involved with.

But by 1972 Idi Amin had gained a reputation for brutality. He began rounding up members of tribes loyal to Obote and other rivals. In prison cells, thousands of people were killed and tortured.

He then turned on the Asian community after the British cut off his arms supply. There were some 80,000 Asians in Uganda and we provided 90 percent of the commerce and generated 50 percent of the industry. He called us bloodsuckers and said we did not care for the welfare of Uganda. Idi Amin wanted to expel the Asians who had Ugandan citizenship, but then changed his mind and said he would simply rid the country of the majority of Asians who had British citizenship. As Ugandan citizens we intended to stay, this was our home after all. One day in 1972 he ordered all the Asians in Uganda to come to a mass registration at the airport. We went along out of fear.

We lined up and Idi Amin with his six foot four inch frame, pos-

itured around in a physically intimidating way as his people counted these petrified families. He saw me and turned on his heel. "You," he said, "I've been looking for you and your husband." My heart sank and thought this was it for me. But he spared us with a menacing look and walked away.

On that night we decided to leave. I was 49 years old.

On November 23rd 1972, we left behind our property, our cars, our valuables and everything that my husband's grandfather had worked so hard to build. With only one suitcase per person we boarded the plane for London to start a new life. Thankfully, my son and brother-in-law were already living here so we had somewhere to stay for the first few months while we picked up the pieces of our shattered lives. I got a job working for the commonwealth office and continued championing the rights of women all over the world.

In the mid-nineties I returned to Uganda and heard that President Museveni wanted to meet me. We met and he asked me to join in his efforts to rejuvenate the, now resurgent Ugandan economy. For five years I worked as an economic advisor in London for the Ugandan administration, helping the country attract much needed investment and wealth. People often asked me why I would want to do something for a country that treated me so badly. My answer to that is at heart I am a Ugandan. When I found out that Idi Amin had passed away at the weekend, I felt neither glad nor sad. This man came in with so much promise, but then destroyed the name of Africa and the name of Muslims everywhere. I am glad that this chapter had come to an end but wish that it had never been opened.

Mrs Sugra Visram lives in Putney and continues to actively support several women's organisations.



SAD MEMORIES: Sugra Visram

History of Asians in Harrow

Subject: COMMUNITYDate 10 5 07Source HARLOW OBSERVER

Thursday, May 10, 2007

www.harrowobserver.co.uk

Celebrating Gujarat Day in the borough



Harrow West MP, Tony McNulty, even spoke a few words of Gujarati

INTERNATIONAL EVENT: Hundreds of people packed out the Kadwa Patidar Centre in Harrow as they celebrated Gujarat Day. Picture contributed.

by Dhruti Shah

MORE than 400 people descended on a community hall in Harrow to take part in the capital's Gujarat Day celebrations.

Community leaders, councillors and other dignitaries celebrated the achievements of the borough's Gujarati residents at the event held at the Kadwa Patidar Centre in Kenmore Avenue, Harrow, on Tuesday last week.

Gujarat Day is an international celebration held on May 1 each year to mark the very day in 1960 that Gujarat, in India, became a state.

The event was organised by the National Congress of Gujarati Organisations (UK)

and it was the first time in four years the group had organised such a large-scale gathering to mark the occasion.

The list of speakers included Harrow's first Asian mayor, Councillor Keeki Thammaiah, and the organisation's president Lalubhai Parekh.

The country's first Gujarati MP - Sailesh Vara, was also recognised for his achievements, as was the journalist and editor CB Patel.

Pravin Amin, a past president of the organisation welcomed guests, and compered the night. He said: "Gujarat was formed in 1960 after India's independence. Gujaratis have made progresses in many different spheres of life and this is a time to celebrate."

He said Harrow was chosen as the perfect venue because of the high proportion of people of Gujarati origin who live in the borough.

Harrow West MP, Tony McNulty, even spoke a few words of Gujarati to the audience. He said: "This is about celebrating the role of Gujarat and Mother India."

The 420-strong audience was also entertained by Wembley-based singer Sunny's Group, traditionally-attired dancer Reshma Bharti and a gaarba (folk dance) in which they were invited to participate.

Afterwards Mr Parekh said the event was a great success and hopes the borough's Gujaratis will be able to celebrate again next year.

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History of Asians in Harrow

Subject: RELIGIONDate: 2. 10. 03Source: HARROW LEADER

Thursday, October 2, 2003

www.icHarrow.co.uk

First Navrati for decade overflows with festivity



RITUAL: Worshippers hold the offerings for the goddess Amba at Harrow's Navrati celebration.

Picture: Wayne Kirham 284C

FIVE hundred people had to be turned away from a Hindu festival because the venue was full.

The Navrati event at Harrow Leisure Centre in Christchurch Avenue, Wealdstone, attracted 1,500 people to celebrate the first official event in Harrow for ten years.

Evening festivities began with a joyous clapping dance, which lasted for more than an hour, as young and old joined in for as long as they could keep going.

Around 400-500 people danced, with about 1,000 people on the dance floor at each time.

By Liz Nicholls

This was followed with loud prayers in the form of song to the goddess Amba and then another dance, with 'dandia' (sticks).

Hindus from throughout London travelled to the venue, which has not staged Navrati celebrations – the festival of nine nights – since 1993.

Dresses of every shade, many with tiny mirrors sewn in, were worn by women and girls, and men wore the modern Indian dress - 'payjama' or shirt and trousers.

Visitors ended the evening at midnight by filing past the goddess with offerings in a moment of quiet prayer.

Kanti Nagda, one of the organisers, said: "Ten years ago I remember there were fewer young people, but this time most people were quite young, which is nice because they're preserving the culture and traditions.

"People were glad to have the chance to celebrate Navrati in Harrow again, it was wonderful."

■ For more pictures of this event see today's (Thursday) Observer.

22nd May 19863F

THURSDAY, MAY 22nd 1986

Indian dance star invites you to...

COME DANCING

INDIAN dance star Anjana Batra is bringing a touch of her Eastern grace to Harrow.

Anjana has just started a series of classes in the Kathak Indian dance style at the Open Line Dance Studio in Station Road.

She trained in Delhi and is noted in both India and Britain as a subtle exponent of the Kathak art of dancing. Kathak dancing depends for its effect on mime and elegance of movement. A Kathak dances tells a traditional story as she dances, using finesse of movement to convey the storyline.

Carol Sealy, Open Line's owner, said: "I asked Anjana to help teach Kathak Dance at the studio because it seemed to me to be so relaxing."

Anjana's classes are held every Friday, from 4.30pm until 6.30pm. The class is one of few run in the London area.

"The best time for a girl to learn Kathak Dance



DATEPAGETOPIC1/6/892KATHAK DANCE

Jayshri Chandaria

Two more years to Kathak degree

AFTER leaving England three years ago to learn a strict Indian dance form, young Jayshri Chandaria has returned home to perform with an Indian master.

Jayshri, 20, of Prothero Gardens, Hendon, fell in love with the art of Kathak on a visit to Bombay when she was 17. Already she had a background of tap and ballet lessons but wanted to see if the dance master Gopi Krishna - recognised as top in his profession - thought she had potential.

"I had started my "A" levels here when I decided to take a trip to India. I fell in love with Kathak and went searching for Gopi Krishna. He is the best - I had heard his name in England - and I wanted him to see

whether I should give up and return home.

"He said after a month he would see, and so I stayed."

Now Jayshri has two years to go on a six year Bachelors of Arts degree in Kathak - two more years of a demanding regime.

"Being under a guru you have to do anything he says," explained Jayshri. "He is extremely strict. For three years I've danced eight hours a day, 364 days a year with only Diwali day as a holiday."

If you would like to see Nataraj Gopi Krishna and his disciple Jaysri Chandaria dance Kathak, they will be performing at the Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane, Wembley, Middlesex. 00 9
Saturday June 3 at 8.00

Sangat

OBSERVER HARROW/WEMBLEY / INFORMER / INDEPENDENT / LEADER / RECORDER

DATE

PAGE

TOPIC

13 . 11. 1986

7

Education/Religion



Stick dance celebration

PUPILS of Sudbury Junior School celebrated Diwali with music and dance last Friday.

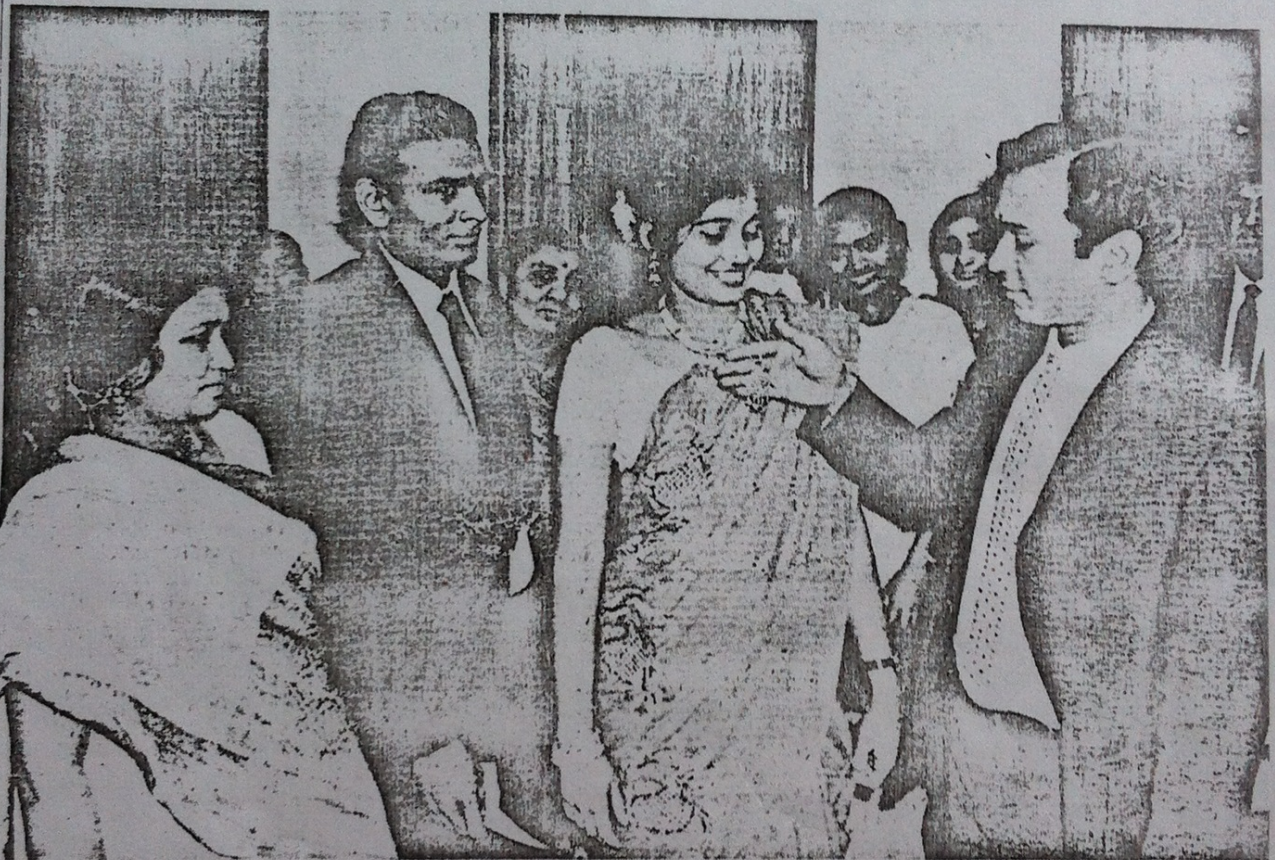
The youngsters took part at the school assembly in Dandiya Raas, the traditional Gujarati stick folk dance.

This was a repeat performance of the dance which they gave at the Commonwealth Institute two days earlier.

The pupils were trained for the dance by Mrs Punitha Perinparaja, a Wembley Indian music teacher.

HARROW OBSERVERDate13-10-1970Page3TopicRELIGION

2,000 INDIANS IN ANCIENT FESTIVAL



FOR THE first time in England, the ancient Hindu festival of Navrathri was celebrated for nine days at Wealdstone Labour Hall and finished on Friday.

The small hall was packed with Indians wearing national costumes, and it was estimated that about 2,000 people attended the last three-hour session of the festival, which was open to all races, religions and castes.

Many of the participants had been fasting for nine days, some eating

only one meal every 24 hours, some living on milk and some on water.

They came from all over the London area, as well as from farther afield. There were parties from Leicester, Manchester and Birmingham.

DANCES

There was a programme of dances around a shrine in the middle of the room. The dances, entitled Garbai and Garbie, were accompanied by Indian chants, finger-bells, cymbals and a harmonium.

Gifts to two women who helped arrange the festival of Navrathri at Wealdstone were presented to Mrs. S. P. Patel (left) and Miss J. Patel by the organiser, Mr. David Patel (second from left), and Mr. M. Patel, vice-president of the

But when wearing national costumes...

Appendix B

Nowhere to Belong
Yasmin Alibhai-Brown

OPENING

[As Yasmin enters onto stage, a Hindi Song plays which she quietly sings, then Yasmin sits on stage responding to the voices)

HUMERA (V.O.)

Are you crazy? Gone mad or what? Why go through such embarrassment? What on Earth put such an idea in your head? Sometimes you are so stupid you know.

YASMIN

They asked me to do it. I was invited.

HUMERA

Who asked you? Who is it is inviting you to do such a thing?

YASMIN

Well, it was Dominic who works...at...

HUMERA

It's a trap, they want to get you, you know, these bloody goras. Say no, you aren't a bloody actress, think of your reputation, your izzat. Go on stage and talk about your family? Have you no shame?

YASMIN

...It's the Royal Shakespeare Company.

HUMERA

Eh? Shakespeare Company? What's that Shakespearewallah got to do with us anyway? It's completely unIslamic, you know. Anyhow you will never go to paradise, too many bad habits you have. Where is your self-control? Really Yasmin, I can't believe you, you know. Always so ready to make a noise, make a fool of yourself. Think you are a bloody actress now...

YASMIN

Wait a minute, Mera. It's not so long ago I remember you in mini-skirts with blue hair and blue lips. And how Islamic is three husbands?

BINA

Oh Yasmin, it is very good what you are doing, very good you have been asked. But

Yasmin, really, will anyone come? What if they don't sell tickets? I mean you are not Meera Syal., you're not an actress.

But you did come. Thank God. But my friends are right – I am not Meera Syal and not a bloody actress. And the memory is not what it used to be, so here's hoping I don't freeze.

I was last seen on stage performing too, too long ago. At Kololo Senior Secondary School in Kampala, Uganda, motto Lead Kindly Light, cheap shacks with hot tin roofs built half way up the hill, a sanctuary, in some ways for a child who could never understand why things had to be just so. Uganda, lush, lovely, fecund, and green, a green I have never since seen, the colour of life itself, fragrant flowers, paradise.

Decades have passed -so much unfinished business.

I've been invited here to tell a tale of how Shakespeare has affected my life- how he shaped me, broke me, heals me today, this dead white male who knows us intimately. For white Europeans, Shakespeare is a consummate craftsman, a glorious wordsmith, music to their ears, an artistic genius.

But we people of colour live the dramas in his plays. Asian Britons are old Elizabethans still. All over the country bitter exiled Africans plot their revenge on bloodstained leaders- tribal Macbeths and oil-soaked Caesars and Othello lives in Brixton.

Your daughter, if you have not given her leave,

I say again, hath made a gross revolt

Tying her duty, beauty, wit and fortunes

In an extravagant and wheeling stranger

Of here and everywhere

Extravagant strangers – that's us, moving migrants, from here and everywhere, lost people no-one loves, carrying outlandish dreams to the next place and next, too big for what we are, just big enough for what we will one day be. Have you noticed, new migrants always lug suitcases, you see them at Victoria Station dragging them up and down. One day the cases will be full. This testimony is about those beautiful dreams, those glorious ambitions. My dreams, my ambitions. And fearful fathers too. Fearful fathers and fearless daughters- a recurrent theme in Shakespeare.

Listen he was a profligate wretch, my father. Squandered money, feelings, family, his own life. He's been dead three decades and more, but you know when I meet him in heaven he'll still be in his crushed pyjamas muttering under his smoky breath that angels today are too dissolute. He was a news junkie of burning intelligence, a connoisseur of many good things and little business sense, an Anglophile who loved the great writers. He was elegant, frequently eloquent. Looked like Jeremy Thorpe

thin, tall, flapping arms,
but dissipation everywhere. Warned I would end up a vaishia – a whore- because as a teenager I liked high heels and motor bikes. Fathers and daughters.

My beloved mother died this spring and I miss her so very much. There she was, a devout Muslim, last summer, drinking a glass of wine with us- very unIslamic-doctor's orders. Actually she always had a bottle of best brandy, Remy Martin, nestling among her silk saris for the moments when she brought the high blood pressure and needed a swig. She told us old stories. The first two children were ten and eleven. Kasim, my father was incapable of responsibility so she had pushed him off the marital bed. Then One night he was overcome with lust and she didn't resist. 'Didn't like it, but what to do? He's my husband' And so I was conceived, in folly and turmoil, passionately unwanted.

Soon after he stepped out for a packet of cigarettes. Begged money from his wife who as usual protested, then relented, fishing out wet notes from her bra and handing them over. 'Didn't want to but what to do? I'm his wife. 'It was over 18 months before he returned from the shop – without the cigarettes of course.

In the meantime a new baby was born - me. I was tiny, barely three pounds, blue purple like a small aubergine, she said. His wife, my mother, nearly died of meningitis after giving birth. She was so weak and exhausted. But she still fed me British Cow and Gate baby milk, made in England, such love and forgiveness for messing up her life even more.

I was scrawny when young - and clumsy. Always falling over and covered in bright colours. Red mercurochrome ointment for my cuts and yellow turmeric paste to heal my bruises. My school uniforms were the most faded and frayed, but clean, Omo clean. Do you remember Omo washing powder? I was never cute, though I do have what Asians call a wheaten complexion, light enough, always very useful. 'not very good looking girl but good brains under that huge forehead' they all said, the kind worshippers in our mosque. Now you know why I always wear a fringe. But none of this made me naturally timorous - I've been a showoffy said my mother, Jena, from about the age of four. Standing on platforms, tables, chairs, sounding off as if I was born to it.

Often broke we were, except for those times when Kasim made a killing and spent the money like water from a tap. But my mum begged and borrowed to send me to the nursery school where the swanky people sent their children. A show was announced for Khushiyali, our annual July festival outside our community mosque. It was a lovely event with music, food, nice clothes and performances. Of course, the best connected kids got all the big parts- impetuous kings, adorable princesses Bo Peep. I got but one weenie part- I was the maid hanging up the clothes and a little boy was trained to rush on to the stage and pinch my nose.

But guess what? The rich kids – all eight of them- were useless in front of a real audience. The wimps yelled for their ayahs, their black nannies- lined up at the back

in their pink and white uniforms. Pretty maids all in a row, paid a pittance to bestow maternal love, day and all night while the mummies dressed up and went for coffee mornings. And tea parties. And dinner dances. The children shrieked, the maids shrugged, the nursery teachers panicked. I put up my hand and said I could do the whole lot. A desperate teacher grabbed me by the hand and pulled me away.

LX change to more atmospheric state.

MOSQUE STEPS

I'm led into the compound full of flowering trees and shrubs, their bright colours dancing in the sun, the pungent scent of Rathkirani is thickening the air to syrup. A grand three sided staircase sweeps up and up and up to the beautiful snow white mosque which throws its mock Taj Mahal towers to the blue sky. It's covered in necklaces of fairy lights and bunting for Khushiyali.

At the bottom of the steps, a stage has been set and red carpet laid out in the front rows, where the WIPs, the wabenzi, people with Mercedes are starting to take their places on cushions. The rest sit on handkerchiefs.

And as the sun finally sets crackling music fills the compound and young couples float on stage to play dandia – the stick dance, followed by the older men and women, dancing their garba - more difficult these days. Then I am told to go on. To sit on a chair with a red cushion. To get ready for my rhymes.

I am wearing a pink taffeta dress with lace and a satin belt. It is noisy, my dress, even more noisy than the rude newspaper rustles my father makes when he wants the guests to leave. On my head is a cardboard crown with sequins which gleam and glisten more than all those real jewels in the crowd – the diamonds and rubies, the one string, two, three and fours strings of pearls. Who needs their gold and stuff? My mummy always says. Then I see her. She has been given place near the front, not far from Masa and Masi, her cousins. They are very rich but you know, he's so fat he has to put a towel on his stomach to stop the steering wheel creasing his suits when he drives his big cars. Next to them the ladies with their Dusty Springfield makeup and their bouffants stiffened with beer, whose stale, flat odour mingles with their French perfumes.

They are all looking at me now expectantly. Then I hear someone ask Mr Ahmed from the shop, Who is this child? It's that clever young daughter of Jenabai- bechari Jenabai married to that Kasim, do you know him? But I am not that poor little girl Mr Ahmed gives free broken erasers to. I am a queen eating bread and honey. The Queen stands to receive her audience. And then... under the arches, a commotion.

KASIM

What is this blasphemy, this obscenity? You have made your mosque into a nightclub, a circus. Your wives dress like harlots. Is this Islam? Listen to me my people, a prophet's words are never heeded. Islam is a pure religion. I have read the

Koran. You only read account books. Look into the eyes of your ayahs and drivers. You flaunt your money in their faces in the house of God. Mark my words, one day they will drive us out...you will remember my words.

It's my father and he's making a scene. I know that mood- it will grow and grow like the clouds in the afternoon until the rain falls. Everyone's looking at him now. Masa is purple with rage, mummy is pale with shame. They shush and tut and shout. Two men grab him and he gets even more noisy. But eventually they pull him off down the side off the building and there is silence. I gather myself and find my voice. Sing a song of Sixpence. And the Queen of hearts. And Jack and Jill. And they smile and clap and afterwards pinch my cheeks and tell my mother she is nasibdar, lucky. Then the Mukhi – our leader comes down, looks me in the eye, smiles – great gold teeth. And into my hands he places a bar of Cadbury's chocolate. One and a half glasses of full cream milk.

I feel light; I feel loved; I feel a somebody.

HOME LIFE

Home life after this felt ever more full of discontent, damp with resentment, infused with the suppressed fury of a disappointed marriage, the misery of misfits. Until I was twelve I slept between my parents, ever more acrid with each other, like the air they breathed out as they slept. Two beds were jammed together and I remember the feel of the metal frame on my back, the lumpy mattresses smelling of children and other stuff and Johnson's baby powder which Jena sprinkled over to make them smell innocent. When I left their bed, they moved even further apart.

MAMA KUBA

So I loitered, avoided going home always stopped over at our next door neighbour's flat, Mama Kuba, or big mother, as the African's nicknamed her. She was a formidable Asian woman, large, authoritative, grey eyes at once steely and beautiful. A faithful Sunni, she prayed five times a day, fasted, had been on hajj, slit the throats of goats herself. But she smoked players cigarettes, had chucked many husbands; her sons were never to become real men, she enslaved her servants and daughters in law.

But she cared about George, the maskini, the dignified beggar with Elephantiasis who had insects nesting in his thickened skin and she loved me. We had a deal, If I massaged her back everyday she would give me money every Saturday. So I did, walked up and down her broad back, any oily piste, and her creamy skin rippled like wax in a lava lamp.

MAMA

Eh Johnny, ash on floor. Spittoon. Shenzi, Where are you, turn that bloody music off. Where were you? You are looking me in the eye? Eh! Tahone. Lots of Johnnies in the market place. No, no weekend off. Zarin get a big glass of milk and seven almonds, Yassi is here. And lock the store jungle Johnnie steals everything. Don't give him any sugar for his tea..

Come, Yassi, my back. Yesterday your heart was not in your feet. Are they clean? Have you prayed today? You Shias will never go to heaven.
Come...ooohh...
How was school? Come first, I hope, not 2nd, 2nd rubbish.

YASSI

No it was fine, but one teacher said I was talking too much.

MAMA

Pay attention, Study hard. You have to look after your poor mother, married to that useless man. You know all men are bastards. I had to throw away four of them. Be a lawyer or maybe doctor.

YASSI

But Ma, I am going to be an actress..

MAMA

What? Foolish, want a thapat? Big slap? You got a brain- like me. Allah doesn't give all women brains you know. An actress? Like those half naked Hindustani girls? You know they worship cows?

YASSI

No, a proper actress. Like Audrey Hepburn. Or Doris Day Move over darling...

Before she can answer, the door opens and I recognise the long fingers curled around the doorframe.

MAMA

What are you doing, Kasim? Barging in to woman's bedroom now? Better not be asking me for cigarettes, (wraps sheet around self).

KASIM

Sorry, sorry Mama Kuba. Been busy signing a deal, Just two cigarettes, three maybe, Mama Kuba. Just till tomorrow.

MAMA

(she lights a cigarette and takes a puff – slowly) Ha! I knew it! Always asking cigarettes! Always today tomorrow never comes. What kind of murth are you? What kind of man Kasim? Always only today When will you be a cock and not a hen?

KASIM

Why are you making such fuss? You know I'm a man of my word, my word is my bond.. Anyway it's Friday you're supposed to be charitable.

what on Earth is it you are doing, Yassi? What are you doing in mirror there? It's not that actress nonsense again is it? Over my dead body. Its your fault Mama Kuba. You give her money, she goes to the cinema. You're spoiling my daughter

MAMA

Your daughter??? (spits) Where were you in the first twelve months didn't even see her face. How many times did you forgot her at nursery school to go drinking in City Bar? Your city bar friends are laughing at you, saying head full pocket empty,. I saw them coming for their money, you had your suit covered in papaya, had to hide like a dog in a dustbin. Look after your family first, your daughter. (taps ash onto his shoes)

KASIM

You'll see, Mamakuba this deal cannot fail. Ganatra is backing it can't fail. . Soon you'll see: Kasim's Oxford hats. Oi why you throwing ash on my English shoes?

But I was stubborn – then as now. These two couldn't stop me acting, I carried on. Played the incautious Alice in wonderland, a flirty milk girl who fell for a scumbag soldier only to be betrayed by him. Drusilla, one of the ugly sisters in Cinderella, large plastic spiders were pinned on my hair which flew during a spectacular fight over the shoe. Later, a proper heroine- Scherazade.. In lovely red satin pantaloons – the compelling storyteller.

We played with the grownups too. There was a flourishing National Theatre in Kampala with a semi professional company. I played a fairy in a terrific production of Midsummer Nights Dream. Our primary teacher and his wife were Oberon and Titania, – he was magnetic, black locks, a voice like melted dark chocolate. She walked with a swing, took up space in the world, had inviting eyes and a waspish tongue. The appeared to be acting out the jealousies of their own tempestuous marriage on stage. Can you imagine how exciting that was for the children of small shopkeepers who knew little about possessive and sensual love?

We went on to serious drama when quite young. Chekov, Shaw, Arthur Miller even Ibsen. And more Shakespeare. Portia was my favourite role then- Brimming with Christian certainties, how I relished humiliating Shylock.

My father never came to the performances, Didn't believe in entertainment. But I was smitten. There was an empty storeroom underneath our flat. Full of rubbish and insects. There, sometimes, alone, I tied ribbons under the bust and round my forehead and played all those roles yet un-played, Miranda, Desdemona, best of all Cleopatra, a melodramatic fest sometimes producing real tears. Imagine her if you will, the young nascent actress with her extravagant yearnings.

The sixties counter culture wafted to us on the crosswinds and we heard of op art, Twiggy and the Beatles. It was at this time that a new flock of white people flew in mostly Brits but some American draft dodgers. They were so different from the old imperial sort- In their stiffly ironed clothes, stockings, rigid hats, always hats, as if they were expecting blows to their dignity. These new arrivals were free, flowing, easy. They wore crumpled clothes, cheap sandals. I had never seen dirty white feet before. They mingled with us, joined the National Theatre. It was at this time that Mrs Mann joined the school, the wonderful Mrs Mann, tall, blonde, gifted actress and with her my greatest and last, theatrical role – Juliet.

A BIGGER PICTURE

But before I carry on with my personal story, I must fill in the backdrop, describe the bigger picture. We were players in a calamitous history. .

Ugandan Asians were brought in by the British during the great Victorian expansionist period of the empire. They were to build the railways from the coast to the interior as indentured labourers, slaves given pocket money and false promises. But news of paradise had spread to India and soon they were followed by adventurers, entrepreneurs, impoverished folk escaping the famines in India, in part exacerbated by British policies. Later came professionals. And as numbers grew , the British organised us, set us up to be the be buffer between themselves and the lowly blacks.

You could see this in the hills of Kampala, built on seven hills. Right at the top, the huge mansions of the Wazungu, whites, with gardens gates and guards and dogs trained to bark at approaching blacks and browns. Then, further down is where rich Asians lived, with their lovely houses and gardens, gates and dogs that barked only at blacks. And at the bottom, in the valley, the sodding pits were the native Africans surrounded by mangy dogs that just barked.

Divide and rule; How the British love their order.

Asians soon grew to love their adapted country but alas not its people whom many believed to be barely evolved from apes. Too many Black Ugandans to despise everything we were and did – even the massive good we did. Fear and loathing, envy and revenge, swilling around, soiling paradise.

Then came independence and everything changed...

I met General Idi Amin soon after independence when he was a general in the army. too he was to become Field Marshall Doctor General Idi Amin Dada, VC DSO MC His Excellency President for life of Uganda, Conqueror of the British Empire In Africa, Al Hadj, Last King of Scotland. I remember asking him “Why are there no Asians in the army?” He looked down at me, a malevolent laugh burnt up from his belly like lava and he said, “Because we do not eat chorocco (lentils) in the amy. We Africans eat red blood meat. You are not African...”

No we were never Africans – Not to Amin and his lot. But for many Asians too the label was repugnant- Africans were like Caliban, born to hew, unfit to move with the civilized.

Abhorred Slave,

which any print of goodness will not take,

Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,

Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour,

One thing or other: when thou didst not, savage,

know thy own meaning, but wouldst gabble like

A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes

With words that made them known: but thy vile race

Though thou did'st learn had that in 't which

Good natures Could not abide to be with'

We had the good natures. Listen now to my relatives, acquaintances even today in their big houses in Harrow and Pinner, Toronto.

'Beautiful country, paradise, wasted on the jungles. Look what a mess they have made after we left.. We tried, tried hard to teach them, better ways, good business sense, easier to teach monkeys Happy to be out. Some have framed pictures of Idi Amin, they hang marigolds around it to thank him for pushing them on to richer pastures.

Remember Prospero's fury when Caliban tried to violate his daughter? It was the final act of barbarism. For Asians that was the final horror too. As old class and race sex rules broke down, Asians felt ever more alienated from the country they loved. It's heartbeat, its drumbeats producing only terror.

They believed that what black men wanted was to lay their lascivious paws on their daughters, sisters wives and mothers. And some, a few, black men played on these fears. When we were in public spaces they baited us: 'Hey you daughter of Shylock, how much money has your father sent out today? We know what you are doing. This is our country, you will be ours too.' When Asian men were about, they got bolder still. "Hey mzee, old man, Tonight I come to your house, and you be giving me your daughter. Then we will do it, and you can give me your big car eh?' She is going to be in my bed. What do you think of that, eh? Oh yes..." And this started to happen more, Asian parents lost all will to remain.

Remember we were the self controlled, cautious, nifty merchants, decorous fiddlers of accounts, hoarders of wealth, excellent bribers, family and community creatures governed by manners, we who thought of ourselves as pearls before the swine. Expelled by a hideous, big, black man- cannibalistic, raw, brutish, unpredictable, part child part savage.

We cast as Shylocks of East Africa. They cast as Calibans. Ducats and daughters.

But my father was different. He understood how perilous was our arrogance, our inability to adjust to new realities. He was heroic in the way he hurled himself against the surf waves of convention. He was special.

SCHOOL

And it was into this landscape that Mrs Mann arrived. She was appalled by the apartheid she found, our divided lives our divided selves. That white men were still blacking up as Othello when there were talented black actors around. And so she decided to stir things, subvert the order using a school play.

Mr Raval, our headmaster was ferociously traditional, had a black and orange smile (he chewed pan all day long) and teeth like old stones in a graveyard. He also had an imperial mind set- he was flattered a white teacher had come to his school and he trusted her to do the right thing. She did, but with, perhaps some naivety. She decided to produce Romeo and Juliet for a major drama competition. The Capulets would be Asian and the Montagues African. I so wanted to play Juliet, would have KILLED to get the role. Off I went to audition bursting with hope and expectation. But, no other girl even put up her hand. There was no competition. Wise girls. They understood things I didn't. As word got round the Asian teachers began a counter offensive against the project. And head of the pack was Mr Banya.

MR BANYA

Okay, okay, okay...sit sit. Indian time always late. Chair broken or what – okay sit two on one chair, two on one chair. . Now today I will be doing a special lesson. I am going to teach you about Romeo and Juliet. Yes, yes I know Mrs Mann is doing it too, but I am teaching you the real most deepest meaning of this drama.

Question: I want one word answer please. What is the story about? Lowe. My daughter Rashmi is listening to some song all you need is love. NO all you need is obedience. Silly girl Juliet, meeting lafanga boy, Romeo, going from party to party, no serious purpose in life.

Father very successful merchant big house finding good husband Paris, excellent prospects, older also will keep her in line. No, Want Romeo. You know children fathers are always knowing best and teachers also, I am like your fatherhood. Sow hat is Mr Shakespeare doing to these two Romeo and Juliet? Answer please? What happens at the end? They die. He is killing them. Very clever wise man Shakespeare. Mr William Shakespeare, clever man, is writing this drama. This is the lesson he is teaching you. Better to die than disobey. Repeat.

You Hasmukh, what is this hair you are wearing? Think you are a girl or what? Here, if you want hair llike girl we will give you it – her have girlie grips to make look pretty, just like girl.

Vinod – what are you doing? You are doing romancing or what? In my class? I am your fatherhood here. Remember, this is Mr B here. Want another stick on those stick legs? I am noticing some boys wearing rock and roll trousers- you Vinod always making trouble. . We will be doing coca cola test. If this bottle is sticking you will be walking in your undering pants. Stupid ideas coming from England these days not great like before.

Second lesson in the play CONVENTION. Life without convention is like a body without the bones. And also natural order. Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, you can be friends boys with boys, girls with girls – but remember a lion does not go with a tiger. And Vinod again making mischief, passing love chitties to that stupid girl Yasmin, I have twenty four pairs of eyes, be very careful,

Come forward. Girl close your eyes. Put head down. Don't look. Open zip.

KID AND KISSES

Oh he had twenty four pairs of eyes and he knew we were up to things. Vinod was my boyfriend. Cool, smart indolent. It was innocent stuff, no sex or drugs but yes rock and roll. He was a great dancer and he was Hindu while I was a Shia Muslim. He slipped me poems in class, claimed he had written them himself but I knew he had copied them from Herrick and Shakespeare. You can't love the theatre as I did from childhood and not become a romantic. . Things were changing in our society. For decades before, the wheels of life moved at an expected speed, everyone knew their place. There was the family, education, business, marriage, children, family, education, business, nicely arranged marriage. Cliff and Elvis had sent over their wicked songs in the fifties but it was in the sixties that the wheels really started to rattle. Mine was the first generation of Asians to fall in love with love, just as Romeo does.

And how beautiful he was, my Romeo. John Abwole, gentle, graceful, like a ballet dancer treacle eyes. We were animatedly reading Tolstoy at the time and had found a

book about the pre-raphaelites in the school library. He was so idealistic always saying we would make a different future, another country.

And just at this time, something terrible happened in our school. We had a chemistry teacher, Mr Dinker, young and trendy wore drainpipes had an Elvis hairdo. Mr Dinker was a Hindu. And he fell madly in love with a young Muslim trainee teacher at the school and she with him. And they were not careful. When word got out she was taken out of the school, never seen again. Soon afterwards, we came into school and were told that Dinker had been found dead in the Chemistry lab, he had swallowed concentrated acid. Of course there was grief and shock and sorrow but I also thought this thing called love what power it has to bind lovers through death, what risks it makes them take. .

Tis almost morning, I would have you gone

But no farther than a wanton's bird

That lets it hop a little from her hand

Like a poor prisoner in its twisted gyves,

And plucks it back again, so loving jealous of his liberty.

LX CHANGE

We rehearsed in the school hall. I a wheat-skinned Capulet, he a black-skinned Montague. You know until I was writing this testimony I'd always thought and said we never really touched on stage, it was all make believe. But I found Mrs Mann and talked to her and we did and kiss and that she had to train us to do this over several days. We were shy and reluctant. I had edited this out of my memory. Perhaps because I was aroused this gentle alluring boy. Remember I existed in that space between superior whites and the beasts of burden. And from that space you did not reach across to touch black skin or kiss black lips or give your heart to a black man. Even in a school play. How did Romeo feel elated we were living in times when this was allowed or was he terrified he was trespassing on dangerous grounds? I'll never know because a few years on I had a letter from him- he had gone to India to join the Ugandan consulate and hadn't taken the right shots and was in quarantine. In his letter he wrote 'I can see India from my window, the lovely women in their colourful clothes. I am dying to get out there' Then I heard, soon after this he was killed in a car crash. So my African Romeo is buried in India. Now I can now remember my feelings as I played Juliet. That certain tightness in the belly, the

beating heart, flashing eyes. Was it the thrill of the forbidden? Or was I releasing a wantonness in a safe space, wantonness I was born with which alarmed my parents and teachers? Or was it Juliet herself who took there, this girl who expresses newborn desire with such unfettered passion.

Come civil night
Thou sober suite matron, all in black

Hood my unmanned blood, bating in my cheeks

With thy black mantle, till strange love grow bold

O I have bought the mansion of a love

But not possessed it, and though am sold

Not yet enjoyed.

Whatever it was it was hot, made my boyfriend intensely jealous. He was playing Tybalt. In his eyes I became easy, available. A girl who could kiss a black was shameless. So one afternoon he took me to an empty house belonging to a friend and tried to have his way with me. He wooed, threatened and cajoled. But even I knew the difference between art and life. he was left high and dry and soon afterwards he dumped me, understandably.

FIGHTS & SHOW

This meant the tension between Romeo and Tybalt was real as was the animosity between the Montagues and Capulets. Mrs Mann encouraged them to bring in mock weapons and they did. And oh the fights, swagger, jibes and blades. It was as if both sides knew the Universe was changing. The Capulets knew their wealth and status were no longer enough to protect their status.

The Montagues looked us in the eye, they were never going to be our servants again- these were future lawyers, ministers, judges. As they went for each other it was the past battling with the future in Verona .

Excitement reached fever pitch on the first night. It sold out – not unusual this being a National Competition. But it was the second night which was a surprise, twice as many people wanted tickets, there was a rush and crush, why even Old Mr Ahmed was out there and I thought, the show's a hit. and John and I are at the heart of it.

PALMERS SONNET

We won. Best play in the all Africa Drama competition. Groundbreaking she said the adjudicator, Betsy in her electric blue suit. Then my name, best actress, the scholarship at a top drama school in London.

THE STAIRS

The next thing I really remember is being driven home that incredible evening, thirty-seven years ago. At 9.45 pm I am dropped off by a teacher. I spring out of the car, rush up to the dark stairwell, towards our tiny flat above the marketplace, busy

and boisterous all day long. Always there, the stench of old piss and dead vegetables. But tonight all I smell is the redolence, the deep fragrance smell of jasmine woven into my long black plait. Stage make-up still on deep and pink, my lips have been painted chilli red. I am wearing a white and gold gossamer sari which shimmers and shimmies even in the blackness. On my arms dozens of glass bangles jangle jubilantly.

I'm holding a silver coloured cup, shaped like a babycham glass, It holds my joy, radiance, liquid gold. I am carrying this globe of happiness into the flat. The demons will all flee and we will be a happy family. And then , London, studying drama and then on the stage. Playing Cleopatra. I must remember to ask when would be a good time to fly off. In an aeroplane.

Ululations have started up on the street. A thief has been spotted, the crowds will sport with him before they kick him or burn him to death. For a bunch of bananas or an shirt. But tonight the sound flickers across my consciousness, slips off somewhere, an unheeded omen. I dash up the steps and into the veranda. No light on in the veranda, no light on in the corridor, no light on in the kitchen – always only one light on! Impatience drives me on and I break through into the living room where one small bulb casts its sickly, yellow light. I stop. There is a crowd of people – my mother, my father, my brother and his wife, Uncles, Aunts, my cousins and his box shaped wife. I don't understand. .

Why are they looking so deadly serious, so tragic? Has someone died? Is it Chacha Mansoor, my uncle? Or sweet Mami? Or Mercedes Masa? They all look up – but not my father who looks down, his long arms dangling his smoky breath rattling. My mother is sobbing into her pacheli, chubby frame wobbling with terrible grief. My cousin's wife smiles. There's lipstick on her teeth like blood on a hyena's jaws.

And then my cousin moves towards me his eyes are like knives. They slice through me, a jolt of realisation – this is something to do with me, something I have done. He grabs my shoulders and the silence breaks into a million pieces. Sound and fury and violence. I have walked in one moment from heaven into hell.

Kasim still doesn't look, doesn't flinch, doesn't move as a pack surrounds. My mother's voice shouts in vain– don't hit her, talk to her, she's only small.

I am screaming, pain, terror, confusion, and eventually, above the blows and bedlam I hear Mama Kuba's iron voice

Aree What is going on in there? What is all this noise? What has happened? Yassi?

I tear myself away from clawing hands, past the kitchen and out the door into Mama Kuba's arms. Into her flat, where no-one dares to follow. They have torn the jasmine from my hair. The sari is a mess, many glass bangles have broken away cutting my arms. I lay my head in her lap, weep my tears rolling off the satiny, synthetic fabric

of her dress.

Stop crying, stop crying. You are here now. Stop crying. Now tell me what happened. What happened?

But I can't tell her, because I don't know. Then my mother arrives, distraught, in tears too. My mother who showed me how to love (O sweet my mother, cast me not away, Juliet begs).

How could you do this to me? Have you no pity doing such a dirty thing? Haven't I done everything for you? To bring this shame. How will I show my face now? How could you do this? You touched a black man.

AFTERMATH

Story had got to my family and all around Kampala that I had tried to elope with an African and a young Asian man had to fight him with a knife to save my honour. Art and life, no difference, which was which? Much uproar.

Is this trauma why I erased the memory of the kisses on stage with John? Or was it easier to cast myself as a virginal victim of brute forces. I must have known there would be consequences for my family for what I did but I didn't care. Or was it guilt and shame? that I too believed it was wrong to touch that blackness. I have often wondered- how would I feel if my daughter married a black man? Will I love their child? I hope I have excised anti-black prejudices, but I don't know.

So much changed in the aftermath of that performance.

My mother forgave me, loved me. But she never mentioned the play again and I never told her about this show, wish I had now. But my father, my father never, ever spoke to me again. Not a word. Oh there was one free BOAC postcard which arrived the week before he died – it says to Yassi, from Papa. Blank space where the words should have been.

But after that night he too lost his authority. He was never again the man of the house. That was my brother. Papa crawled permanently into his pyjamas, withered into self pity, read and re-read Lear. In his blindness he never saw how his waywardness, gambling had rebounded on us. He thought he was the victim of our heartlessness. He was cruel too.

Ingratitude, thou marble hearted fiend

More hideous when thou showest in a child

Than a sea monster

And like Lear and Cordelia, we never got to reconcile. Never got to forgive. He is buried here in England, in Woking. Going to the funeral prayers my cousin and I took cab from the station to the cemetery. We were talking about the troubles in Uganda, and how hard it was to settle in England. When I paid the cabbie. He looked

at me and chucked the money out of the window.
 ‘Fuck off Paki we don’t want you here’. I had some change in my hand which I
 threw at his face and ran off down a small lane , carrying double the grief now.

Every week, I get people telling me to fuck off Paki to where I came from.
 They will put it on my gravestone – will be back there then.

I wasn’t allowed to take up the scholarship. That dream was obliterated. My
 reputation destroyed, my name mud. I understood I wasn’t a proper Asian woman. I
 couldn’t be an African either. The colour of my skin militated against that. Exiled
 again to this country I will never be embraced as a daughter of this nation. Like the
 thousand who come here, I will walk that line, an insider outsider. And it boils me u
 when I hear politicians from left to right punishing and scapegoating again and again
 the immigrant and
 asylum seeker and I want to say to them, OK :

Grant them removed

Imagine that you see the wretched strangers

Their babies at their backs with their poor luggage

Plodding to the ports and coasts for transportation.

What had that got you? I’ll tell you You had taught

How insolence and strong hand should prevail

And by this pattern not one of you should live an aged man

For other ruffians as their fancies wrought

With selfsame hand, self reasons, and self right

Would shark upon you.

Mr Shakespeare, very wise man. A speech he gave to Thomas Moore. The bard
 understood what modern politicians don’t. That when in that age of globalisation
 when Elizabethans went forth seeking adventure and exotica, contact with the
 fantastic unknown there would be washback. Othello is the prize and price of that
 contact

So many other truths of Shakespeare live on, all pervasive.

Lady Montague frets that Romeo might have been in the street fracas that has just
 erupted between two warring families. Just think Stephen Lawrence’s mother
 Doreen, who waited only her boy never came back alive. Other mothers like me of

boys- white brown black- watch them go out. Will they come back dead? Whence the swagger and bloodlust?

Think of the thousands of Juliets, in Asian and Arab families bullied, beaten, sometimes killed for refusing the Parises chosen by their fathers.
 When Capulet tells his daughter: ' And you be mine, I'll give you to my friend
 And you be not, hang, beg, starve die in the
 streets,
 For by my soul
 I'll ne'er acknowledge you'

We understand what that means exactly, heard it often enough.

There are always people who jump over these barriers. Jemima Khan marrying a Muslim cricket hero when hatred of Muslims is pervasive. Then is crushed by Pakistani bigots who cannot accept the Jewess. Diana boldly taking on an Arab lover- the son of a the most hated Arab, the merchant of Cairo. Imagine if Diana and Dodi had lived and had a child. Read Titus Andronicus for the most moving testimony of a white queen giving birth to a mixed race child.

Or Othello, how does a black boy or man read or watch that as just a play? I once sat in on a lesson on Othello in a London secondary school, racially mixed. A number of white boys said that Desdemona was stupid for trusting a black. They are no good. You see it everywhere, Our girls think these guys are really cool and that. Then they beat them up, get them pregnant, kick them around, have other girlfriends like.'

And of course Othello does destroy sweet Desdemona. And there are many white women who hoped for better from their black lovers. But hey, Men, white black, brown disappoint women much too much of the time. But race intensifies the emotions, poisons meanings. As the cracks begin to show, prejudice rises, otherness is to blame and not ourselves. Always the other...

Ben Okri wrote in a searing essay on Othello: ' ultimately we are bound in fate whoever the other may be. We are bound in the fact that we have to deal with one another. There is no way around it. The way we see the other is connected to the way we see ourselves. The other is ourselves as the stranger.'

I took that other to my bed, into my heart. A pure Englishman with blue blue eyes and sturdy feet, roots in the south downs. He took on this extravagant stranger. Buys me scented lilies when I cry for Uganda. Touch wood, much wood we have made a happy family. And I am grateful that I got to come here to open my world and fight my battles. What if we were still in Uganda? I might have been tamed, become a pearly wife with four strings of pearls and might be lecturing my little ones on convention. Instead England gave me this. The chance to be on stage even. There is one sorrow, one echo from the past come haunting. A young man I love more than my own life was cut off by his father by email two years ago for reasons I don't know. That deadly silence again. I hope they have a conversation before death makes that impossible.

EPILOGUE

It is cold during his funeral. He is lying in his coffin, his face a little troubled. I take a spoon to put holy water on his blue mouth. The spoon tinkles like it has touched ceramic. That sound finally brings on hot, angry tears. How dare he die before we had resolved anything? What kind of father does that?

As others pay their respects I remember

How you always only ever wanted one egg on toast for supper every night. How many burnt holes you burnt putting live cigarettes into your pockets. How you had all your teeth removed for good health. How you drank blood red claret with style . How political you were, how unafraid to speak out.

Your friends tell me' too much like your father, too big mouth, too political just like Kasim

Too much like Kasim, hey ho. .

LX FADE TO BLACK

Appendix C

Materials on *Navratri*
(From family acquaintance)

INFORMATION FROM BA
FROM DAD'S GUJARATI
CLASS.

Ras

This dance is known as Ras.
Every participants have small sticks
in their hands. Some times two —
Some times one but there must be any
type of sticks.

This dance can be performed
generally in any programme-getting.
In this dance generally drum is
played for tal. mostly as a musical
instrument flute is played. Some times
some ~~for~~ typical songs are sung.

The root of this dance is as early
as Lord Krishna. It is told that Lord Krishna
was playing Ras with his friends girls
and boys. Gopis & Gops. when he was
of eleven. Gopis were very fond of playing
with Krishna.

Then when Krishna came to Gujarat
this Ras came in Gujarat. Since then every
Gujarati Boys & Girls are fond of it.

This ^{is} played by all persons of all ages
Today all the players are ^{radios} over 60 of

Hiligadi
Kachori Club. Now it begins

FOLK DANCES FROM GUJARAT - The west coast of India.

All dances demonstrated today are from the west coast of India - The state of Gujarat.

Manjeera or Bell dance:

This is mainly performed as a welcome or prayer dance.

Stick dance:

This is performed at any gathering. Participants can be men and women, boys and girls. This dance dates back to Krishna the Hindu god. This dance is favourite among young and old and is performed in villages and cities. The music accompanying has a very special drum beat.

Clap dance:

Another folk dance from Gujarat. Both hands are used. Participants are mainly women and girls. - This dance is performed to enchant the goddesses. It is specifically performed during the festival of Navaratri - festival of goddesses. Women & girls dance every night for nine nights to welcome the goddess or Shakti.

~ नवरात्री ~

भारतमा नवरात्री को तथेपर -

~~सहित~~ 3. महादेवस्य विष्णुस्य ब्रह्मस्य (दुर्गा)

(१) दुर्गा ?

इतिब्रह्मपति - यज्ञ -

सति (शिव) दुर्गा - त्रयो योगिनीया - (दीरा)

सति - शिव - दुर्गा - 1 महादेवस्य
2 महाविष्णु -
3 महाब्रह्म -

त्रयोमते त्रयो नवरात्री - नवदुर्गा - नवसिद्धि -
महामाता - त्रयो -
सति एते सतिं नवरा

(२)

राम - शिवलोकं युद्धे विजया एवम् -

तथायत्ने - त्रयोमतेन नवरात्री -

सति रक्षितं युद्धं - दुर्गायुद्धं -

कोटेश्वर राम - १०८ वर्ष

विष्णुमृतो संत - ५

१०९ वर्षो योगेश्वर -

दुर्गाको रक्षाकार - १२ -

सति शिवलोकं युद्धं -

(३)

सति स्वर्ग - पुनापानी - त्रयोमतेनां
व्यापारे पूज्यते शक्तिमान्नाम्य सति गत्या त्वरे (सक्तिसेवुग्य
सति देवो - (सक्ति - विष्णु सति) शिवस्यो गत्या - सति वादीनां)

सति ते सतिना शक्तिं सति युद्धे सति नवरात्री शक्तिं सति सति

सति सति उद्याते नेना सति तेषां सति शक्तिं सति सति

नवरात्रीस्य सति सति शक्तिं शिवस्य -

सति हरिस्य सति - सति सति

- 1. शक्ति (५) भांडार
- 2. सति (५) सति
- 3. सति (५) सति
- 4. सति (५) सति
- 5. सति (५) सति



જેમ મહાદેવનાં ત્રણ રૂપ છે- બ્રહ્મા, વિષ્ણુ અને મહેશ. એવી જ રીતે મહાદેવીના પણ સરસ્વતી, લક્ષ્મી અને દુર્ગા એમ ત્રણ રૂપ છે.

સરસ્વતીમાતા બુદ્ધિ અને વિવેકનાં દેવી છે. લક્ષ્મીમાતા ધન અને ઐશ્વર્યનાં દેવી છે.

એવી જ રીતે બ્રહ્મા, વિષ્ણુ અને મહેશ શક્તિરૂપે મહિષાસુરનો સંહાર કરવા માટે મા દુર્ગાનું સર્જન કર્યું.

નવરાત્રિના પર્વમાં મા દુર્ગાની ઉપાસના કરવામાં આવે છે. દુર્ગાના નવ રૂપમાં મા દુર્ગાના નવ રૂપમાં શૈલપુત્રી, બ્રહ્મચારિણી, ચંદ્રચંદા, કુબ્જાહડા, સ્કન્ધ માતા, કાન્યાયની, કાળરાત્રિ, મહાગૌરી અને સિદ્ધિદાત્રી છે.

૧. શૈલપુત્રી

દુર્ગામાતાનું પહેલું સ્વરૂપ એટલે 'શૈલપુત્રી'. નવરાત્રિના પ્રથમ દિવસે તેમની ઉપાસના કરવામાં આવે છે. તેમણે પર્વતરાજ હિમાલયના ઘરે પુત્રી સ્વરૂપે જન્મ લીધો તેથી તેમનું નામ શૈલપુત્રી પડ્યું. તેમના જન્મસા હાથમાં ત્રિશૂલ અને કાબા હાથમાં કમળનું ફૂલ શામે છે.

૨. બ્રહ્મચારિણી
નવરાત્રિના બીજા દિવસે

નવરાત્રિ મહોત્સવ - ૨૦૦૯

તેમના સાત હાથમાં કમંડળ, ધનુષ્ય, બાણ, કમળનું ફૂલ, કળશ, ચક્ર તથા ગદા ધારણ કરેલાં છે. આઠમા હાથમાં જપમાળા છે. તેમનું વાહન સિંહ છે.

૫. સ્કન્ધમાતા.

મા દુર્ગાનું પાંચમું સ્વરૂપ એટલે સ્કન્ધમાતા. નવરાત્રિના પાંચમા દિવસે તેમની પૂજા કરવામાં આવે છે. બાળપણમાં ભગવાન સ્કન્ધ માતાજીના ખોળામાં રમતા હતા. તેમને ચાર હાથ છે. એક હાથ આશીર્વાદની મુદ્રામાં, બીજા હાથમાં કમળનું ફૂલ શોભે છે.

૬. કાન્યાયની

દુર્ગામાતાનું છઠ્ઠું સ્વરૂપ મા કાન્યાયનીનું છે. નવરાત્રિના છઠ્ઠા દિવસે તેમની પૂજા કરવામાં આવે છે. તેમના ચાર હાથ છે. જમણી બાજુનો ઉપરનો હાથ અભયમુદ્રામાં તથા નીચેનો હાથ આશીર્વાદ મુદ્રામાં છે. ડાબી બાજુના ઉપરના હાથમાં તલવાર અને નીચેના હાથમાં કમળનું ફૂલ શોભી રહ્યાં છે. તેમનું વાહન શોભી રહ્યાં છે. તેમનું વાહન શોભી રહ્યાં છે.

૭. કુબ્જાહડા

દુર્ગામાતાનું ચોથું સ્વરૂપ એટલે કુબ્જાહડા. નવરાત્રિના ચોથા દિવસે તેમની પૂજા કરવામાં આવે છે. તેમના મંદ હાસ્ય દ્વારા આખા બ્રહ્માંડને ઉત્પન્ન કરવાને લીધે તેઓ કુબ્જાહડા તરીકે ઓળખાયા છે. શરીરનો રંગ સોના જેવા

સિંહ છે.

૭. કાલરાત્રિ

કાલરાત્રિ એ દુર્ગામાતાનું સાતમું રૂપ છે. તેમનો રંગ અત્યંત કાળો, માથાના વાળ વિખુલ્લની જેમ ચમકતી માળા છે. ગર્દભ તેમનું વાહન છે. ઉપરનો જમણો હાથ આશીર્વાદ મુદ્રામાં, જમણી બાજુનો નીચેનો હાથ અભયમુદ્રામાં છે. ડાબી બાજુના ઉપરના હાથમાં લોખંડનો કાંટો તથા નીચેના હાથમાં કટાર શોભે છે.

૮. મહાગૌરી

મા દુર્ગાની આઠમી શક્તિ એટલે મહાગૌરી. તેઓ ગૌર વર્ણના છે. તેમના ચાર હાથ છે. તેમનું વાહન વૃષભ (બળદ) છે. ઉપરનો જમણો હાથ અભયમુદ્રામાં અને નીચેના હાથમાં ત્રિશૂલ છે. ઉપરના ડાબા હાથમાં કમળું અને નીચેનો હાથ આ શી વાદ્ય મુદ્રામાં શોભે છે.

૯. સિદ્ધિદાત્રી

મા દુર્ગાનું નવમું અને છેલ્લું સ્વરૂપ સિદ્ધિદાત્રીનું છે. નવરાત્રિના છેલ્લા દિવસે મા સિદ્ધિદાત્રીની પૂજા કરવામાં આવે છે. તેમનું વાહન સિંહ છે. જમણી બાજુના નીચેના હાથમાં કમળનું ફૂલ શોભે છે.

નવરાત્રિમાં માતાજીની પૂજા

ધર્મશાસ્ત્રોમાં નવરાત્રિ પર્વની પૂજાના અનેક પ્રકારો દર્શાવ્યા છે. જેમાં અભિગમન, ઉપાદાન, યોગ, સ્વાધ્યાય અને યજ્ઞ રૂપી પાંચ પ્રકાર મુખ્ય છે. પૂજા સ્થાનને પવિત્ર, સ્વચ્છ કરવાં વગેરે અભિગમન પૂજાની શ્રેણીમાં આવે છે. જુદી જુદી પૂજા વિધિ (ગંધ, ધૂપ, દીપ, નેત્ર ચગેરે) ઉપાદાન પૂજામાં આવે છે. પોતાનાં ઈષ્ટ (દેવી-દેવતા)ની આત્માસ્વરૂપે પૂજા કરવી યોગ કહેવાય છે. દેવી-દેવતાનાં સૂક્ત, સોત, ગુણ, નામ, લીલા વગેરેનો પાઠ કરવા તે સ્વાધ્યાય પૂજા કહેવાય છે. અષ્ટમીના ચોજ માતાજીનો યજ્ઞ કરીને આહુતિ આપવી તેને યજ્ઞપૂજા કહે છે. દેવીપૂજામાં ઉપાસના કેવી રીતે કરીએ આ એક મહત્વપૂર્ણ પ્રશ્ન છે. આમ તો દેવીપૂજાના ૬૪, ૧૬, ૧૦ અને પાંચ ઉપચારોથી પૂજા કરવાની પદ્ધતિઓ જોવા મળે છે. તેની સાથે રાજોપચાર પૂજાનો ઉલ્લેખ પણ જોવા મળે છે. અહીં આપણે માત્ર પંચોપચાર પૂજા જે ઓછા સમયમાં વધુમાં વધુ ફળદાયી છે તેની ચર્ચા કરીશું. પંચોપચારમાં ગંધ, ધૂપ, દીપ, ઈપ અને નેત્રેયનું મહત્વ છે.

