



**Exemplifying South African Indianness through a
Bolly-World Experience:
Writing, Directing, and Staging Bollywood Theatre in
Durban, South Africa**

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Abbreviations & Acronyms

ADeC African Democratic Change

ANC African National Congress

AV Audio Visual

AYS Arya Yuruk Sabha

DUT Durban University of Technology

IPL Indian Premier League

NIC Natal Indian Congress

Parcan Parallel Can (theatre lights)

SABC South African Broadcasting Corporation

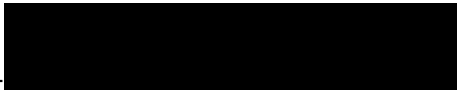
SAIT South African Indian Theatre

TRC Truth & Reconciliation Commission

Declaration

I, Verne Rowin Munsamy (993217994), declare that:

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As the candidate's Supervisor I agree / disagree with the submission of this thesis.

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Signed:  Dr Andrew J. Bethke

Abstract

The history of South African Indian theatre coincides with the arrival of indentured labourers from India in 1860. This type of theatre has evolved and changed with South Africa's shifting political terrain, moving from ritual theatre to realism and protest theatre during apartheid. These ongoing changes now include Bollywood theatre, an adaptation of Bollywood cinema, which resonates strongly within the South African Indian diaspora (Desai, 2004). The aim of this research is to describe the writing, directing, and staging of this type of theatre in the city of Durban in South Africa. To describe this genre of theatre, how it is created, and why it resonates with the Indian community of Durban, South Africa, the practice-based research (Smith & Dean, 2009) process and an autoethnographic investigation of my own background and theatre-making process is provided. It includes a description of the post-structural framework (Derrida, 2001; Gannon & Davis, 2017) in which this research is located.

The theoretical framework is identified and defined. Identity politics grounds the research in the cultural practices (Hall, 1996/7; Butler, 1993) of South African Indians, and I describe the practitioners that have influenced my theatre-making process to support the research (Stanislavski in Blumfeld, 2008; Grotowski, 2002). I adopted a qualitative methodological approach, grounded in autoethnographic data collection, interviews, focus groups, and video footage, as recommended by Jones (2016) and Zenya (2017). Bollywood theatre is a popular theatre form that connects with audiences, as it is made by the people for the people, and comprises multiple genres in one production (Barber, 1997). This research study scrutinizes archetypes in both Bollywood cinema and Bollywood theatre in South Africa (Rogers & Armstrong, 2009). I examined my personal history to reflect on my exposure to political climates and institutions of power and how this has shaped their world view and the stories and characters that they conceive. This thesis offers a history of South African Indian theatre through the writings of Sathasiven Annamalai (1998). Lastly this thesis ends by concluding that Bollywood Theatre is a new branch of South African Indian Theatre (SAIT) and that South African Indianness is exemplified through this genre.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Prologue

In choosing a research topic for the thesis, I considered a few possibilities, but my predominant thought was to write about my own theatre practices. Initially I was uncertain as to which knowledge gap I would be attempting to fill, but as I ventured into my own personal history to make sense of my thoughts and ideas about the topic and, more importantly, the passion required to sustain seven years of interest in the research, I interrogated what had sparked a lifelong interest in theatre and performance that are integral to my life.

My earliest encounter with performance was when my family gathered in a hall-theatre at a retirement home in the Chatsworth community in Durban. Located south of Durban, this area was a residential designated area for Indians during apartheid (Desai, 2004) – essentially a buffer between the white suburbs in the north and the Black suburbs in the south of the city (Desai, 2004). It was in this hall that residents supported local artists, dancers, and comedians. The hall was packed with the audience overflow sitting in the aisles. I relished in the sense of community, which was enhanced by the classical dancers, stand-up comedians, and skits showcased. This was Indian theatre, served for the community and by the community (Mda, 1993). Recalling these moments helped me to settle on an area of research. I sought to focus on South African Indian theatre (SAIT) and to determine what new pathways are emerging to bring stories of Indianness to the community/ies. In this study the term ‘Indianness’, refers to Indians’ shared cultural, religious, and the shared experiences of people in the Indian diaspora. Indianness encapsulates a shared connection of experiencing; a culture that is also based on race (Dickenson, 2014:14). For me, being Indian refers to the spicy food I eat, the people that I interact with, the language that I speak, the clothes that I wear, and the customs that I follow.

When reading about SAIT to establish its beginnings and learning about its 160 plus years’ existence, I unearthed two gaps. The first was that literature on SAIT appeared

to have halted in 2000, and no new writings on the subject could be located. Secondly, it appeared that this particular style of theatre that had not been written about—it being an appropriation of the Bollywood cinema style and form in theatre practice. This realisation informed my intention to focus on South African Indian Theatre (SAIT) with a specific interest in stage adaptation of Bollywood. Thus, my intention was two-fold: to add to the history of SAIT by documenting its status post-2000, and by adapting a Bollywood cinema production for a live audience.

This research investigates Bollywood theatre and the representations of South African Indian culture, and the identities embodied in it. It further investigates my staging, writing and directing of said Bollywood theatre and how I represent Indianness through my writing and directing. For the analysis there are certain key questions which are addressed:

1. How does Bollywood theatre represent South African Indianness in a post-apartheid context?
2. Why is this style of theatre popular amongst South African Indians?
3. How and why do I adapt Bollywood cinema for the stages of Durban, South Africa, and how does my socio-political context shape my writing and directing?

The objectives of this research were to:

1. create a Bollywood theatre production to be performed for a Durban audience and to posit Bollywood theatre as a new genre in SAIT;
2. simultaneously ascertain how Bollywood theatre reflects on my own history and identity via this theatrical expression, assuming that Bollywood theatre represents South African Indian culture and identity; and
3. examine the concept of Indianness post-apartheid.

1.2 Looking Out: Broader Boundaries.

To locate the study more politically, the South Africa I find myself writing in is a young democracy, which embraces a paradigm of equality. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 (section 9) (RSA, 1996) ensures that basic human rights are rigidly upheld. My mixed-race ethnicity (Indian and Coloured) is dominated by my Indian culture as this was the legal racial identity ascribed to me by the South African laws of the time – where only one box indicating ethnicity could be ticked. Children born to mixed race couples were typically assigned their father's ethnicity, in my case Indian, and thus, I was denied my Coloured heritage. In South Africa, the term 'Coloured' was used to categorise people of mixed race with certain physical features (Rankin, 1982). Interestingly, being Indian awarded me more privilege during apartheid than my counterparts who were assigned Coloured ethnicity; it automatically placed me higher in the racial pecking order. As Erasmus (2001:24) states,

Coloured identities are formed in the context of racial relations of power and privilege. They are not 'merely different' but are formed in hierarchical relation to both white and Black African identities; they are experienced and constructed as less than white and better than black.

Although Indian and Coloured identities were placed between Black and white, Indians had more privilege than Coloured people, and I can concur that this was my experience during my childhood and youth. My Coloured uncles were restricted contract job opportunities at the docks and oil refinery, while my Indian uncles held steady jobs in the furniture and clothing industries. My Coloured uncles were often paid with alcohol instead of cash. There was always a stigma attached to Coloured people, which my own family perpetuated. My Coloured family was seen in a less favourable light than my Indian family and were commonly discussed in an inferior tone; this was a common perception in my extended Indian community. My Coloured family's economic status was far less than that of my Indian family, and we were discouraged from identifying as Coloured as the family perception was that this would lower our social standing in the community.

1.3 Looking In: Ambitious Aims

In light of the above introduction to personal aspects that informed my identity and my interest in SAIT, this thesis seeks to accomplish a few things, as mentioned above. It explores culture, as my cultural experiences have been conditioned by my parents and community. As an autoethnographic research project it will examine my own history and experiences and how my theatre practices help me to deviate from the status quo and to theatrically challenge social systems.

The investigation and data collection are situated in qualitative methodology as the research is based on data expressed mostly in the form of words, descriptions, accounts, opinions, and feelings (Heath et al., 2018). The research is located within the interpretive paradigm (Chilisa & Preece, 2005), as the research is subjective in nature. “Researchers describe themselves, their values, ideological biases, relationship to the participants and closeness to the research topic. Common designs include ethnography, phenomenology, biography, case study and grounded theory” (Chilisa & Preece, 2005:30). Three methods of data gathering were used: practice-based research; autoethnography; and theory derived from secondary sources. Practice-based research can follow two directions: either the act is researched; or there is research around the act. Johannes Sjoberg (2008:1) states that “practice as research denotes a research process that leads to an arts-related output, an arts project as one element of a research process drawing on a range of methods”. Hazel Smith and Roger Dean (2009:5) categorise practice as research as either “practice-led” or “practice-based”. Practice-led research implies that research is a practice leading to research insight, whereas practice-based research refers to research such that the creative work acts as research (Smith & Dean, 2009:6). I decided on a practice-based approach, and the act of writing and directing a specific Bollywood theatre play is analysed as are the final performance and representations of Indianness that may emerge. The primary research emerges out of the Bollywood theatre play that was written and staged.

Autoethnography is the second method used to collect and analyse data in this thesis;

autoethnography makes the personal political. Stacey Holman Jones (2016:763) defines autoethnography as the use of personal text as a critical intervention in social, political, and cultural life. An interpretive method such as this offers the following ways through which data may be collected for analysis: observations; interviews; focus groups; questionnaires; photographs; personal documents; and visual recordings. My first-hand experiences with SAIT, Indian culture and politics, and Bollywood are described and analysed in relation to the South African production *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019).¹ To document the process and the product, the following methods were used: a personal journal documenting the writing and playmaking process, and recollections of observations, experiences and encounters with SAIT; my culture; my writing style; directing choices; and adaptation techniques. Focus group interviews were held with participants (actors, stage crew, technicians and producers) at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the process to establish if there were similarities or differences in their own thinking, and to ascertain their views on their observations about South African Indian culture as ‘performed’ in every-day life and on stage. The research design is expanded upon in chapter six.

The possible similarities and/or differences between the archetypes present in Bollywood cinema in comparison to those evident in the Bollywood play were interesting as they relate to possible schisms between South African Indian and motherland Indian identity. The final performed theatrical event was recorded to analyse and capture the product, and to establish themes and patterns that might have been apparent. Rehearsals and the finished product were also video recorded for analysis.

Zenya (2017:1) states that, autoethnography “can be understood as the ethnographic exploration of the self. It is a research method that uses self-observation and reflexive investigation for the purpose of extending sociological understanding”.

¹ I write the title *BOMBAY CHASERS* in all capitals to be heard. Literature on Indian Theatre and Indianness have been silent since 2000 and therefore, in an attempt to speak loudly and proudly, I write my titles in all capital letters. As a marginalised identity, this is an attempt to further announce my voice and the Indian cultural experiences in Durban.

This thesis investigates my Indian history, my writing and directing of Bollywood theatre, and my engagement, as a person of colour, with South African political paradigms of apartheid and democracy. Zenya (2017:2) claims that,

there is a considerable emphasis on personal recollection, the evocation of feelings and the exploration of characters. This type of research is only made possible through theories consistent with a postmodern era. Auto-ethnographic research aims to challenge the dominant scientific paradigm by making space for other ways of knowing through sharing unique subjective and evocative stories of experience that add to the knowledge of the social world.

The starting point for the research is my own experience examined alongside that of two other writer/directors, namely Ashwin Singh and Vivian Moodley. The purpose of autoethnographic research and my examining of my own experiences, is to gain insight into broader sets of social phenomena, mainly Bollywood Theatre and why it resonates with a Durban-based, South African Indian audience.

To understand the process of adaptation it was necessary to analyse a play. Practice-based research is a subcategory of academic research (Biggs & Buchler, 2007:62). To examine a case study for the purposes of discovering the way or method through which a Bollywood show is adapted, I scripted a play, after close examination of the cinematic style. This study's research intention was to exemplify a change and examine the writing, directing, and performance of this fresh style of SAIT. For this research to warrant merit, it had to have, what Biggs and Buchler (2007:64) term "rigour". This means that the research must undertake certain activities like a literature review and exist in a theoretical framework.

1.4 Thoughts and the theory that informed this thesis

My research is rooted in a poststructural framework, and it adopts a strong individual tone. Derrida (2001:17) stated that, "the notion of structure refers only to space, geometric or morphological space, the order of forms and sites. Structure is first a structure of an organic or artificial work, the internal unit of an assemblage ... governed by a unified principle". These structures lend themselves to the practice of the ideology

of a privileged centre within the internal order, as was the case in South Africa during apartheid. Derrida (2001) argues that the power located at the centre of these structures determines the composition of the structure, but is itself displaced from the structure, so essentially, acts simultaneously within and outside of the structure. With the absence of a centre, everything is able to become discourse (Derrida, 2001:354). Foucault (2005) posits that all truths are the construction of discourse, and that these truths change from time to time and the truth must not be essentialist. “The field of discourse consists thus of dispersed statements, events having their own specificity and entering mutual relations” (Foucault, 2005:228).

“Poststructuralism offers radical strategies for bringing about change” (Gannon & Davis, 2017:73). As my research relies on my personal history and the concept of Indianness, it is important to determine how my identity was shaped by power struggles in South Africa, such as my ethnicity. As a person of mixed race, and yet being categorised ‘Indian’, I have been impacted by apartheid rule and, then later on, by democracy. The racist apartheid policies shaped identity development but also helped me to understand its construction.

The architects of apartheid racial classification policies recognized explicitly that racial categories were constructs, rather than descriptions of real essences—a version of the idea of race which enabled the bureaucratization of “common sense” notions of racial difference, and which contributed directly to the enormous powers wielded by racial classifiers. If constructs, these categories were powerfully rooted in the materiality of everyday life. The ubiquity of the state's racial designations, and the extent to which they meshed with lived hierarchies of class and status, meant that apartheid's racial grid was strongly imprinted in the subjective experience of race. (Posel, 2001:1)

Poststructural thinking opposes the essential thinking during the apartheid era. It is this paradigm shift that resulted in freedom from oppressive rule and therefore impacted my relationships with race politics, national identity, and culture, and it is in this poststructural era that I write about characters that are conceived in this theory of identity construction.

“A further principle of this theoretical framework has to do with questions of power, emancipation, freedom, and agency” (Gannon & Davis, 2017:73). I now find myself with the agency to question the status quo through theatre. As a person who identifies as a South African Indian, my relationships with power and institutions of power will be discussed in later chapters, such as my first encounters with Black South African students during my primary school years. However, my questioning of power is inherent in the theatre shows that I write and direct, which aims to empower a marginalised community through its representations on stage.

“Poststructuralism seeks to reconfigure agency so that we still claim it as a possibility, albeit contingent and situated, that will assist us to conceptualize and bring about change” (Gannon & Davis, 2017:73). Institutions of power that denied individuals the ability to act were challenged through poststructural writing. In this writing, the individual is given a voice to speak about change and their own narratives, something that was not available due to systems of power and oppression in the South African context in which I grew up.

“Poststructural theories produce dangerous knowledge, the kind of information and insight that upsets institutions and threatens to overturn sovereign regimes of truth” (Gannon & Davis, 2017:76). Thus, multiple truths are spoken, as was the case evidenced when apartheid was abolished. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) trials are evidence of this.² Indian artists and writers marked this paradigm shift in different ways. Indian culture, which had been placed in a subordinate position, and was only allowed to grow within the constraints of oppressive rule, was now introduced into normative practices, but the examples that flourished were predominantly stereotypes of both culture and identities. Even in a post-apartheid context the examples remained stereotypical, but diversification did start to emerge. For instance, I have witnessed changes in my own family, where some members maintained single parent homes, which was different to the previous social norm of a nuclear family lifestyle.

As I embark on my own journey to restructure my identity and interpret my South

African Indianness through theatre, my studies draw me towards identity and cultural theories. Hall (1996:16) states that “Identity theories are never merely descriptive but normative, and as such exclusionary”; a hierarchy is established within the binary as we exclude ‘the other’ which is not us: black or white; man or woman; and rich or poor. In South Africa, Indianness (and Colouredness) exists in between these binaries of black and white, and not only do “the binaries within discourse limit and constrain modes of thought and the possibilities of identity” (Gannon & Davis, 2017:76), but the presence of Indian and Coloured identity undermines the stability of the binary. The aim of poststructural thought is to disrupt this binarised mode of thought. The extent of the impact that institutions of power have had on my identity are discussed fully in later chapters. I explore how my theatre scriptwriting explores certain power relations and resistance to them. “In drawing attention to their constitutive power, a deconstructive approach does not foreclose the use of constitutive categories on behalf of those who are subordinated by them” (Gannon & Davis, 2017:76).

I also challenge those binaries that are negotiated through our own known practices in accordance with Gannon and Davis (2017:74) who propose that post structural writing “searches for ways to disrupt the grip that binaries have on thought and on

² The TRC hearings organised by Archbishop Tutu amongst others were an opportunity for victims of the apartheid regime and their families, in instances when the victim was murdered, to speak their stories and perpetrators of violence to seek forgiveness for their actions. These records may be accessed on the website, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/>.

identity". The challenges posed to binaries and their impact on identities arises from researched arguments and also from cultural artefacts such as poems, fiction, music, and the performing arts (Gannon & Davis, 2017). As such, my contribution in terms of writing theatre scripts will be analysed as poststructural examples of writing, as they depict shifting culture and individuals who are adapting within these shifting contexts. This supports Butler's (2003:46) assertion that people must "find ways to change in a shifting context". Gannon and Davis (2017:81) concur and add that,

[We] think things are the way they must be because they've become naturalized. The life of the commodity structures our world in ways that we take for granted. The point is precisely to make the taken-for-granted world seem spectral, strange".

Individuals must challenge what is quotidian to them in order for change to occur, even if it is painful to face.

Power relationships exist between the individual and the institution (Gannon & Davis, 2017:84). Poststructuralism assumes that meaning and intention are not fixed in time, but rather that they are fluid. Within this theoretical framework, power is a product rather than oppressive (Gannon & Davis, 2017:84). Power is assumed to exist in a hierarchical structure and is institutionalised so that certain groups or individuals exert power over others. However, Foucault (in Gannon & Davis, 2017:85), explains that power proceeds in every direction at once. Both of the above notions of power are explored in my research as I recount my history and discuss different power systems, both public and private. While power relationships cannot be denied, it is possible for new discourses to emerge as resistance to power, as evidenced in South Africa. Gannon and Davis (2017:76) posit that a "criticalist is any researcher who believes that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted ... the relationship between concept and object and between signifier and signified is never stable or fixed".

Power does not literally mean the governing body of the country, which was oppressive in rule during apartheid, instead it extends to power exerted from one

individual onto another, forcing a hierarchical structure of genders, races, cultures, and ethnicities. The shifting paradigms in South Africa have resulted in a myriad of relationships between individuals with different power systems. Butler (1997b:15) states that the “[s]ocial subject is a site of ambivalence where power acts to constitute these subjects (who might elsewhere be called individuals) in certain limited ways but where, at the same time, and through the same effects of power, possibilities to act (albeit constrained and limited) emerge”.

Throughout several periods in South African history, power struggles have forced individuals to rise up, form resistance, and act. Gannon and Davis (2017:77) state that power is often oppressive and utilized, enacted on certain groups or individuals. My recollection of SAIT in later chapters highlights some of these shifts and power relationships.

Poststructural writing requires the reader to digest more than the binaries that have been established and to question stereotypes of race, culture, identity, and even theatre practices. My own journey of challenge and relationship with power, as revealed through my writing, finds support in Gannon and Davis (2017:77) who state that “poststructural theories are committed to a more straightforward concept of emancipation, and of the freedom of individuals to strive toward it, as a necessary and permanent possibility”. I subscribe to the notion that if we think differently, then we will act differently.

Gannon & Davis (2017:80) further define poststructuralism by stating that it, “turns to discourse as the primary site for analysis and brings a deep skepticism to realistic approaches where the task of social science is to discover and describe real worlds, which are taken to exist independent of their observations and their subjects”.

Gannon and Davis (2017:82) define discourse as a “complex interconnected web of modes of being, thinking and acting. They are in constant flux and often contradictory. The concept of discourse is to denaturalise what seems natural”. My research supports the notion that theatre as discourse and thought, have helped artists to progress

significantly in bringing about social change and exemplifying social realities. Gannon and Davis (2017:80) further state that, “[p]oststructuralism troubles the individualism of humanist approaches, seeing the humanist individual as a (sometimes) troubling and frictional accomplishment of social and discursive practices”.

While the individual is seen as a product of society and culture, poststructuralism allows for thought that the individual is more important than the social (Gannon & Davis, 2017). This stream of thought is deconstructive of that which was presented prior to the paradigm shift.

A defining focus of poststructural thought “is on cultural life as the production and reading of texts and on the deconstruction of those texts” (Gannon & Davis, 2007:81). Texts expand further than the written form, as cultural artefacts, theatre shows, dance works and poetry are considered bodies of text. The representations of culture through theatre is discussed in later chapters.

According to Gannon and Davis (2017:81) “[p]oststructuralism promotes close textual analysis as a central strategy for more than conventional written or spoken data. It allows for macro texts like ‘capitalism’ (or Marxism, humanism, feminism, postmodernism), and it allows for more familiar ‘micro’ level texts like interview transcripts or literary texts”. This research investigates both macro texts in the form of cultural theory and identity theory, and micro texts such as interviews with writer-directors and actors and an analysis of the play’s text and the language used.

The earlier thoughts of poststructuralism were that language was a driving force. Later engagement revealed posited that “this shift of interpretive focus is from language as a tool for describing real worlds to discourse, as constitutive of those worlds; and there are no ‘right’ research methods” (Gannon & Davis, 2017:81). It is through discourse that agency’s known structures and ways of daily life may be deconstructed and reconfigured.

Poststructuralism aims to question what we see as essential and to find deviated paths to what is considered inevitable. Poststructuralism further “theorizes the process of subjectification, where gender and sexuality can be understood” (Gannon & Davis, 2017:82). Gannon and Davis (2017:75) state that,

Through playing with language and alternative focus of narrative and representation such writing can blur the gender binaries, making a deconstructive move from either/or to both/and, disrupting, deconstructing, and troubling clichés and stereotypes of everyday thought and practice in which we are enmeshed.

I will further examine the roles and stereotypes evident in my own history in Chapter Five.

“Poststructuralism makes grand claims for the potential of such work to change the world” (Gannon & Davis, 2017:75). Although *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) does not ascribe to such lofty ideals, I believe it does offer an example of a theatre style that is changing the course of what is known to be SAIT. The theatre show has a dual function of evidencing South African Indianness and the identities that exist within this culture to offer examples that are not merely stereotypes, but which highlight the diverse nature of the culture and the identities that are developed within. The show attempts to challenge the stereotyped understanding of Indianness in this post structural South African context. These examples of nuclear family values, strict parenting, religious devotion, and close-knit communities are explored in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) and other shows like Singh’s *Marital Blitz* (2011) and Moodley’s *Hanged by the Thali* (1990s). This form of community theatre assists in creating a nexus between people. Van Erven (2000:1) describes community theatre as “an important device where communities can collectively share stories, to participate in political dialogue, and to break down the increasing exclusion of marginalised groups of citizens”.

1.5 Popular Theatre Perpetuating Popular Culture

Bollywood styled theatre has proven to have great appeal amongst Indian audiences in Durban. Popular theatre in South Africa has revealed itself in diverse ways. Karen

Barber (1997:1) who writes about African or marginalised popular culture defines popular theatre as an uncharted space, demarcated by what it is not. Barber (1997) further defines popular theatre as not being an elitist form of theatre, and it occupies a national and, at the same time, international locale, much like Bollywood. It can sometimes represent a minority but international audience. Traditional art (such as Classical dance) serves as the foundation on which modern art (such as Bollywood dance) develops and thrives as it appropriates traditional art and makes it more contemporary and accessible. This is an important point, as I aim to show that Bollywood theatre is a type of popular theatre amongst a minority group in South Africa whose roots are nourished by traditional Indian Theatre conventions and culture. Barber (1997:1) proposes that popular theatre considers the growth of traditional into modern art as a direct result of global capitalism. Capitalism commodifies traditions, and so to keep up with demand, tradition is modernised and sold off globally. The export of Bollywood cinema worldwide has boosted its appeal and commodification. The Indian diaspora in South Africa celebrates the traditional as a form of affirmation of identity and self-worth (Barber, 1997:2). Popular theatre serves as a nexus between tradition, culture, and the diasporas.

Popular theatre is also seen in the use of multiple genres fused together, combined with available contemporary media resources; Barber (1993) claims that it is syncretic. Bollywood cinema and theatre, to an extent, uses or borrows from other genres and styles to create a unique experience that is disseminated to mostly Indian audiences around the world. Not only do Bollywood movies borrow storylines from Hollywood, but they also incorporate assorted styles in the dance routines. Barber (1997:2) adds to this definition of popular theatre by stating that, “genres billed as entertainment usually talk about matters of deep interest and concern to the people who produce and consume them”. My writing endeavors in the realm of Bollywood theatre have done just this: they look at and question South African rape culture, and more recently interrogate Indian culture and identities.

“Popular theatre is produced by the people for the people” (Barber, 1997:2). Bollywood theatre, which is what this thesis examines, is purposefully produced by Indian theatre-

makers for Indian audiences. Barber (1997:3) states that, in Africa, “what is popular is always ambitious because it comes to us inscribed with the history of political and cultural struggles”. Struggles for freedom have been reflected in popular theatre practices and now they reflect the diversity that is inscribed and promoted by the South African Constitution.

Harding (2011:1) claims that,

An alternative perspective on the cultural context of disadvantaged neighborhoods argues that such neighborhoods are characterized by *cultural heterogeneity*, the presence of a wide array of competing and conflicting cultural models, most of which are “mainstream” or “middle-class” models but some of which are “oppositional” or “ghetto specific”.

One of the aims of this thesis is to exemplify Indianness (a marginalized race and culture) in a post-apartheid context. A context that allowed Indian culture to merge with other mainstream cultures once again and thus the decision-making process that selects social life choices was expanded to include choices beyond what was allowed during apartheid. Barber (1997:4) lends support to the notion that socio-political movements forge new identities and new publics pre and post colonization, and by the same logic, post- apartheid. The new Indian identities that have emerged are represented through diverse archetypes on stage. Barber (1997:4) states that through popular theatre, “[p]erformance genres, rather than reflecting the already constituted consciousness of a distinct social class might mediate between disparate social realities and provide for symbolic spaces in which disjointed social relations were reconstructed”.

The Bollywood theatre case study that is offered does just this; it exemplifies the social classes of different Indian identities located in a specific locale – Durban. The play aims to highlight the developed connections based on common historical experiences, apartheid, and later democracy, and culture.

Reddi (1989:1) claims that “[c]ulture can be spoken of as a subsystem with a larger social system, drawing from and giving to the other subsystems”. Indian culture has a

continuous history that reflects more than 3 000 years of evolution. Indian culture has been impacted by colonization and the politics of liberation, similar to that of South African Indianness, and is steeped in faith and religion, spirituality, family, caste, and location (Reddi, 1989:3). Language was a common means to build communities as families shared a common language that spread to other members of the community. Reddi (1989:3) confirms that art functioned as a means of communication. A receiver of the art is not passive in its consumption, but rather reacts to hidden meaning that is woven from common threads of knowledge. This shared meaning that exists within a culture allows for certain agreed meanings to prevail. Effective communication for an Indian ethos must be specific to Indian receptors and different to that of the West. Media has evolved over the years and became a distributor of dominant cultural practices, not just in India, but around the globe. For Indian culture in particular, Indian cinema has the greatest potential for spreading popular culture (Reddi, 1989).

Poststructural media theorist John Fiske (1989:4) defines 'popular culture' in consumer capitalist societies as being, "deeply contradictory in societies where power is unequally distributed along axes of class, gender, race, and the other categories that we use to make sense of our social differences". In South Africa popular culture developed in a milieu of apartheid's unequal practices. Fiske (1989:5) adds that, "popular culture is the culture of the subordinated and the disempowered thus it always bears within it signs of power relations". South African Indians were unequivocally disempowered by the racist apartheid policies, but the theatre that is made for them, by them, reflects power relations. This will be discussed in later chapters.

South African Indianness is influenced by Indian culture as this is emulated in popular world culture through Bollywood cinema. While Indianness implies an essentialist, stereotyped way of being Indian, in this post structural framework, it is utilised to refer to the myriad ways that one could be Indian. The term does not merely refer to race, but a set of actions and value systems (Ocita, 2016). Fiske (1989:1) further states that, "the desire to be oneself does not mean the desire to be fundamentally different from everyone else, but rather to situate individual differences within communal allegiances". One aim of this thesis is to situate my own individual thoughts within a

shared Indian culture and to examine my own relationships with power and institutions of power, such as race and gender through my theatre-making. The archetypes that I write are reflective of certain characteristics but represent individuals from my own community.

1.6 Theoretical Concept Confirmed Through Theatrical Convention: Assuring Archetypes

Archetypes have existed since the days of Plato (Rogers & Armstrong, 2009:i). Archetypes reveal universal truths in characters that are common to most cultures. Green et al (2019:2) states that, “narratives can be an important tool for learning about archetypes, because the character development and cause-and-effect structure illustrates the types of interactions that one might have with archetypal characters”. Rogers and Armstrong (2009:i) further state that archetypal characters in “theatre studies [are] discussed in terms of physical gesture and psychological discovery”, and therefore, they are reimagined in relation to the context of the actor whose mindset is influenced by context and political movements, as the character is devised from the recesses of their mind (Rogers & Armstrong, 2009). Theatre scripts depict numerous archetypes.

Archetypes are used in many genres of theatre. An archetype is an individual character that exemplifies a specific set of universal, noticeable behaviour patterns. Performance forms like Comedia Del Arte, an Italian physical theatre typically include 12 main archetypal characters. There are also 12 archetypes in English literature. *The 12 Jungian Archetypes and Theatre!* (Prospect Theatre Company, 2016), lists these archetypes as the innocent, the orphan, the hero, the caregiver, the explorer, the outlaw, the lover, the creator, the jester, the sage, the healer, and the ruler. These archetypes are easily identified in the Bollywood theatre case study that was analysed.

Green et al (2019:3) claims that, “the archetype approach may also prompt new hypotheses about which types of narratives might be most engaging and effective for particular audiences”. The archetypes selected for a Bollywood

storyline would consciously stir up a connection with an Indian audience (for example). Green et al (2019:6) further state that,

These scripts help to guide interpretations and expectations of characters, their narrative roles, and what they are likely to do over the course of the story. Although these scripts may have their roots in archetypes, they may also develop in culturally specific ways.

Certain archetypes will allow for the narrative to take a certain predictable path. For example, the nurturing mother figure that exists in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) will allow for a moment where her nurturing advice is valued.

Physical features become vital in identifying archetypal characters on stage. For example, Green et al (2019:7) explains that, “heroes typically display pleasant facial expressions with slightly upward-slanting eyebrows, whereas villains wear stern and angry expressions with downward-slanting eyebrows”. These aspects of archetypes are notable as they assist in understanding when certain archetypes are used and what functions they serve. Understanding archetypes is important for this thesis as I identify Bollywood archetypes that exist in the show *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019).

Thus far, this chapter has revealed my interests in this topic and noted the research gap within SAIT ie. Bollywood Theatre. The above sections identified the theoretical framework, poststructuralism (Gannon & Davis, 2007) that supports the aims of this thesis. It further described the methodology of gathering data located in qualitative, practice-based and autoethnographic reflection. The last section of this chapter will provide a breakdown of the entire thesis, chapter by chapter.

1.7 Trimming the Thesis into a Brief Breakdown

Chapter Two: Threading the Theory to Understand My Mystery, is the chapter that grounds the research in the theory of poststructuralism (Butler, 1993; Gannon & Davis, 2017), cultural theory (Hall, 1996/7; Butler, 1999), (Grossberg, 1996; Erasmus, 2000; Bhat & Narayan (2010); Patel and Uys, 2012), identity (Connell, 2000), and performance or theatre theory (Stanislavski in Blumfeld, 2000) in order to lay the foundation for analysis. It extends the theoretical argument started in this chapter.

Chapter Three: Stages of Changes: Writing, Directing and Staging Bollywood theatre takes an autoethnographic glimpse into my first-hand experiences of making theatre within a South African context, looking specifically at Bollywood Theatre. This methodology chapter analyses the play *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019), which was staged at Sibaya's iZulu Theatre in May 2019. This qualitative research design establishes itself in the interpretive paradigm and is subjective in nature. Holman (2016:1) defines the parameters of qualitative research, which this thesis relies on. As previously mentioned, this research is practice-based, and therefore, information was gathered from my personal journals, photographs, interviews focus groups, questionnaires, and video recordings.

Chapter Four: Chili Bites and Breyani Delights is the literature chapter and provides a glimpse into South African Indianness pre- and post-apartheid (Vahed, 2013; Gopal, 2013; Desai, 2013; Nutall, 2005; Patel & Uys, 2012; Frankel, 2010). The poststructural theoretical framework is apparent in the shifts that are marked in theatre-making, making it possible to reflect on the identities that were developed during different political contexts and how these identities are represented on stage.

Chapter Five: Texting that is Contexting: Reflections on the History of South African Indian Theatre. This additional literature chapter serves to review the history of SAIT and considers the political shifts that caused this theatre to advance (Zaloumi, 1995; Annamalai, 1998). In this chapter cultural and theatre theory are examined in relation to political shifts that were witnessed in SAIT. The autoethnographical component of my research is evident in discussions of my own experiences with theatre and my

personal style of theatre-making.

Chapter Six: Pinewood Hills and Chatsworth Thrills to the Cultural Spills and the Shoes that I Must Fill: Unpacking I. Autoethnographical research depends on understanding who I am. I am defined by my context, culture, education, and lived experiences. The research design is defined in this chapter. This chapter looks at how my choices were crafted and nurtured by socio-political and economic advantages and disadvantages that were dictated by government policies. It also considers the influential people in my community and my family who have had an effect on my life, thus shaping my Indianness. This chapter represents my autoethnographical history and the experiences in my social context and revisits the identities that I witnessed and the impact that democracy has had on my life, inspiring agency. This, like Gannon and Davis (2007) suggest, promotes close textual analysis. My own history is written in narrative form to create a text that then can be examined. I interrogate my own encounters with power and the journey to my own agency.

Chapter Seven: Delhi to Durban: The Influence of Bollywood on South African Indian Culture navigates the reaches of Bollywood cinema and also looks at why this popular Indian cinema has influenced Indian diaspora communities. Bollywood serves as a cultural connection, a nexus between the motherland and the diasporas of Indian communities all over the world, not only South Africa. Thus, this chapter defines Bollywood cinema with the intention of understanding why it is one of the largest movie industries in the world (Dudrah, 2006). Ashwin Desai (2004) and Vijay Mishra (2002) discuss the above-mentioned nexus. Nalini Moodley (2012), a South African researcher, expands on the connection and discusses the ideologies within.

Chapter Eight: Data Denied and Data Supplied: Coalition of the Voices of Persuasion offers an analysis of the data to ascertain the effectiveness of this style of theatre and the overall level of engagement of the cast with this novice style of theatre. Furthermore, it considers the outcome of the rigorous rehearsal process. It evaluates the success of the archetypes exemplified by the actors and how they were conceived to be 'South African Indian'. It explores the answers to a questionnaire used to focus

on recognising character traits that are familiar and identifiable in both Bollywood and a South African context. This chapter is an extension of the qualitative methodology that reflects on micro texts such as interviews to gather information.

Chapter Nine: My Concluding Thoughts: Durban Indianness Through a Bolly-world Theatrical Experience. The conclusion states how and why *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) constitutes SAIT, specifically Bollywood Theatre. It supplies an overview of the language, costumes, archetypes, plots and dances. It conclusively states how South African Indianness is exemplified and the appeal that this type of theatre has on a South African Indian audience.

CHAPTER 2: THREADING THE THEORY

This practice-as-research project sought to adapt the Bollywood cinema form for a South African theatre-going audience in order to investigate South African Indianness and how it is represented in performance. To explore this phenomenon, a poststructural theoretical framework underpinned the thesis, particularly as it connects to notions of identity and representation within the diasporic community of South African Indians. Poststructuralism is governed by the belief that theory is not separate from reality (Mambrol, 2017). Existence comprises mutually constitutive processes and all processes are continually in a state of transformation, fluid, and thus always changing. These poststructural aspects are present in cultural theorists Stuart Hall (1996) and Judith Butler's (1999) work, both of whom are particularly useful in their engagement with concepts of identity, identity construction, and performativity (Butler, 1999).

Identities are performed within a specific cultural context; therefore, cultural theory is analysed through the arguments offered by Stuart Hall (1996; 1997), Laurence

Grossberg (1996), and Robert Connell (2000). These cultural theorists posit that identities are deeply rooted in culture and cultural practices and that identities are fluid in nature. South African Indian culture and identity and how it emerges in writing and directing is an integral part of this investigation. Identities are deeply personal and also indicate the multiple social belongings that individuals have (Connell, 2000).

Erasmus (2000:100) states that “groups provide individuals with frameworks within which their memories are located...We situate what we recollect within the mental spaces provided by the group. No collective memory can exist without reference to a socially specific spatial framework”. These notions of identities being situated within a specific culture are shared by Hall (1996; 1997), who argues that identities are shaped by cultural practices and representations. The ideologies around identity construction and representations will be explored in terms of constructing a South African Indian identity within a South African Indian culture.

Context is a key component in cultural construction, and thus I will examine how my birthplace, South Africa, with all its political turmoil and changes, along with my diasporic connection to India, has given rise to my engagement with Bollywood Theatre. As a playwright and performer, theatre is the arena through which I show my Indianness. Thus, it is important to explain the culture of theatre – the genres as well as the performance theories that are fused to create genres such as Bollywood theatre. The emergence of Bollywood Theatre reveals the poststructural nature of theatre and its fluidity. Within a South African context, Bhat & Narayan (2010) examine the notion that Indians have maintained their cultural identity throughout their history in their new ‘homeland’, and that this is evident in creative outputs such as theatre and dance. However, while theatre reaches audiences of a few hundred people, cinema, like Bollywood blockbusters, reaches millions of viewers (Ebrahim, 2008:64; Desai, 2004). Bollywood has great appeal within the Indian diaspora as it is seen as an export vehicle of Indian culture from India to its diaspora across the world, including South Africa (Ebrahim, 2008:64). Part of the interest here is to ascertain why post-apartheid South African Indians have resonated with this form to the extent that they have. Bollywood represents and has become part of popular culture, creating a sort of

homogenisation of Indian culture (although this Indian culture is not static and homogenous); it is in this homogenisation that Indian culture may be questioned and examined (Desai, 2004).

2.1 Busy Bees, Growing Trees, Blowing in a Cultural Breeze

There are myriad diasporas across the globe including African, Asian, and Indian diasporas to name a few. Diasporas are migrant groups of people that have settle in new lands and created communities. A diaspora is characterised by distinctive communities in “historical contexts of displacement” (Naficy 2001:92). Diasporic identity is developed in response to exclusionary and racist national narratives (Desai, 2004:iv), as one displaced culture tries to coexist within a broader national culture. Culture is the contemporary repository of memory, of history, and it is through culture, rather than government, that alternative forms of subjectivity, collectivity, and public life may be imagined, questioned, and challenged. Theatre is one such aspect of culture and a form of culture in itself, and can aid in establishing a collective voice.

Patel and Uys (2012:79) claim that “[c]ommunities are created through a social relationship based on the subjective feelings of belonging to the same community”. Since their arrival in this country in 1860, South African Indians, have a connection with India, the ‘homeland’ through their lineage. This is expanded upon in later chapters, suffice to say here that there is a romantic and nostalgic connection with India – a place most Indian South Africans will never visit. This has led in part to the fascination with Bollywood cinema, which is seen as an index of many aspects of Indian identity that identifies with the transnational community in many countries within the Indian diaspora, including Durban, South Africa.

The South African Indian community developed under diverse political circumstances in South Africa. Sujatha Patel and Tina Uys (2012) argue that South African Indian identity has shifted post-apartheid, but it is steeped in the history of our memories. Indian identities were placed in a marginalised position during apartheid, however, with the birth of democracy these identities began to develop under the new freedoms and equality enshrined in the South African Constitution. South African Indian identities

have developed to be more than merely low-income earners with basic education. Indian culture has become more prominent in South African culture. My own Indian identity and my experiences in my own Indian community are explained in later chapters where I describe how Indian communities developed, first under indentured labour, then apartheid segregation, and finally democracy. I show how the shift in political paradigm impacted on my personal history and identity. This history has also shaped my theatre-making practices. Nalini Moodley (2012) reminds us that we stage what is home to us and at the same time what is not. Moodley (2012:xxi) goes further to state that, “displacement from putative homeland unites many diasporic writers”. My writing of Bollywood theatre is my attempt to stay connected with India and the cultural practices that have been passed down through generations.

Since I have adapted a genre, I reflect on genre theory, because both theatre and film are categorised into genres. “The word Genre comes from the French meaning class and in recent times has come to refer to a distinctive type of text. It is typological in function. Film is often categorized into genres like Western, Drama, Satire and so on” (Chandler, 1997:1). Daniel Chandler (1997:1) further explains that genre is an abstract concept rather than something that exists empirically in the world and is based on story, content borrowed from literature, or artistic status. Genres are linked through familiarity with the form of themes and content. Specific genres are more easily recognisable as they share codes and there are no rigid rules of inclusion and exclusion (Chandler 1997:3). Each genre makes use of archetypes.

David Duff (2000:x) suggests that archetypes are a key feature of genre theory – a recurrent pattern or motif derived from ancient myth or ritual, and ultimately from a universal 'grammar' of the human imagination. He further implies that through genres, archetypes could become canonised. Canonisation is the process whereby a genre acquires cultural recognition or prestige through inclusion within a select list or 'canon' of highly valued genres. In this thesis' creative component, I produced a new stage genre adapted from film, creating a hybrid genre by adapting its original cinematic form for stage. Chandler (1997:2) states that the number of genres in any society depends on the society's complexity and diversity. Genres are not systems; they are processes of systematisation. They are not fixed forms, as both form and function are dynamic

(Chandler, 1997:4). Theatre has genres like musicals, comedies, stand-up, and drama and these too are changing with the shifting socio-political climate. Sarahleigh Castelyn (2001:1) relates poststructuralism to theatre dance and states that, “[p]oststructuralism [...] offers an understanding that there exist counter-discourses that have the ability to resist dominant discourses of race and gender.... Contemporary theatre dance explores the body’s potential to be subversive in performance”.

Theatre is able to reflect poststructural thought by interrogating the (gendered) body through theatrical dance, and similarly through the archetypes written for dramatic performance. The aim of this thesis was to locate gendered bodies through archetypes of not just Bollywood types, but also archetypes created in relation to a specific context, that is, Durban, South Africa. This thesis offers archetypes like Mrs Naidoo that are well known and accepted by south African Indians as it has been used in various show and skits as evident in *The Kandasamys* (2017). While distinct, these archetypes are derivative of their Bollywood roots. Thus, poststructuralism, culture, and genre become intertwined as this thesis navigates a theatrical performance adapted from cinematic origins and draws from my personal context for language and character construction.

The thesis assumes the position that theatre is a cultural practice (Degenaar, 1991) through which ideologies are sustained and simultaneously challenged. Theatre provides its own codes that creates a medium in which culture can exist, create challenges to, and create new cultural practices. Theatre has the potential to recreate contexts and examine constructs that appear within contexts on stage. The post-apartheid era has seen a shift in the cultural practices of South Africa; these shifts transcend into theatrical representations (Pavis, 1992). An analysis of these representations and changing conventions allows us to read the relationship between theatre and everyday life (Mangan, 2003).

2.2 Browning my Identity in the Durban Sun

Indians have flourished since their arrival in 1860 and have manifested themselves in myriad forms, dialects, and languages. My thesis confines itself to a study of Durban Indian identities that developed in primarily Indian areas such as the township of

Chatsworth and the younger townships of Shallcross and Phoenix. These specific identities are represented on stage through the Bollywood theatre play, *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019).

Identities are deeply personal and are manifestations of our desires, goals, contexts, and culture. Hall (1997:1) adds that identities are in a constant state of flux and are therefore able to adapt (this is one of the key concepts of poststructuralism), evolve, and sustain themselves in diverse contexts. Grossberg (1996) promotes this assertion by providing two opposing views of identities: the first being an 'essentialist' view; and the second, more in correlation to Hall, the 'anti-essentialist' stance, which this thesis adopts. According to this view, identities are not static but dependent on spatial and temporal contexts – constantly growing, devolving, and evolving in context. Who we are is a result of the impact that various religious, educational, political and cultural institutions have had on us – what Louis Althusser calls 'ideological state apparatuses' (1971). The Indian identities that developed during apartheid are compared to the identities that developed during democracy in South Africa; this aspect will be reflected upon in my own history and by identities developed during and after apartheid and the archetypes that are identified in chapter 9. Thus, bodies of identities shape our reactions to social circumstances, language, politics, and history, making them complex entities to deconstruct and understand. However, over time, stereotypes and archetypes have emerged in an attempt to categorise these identities according to race, gender, class, education, and so forth, as is the case in South Africa. These stereotypes emerged in the media, in jokes, and on television. Hall (1996) concurs that stereotypes based on race have a negative impact. However, an archetype is likened to a stock character and may present itself in the form of a nurturing mother or a stern father but developed in relation to the specific context in which it is constructed. While these are stereotypes, they are not based on race. Archetypes are valuable in theatre because they provide the basis for character development. Stereotyped characters in Bollywood theatre assists in creating storylines. In my understanding, archetypes allow us to write characters/identities that are known, so that we may navigate their importance in our communities and simultaneously challenge certain behavioural qualities in them, this is evidenced in the characters that are discussed in chapter 9. The first, an essentialist stance, assumes that identities are only determined or defined

through either a common origin, a mutually shared structure of experience, or both. This approach is in itself static, but not lacking in thought – it is the stance of the latter thought that is rendered true in this thesis.

Hall (1996(b):3) describes identities as being fragmented. This state of fragmentation allows for the fact that we play multiple roles, embodying multiple identities multiple things simultaneously, and these roles may contradict each other: hard boss by day, caring parent by night. Hall delves deeper to assert that human beings are able to wear many 'masks' dependent on the situation in which they find themselves, which Hall (1996 (b)) refers to as 'transformation'. The manner in which we portray ourselves differs from interaction to interaction, as well as differences in social gatherings. However, assuming a transformational mask is not about concealing a 'true', essential identity, it is simply the way that the social and cultural contexts determine the presentation of the self in everyday life (Goffman, 1969). As Connell (2000:2) explains, the constructed nature of identities is correlated to social constructs and structures. Naficy (2001:6) concurs with Hall (1996) by stating that, "identity is not a fixed essence but a process of becoming, even a performance of identity". Diasporic identity is an important attribute in community theatre-making and what Naficy (2001;269) calls exile cinema or accented cinema: "In exile the familiar becomes unfamiliar and the natural denaturalized, one is forced to face, perhaps more than at any other time, the essential construction of one's own structures of belonging ... this distance means that exiles are able to "remake themselves. If it can be constructed, deconstructed, identity can also be reconstructed, deconstructed - even performed".

The diasporic identity is able to reconstruct itself in a new context with new borders with a sense of belonging as well as exclusion, as is the case with South African Indian identities. The development of identities is further compounded by relations to discourse as well as the distinction between them and others (Grossberg, 1996). During apartheid, for example, the discourse of inequality positioned Indians in a minority, marginalised position, thus birthing marginalised identities. Identities are exemplified through a broader social perspective, as evidenced by my own Indian

identity, which is a mixture of two race classifications. The archetypes that are evident in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) are a representation of identities developed during post-apartheid in Durban but do not represent all South African Indian identities.

2.3 Culture as Collective Consciousness

Algerian-born poststructural theorist Jacques Derrida (in Schechner, 2002:90) observed that, "identities reveal where people 'fit into' in the world or where they are placed in the world. Identities are those aspects that are classified or socially codified". Richard Schechner (2002) further explains that social codification is where identities are defined within a category. Categories include male, female, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, and even racial categories, and these categories often give rise to stereotyped assumptions and reactions. Each category is further examined under multiple lenses. While there are many South African Indian identities, we are often stereotyped according to mannerisms, actions, language, and behaviours. The categories are coded with meaning and then exemplified by the individual. Culture is an example of a unified, connective experience that is shared by many and then practiced by the individual, thus impacting on identities. "Culture consists of shared cognitive representations" (Romney et al., 1996:1). Indian culture in South Africa is a prime example of a category. While we are diverse in our beliefs, actions, languages, and spaces, we remain unified by race, as we were forced to unite against apartheid and had to share the same location. Muslims, Hindus, and Christians were forced to live together. Mosques and temples were built next to each other in Chatsworth. While the intent may have been to create friction amongst the faiths and to homogenise what was to be Indian culture, this was not the end result, but rather Indian people united against a common cause.

Codes embedded in South African Indian culture have been established within the culture as well as by those outside the said culture. This was the case during apartheid and still persists. Social roles have been established for men and women, Black and white, and those of us in between, the binaries. Hall (1996(b):5) concurs that binaries define identities. Our identities are developed in relation. Identities are therefore defined by what they are not. The strategy of apartheid was to establish these

differences as legal hierarchies that socially engineered how people were identified.

The marginalisation of Indian people within the apartheid structures also impacted on their social practices. Job prospects were limited, for example, Indians were mostly employed in the textile and clothing industries. Housing facilities were vastly different for each race group, I know from my own experiences that the land and homes were much smaller than that of white neighbourhoods, with many Indians residing in apartment style dwellings. Cultural changes and language further established acceptable social roles, which in turn influenced identities within the culture. Culture, along with race, played a significant role in shaping South African identities during apartheid and subsequently further shifts are evident in post-apartheid state. “Meaning depends on relationship between things in the world – people, objects and event, real or fictional – and conceptual system, which can operate as representation of them” (Hall, 2020:1). The identities developing in this body of South African Indianness, which distinguishes between culture, gender, sex, creed, religion, and even race, are directly influenced by these categories. These representations of Indianness are further explained when, in my findings chapter 9, the characters, language and archetypes embedded in the play *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) are examined.

These identity constructs are further examined through the lens of theatre. As mentioned, Hall (1996 (b)) claims that identities develop or coalesce around perceived ‘likeness’, which is determined by establishing perceived differences. When placed in a position of ‘other’, that ‘othered’ identity emulates character traits from the dominant hegemonic race and culture. Identities may be formed relationally, but for poststructuralists race is a construct. White, Indian, etc., do not really exist; they only exist in humans’ creation of them, and power ascribed to them. This power is real and experienced.

Hall reiterates what Michel Foucault (1984) determined, by stating that the ‘subject’ is able to exemplify knowledge that is constructed through discourse. Who we are is a representation of the bodies of knowledge that surround us and attract our attention. Fiske (1998:1286) reiterates what Althusser notes about interpellation theory, namely that “the role played by the media and language in this constant construction of the

subject, by which we mean the constant reproduction of ideology in people. Althusser uses the words interpellation and hailing to describe this work of the media. These terms derive from the idea that any language, whether it be verbal, visual, tactile, or whatever, is part of social relations and that in communicating with someone we are reproducing social relationships”.

The media is able to market products to us and ‘attract our attention, so too do movies; we say ‘yes’ to certain social relations and ideologies passed through the media to the individual subject. During apartheid, the media was used to promote certain unfair practices.

The apartheid regime fostered Indianness that referenced the unequal segregation laws practiced at the time. The movement of Indians was limited to certain areas. Different races had access to different quality levels of education. The Indianness that is currently being groomed embodies concepts of freedom, equality, and unity, as opposed to segregation and a hierarchical race structure that promoted white culture as superior. Nevertheless, the subjugation of Indians under the apartheid government permeated our cultural practices and created identities that reflected these unequal practices and were directly relational to the power struggles of the time. Many of the older generation of Indians have had a very basic or inadequate level of education. The identities were that of working-class people whose culture was seen as less valuable than that of the white community. To combat this perception, many Indians focused on acquiring a good standard of education so as to feel superior through knowledge. A further cultural practice is to keep tidy and clean, as cleanliness gives the perception of wealth and status compared to that of an oppressor. Both Paulo Friere (1970) and Fannon speak about this internalisation of a feeling of being ‘less’ and a desire to ‘be’ the oppressor. Referring to this as being “submerged in the reality of the oppressor” and “duality of the oppressed”. This is evident in the loss of many Indian vernacular languages and the diminished number of people who speak these languages (Desai, 2004).

The classifications established during apartheid fostered stereotyped embodiments of race, sex, gender, and culture. Hall (1997) attests that racial othering has diverse

impacts on developing identities. He suggests that "often the representations that emerge within an identity are reconstructions of cultural stereotypes" (Hall, 1997:25). These stereotypes are constructed on the premise of shared, communal experiences and codes, but are, nonetheless, assumptions made about a group that ignores the individual's experience. These assumptions are manifested by those not belonging to that race or culture; however, these stereotypes are used to write and depict characters as a way to accept them and for several other reasons. The very fundamental reason for this could be using stereotypes as heuristics to remember people (Paliwal, 2021:1). My use of these stereotypes is to highlight the different people that I have encountered during my time in Chatsworth and other archetypes of the same nature (like the overbearing Mrs Naidoo in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019); they are familiar to the audience, but they also represent individual experiences in situations.

Grossberg (1996) affirms that stereotypes are often constructed out of 'othering' practices and differences between known practices and those misunderstood by the dominant culture or 'other', but they might have been experienced frequently. These stereotypes act as labels that do not fully represent the diversity found inside. In South Africa, Indianness was often stereotyped as exemplifying traits like curry-eaters, thriftiness in business, a family-first approach, and patriarchal-lead homes with outlandish Indian-English accents. According to Meshtrie (2010:1), since the 1960s "English has become the main language of the Indian communities in a vibrant form retaining a great deal of religious, cultural and culinary terminology from India as well as showing considerable creativity in adapting the English of the Queen". This unique accent has been the base of much mockery but nonetheless, it remains an identifying factor for South African Indians, particularly from Durban. This is discussed in later chapters that reference my own upbringing, context, and culture.

Culture is a manifestation of a complex network of social belongings, behaviours, and boundaries. Hall (1997:2) reminds us that culture is about a group of individuals' shared meaning: "Culture is the everyday lives that are lived by the majority of 'ordinary' people". Culture is produced by a group of people via an exchange of practices and meaning, and those individuals who practice culture share a similar

interpretation of the practices within. The participants of a specific culture, like the individuals that embody South African Indianness, are vital aspects of the said culture.

2.4 Writing Our Stories through Cultural Chains that Isolate our Brains

Kristen Petersen and Anna Rutherford (1988) posit that migrant writing offers new possibilities not already explored by the dominant culture. Salmon Rushdie (1988) offers the rationale that displaced, diasporic identities are lost in the gulf between Black and white, and that it is through the writings of the diaspora that cultural multiplicity is fully realised. As a diasporic Indian, my writings tell the stories and lived experiences of a marginalised group of South Africans. These alternative narratives are then captured in theatre, and in this specific instance, through Bollywood theatre.

As stated earlier, theatre in its many shapes, is a cultural form and may be viewed as culture in itself. Theatre is embedded with codes and meanings that can be interpreted by its participants. Patrice Pavis (1992) explains that theatre carries its own set of codes and meanings that guide character construction. Theatre has been used to entertain, educate, and recreate contexts, and, during apartheid, to examine hegemonic constructs of a context, through staged performance. Theatre has the potential to both reinforce and critically analyse the social contexts within which it functions (Prendergast & Saxton 2009:8). During apartheid, these critical theatre-makings reflected the struggle for freedom. Hall (1997:3) notes that "within any culture there exists a diversity of meanings and interpretations or representations of a particular topic". There are multiple meanings layered into systems, such as cultural practices, which are open to interpretations by those who practice it.

Cultural practices, like identities, are not static entities but rather fluid in nature. South African culture is evidence of this fluidity, shifting from a state of segregation politics to freedom. The cultural bodies within this national culture have followed the cultural shifts of democracy and the South African Indian community is a prime example. Indian culture in South Africa has evolved dynamically in the South African context in terms of language and religion and other cultural articulations. These are discussed in later sections of this chapter, however, it is important to note that the designated

'Indian' population transitioned from a position of inferiority, during apartheid, to a status of equality in the democratic era and this has had a considerable impact on the formation and evolution of the collective identity.

As stated, during apartheid, South African Indians, a displaced group, were marginalised through segregation policies and were viewed as inferior. The author, social critic, theorist, and educator bell hooks (2004:19) writes that, "within the politics of domination, the notion that the superior should rule the inferior is the advised ideology". This community of people fell prey to these policies that considered them to be inferior to racially classified whites, and this in turn impacted on the identities that developed under these unjust circumstances and power struggles. South African Indians were placed in the middle of these power struggles that held race as the central determinant of identity that was fixed. "Through apartheid legislation, the white race was established as dominant and the Black race marginalized. Coloured and Indian race groups were placed in the middle and often not spoken of" (Munsamy, 2006:9). My examination of these 'in-between' identities is constructed within the play *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019)

Nationality and nationalism are further manipulators of identities. Anderson (in Hall, 1996 (b)) states that context builds identities. Cultures can evolve within a nation where that culture is congruently impacted by the hegemonic culture of that nation. Thus, an identity may be solidified within a culture and a national culture simultaneously. I, like many South African Indians, am proudly South African, but at the same time hold allegiance to Indian cultural practices. We have the freedom to practice our culture and religion, but also support the national culture with our Indian culture while supporting the national economy with small businesses.

In South Africa, examples of appropriated hegemonic cultural practices by Indians are witnessed through language choices, dress codes, and education systems, while simultaneously adhering to evolving cultural practices. Anderson (in Hall, 1996 (b)) further explains that national culture can have negative implications on identities as this national culture, which is defined by those within it and those excluded from it, ignores unequal practices, and assumes a cultural practice of comradeship, and such

was effect of apartheid. The unjust segregation laws of apartheid divided the citizens of the nation, but also unified us under a national identity that was defined elsewhere by unequal racial segregation and treatment. Alongside these unjust cultural practices, the Group Areas Act of 1956 separated each race and located them in certain areas. This allowed races to remain separate but equal, a concept only true on paper and not the lived reality, while at the same time these isolations allowed each race group to unify as communities with distinct cultural practices that solidified and evolved separately.

Hall (1997) concurs that this segregation gave rise to othering, racial stereotyping, and assumed gender and sex roles. Othering arose from stereotyping and racial signifiers, which were mainly physical features, and ignored individuality. This othering also manifested itself in unequal statuses, violence, and fear, but was considered South African nationalism. Post-apartheid times have resulted in a more freedom-seeking culture that aims to set right the inequality of the predecessors. Segregation laws promoted racial division and a complex multicultural system where certain cultures were privileged over others, and these divisions were often connected to race.

Multicultural societies often give birth to hierarchical practices. Schechner (1991) defines multiculturalism as many cultures existing side by side, as is the case in South Africa. Pavis (1996) notes that within multicultural societies, hegemonic practices are appropriated by cultures that are subjected, inferior cultures. It is always the practice that the hegemonic practices, which are not always the dominant practice, are placed at the centre of power systems (Schechner, 1991). The apartheid government placed white culture at the apex during that period, and the context resulted in its assimilation into other cultures. This is explained by Orkin (1999: 9) who states, "often the expectation is that the 'inferior' group or culture would be assimilated into the majority culture". The Indian culture in South Africa, while not the majority, was forced to assimilate white cultural practices during apartheid in order to assume a national identity. An example of this is that English became our primary language, and as Martin Orkin (1999) points out, the opposite does not occur. Rustom Bharucha (1996) describes this process as a polemic one, in which the sharing is unequal and depicive of power struggles, as was evident during the South African freedom struggle.

However, the change in thinking resulted in segregation giving way to the cultures mixing, and this occurring more often, allowing for different cultural practices from various cultures to be experienced.

Anderson (in Hall, 1996) describes the post-apartheid South African context as a multicultural one in which cultural exchange is evident, creating a nation and a national culture that is diverse in cultural practices. There are some positive cultural exchanges where Indian culture has been appropriated into the national culture. Indian cuisine, like curries and the spices used to cook them have become staples in most South African kitchens. "Bunny Chow, a hollowed-out load of bread filled with curry, is a signature dish of Durban" (Govinden, 2006:1). Indian words and slang from the diaspora have permeated into the South African lingo (Meshtrie, 2010:1). However, in spite of this cultural mixing, there are some doubts cast upon multicultural societies, and the 'Rainbow Nation' that emerged post-apartheid. In reality the 'rainbow', colours are still ordered top to bottom and are still separate. Elirea Bornman (2014:1) states that, "[a] strong drive towards nation building has been regarded as a necessary step to create a common South Africa identity and sense of nationhood. New national symbols and a changed symbolic landscape have had a key role in this regard. Symbolic tension and conflict on various levels indicate however that divisions in South Africa society have not only remained, but in some cases have even become more profound".

The South African Rainbow Nation metaphor seeks to join the different races and cultures under the guise of unity; however, these races and cultures remain separate. Thus, individual cultures are still overshadowed by the sense of a national identity over an individual identity.

Performers in a multicultural context are able to portray, challenge, and critique identities. Pavis (1996) observes that theatre is a medium that allows for cultural exchange, representation, and examination. Pavis (1996) also notes that intercultural reception and acceptance is possible. As stated previously, theatre is part of and may be seen as a cultural practice in which ideologies are practiced, sustained, and examined. The identities that emerge out of a context are able to manifest themselves

in the imagined world of theatre and stage. An important aspect of identities, along with race and class, is gender.

Gendered identities are layered constructs that are nurtured through socially determined roles. Berger, Wallis, and Watson (1995) argue that gender roles are determined and developed through factors that we control and factors that society controls. Butler (1995:15) concurs, stating that "gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, and revealed through the body". Gender is a construct that forges itself onto the body through cultural practices, interactions with society, and via repetition; they are certainly not biologically determined (Butler, 1995). Cultural practices and ideologies play a pertinent role in shaping gendered identity in line with predetermined roles for men and women. Connell (2000) adds that our bodies are defined by the gendered order of society, distinguishing a hierarchy. This hierarchy exists between men and women and within male and female gendered identities. This thesis looks at gender roles within the archetypes presented in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019). For examples, Mrs Naidoo is the representation of a stay at home mom. Butler (1999:20) states that, "the sexual hierarchy, along with cultural context, produces gender". These gendered roles and hierarchies are sustained through cultural practices and various institutions.

Robert Morrell (1998 (a)) explains that during apartheid gendered roles were governed by the same power struggles of the time. However, Gilmore (1990) states these can shift as gendered identities are amendable rather than fixed as evidenced by the educated status of the lead role of Priya. She is a university student attaining tertiary level education. What might once have been considered unacceptable or acceptable behaviour is likely to change with changing power dynamics. In a post-apartheid era, gendered roles are more diverse. For example, Indian single-parent homes managed by women are more frequent (Desai, 2006). Women are positioned in more power roles, which was not the case prior to the emergence of democracy.

The post-apartheid context has reduced the limits placed on gender roles and sexuality, and thus facilitated the inclusion of a multitude of gendered roles and sexualities, including gay, lesbian, and non-binary roles as evidenced in the character

Ravi. South Africa remains homophobic and largely intolerant of queer identities despite our progressive constitution – although tolerant and open spaces do exist. Gender-based violence exceeds the homophobic bias into gender-based violence of all kinds. Meyiwa et al. (2017:1) states that “[t]he struggle for liberation, equity and equality in South Africa has come a long way to the point where South Africa has celebrated twenty years of democracy in 2014. Substantive advancements have been made towards a constitutional framework and domestic policy that is transformational, progressive and empowering. Yet, South Africa still faces inordinately high levels of gender-based violence”.

Social movements demand equal status amongst the sexes, thus redefining gender roles and responsibilities. Morrell (2001(a)) adds that there are constant challenges to hegemonic practices and gender, thus ensuring that marginalisation is limited. One such challenge was the movement to legalise non-heterosexual marriages so that equal rights are awarded to all individuals. These practiced gendered behaviours are likened to what Schechner (2002) calls “performed identities on stage”, meaning that the constructed role for theatre is rehearsed and constructed in a similar repetitive manner. The actor may rely on known and observed behaviours to reconstruct a stage character.

2.5 Boundaries and Borders: The Genre Ignores Others

In this thesis, the primary focus is on theatre and how Bollywood film might be adapted for stage, therefore I will examine the film genre of Bollywood and how it might be adapted into Bollywood Theatre. John Frow (2006:1) states that, “genres organise verbal and non-verbal discourse, together with the actions that accompany them, and they contribute to the social structuring of meaning”. The genre assists us to infuse the action with enough meaning within a style that becomes unified in meaning and resembles certain given traits. Most authors or playwrights create bodies of texts, in all forms, that are located in a certain genre or find themselves attracted more to one genre over another without confining the text to just one genre as is the case with *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019).

Film genres are more strongly apparent where there is a distinguished format and

texture, for example, western, romantic comedy, or action. There are also further divisions that occur within a genre. Noel Brown (2014:1) defines a specific film genre: “Feel-good film’ has become one of the most widespread typologies in popular discourses on cinema in recent years. Although primarily North American in application, the “feel-good” label has been attached to films from numerous national cinemas (including Hollywood, British, French and Indian), and in its formal diversity encompasses several filmic modes (e.g., comedy, drama) and genres (e.g. romantic comedy, sports films, sci-fi and fantasies)”, Bollywood cinema is as example that incorporates many genres in one movie.

Hollywood movies are a genre of film on their own as are Bollywood movies; the former is located in American tradition and the latter is steeped in Indian culture. Within the Bollywood genre, there are similar divisions to exemplify romantic comedy, action, drama, and comedy, with a further distinction in the musical form. Genres may be linked to a historical period or a context. They are a way to distinguish one form from another and are somewhat formulaic in their conventions. Frow (2006) notes that genres are endless as new ones emerge constantly and old ones retrace themselves to suit modern changes. Whatever its journey, the core function of a genre is to construct a way of making meaning or infusing meaning into a certain world. Genres are recognisable to the consumer and provide clues that hint towards a certain meaning, and they can only be understood in comparison with other genres. Brown (2014:2) further describes the two popular yet differing methods of genre classification, stating that “[t]he first groups films by their intended audiences; examples include the teen film and the children's film. Clearly, this approach, too, has little application to the feel-good film, the audience-base of which appears to be pluralistic and non-demographic-specific. The second groups films according to their *affective* (physical, cognitive, emotional) impact on audiences”.

A genre constructs a set of knowledge (Frow, 2006) for the recipient to deconstruct to understand its specified symbolism. Each symbol assists in defining a form that is able to isolate time, space, location, participants, beliefs, cultures, and themes. While they provide an endless future, they are duplicitous in that they also place restrictions on the structure and content. While the content may differ, the structure remains the

primary tool through which meaning can be constructed. Key meaning is embedded in the structure of a genre, which assists the recipient to create meaning.

Genres may be reflected upon as a social construct that further examines social relations. They provide a means by which we may interrogate characters and their interactions with each other in a specific environment (Frow, 2006). It is then possible to state that a genre is an ideal way to exemplify social situations through bodies of meaning, namely the text. Genres further include the types of actions and gestures that are acceptable for a specified genre. Vijay Mishra (2001:1) defines Bollywood as a genre, "India is home to Bollywood - the largest film industry in the world. Movie theatres are said to be the "temples of modern India," with Bombay producing nearly 800 films per year that are viewed by roughly 11 million people per day". Mishra (2001:1) further states that, "Indian film production and reception is shaped by the desire for national community and a pan-Indian popular culture". This definition will be expanded upon in a later chapter. Bollywood cinema has its own genres and codes that define them. The characters or archetypes that are represented in each of them has a specific function. These will be studied in chapter 9, in order to adapt them for stage, which has its own genres and parameters. This study will discover the codes that are embedded in Bollywood Theatre, how these codes resemble Bollywood cinema and how they resonate with a South African Indian audience. Themes, plot, structure, melodramatic style, characters, costumes, and dance will be considered in the analysis as these elements are common in most Bollywood films.

Frow (2006) lends support to Anne Freadman's (2004) thinking that live performance relies on the framing demands of theatre, social context, audience, and action on stage for meaning to be constructed. The body of work is the performance, which is then understood within the constraints of the genre, by the audience. Theatre comprises codes through which culture may be evaluated. This evaluation takes place within the frame of a genre and meaning is solidified in relation to previous knowledge or understanding. The text, both written and performed, is a tangible manifestation of a genre through which meaning is instilled.

2.6 Treacherous and Timeous, Theatre Defines Us

As a constructed world, theatre can navigate a wide variety of subjects through performance. Schechner (2002) asserts that performance includes a spectrum of human behaviour from ritual through to sport, entertainment, and even the performing arts. Performance may also be as basic as the repetitive actions of everyday life that are re-enacted in a specific social, gendered, or class role, and it is from these performed roles that stage performances may be reconstructed. The actor uses their own lived experiences, practices, and identity, one shaped by context and culture, in the process of extrapolation that leads to a character as is evidenced in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) and discussed in chapter 9.

In its entirety, theatre is considered a cultural practice. Degenaar (1991) describes theatre as a system of meaning with its own codes, where culture exists and is manifested. This imaginary, staged world of theatre can recreate contexts and characters and exemplify constructs and behaviour. Thus, theatre becomes a medium through which we may critically engage with contexts, social issues, identities, and cultures within a poststructural framework. Pavis (1992) affirms that theatre has the potential to represent and examine every aspect of culture, and that theatre comprises a set of codes that groom identities and behaviour, which the performer must communicate to the audience.

Antoine Artaud (1974) notes that performance only exists through the actor, and while the performance may be similar in character to the actor, the two are never identical. The fictional character can never exist without the actor's world because the character is created from the actor's imagination. The actor is always dual – themselves and the character. The character is layered onto the actor with separate principles, mannerisms, and thoughts. The character is created for theatre, specific to the genre, with the help of the text and the actor's ability to empathise or sympathise with the character's fictional world and to revive them on stage.

According to Mangan (2003), this representational nature of theatre, allows for the exchange of conventions that link the stage to everyday life. The identities that are exemplified on stage are often prompted by real life constructs, as is evident in my

own writing of the stage play as the creative component of this thesis. Butler (1997) notes that gendered identities, like performance, is repeated. The idea that in the performance of our own identities (which Butler is primarily interested in) we develop actions and movements that are repeated such that they come to exemplify the 'essence' of who we are, this is similar for theatre. There is a difference between performativity and performance, as "[t]his re-enactment and re-experiencing are of a set of meanings already socially established" (Butler, 1997:140). Our identities are developed through repeated actions that are likened to the reconstruction of characters on stage. Aspects of cultural discourse are rehearsed and sustained through performance. Performers are trained to denounce their own identities and layer onto themselves the character's identity, often drawing on their own lived experiences. The fictional character's identity is rehearsed and repeated in order to achieve a three-dimensional identity on stage that fills the character's 'real' world. Butler (1993) stipulates that performativity is not achieved through a singular or 'deliberate' act of behaviour but rather through reiterating practices in relation to discourse. Theatre, of course, would apply performativity in relation to its own discursive nature, unless it was an improvisational style of theatre. Schechner (2002) reminds us that every sound and gesture performed on stage is rehearsed. The character's identity, performed by trained actors, does not emerge for the first time on stage and actors often portray identities that are stylised versions of everyday behaviour as evidenced in the characters in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019). These performed identities are only layered on the surface while the actors' lived identities are deep within them (Butler, 1999). These stage identities emerge in many styles and genres that further dictate how these 'beings' live in their present moments and contexts through theatre. Simon Shepherd and Mick Wallis (2004:1) describe theatre as having its own history of thought. Theatre has its own etiquette and establishments that are practiced by many. Within theatre there are many forms, styles, and genres, and one of the aims of this study was to examine Bollywood as a specific style and genre of theatre.

2.7. Theatre Styles that Bollywood Applies

To understand the type of Bollywood Theatre that I attempted to examine, I think it

important to discuss elements that influence this genre of theatre as well as the theorists who have shaped my own theatre practices ie. Stanislavski, Brecht and Grotowski. Musical theatre, community theatre and Bollywood theatre are styles that are a common thread in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019), therefore it is vital that these genres be explained, and their relevance established. In terms of musical theatre, Georges Aperghis (1993:1) states that, “in recent years we have seen a break-up of narrative, with a multiplicity of signals being sent to the audience/spectator and with the regular counter-pointing of different, inter-weaving stories”. Aperghis (1993:1) further claims that, “the components of musical theatre (painting, light, costumes etc.) have gradually become disassociated and are now in the process of discovering their autonomy within a wider, differently structured context” and that, “the corps of interpreters (musicians, actors, singers etc.) are becoming liberated, in expressive and narrative ways, in addition to their own specific skills”. Millie Taylor (2012:3) adds that, “Musical Theatre works and performances vary widely” and that musical theatre may include musical drama, musical comedy, and dance musicals. The dance musical is of particular interest to this thesis, as Bollywood focuses strongly on dance while the singing is mimed. Taylor (2012:3) expands on these defining factors to state that: “[s]ome have very little dance, though they have spectacle of a different type, for example *The Lion King*; others tell their stories through dance, such as *Cats*. Some works are through-composed, like *Les Misérables*, while others are musically diegetic or metatextual like, *Cabaret* does. Some musicals contain a linear narrative that is presented in an “integrated” or ‘realistic fashion such as *My Fair Lady*; others dispense with linearity and use other narrative constructions, as *Assassins* does”.

The Bollywood theatre that I am making contains dance, has a linear, realistic narrative that is broken up with spectacular dance numbers. The costumes are a vital aspect of the performance and so this too has impact on this research. Some musicals may also be inspired by cinema (Taylor, 2012). While Taylor (2012) refers to a specific example like *Beauty and the Beast*, which was adapted for stage; my adaptation is that of Bollywood as a genre and is influenced by various movies that I have seen. *Little Shop of Horrors* is an example of a musical that draws on elements from the ‘b-grade’ film genre (Taylor, 2012:4). Musical theatre can be provocative and entertaining, but often either the provocation or entertainment is

overlooked (Taylor, 2012:4). *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) focuses more on entertainment than provocation, but still offers value. The music and songs are integral to driving the plot or narrative (Taylor, 2012:5). The song selection for *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) does just this, but the performance focuses on the dance aspect more than the songs themselves. The song selection is examined in chapter 9. Taylor (2012:6) states “The integrated musical also relies on the performance of ‘psychological realism’ by characters in staged situations, and a continuation of this ‘realism’ through speech, song and dance”.

BOMBAY CHASERS (2019) has a structure that resembles this ‘realism’ in that the narrative is depicted through speech and dance. The signs embedded in the musical represent cultural and historical contexts (Taylor, 2012:8). Meaning can be derived from colour choices, textures, and sounds. According to Taylor (2012:9), musical theatre contains “moments that are ‘emotionally voluminous, generous, aesthetically striking, and intersubjectively intense’”. This is evident in the play analysis in chapter 9. The moments that arise from form and content can also be likened to Brecht’s idea of *gestus*, which is explained in the following section.

Zachary Dunbar (2016:1) adds that,

Though the musical theatre acting literature fails to formally explain the modes of appropriation or varying legacies of Stanislavski’s tenets (a task I will briefly cover), the pervasive reception given aspects of his [Stanislavski’s] systematic preparations may rest, in part, on the apparent logic of a methodology that enables actors, during the process of preparing for a role, to approach a song and its lyrics as though they would a play and its spoken text. Moreover, the holistic way Stanislavski perceived the actor’s process (particularly in the latter part of his career), reinforced the intrinsic coalescence of psychophysical work and active engagement with emotions (or broadly, components of affective and sense memory), and this approach resonates with the integrationist ideals in modern musical theatre actor training which seek to combine, in an emotionally invested way, the essential elements of acting, singing and movement.

While the Stanislavski System was conceived for a realistic acting style, its tenets may

be applied in other genres. I will expand on the use of the aforementioned tenets in the following section, as these tenets were used in my approach as a director to guide actors in their development of the roles that they were playing.

Community theatre practices are evidenced in the play study of *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019). Eugene van Erven (2001:1) describes this genre of theatre by stating that, “[c]ommunity theatre is an important device for communities to collectively share stories, to participate in political dialogue, and to break down the increasing exclusion of marginalized groups. It is practiced all over the world by growing numbers of people”.

The Indian community of South Africa is one such marginalised group creating theatre that has similar defining features, and this is detailed in the next chapter. While community theatre is generally characterised by improvisation and the telling of personal stories (Erven, 2001:2), *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) is not a workshopped play but might still be classed as such. Erven (2001:2) claims that “Community Theatre is a worldwide phenomenon that manifests itself in many different guises, yielding a broad range of performance styles”. While *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) does not comply with the usual community theatre practices of involving the community (Erven, 2001), it was made for a specific community who had minimal involvement with the script writing phase. Erven (2001:3) further describes this style of theatre, which *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) seeks to achieve, by stating that, “[i]ts material and aesthetic forms always emerge directly (if not exclusively) from ‘the’ community, whose interests it tries to express. Community theatre thus is a potent art form that allows once largely silent (or silenced) groups of people to add their voices to increasingly diverse and intricately inter-related local, regional, national and international cultures” which further embodies aspects of poststructuralism.

Since *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) aims to be classified as Bollywood Theatre, it becomes essential to define this genre of theatre. Jerri Daboo (2018:4) describes Bollywood Theatre as having an “expectation from the hegemonic ideology of the

mainstream theatre audience and industry that if there is something on stage that comes under the heading of Asian/Indian, then this must mean an incorporation and presentation of Bollywood. Therefore, the performance will be a piece of colourful entertainment with high-energy song and dance numbers wrapped in an exotic masala-flavoured theatrical experience: not too demanding, not really political and full of comedy and romance as is evidenced in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019).

I will go into a more detailed description of Bollywood cinema in a later chapter as this style of theatre resembles Bollywood cinema. Daboo (2018:4) states further that,

Bollywood has remained a stable marker of identification, even if the form and expression has changed. Therefore, the placing of Bollywood on stage is itself a transgression of the inherent 'whiteness' usually seen in mainstream theatre, and leads to an identification with members of the South Asian communities which might also bring them into a theatre building on that would otherwise feel alien to them. The pleasure of familiarity and recognition in seeing a song and dance number from a favourite film re-enacted on stage offers a significant intervention into the dominant discourse of 'British theatre'

Bollywood theatre in South Africa appears as a transgression from mainstream theatre in Durban and seems to have a deep connection with the India diaspora that resides here. Daboo (2018:9) further states that,

The placing of Bollywood on stage requires consideration of issues of adaptation, intertextuality and transmediality, particularly with the transference of a sequence from a film being recreated in the theatre. The element of 'liveness', of lived experience and immediacy of presence that is possible in theatre performance in contrast to the mediated experience of film.

The Bollywood Theatre that I am exploring through *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) is an adaptation of Bollywood cinema. This concept of adaptation and a definition of Bollywood appears in a later chapter. It is important to note, as Daboo (2018:9) explains, "the liveness of theatre, the physical presence of the characters, situations

and music and dance on stage bring a different kind of engagement to the diasporic consciousness”. This thesis aims to explore the liveness of Bollywood on a Durban audience in South Africa and the value that is added to SAIT.

2.8 Bubble Bubble, Combining the Toils and Troubles of Three

Robert Blumfeld (2008) acknowledges that there are various acting and performance styles and genres of acting and performance; such as Ancient Greek (700 BC - 490 BC), nineteenth century realism (Stanislavski, 1952), satire (Davis, 2017), Noh and Kabuki theatre (Serper, 2001), poor theatre (Grotowski, 1967), epic theatre (Brecht, 1964), popular theatre (Kerr, 1995), storytelling theatre and, to refer locally, SAIT, just to mention a few. Within these categories of theatre there are further subdivisions. To conduct this examination, I will explain some of the acting and directing theories employed and define and explain the choice in style, Bollywood, as well as the theory that underpins this genre. Some of the key influences and theories visited include the theorists Constantine Stanislavski, Bertolt Brecht, and Jerzy Grotowski. I will extrapolate elements of their theories on performance as they relate to the creation of Bollywood theatre. This extrapolation of elements of theory fit with the poststructural nature of theory where the theory may evolve beyond its original intended meaning.

Creating a character on stage relies on many variants. The director describes his or her vision to the actor who then has to manifest an entity that comes to life on stage. There are various theories on how one might go about constructing these roles. Theorist Constantine Stanislavski was influential in the development of nineteenth century realism. While Bollywood is not a realistic style or genre, musical theatre does focus on elements of Stanislavski’s theories on how an actor breathes life into a character; relevant particularly, is his writings on concepts like the ‘magic if’, ‘given circumstances’ and textual analysis; these will be explained later in this chapter. Dunbar (2016:1) states that, “the principles underpinning current acting approaches in musical theatre are primarily based on, and indebted to, Stanislavski’s acting ‘System’”. The tenets of this system were used to create and develop characters during the rehearsal process. Certain tenets like ‘psychological characterisation’ may not be appropriate for a Bollywood musical as there is more reliance on song and dance

(Dunbar, 2016:1).

The fundamental ideas of the Stanislavski system, as identified by Blumfeld (2008), is to create a process to deconstruct the script within any performance technique to construct a character, that is an actor and director deconstruct the script so as to reconstruct it in a live theatrical performance. All action on stage requires choices to be made by actors and performers and are embodied in the director's vision or concept. Blumfeld (2008:18) concurs that, “[a]ll the steps in the preparation and rehearsal process involve making choices, which are your particular, individual interpretations of the subtext and the character as a whole. The author has provided a sketch or a blueprint of the character, but it is you who will complete the sketch and construct the character”.

The text has multiple meanings and layers revealing the character's internal and external behaviour and their intended goals. Stanislavski, in Blumfeld (2008) mentions that the interior monologue that runs through a character's mind is best revealed through what he calls subtext, which is the underlying meaning behind the text. This interior layer is revealed through the character's physical manifestation, including their mannerisms, facial expressions, and gestures. The relationship between the internal and the external is best established when each character's goal is intimately known. Subtext is understood by an audience when they witness the characters' stage business (Blumfeld, 2008:40). Actors, guided by directors, use logic and experience to fill in the pieces of the puzzle to present a full picture of the character on stage. Stanislavski (in Blumfeld 2008) highlights certain elements that characterisation must adhere to realise this picture.

Blumfeld (2008) pinpoints the first step as one which “Tells the Truth”. The actor imagines that they are the character and makes believe that the designed set and actions are real for this character; the actor must deliver the truth of the character. The thoughts, words, and costumes are no longer that of the actor but those of the character who 'comes to life' through the actor and their choices, which are modified within stylistic and genre requirements. The process of searching for this character begins by identifying the “Given Circumstances” and combining them with the actor's

emotions and body gestures, which are then used within the context of the play. Stanislavski says that “Scenic Truth is not the truth of life; it is peculiar to itself” (in Blumfeld, 2008:19).

The next step is specificity. Actions and choices must have specificity, and to achieve this the actor must be familiar with all aspects of the character's life and be present in the 'now'. Blumfeld (2008) adds that the actor must be weary of the location, context, and time, as these impact on the choices made. For example, a dinner between two individuals will present a different atmosphere and gestures when moved from a secluded setting to a public setting. The spaces that the sets represent determine the action that can develop, as sets permit certain types of behaviour to unfold that are recognisable to the audience. Blumfeld (2008) expounds that historical time also is a determinant in character discovery. Certain historical periods can be identified in human behaviour and speech, and it is this transformation of the body that is directed and stylised. The actor must research these specific times and places to discover the life of these characters 'living' in them. Blumfeld (2008:20) claims that time is an important concept for the characters and actors. The actor must manage the time when things occur on stage, including considering the shows' starting times. Time is twofold –the past in the present or the time of the character in relation to the time of the actor must be considered.

The objective of specificity is to avoid stereotypical characters and emotions and demands a deeper interrogation into character and situation. This deeper analysis must manifest itself in the form of the character's psychological gestures. Stanislavski calls this process “Through the Conscious to the Unconscious” or commonly refers to it as emotional memory (Blumfeld, 2008). The character's physical actions must be generated by the character's thoughts to produce gestures that embody that specific character. Blumfeld (2008:21) further states that “we cannot directly act on our emotions, but we can produce our creative fantasy, and it stirs up our emotion or affective memory, calling up from its secret depths, beyond the reach of consciousness, elements of already experienced emotions, and regroups them to correspond with the images which arise in us”.

Actors are responsible for selecting, from their own lived experience, emotions for characters that will then lead to psychological gestures. When we move like the character the character's emotions are revealed. These gestures are imagined within the parameters of the 'given circumstances' of the character's world. Metaphorically, awakening the character's unconscious unleashes the character's instincts, which are different to the actor's instincts. Actors must populate the character's unconscious emotional realm with as much information as possible, and with as much detail as possible about the history that the character might have 'lived', as was encouraged through my directing process.

Stanislavski's understanding of emotions is that they are two-pronged. The first being the primary emotions, which are experienced in the moment. Secondly, repeated emotions, which are those emotions that the actor allows to resurface or to be recalled (Blumfeld, 2008). Emotional recall is most useful to the actor as it offers more control than a state of primary emotions affords. When inner thoughts are understood, it is possible to move on to 'discover through doing', otherwise known as action. Discovery through doing is basically what the rehearsal process is about. The actor has to use these psychological gestures to reveal the character's inner thoughts, or rather the subtext. Blumfeld (2008:23) in his analysis of Stanislavski's system states that discovering through doing is, "corollary to the previous principle, the most important way to get to the unconscious through the conscious is by doing - that is by actually performing a psychological action. Only that way will you really discover what is going on with the character both physically and emotionally".

It is through doing that an actor realises timing to move in the space as well as the relationships that exist between with the environment and other characters. This forms part of active analysis (Blumfeld, 2008:23), the last unfinished method of Stanislavski's. Through this last phase, much emphasis is placed on actually moving and doing in a rehearsal, as opposed to sitting and analysing. After all, acting is about doing, putting something or someone on their feet, and discovering their actions in this imagined space.

The Stanislavski system works well if the techniques are understood correctly.

Blumfeld (2008) notes the importance of the system's three main techniques. The first key element is concentration. An actor must find focus in what is required of them and the character, as both have different objectives and goals. Although objectives remain the same – to portray a character and whatever that character's goal may be – each performance is different, ephemeral. Blumfeld (2008:24) concurs when he states that, “The framework that has been set up, including the blocking and sequence of events, is repeatable, however, these will be experienced differently every time, as the actor lives through them from moment to moment, concentrating on the task at hand”.

A director prepares the actor for the level of concentration required to achieve an awareness of the environment in which the action unfolds and equal concentration to forget their own world while this action erupts on stage. Stanislavski terms the process ‘public solitude’, the state in which the actor is alone in the character's world, the stage, which is a public space (Blumfeld, 2008:24). Stanislavski's technique was developed around the notion of a fourth, invisible wall, in the theatre, through which the audience gains access to the stories that are unfolding (Blumfeld, 2008:25). This notion of a fourth wall can sometimes be broken by the actor when they address an audience directly.

To reach this level of concentration, ideally the actor is required to arrive a few hours before the performance to physically rid themselves of the real world to mentally focus on the role and to achieve the character's objectives. "Stanislavski talked about a *Circle of Concentration* that the actor must build around him or herself. You can do this by concentrating on an *Object of Attention*” (Blumfeld, 2008:25). It is important that the actor is sufficiently physically and mentally relaxed so that the actor can successfully step into the role of the character who is unaware of the audience.

Relaxation is essential. The actor must be in a relaxed state before giving a character performance. The actor's stress should not impact on the character's life, as these two worlds must remain separate. Physical warmups are crucial to muscle relaxation and increasing body flexibility so that the actor can perform the range of movement and gestures that typify their character.

Stanislavski's technique requires establishing diverse levels of communication. Communication may be achieved through verbal and physical means. You can sense mood and tone as well as reveal emotions in the way you react to other characters and objects.

Blumfeld, (2008:26) divides communication into three categories: "First, you communicate directly with your fellow actors- you are in 'communication' with them; second, you communicate directly with an object that is absent, as when you think of a loved one; and third, you communicate indirectly with the audience, of whom you have to be aware".

Actors best achieve this communication when they understand the character's internal emotions and thoughts. Part of communication is to listen. Actors must hear and react or respond to what other actors say and how they say it in order to achieve their own individual goals and to respond in character. Listening is an excellent skill for an actor to master as they must be in a readied state to react to anything that might happen. This also prepares the actor to engage with the character's dialogue and emotions in the moment to avoid seeming too rehearsed, even though they have been perfected in rehearsal. Actors need to listen, suppress natural reaction impulses, and allow the character's reactions to be revealed naturally.

Stanislavski's technique also incorporates the notion of 'The Magic If'. This creative state depends on the actor immersing themselves into their character and its world and thus behaving "*as if* the character had a past and *as if* the character has a future, unless of course the character dies in the play" (Blumfeld, 2008:27). The actor must imagine the events that have been and will become, as well as fill in the space where the character does not appear in the storyline.

It is only through the actor's imagination that the character lives. To achieve Stanislavski recommends that the actor use affective memory. "Affective memory means the visceral memory of emotions and feelings (emotional memory) and the memory of physical sensations: hot, cold, drunk, sick, tired, attractions to someone or something, and so forth (sensory memory)" (Blumfeld, 2008:28). This, combined with a process of 'Endowment,' where we endow objects and actions with real qualities,

leads to characterisation. Endowment gives weight to objects, for example, and feelings where they are lacking. The 'Magic If' expounds in practice to include what Stanislavski terms 'Emotional Recall' and substitution (Blumfeld, 2008:29). This means that actors must find emotional equivalents in their own lives and substitute them into the character's thoughts and words. The aim is to find a nexus between the actor's emotional past and the character's present situation. This situation is revealed through the script.

Stanislavski offers a specific method to use to analyse a script, and this method is what I encourage during my directing process. This method, in my experience, can apply across genres and styles. We always begin by reading the play to understand the plot and the events as they occur. Blumfeld (2008:30) states that it is equally important to consider the event before time, before the start of the play, the given circumstances of the play, as and the historical and sociocultural context surrounding the play. As mentioned, it is vital to consider where the play is set, and the historical timeline is understood. This investigation into the timeline will reveal the characters' costume, mannerism, and gesture choices, the culture, and behaviour patterns. This will provide a director or actor with the particular set of choices for performance.

The next step would be to break the storyline up into episodes and then smaller events, making what Stanislavski referred to as external circumstances (Blumfeld, 2008:31). As the play is broken down into smaller units it is important not to lose sight of the grander picture and to be true to the core of the play. The character's function and role within the story must then be established, as well as how the character journeys across what Stanislavski refers to as the 'throughline' of action, which means looking at the events from beginning to end (Blumfeld, 2008:32).

The characters help reveal the themes of the play and the superobjectives. "The 'Superobjective' is the main theme, giving the play its overall meaning" (Blumfeld, 2008:33). It is important to discover the concept and meaning behind the author's writing. The opposition or obstacles in the path of the throughline are referred to as the counter-throughline. Stanislavski (1961) explains that a play exists on several interconnected planes. These are the external plane, the events and facts; the social

plane, the historical and socio-cultural background; the literary plane, referring to the playwright's style and language choices; the aesthetic plane, denoting costume and set which are elements of production essentially; the internal plane, which impacts on the external plane and is in essence the character's inner thoughts, aims, and objectives and driving force; the physical plane, the character's physical manifestation, which comprise physical presentation and mannerisms alongside vocal expressions (Blumfeld, 2008:33/34). Stanislavski recommends that the character's internal plane must be considered, i.e., information such as class, age, sex, upbringing, and so forth. This detailed character biography is vital in shaping the character from the internal into the external plane.

The more we understand the character the easier it becomes to envision their thought processes and manifest their physical embodiment on stage. According to Stanislavski, the actor must discover for the character, the objective and goals, answering the question, what are the wants? Counter to this, it is important to determine the obstacles that are standing in the way of the character achieving their goals. The obstacle creates much needed conflict that keeps the wheels of the story turning. He stresses the point that the actor must refer to the character in the first person, 'I' (Blumfeld, 2008:35). The character's inner thoughts or psychology are revealed in action on stage.

This action considers the character's verbal and physical choices and is further driven by each character's quest to fulfil their individual goals. "An action is something a character does at a specific moment in furtherance of an objective. Actions may be verbal: each utterance has an intention or internal motivation: experienced in the form of interior monologues" (Blumfeld, 2008:37). The interior monologue is not always expressed externally. The action is directed towards the core message of the play, and physical actions are all geared towards achieving the intended goals, while verbal actions are revealed through the voice. Specific attention must be paid to the punctuation used as this helps to trace the tempo of each character's throughline and counter-throughline, as well as their own superobjective.

Stanislavski's system further distinguishes mannerisms and physical activities to

supplement the textual analysis. He refers to a “bit” (or beat) as, “the small unit of a scene during which an action is played out. A *Beat* is the beginning of new action. When one action stops, another immediately begins” (Blumfeld, 2008:40). When each beat is marked and scene end reached, the score, which is the step-by-step process of finding the throughline, is accomplished.

According to Stanislavski, the stage business leads into the voice and the movement patterns that the actor chooses for the character. Blumfeld (2008:41) states that, “the physicality of a character, too, should be organic and not preconceived or calculated”. Each character’s voice and movement are variants that determine the action’s rhythm or tempo. The play must lead to a climax and each scene builds on the other to achieve this cathartic moment. Each beat and scene are timed to build impact fully until the climax. This system of acting theory has been used in both stage and film acting styles, including non-realism genres like musical theatre. This is important as *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) is a Bollywood, musical genre.

Many directors disagreed with Stanislavski and his system, but his teachings remain relevant. Jerzy Grotowski was a Polish-born theatre practitioner who developed an alternative approach to acting and performance which he outlined in his book *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968 and 2002). Grotowski created his experimental Theatre Laboratory in 1965, which deliberately departed from Stanislavski’s teachings as they did not conform to his own context and style of theatre-making. Grotowski sought to understand the art of acting from the actor’s perspective. He too was a student of the Meyerhold and other European acting styles, but sought alternative ways to make theatre, by getting the actor to strip down, as it were, to examine the core, to understand the root of emotions, and then to discard them. Grotowski (2002:16) attests that, “We do not want to teach the actor a predetermined set of skills or give him a 'bag of tricks'.... Here everything is concentrated on the 'ripening' of the actor, which is expressed by a tension towards the extreme, by a complete stripping down, by the laying bear of one's intimacy - all this without the least trace of egotism and self-enjoyment”.

The process of elimination of fears is coupled with an "eradication of skills" or

blockages, otherwise known as *Via Negativa* (2002:17). It is this actor training that is of importance to this thesis as Grotowski's exercises were used in the rehearsal process of *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019), to assist actors to discover their characters through a simplistic stripping down process in order to get them to perform. The exercises and results are presented in the findings chapter.

Grotowski's proposed process spans years of hard work and exercises that train the body and the voice simultaneously. For a six- to eight-week rehearsal process only a few exercises may work effectively. The actor must be able to produce the signs of the role, thus still creating a role. Grotowski (2002:17) states that, "there is no contradiction between inner technique and artifice (articulation of a role by signs)". Fears stand between these two and inhibit a performance. The actor must discover a genuine place from which the character or role may emerge, and establish what human behaviour will drive the character, and perform from a place where "pure impulse" thrives (2002:18). Grotowski further states that certain elements of this acting technique may be derived from ritual theatre and rituals, and that the performance can often lead to social "awareness" (2002:18).

What may also be valuable is the re-evaluation of the actor-audience relationship. Sometimes the audience may become a part of the performance. The audience witnessed the change from actor to character and character to character in full view - a technique that is also practiced by Bertolt Brecht, as discussed later. Similar to Stanislavski, Grotowski believed that the actor must be true to the character's objective (2002:20).

He, like most Bollywood cinema proponents, emphasised tradition and religion to enhance the theatrical experience while simultaneously grounding it in something familiar. This goes back to his thinking on grounding theatre in our roots. Theatre is imbued in our history and cultural practices. The ever-popular practices of culture, religion, and myth become important points of departure for theatre-making, as social behaviour stems from these practices. *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) looks at Hindu religious beliefs and culture.

While exploring tradition and myth in theatre, it is essential that we challenge it in some

way, and not just present it as learned. We must find ourselves and our experience in the myth or tradition and not it in us. Grotowski (2002:22) does remind us that western theatre found its origins in religion and myth. We must look at myth as a source, but “confront” it rather than “identify” with it (2002:23). The actor only achieved this spiritual awakening through the process of becoming a “Holy Actor”. Grotowski determines that to achieve this state of holiness the actor must, “be able to overstep every conceivable limit” (2002:35), in order to fulfil the character’s needs. Emphasis is placed on the actor’s natural ability to amplify their vocal and physical limits and find sufficient aspects to create a well-rounded character. To achieve this, the actor must be extremely familiar with their bodies, boundaries, and abilities, discover how to breathe life into the character’s vocal patterns, and know their physical limitations to best walk in the life of the said character. The human body must be freed, as much as possible, from all tension so that there is less resistance to the process of becoming the character. A vocal and physical warm-up will provide a quick investigation into one’s body to discover where the resistance and tension lie. This process is ongoing and new boundaries and resistance will emerge at various times during the progress of the process.

There were other directors who also challenged realism and its theatre conventions and social contexts. One such theatre practitioner was German-born Bertolt Brecht, whose theories of epic theatre are taught globally and are considered a close second to Stanislavski’s teaching. Brecht’s theatre practices have had a major impact on South African theatre practitioners and practices alike. Much of the theatre staged in South Africa during the 80s and 90s was designed to stage protests against apartheid, drawing on many principles of Brecht’s epic theatre.

Epic theatre evolved out of defiance to realism in theatre. Brecht wanted a theatre experience in which the audience played a more active role as opposed to realism’s passive spectator of the action (Willet, 1959). The audience played a crucial role in his didactic relationship through which the message of the play could be relayed. This links with community theatre notions, where the audience plays a vital part in constructing the show and the interactive engagement with the staged performance. Examples of this audience-actor relationship are evident in *BOMBAY CHASERS*

(2019) with the “breaking of the fourth wall” as Brecht suggests.

Epic theatre developed out of much of the epic literatures like the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, and *The Odyssey* (Willet, 1959). The epic theatre form takes on a lengthier narrative in comparison to realism. It also uses multiple locations and reaches across many time frames and is similar to a montage effect. *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) is quite a lengthy narrative, with multiple locations (as is Bollywood custom) and spans several days. In his use of epic theatre, Brecht rejects Aristotle's model of play-making, in which there is one location, one day, and one place in which the story is set (Willet, 1959). Like the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, some of Brecht's plays were historical in nature, but he also chose to make them diverse in theatrical genre while still considerate of social issues and change, much like *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019). The longer episodes added more information to the storyline, and they were interspersed with parables. These parables taught the moral lessons that Brecht wished to disseminate, and simultaneously detached the audience from the storyline temporarily (Willet, 1959); the narrator's speeches in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) is similar to the parables as they detach the audience from the narrative while providing them with information. These parables were often accompanied with songs, but I found that dance routines work just as effectively – elements that are embodied in Bollywood.

The disruption or detachment is part of the play. “Gestus” or gestures are important devices in epic theatre (Willet, 1959). Action on stage is characterised by gesture and movement, which leads to the overall body of moments in the play. The movement comprises natural and non-realistic actions (Willet, 1959). The physical aesthetic varies in rhythm and shape but is plural in nature so as to create a different dimension. The actors discover “gestus” for the characters, which represents the characters' social standings, attitudes, and relationships (Willet, 1959). This similar brief to Stanislavski denotes a strong tie between character understanding and performance. Characters were often linked by social status and certain characters were written for functions of stage rather than their influence on the storyline. The “gestus” that these characters created were often borrowed from Asian dance forms, much like Bollywood cinema. This mix of style and form was important in developing epic theatre (Willet, 1959). Like Stanislavski, Brecht also found home for his plays in a proscenium arch

theatre space, however, his destruction of the imaginary fourth wall was distinctive. *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) also used the breaking of the fourth wall.

Brecht believed that the imagined fourth wall inhibited the actor-spectator relationship (Willet, 1959). To solidify this relationship, Brecht got actors to deliver speeches to the audience and to interact directly with them, something unfamiliar in realism. The entire auditorium was utilised in his theatre-making process. A device that destroyed the fourth wall notion was the narrator figure whose narration was written into the story and served multiple functions, the first of which is to explain events and also to serve as detachment from the action on stage (Willet, 1959).

Brecht explored the use of a technical visual element in the form of projections. The projections were instrumental in gaining an intellectual response rather than an emotional one to the themes and objectives (Willet, 1959). The music and song selections further exemplified the thematic core of the play and were equally significant in imparting information (Willet, 1959). Modern music that reflected the stylings of the modern audience was used. These elements are important, as they were explored in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) to create both a visual nuance and audible connection, as well-known Bollywood songs were selected, and the videos aimed to enhance the emotional connection with the audience.

Additionally, actors were trained to veer away from natural acting and never fully “becoming” a character, as this would defeat the objective of necessary distancing. While some characters were complex, most were stereotypical and simplistic to aid understanding (Willet, 1959), as is evidenced in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) through melodramatic acting and stereotypical characters. Brecht’s teachings have had a global influence, like Augusto Boal’s theatre stylings in Brazil and even locally in South Africa, including my own theatre practices. Their theories on identity and culture manifest themselves in the theatre and this is vital for the latter chapters that analyse the performance case study of *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019). This show will define a genre and through my journals explain how writing and directing this genre exemplifies South African Indianness. I will use the teachings of Stanislavski, Brecht and Grotowski to create a unique working environment that establishes Bollywood theatre

in Durban.

CHAPTER 3: STAGES OF CHANGES: WRITING, DIRECTING, AND STAGING BOLLYWOOD THEATRE

This chapter documents my processes of writing, directing and staging Bollywood theatre. Through an autoethnographic lens (Jones, 2016), I describe the practice-based case study in order to ascertain the evolutionary steps that lead to Bollywood theatre, specifically *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019). I begin with the writing process, as this is where the characters, plot, and themes were first determined. I describe the writing process and stimuli that determined the language choices. Major and minor themes and the character analysis (the myriad themes are representative of each character and their archetypal significance), as well as the archetypes they represent are described. A scene breakdown and the changes to the script after feedback are presented. Thereafter my directing process is described to illustrate how the page transforms onto the stage is described by sharing a rigorous account of the rehearsals and the final performance. The method of directing (Cole & Chinoy, 1963) as well as the manner in which I handled rehearsals, publicity, problems, and people in the six weeks of rehearsals and week of performance is analysed.

3.1 Thoughts Served on a Platter, the Page Holds My Matter

For me, writing is a solo act that requires time. As is with the case for many writers, the stories conceived in my imagination are often variations of real-life events, or events occurring around me (like current affairs), and I jot down scenarios that could arise from the situation. The characters are dramatisations of actual people that I interact with in daily life or pass on the streets, as I observe mannerisms, speech patterns, and phrases of speech for each of them. I have developed a portfolio of characters and themes to draw from in my creative processes.

When writing a script, I start with a good trigger and inciting incident for the rest of the show to break out. Ashwin Singh (2019) agrees that a good trigger is important for a

script and that often his trigger is a person that ignites a character and then he places that character in a situation. I work in an almost reverse fashion, such that the scenario comes first and then I populate it with characters. The trigger or spark for *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017), apart from the need to have a case study for my research, was ignited by my passion for Bollywood-styled theatre. I had much success with my first Bollywood-influenced show, *CONSENTING SILENCE* (2013), and was eager to write the second instalment for this energetic theatre genre. At the time, I was engrossed in the Indian Premier League (IPL) T20 Cricket Series, enthralled by the dancers who occasionally get to entertain live and television audiences. It dawned on me that this dance spectacle would be a believable event to prompt storylines and characters for a show. The opening ceremony to the IPL was glamorous and flashy with artists from around the world performing, many of whom were dancers. As Bollywood relies heavily on dance (Mishra, 2001) for most of its genres, this was the ideal starting point. I used the dance platform to write a play about seven dancers, later becoming eight in rehearsals, who won a dance competition with their own unique routine, giving them the chance to dance at the opening ceremony of the IPL T20 Cricket tournament in India, Mumbai. The location, India, would allow the storyline to transport these characters to the motherland. The concept of the motherland was drilled into our subconscious as children and we all dreamed that one day we would return to India to explore our ancestry and culture.

When I eventually travelled to India to research the script, I was reminded of the teachings of my Aiya. The culture that I witnessed in India was similar to but vastly different from the culture that was taught to me by my Aiya. My experience of the culture was reinforced in the script and dialogues for stage. This direct depiction is not my usual approach, which typically stems from current, political events. However, *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017/2019)² deals with my own diasporic South African Indianness. The thematic content differs from my first Bollywood styled show, *CONSENTING SILENCE* (2013/14). Like *JOURNEYING HOME* (2008), in which I write about my personal encounters with cancer, in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017) my writing took the form of personal reflection in order to write about characters that are

² I reference two dates as one references the written play and the other the staged performance respectively.

a culmination of traits embodied in individuals encountered when I was growing up in Chatsworth and Shallcross.

CONSENTING SILENCE (2013/14) was a drama, and thus the thematic content was quite dense, depicting and examining the culture of rape and the consequences, deemed necessary due to what I consider outdated customs. Loomba (1993:1) shares this view by stating that customs, like immolation, where a surviving wife is burned along with her dead husband, are outdated traditions. Alanen (2016:1) assists this argument by stating that forced marriages are a crime against women's basic human rights. *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017) is written in the genre of comedy and is more of a light-hearted piece rather than a serious one. The choice to write a comedy was intentional, as I felt that it would appeal to a larger audience. However, it does contain elements that are seen in most Bollywood genres. Both plays that I have written include a love triangle at the core of the story, as is Bollywood custom.

3.1.1 Breaking Down the Acts into Individual Scenes

The scene breakdown is as follows: Act I begins with an opening dance followed by a narrator's speech and then Scene i. This scene sets up the plot and the players. We are introduced to the trip to India and meet the leads and their impending romantic experiences. We are also introduced to the sidekick characters and learn a little about their subplots.

This is followed by the second narrator monologue, which comments on the action of the first scene and then leads into the character description of the twin sisters from India. Scene ii takes place in India and involves the twins and their servant girl. Through a mysterious phone call, we learn about an impending plot to thwart the efforts of the dance squad. The rising drama is then relieved by the love dance. Scene iii uses the narrator speech to follow the dance routine to allow the dancers time to change costumes and catch their breaths.

Scene iv is set in the home of the Naidoo family. It is the maternal scene between Mrs. Naidoo and Priya and sets up the relationship and the attraction that Priya has for Thiesen. The clumsiness of Mrs. Naidoo and her bumbling yet nurturing nature are also revealed here for the first time. Scene v follows with Thiesen confessing his love

for Priya to Mikhail. The narrator's fourth monologue discusses Ganesha's two wives and their relationship in comparison to the love story unfolding, and hints at the saga of a love triangle, as Lord Ganesha had two wives.

Scene vi takes place in the airport and includes most of the cast members, including extras, except the Indian villains. A cameo role by someone famous is included. This scene sees the troupe preparing to leave for India. The split scene is a detour from Scene vi, which has two focal points in the airport toilets: boys on one side and girls on the other. Here the discussions revolve around the brewing romance and how best to proceed. Act I ends with a travel dance that musically depicts the journey from Durban to Mumbai. The narrator ends the first Act by recapping events and reminding the audience of the intermission and its duration.

Act II is similar in structure to Act I but is wordier and more dialogue-driven. It begins with the stick dance which contextualises India and exemplifies a change of culture and Indianness. The narrator fills the space before Scene vii with a monologue that welcomes the audience back and moves the storyline forward. Scene vii is a short scene in a rehearsal venue and is an exchange between Thiesen and Priya. It is the first time that we see them alone and witness the joy of their relationship that seems to be flourishing.

The narrator then provides thoughts on conflict resolution. Scene viii is a long breakfast scene that lays out the action of Act II and introduces the troupe to the twins, introducing their foreboding trouble. The troupe's adventures in India are then encapsulated in a dance sequence, which precedes the short scene that takes the shape of a rehearsal and dialogue that causes friction. The narrator features once again to add to the suspense and tension, and allow the entire cast to prepare themselves for the nightclub dance and Scene x.

This scene is verbally and physically explosive as it includes the necessary, outlandish Bollywood fight sequence; it is also the climax of the action. It ends with a few key players being arrested and a sense of doom and gloom. In the last moments of the scene Mrs. Naidoo consoles her heartbroken daughter. Scene xi takes place in a temple between the twins and Rhithik. The plot is revealed to destroy the momentum of the dance troupe. The temple location is key as it is a prominent feature for many

Indians, including those in the diaspora. A quick set change places the action for Scene xii in an Indian jail cell.

Scene xii is more intimate in tone at first, between the police officer, the narrator, and Thiesen. The police officer questions and offers divine wisdom to the young Hero, nudging him back on track. The final scene culminates in all players finding happy resolutions, even the evildoers are wrangled into shape and allowed to join in the end festivities, which is the dance. The final words are spoken by the narrator who delivers inspirational words and finalises the action by rounding off the storyline. The penultimate and ultimate scenes are considered the resolution phase of the play. The ascent of the speaking component of this Bollywood musical must reach 80 minutes. The dialogue writing was inspired by this scene breakdown.

3.1.2 Rolling out the Role Models that Gave Rise to Theatre Huddles

Priya and Thiesen's love story in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017) is interrupted by the corrupted vixen Bhavika, because love stories that have conflict and offer love triangles are appealing to audiences. The plot progresses through many levels and subplots and are ignited by the characters. To make the story gripping, I ensured the supporting characters were involved with substantial interaction so as to populate the subplots for maximum impact. The subplots involved: Ravi and Nishaani's competitive banter; Mrs. Naidoo and Priya's mother-daughter relationship; the coach's pedantic, violent outbursts and concerns; Arjuna's stress eating; and the conflicts between the Dance School and their rivals. Conflict in Bollywood often erupts in dramatic, outlandish fight sequences and thus I included one in the script. This also marked the climax of the play in Act II, Scene iv. The trajectory to the climax includes many twists and turns.

The rising action unfolded in diverse ways, as is expected in Bollywood. Much of the rising action is character-driven as well as the archetypes that they exemplify. This is evident in the relationship between Mrs. Naidoo and Priya through which we recognise the doting, overbearing mother and the sweet, innocent, homely daughter who is yearning to blossom. Their relationship demonstrates the love they share, the wisdom imparted and friendship between a mother and daughter. Mrs. Naidoo's character also brings comic relief because of her bold personality and the choices she makes as well

as her generous size, as I have imagined her to be.

The lead characters' friends add significant value as via the humorous throughlines and archetypal actions. The character Arjuna symbolises the studious, sporty girl who always adds unnecessary pressure on herself. Nishaani's character is tomboyish and aggressive, but also loyal and protective. Both characters are devoted, loyal best friends of Priya. They provide the outlet for comic dialogues and entertaining diversions from the main storyline. Individually their journeys are fully rounded where we see their evolution and the achievement of their goals, as support characters. Mahi was a late introduction to the story, whose role was only written in during the rehearsal process. She was added to even the numbers in the dance routines so that there was an even match between boys and girls for physical lifts and partner work. She was given anecdotal lines that relieved the story's tension. This character also brought in a youthful, playful energy that suited the musical style of Bollywood. Their male counterparts are Muruvan, Mikhail and Ravi.

Muruvan, represents Lord Muruga, the elder brother of Lord Ganesha, and since the production aims to impart the teachings and life lessons of Lord Ganesha, and it seemed appropriate to represent his older brother as one of the characters. His character is the archetypal big brother, tormenting Thiesen, but by his side in times of strife and struggle, much like the relationship between the named deities. He proves to be quite the protector of his younger brother and also has many witty one-liners to increase humorous appeal. Muruvan is the type of character that challenges authority with an ego that is matched by his skills and banter. The rivalry between the brothers acts as a scripting device to add to the shadowing effect that the hero must break free from.

Mikhail represents the best friend who supports the lead, no matter what. His brotherly bond is different in comparison to the one between Muruvan and Thiesen, but nevertheless a stronger one. Essentially, he is the softer binary so that diverse types of dialogue are achieved. His character is non-aggressive and relaxed, while Muruvan is like a vicious little dog whose bark is matched by his bite, unlike Ravi whose demeanor is more feminine. Bollywood incorporates the hijra⁴ character, a man dressed as a woman, behaving as such. Ravi is a flamboyant, gay archetype; inclusion

of this character was intentional as hijras are not common in our South African context. His high maintenance personality creates tensions with many characters. He aims to be the teacher's pet, which results in moments of friction between him and others, but mostly with Nishaani. Their rivalry creates the much-needed humour and also sincere moment so that the action does not seem like an incomplete journey that is merely constructed on the surface.

Ravi is the recipient of the coach's explosive outbursts and frustrations. The coach was originally conceived as the male authority figure who is stern and commanding and the counter energy of Mrs. Naidoo, who is nurturing and maternal. Bollywood films, both past and present, are notorious for keeping these archetypes alive. These character traits conflict with each other, adding another level of tension to the storyline. An essential figure in the writing was the narrator, who creates and narrates the story, allowing for some comic relief to diffuse tension and the physical manifestation of Lord Ganesha himself. The narrator plays a key role in providing crucial information about the teachings of Ganesha through monologues form and allowing time for the dancers and crew to change costumes and sets respectively. This narrator was written to represent multiple characters to indicate the notion that Lord Ganesha appears in several forms to assist us and to remove obstacles in our way. Thus, the role was performable and conformed to the theatrical convention of educating through narrative monologues. Most of the religious teachings are delivered through this character with comparisons made between the said teachings and the actual events of the character-driven plot. In writing the narrator's lines, it was vital to present them in natural, active speech rather than in the stiff narrative of the scriptures. The importance of active, natural speech was that the monologue was not delivered like in a sermon.

⁴ Serena Nanda (2010:1) offers the following definition, "the hijra (eunuch/transvestite) is an institutionalized third gender role in India. Hijra are neither male nor female, but contain elements of both. A devotees of the Mother Goddess Bahuchara Mata, their sacred powers are contingent upon their asexuality. In reality, however, many hijras are prostitutes. This sexual activity undermines their culturally valued sacred role".

The final characters to consider are the extras in the storyline to move it forward and to create ambience in scenes. The extra actors, actresses, and dancers that were used to affect the appearance of scenes were given lines in rehearsals, which then added to the length of the script, guarding against making it too long, as space was allowed for such an occurrence. Often these characters would comment on the situation at hand, thus adding to the sounds of a scene. I always leave room in the script that then gets filled in rehearsals to best provide rhythm for the scene and the play as a whole. This process works for me as I am also the director who is bringing the script to life. This also allows me to best understand the script's intention and its themes.

3.1.3 Teasing Out the Themes

The play's themes are love, friendship, religion, betrayal, identity politics of South African Indians, and the politics of the diaspora. Minor thematic content includes class, sport, and art as contributing factors to society and forgiveness. Religion, specifically Hinduism, also features strongly as a theme. The starting point for this script was to educate audiences about the teachings of Lord Ganesha. The many stories of Ganesha as a child defying his father in order to fulfil his promise to his mother to stand guard over her, his father cutting off his head, and other stories of what he symbolises to Hindus (protector, remover of obstacles, and other descriptions from the Sanskrit) are told in modern rhetoric, which connect to the main plot; much of which speaks of a nonviolent way of life.

Friendship and loyalty and brotherhood and sisterhood are important themes as they shape character relationships that lead to a sense of unity and community. The bond between Muruvan and Thiesen is initially a blood one, but it evolves into an emotional one. Thiesen's gravitational pull towards the character of Mikhail is initially emotional but develops into brotherhood, where they share their deep-seated emotions, goals and ambitions. This is also evident in the girls' sisterhood. All genders show unity, loyalty, and a sense of community as they strive to achieve their common goal, while simultaneously achieving their minor individual goals.

The characters' minor goals and the manner in which they go about achieving them reveals much about their identities. An example of one of these mini goals is Mahi's

quest to establish herself within the company. The identities exhibited on stage are created in relation to certain archetypes that exist in Bollywood. The identities, while individually constructed, exemplify archetypal behaviour that draws on multiple traits from numerous people. The stern patriarchal figure is represented in the coach while the motherly, nurturing, and caring archetype is embodied in Mrs. Naidoo. Other archetypes that Bollywood constructs are the heroic male lead with personal flaws that he must overcome through battles that he must fight to win over his love both internally and externally. The female lead is depicted as innocent and beautiful, in need of her hero to rescue or to prove his love for her with a grand gesture. Priya does not need rescuing here, it is Thiesen who is arrested and must be saved from his own acts, but he still has to regain the trust of his love interest.

The archetypes of the loyal best friends are presented in Mikhail and Arjuna. They are unquestioningly supportive of the leads throughout. Mikhail is the odd friend that is incapable of matching the lead, but still strong in presence. Arjuna is the sporty friend who is similar in presence to Mikhail. The identities of Nishaani and Ravi are symbolic of non-hegemonic forms of identity as Ravi is male but more feminine in behaviour, and Nishaani is a female with more masculine behavioural traits. Mahi, who was only written into the script in rehearsals, signifies the novice character, eager to learn and be a part of the action. The villainous archetype is depicted in the character Rhithik, who is evil and cunning and the mastermind behind the sabotage. This identity is disliked by the audience because of his quest to derail and jeopardise the goals of the leads. His goon sidekick is established through the thug, Vedarsha. Bhavika exemplifies the ditsy, clownish quality that the audience connects with because of her redeemable actions. She is the poisonous vixen that uses seduction to come between the leads. Bhavika, Bhavna's sister, and the dowdier of the two, represents the individual who foils the evil plot, a member of the accused party, who brings about redemption; her acts are often righteous.

The extras that filled the scenes with ambient noises were also given speaking lines in rehearsals. These were in correlation to the location and types of characters that each actor decided to become. The Kapoor sisters, for example, were glamorous, wealthy individuals who had servants, representing the higher caste in India. The

servant at Bhavika and Bhavna's household, does not speak, exemplifying her lower caste. The servants of a lower caste are often abused and silent in the presence of the master.

These identities on stage represent not only South Africa Indian identities but also those of Indian archetypes witnessed through Bollywood movies in the cinema and television shows like those on ZeeTv. As a diasporic community, South African Indians have a strong connection to India which is tightly maintained through cinema and television programmes. Thus, one of the themes evident is of identity constructed as a diasporic citizen and the connection to the motherland, India. Mrs. Naidoo is the character that most strongly personifies this theme as she belongs to a generation that is responsible for maintaining this connection. While the younger generations are still connected through their love of the movies, songs, and dances, their connection is more superficial in comparison to Mrs. Naidoo's; returning to India or visiting it, ranks high for most Indians living in South Africa in her age bracket.

Class is a theme that exists to represent the structures within a South African Indian community. The caste system that was brought to South Africa has eroded and been replaced with a class system. There is a South African class system based primarily on race during apartheid and then wealth post 1994. The play illustrates both of these as I look at caste systems as well as class differences. Muruvan, Thiesen, Mikhail, and Nishaani represent the working class, relying on public transport; while Arjuna, Mahi, and the Naidoo family represent an upper-class background. Mrs. Naidoo's appalling treatment of the maid in her household shows a power dynamic that was rife during apartheid and still exists today.

Sport is an active theme as it plays a central role in the lives of individuals residing in most Indian households. This competitive platform in the form of cricket, soccer, volleyball, tennis and even rugby, to name a few are prevalent in many Indian homes. As a child I was actively involved in sports. For many South African Indians sport was considered a unifying system within their culture. It was a good distraction from what was lacking in their lives during apartheid, and post-apartheid it remains a unifying tool for the Rainbow Nation. Cricket is infamous for revealing the connection to India as most people in my family and amongst friends, support India rather than South Africa

in a world championship.

Performance and art are themes as we are living in times where funding for the arts has been slashed and theatres are closing in Durban. There are very few opportunities to develop live performances, yet art plays an influential role in society. The play centres around eight dancers who are going to dance at a sporting event. The dancing itself becomes competitive as two squads rival for top spot. Performance art competes for a place in society. Jealousy is also a theme and features amongst the dancers and Priya when Bhavika begins flirting with Thiesen. Rhithik as the captain of the losing team is extremely jealous. It is this envy that leads to conflict and rising action. Nishaani's jealousy of Ravi, the appointed dance captain, allows for comic relief at times.

Love is a major theme that is exposed through the lead actors' actions as well as other forms. *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017) exemplifies the love between mother and daughter, love amongst siblings, the love for dance and performance and the love shared between friends. It is highlighted in the love Indians have for their religion and the hope for a unified community. Love is at the core of most Bollywood movies, so it is only fitting for it to feature in a live performance of the same genre.

Family and community-building is also a theme in the play. As Indians in South Africa, we are constantly reminded of the value of family and the sanctity of community. South African Indianness is driven by a need to remain connected to the motherland, while at the same time being rooted in South Africa. Family bonds might be tested, but they are reinforced with help from our family, friends, and community. It is in this community in Durban, South Africa that we have found homes and fostered levels of acceptance. While we may resemble our ancestors, we do not think the same thoughts regarding culture and religion, nor do we have the same family values. Sibling rivalry is showcased through Muruvan and Thiesen and Bhavika and Bhavna's relationships. This is also one of the issues presented through Ganesha and his brother Muruga's story. It is also through these relationships that we learn about forgiveness.

Camaraderie is an important theme as it is necessary for the happy ending that this Bollywood Musical demands (Mishra, 2001:114). The team of Durban dancers is

forgiving of their foes, which leads to all of them dancing together at the final event. This acceptance of each other unites them towards a common goal. Lastly, the theme of power and gain is evident in the power yielded by the coach and the pursuit for power exhibited by Muruvan and Nishaani. We also see power and abuse thereof between Rhithik over Bhavika and Vedarsha. There is also the looming power struggle to dance centre stage. And of course, we all relinquish power to a higher being in the form of God.

3.1.5 Pen to Paper, Discovering the Points in Order

My writing process may not be typical. Keeping in line with contemporary technology, the script was typed on my phone's memo pad, then emailed to my computer to use in the final writing. This method allows me to write on the go. The process begins with a concept. The play was conceived to impart knowledge about the Hindu deity Ganesha, and to showcase aspects of religion in a contemporary way, which reached a diasporic generation that is starved for meaning in culture. Secondly, I wanted to explore the medium of Bollywood through theatre. At the core of this play is Thiesen and Priya's love story. It was important to entertain while educating and that the delivery of information was natural rather than a sermon.

Additionally, I wanted to highlight Durban Indianness and to bring it to the stage, and therefore I adapted the Bollywood style to live performance. The dance numbers that accompany this genre include an opening dance that serenades Ganesha, a love dance where we see the couple's romance blossom, an item number that involves someone well-known, a nightclub medley, and the dance finale.

Choreographed by their stern coach and chaperoned by the overbearing mother of one of the dancers, the dance troupe venture to India to show off their talent, but the characters have to confront one obstacle after another. The lovestruck couple are strategically divided by the evildoers and the hero is arrested after a fight in the nightclub. The action is narrated by a character that is the physical embodiment of Lord Ganesha who guides the characters and pushes the action forward. The character list includes Priya Naidoo (heroine), Thiesan Pillay (hero), the narrator (Ganesha), the coach, Mrs Naidoo (Priya's mother), Muruvan Pillay (Thiesan's

brother), Ravi (dance captain), Arjuna and Nishaani (best friends of Priya), Mikhail (best friend of Thiesan), Mahi (new dancer), Bhavna and Bavika (twin sisters from India), Rhitik (the villain) and Vedarsha (the goon).

The love story must exist as a love triangle to add conflict (Desai, 2004:5; Mishra, 2001:16). The hero and heroine must encounter obstacles in pursuit of their effort to unite. A parental figure or grandparent often appears to impart knowledge and nurture the leads. The hero and heroine must have a pure love and an innocent desire to belong together, a relationship that seems cosmically fated. However, the hero must, for some reason, fight to win back the lost love of his betrothed, a love that has been lost through his own actions or those of someone else. The hero must lose his love so that his valiant efforts to regain it become heroic. He loses his love through lust for someone else or through the overbearing pressure from family and friends to find someone more suitable. Their relationship is solidified by encouragement and supportive friends or sidekicks.

Bollywood is famous for using multiple locations and this proves challenging in theatre as it is a live medium (Mishra, 2001:6). However, multiple locations can be created with the use of scenery projections or videos. The dialogue must be deliberately metaphorical and image-filled and must include heart-wrenching monologues that swell with emotion and keep the audience rooting for the hero and for good to overcome evil.

The writing can tackle social issues, but this is often not the popular choice in Bollywood, which is seen as a form of escapism (Ganthi, 2013:3). The script or plot can depict elements of real life (Desai, 2004:1). As Bollywood is a symbol of Indianness, it was essential that the dialogue exemplify South African Indianness. Bollywood is famous for promoting nuclear family values and strong bonds to family and community (Mishra, 2001:4). Conflict must arise from miscommunication or misinformation. A narrator character and stock archetypes are deliberately written to be identifiable (Mishra, 2001:6). Along with the dance sequences, there are elaborate, over the top, fight sequences followed by a chase (Desai, 2004:23). The chase will be unnecessary in a limited theatre space with few levels and entrances. It is customary for there to be a happy conclusion in the Bollywood genre where all the plots come

together in a happy resolution. I omitted the necessary flashback sequence as this would not have worked in this theatrical performance. I felt that the action and the writing had to be typically melodramatic. I included an intermission, as I have observed that this is tradition, and ensured that the script was not too lengthy – 45 pages without dance routines.

Character-naming was a lengthy process, as the meanings of the names had to be connected with the characters' personalities and traits. For example, Muruvan is a version of the name Muruga, who is the older brother to Lord Ganesha. Priya means pretty and innocent, which is symbolic of the character's archetype. Bhavika, Bhavna, Vivek, and Rhithik are names chosen for their direct relationships to Indian, Bollywood stars. South African Durban Indianness has many common names embedded in it, such as Mrs. Naidoo. Naidoo is a common Tamil surname in Durban, and Coach Singh is a common Hindi surname. Nishaani is a well-known Hindi female name but is rather dated. Thiesen is more modern a name and was chosen to bridge the gap between old and young audiences, a relationship that is fostered with both generations as the characters speak to their respective generations. I worked through the name lists alphabetically so as not to repeat names from other plays that I have written. This stems from my own cultural practices where the naming process of a child is astrological, and names are determined from the alphabets provided by a Guru and are thus auspicious.

The title of the play had to be catchy and precise to capture the essence of the play. A title must titillate and entice the audience before they learn more about the play. It cannot be too long and wordy if the aim is to advertise on street poles. The title had to exemplify cricket, dancing, religion, and the diasporic connection to the motherland. Title considerations included Delhi Chasers, a name similar to a team in the IPL 20/20 Cricket, and GPL, similar to IPL, was another option. *BOMBAY CHASERS* was chosen as Bombay is the old name of Mumbai, the home of Bollywood and it represents the desire to connect with the motherland, as chasers of an ancestry. Chasers connects to cricket, while Bombay represents the connection that the South

African Indian diaspora has with old Indian customs, while it was still Bombay. The dancing was incorporated into the script and was a vital component of the script as it

added to the Bollywood aesthetic that is sought after.

3.1.6 Fancy Footwork and Distinguishing Bookmarks

Dances are an important aspect as they help the storyline, as opposed to just appearing randomly. They are part of the storyline and enhance the emotional connection with the audience while also offering the costume spectated and energetic entertainment that embodies the aesthetic appeal of Bollywood. From my observations of Bollywood cinema, it is not often that the movie begins with a dance item, but as the writer I chose to start with one, as many musical theatre shows open with song and dance. I decided that the opening dance would be devotional and energetic and included the entire cast to introduce all the players in this epic tale. The problem with this was that some in the cast were not trained dancers, and for this reason some of them had to be removed, which defeated the concept of introducing all the key players in the beginning. I chose a love dance as the second dance where the couple would experience their first touch to ignite the spark between them. The love dance, in my experience, may happen at any point in the first half of the script. This is an explosive moment, filled with the romance that will draw the audience into the world of the protagonist couple. Having placed the romantic number early in the live action worked as the script is not as long as its cinematic counterpart would be. It worked to build the romantic expectations of the couple who will soon face challenges to their love. The negative aspect was that the couple had less time to change before the next scene in which they were required to perform.

The third dance depicted travel with an accompanying video to highlight the journey that the team took from South Africa to India. This was also the intermission dance which provided a cliff-hanger for the audience who would return after a break. This dance worked to fill the gap of telling the audience that the storyline was changing locations and to hide the actual travelling. The heightened energetic dancing leaves an audience wanting more in the second half but at the same time is taxing on the cast when there are not sufficient dancers to fully cover the stage for each dance in the medley.

I decided that the dance that opens the second half would be a traditional Indian stick dance to symbolise the context of India, similar to that of a traditional Garba, which is

a Gujrati stick dance. In this instance, the dancers did not include the leads as they appeared in the scene that followed directly afterwards. The choreography and concept aimed to visually transport the audience into an Indian context that is influenced by what has been traditionally seen in Bollywood movies like *Gangubai Kathiawadi* (2022) by Hussain Zaidi. The fear was that an energetic ending and the expected build-up at the peak of Act I might not match this dance, however, and I settled on this choice as this is a popular style of dance. My decision was influenced by my experience of Durban's annual Garba Festival held every September, which is well supported by the Indian community.

There were also rehearsal dances without music that highlighted some of the choreography as a teaser. This was necessary as the script refers to the dancers rehearsing for the grand finale. The aim was to get the audience excited for the end moments with some exquisite dancing, just enough to whet the palate. The danger was that we would reveal the best moments and that the finale would fall short. Therefore, the basic combinations were revealed earlier with popping lifts, for example, reserved for later. Dance five is a modern dance that represented the sightseeing and travelling done by the squad to India. This replaced the scene that would have been written to depict the idea of touring the new surroundings. The drawback of this dance was that the dancers were required immediately afterwards for a speaking scene. To circumvent this, the script used this dance as a sort of rehearsal while projectors cast pictures of the locations that were visited.

The club medley, routine six, is a three-song mash up that is fierce, energetic, and contemporary. I chose to insert the dance at this point as it is provided a much-needed release of the energy that had built up in the characters. Here I squeezed in as much dancing as I could without it being overbearing. It was also a suitable place to include the 'item number', which is the appearance of a famous person or actor who appears for one dance only. To allow for the dancers to recover from such a tremendous physical feat, I placed a monologue which is spoken by an actor that does not appear in the dance for the entire three songs. With the limited dancers and three songs it was challenging to include elaborate costume changes, however, slight alterations like the removal of a waistcoat or the addition of a jacket between songs, was possible.

The seventh dance was the routine that performed at the opening ceremony of the IPL, as required by the script. This routine solidified the notion of a unified, happy conclusion. The two-song medley tried to use costumes that glowed in the dark, but there were issues as the host space could not manage a complete washout of extra light, and the music change might not have transitioned well into each song.

Dance eight was the finale number that bid farewell to the audience, it had to incorporate lifts as the script speaks specifically to this in a few scenes. I wanted to include lifts as this connects with my own contemporary dance training, however, the dancers did not have the same training, as Indian classical dance does not include lifts. To teach lifts took time and the dancers had to adapt and they did not achieve what I had envisioned when I wrote the script. Dance nine is the reprise, an encore number that is purely for audience demand and a final bid to thrill the audience.

3.1.6 Styling My Rhyming with Historic Habits

There are certain elements that feature in most of my plays, and these include underscoring. Monologues and scenes are underscored, like in film, to further tug at the audience's heartstrings. I use instrumental music for scenes and lyrical songs for dance pieces. The lyrics speak to the narrative or support the plot. I will provide specific examples of songs when I present examples of all the show songs used.

I am fond of the split scene device, where dialogues are written to be performed in distinct locations even though they deal with similar issues, and sometimes the dialogue from one scene leads into the dialogue in the other. This too is a familiar device in film scripts, but in theatre this effect is best executed through fast lighting changes on specific lines, for marked areas of the stage. There are two split scenes, one in each act. The script offers the following example:

Split Scene vi

Boys

Ravi: Better enjoy the toilet, before the thigh torture of a long drop (*he disappears into a stall*).

Muruvan: What are you two retards snickering about?

Mikhail: We weren't snickering, but if you must know...

Thiesen: Let's just get back.

Girls

Arjuna: So, you like the klutz?

Priya: He's not a klutz, anyone could trip over luggage.

Nishaani: But only he did...

Priya: He's cute.

Boys

Muruvan: If you tell me, I promise not to make fun.

Mikhail: We have a plan to win him his Love.

Thiesen: Dude!

Muruvan: A plan?

Thiesen: I told you he wouldn't...

Muruvan: Brother, relax, if you are in love, then your Bro has you sorted for all the advice you need. I do have a girlfriend after all.

Girls

Arjuna: Hopefully the last four months of flirting will end on this trip and become something more.

Priya: Guys let's just focus on the show.

Nishaani: You only say that because you are afraid he won't make his move.

Priya: Well, he hasn't yet; what's taking him so long?

Arjuna: Patience girl, and if you are so ready, then why did you bring your mother?

Nishaani: If anything is going to block you, she is, with her bold ... personality.

Boys

Mikhail: So, you will help then?

This split scene sees a plan being hatched to get the couple to spend more time together so that their love can grow. In both locations the dialogue seems to have

a similar intention. The writing style is witty, the dramatic tone is always undercut with humour or funny one-liners, for example:

Muruvan: Little Bro needs all the help he can get. I hope the entrance wasn't part of your strategy.

Thiesen: No, but I think we need to rethink this, especially since we need to distract a big obstacle – Mrs. Naidoo.

The writing is poetic and sometimes rhymes. The melodramatic style forced the language choices to be verbose, including alliteration and metaphor. An example of this is found in Act I, Scene iv:

Mikhail: So now you love her?

Thiesen: My young mind is too simple to find the big adjectives to describe her or the way I feel for her. All I understand is that when I'm near her, I can guess what the earth's water feels like when it sees the moon, it swells with emotion. So giddy with excitement and yearning that I am drawn to her and nothing else. She eclipses my heart with her beautiful aura. I barely listen to a word she says because I am so captivated by her rosy cheeks and glistening smile. The glow of her eyes could melt icecaps, just like they have melted their way into my heart and her face infectiously haunts my every thought.

The metaphoric monologue reveals the depth of the love that Thiesen feels for Priya. The attraction is like the pull between the earth and the moon, and her beauty is as rare as an icecap floating in the ocean.

The dialogue is interspersed with monologues that fill the space with heightened emotions. The major revelatory monologues are spoken by key players like the coach, who divulges essential information in the beginning about the plan to take the dancers to India, Thiesen who uses the monologue to declare his love for Priya, Priya who airs her dismay at Thiesen's behaviour, and the narrator, who imparts much of the religious knowledge. An example of the narrator's monologues follows below:

Ganesh: You seem to be envious of everyone that you wish you could be and all that you wish to possess. Remove the blinkers that your jealousy becomes, and you will realise that all that you desire is in you already. While our stories speak similar narratives, we are each embedded with our unique gifts. I know I sound like a postcard or what you call a meme, but at least I'm sitting on this side of the table.

The character is advising the hero on how to fix the situation that he has caused. This

along with other narrator monologues are used to allow for the action to teach a lesson and to give the actors time to change costumes for the next scene. There are six scenes per act, and two acts in total. There are more discoveries in the second half with foreshadowing conflict in Act I. Foreshadowing is a clue in the script that hints at something bigger to come. The monologue that opens Act I, Scene ii is an example of foreshadowing, we get the sense that something ominous is going to arise out of this mysterious conversation.

Scene ii – India

Bhavika: Don't worry yaar, I remember what you said. It's not brain surgery...what are you saying about my brain?... I will meet you after my sister and I go to fetch the South Africans...I agree yaar... I saw the videos, they have some talent...no, no, no one is as talented as you. I can't wait to see you! You better not be late yaar. We can plan when I see you, also then I will have a good idea of where the chain is weakest. You know I can spot a flaw a mile away. Not everything that sparkles is a pure, solid diamond... she will drop me off, she doesn't know about us...ok bye, I hear her plodding along.

The character is clearly plotting the downfall of the dance troupe with a mysterious other person. I have a signature line that features in all of my plays, and this was included in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017). The line is nostalgic as it says, "I wish for a time less complicated". This line reminds me of my childhood and the lessons that I have learned through lived experience. The coach speaks this line out of frustration at what is happening, when all efforts to stay on track are failing.

3.1.7 Finding Inspiration in Different locations

To initiate the writing of a scene I typically take long drives away from the city and head for the coastline where it is more aesthetically diverse and colourful. Here the images that I see infuse with my writing and spark more metaphorical lyricism. The change of scenery combined with the research on Lord Ganesh's teachings aided in the construction of the opening monologue. Lord Ganesha's teachings were converted into active speech rather than informative speeches. I also considered the distinction in rhythm, tone, and word choice for each character.

There are two types of Indian accents presented by the characters, a South African Indian accent and an Indian accent. The characters speak a lot of Durban colloquial

slang in quick rhythm. The characters' language choices attest to their diverse South African Indianness in terms of class, culture, and context, which led to the development of different value systems. Mrs. Naidoo's first speech in Act I, Scene iv is a good example of colloquial South African Indian speech:

Mrs. Naidoo: (*Talking to her husband who is off stage*) The garden and the plants inside must be watered; don't use too much water, there's a drought. I've cooked all your favourites and left them in the freezer, tripe, trotters, tongue and all. I even turned the h'oven to the right settings and time, so all you have to do is put the main switch h'on and h'off...oh and turn the timer on every time. All the stuff in the freezer will cook in 20 minutes. And dare I smell cigarette smoke in this 'ouse, when I come back, there will be war. OK now let me see, toothpaste and brush, socks, h'underwear, blouses, passport that goes in hand luggage.

The language is representative of archetypes yet remains peculiar to each character. Mrs. Naidoo, not only depicts a certain class and educational level of South African Indian women through accent but as mentioned earlier, she also offers much needed release from the tension in the plot. She is archetypal as the big, loud mother figure that is overbearing at most times. Her comic one-liners prove useful moments of high tension. She replaces the doting grandmother figure from my earlier play *CONSENTING SILENCE* (2013/14). Mrs. Naidoo is enthusiastic and excitable and is in full support of the truth and her daughter's romantic follies. She offers much needed guidance as a person of age, and it is through her that we explore old fashioned beliefs about connections to India. For example, she expounds on the mysteries taught to most South African Indians about the powers that exist in the motherland and the spiritual connection that can be found in the Ganges River. Mrs. Naidoo is different from the other sidekick characters in that she serves to remind us of the culture that South African Indians have clung to for more than one and half centuries while living in South Africa. On my drives outside the city, I also mapped the themes that will navigate the action.

The first identifiable theme is religion. The aim was to teach a young diasporic Indian audience about Lord Ganesha's religious teachings and those that have contributed to South African Indianness. The aspects of scripture's teachings on violence or

conflict, relationships with siblings and spouses, and moral guidance were incorporated to deliver the religious component. The second theme is located in the notion of South African Indianness as a cultural body that is separate from its motherland yet still connected. Individual types that unify and exemplify this unique type of Indianness were considered.

The stern paternal parental figure was matched by the nurturing maternal energy, alongside the soft, innocent daughter character. These nuclear structures are still evident along with more evolved family structures. Linked to this was the theme of belonging and yearning: discovering of a sense of belonging for Indian South Africans and a long yearning or desire to know and connect to the motherland. This desire is taught, but actual visits to the motherland are few and far in between. Much of what is practiced in South African Indianness is an emulation of what is seen through the lens of Bollywood movies, which is presented through music, dance, and attire.

Friendship features through the bond shared by the eight dancers and their pursuit of a common goal. The strength of friendship is evident in the challenges they face and the acceptance and forgiveness amongst friends. Sibling rivalry as a theme is enacted in Thiesen and Muruvan and Bhavika and Bhavna's relationships. This rivalry manifests itself the tests their relationships encounter, and one sibling is asked to forgive the other, and their rivalry fuels the pursuit of their common desires and goals. This is also compared to the rivalry between Lords Ganesha and Muruga. Leadership and power are presented in the power that the coach exemplifies as a patriarchal figure and as owner of the dance school. There are power struggles for captaincy over the troupe, by Rhithik over Bhavika and his super-objective to usurp the dance troupe through devious actions. These themes are manifested within a specific genre.

I adapted the Bollywood musical genre for the stage, and therefore, it was essential that the writing be melodramatic with drama undercut by comedy. I leaned more towards comedy in the writing as this proved easier to infuse with the strong religious undertones, making it more accessible⁵. I also attempted to write the entire play on

⁵ Mairi McDermotta and Kim Lenters (2019:1) adds that, "humour, when engaged in the classroom, tends to be used as a means to hook youth into the 'real' material of school...". Humour is used in the writing as a form of hook for the intended audience.

my Samsung Galaxy. The small screen and keyboard took some getting used to, but I adjusted well. I had to edit on a laptop or computer screen. The formatting was problematic but possible to fix later.

The characters for a melodrama are often extraordinary people trying to live average lives. When considering the character of Mrs. Naidoo I drew upon familiar tones and nuances that I had seen in Aunty Molly⁶, a large and in-charge personality, but still caring and nurturing. I also likened the character to personalities like Maeshnie Naicker and Bash with Tash, local Indian celebrities that are exaggerations of life. Mrs. Naidoo's choices in life and attire are striking and bold in an awkward way. In contrast, the coach is more reserved and exhibits signs of a nervous breakdown. As demanded by Bollywood, the coach exemplifies the qualities of a stern father figure with a commanding nature, in comparison to the archetypes of the young hopeful couple with an essence of purity and innocence that gets snatched away.

Thiesen and Priya embody the archetypal Bollywood figures of a young romantic couple. Thiesen exemplifies the qualities of a typical second son of an Indian family, the quieter, meeker brother who lives in his older brother's shadow. Priya displays the qualities and values of the ideal South African Indian girl with astute morals and family values.

I have observed that a narrator in Bollywood movies is responsible for telling the story and occasionally making appearances in the action itself. The function of the narrator in my script served a similar function, that is, to divulge the story to the audience and occasionally appear in the action as a character, but more than this the character facilitated some film conventions to segue more smoothly in a live performance medium, such as allowing time for costume changes and to steer the audience through the rising action. And since Lord Ganesha is renowned for his ability to script and recount events, it is only fitting that the two merged into one so as to impart religious teachings about peace and coexistence, and to become a part of the action, to offer advice to the hero, and to link the scenes. As I wrote the narrator's lines, I realised that

⁶ Aunty Molly is a family friend and my preschool teacher from childhood.

while this role was ideally suited to the transition stages, it was necessary to write fairly long monologues to allow sufficient time for set and costume changes.

Bhavika and Bhavna's characters typify desires in the diaspora, through Bollywood-type archetypal figures - desires that embody the character traits that we see in films. The sisters serve to show us our glaring differences in dress, language, and culture, despite having the same heritage. The Indian cultures of both geographical locations in the play fostered different Indianness. They exemplify the archetypes of the glamorous, cunning but naive beauty contest winner and the nerdy, dowdy, righteous, faithful sister. These are strong traits in Bollywood cinema as are new archetypes that depict women in numerous power roles that were previously male dominated. It is this less conservative space that South African Indian archetypal roles occupy. Anand Singh (2008:2) states that, "[i]n South Africa, people of Indian origin refer to themselves in one of three ways, either as South Africans, South African Indians or Indian South Africans ... they are making a statement about how they wish to be seen in terms of personal beliefs and identity formation".

Not only do the Indian identities define themselves in relation to ethnicity but also to context. Nassima Carrim and Stella Nkomo (2016:1) add that women have a tough time advancing in a context for many reasons, stating that "[a]n individual's managerial identity is not formed solely by personal and social identities in the workplace but by the socio-historical political and cultural contexts within which individuals and groups are embedded. These contexts shape not only the racial-ethnic and gender identities of individuals but also the processes of racialization, gendering and culturalization that create and reinforce particular social locations in society".

Historically, Bollywood films depict woman as conservative, homely beings under the proverbial patriarchal thumb, but this representation is certainly eroding. The male characters in Bollywood have also evolved, and it is from these changes that Vivek and Rhithik were fleshed out. Their names are derived from famous stars Rhithik Roshan and Vivek Oberoi. Their behavioural speech patterns are a compilation of traits gathered from several Bollywood villains. They tend to resemble each other as vocally bold, dim-witted, vicious goons. These antihero qualities accompany those of redemption so as to achieve the ever-popular happy conclusion. To achieve the play's

goals and themes, the South African Indian characters had to look and sound different, be regional-specific to Durban, and this had to suit each character.

Thiesen is a youthful, sporting hero and skilled dancer. He is a great all-rounder on and off the cricket pitch but lacks confidence. Like many Durban Indian boys, he was encouraged to excel in cricket, which is typical for Indians living in middle class dwellings, in predominantly Indian-occupied suburbs like Chatsworth. As the hero, he is flawed in nature, which allows for overwhelming defeat from which he must rebuild himself. Thiesen is surrounded by people, his peers and friends, who help him to succeed in his quest. His equal appreciation for sport as well as arts is a more modern allowance in Indian homes.

Thiesen's brother Muruvan is a typical Indian boy from Chatsworth with rough ways and a taunting personality. He has plenty pent-up energy and is frustrated with himself and those around him, which disguises his fear of failure. The pressure exerted on him is diverted onto Thiesen. Muruvan is cocky but rightfully so with regards to his skill and talent. He thinks he should lead because of age, but his personality clashes with most characters. He is competitive and enthusiastic, overzealous at times, but lacking in wit. He embodies many of the qualities of my own older brother.

In contrast to Muruvan, our heroine Priya is gentle and caring in nature and is the perfect opposite and equal for Thiesen. She exemplifies the ideal South African Indian girl who is compassionate and beautiful but who also has an adult wisdom. Her moral compass is sound, and she is family-oriented. She is likened to a rose in the process of blooming. Priya is a devoted daughter, but she also has her flaws with regard to her mother. Priya offers support to her friends as they support her unconditionally in return. She is the embodiment of the ideal Bollywood heroine, who has a complicated relationship with the nurturing archetype.

The sidekick characters brought harmonious balance to the ensemble. They construct a context in which the leads are able to live out their tale of romance. Ravi is the book-smart sycophant that always seeks to please the coach. Although these endeavors have won him captaincy, he is loathed by the other dancers and often mocked. His journey leads him to accept himself as a homosexual. Ravi also serves to create a lot

of the humour in the play. This bumbling, foolish, 'stick in the mud' archetype has a strong presence in Bollywood films. Mikhail on the other hand is revealed as a character whose archetype is supportive and is the hero's best friend. His bond is confirmed by his actions and words of advice. He is steadfast in his championing of the hero's quest to find love, and the wingman who is overt and playful in nature. He is forward speaking, but seldom forward thinking. Nevertheless, he is also heuristic in nature. I have met many Indian boys like this, including my best friends from primary school, Rubendran and Darren. This archetype is destined for a bachelor lifestyle in Bollywood.

Unlike the male support cast, the female characters are more defiant in nature. Nishaani is the type of character that defies conventional definitions of South African Indian beauty. She is tomboyish in her speech patterns and mannerisms. She dresses more like a boy and has fists to boot. Nishaani is driven in her ambition to lead but she also possesses jokester or jester qualities. She is far from the ideal South African Indian girl's depiction, thus ideal for a support role. Her fear of confronting her own identity is what makes her tough on the world and the people around her. This said, she is known to be fast-talking and confrontational with boys because she is strong in her beliefs. I know many females in my own family who typify this archetype.

The final support character is Arjuna, the character located between the archetypes of Nishaani and Priya. She is sporty and intelligent but easily swayed. Arjuna is not as extroverted as Nishaani but not as introverted as Priya. This archetype of the sporting girl is not a lead role position, as Bollywood exemplifies family values and women in more submissive roles. This of course is changing in Bollywood, but the archetype remains a supportive one.

3.1.8 The PENNING Process.

My writing process proved to be quite erratic as the scenes were written in a non-sequential order, which was supported by a detailed scene breakdown. The scenes were described with elements, conversations, and even locations. Act I was written quickly, in a week. I typically write when the idea is fresh and the excitement around the writing is at its peak. I also used the spare time that I have assigned to

writing in between lecturing and researching. It took me almost the entire month to write the play, but this was a non-consecutive flow. The 40-page script should run for approximately two hours including dances but excluding the 20-minute intermission. I fell in love with the script as I do with all my plays; this is important as the plays deal with my life experiences and must therefore sit well with my conscience.

Act II's scene breakdown altered slightly after writing Act I and new scenes were added. This is often the case when the story evolves and takes on a mind of its own. It is necessary to leave room in the process for deviations to the storyline. These unplanned scribbles make for remarkable moments in the script, and I embrace them rather than shying away from them. The lengthened second Act made the play comparable to the epic length of a three-hour Bollywood film. Thus, the writing had to be fleshed out with extra scenes, longer dialogue for scenes, and longer monologues for the narrator.

During the play writing, I envisioned the set on which I would direct. The writing process linked to the directing that would follow as I fulfilled both roles. The initial intention was to use saris as draped backgrounds, but the theatre space could not support draping, so picture stills were projected on three screens placed across the stage. Specific mental images of locations for scenes were foremost in my mind during the writing. For example, a dance studio, a lounge in a posh home, the Durban airport, and a breakfast hall in India. These were written into the script as a guide. This multi-dimensional element is a direct exemplification of Bollywood cinema and thus it's crucial presence in the play.

Each character was written with a specific accent in mind. Accents are important as they help to distinguish characters and regional dialect. The language that is spoken by Indians in Durban today has evolved from that spoken by my parents, for example. Vernacular speech is almost non-existent, and the English language that is heard is more refined than that spoken by my parents, more modern, and sophisticated owing to the elevation of education and exposure to other races on a daily basis. Much of the evolution stems from embarrassment; my grandparents' pronunciation of many English words was inaccurate due to their lack of education. This lack led to a whole dialect of Indian English developing in a Durban context. Mrs. Naidoo speaks in a

broken, Kitchen English, but the other characters are written in speech representative of the many dialects of English spoken by Indian people in Durban. Part of this linguistic fusion are colloquial slang terms, phrases from the Afrikaans and isiZulu languages, and the unique quick rhythm. The language constructed also exemplifies a South African context with the use of phrases like *skraal* (hungry), *haibo* (expressing shock and dismay) and *lekker* (nice). It also refers to social issues like #feesmustfall. These hybrid forms of English are spoken by Muruvan (the lower class, uneducated Indian), Ravi (the hijrah), and Nishaani (the fast-talking, tomboyish Indian girl) for example.

The feedback on the script was extremely positive. Theatre friends and family alike loved the script and the style. After the read through in 2017, Shona Noble, mentioned that the writing unfolded well, that the story became progressively more gripping, and the comedy unraveled and revealed itself well. My main worry concerned the character profiles and whether or not they had been sufficiently rendered and appropriately located in the relevant Durban locations in the writing alone; which was unnecessary as each one is distinct. The script was longer than anticipated but the story was not overdrawn. Although lengthy, recognisable contexts, familiar images and phrases, and dance sequences that energised the audience, as is Bollywood custom, prevented the play from being too wordy. The producer's mother, after hearing the readthrough in 2017, felt that the religious teachings had been simplified. While true, I felt simplification was necessary to retain the entertainment value rather than the play being perceived as a religious sermon. This valuable step of constructive criticism brought much needed assurance and helped to identify problem areas.

The script resembles a Bollywood genre styled play. The characters are lively and provide exuberant metaphorical dialogue. The script resembles Bollywood movies in the form of melodramatic dialogues and the presence of a narrator to explain the action to the audience. The length is appropriate for a Bollywood epic. The Bollywood archetypal characters are evident in the writing, like the stern coach and the nurturing mother. The plot's twists and turns were in line with Bollywood musicals like *ABCD* (2013). There is a love triangle with several obstacles that seek to impede the budding

romance. The costume changes are included in the dance routines that have mimed singing.

These monologues function to recap the events that unfolded in the storyline. This writing technique helps to reduce tangential subplots and tightens the plot. The monologues in the play were written non-sequentially as they are self-standing and did not need to be written in order. Act II has fewer narrator monologues as this would have resulted in the show resembling a religious sermon and slowed the rising action. The religious aspect offered advice in new ways, remarkably similar to my relationship with religion - consider Hansen's (2006) view on mythological plays as performative religion, for example. Religion, like most aspects of culture, is also adaptive, if it is not, it will isolate itself from an emerging generation. Thus, in a sense, *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017/2019) is an example of mythological theatre with aspects of performative religion.

Towards the end of May 2016, I wrote the nightclub scene and the fight and had started on the breakfast scene before pausing, as this ensures that I return with something ready to work on, and I return to the script with more enthusiasm. As time was of the essence, and I had a busy examination period at work and potential sponsors had requested an entire script to peruse prior to any sponsorship commitment, I had to write two scenes concurrently. This enabled me to match the scenes in rising action and flow, thus ensuring continuity of action, which is seldom visible when I write on multiple memo pads on my phone.

I only got a complete picture when I emailed it to my computer and edited it. The penultimate and ultimate scenes' writing comprise a split scene. I started experimenting with this in *JOURNEYING HOME* (2009) and then again in *CONSENTING SILENCE* (2013/14) and then in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017) This type of scene is primarily formally executed in television series as it fuels the audiences' levels of anticipation. This type of observation is only possible because as a writer-director I witness the audiences' reactions and interactions with the final product. *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017) had two such scenes, one in Act I and the other in Act II, both at crucial interludes during the rising action and in those scenes where the characters require moments of clarity and contemplation. The one scene uses the last

word of a character's speech to launch directly into a new scene with a different line in a separate location to illustrate another character's new thought. The second part of the split scene has characters speaking simultaneously in alternative locations. I inscribe titles for each scene and the intention is to capture the essence of each scene in one phrase. This can also be done in the scene breakdown phase of the process.

The convenience of writing on my phone, apart from having the script in my pocket at all times to work on, is that it facilitates staying in the writing zone and writing when the inspiration strikes, and I am able to finish sections and thoughts expediently. The downside is that my screen is a little small on which to view the entire page, resulting in many grammatical errors, only evident on a large computer monitor. The final touches to the script include choosing music to underscore the scenes and backing tracks for the dance routines.

The music, which will be described in greater detail later on, was a mixture of popular, trendy songs like, those from *Kalaank* (2019), and classical instrumental songs for the underscore, like *Kabi Kushi Kabi Gam* from the 1990s. The instrumental triggers feelings of nostalgia in appropriate moments, thus enhancing the scene's mood and tone. The longest tracks are two minutes long, except for the club medley which is a three-song medley, and the finale which is four minutes long. This allowed for the play's rhythm to flow and not stagnate. I cut one dance, where Lord Ganesha races around the world, as this is explained in a monologue and would have been redundant.

I expected the script to do well due to the generous feedback offered by colleagues, friends, and other producers. For some, like Chiara Sewnarain, an actress and teacher, the villainous characters were a smashing hit while for others, like Shona Noble, an award-winning theatre actress and drama teacher, the melodramatic Bollywood style was the most attractive feature of the play. The full readthrough was an informative experience in terms of locating the writing process's end point. Lee-Anne Naicker, a lecturer at Durban University of Technology (DUT), explained that the script was Bollywood in that it told an epic love story and was melodramatic in style. The writing process was only finalised when the rehearsal process began, and I stepped into my role as director.

3.1.9 Drawing the Boxes that the Bollywood Script must Tick

In order for the script to provide performance-driven action, there were certain milestones that needed to be reached. I read the script to ensure that all boxes had been ticked, beginning with the inciting incident, as this sparks the action (Rush, 2005:2). The incident revolved around the team's aim for top spot at the opening match of the IPL. This segues into the rest of the storyline. I then checked foreshadowing to ensure that the script had enough clues to guide the reader or audience to and through the crisis. This was written mostly in the first half. The phone call between Bhavika and the unknown person in Scene ii hinted at the trouble to come. The coach's threats are also exemplifying of foreshadowing, as the warnings were foreboding. The trigger for the action was the sibling rivalry that ignited the narrator, Lord Ganesha, to find physical embodiment to help these siblings and rivals. The reader or audience was then hooked by the flawed hero who had to overcome his own fears and win the hand of his true love. Building the anxiety that leads to the dance extravaganza which was gripping. Crisis appears in every scene, which leads to the major crisis in Act II, Scene iv (Rush, 2005:4).

The crisis and plot unfold much like the Bollywood movie, *Dil To Pagal Hai* (1997), where the love triangle and melodrama are clearly evident. The movie is directed by Yash Chopra and stars Madhuri Dixit, Shah Rukh Khan, and Kareena Kapoor. Reference can also be made to the movie *ABCD* (2013), directed by Remo D'Souza. This knock off of the Hollywood movie *Step Up* (2006), uses dance to convey much of the storyline and crisis. In my play, like *ABCD* (2013), Scene I's crisis is that the dancers are not ready for their performance and the coach reveals their shortfalls. The crisis in Scene ii is that the sisters are not ready to go to the airport, thus delaying the action. Scene iii's conflict is the love couple's anticipated meeting. The conflict in Scene iv emerges as Priya tries to encourage her mother to tone down her loudness. Scene v's crisis is the fearful resistance that stops Thiesen from confessing his emotions. The airport setting in Scene vi, depicts leaving and the urgency to get to India and the crisis shapes itself in terms of Thiesen and Muruvan being late to arrive, and further pressure exerted on them.

The crisis of Act II results from Act I where continued romance is uncertain and the brothers face strike three, like in *Dil To Pagal* (1997). The crisis of Scene vii concerns Thiesen's need to perfect the dances. The breakfast scene, Scene viii, reveals conflict and tension through the appearance of the twins, Bhavna and Bhavika. Scene ix escalates the tension and crisis by creating doubt between the lovers through dance and partnering replacements suggested by Bhavika. Scene x offers the ultimate conflict with the emergence of Vivek and Rhithik, which erupts into a fight. While Scene xi and Scene xii are both part of the resolution or declining action of the play there are still crises to overcome, namely, to free the imprisoned and get to the cricket.

Apart from the desired happy conclusion, the play's resolution presents itself in the two dance crews shedding their differences, like in *ABCD* (2013), and joining forces to take to the stage together; they are able to reach their performance, dodging the infamous India traffic only with the help of God, Lord Ganesha. The tension begins at the end of Scene x when Mrs. Naidoo counsels her heartbroken daughter and encourages her to rather find the will to forgive and trust a foolish young man. That segues into the next step which is freeing the boys from jail and the forgiveness that everyone is privileged to give and receive. There are several monologues that serve as moments of revelation in the plot.

Rhithik's speech in Scene x, like *ABCD* (2013), reveals the plan to foil the dance champions. Bhavna's monologue unites the characters, despite their differences. Mrs. Naidoo's monologue, in her first scene, unearths the desire to travel through the motherland. The coach's monologue in the first scene triggers the tension for the rest of the script that follows, as she reveals the dance troupe's intended goals to dance at the IPL. The narrator's monologues are religiously informative, consoling, metaphorical, and mandatory as a strong linking device. The 12 scenes offer rising action through the main love story and subplots.

There are enough crises to build the action naturally without exceeding the time limit or dragging the action along without cause. A live audience grows restless in a three-hour theatre performance, so they are hooked by the love story and the turbulent ride towards a happy resolution, the antics of the outrageous Mrs. Naidoo and her overbearing presence, the follies and foibles of friendship, and the devious doings of

Rhithik and Bhavika. The scenes are divided furthered by the dance sequences that depict, without words, the missing segments of the storyline; of course, those who understand the lyrics of the songs will understand that the meaning contributes to the plot. It is a storyline that is filled with romance and melodrama.

There was sufficient space to populate the various locations with dense crowds. The ever popular and dominant costume changes were written into the script or facilitated by the monologues. The themes that are both complex and light-hearted in nature culminate in the happy conclusion. I tested the script at various points in the writing process with live readings with close theatre friends and also untrained ears to determine the storyline's appeal and excitement level and to receive feedback about identifiable characters and subplots.

3.1.10 Finding Focus Through Locus

My writing process is also attuned to the happenings around me. During the writing period, May 2017, the infamous Gupta brothers were being investigated for corruption and mishandling of government funds. Although the Guptas remain foreigners to our country, their legacy has tainted the attitude of locals towards South African Indians, thus affecting South African Indianness. As a diaspora community, South African Indians around me diligently question our belonging to the southern tip of Africa, but our ties here are now ancestral for those of us who are fifth and sixth generation South African Indians. Our marginalised status was severely limiting during apartheid, but now we are included in the unifying illusion of the Rainbow Nation.

This explained, marginalisation still exists in the form of racism. There is disparity between intent and action. There are geographical regions that are populated densely by certain races in conjunction with emerging locations where much mixing occurs. Within these undisturbed regional locations, like Chatsworth and Phoenix, Indianness is allowed to flourish and develop while simultaneously remaining stagnant.

Language is one of the main identifiable factors of South African Indianness and years of change has strengthened this feature to an easily recognisable state. Language is taught through the generations, and the generation after mine engages with English on a higher level, while simultaneously deconstructing it to suit their own lived

contexts, which are shaped by a technological revolution. Perhaps this cohort will also manipulate the language further, given their evolving context. The characters' dialects manifest their speech patterns and word selection in relation to location and education. The writing is both specific and generic so that it relates to all. There is always room in the script for the director to interpret new meaning and recontextualise it.

The sport of cricket has seen its own evolutionary steps that led to the birth of T20 Cricket that offers two opposing sides only 20 overs each to set and chase targets. This new brainchild is popular with its own World Cup sought after by teams. This sport has always been popular in Indian schools that I attended and the love for the sport draws enormous support from Indian communities in Durban. Stadiums, homes, and sports bars are filled to capacity to watch with the outcome of each ball of the match when nations and international teams battle for victory on the pitch. In May 2017, cricket fever had reached its climax with the IPL T20 world cup. This world-class sporting event ignited much excitement for individuals whose lives are heavily influenced by the sport, creating a community feel not just amongst Indian fans, but worldwide unification. Its fame and relatability have the potential to draw fans of the sport to theatre if this love, as a focal theme in the show, is exploited.

The Bollywood style too is a certain audience puller; this film genre attracts billions of fans across the globe as well as hundreds of thousands locally. Bollywood cinema is at its peak in terms of appeal in Durban. All major cinema houses like Ster Kinekor and Nu Metro, and television channels such as DSTv and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) screen Bollywood movies (Ebrahim, 2009:1). There is a growing demand from local audiences to watch and imitate this phenomenon. The music, dancing, and customs are being absorbed into South African Indianness and to an extent South African cultural practices. Bollywood is diverse in genre with its many forms that appeal to its equally diverse audiences. Its influence has permeated into the theatre world with songs, dance routines, and costumes becoming familiar features. Bollywood's escapist backbone is key in attracting audiences. Interjections and reactions were added but selected specifically for each individual character, so as to mimic this style. People turn to the cinema to escape their daily drudgery.

The Durbanites in the context of the time during this play was set disapproved of the then President, Jacob Zuma, and the way his maladministration of the country. His corruption charges are an ongoing blight in our political landscape. It was during his leadership that South Africa experienced severe economic hardship. People had lost hope, I was losing hope for our futures, and like many, turned to God for solace. Lord Ganesha's birthday is celebrated in Durban in September, but preparations begin in May. As a Hindu, going to temple on auspicious occasions is essential, and it is in the temple that I am reminded of my faith in Lord Ganesha. The faith that I could not find my Government, was found in the religious scriptures.

I have witnessed through my productions that returning audiences want light-hearted pieces to serve the function of escapism. The distinguishing themes are prevalent enough to stir emotions in local Durban audiences who are themselves looking for escape and solace simultaneously. This play's target market is primarily South Africa Indians with ties to Hindu religious customs that are practiced with this example of Indianness. They represent fears of disembodiment and anxieties of identities residing within a Durban context, and the uniqueness of language. These themes are clearly visible and relatable. This substance is then met with a splash of colour when infused with the themes of love and friendship, and the dances themselves. This thematic focus shifts *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017) into a lighter, musical, style within the Bollywood genre. *CONSENTING SILENCE* (2013/14) was a drama with hints of the musical form inside it, however, still firmly placed in the genre. Writing a Bollywood script is remarkably different to any other script that I have written, yet quite similar at the same time. The writing process has been the same with long drives for inspiration while the format is different in terms of dialogue, dance, and direction.

3.2.1 Drowning in Words the Director Emerges

My journey to become a director began in 2002 when I pursued my honours degree in Drama and Performance Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, specialising in directing and acting. For my final project I directed David Mamet's *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* (1993). It was here that I experimented with a physical style of blocking for the fast paced, wordy play. The set that I designed had three locations in the tiny Studio 5 Theatre. I learned a lot about the directing process, as described below. I

enjoyed honing this skill as I have directed dozens of shows since, refining my particular demeanor and focus on stage. Directing is a special craft that demands full focus, and the director has to wear numerous hats simultaneously, such as director, designer, and sometimes counsellor.

For me directing has always been a multifaceted discipline in which I have been photographer, publicist, costume designer, lighting and sound designer and then operator, set designer and actor – for many varied reasons. The first being that when I initially focused on directing in my career, I was working in a tertiary institution as a drama lecturer and this required me to direct students, in different genres, without much assistance, to perform the abovementioned functions, as is required in any professional setting. The early stages of my directing also involved choosing plays from numerous genres in which to direct the students.

Later, when reading for my master's degree in Drama and Performance Studies, I directed the Greek drama by Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* (458BC) and the following year, the adaptation by Peter Brook of the Sanskrit, *The Mahabharata* for a third-year acting examination. It was here that I learned how to cut a script or to adapt a script to suit a South African audience and how to direct large casts with choruses. Once again, I envisioned the scripts in a physically challenging manner, focusing on Japanese director, Tadashi Suzuki's grounding performance techniques to find an aesthetic that was unique in movement, configurations, and patterns. I played around with multiple characters in a role at the same time, relied on dance sequences as part of battle scenes, and a storyline enacted through movement and yoga. Since then, I have continued on this physically enriching style, which is well-suited for a musically infused genre like Bollywood.

I spent much of my early directing years on large scale productions like Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, and *Comedy of Errors*. In the early 2000s, these shows were conceptually diverse, but they all had one feature in common: they were adapted in style and aesthetic with a Durban, South African flair. They all demanded that I choreograph, publicise, photograph, design and paint sets, design lights, and manage projections and music. The director's role is quite cumbersome and reveals a lot of their passions and positions. Script adaptation and

editing allowed me to forge my own concept into the writer's intentions, thus making theatre that was more relevant. In 2008, after experimenting with other writer's scripts I decided to explore my own writing in my own context as opposed to adapting a script, engineering it to suit my own aesthetic and thus launched into the role of writer-director.

I wrote and directed *REALITY BYTES* (2008) that investigated South African politics through an adaptation of popular reality television programmes like *Survivor*, *Big Brother*, and *Extreme Home Invasions*, for theatre. This politically-infused show challenged actors to explore 10 characters each in voice and body as well as affect the quick transformations into various locations. I used a screen with rear projections to identify locations traversed through this manic journey to get back to 'reality'. When projections were absent, I used voice-overs, as the writer, to allow time for costume changes and transitions as well as shadow puppets on the screen. It is challenging directing yourself, but I fed off the energy that I had directed into the actress opposite me. Actors feed each other's energy in a scene, resulting in them building the rhythm and energy required for the scene. As the writer, I had a deeper connection to the script and was able to capture the essence of my own words when I directed it. This show went on to win best show at the *Musho! Theatre Festival* that same year. As the writer-director I was able to write some of the directing vision into the script as opposed to just basic staging directions.

In my second play *JOURNEYING HOME* (2009), I infused my personal life experiences with cancer – a play that received two Durban Theatre Award nominations. This realism-styled show did not have the physical challenges of *REALITY BYTES* (2008) but was emotionally arousing. The cast of six semi-professional actors and actresses were brave in making a raw emotional piece that not only tackled a sensitive issue, but also depicted characters that exemplified individualism and lifestyle in the new South African democratic era. It was here, in a non-teaching environment that I encountered resistance from cast members to direction and had to be creative in extracting characters that challenged the actors at a higher level. When I cast an African woman in the role of Jessica, a character written to be White, my understanding of African culture was quite shallow, and thus the

direction that I offered the actress was merely touching the surface of what the character could be. I would often find myself at loggerheads with the actress and had to sit with her and delve deeper into her own experiences to develop the character fully, thus fulfilling both our goals as the director and the actress.

My third attempt to write, direct and, once again, perform, was *NO ADDED CHARGES* (2012). The storyline revolved around two bank robbers who desperately need cash after the bank had repossessed their home, while they are expecting their first child. Of course, these amateur robbers botch the task and find themselves in deeper waters. The concept was to highlight the plight of the poor in remote rural areas in South Africa, who were losing their modest properties to banks when they were unable to keep up with rising costs of living and could not pay the interest on their bank loans. My directing peaked in physical quality as I explored farcical theatre for this performance. I found my direction soaring to new heights as I had inflatable furniture on stage, which was then later incorporated into fight sequences. The furniture was minimal but impactful as it became a part of the action.

The fourth play was *CHATS_WORTH* (2014) that used the book *Chatsworth* (2013) by Ashwin Desai to capture an almost autobiographical piece based on the real people interviewed in his book. I directed the one-person show vigorously to encapsulate these figures from history and also to get the actress to explore 11 different characters. Even with years of directing and teaching experience, I failed in places to achieve the desired direction as the actress was untrained and unwilling to learn. It was challenging as I had to walk away from the work, feeling unsuccessful in my attempts to help the actress grow. The physical nature of the genre, a one-person show, proved too much of a challenge for the actress. I learned that even with diversity, some performers are just unreachable, and so instead I disguised what I could not fix with music and through the creative and tricky use of a single property or commonly referred to as a prop, the scarf. I used the prop in several ways to depict different characters and used it as various items on stage. This minimalist setting and prop use were derived from poor theatre.

This minimalist aesthetic was pursued in the sequel to *REALITY BYTES* (2008), in the physical Two Hander piece, *NO CONTEST?!* (2015). Like its predecessor, the sequel

navigated South African politics on a social level, through 22 characters. The characters are larger than life but are directed to occupy the space where a set would traditionally be situated. The projection screen was the only solid set structure that was used for transitions and videos. The actors were sporadically positioned and made use of the stage and auditorium, diverting the audience's attention so that props could be set on stage. The characters themselves were bold in physicality and diverse in their accents, and to direct this I spent many hours reinforcing the physical shape of a character as well as the tension in the mouth to realise each accent and the dialects. The sequel required numerous, full, quick costume changes that required precision and timing. To achieve this the videos had to be timed perfectly. I hired an assistant backstage manager to get the costume changes down to the required time.

My direction of *SLIPPED THROUGH MY FINGERS* (2016) mentored the actresses to reinterpret the script through sign language and dance, specifically Bharata Natyum (classical Indian dance) as the festival was a Deaf Theatre Festival. The result was a bridging between verbal and the signing worlds. The show reinforced the emotional trauma of parents of children with differently abled bodies and the hardships that the children face. The projections depicted time passing to imply that this dialogue occupies the space of one full day. The painted art that was projected on the scene was commissioned for the theatrical show.

My sixth script revealed itself in a very delicate manner that saw me write and direct a play about individuals living with hearing impairments. The success of the show was achieved through intense character-building work with someone who was reading my lips for comprehension. I had to slow down my speech and used an intimate rehearsal venue to focus on character work and blocking (the character's movement and gestures). I wrote poetry about the emotional relationship between a mother and her hearing-impaired daughter, which was projected onto a screen in real time along with paintings of the outside world, at various times of the day. I infused classical Indian dance into the script to draw on the strengths of both the actresses. The combination of intimate poetry and verbose facial expressions depicted in Bharata Natyum, was a winning one as the audience gave the show a standing ovation and the review by Latoya Newman in *The Daily News* was positive.

OUR MAN CLINT (2015) was my seventh play as a writer director, and the second play that I was commissioned to put on stage at the Catalina Theatre while I was Artistic Director there. *OUR MAN CLINT* (2015) was inspired by the two 70s television series about detectives solving mysteries, *Our Man Flint* and *Charlie's Angels*. This musical revue whisked the hero on an international adventure, and to depict this a screen was used. This was enhanced by song selections from the story's locations. This integration of lyrics, scripted text, and choreographed movements and sequences blended well together. The songs, like in a Bollywood musical, propelled the storyline forward. My understanding of this genre expanded as I experimented with bringing action, suspense, and chases to the stage. All the above writing and directing prepared me to bring my passion to the stage, in my opinion, the greatest film medium, Bollywood.

CONSENTING SILENCE (2013/2014) was my initial attempt at experimenting with my childhood dream of adapting Bollywood to stage. The direction involved designing an accessible stage with draped, changeable backgrounds created with draped saris. The multi-levelled stage rosters allowed for intimate settings and ample space for dancing. The script is set in India, so I had to simultaneously master and teach these Indian accents to South African actors. The crowd scenes, significantly smaller than imagined, were populated as much as possible in the intimate theatre space. The smaller dimensions limited the dance routines. The style was melodramatic with fight and dance sequences. The drama was intensified by emphasising the dramatic monologues and intense emotional moments in the play, and the action unfolded like that of a Bollywood movie. The theatre performances were well attended every night, and the audiences were enchanted by the aesthetics of this Bollywood-styled show. The success was measured by audience approval along with four Durban Theatre Award nominations. In between my own writing and directing in a professional setting, I also directed other experimental styles.

I directed one person shows and protest pieces with students. I directed shows in professional venues like the Catalina Theatre, the Playhouse Theatre, the Hexagon Theatre, and the Stables Theatre with *The Off-Side Rule* (2015), *She Put the 'I' in Identity* (2014), and *Handle Your Business* (2013). These shows used the structures

of stand-up comedy and infused a multitude of physical elements to culminate in a hilarious theatre experience. The combination of physical and verbal humour proved successful with audiences and theatre reviewers alike.

3.2.2 Durban Directors Dabbling in Bolly-World Staging.

My most successful theatre venture to date, *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017/2019), was performed at Sibaya's iZulu Theatre in May 2019. The two-year gap between writing to staging was spent finding a theatre venue to house us and to try and raise the necessary funds and sponsorships to produce this mammoth show. I will use this experience to present my directing process in more rigorous detail and identify the path followed in order to extrapolate the specific directing style that brought Bollywood theatre to our Durban stages.

The directing journey launches well before the rehearsal and staging of a show. It is an arduous task that demands much attention from the director these days. The director guides and manages the production to bring it to the stage, navigating through the challenges. And like any endeavor, obstacles are certainties. Before I explore my own directing of Bollywood Theatre, I deem it necessary to present the styles of two prominent Durban Indian directors in order to highlight the journey that this genre has traversed. There are several Indian writer-directors in the Durban community and for the purposes of this research two were investigated, namely Vivian Moodley and Ashwin Singh. Both of them began writing in difficult political climates, which is reflected in their style and content.

The older of the two, Vivian Moodley, began writing and directing theatre more than 30 years ago, during the 1980s, the final years of the apartheid struggle. His style of theatre was often classified as protest theatre, which paired well with his own belief that theatre may be viewed as a 'cultural weapon' through which pertinent issues like racism can be navigated (Moodley, 2018:1). His early works distinguished themselves by revealing issues that affected the undermined non-white populations of South Africa. Moodley (2018:1) started in the business as an actor and naturally progressed to directing. His passion for writing and storytelling made for a formidable combination as writer-director.

Moodley (2018:1) says that his writing style is adaptable in relation to the actors that are at his disposal, especially for comedy writing. His ground-breaking work in *Bhagwan Gave Me This Life* in the 1990s, saw him write and direct an entirely Hindi show in a predominantly English-speaking context, and was the first of its kind in Durban, South Africa. His approach and style are also shaped by content and context, (Moodley, 2018:1). His childhood in the 1950s equipped him with the language that describes context convincingly and confidently. He has lived through a history where the political context of our country shifted several times, and each time these paradigm shifts were marked in his writing (Moodley, 2018:1).

As a director he believes that he is an actor's director such that he can conceive and construct a show in relation to the actors' strengths. Moodley (2018:1) recounts workshopping plays with colleagues, exploring a more experimental type of theatre experience, and evolving according to the audience's changing demands. He also admits that it is difficult to please audiences and keep them returning to the theatre and therefore new styles must emerge to recapture the theatre goes at the expense of what he calls 'true theatre'. I too have experienced similar dilemmas, forcing my own writing to deviate from 'true theatre', that seeks to acknowledge social issues and challenge injustices. One of Moodley's first shows from the early 1980s, which he wrote and directed, was *Coast of Dreams*, which highlighted the problematic implementation of The Group Areas Act (1956) and how this affected the folks living in Warrick Avenue Triangle (Moodley, 2018:1). The mixed-race group district was directly impacted by the Act, but as Moodley was Indian and the community included Indian people, the play was recognised as protest theatre and was thus categorised as SAIT.

Moodley's second venture in the 1980s, *Hamba Kahle Moodley*, was similarly classified. This politically infused piece evaluated the tensions between Indian and African people during the 1980s when tensions rose to near boiling point and integration seemed unlikely. Moodley (2018:1) states that his intentions with these plays was to use theatre as a means to challenge the status quo of segregation and racism, to change it. Theatre was also affected by the apartheid laws but nevertheless it has always been a vehicle for change and a beacon of hope.

Moodley (2018:2) recalls other artists who banded together during apartheid to cultivate a community that demanded equal rights. Farouk Hoosen Sayed was one such activist who used his art to shape the opinions of freedom fighters. He also named performances similar to his style of SAIT. After many shows in the 1970s and 1980s like *Lahnee's Pleasure*, *It's A Colourful World*, *Stable Expenses*, *Coast of Dreams*, and *James Commission*, audiences wanted to see something new. Moodley's style evolved to meet this new audience's demands and was imbued with what he calls Indian ethnic farce (Moodley, 2018:2).

This lighter genre of SAIT relied heavily on stereotypes to portray humour, forcing serious theatre to the back seat. This style of theatre was immensely popular in the late 1980s and 1990s. Moodley's contribution to ethnic farce was manifested in his play *Hanged by The Thali*. It had a large Indian attraction due to its content. Thematically it introduced the audience to a comedic view of marital unrest. The appeal for this thesis lies in Moodley's use of popular Indian music and dance, which he believes boosted the show's appeal and attraction (Moodley, 2018:2). He followed this path and wrote and directed *Shady Lagoon* in the 1990s, which was a comedy spoof of television and film shows at the time. It borrowed popular scenes, songs, and sequences from these shows and used them as part of the performance. This show also featured the melodramatic style that Bollywood is known for. At the time Moodley would not have labelled this as Bollywood Theatre as he was unaware of its characteristics (Moodley, 2018:2).

Moodley (2018:2) admits that anything Bollywood-related has proven very popular amongst South African Indian audiences and therefore he continued to borrow elements from this film genre and relocated them in theatre to ramp up the appeal. He further confirms that the appeal lies in the connection that South African Indians have to the Bollywood genre as a diaspora (Moodley, 2018:2). The culture depicted was exemplified by local Indians who were cultivating their own unique sense of culture and Indianness, which was now a combination of many facets.

The second writer-director I researched is Ashwin Singh. Singh is a prominent writer, director and actor in Durban and abroad, and was generous with his time when I interviewed him in June 2018. He generously shared several matters pertinent to SAIT

as well as his own experiences as a writer-director. He has written 12 shows and of these, six were self-directed. Singh often takes on legal work in order to sustain himself, as funding and opportunities for teaching theatre and performance itself are limited. He runs his production company, Singh Siblings, with his sister. He recounted his initial dabbling in the arts, theatre, and film, in the mid-1990s.

His debut efforts were in educational theatre, which he embarked upon with Pravesh Herman. He explored this medium by writing satirical sketches, a style that was extremely popular at the time (Singh, 2018:1). Like so many before him, he employed this satirical style with impersonations that allowed him to present politics and politicians in a farcical way to mock and challenge the political climate that existed at the time, very much like I do. This was the style that was regularly featured at the Asoka Theatre in Westville, which housed many Indian theatre shows before it closed down.

Singh (2018:1) then entered into partnership with John Vlismas and Shaun Griggs, both stand-up comedians, and they experimented with a then emerging form, comedy sketches mixed with stand-up. This fusion enhances physical humour with the wit and polemic satire of stand-up comedy. I experimented in this same style of theatre-making in my early years. His growth in the form expanded in 2001 when he worked with Joe Carol and Ivan Boniazchik on *The Rainbow Indignation* (2001) (Singh, 2018:2). This form of theatre was expanding and spreading rapidly; several artists experimented with it, such as Ben Voss, Krijay Govender, Zoe Parker, Keseran Pillay, and Gavin Simpson, known comedians. I myself found my feet in this style in 2008 with my first play. This comedy genre found a home in the then new Catalina Theatre at Wilson's Warf in Durban's Bay area. To break from the comedy and sketch style, Singh wrote his first staged play *To House* (2003).

Singh (2018:2) admits that his first attempt at writing faltered as it contained too much – too many characters and subplots with too many interwoven relationships, emphasising that fewer characters are easier to develop fully. I agree with this, as my novice attempts at writing had only two to six characters. This makes the story more detailed and specific. Of course, this style of writing evolved; with a Bollywood musical, a small cast is insufficient to move the plot with its dialogue and dance. Singh (2018:3)

claimed that his process begins with an idea, provocation, or event from which the character then emerges. This aligns with his need to create theatre that reflects social change, much like my own writings. Singh's emotional encounter with the law, as a lawyer, is dramatised in *To House* (2003). The socio-political theme was then fleshed out in a synopsis or a treatment, medium-dependent (Singh, 2018:3). And much like my own style, in comparison, a detailed character biography for each character and a thorough scanning of the plots and subplots before writing commences.

Singh (2018:4) stated that after every scene is written, he reads them out aloud, dramatising them with gusto and drama to hear what the dialogue sounds like and to test its efficacy and appeal. Once the entire plot has been written, similar to me, he reads it out aloud to trusted individuals for feedback, before a second draft is considered. Singh's view on being a writer-director and the relationship between the two is that it is easier to compartmentalize the two, to ensure that one succeeds in both, but at the same time it is beneficial as you develop an intimacy with the story (Singh, 2018:4). The writer in you has to be forgiving of the director in you, the director who may – during the casting and rehearsal process – have to deviate from the writer's initial intentions.

Certain actions reveal themselves through the text that cause the director to manifest new intentions and even edit the text. These edits appear as line additions or removals, changing character profiles and genders or even relocating the context, similar to my process. Singh and I agree that when you become the director you have to embody that role entirely in order to steer the play in the best direction. Singh (2018:6) recommends that the director navigate the best route to achieve the clearest meaning for the actors and the audience. He admits that there is merit in a third eye examining the script, and that many of his scripts have recently been directed by other well-known theatre directors, including myself, but the writer-director role offers specific insight into the goals and intentions of the play and reflects that on stage (Singh, 2018:6).

There are positive and negative aspects in this role of writer-director. The pros are that you can identify the play's original intentions, and this leads to you seeing the artistic process to completion, from pen to stage. A drawback is that the writer-director is too emotionally invested in the play and is blind to the flaws in the words and actions.

Singh (2018:7) notes that an individual may be an actor, writer, and director, but one of these skills will dominate. Therefore, the negative aspect would be that the writer-director is unable, on their own, to identify the flaws that may have arisen. The writer hands over their work to directors when the technical side of the script challenges his capabilities as a director. Another downside to this role is that one is so attuned to what the character should be like, that the actor's ability to create a character for themselves is reduced (Singh, 2018:8). A further downside is that the writer-director assumes the many stresses of the show, but the eventual rewards outweigh the cons, especially if you are the first director of your writing (Singh, 2018:8).

Ashwin Singh (2018:9) highlights the problems that most theatre companies and directors in Durban face, which invariably sees the director wearing many hats, which include producing and co-producing with theatres to ensure that a script makes it to the stage, and this often means directors taking to the stage and becoming an actor, as I have had to do. Singh suggests shying away from acting and directing, should the script be too demanding and technical (Singh, 2018:9). Often directors are set, sound, and lighting designers, costume parade coordinators, and even stage managers. This arduous task is taken on to contribute to the broad spectrum of SAIT, which is prominently located in Durban and Johannesburg. We are drawn to this colourful, boisterous form of theatre with larger-than-life characters.

Most importantly, we write to represent the community that feeds this theatre. Singh (2018:10) admits that his particular style of writing has produced a very eclectic collection of plays. His writing style encompasses lengthy monologues amidst wordy dialogue. His voice as a writer is identifiable in all of the styles with which he has experimented. While Indian himself (and many of his shows have an all-Indian cast), he denies the label of SAIT, as his writing intention is to appeal to people from diverse walks of life in South Africa (Singh, 2018:11). Singh's plays have a large Indian following as the characters and stories presented on stage resonate with locals, so it resembles this unique South African Indian culture. This representation is attractive to this community. I disagreed with his emancipation from the label as much of his writings reflect a lived history that could be viewed as culturally specific even though it is multiracial in cast; his writing voice is ever present as an Indian man.

This kind of thinking is only possible in a post-apartheid context where race is not used as a dividing factor. We write our contexts, and our Durban, South African context is one in which we are able to integrate our cultural knowledge with other cultural practices instead of our minority status. Most writer-directors who are presently adapting their performance to include videos on social media, keep the style farcical with a mixture of stand-up comedy (Singh, 2018:13). Through it all, the Indian family life, culture, and community are placed at the centre of most shows. Bollywood has infused theatre-makers' styles in Durban. Ashwin Singh himself infused some of his shows with Bollywood flavor.

Singh (2018:15) confirms that he experimented with the genre in *Marital Blitz* (2011) and *PopCom* (2012). While his intention was to satirize his response to the form, he in turn glamorised it on stage by referring to infamous stars and the dance element of Bollywood. While *PopCom* (2012) utilised dance, *Marital Blitz* (2011) explored dance and the melodramatic linguistic aspect and situation to create farcical comedy, because of Bollywood's enormous following and the genre's ever-growing format (Singh, 2018:18). It offers the audience a form of frivolous escapism from an otherwise mundane quotidian experience. Bollywood reminds South African Indians of a distant heritage, one that has now been imbued with the sounds and colours of a South Africa culture. Bollywood often borrows from other genres and styles and so too does this theatre genre in Durban, borrowing from Bollywood to create a unique theatre experience. I, like many other playwrights and directors, use theatre to depict and challenge the paradigm in which we live, one that is free of geographical boundaries and one that represents cultural diversity, as described by Schechner (2002:17).

3.2.3 Together We Stand While We Form a Band

During the twenty years that I have worked as an actor and director I have observed that each director has unique directing styles and approaches to the script, and their dealings with actors. However, there are similarities, and there are similarities between Ashwin Singh's directing style and my own. Directing is a collaborative relationship with actors, musicians, dancers, technicians, and crew, and of course the public. The script is scrutinised in great detail to solidify understanding, concept, and context. Both Singh and I ensure that there is a clear concept for the play, and that this underlying

message is evident in all aspects from acting style to costume choices. Once sufficient time has been spent ensuring that the cast and crew understand the script and concept, we both move on to a readthrough where the different voices get to leap off the page, embodying characters, and we research options of similar characters. While Singh likes to offer familiar examples, I tend to allow the performer to make their own choices, unless they do not have actor training and then an example works best. It is encouraging to allow performers to build their own characters with their own opinions unless they have misunderstood the intentions of the role. I offer the cast opportunities to observe real people to identify traits for their roles and build a physical and vocal repertoire, which is then tested via an exercise called 'hot seating', where the character is interrogated.

Singh (2018) and I both move to blocking the action within the parameters of the style and genre established by the play. It is through movement and gesture that subtext emerges and I, as a director, assist in revealing it through motivated movement. This is a Stanislavski (2008) technique that we both follow. The blocking exemplifies the aesthetic that is a visual manifestation of the concept and intention. I believe that scripts in hands stifles the aesthetic development, so the deadline for lines down is immediate. Singh (2018:3) agrees that the director's mandate is to fuel and feed the play's rhythm.

The play's tempo is discovered through text work: the words, concentration on punctuation and vowel sounds, and sentence structure. Compound sentences and long vowels, for example, give you an extended rhythm. The rhythms of each scene must build on each other and lead to the play's climax before they slow down to the resolution. The characters' unique speech and gesture rhythms must be discovered through direction. To solidify the tempo, Singh (2018) does full runs as often as possible so that it develops a natural pace and tempo. I avoid running it too much as this might hamper growth and result in the performers growing bored. I splice these full runs with sessions where the individual scenes and monologues (that may need attention after noticeable flaws in the full run) are tweaked, and only return to full runs in the week leading up to performance week.

Performance must still have urgency by the time opening night arrives. Singh (2018) jokes that in Durban we lack the privilege of a two-week rehearsal in the theatres, which would give us ample time for technical and costume runs. Often the costume run and technical rehearsal is completed at the rehearsal venue. Unlike Singh, my scripts come with a detailed technical list included in the writing phase, thus making the 'theatre get-in', smoother. The set pieces, or representations of them, are also detailed in the scripting phase, shifting into the directing intentions. Unlike Singh, I opt for a more minimal aesthetic in terms of set design as can be seen in my plays *REALTY BYTES* (2008), *CONSENTING SILENCE* (2013), and *BOMBAY CHACERS* (2019). Mock sets are used to direct the action in rehearsals, while the final pieces are obtained just before we move into the theatre. The difference in our approaches is evident in the following sections that detail my directing process and responsibilities.

3.2.4 Feet on the Ground We Try to Make our Sound

As this research is located in an interpretive paradigm in which the research is subjective in nature (Chilisa & Preece 2005), it is necessary to highlight my process of show funding and finding a venue at which to perform, in order to satisfy my subjective approach to directing, which expands beyond the parameters of just getting the script on its feet. In my brief time in the theatre industry, I have directed roughly 60 shows, ranging from one- and two-handers to large scale productions exceeding casts of 40 actors. My style has remained consistent through genres from satire to surrealism, musicals to Molière, and most recently Brecht to Bollywood. I have enjoyed writing the script and getting the show on its feet so that it finds expression in the ephemeral world of theatre. This challenging title of writer-director extends your focus as you are responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the production converge to provide the audience with a well-constructed masterpiece. Your gaze must stretch far beyond the stage and backstage to encompass producing, designing, marketing, and publicity. The lack of funding in the current context has forced this role to evolve; I begin with the essentials – cash!

Productions need money. Funding is not readily available, so often for a script to reach the stage it is essential to look at alternative avenues for funding and sponsorship. The finished script was used in numerous proposals that were sent out to eThekweni

Municipality, the Arts and Culture Trust, Lotto, The Hindu Society, local temples, and many other governing bodies to secure funding and sponsorship, but to no avail. Six months of meetings were held to sell this product to potential sponsors and eventually Sumanth Singh, the co-producer on the show, and I decided to self-fund the show to get the ball rolling. Writing twenty-page funding proposals was a tedious task and slowed down production, so we advertised auditions and the show to create a hype around the brand.

Sumanth and I used print media, like the local tabloid *Chatsworth Rising Sun*⁷, to spread the news about auditions and social media platforms like *Instagram* and *Facebook* to establish accounts to create an upgradeable, weekly buzz around the show, eight months in advance. The initial launch began in the Durban Botanical Gardens for a photoshoot with local newspapers and press. Girls adorned with elegant Eastern wear that exemplified the concept of the show, which was fun, fresh, and vibrant. This exposure went across Durban, as far as Port Shepstone, and even Johannesburg, from which it drew performers to the audition venue. I firmly believe that open and fair auditioning processes should be followed to offer different actors opportunities to showcase their talent and skills. Durban theatre companies are notorious for offering only a select few actors repeated acting opportunities. Through the open auditions undiscovered talents surface, as was the case for us. Fortuitously, the auditions that we held in Chatsworth, in the Nelson Mandela Youth Centre, were successful. We managed to encounter tremendous talent both in terms of actors and dancers, some of whom had never performed in front of a live theatre audience. Some of the roles had not been filled through the auditions and so I personally called actors and actresses to invite them to attend script readthroughs. Some actors negotiated a higher fee before guaranteeing their participation in the performance. When all avenues for finalising casting were exhausted such as casting calls and approaching actors directly, like Rahul Brignath (who was unavailable), I changed the some of the characters from male to female, such as the male coach to female coach, and Vivek,

⁷ The Chatsworth Rising Sun is a local tabloid newspaper that has been running since 1986 and can also be located online on the following link <https://risingsunchatsworth.co.za>

the male goon, to Vedarsha a female, to suit the cast members that were available but who had been cast in minor, non-speaking roles.

By the time rehearsals approached we were four male dancers short, which made partner-work challenging. The choreographer's expectations were not met in terms of numbers. Six male dancers, including myself, were required to dance all nine dance routines. Discussions with the choreographer, Nisha Mahendra, began in February of 2018. I would *WhatsApp* call her to explain each dance number and the significance it had to the storyline. She would then send me videos of choreography, along to the music that we had sent her, for approval. This went on for nine routines, which were completed prior to her arrival from India. The rationale behind her appointment as choreographer was her sterling reputation in Bollywood films as dancer and assistant choreographer. I felt that this direct link to Bollywood would boost the dance component's quality and standard, which it did. In hindsight I should have sent her the entire script to read so that she could better understand my vision, as some visual concepts were omitted. Text rehearsals commenced two months before opening night, which was scheduled for May, and before Nisha's arrival.

Before rehearsals commenced, I collaborated with a professional designer to design the poster, finalising the design and the colour schemes for each media platform. Different visuals were chosen for each platform to avoid confusion and to establish a brand look. The digital poster, in different versions, was released and re-released on each of the cast members' social media profiles. The digital poster's branded background was superimposed with each cast member's photo, gained from the photo shoot we held, and was shared on their social media feeds as well as our own *BOMBAY CHASERS* social media pages. There were three variations of colour schemes of green and purple which became our noticeable brand. We printed A3 sized posters, with pictures of the lead couple, and put them up at local temples, shopping centres, schools and youth centres in Chatsworth, Phoenix, Reservoir Hills, Ottawa, Umhlanga, Westville, Park Rhyne, and Verulam, as these areas have significant Indian populations. I avoided street pole advertising, as I had previously found it expensive and ineffective in terms of attracting a theatre audience.

3.2.4.1 Searching for a Venue seemed like a Satirical Revue

In practice-based, autoethnographic research it is vital that all aspects of the director's responsibilities be mapped out (Sjoberg, 2008:5). Directing in Durban requires the director to wear many hats; Foucault (2005:225) reminds us that truths must not be essentialist. In a poststructural context, it is then important to look at the redefined role of the director, a role that shifts beyond rehearsals and staging a show. Finding a performance venue is an arduous task for the director. My original plan was to use community halls in Chatsworth, Phoenix, Pietermaritzburg, Stanger, and Tongaat. This idea of taking theatre to the community is a nostalgic journey through the history of SAIT. Unfortunately, taking a show on tour is far too costly and the screens would have been too large to be accommodated in the community halls' stages, not to mention the cost of hiring equipment for each venue. Additionally, potential sponsors and proposals demanded that an established theatre be used to hold the performances to ensure credibility. Securing an available time slot in the Sibaya's iZulu Theatre's⁸ annual schedule proved easier than our efforts at other Durban theatre venues. The Playhouse was fully booked, and The Globe and Barnyard Theatres at Suncoast did not have stages that could accommodate such a large cast, with intricate acting, for the nine dance routines. The space backstage also wasn't sufficient to accommodate quick costume changes. The Sneddon Theatre is often booked out years in advance and offers extraordinarily little space for new artists. Most of their clientele are returning customers with repeat or new shows. The Rhumbelo and Seabrooks theatres were just too small in dimension and seating capacity to accommodate this mammoth show. Our best option lay with iZulu Theatre. They offered an attractive agreement that was affordable, as they offer reduced rates with profit sharing. The backstage area was sufficient for the scene and costume changes and the acting area had four entrances. The upper staging area was off limits to us as it was being repaired. This denied me the staging levels that I was hoping for and forced me to reimagine the shapes and levels. For example, I had originally blocked some of the narrator monologues on the ramp, but now had to place the narrator on the stage. Most of the action took place on the flat stage as it was difficult to have sets

⁸ Sibaya is a casino and hotel venue North of Durban which has a theatre venue as part of its entertainment.

and ramps with the projection screens. This left me with very few aesthetically diverse options for blocking the entire play. Thiesen's confession of his love to Mikhail was also originally placed on the ramp so it would not interfere with the video projections but I had to place them on stage in front of the screens. The task of finding a suitable theatre and securing the time slot took a year and a half. Only once the theatre was booked could we start the marketing campaign.

Between September 2018 and May 2019, we publicised the show vigorously, primarily on social media, with several versions of a press release being custom written for the different platforms. Social media has become our best tool to market a show. The show gained hundreds of followers prior to opening night and is still registering followers awaiting the sequel.⁹ Rehearsal pictures and social sightings of actors are documented on the social media pages, and it also serves as a site on which to publicise notices. This platform made the audience feel connected to the show and they eagerly awaited the final product. Ticket sales were conducted via Computicket, and the 10% levy aside, this eliminated the task of administering ticket sales, allowing us to attend to the ever-growing list of other chores requiring attention. We were not equipped for quick card payments, but I appointed an assistant with industry work experience to take block bookings via email and send them to Computicket. Other tickets were won by the public in competitions we ran in the newspapers, like *The Rising Sun* and *Phoenix Tabloid*, and on radio stations like Lotus FM, which boasts millions of listeners nationwide. The iZulu Theatre reserves tickets for the high rollers that frequent the on-site casino, so a sizeable percentage of the tickets were sold.

3.2.4.2 Researching the Culture to Avoid Disaster

In December 2017, Sumanth and I travelled to India: Mumbai, Delhi, Rishikesh, Haridwar and a few other provinces. This personal and research-driven visit gave me first-hand knowledge of the culture, politics, customs, and rituals about which I was writing and directing. The romanticised depiction of India, as seen in Bollywood movies, proved to be far removed from reality. The pollution, odours, overpopulation,

⁹ This is the media link for the show where pictures and posters may be viewed.
<https://instagram.com/bombay.chasers?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=>

poverty, and slum dwellings are vastly understated in the movies. Delhi is so polluted that smoking in public is banned. The number of street children is overwhelming. The traffic congestion results in a 15 km drive taking three hours. These experiences made their way into the script when Mrs. Naidoo brings out her list of things to do in Act II, the breakfast scene. Some expectations about culture were confirmed, but to my astonishment there were glaring gaps between what I was told and taught by my Aiya and what I witnessed in the motherland. I noted the differences in marriage rituals and ceremonies; while similar in nature, they differ in that weddings in India are typically conducted at night and run for four days. The final vows are only witnessed by the immediate family, which is different to what is seen in the movies, and also differs from South African wedding rituals, where all guests witness the taking of vows.

The stories of the Ganges River's healing powers lead me to river raft down the spiritual waters. Mrs. Naidoo makes mention of her dream to step in the Ganges in Act I, and Priya and Thiesen refer to it in Act II when they are rehearsing. The Indian community there mocked us for our lazy, colloquial use of Hindi, which only slightly resembled what was spoken to us. I scrutinised the English accents spoken, this is what I was most interested in directing through the characters of Bhavika, Bhavna, Rhitik, and Vedarsha. The poor are treated very differently to the wealthy. I tried to make conversation with a waiter at the wedding that I attend during my visit to India in 2018, and he felt awkward and uncomfortable that someone of my middle-class status was speaking to him; the manager then told me that I was not allowed to address the waiter directly. This incident made its way into the play in the relationship between Bhavika and the maid, who does not speak in the play.

The Indian dress sense and fashion were similar to that observed in Bollywood movies, but everyday wear was dowdy and less flashy. Thus, Bhavika and Bhavna were costumed in expensive *lengas* (two-piece skirt and blouse), while the maid wore a plain brown sari to represent her lower caste. The villains were based on three men who tried to assault us while travelling in Mumbai. Their fierce demeanor and hand gestures were infused into Rhitik and Vedarsha's characters. These are just some of the observations that sparked ideas for the show, as well as ideas for characters based on the individuals that I had met while on my visit. While there, we also sourced

costumes, some props like the Ganesha masks for the opening dance and Ganesha pendants to hand out to audience members after each show. This research can also be conducted in a library or online, but we were fortunate enough to experience it first-hand. This allowed me to direct with a keen sense of what I was imagining and the portrait that I had painted, through moving pictures on stage, was further layered by this experience. The importance of Bollywood as a medium was made clear as I witnessed the context for which it creates escape. The levels of poverty are exponentially exemplified by the large populations of people. Slums are ever-growing and encroaching on town and city. The never-ending traffic congestion and noises are simply overwhelming. Water purification is dismal, thus making tap water hazardous to your health. These observations made their way into the script to assist with authenticity.

3.2.5 Preparing the Inevitable, We Rehearse the Fable

As an autoethnographic study that aims to describe my directing process of a Bollywood play from rehearsals to staging, I narrate the process in detail. Before rehearsals commenced, I finalised the set design which mainly comprised the large, high definition, 3-D screens, which were erected along the back and extended across the entire stage. This was not what I had originally envisioned for the set, but I had to keep the stage bare for the dance routines. The images and video footage were compiled in advance and the outstanding clips were made while we rehearsed, to be available for the technical rehearsal. The video editor misunderstood my intentions at first and so the videos had to be remade, which caused delays. The visual effects for the dances were effective. The images helped to fill the otherwise blank stage. The selected locations in two-and the three-dimensional acting enhances the Bollywood aesthetic by adhering to Bollywood's use of multiple locations.

There are many variants that could go wrong with technology, especially with load-shedding. I am pedantic about back-ups and keeping separate versions of video, audio, and pictures. I know from experience that the screens will emit light, which in turn impacts the stage lighting so the desired visual aesthetic had to be compromised by putting screens in place. Complete blackouts were impossible with the screens on the entire time, but adding a black picture helped somewhat. To save time I went

through each scene and wrote a technical script detailing audio-visual (AV), musical, and lighting cues. The colour schemes, spotlight placements, and other special lighting effects were established. I have extensive technical experience from working backstage and this is helpful when accessing the space where we are only allowed a day to complete the technical set-up. I prefer intense lighting to assist the theatre technician. This carefully constructed design is pre-emptive of the stresses that the 'get-in' will bring, and this preparation alleviates some of that stress. This said, there are always challenges that arise. The lighting rig at the theatre was basic in comparison to other theatres, and isolating lights through profile lighting was impossible as the theatre did not have any profile lights.

I ensured that the music was finalised well before the rehearsals. The underscore and dance songs were sent off for modification and editing to suit the tone and timing of the scenes in which they layer meaning. I chose instrumental music for most of the underscore music to enhance the emotions of the dialogue, without the distraction of lyrics. Certain popular lyrical songs used were utilised for their meaning as they suited the tone of the scene. Examples of the songs are provided later on in the thesis.

Organising a rehearsal space proved to be challenging as a central location was necessary for all cast members in terms traveling distance. This meant that rehearsals had to take place in and around Mayville or just outside of Durban central business district. The idyllic rehearsal space at Playhouse Mayville was fully booked during our rehearsal period. The Stables Theatre offered rooms that were too tiny for our expansive cast. Our solution lay in the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Drama Department. As this production fell within the parameters of my research, I was fortuitously offered free rehearsal space, which was cost-saving as we typically have to pay to hire a rehearsal venue. The first call for the entire cast was held six weeks prior to opening night.

At the first rehearsal I introduced the concept and the script to the cast. It was vital that the play's context be established for this journey on which we were all about to embark. The faces staring back at me were novices to the theatre world and so I adopted a gentle, approachable, personae as director. I had to nurture and tease performances from them, as most of the cast were dancers tackling acting for the first time. It is a

daunting task to direct and teach acting simultaneously. To balance the performance of the inexperienced, professional and award-winning actresses were cast to motivate the novices and to disguise any shortfalls. As my professor used to say, 'directing is the art of disguise'. We disguised the flaws in the performance through costume, music, and other actors. At the first meet and greet, introductions were followed with a readthrough of the entire script. Several cast members were absent therefore I read the missing roles for timing and to hear the various levels in tones and voices. The lead, while a fantastic dancer, had quite a faint voice, and some cast members were not used to projecting their voices. It was evident that voice work and training was essential and so this became a part of the daily rehearsals. Directing often includes a teaching component as I constantly work with novices; even in large scale productions my vocation as lecturer persists. The rehearsal process is a navigation of 20 lives and schedules to juggle into a four-hour rehearsal period during everything must be covered.

There are limited opportunities for full time acting work in a challenging national economy. For this reason, most performers have full-time jobs or are furthering their tertiary studies, and therefore rehearsals typically commence after 4.30 pm in the afternoon. Although cast members who were university students were available a little earlier, rehearsals could not begin until the entire cast necessary for each scene was available. However, for the individuals who arrived early, we worked on character and understanding the style. The more time spent teaching and training is beneficial to performers and the production. Each cast member must have sufficient rehearsal time in order for them to feel comfortable on the stage. Ideally, we would have liked to have had eight-hour rehearsals, as the job warrants, but alas, this process was shrunk and compressed into three- to five-hour rehearsal periods a day, Monday to Friday with weekends only included the nearer we got to performance week. We typically only start rehearsals after 5 pm to allow time for traffic and transport to the venue. To combat the short rehearsal day, we rehearsed for four to six weeks. The dance rehearsals only started two weeks after we started acting. But this was extended to adjust for the level of expertise in the cast.

At the first rehearsal, after the readthrough, I explained the themes, concepts, and character profiles to the cast. I got to hear the voices that will speak the lines and gained clarity on accents and the characters' physical shapes. These discussions were possible due to my thorough knowledge of the characters as writer-director. I spent a fair amount of time explaining the style as this was something new to many. I drew on popular Bollywood films such as *Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), *Dabang* (2012) and *Bunty aur Babli* (2005), as references for characters and for examples of the melodramatic style that was needed to pull off this genre. I still think that the genre could be explored further with a more experienced cast. I also explained to them the added burden of research attached to this specific project and the cast's willing involvement in that process in the form of focus group discussions. I noted the vision that I had for *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) and the direction that I wanted the show to take. I gave the cast a teaser of the music selection, to test their responses to our choices. If the songs were not popular amongst the cast, then chances were that they would not be popular with the audience.

I spent most of the latter part of 2017 and early 2018 studying Bollywood movies of all kinds and genres. I based the characters on the archetypes that were evident like the stern coach, the nurturing mother, and the loyal best friends. I immersed myself in everything Bollywood that was happening in Durban, including a music concert by the celebrity vocalist KK. This allowed me to gauge the songs' popularity, some of which we had already added to our playlist, examples of which appear later in the thesis.

In January 2019 I settled the R5000 deposit with the theatre to guarantee our spot at iZulu Theatre. The search for a theatre space was exhausting and seemed impossible so when we finally had confirmation of a slot in the theatre, we had to act fast. The theatre offers rental association deals, so I did not have to pay large sums for rental, but rather entered into a profit share agreement with them. This deal with the theatre alleviated the burden of raising tens of thousands of Rands to pay the full rental cost and it is offered by most theatre venues in Durban. I often work with theatres on a profit share basis. Some theatres will offer as much as a 70/30% split in favour of the artist, which is ideal for start-up companies, non-funded organisations, and independent theatre-makers. The iZulu Theatre generally operates with only a one-

day get-in, but I negotiated to two days as I felt that a novice cast needed more time than a professional squad of actors. Ideally, I would have liked at least a week in the space for rehearsals. Before the next set of rehearsals began, I ensured that the cast was familiar with the space in which they would be performing so that they weren't confused. I marked the stage parameters on the floor in the rehearsal room.

During the early stage of the process, I took measurements of the cast for costumes, and sent them to local and international tailors, allowing sufficient time for costume-making. The problem with this was that many cast members lost weight during the rigorous dance rehearsals and some costumes were then too large. Costumes were a major aspect of the show, especially if they were to exemplify the colourful world of Bollywood cinema. I went on a costume venture trying to dress the final cast. We took measurements and sizes and visited every dance school that we knew in Chatsworth and Phoenix. To hire the costumes would be much cheaper and easier than having them made from scratch, but inevitably we had to make new costumes to suit the modern aesthetic that we were developing. We ended up costuming all nine dances with new outfits, which were custom-made in both Durban and Mumbai. The risk was that of shipments being delayed and this fear materialised when the costumes arrived late from India, on the day of the first performance, leaving no time to rehearse in the costumes, and resulted in first night glitches. The choreographer brought the dance props from India, so they were used in rehearsals.

3.2.5.1 The Nitty Gritty of the Rehearsal Ditty

The energy of the cast was quite youthful and bubbly, which boded well for rehearsals as they spent several hours a day together in a confined space. Poststructuralism proposes encouraging individual agency to bring about change (Gannon & Davis, 2017:3). This change is not limited to the theatre that is produced but also changes how directors and their roles are perceived. Part of my directing duties involved regulating the cast members' emotions, emotions that are external to the staging process. A cast member wanted a bigger role than what she was offered and I was determined to keep her as she displayed amazing dance ability, I had to negotiate around her work schedule and promise growth in terms of her participation, to keep

her. With much persuasion she stayed and proved to be a valuable extra playing a range of characters as she was able to explore several accents.

I emailed the script to cast members who were absent, but only to those who were certain to return, like those travelling from other provinces. As male actors were scarce during casting, I shuffled the characters around, taking on the role of narrator as I knew it would be easier for me as a director to learn the monologues and direct myself in the role, than it would be to train a novice actor. I turned the coach character into a woman, as the majority of Indian dance academies are run by women in Durban, and thus the character would remain authentic. More lines were added for the extras, which allowed more time for costume changes. After the first readthrough I adjusted the script and added dialogue to beats that seemed incomplete. There was about a month between the readthrough, and the first rehearsal and this time was used to locate costumes, as we then had an idea of the cast's sizes.

With fewer male dancers than anticipated, some of the dance music was edited to prevent exhaustion and injury to the remaining dancers. These edits needed to reach the choreographer in India and the sound-mixer so that we were all on the same page when the dance rehearsals commenced. I did not edit too ferociously as dance is a vital component of a Bollywood musical. The nightclub scene's four-song medley was cut to three and one of the two travelling dance sequences was cut. Nine dance routines remained, but only a little shorter in length. While I was in communication with the choreographer I was also bombarded with scheduling concerns from the rest of the cast. Rehearsals were scheduled for five days a week, Wednesday to Sunday, as Mondays are our typically theatre off days, and many schedules conflicted with Tuesdays.

BlackCoffee, a production house, gave us a stage manager to oversee the show set-up and technical aspects. To assist with stage management, two students from DUT were co-opted to assist as their skills were required for quick set and costume changes. We also used this pre-rehearsal time to secure stagehands and assistants for costume changes; these dressers were valuable during the shows.

The pre-rehearsal work was tiresome as I also had to focus on my full-time lecturing and other commitments, but by the time rehearsals started I had freed up a lot of time and focused mainly on the show; using the time to figure out set pieces and their configurations. I kept the furniture and set pieces quite simple and easy to move. I chose ottomans, tables, and chairs and multiple props. The largest set pieces were in Act II, Scene ii, the breakfast scene, which required four tables and 15 chairs. This set-up and strike took the longest and not always the smoothest. To combat this lengthy strike, I directed the narrator and the extras, disguised as kitchen staff, to clear the set while the scene's dialogue was still in play, a Brechtian device. Once I planned the set pieces in different configurations, so that I could use the same pieces for different looks, I moved on to plan the tight scheduled rehearsals.

The groundwork was done in the scene breakdown detailing the characters needed in each scene, as well as the extras and the furniture. With this information, scene rehearsals were arranged for when everyone involved was available. The weekly schedule was a necessary tool as people had different and changing commitments. All 12 scenes were blocked in the first week to get the show on its feet. My expectation is for all actors to know their lines by the end of the second week, understanding the emotions, blocking, and staging happens simultaneously, as muscle memory enhances speech memory. The two are intertwined and influence each other and that is manifested through the character's actions. Bradley (2016:7) states that our memories, identity, and conceptions of self are linked and that "memories are often classified as a function of the mind, rather than of the body. However, it becomes clear that the body, mind, and memories are highly interconnected". The 12 scenes were each allocated an hour and a half each in the first four days with the hope that the entire show, with scripts in hand, could be run on the Sunday of the first week.

The second week of rehearsals focused on directing characters out of the cast members. In early April I started but halted during the first rehearsal with this novice cast. I managed to read only half of the script. This was tedious because I had to explain each scene, the character journey and their emotions to most cast members,

the trained actors were exempt. During this read-through it became clear that one of the male dancers was more than capable to fill the role of the best friend and that his nerves had just gotten the better of him during the auditions. Since our lead actor and villain had never performed before in acting roles, I planned more individual sessions with them to manifest a fully rounded performance; added to this list was the actor who played the character Ravi. The actor needed much coaching to deliver a believable and three-dimensional character. He spoke with a monotonous unnatural rhythm, and it required significant voice coaching to break the rhythm. I heard potential in the read through and was confident that with daily vocal and physical warmups that his performances would improve during rehearsals and flourish on stage with performance energy. I directed certain actors who are playing foreigners from India to watch certain Bollywood movies; I wanted these characters to be crafted in reference to certain Bollywood archetypes, such as the evil vixen embodied in Bhavika and the nerdy and clumsy Bhavna.

I adopted different accents when directing performers so that they could hear the type of accent I wanted them to emulate – either Indian or South African Indian. I spent the last half hour of the first rehearsal playing music to the cast so that the dancers got a feel for the songs and where they were placed in the script. The last dance beat has three routines back-to-back, totalling twenty minutes of dance, and this prompted an exercise regime that included dance classes to prepare for the choreography.

The Instagram page was set up at this rehearsal, using pictures from activities that we completed. To foster camaraderie amongst the cast and to advertise the show we printed T-shirts for all cast members with their names printed on the back and the brand on the front. I found that food, healthy snacks like fruits, and tea help to keep the cast focused and energised. Alongside this, I lead a warmup, to familiarise the cast with exercises that they could practice at home to strengthen their vocal quality. I interviewed a potential dancer and allowed him to sit through the reading of the second half so that he and the cast could improve their genre knowledge and understand the type of characters that were required for such a bold genre.

We further interrogated the relationships established in the writing and the character backgrounds that may be developed with assistance from the script. I ensured that the

performers understood the punctuation for appropriate pausing and how to breathe for each thought. I explained to them that I would block them and construct movement in relation to the length of the punctuation. Extra lines were added for the first half and other lines were shifted around. In these initial stages of the rehearsals, I employed much of Stanislavski's system (in Blumfeld, 2008) with regard to analysing a text, including subtext, beats, relationships goals, and tactics. Performers were tutored to increase their confidence and understanding of how a theatre show works, then narrowed down to the best suited Bollywood aesthetics.

Certain characters' intentions were changed as their genders had been changed. The romantic relationship between Ravi and Nishaani was changed into a spiteful, love-hate relationship, which was more in line with the gender profiles presented. Since Vivek was now Vedarsha, I edited the love triangle friction, as originally scripted, retaining only the main love triangle, with no supporting love triangle as is generally depicted in Bollywood productions. Considerable time was spent explaining their significance to the villains and how they need to concentrate on developing this triangle. The sisters were played by two trained actresses, so their readings assured that they would become the hated villains. I went into blocking rehearsals with confidence that the textbook groundwork had been completed.

Blocking the series of rehearsals had a shaky start as people were unable to attend all of them. I decided to rehearse the smaller scenes comprising only two to four characters first; this included Act I, Scene i, ii, and iv. I avoided blocking scenes sequentially, a common occurrence in the film industry. Performers had to be aware of their characters' trajectories in order to understand the growth in their physical and emotional characterisation. I often use the image of a flower bud opening to equate to the blossoming of a character's actions on stage. I blocked myself into the narrator monologues and worked out my entrances and exits for all these. Cast members said that the learned skills and techniques were implemented, which was quite crucial as I wanted them to achieve their full potential.

During the day, Sumanth and I drove around in search of material for costumes. With such a large cast and bearing the production's requirements, the fabric choices were specific and depended on achieving the cheapest prices for the right quantity. We drive

to the regular fabric shops in Brickfield Road, Central Durban, Chatsworth, and Overport. We sourced various materials in diverse fabrics and colours from various sources that were then sent off with measurements to the local tailors to make dance pants and tops. Some pants were used with different tops for multiple combinations.

The first Saturday rehearsal gave me sufficient time to block most of the play, bar a few big scenes, like the Nightclub scene, as we still had acting roles unoccupied. I moved forward, reliant on the fact that this was beneficial to the majority of the cast, who were eager and present. I spent suitable time in the long session teaching theatre terminology like up stage, down stage, masking, etc. I was satisfied with my decision to cast novice actors because as dancers they had mastered their fear of crowds and appreciated the energy required to perform for an audience. This confidence was solidified when these performers ably constructed their characters and play with vocal and physical nuances. The Sunday rehearsal was also an all-day event and thus we utilised the time constructively, conducting a follow-up photo shoot and we finished blocking the Nightclub scene. Stage managers noted the blocking of absentees while it was walked through by other cast members who were not required in the scene. To achieve this, a basic combat technique class was held, as this scene ends in a big barroom brawl.

I taught stage slaps, hair pulls, punches, kicks, and rolls, which were then choreographed into a fight sequence where everyone is involved in a club brawl. The female cast members seemed more enthusiastic about the combat scenes, but the males were reticent. I assumed it was because of their shy personalities or their 'model'-like delicate nature. I encouraged them to increase their confidence so that the fight would appear believable. This was rehearsed every day due to the danger factor. Actors could hurt themselves if they do not concentrate. They lift each other, so if they are not focused and prepared, they could drop one another, causing harm. As I had not yet employed a stage manager, the prompt book was handed over to cast members who were not busy at the time, and they noted the blocking and furniture placements. Along with a stage manager I still needed to cast the Muruvan character.

We only had a few options left but there were some quality performers; I avoided being overly concerned as there was plenty time to train the actor for the required role. The

second week was spent concretising the blocking and character profiles. I devised exercises drawing from Grotowski's teachings to assist the cast in discovering physical shapes for their roles, as his exercise on changing the centre of energy (Grotowski, 2002:116) was most useful in enhancing these discoveries. The exercise asks the actor to change their physical shape by placing energy in a specific body part.

I sequestered drama students from DUT to stage manage in the second week which hastened the process, as their theatre knowledge was sound. I allocated time with the cast to focus on layering detail into their performances. I added gestures to suit the melodramatic style and movement once they began to show understanding and growth. To boost the cast members' performance ability the trained performers were mobilised to coach individuals while they were not on stage. Sometimes peer learning is more rewarding, as was the case with certain cast members.

After running scenes and detailing them, towards the end of the second week, we played games to build reactions, much like silent movies where the actors react in a melodramatic style, without speaking as well as fostering relationships through 'hot seating' (Blumfeld, 2008). While establishing the ensemble we lost a cast member, who decided that he had to support his pregnant wife, and we had to find a replacement. I also had to quell squabbles between cast members, which is natural with so many personalities competing for space and attention in one venue.

During the third week of rehearsals, we finally met the choreographer who had additional ideas for costumes. This stretched the budget further than anticipated, but we wanted to create a spectacle, and costumes were an essential part of this goal. We had to recast Muruvan, and I was hopeful that this actor would stay the course. The social media campaigns were updated weekly, to maintain hype around the show, which was growing. With people unavailable for a few evenings in the week, I focused on visuals, costumes, props, and finalising the music as the following week concentrated on dance routines primarily.

In the fourth week we learned the dances for the first half of the play. Most of the week's rehearsal sessions were devoted to learning and shaping dance routines with the choreographer, but I set aside an hour each day to polish scenes so that they would match the dance energy and that cast members remembered the acting work

that was done.

The dances are high powered, so I needed to match this in the scenes to ensure that the action soared rather than crashed. While polishing the scenes I pushed the melodrama embedded in the writing with equally melodramatic blocking, but the voices were lagging behind. I did exercises to stretch vocal elasticity so that voices were powerful enough to be heard in the large theatre venue while maintaining nuances in the voices. I also drew out reactions in visage and body which Bollywood demands. The seasoned actors had solidified their character work, which helped encouraged the novices' development. Various methods were employed to coach the cast members' growth. The actress playing Mrs. Naidoo had regressed since her audition because of personal self-loathing, stating that she was unhappy that she had been cast in the role of the 'fat' aunty, and thus I was forced to alleviate some of these negative thoughts by comforting her and reminding her that all body sizes matter, and that we should not shame ourselves. This helped her to construct the character more fully. By the end of the week, we were able to run the entire first half, which was taking fantastic shape, and on schedule.

The fifth week had many difficulties, which was expected as the pressure compounds with performance week looming. We started the week with low morale as fatigue and stress predictably set in, therefore I eased up on cramming more into a weary cast and diffused the situation with tension-releasing games and team-building exercises. We played listening games, and I reiterated the need for cast members to listen actively on stage. The cast was restless and belligerent, and this cannot be met with harshness. The choreographer was quite brash with the cast, and therefore I was softer to compliment that energy, and to avoid a revolt. We made it through the rest of the week learning dances and refining the learned pieces. The style of learning was quite different to what anyone was used to, and I found myself rushing the choreographer along as opposed to specific, staggered learning. There was a lot to achieve, and we were lagging behind. By the middle of the week, I changed tactics and played more games on picking up cues and reacting and improvising should action divert from the script. I experimented with teaching the Bollywood melodrama, pushing it beyond what the cast had already achieved. I ended the week by confirming the AV design that had been completed and the final poster designs for printing and

distribution. In week four we switched to seven-day week rehearsal schedule to accomplish our tasks, but at the start of week six the fatigue levels had peaked, and I duly gave the cast a much-needed and well-deserved break.

That one day off did the world of good and replenished the cast's spirits and bodies. While re-blocking, I added in more physical, farcical humour, which complimented the dance for the Bollywood style with which we were experimenting. To encourage the cast to act with as much conviction as their dancing portrayed, they were directed to act out scenes as if they were scenes in a silent movie, thus amplifying the physical embodiment of their goals. I worked on picking up cues and lines at a faster pace as the show was running 20 minutes over time; this was achieved by the middle of the week. Another photo shoot for newspapers and promotional videos with local celebrities like Logie Naidoo and other local Internet sensations was scheduled for the week. These promos boosted social media following. Week seven was 'get-in' and performance week.

The groundwork had been concretised as there can be no uncertainties during the get-in and setting up of screens, lights, sound, and spacing. The first two days were spent on rehearsals and sorting out any issues as this may have been the last chance once we moved from the rehearsal venue into the theatre. Often this shift in space disorients a performer until they find their bearings. Screen set-up took an entire day, so the evening was spent on spacing the dances. Sometimes as a director it was necessary to be more demanding, as was the case with the choreographer who was taking too long in a cue-to-cue rehearsal. The last rehearsal focused on spacing the scenes and completing the technical aspects. It could not technically be considered the final dress rehearsal, as the costumes had not yet arrived from India. They were held up at customs until midday of opening night. Sometimes as a director it is necessary to contend with your focus being pulled in various directions and people rubbing each other up the wrong way. This is only natural when tension is high, and creativity is crucial. Sometimes it is necessary to tell people when they have exceeded their limits and when to pull back, reminding them of their roles and places in the ensemble.

As director it was necessary to ensure that each component was ready for opening

night and tough calls had to be made. I delegated people to run each section of the technical side, and I viewed the final product in action. The end of week seven took us into the start of five grueling performances. Opening night was a success despite a few shaky technical points, which was expected without a full dress and technical rehearsal, but the show was developing. Usually, my job as director ends on opening night, but with so many flaws, it was necessary to intervene and reign in the individuals causing mishaps and mayhem. The weekend of performances sped by, but the growth on stage was phenomenal, resulting in a glowing review and positive audience reception. The feedback and coverage were gratifying and elevated and inspired the performance of each cast member. It was a very satisfying result, which I can build on.

3.6 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis is to provide an autoethnographic (Jones, 2016), practice-based example of the writing and directing process of a Bollywood-styled theatre show, *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017/2019). To do so, I have recounted and examined my own writing and directing style (Cole & Chinoy, 1963). Taking a show all the way to theatre is an extraordinary journey that experiences many difficulties. The writing of the play is sparked by context, characters, and current events. There are certainties that must appear in the writing, like character biographies, scene breakdowns, and climactic moments. Each character must have identifiable goals, and when writing a Bollywood script these must appear outlandish, and melodramatic. The language is metaphorical with speech being active and descriptive.

The directing requires you to be versatile and bring the words to life on the page. Several writer-directors have emerged in Durban, South Africa who have fused elements of Bollywood into their theatre-making processes, as this genre is quite popular, and its popularity is growing. The rehearsal process is crucial in establishing confident and cohesive performances, and for a Bollywood musical theatre show focus must be split between dance and acting rehearsals, costumes must be vibrant and plentiful, the technical aspect must be solid and depict the necessary multiple locations, songs, and colours. The venue must be big enough to house such a grand endeavor and be booked well in advance. Marketing is another important aspect, as

the audience must learn of your show in order to attend it. While there were many pressures placed on me as writer-director, the rewards are ongoing.

CHAPTER 4: CHILI BITES AND BREYANI DELIGHTS: EXAMINING SOUTH AFRICAN INDIANNESS PRE & POST-APARTHEID



Above is a picture of Unit 7 in Chatsworth, where I grew up.

The Indian community developed under changing circumstances in South Africa. Sujatha Patel and Tina Uys (2012) stipulate that South African Indians have new identities in this post-apartheid context, but they are steeped in the history of our memories. The history of South African Indians spans more than 160 years on the continent, with the first indentured labourers arriving in 1860. For the purpose of this thesis, I will recount the history from the mid-1900s to the present day, as this is when my dad and grandparents were forcibly relocated to Chatsworth from Clairwood according to the Group Areas Act of 1956 requirements, and thus began my own history in Chatsworth, Durban. The segregation laws separated groups of people racially. Under these segregation laws, Indian culture was allowed to develop in quite a unique way. Thomas Hansen (2006:1) says, “[t]he distinction between the erstwhile

white centres of South Africa's cities (clean, modern, and universal in aspiration) and the racially defined townships (designed as enclosed, stable, and quasi-domestic community spaces)".

These enclosed spaces gave rise to common practices, culture, and even language that were shared by the isolated race group. This thesis aims to describe Indian culture and language, as well as religions practiced in Chatsworth. This is important to this research, as I am writing about Indian archetypes that were developed in this specific area. A description of Chatsworth, this urban, Indian township, South of Durban is provided, and thereafter some of the cultural practices and identities that manifested in this isolated location are presented. The chapter concludes with an exploration of Indianness in a post-apartheid context.

4.1.1 The Infrastructure That Fostered Indian Culture and the Demographics that make up Chatsworth

Chatsworth is a township that was developed outside of Durban and its existence is owed to the Group Areas Act of 1956, which sought to segregate people based on race, under the premise of separate but equal development, which was not the practice or the result. Chatsworth is an urban space that is both elongated and like a grid (Desai, n.d.:13), with many intersecting roads that create a maze-like effect. The roads are marked with numbers as opposed to names, like Rd 706 where I resided. This of course changed post-apartheid when some roads were named.

There are 11 units in Chatsworth, excluding units 4 and 8, each unit is made up of several intertwining roads. The units were later named, Havenside (Unit 1), Umhlatuzana (Unit 10), Bayview (Unit 2) Westcliffe (Unit 3), Croftdene (Unit 5), Arena Park (Unit 6) Montford (Unit 7), Moorton (Unit 9), and Crossmoore (Unit 11). These units are listed geographically as you enter the M1, Higginson Highway, which traverses the length of Chatsworth. The bordering townships to the north and west are Queensburgh and Pinetown, respectively, and are predominantly White areas. Umlazi (an African/Black township) lies to the south, and Wentworth, a Coloured area lies to the east.

Goolam Vahed and Ashwin Desai (2013) in their essay titled, *Segregation, Group Areas and the Creation of Chatsworth*, indicate that the first residents in the 1960s

included municipal workers from the Magazine Barracks, anglers, banana plantation and factory workers from Clairwood, as well as gardeners from various areas such as Cato Manor. Desai and Vahed (2013:3) state the majority of these people were of Hindu faith, with a smaller number of Muslims and Christians. The Indian residents were joined by the Indigenous Zanzibaris from the Bluff area. Gopalan (2013) explains that these houses in Chatsworth were too small to house the extended families which is customary in Indian culture.

Furthermore, the building process was so rushed that poor-quality homes were erected. Most homes lacked basics like hot water, and it was the responsibility of the occupants to make repairs and improvements. From these tiny dwellings some Indians built mansions by extending their homes and by building out-houses on the property, as was the case with my home – Chatsworth, Road 706, house 115, Montford. The home that my grandfather or *thatha* had purchased was extended to include an outbuilding to provide space for the 20 or so people that lived there and called it home.

The Inner Circle bus service, taxis, and trains transported people within the township. Most Indians earned basic wages, thus many relied on public transport, particularly the bus services. Karthigesan Gopalan (2013), in his article *The Threatened Bus Ban and Political Fissures, 1972-73*, adds that bus services were threatened when rail services were designed for Chatsworth. Even with these transport systems available, it still meant that many hours were spent in transit to and from work, and a large portion of their wages spent on travel. My parents took the bus to work every day, leaving at dawn, travelling 25km to Clairwood and back again. Desai (2013:343) emphasises the huge presence of Taxis in this township. Names of deceased loved ones on the back of the taxis, loud earth-shattering base music, and fierce driving typifies these taxis that played a key role in providing transport for thousands daily. They ran the inner circle route as well as to town and other surrounding areas.

"Dominating virtually every unit was a primary and high school, sites for advancing a new generation of young people into the apartheid-created 'Indian' University of Durban Westville, the ML Sultan Technical College, or skilled apprentices" (Desai & Vahed, 2013:3). Education was important for most Indians, as it was seen to increase your class status. Along with education, the family unit and family values were held in

high esteem. Family wages were supported by women entering the labour force and working in clothing and textile other factories and others in the Clairwood area (2013:3). Indians were allowed to progress more than their African counterparts during apartheid. Jeremy Seekings (2008:2) states that this is due to the government's attempt to place certain races above others: "In a world in which racial labelling and discrimination are regrettably commonplace, the South African system of apartheid stood out as an extreme attempt to order a society explicitly and systematically according to racial categories".

This categorisation led to Indians elevating their status through wealth and education. The emerging Indian middle class of the 1970s, built on the property of their parents or extended the council houses that were provided to maintain family connections and wealth (2013). "Chatsworth is a living, breathing landscape of people. Despite the aim of the apartheid state to create a racial category out of 'Indian' that residential proximity was meant to solidify, difference of language, class, ethnicity and religion belied the homogeneity of this 'group' (Desai & Vahed, 2013:5)".

While Indians are viewed as a homogenous group, there are distinctions in terms of class, religion, language, and education. By homogenising Indian culture and people, the apartheid government tried to dehumanise non-white citizens. Desai and Vahed (2013:19) point out that within old Chatsworth there were "no recreational areas - no club houses, playgrounds for children, no public temples or mosques, and such amenities as telephones and shopping centres, are [were] inadequate". These dehumanising apartheid laws were accepted by some but also resisted by many. It was mainly the upper-class Indians who put up the most resistance to the Group Areas Act, as they had the most to lose (2013:28).

Space was utilised to its fullest with low-cost housing built from inferior cheap materials (Vahed, 2013:29). Dianne Scott (in Desai & Vahed, 2013:31) says that this phenomenon of spatial control was a general marker in most urban planning during the twentieth century; this includes South Africa. The houses in the area are semi-detached and some poorer areas have blocks of flats that can house up to six families per block. Ashwin Desai (n.d.:4), a newspaper columnist and lecturer, describes its inhabitants and these flats as, "the proverbial third-class coaches of the apartheid

train; cramped, ugly, unsafe and hidden from view". The first arrivals found whitewashed walls with no roofs, resembling a horse stable (Desai, n.d.:13). The land that it is built on is land that was stolen from 600 small Indian farmers (Desai, n.d.:13). The seventy thousand that had lived there initially had to deal with the loss of decades of hard work while tens of thousands of other migrants had to accept this new way of life. My family were moved into a semi-detached house in the mid-1960s.

Chatsworth now houses over 300 000 people to date, most of whom were and are Indian (Desai, n.d.). Gopalan (2013) explains that these houses in Chatsworth were too small to accommodate extended families. Two- or three-bedroomed houses were populated with between 10-20 people. The town was built within a 10km radius and designed to achieve optimal space usage in order to build houses, shopping centres, and schools for over 300 000 people.

With yards being too small for luxuries like swimming pools, there was a community pool in Westcliffe, and then the Arena Park Pool was built in the late 1980s. There were tennis courts painted on the parking lot grounds of most schools, and in the early 1990s a tennis court, netball court, bowls, cricket pitch, athletic track, and soccer field were built next to the Arena Park's Olympic-sized pool. Other entertainment venues included the Silver Slipper and Friar Tuck nightclubs and the Odean and Kharawastan function venues. There were also several game shops, pubs, bars, and tattersalls with slots machines to pass the time, these latter activities reserved mainly for men. Wardle et al. (2012:1) state that, "[w]e therefore concluded that the distribution of gambling machines in Great Britain, in line with other international jurisdictions [like South Africa], displays a significant association with areas of socio-economic deprivation. The profile of the resident population living ... are those most at-risk of experiencing harm from gambling".

Chatsworth is a community that was susceptible to social problems resulting from gambling houses. In the early days of Chatsworth, 5 000 people came from the Magazine Barracks.¹⁰ Many were farmers who had different faiths and cultural

¹⁰ These Barracks were established to house Indians working near the City Centre (2013:62). Unlike the fishermen of Bayhead, these individuals were more urban-driven in their skill sets; the domestic work was allocated to women who raised kids and tended to household chores like cooking and cleaning.

Practices; however, within this space, Indians found ways to make life bearable despite the efforts of the apartheid regime to limit social interaction.

Hannah Carrim (in Desai & Vahed, 2013:68) reminds us that education, football, religion, drama, and movies were crucial aspects of community life. Vahed (2013) points out that sports brought a sense of unity. Soccer and cricket were popular in the community. Halls were built to nurture a culture of dance, both traditional and modern, as well as performance. They were also used to house large weddings that could accommodate over a thousand people. Traditional dances were performed at religious gatherings as well as wedding ceremonies. Dance troupes would travel within the area and perform in halls and schools. These sectors boosted community development and served to enhance Indianness.

Zainub E. Dala (in Desai & Vahed, 2013:368) refers to the great feature of Chatsworth – the R.K Khan hospital, commonly known as Khan's, situated within walking distance from the Chatsworth Centre. Named after the lawyer who arrived in this country with Gandhi, it was once a beaker of hope for the sick. These days the hospital is run down, and patients spend hours in queues, have to contend with poor attitudes from staff members, and the level of hygiene and cleanliness has declined dramatically. “Local community activist and ADeC [African Democratic Change] leader Visvin Reddy said he had received numerous complaints about RK Khan Hospital’s management” (Naidoo, 2022:1). However, it was, and still is a source of help for the destitute (Desai & Vahed, 2013:381).

4.1.2 Worship and Praise with a Higher Power we Liaise

Religion is a big part of Indianness, and thus Indians took it upon themselves to build religious institutions. The Shree Vishnu temple in Westcliffe is one of the oldest temples in Chatsworth, established by members of the Magazine Barracks. The many temples that were built in the area face east, as this is where the sun rises, and Hindu culture dictates that a God lamp face east. Even with temple structures erected all around Chatsworth, Hindu homes were fitted with small temple structures so that prayer could take place at home on a daily basis, and my home was no different. The people from the entire road would congregate at one humble abode to participate in

religious ceremonies like Porridge, Hanuman, and River prayers, Kavady, goat slaughtering, Eid, and Diwali. There are temples and places of worship across Chatsworth. Brij Maharaj (in Desai & Vahed, 2013:392) highlights Hinduism's persistence amidst the ever-present encroachment of other religions. The Hari Krishna Temple was built in the 1990s.

Both old and new members of the community are still staunch in their beliefs and practices. Ulrike Schröder (in Desai & Vahed, 2013:411) reminds us that in the last few years many temples have been revamped and renovated, including the inclusion of a huge Hanuman statue at the Road 701 temple. Like religion, sport has always been strongly supported in Chatsworth, despite players lacking equipment or having proper facilities.

4.1.3 Sales and Shops that Sprung up for the Mobs

Vahed (2013:349) informs us that trading has always been evident in Chatsworth and due to the spending capacity of middle-class Indians, shopping centres sprung up to limit travel and contain shoppers in their own areas. These mini centres catered for everyday groceries along with independently operated fresh vegetable stalls and travelling chicken vendors. The local butcher, hardware store, and bakery were also situated here, along with a Bottle Store; this was common to all districts. Most butcheries sold Halal meat to cater for the Muslim community. When Chatsworth Centre¹¹ was completed in the early 1990s, a bioscope was also built, along with larger clothing chain stores like Edgars and Markham's, that were previously only found in central Durban. The convenience of shopping on credit kept these chain stores' doors open, but small businesses also prospered.

Vegetables were grown in the small yard spaces that were allotted to owners and they either sold fresh vegetables or turned them into a pickle condiment and sold them from home. Seamstresses found easy work sewing dresses for matric balls, hemming garments, or making alterations. Aunties made baked goods, rotis and Indian delights that were then sold to neighbours. There were mobile as well as stationary tuckshops,

¹¹ Chatsworth Centre is owned by Sanlam Properties, the oldest, Afrikaans, insurance company in South Africa since 1918. Sanlam's development of the centre capitalised on the growth of the Indian community and the spending power of the developing middle class of Indians.

selling sweets and essentials like bread and milk, which canvassed the neighbourhood. Plumbers, carpenters, and builders also worked from the comfort of their homes. Doctors turned rooms or floors of their homes into surgeries in order to be accessible to the community.

Trade in Chatsworth is a long-standing tradition, starting with the Indians in West Street and moving into the markets, stalls and shopping Centres in Chatsworth. Vahed and Desai (2013:362) admit that “at the Bangladesh Market in Chatsworth, Durban, the art of haggling is still in evidence”. From the small outlets like *Take ‘n Pay* to the larger Chatsworth Centre, business and trade thrives.

4.1.4 Schools with no Pools, Servicing with few Tools

The schooling system in the 1960s, 70s and 80s was governed by the Tricameral Government (Cameron, 2007:1)¹². Education was heavily subsidised by the Tricameral Government, which meant that it was affordable even for poor households. However, the quality of education was a level above that of Black South African learners¹³. Futoshi Yamauchi (2011:1) confirms that, “the legacy of apartheid imposes historical constraints on the spatial distribution of income and population groups. Good schools are located in selected areas. This has maintained inter-racial diversity in access to good education”.

Indians and Black people were offered subsidised education, but it was definitely inferior to the education reserved for white children. This was most specifically noticeable in terms of the facilities – such as sports facilities. Poorer ex-Indian schools still do not have sporting facilities. The school fees were remarkably cheap, my family paid R2 in 1988 for 6 children, and in return my brother, cousins, and I were given textbooks, stationery, and notebooks. However, there were no sporting facilities or equipment.

¹² The Tricameral local government was responsible for leading Coloured and Indian affairs including education (Cameron, 2007:1).

¹³ Bantu Education was a discriminatory education that offered Black people a different education to white people. It was introduced under the Nationalist apartheid government and was used to control the knowledge that Black people received (Christie & Collin, 2007:1).

Apart from sporting facilities, the education offered to us was limited, with only a few students reaching tertiary level, but still education remained a noble quest. To assist in the quest, there were community libraries where books could be read at the libraries or loaned. These libraries also had rooms which were hired out for extra lesson tuition, dance and karate classes, or music lessons. Vernacular languages were taught here after hours as most schools had stopped teaching vernacular languages.

Numerous members of my family went to Pinewood Primary, which was situated a few hundred meters from my home. There were eight primary schools and eight high schools within Chatsworth, and even here there was a hierarchy. We competed within these eight schools for sporting and academic accolades. And although we had fewer opportunities at school than our white counterparts, Indian schools were still ranked higher than most Black schools in the country in terms of academics and sports.

Schools in the 1980s had a corporal punishment protocol. The teachers, who were underpaid and often resorted to strikes and 'chalk downs', were quick to use a cane to discipline students who misbehaved. My parents encouraged teachers to cane us if we misbehaved, instilling fear in us. Added to this fear was the fear of air raids and bombs. In the 1980s there were numerous air raids, and the schools would do drills to ensure safety of students. I remember crouching under my desk as a seven-year-old, when the siren would sound for a drill. Mark Hunter and Goolam Vahed (2013), in their article *Schooling in Chatsworth*, mark the shift in the demographics in schools in Chatsworth in the late 1980s with Black students entering previously Indian schools.

4.2 Customising Calm after the Storm but the Rains Still Remain

There were many levels to the oppression experienced during apartheid. The new South African Constitution ensured that these forms of oppression were eradicated in the post-apartheid context. Women of colour had to endure racial oppression as well as gender oppression. One of the goals of the development of the South African Constitution (Act 106 of 1996) was to create a space for women to have equal opportunities. Vanishree Pillay, Zanele Ndaba, and Jenika Gobind (2022:6) state that,

Coloured and Indian women were excluded from the migrant labor system and allowed to move freely to secure employment. They also labored, under the apartheid system's

racial allocations of resources and the panoply of disadvantages engendered by apartheid. Coloured and Indian women continue to exist in abject conditions of poverty even today.

Movindri Reddy (2017:149) confirms that the Indian community in South Africa is a historically patriarchal one. The oppression faced by Indian women is not a new concept. Penelope Andrews (2023:1) states that, "Cultural prohibitions imposed on Indian women can be traced back to the days of imported indentured labour, and even before, stemming from the land of their ancestry India". The double oppression of racism and sexism is a legacy left behind as a byproduct of apartheid and as Andrews (2023:1) states that, "it still presents in the post-apartheid era as women of colour access opportunities in the workspace". This system of sexism brought violence towards women (Ndaba et al., 2022:1). This violence is something that I witnessed first-hand in my family, and this is recollected in my autoethnographic chapter.

According to Fatima Meer (1972:1), Indian women have been "nurtured in an even more oppressed atmosphere than their sisters in India" and where most likely to remain in the abusive environment to protect the family. Meer (1972:1) further states that, "[o]ne of the most compelling excuses for the oppression of women and one which women themselves have often been in collusion with, is the need to protect an encysted and embattled minority culture from the alien culture in which it finds itself, for one reason or another, buried".

For this reason, Indian women were not viewed as fighters for our liberation, as they only involved themselves because of their husbands and family (Meer, 1972:5). The deep-rooted sexism in Indian culture had different expectations for boys and girls. Meer (1972:9) states that boys, in contrast to girls, were trained to be detached and in control of their emotions, and unlike girls, not to yield to their emotions. For girls the end goal is to marry, become a good wife, and have a life of domestic duties (Meer, 1972:12). The wife/mother is allowed a routine and some power by the husband/father. This tradition is changing but has not yet been eradicated in the post-apartheid context. "Gender is seen as a product of social actions. Indian women are seen as less than in comparison to men" (Pillay et al., 1998:2).

Sinethemba Sidloyi and Mariam Seedat-Khan (in Desai & Vahed, 2013:234) explain that many Indian women arrived as domestic labourers and had to yield to the role. "There was an assumption on the part of employers that Indian women's needs were and should be provided for within a patriarchal family unit" (in Desai & Vahed, 2013:235). This perpetuated the stereotype that men are the sole breadwinners and a women's role is confined to the kitchen. This stereotype still exists and can be seen in Indian theatre and film, for example the film *Keeping up with the Kandasamy's* (2017)¹⁴. This stereotype is also discussed in my own play in Chapter 8.

Reshma Sookrajh (in Desai & Vahed, 2013:112) highlights the discrepancy in the education levels of a whole generation of Indian women. Although this unequal practice was later eradicated, there are still a generation of uneducated women as domestic skills were encouraged more than an education. Both my grandmothers were part of this generation who were confined to the domestic sphere. Gerelene Jagganath (2017:2) states that, "Indian women in general, are predominantly responsible for food work (accessing and buying ingredients and food items, preparing and cooking food) and family meals represent a significant part of household activity".

With more women entering the work force in the 1970s, many of them gave up school to help support their ever-growing families. Bridget Kenny (2018:63) states that women of colour entered the work force under new regulations under the Tricameral Government and occupied jobs that were previously held by white women. However, the gender discrepancies still remained, as boys were allowed to finish school as their job requirements required a matric certificate.

It was almost unheard of for women to get their driver's license, as driving was restricted to the men in the family, and it was not until the 1980s that more women took a license test; gender discrepancies still exist today. Pritesh Ruthun (2020:1) states that, "[a] recently published gender report by Statistics South Africa (SSA)

¹⁴ *Keeping Up with the Kandasamys* (2017) is a South African Indian comedy directed by Jayan Moodley. It was the first South African Indian film to be screened in theatres nationwide. The cast includes Jailoshini Naidoo, Maeshni Naicker, Madhushan Singh, and Mishqah Parthiephal, to name a few of the leads.

highlights that only 21.8% of females possessed a driver's license in 2020 compared to 40.1% of males in SA". Within this gendered difference, there are further race discrepancies.

As a result of this oppression, Indian women have developed identities that are subjugated. This subjugation is acknowledged by the new constitution and laws implemented to combat this gender oppression as is evident in Chapter 9 of the South African Constitution (Act 106 of 1996), which calls for equality for all and protects against discrimination in terms of, inter alia, race, gender, sex, religion, creed, and age. The drafting of the Constitution included measures like affirmative action to ensure that women were able to break away from the oppression experienced during apartheid (Ndaba et al., 2022:11). The gender division was clearly visible in the Indian community. Cheryl Walker (1982:106) affirms that, "Indian women were the most subjugated group of people in South Africa. Hindu and Muslim religions place restrictions on women". I witnessed in my own home, that women stayed at home on weekends while men went to bars and totes to gamble.

Outside the domestic environment, women were excluded from institutions like gambling houses which were seen as a male domain. Gambling houses themselves were problematic in that they were used as a tool to further disempower people of colour. The placement of gambling houses in Chatsworth was deliberate in order to take advantage of those who were already at risk, as mentioned earlier, from addiction and violence. Furthermore, the reservation of these facilities for men only lends support to the patriarchal nature of the Indian community.

The race struggles of apartheid had created a significant divide between races particularly between Africans and Indians. To navigate nation-building and to create a strong opposition to the white National government, Indians were asked to join the opposition party (Ramsamy, 2007:1). In 1994, after the liberation struggle had come to fruition, the African National Congress (ANC) came into power. The aim of the post-apartheid government was to create a unified South African identity (Ramsamy, 2007:2). Ramsamy (2007:3) further states that, "[t]his assertion of an inclusive and common South African identity became the basis of the ANC's doctrine of non-

racialism and later served as a unifying ideology for many other social movements opposing the apartheid system”.

Despite these efforts to eliminate racial bias there were still discrepancies in actual outputs. Desai (2013:4) explains that the leaders of the time had come to Chatsworth with promises of a better future, but this hope was soon dashed by rent increases, and by the turn of the 21st century the conditions had worsened severely, with relocations and evictions persisting into the new post-apartheid era, due to the capitalist system that the ANC encouraged (Southall, 2004). Although rentals increased, basic facilities like water supply were not regularly provided. There were also failed promises to provide water and to respect diverse cultures and human rights (Desai 2013:5).

The ANC received significant support from Indians like Ahmed Kathrada, and this continued post-apartheid in 1999 with people like Fathima Meer who urged Indian voters to support the ANC. At the time, many Indian voters felt that the ANC had no intention of improving the Indian community’s situation as they were not viewed as one of 'the poorest' communities (Desai, 2013:8). Many of the Chatsworth residents, especially flat dwellers, and the elderly, the unemployed, or single mothers relied on social grants (Desai, 2013:9). Even amongst the Chatsworth Units, there was a definite hierarchy based on money and class (Desai, 2013).

4.3 Turning back the Hands of Time, Holding History to unpack the Misery

Hamilton et al. (2001:38) states that Indians in South Africa benefited from democracy with the lifting of movement bans. Indians had to overcome many inequalities of the apartheid system. Desai and Vahed (2013:1) state that, “Chatsworth was born at the height of apartheid's madness when the government sought to ghettoise persons of 'Indian' origin into what it intended to be a frozen racial landscape”.

Indians also suffered a violation of dignity and rights as did Coloured and Black South Africans during apartheid; however, most communities and townships have transformed through necessity and ingenuity. Even though the Group Areas Act of 1956 displaced individuals now living in Chatsworth, there were still divisions that plagued the Township. One obvious friction was the encounters between Indians and

the Zanzibaris living in Bayview. However, all non-white citizens were treated with the same level of disrespect and disregard.

Thembisa Waetjen (in Desai & Vahed, 2013:99) documents that during this time the government used the South African Police's Special Branch to enforce its apartheid laws. In her article titled *A Private Island: Gender and Everyday Struggle in Political Times*, Waetjen (2013) explains that The Ninety Day Act allowed for the detention of individuals suspected of anti-government actions. Many Chatsworth families lost fathers who were detained and sentenced for extended periods during the 1960s and the number of single parent homes increased. Families were lumped together not only for space but also for security. The houses were so close together that even neighbours became part of your extended family as it was impossible to exclude them from your lives; you could smell the kitchen of the neighbours three doors down and you were always welcome to a plate. There was a strong community feel and experience. Although on the whole Chatsworth seemed like a united community, women still found themselves in submissive and subjugated roles.

The Indian community had few organisations that represented its needs. Vahed and Desai (2013:155) state that the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) was one such organisation, but it was banned and later replaced with the government-appointed South African Indian Council. The NIC challenged the government's treatment of Indians and the poor housing conditions in Chatsworth. It facilitated the development of the Durban Housing Action Committee and its influence extended to Tongaat and Stanger. Vahed and Desai (2013:162) state that, "[b]y the late 1980s conditions were changing in Chatsworth. While many younger people were in contact with the ANC in exile and some joined their structures, there was a discernible shift in the nature of opposition to apartheid, which peaked during protests against the Tricameral elections".

Vahed and Desai (2013:169) state that Indians' political involvement shifted from national involvement in the 1960s and became more localised due to apartheid regulations and further shifts in the 1980s. As the political climate changed so did the South African Indian community's involvement and reactions. The Minority Front political party championed Indian concerns. Govender and Maharaj (in Desai & Vahed,

2013:145) describe Amichand Rajbansi, the then leader of the Minority Front, as "a politician, socialite and businessperson, was a larger-than-life figure in Chatsworth from the 1960s until his death in 2011". I recall his political presence in Chatsworth as he was the only relatable politician with concerns of developing the Indian community. He was considered the voice of South African Indians in Durban. Some of the things that Amichand Rajbansi tried to combat were a lack of sleeping space in homes, no facilities for us and nowhere to hang our clothes, no parking for cars, and no playgrounds for kids, thus leaving them to play on the streets (in Desai & Vahed, 2013:171). His efforts were rewarded with the Chatsworth Stadium and Oval Cricket Ground.

Despite the efforts to curb poverty levels, child and adult care shelters became more prevalent as the numbers of homeless people rose. A report by Statistics SA, census 2022 revealed that,

According to new data released by Stats SA, poverty is on the rise in South Africa. The latest "Poverty Trends in South Africa" report shows that, despite the general decline in poverty between 2006 and 2011, poverty levels in South Africa rose in 2015. More than half of South Africans were poor in 2015, with the poverty headcount increasing to 55,5% from a series low of 53,2% in 2011.

Poverty was prevalent in the Chatsworth home and flat dwellers. Class and economic differences existed between those who lived in flats and those living in semi-detached homes; the latter had more yard space and indoor toilet facilities while flat dwellers shared communal gardens and space and carried the stigma of being moderate to low-income earners. The flats were a means to house as many people as possible on as little land. These flat establishments fostered a culture and stigma of violence and drug abuse.

4.4 Democracy Dawns and the Rise of Pawns... Allowing the Scabs to Heal

Pre-democracy there were several riots in Durban between Indian and Black groups. "The bloodshed of the riots led to cases of grievous harm, incidents of rape and the massacre of Indians. Approximately 142 lives were taken, and these riots created around 40 000 Indian refugees" (Indian Spice, 2001). Riots broke out again in 1985,

and the local community newspaper, *The Post* (2020) reported that, “on August 6, 1985, violence shattered the peace. For two days homes and shops were looted and set alight ... 1500 Indians lost their homes”. However, in the 1990s, integration between Indians and Black people began.

I remember when integration occurred in the late 1980s when the first African students were introduced into Pinewood Primary, and this led to Indian and African communities getting to know each other, treating each other better. Waetjen (in Desai & Vahed, 2013:232) highlights that integration was made possible through the dismantling of zoning laws. The fight for space and lack of housing is uniquely evident in the informal shack dwellings that popped up in Crossmoore and Shallcross and other areas of Chatsworth. Low-cost housing had been long awaited but the end result not pleasing. Shannon Walsh (in Desai & Vahed, 2013:199) in her article *Forced Integration*, denotes that both South African Indians and Africans contested space in these shack settlements. Desai and Vahed (2013:174) note that after the ANC came into power in the mid-1990s, the Chatsworth community faced new and diverse challenges, such as exorbitantly high increases in flat rentals, exorbitant electricity and water bills, and Chatsworth residents’ popular perception was that the ANC increased the cost of living for Indians because they assumed Indians were wealthier than Black people, even though many of them were still living below the poverty line. With the developments in industry, smaller home-run businesses were on the decrease. The community was still welcoming when integration of the schools took place, granted there were many fears owing to prior hostility and riots, along with the stereotyping of the other race groups.

Mark Hunter and Goolam Vahed (2013), in their article *Schooling in Chatsworth*, mark the shift in the demographics in Chatsworth schools. In the early 1990s students from Umlazi, Chatsworth’s neighbouring Black township, were slowly introduced into the schools of Chatsworth. There were feeding schemes set up to assist learners from poverty-stricken homes and fundraising schemes to assist with school fees. What began with only a handful, flourished into full integration. From 1990 onwards, the demographics of Chatsworth changed with more Black South Africans moving into the area; however, it is still predominantly an Indian community.

A Youth Centre opened in 2003 to provide a recreational space for the youth of Chatsworth. The late President of the ANC, Nelson Mandela, provided government funding for the centre after a tragic event which left 13 youth dead. The official web page for the centre states that the “Nelson Mandela Community Youth Centre (NMYC) was opened in October 2003 by the late former South African President, Nelson Mandela. Situated in the sprawling township of Chatsworth with a population of almost 500 000 people, the NMCYC has become a hub for all forms of activity to uplift the youth and the community at large”.

The Nelson Mandela Chatsworth Youth Centre was not only a recreational space but also a space where teenagers learned about anti-drug campaigns, attended extra classes, and took up hobbies, which was welcomed by the community who faced drug problems with the youth. Vahed and Willemse (in Desai & Vahed, 2013:292) explain that "over the past few years, Chatsworth has made headlines for the perceived drug scourge that has gripped the township". ‘Sugars’, a drug of choice, replacing Mandrax¹⁵ and marijuana, has plagued this township and has had a negative impact on the community.

Along with drugs, gangsterism was also rife, and was headed by some of Chatsworth's most notorious figures, such as The Dre Boys. They were responsible for many drive-by shootings and violence that ultimately led to their imprisonment. Young boys were recruited into gangs to become drug peddlers and deviants. Much of the violence stemmed from taxi-related disturbances¹⁶.

4.5 The People that emerge on the Page, Spring from the Place and the Age.

My aim is to exemplify South African Indianness, and this necessitates me looking at how the identities and characters that developed in this context arose, developed, and are ultimately represented. Ronit Frenkel (2010:1) stipulates that, “South African Indian fiction constantly invokes racial categories by its very constitution, it can also

¹⁵ Mandrax is a synthetic drug sold in tablet form and its key chemical component is methaqualone.

¹⁶ IOL newspapers 4 December 2007 reports that, “taxi turf wars broke out in Durban t the Warwick Junction taxi rank”. Taxi turf wars are a frequent violent occurrence in Durban.

highlight the (de)construction of such racial categories and the politics of authenticity that polices its bounds”.

While these works of fiction describe and illustrate the politics surrounding South African Indian identity, there is also the dual function of representing a key part of South African culture. They challenge contemporary notions of what it is to be a South African Indian in post-apartheid South Africa.

Simon Gikandi (2021:75) states that there are many similarities between poststructural theory and postcolonial discourse. Gikandi (2021:76) further states that, “[o]ne of the things that both movements have in common is that they have always generated heated questions about their political efficacy, their location with intellectual traditions informed by unequal relations of power and their validity as theoretical categories that can provide us with useful knowledge about the cultures and literatures of previously colonized countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean”.

South Africa is one such example where colonisation and apartheid both disenfranchised a group or groups of people. Frenkel (2010:2) posits that,

Postcolonialism is a contested term with a plethora of meanings. Postcolonial theory is often associated with the former colonised world's relationship to the metropole or 'centre'; with discourse analysis influenced by Said's *ORIENTALISM*; or the chronological shift or temporal mark from colonial to postcolonial time (usually designed by the hyphenated 'post-colonial'). It is also sometimes linked to anticolonial histories.

Stuart Hall (1996) describes the writings in this postcolonial period as writings that mark a shifting pattern where there is a crisis of understanding (in Frenkel, 2010:2). He further explains that old categories of making meaning of the world are insufficient to label new accounts that have arisen in a globalised world.

Frenkel (2010:3) values the contested nature of postcolonial theory but deems it the most suitable manner through which a destabilised context may find stability. "It is the very blurring of boundaries between sites, cultures and ideas that postcolonial theory is useful in capturing" (Frenkel, 2010:3). Postcolonial theory reminds us that we are unable to disconnect from our past; the present context is as a result of the past history.

4.6 Mixing Cultures to form Hybrid Practices

Homi Bhabha (2013:1) states that, “this side of the psychosis of patriotic fervour, there is overwhelming evidence of a more transnational and translational sense of the hybridity of imagined communities”. Frenkel (2010:4) proposes that hybridity is a common feature of postcolonial writing as new cultural forms begin to emerge from mutual exchanges across cultures. Bollywood theatre is one such hybrid form of cultural expression. Indian culture in South Africa is considered a hybrid culture as it is evolving in relation to the cultures around it. Wurgaft (2007:1) states that hybrid forms are,

A culture change that results from continuous first-hand contact between two distinct cultural groups. The change occurs at social (collective) and psychological (individual) levels and change usually affects the previously nondominant group the most. Thus, the Indian community would be affected more in this process than the previously dominant white group.

Hybridity has been contested by essentialist views and the notion of a pure and authentic origin, but Frenkel (2010) disengages from this notion in favour of one that highlights the point that no culture is exempt from intermingling. This process could occur prior to this hybrid cultural component being formed. Wurgaft (2007:2) states that there are, “many hybrid arrangements being developed to accommodate the simultaneous demands of traditional Indian culture and a Western English-speaking world”. South African Indians present a hybrid language that is then represented in performance. Ketu Katrak (2021:106) states that hybridity is a powerful concept in postcolonial theory. Katrak (2021:105) offers Durban choreographer Jay Pather as an example of theatre-makers who works with hybridity in performance, mixing styles of dance and multimedia.

Bhabha (2013:2) states that, “what this “imagined” geopolitical space may be, as a local or transnational reality is being both questioned and reiterated” through language and writing. I have only one Indian parent, and am therefore ‘half’ Indian; however, my context is influenced and also influences this description. South African Indians were marginalised during apartheid, and this is evidenced by the lack of literature by South African Indians, and on the subject matter. Ronit Frenkel (2010:5) writes that, “writing

by South Africans of Indian descent has largely been excluded from the canon in post-apartheid South Africa. The exclusion of South African Indian scholarship highlights the insidious nature of apartheid that reverberates in a democratic present that is still marked/marred by racialised discourse”.

Apartheid established binaries and divisions that were drawn from racial classifications. A revision of South African culture post-apartheid forces a revised look at South African Indian culture.

South Africa strives for a context free of racial tensions, and thus many laws have been implemented to abolish discriminatory behaviour based on race. This is evident in our Constitution, section 9. Frenkel (2010:6) lends support by saying that,

Race in South Africa is an inherently ambiguous construct, despite a history of imposed racial identities. Presently, this ambiguity is located in the tension between non-racialism, Black Consciousness and apartheid taxonomies that characterise contemporary South Africa where racism is interrogated but race is not. In reading South African Indian literature as a cultural history, the racial politics that continue to undergird South African culture are contested in a process of reformulation.

From this, one might understand that this literature captures this era, and in so doing, explores what it is that South African Indian culture is or has become. These representations are explored in the type of characters selected to drive the narrative of a Bollywood theatre play. Frenkel (2010:6) states that, the focus on “South African Indian fiction and race, as imbricated cultural histories within the complex site of Indian identity in South Africa, reveals the inherent interconnection of cultural forms”.

This implies that a study of these fictitious literatures would reveal more about the said culture and make it possible to draw comparisons between other dominant cultures. Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl-Ann Michael (2000:2) support Frenkel by stating that,

South Africa is also a place striking for its imbrication of multiple identities - identities that mythologies of apartheid, and of resistance to it, tended to silence. Important as this focus on the decompression of post-apartheid period has been, we may also begin to see that complex configurations, at least at the level of identity were always there. Apartheid tried to mask them through the ideology of separation. The new generation

has tried to mask these complex configurations by foregrounding an over-simplified discourse of rainbow nationalism.

These systems of masking have not allowed for the differences and similarities between cultures to fully be analysed. As such, it is vital to understand race as a subject matter, and why cultures connect to and distance themselves from each other. Frenkel (2010:7) reminds us that, "race is both a natural and a social construct". It is more the social construct that interests this research. Race has been used as a social construct in South Africa as a form of stratification, but with a shift in paradigm it is necessary to re-evaluate race, specifically the South African Indian, and some of the identities that fall within this race. This contested nature of race still needs to be examined post-apartheid. Frenkel (2010:8) states that in the South African context, "where society was historically constructed through racial differences and domination, the mechanisms of race making and the current salience of racial myths are important discourses through which this process may be explored".

During apartheid there were four main classifications of race, these included white, Black, Coloured, and Indian. Frenkel (2010:9) notes that these four groups were also "hierarchically arranged with the White population at the top, followed by Indians, then Coloureds and finally the Black population at the bottom".

There was further division within each race group in terms of class, gender, religion, and sex. In the post-apartheid context these hierarchies have eroded or reversed. The assumed privileged status of Indians in South Africa during apartheid is no longer if it ever existed. Frenkel (2010:13) claims that "[r]acist discourse has followed the South African Indian community from the time that they arrived in South Africa. Numerous non-fiction depictions, particularly early editions of the *NATAL MERCURY* newspaper, portray this community as a homogenised group that is 'unscrupulous, dirty and unfathomable', and that keeps itself aloof from all other communities".

This type of stereotypical understanding of a community allows for an extremely limited knowledge base of the individuals who belong to this race. Frenkel (2010) explains that one such stereotype is that of South African Indians being unscrupulous business merchants, "Indianness became a language of both race and nation" (Frenkel,

2010:13). In South Africa we define Indian by race, physical features, language, and cultural practices that are specifically confined to this context by this particular diaspora. As the South African political landscape is changing so to do cultural practices.

Sarah Nuttall (2005) in her presentation title *NEW DIRECTIONS in the STUDY OF CULTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA*, writes about South African culture as being bifurcated. By this she explains that our thoughts and scholarship as a nation is premised on the ideology of racial segregation, and as such, the by-product of this segregation theory is still evident in today's society and is often referred to in postcolonial theory. Thus, notions of segregation are still evident today and it is through this notion of difference that we come together. South African culture today seeks to unite a nation based on our differences, and this is evidenced in the concept of the Rainbow Nation's "Simunye we are one!" claim, but it is as important to give equal weight to nuance as it is to only consider the broad ideology of Nationalism. These concepts remain an illusion today (this is evident in the riots that took place in July 2021)¹⁷. Examples of modern Indianness, culture, religion, and language are presented in later chapters when I examine my personal history.

4.7 Conclusion

This thesis aims to represent South African Indianness through theatre. In order to understand the development of South African Indian culture it was imperative that I locate this culture in the context in which it developed, and the time and space. Therefore, the chapter began with an account of the forced arrival on Indians in Chatsworth. Hansen (2006) reminds us that space was developed differently for white people and Black people. This chapter presented the history of Chatsworth from its establishment through to the forced removals of farmers and business owners, supported by the Group Areas Act, as well as the impact that this low-cost housing scheme had on the community, which then nevertheless thrived within (Desai & Vahed, 2013). It further looked at the infrastructure and community spaces that sprung

¹⁷ In July 2021 violent riots broke out in Durban and Gauteng and gave rise to racially motivated tensions once again. The link reports these activities in the *Times* news. [IN PICTURES | Violent riots and looting grip KZN and Gauteng \(timeslive.co.za\)](https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2021/07/21/riots-photos-2021-07-21/)

up in this largely Indian community. Chatsworth is home to one of the largest populations of Indians and as this thesis' creative component aimed to capture some of the archetypes of people in theatre, the chapter described factors that shaped the identities that were nurtured here, including my own.

Chatsworth nurtured a unique Indianness; it produced an Indian community that was united against racially-motivated attacks and riots. Indian culture still held onto religious and cultural practices. Chatsworth housed/houses a developing middle class of Indians from people who lost everything when they were relocated. Chatsworth further nurtured identities that occupied the roles of shop owners, traders, and factory workers. However, it also nurtured patriarchal beliefs that are rife in this community with the establishment of gambling houses that were frequented by mainly men. Patriarchy is also evident in the unequal educational levels of between men and women (Sookrajh, 2013), which occurred in spite of the Tricameral Government's efforts to provide subsidised education for Indians.

Chatsworth is ever-changing with new buildings rising. In the beginning there were no recreational facilities or places of worship, but since 1960, temples, mosques, and churches have been built to accommodate the various faiths of its inhabitants. There are malls, shopping centres, and businesses that have developed within Chatsworth, like Chatsworth Centre, the Chatsworth Sports Centre, and the Nelson Mandela Youth Centre. The development is indicative of the inhabitants' status, as well as the developing and nurturing nature of sports and recreation, which was something that Indians used as a form of escapism.

Apartheid politics were responsible for this community's establishment, and it is politics that impacts other integral facets of this diverse community. The chapter described the role of the NIC in governing Indian matters. It further looked at the police's Special Branch division that detained Indian men for opposing apartheid, resulting in homes that were run by single women as well as women having to enter the work force and become the breadwinners for their families (Waetjen, 2013).

Democracy brought many changes to education and the freedom of movement to leave Chatsworth. It also brought with it a hybrid Indian culture that developed

identities with a unique language and culture that mixed Indian culture with the national South African culture (Bhabha, 2013). Like any township, Chatsworth residents achieved much and developed considerably but has also experienced atrocities. Indian identities were allowed to develop in isolation for over 40 years, but now these identities are beginning to shift with the evolving context. Indians are more than just merchants and business folk, and the following chapters present this diversity.

Chapter 5: Texting that is Contexting: Reflections on the History of South African Indian Theatre

South African Indian theatre has had a long history, beginning with the arrival of the indentured labourers in 1860. This chapter embarks on a journey to review said history, noting shifts that have occurred and the socio-political climate that steered this course of change. My research has revealed a gap in the literature relating to post-apartheid developments. This chapter seeks to fill some of those gaps. Celeste Zaloumis (1995) provides a detailed overview of SAIT and frames the idea that this unique style of theatre developed in accordance with socio-political and socio-economic pressure placed on this South African Indian community. Zaloumis (1995:iii) further explains that the “dynamics of theatrical evolution emanated from and were directly related to the process of social change being experienced by people of Indian descent within the South African milieu. The very divided nature of the community and the social machinations emanating therefrom served as an added catalyst for change”.

Therefore, I examine some of the major political movements reflected in and through SAIT. I will focus on theatre, which integrated the imposition of certain legislation that restricted human rights and movement, namely The Gandhi period, the Arya Yuvuk Sabha, the Cato Manor Riots, and The Group Areas Act 1950. All of these events steered this dramatic form to take new directions. As I seek to reflect my own context in my writing and directing, it is imperative to acknowledge other artists who fashioned theatre in a comparable manner.

The dramatic form, the script, became a reflection of the relationship between dramatic expression and socio-economic and socio-political contexts (Zaloumis, 1995). South

African Indian plays allow us to analyse this small subculture within different South African ethnic groups. Specifically, I will look at *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017/2019) as a case study that exemplifies representations of South African Indian culture, Indianness, or what Zaloumis (1995:1) calls the "ever-fading Indian sub-continent Mother culture".

This social shift plagued our history, and this is evident in SAIT. Zaloumis (1995:2) offers other examples, such as the social transition from economic suppression to racial and ethnic suppression as one such occurrence, stating that "[s]uperstructures such as religion, aesthetic and philosophical as well as legal and political upheavals were responsible for shaping the shifts that were displayed in theatre". Marx (in Zaloumis, 1995:19) adds that "[i]n order to study the connection between intellectual and material production it is above all essential to conceive the latter in its determined historical form and not as a general category. For example, this corresponds to the capitalist mode of production, a type of intellectual production quite different from that which corresponded to the Medieval mode of production".

In the same way the shift from racial and ethnic suppression gave way to democracy and freedom, it is now leading to a new mode of production in terms of culture and identities within South African Indian culture, and more importantly the relationship of those identities to a national culture. The sociology of drama, already concerned with institutions (theatre and their predecessors and successors), with formations (groups of dramatic and theatrical movements), and with formed relationships (audiences, including the formation of audiences within theatres and their wider social formation), would go on to include forms, not only in the sense of their relation to world-views or structures of feeling, but also in the more active sense of their world performance (social methods of speaking, moving, representing and so on). Zaloumis (1995:25) adds that, "in many arts, while the manifested social content is evident, in one way or the other, in institutions, formations and communicative relationships, and in other ways in forms which relate to the specific selections of issues, specific kinds of interpretation, of course specifically produced content, and equally important and sometimes more fundamental, social content can be found in the basic social means, historically variable and always active social forms of language and movement and

representation on which, ultimately, the more manifest social elements can be seen to depend on”.

This chapter seeks to identify political climate change, the institutions that caused this change, and how that change sparked reactions in SAIT. The underlying aim is to describe the events that have shaped SAIT and artists who have forged a way forward in this post-apartheid context.

5.1 The Rising Sun on the Settling Sand of no Man's Land

South African Indian Theatre has endured more than 160 years of change, beginning with re-enactments of sacred Sanskrit texts, like *The Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, which were performed by early indentured labourers. Dance and performance became crucial ways in which community life was maintained and encouraged (Zaloumis, 1995). From its modest beginnings, SAIT has found longevity and sustainability through its metamorphosing nature. One such evolving facet is that of religious venues such as temples that became popular hosts for religious and secular dramas and replaced the previous fireside dramas, which were presented in a more informal manner (Zaloumis, 1995:27). Being performed in temples, the dramas served to bring the community together, thus playing a significant role in community development. There are very few written accounts of these early works as this was passed down orally to later generations.

Sathasivan Annamalai (1998:11) describes early SAIT as a form that "operated mainly through oral traditions and linked to religious mythology. Therukoothu dance dramas were passed on from generation to generation, usually father to son". This oral tradition was instrumental in carrying Indian dramas into the twentieth century; however, there is a lack of published texts. Annamalai (1998:49) explains that "the establishment of South African Indian Theatre within this culture, in the beginning, was inextricably tied to religion and ritual". This early theatre had strong ties to temples, rituals, and festivals. Annamalai (1998:49) provides the ultimate example of the connection, namely Lord Shiva (a Hindu deity), who, in the form of Nataraja, controlled the universe through dance.

Annamalai (1998) attests that the vernacular was orated and passed on from

generation to generation. Passages of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were recited from memory, thus remembering has dissipated over the generations. The problem with this is evident in the absence of vernacular languages being spoken in either homes or in public. The dwindling of Indian vernaculars was compounded by the English language education and instruction that was dominant at the time (Annamalai, 1998:47).

Annamalai (1998) describes the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* as Sanskrit texts that contain all elements of high drama, themes of oppression, greed, pride, and hypocrisy, and gory battle scenes. Most of these dramatic elements have been adapted through time and context to find suitable matches in modern theatre practices. Religious dramas often included a moral lesson and evolved from the scriptures; performance is an integral aspect of Hindu prayer, with songs and dances being performed in devotion to deities. Temple venues were also accessed for performances of a secular and non-religious nature and had a high entertainment value. Along with these non-religious performances there was, and still is, a large scope to perform Hindu rituals, which are enacted at weddings, during prayer and ancestor worship, and even at funerals.

5.2 Political Shifts, Government Slips and the Gullies that Catch Them

South African Indian Theatre saw significant shifts in style, from its novice religious content to shifts in form and content, which seemed to follow similar drastic shifts in the country's political climate. There were several artists like Ronnie Govender and Muthal Naidoo who marked political strife in their chosen works, but they were not the founders of this concept, there were Indian artists who came before them and dared to challenge the mold, especially during, what Zaloumis (1995) calls, *The Gandhi Period*. Mahatma Karamchand Gandhi arrived in South Africa in 1893 and began his turbulent journey in the country as he was evicted from a train, and then led peaceful resistance against unfair and unjust laws that disenfranchised the Indian population and others in South Africa. In the period leading up to his exit from the country in 1914, Gandhi was instrumental in starting the Satyagraha Movement (which seemed to dispel numerous frictions through silent and peaceful protest), effected change during the Anglo Boer War, defied immigration laws, and was secretary of the NIC (Zaloumis,

1995). Gandhi's efforts to unify the community and Indian resistance in politics were marked in the theatre that was being made in the early twentieth century as religious dramas made way for original, new scripts. These scripts shone a light on the South African political climate at the turn of the century.

The tragedy of war soon permeated into the theatre practices in Durban. Theatre during the World Wars did not die out, as this political period found representation in theatre. In 1912 the drama group Arya Yuruk Sabha (AYS) was formed under the leadership of Chairman Mr. Tommy Lalbadur. The AYS began to identify with a form of theatre that sought to draw dramatic performances away from religion (Zaloumis, 1995). Dramatic performance and writing grew in SAIT. The AYS strived to place drama at the centre of community activities, and through its efforts became instrumental in bringing new, indigenous scripts to SAIT, and thus saw a shift away from dramas related to India, although the plays were still rooted in Hindu culture and Hindi language specific to a South African Indian community.

Towards the latter part of the 1920s the South African Government started implementing laws that restricted movement of certain groups of people within certain areas. The government threatened to repatriate Indians in South Africa to India. One such law was the Immigration of Indian Relief Act of 1927, which provided that any South African Indian absent from the country for three consecutive years would forfeit their South African citizenship (Zaloumis, 1995:82).

Trends in new scripts continued well into the 1930s. The AYS created and performed work that represented the current struggles experienced by Durban Indians and the world community that was overcoming the tragedy of two World Wars. Buildings were erected to house these new styled shows. The Aryan Benevolent Home for the destitute and needy, housed not just community members, but also a theatre. This venue was committed to promoting local talent, and offered a space where non-religious content would not be challenged.

After World War 1, the local Indian community faced political turmoil. The social circumstances of the Magazine Barracks in Durban were reflected in the themes that the new dramas were tackling. Life in the Barracks, rather than religion, took centre stage in many of the dramas that were being staged. Now in SAIT, men still performed

all the roles (Zaloumis, 1995:85). Women began appearing in Tamil dramas in the 1920s. The first play to incorporate women was *Setyaman Salvitri*.

The 1930s brought their own troubles to the South African theatre culture as a shortage of performance venues resulted in dramas being performed in cinemas and the open air. Sketches depicting everyday life were presented after the movies were screened at 10 pm and ran until 5 am, and were attended by the entire family, young and old, thus fostering a sense of family and community unity. The open-air dramas were scheduled in Clairwood. Zaloumis (1995:86) describes the stage decor as draped saris, with the audience placed in a u-shape around the stage, while banana leaves served as seats. Meticulous care was taken with costumes, accessories, and makeup. Clay ash and chili powder were used to recreate the visuals and actors' face makeup of the dramas in India.

Additionally, Zaloumis (1995:87) points out that there were several distinguishing factors that made the dramas uniquely South African. The language used in these local dramas was a type of pidgin Hindi, Tamil, or any other vernacular language, thus allowing a larger more diverse, multilingual audience to find meaning. All dramas contained comic skits that served as light relief after the intense dramas; the road scenes' (scenes that took place off the stage area) also covered set and costume changes. As the dramas evolved, so too did the backdrops, which were elaborately painted scenes, and the area behind the screen doubling as a dressing room. Theatre noticeably developed and shifted in structure, content, and reach.

The Indian dramas of the 1940s saw an improvement in quality, displaying a more sophisticated and distinguished style. The South African Indian eisteddfods¹⁸ were borne in the era after the World Wars and are still running today, keeping the Indian vernaculars as their mode of language expression. The aim was to regain a sense of unity that the wars had sought to obliterate. Improvements were also seen in the technical aspects of the performances. South African Indian theatre progressed in the post-War theatre of the 1950s and 60s, facilitated by the enhanced sense of unity

¹⁸ The eisteddfods are speech and drama competitions in Indian vernacular. They were introduced by the Indian government to keep vernacular languages alive. Their origins are from Welsh heritage dating back to the 1800s.

experienced by the Indian community (Zaloumis, 1995:88). Theatre channeled a source of repression that had spread through the Indian community.

5.2.1 Drastic Times Called for Elastic Mimes

Technical advancements were taking place across the globe, and these were included in theatre. Hand-held and hanging microphones were introduced and improved audibility. Also, for the first time, children became performers in the dramas. South African Indian theatre might have been scarce during the 50s, most likely because focus was on the resistance campaigns spreading across the country (Zaloumis, 1995:96).

The political climate of the 1950s was rife with riots between Indian and Black communities, with looting, violence, and a very slow-to-react police force. The Group Areas Act was implemented, resulting in people being removed and relocated to certain areas – these forced removals were racially determined acts. Zaloumis (1995:112) points out that, "destruction of communities, their location and relocation was without a doubt a major catalyst for social change amongst South African Indians." There was a sense of insecurity within the community as they were being placed in an inferior position in comparison to Europeans, and cultural and human rights were being infringed upon.

The sanctions placed on South Africa by the rest of the world affected theatre practices as they were largely influenced by Indian cinema. The cultural boycotts and sanctions placed on South Africa during apartheid meant that Indian films became harder to import into the country. There were many uncertainties regarding the position that Indians would occupy in this new-found context. It was only when, as Zaloumis (1995:127) states, that Dr. Verwoed, head of the National Party (from 1958-1961), officially recognised South African Indians as a permanent feature of the South African population, that some tensions were eased.

The Indian dramas were impacted when one of the popular venues that housed dramas, the Victoria Picture Palace, was demolished (Zaloumis, 1995:130); venues were hard to find for Indian dramas. Despite these political uncertainties, popular

children and school productions, as well as shows held in community halls continued (Zaloumis, 1995:113). Towards the latter part of the decade, SAIT started reached European theatre-making standards.

The political tensions of the 1960s forced Indians to use theatre as a non-violent weapon in the struggle; middle class Indians created reactionary movements in theatre. It became reflective of Indian culture that now included the lives that Indians were living in South Africa. The traditional Indian drama began evolving into a style of theatre that also served to protest against the indignation that South African Indians faced. However, most of SAIT typically depicted religious dramas, vernacular plays, classical dances, Nagaras and Bhajans (Zaloumis, 1995:114). South African Indian theatre that veered towards protest did so against the discriminatory legislation and in an effort to unite communities in the struggle against a common enemy.

Zaloumis (1995:117) states that, "[w]hite liberal personalities approached the Indian dramatic community propounding the idea of democratic theatre", creating a space in which theatre moved beyond mere entertainment and played a role in pursuit of democracy. The prominent figures in this changing and rising SAIT were writers and directors Muthal Naidoo, Devi Bugwhan, G. Pillay, and Ronnie Govender, who employed workshopping techniques to create indigenous works to perform in halls and in schools. This workshopping process was different to the previous and existing modes of Indian theatre.

In an interview, Ronnie Govender (in Annamalai, 1998:59) admits that "the 'new-wave' was to take the known Eurocentric traditions and to incorporate the other races into that same tradition". This new branch of SAIT would result in theatre reaching more audiences, as they were performed in English, directed towards being socio-political as opposed to religious, employed a Eurocentric performance style while being rooted in South African culture, and protested prevailing current events. The government had gone to great lengths to curb the theatre's role in the struggle against apartheid. Theatre companies had to acquire four permit forms, from four different government departments in order to make legal theatre (1998:61). Overcoming these restrictions, new waves in SAIT flourished.

An influential force in steering Indian dramas more into the realm of realism was

Krishna Shah, an Indian instructor with training in America on the Stanislavski acting method (Zaloumis, 1995:132). This realistic style of theatre-making was more fitting to a style that sought to challenge social standings but represented it more directly and honestly. Shah conceived *King of the Dark Chamber* (1961), which was a blend of two styles of theatre – classical and folk (Zaloumis, 1995:132). Shah used different elements of each style, like the chorus from folk dramas and translated lyrics into English, while reciting them with the metered beat of classical Indian dance. Zaloumis (1995:133) adds that Mudras, a distinct element of classical dance, were also featured in this new sophisticated form presented on South African stages. Zaloumis (1995:133) claims that Shah's influences are most notably recognisable in two works, *Lokadharmi*, a social realism play, and *Natyadharmi*, an imaginative reality drama. Shah's style of theatre-making was more in the style of the latter drama type, where subject matter, plot, gesture, and music were uniquely conveyed. He favoured sentiment over emotion in theatre, as sentiment is always pleasurable and unique, whereas emotion may be pleasant or unpleasant (Zaloumis, 1995:135). The Shah Theatre Company was home to some prominent SAIT makers. Ronnie Govender and Muthal Naidoo were amongst these theatre-makers, and created shows like *Christmas Nuts*, *Religious Snob*, and an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*.

Annamalai (1998:9) claims that "apartheid structures were also designed primarily to promote the culture of the White minority, which eventually led to Euro-centric theatre holding a dominant position and influencing other cultures". The dominant style at the time was white, and theatre that represented the times. Krishna Shah was a catalyst for many other companies, including the Theatre Council of Natal, Tecon, and Music & Drama Group, all of whom sought to make theatre that reflected the times (Zaloumis, 1995:136).

5.2.2 European Processes Fused with Indian Focuses

Tecon carried this motif of protesting the unfair practices of apartheid into the 70s and became involved in the struggle by using the play *Antigone* to represent the South African political climate (Zaloumis, 1995:138). *Antigone* is a Greek classical play about a tyrant leader who persecutes those who stand against him, with the theme of resistance against an unjust government dominating the play. Ronnie Govender also

used theatre to protest against the unjust system of oppression.

Govender, now deceased, flourished in the 1970s with shows like *Lahnee's Pleasure* and *Swami*. He explored themes of restriction of movement and developed a style that fused choral verse, multiple voices, and drama mixed with poetry (Zaloumis, 1995:140). The form, content, and style he had developed, made him an extremely popular figure in SAIT. These protest-styled themes also resonated in the works of Kessie Govender, who used theatre and shows like *Stable Expenses* and *Working-Class Hero* to highlight the working conditions on building sites and authorities' harassment of companies (Zaloumis, 1995:41). Govender used real characters and situations of imprisonment and assaults carried out by the government. Kessie Govender's writing also took a political slant, but he maintains that the aim of it was not solely motivated by the Black Consciousness Movement (Annamalai, 1998:14).

Part of the motivation for this style of theatre was an attempt to reflect and retain Indianness during apartheid. Sathasivan Annamalai (1998:iv) proposes that SAIT's history is a rich suppository of "raw material which fits neatly within the broader context of how theatre generally developed in this country. The overriding commonality invariably is the part played by politics".

Ronnie Govender infused *House of Delegates* with politics by ridiculing the House of Delegates. SAIT was exploring a multiplicity of genres and forms, some resembling but most far removed from their Western counterparts. Religious themes in Indian dramas had given way to indigenous writings that were exploring a more European theatrical tradition (Annamalai, 1998:14). The decline of Indian vernacular languages led to a large gap in SAIT and the disappearance of some forms of Indian drama.

5.2.3 Spoils of Wars while Driving Globalised Cars

The idea that SAIT was made for Indians, by Indians, and about Indians had developed due to the social circumstances. Annamalai (1998:15) indicates that the Indian community in South Africa is the largest grouping of the Indian diaspora; within South Africa, this group enjoyed modestly higher economic favour in comparison to other 'non-white' race groups. This diaspora of Indians had evolved into a new South African

culture, and it is this new culture that was represented in theatre. Annamalai (1998:12) states that prior to the 1950s, SAIT possessed certain characteristics intrinsically related to the lifestyle of this Indian Community; their aim was to reach further, include greater politics, and serve an important function in society. Annamalai (1998:17) claims that a major reason for the disintegration of vernacular dramas was the fact that Natal Indians adapted their culture to the context within which it was placed. The traditions needed to sustain these types of dramas had begun to disintegrate.

Annamalai notes that the prejudice shown towards non-white citizens extended to their works and writings being dismissed at publication houses: "Government itself neglected to document minority cultures such as that of the Indian Community" (Annamalai, 1998:14). The apartheid regime allowed limited cultural interaction between the races, but within this South African milieu with Eurocentric, Afrocentric, and Indian-orientated cultures, coexistence was inevitably bound to what Hall (1996) refers to as cultural appropriation of the dominant culture, which is white Eurocentric being dominantly assimilated into other cultures. Such assimilation was marked in the new theatre-making process of South African Indians. These theatre-making processes were further advanced by westernisation, urbanisation, industrialisation, and secularisation (Annamalai, 1998). As these paradigm shifts occurred, they incurred shifts in cultural practices, for example, the practice of arranged marriages has fallen away in South African Indian culture and been replaced by a boom in love marriages. These and other such cultural changes are reflected in the theatre practices that have evolved over time.

South African Indian culture or Indianness has been assimilated into South African culture in several ways, with positive and negative outcomes. The positive is economically evident. Today this population group, is a minority that contributes to the South African culture with cuisines that uniquely represent Durban, like the Bunny Chow, with thriving businesses as more small business owners could be registered, flooding of industries and professions like doctors, lawyers, accountants, and teachers as well as in the media and other arts-related jobs. This sector is on a rise; many South African Indians have high levels of education, but the downfall is that the main language spoken by many Indians domestically, socially, and in the workplace is

English, and as Annamalai (1998:29) points out, an abandonment of the 'close knit extended family' owing to the Group Areas Act and the adoption of a more nuclear family unit. These acts that stifled the development of Indianness in South Africa extended to and included the indentured labour system, maltreatment and exploitation, poor working conditions, and protest actions (Annamalai, 1998:30).

Throughout these events, Indian theatre continues to develop but some traditions have fallen by the wayside due to a lack of documentation. The negatives are that South African Indianness is often a marginalised culture with few opportunities on the horizon. Schools in local districts like Chatsworth and Phoenix have closed their doors as families have opted for private schooling or schooling outside of these areas. Religious institutions have seen a drop in attendances by worshippers, with the youth avoiding these establishments in favour of other cultural activities that were previously denied to them, such as music, gymnastics, swimming, and rugby.

From my own experiences, there are similarities in how political shifts influenced the theatre-makers and practitioners of this new age of South African, and specifically Indian, theatre. I frequently attended dance dramas and shows at the Aryan Benevolent Homes where classical dance still thrived. Theatre shows at the Asoka theatre, performed by the likes of Afzal Khan and many others, promoted family values and used comedy skits, with stereotyped Indian characters and storylines that depicted our lived experiences in a satirical style. Theatre in the 1980s manifested itself in this satirical fashion, which relied heavily on comedic timing and farcical scenarios performed by flamboyant characters.

Stand-up comedians like Mervyn Pillay, and later on Keseran Pillay, tackled the atrocities of apartheid and thereafter the transitional period into democracy in the content of their stand-up routines. In the late 1990s Keseran Pillay used stand-up comedy to tackle the marginalisation of this group through apartheid practices, delving deeper to represent types of Indian masculinities that were different to the stereotypes that audiences were accustomed to (Munsamy, 2006). No longer was the content driven towards protest and change but rather an inner look at the community itself and how it was making steps forwards in a democratic context. However, a substantial portion of the content in the late 1990s was focused on the TRC and the individuals

who were awarded amnesty for their offences.

Krijay Govender, a stand-up comic and writer-director of *Women in Brown* (1999), used theatre to deconstruct the role of Indian women in society as well as challenge the stereotypes of this cohort of South Africans. Govender's examination of Indianness spilled over into her comedy, which served to highlight certain cultural behaviours. Leandra Reddy also used stand-up comedy to interrogate Indian behaviour in Durban. Although comedy skits, stand-up, and satire featured prominently, eisteddfods and cultural events were ongoing platforms throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Ashwin Singh (2018) helped me recall SAIT and writer-directors who have prevailed post 1994. Ronnie Govender continued a successful streak with shows like *Thunsil* (1995), *Flight 49* (1998), and *At the Edge* (2000), maintaining his cutting-edge style. These shows depicted the changes in the Indian community and the existence of Indian culture post-apartheid. Govender also explored current trends with shows like *Too Mucken Fuch* and *31 Million Rand Robbery*, based on a robbery heist in Durban in the late 90s. This more satirical style proved quite successful, and the turn of the century also saw Rajesh Gopie using a similar style to make his mark with *Out of Bounds* (2001) and *The Coolie Odyssey* (2005). Other Indian theatre-makers in the early 2000s were Pranesh Maharaj, Dr Satchu Annamalai, and Kumseela Naidoo from The Dingalings who produced distinctive styles and genres of SAIT including realism, drama, children's theatre, stand-up comedy, satire, and to a certain extent a bit of Bollywood in all these forms. There were also several comedians like Krijay Govender, Keseran Pillay, Dhaveshan Govender, Shika Bhudoo, Anesh Singh, Masood Boomgaard, Natasha Munian, Karou Charou, and me.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter briefly navigated the history of SAIT. Several political shifts were highlighted to denote the impact that was mirrored in theatre. Theatre served to reflect the context, showcase Indian culture, and above all, create a space in which challenge was possible. The theatre genres evolved and changed from recitations for religious Sanskrit texts to original scripts that depicted a South African Indian lifestyle. SAIT also aligned itself with a global feeling of community-building after the World Wars.

Extreme political conflict and discriminatory laws allowed for SAIT to manifest new ways of making theatre and new heights were reached, such as realism, which was initiated to combat the Group Areas Act and to depict a more accurate picture of what life was like during apartheid. This exhibited theatre's resilience in adapting to the role that theatre played within the community. Thus, theatre was used as more than merely entertainment but also as a tool for change and a place where culture could be represented. With the emergence of democracy, theatre once again evolved to delve deeper into South African Indian culture and the new representations found in culture and identities. It is within this paradigm of equality and democracy that Bollywood-styled theatre emerged as a result of sanctions being lifted on South Africa and the spread of a global culture, and by including Bollywood cinema into this global, popular culture. Numerous genres and plays have been represented in SAIT since 2000. With individuals enjoying more freedoms and choices, different performance styles like stand-up comedy, satirical skits, and even children's theatre productions were allowed to thrive.

CHAPTER 6: PINWOOD HILLS AND CHATSWORTH THRILLS TO THE CULTURAL SPILLS AND THE SHOES THAT I MUST FILL: UNPACKING I

The research undertaken in this dissertation is autoethnographic in design. Therefore, in order to fulfil the requirements of this research design there are several factors to consider. Adams et al. (2017:1) describes autoethnography as being a research method that "uses personal experience ("auto") to describe and interpret ("graphy") cultural texts, experiences, beliefs, and practices ("ethno"). Autoethnographers believe that personal experience is infused with political/cultural norms and expectations, and they engage in rigorous self-reflection -typically referred to as reflexivity- in order to identify and interrogate the intersections between the self and social life".

One component of my research highlights my own experiences, my history, and context. Autoethnography is a style of autobiographical writing and qualitative research that explores an individual's specific lived experiences that have been

impacted by social and cultural institutions. Carolyn Ellis in the *Handbook of Autoethnography* describes this qualitative method.

... autoethnography is not simply a way of knowing about the world; it has become a way of being in the world, one that requires living consciously, emotionally, reflexively. It asks that we not only examine our lives but also consider how and why we think, act, and feel as we do. Autoethnography requires that we observe ourselves observing, that we interrogate what we think and believe, and that we challenge our own assumptions, asking over and over if we have penetrated as many layers of our own defenses, fears, and insecurities as our project requires. It asks that we rethink and revise our lives, making conscious decisions about who and how we want to be. And in the process, it seeks a story that is hopeful, where authors ultimately write themselves as survivors of the story they are living (Jones, 2013:10).

This chapter seeks to navigate the intersection between myself and social life. It also explains why I think the way I do about social issues, and how I represent the people that I have grown up around in the plays that I write. Bochner and Ellis (in Adams et al., 2017:1) add that, “fundamentally, autoethnographers aim to show “people” in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles”. Adams et al. (2017:1), further state that autoethnographic research is, “the practice of cultural members giving an account of the culture”.

To understand the person that I am and how my contexts have shaped my creative processes, it is essential to recount this journey as well as the most influential individuals and events. Thelma Rosenberg (in Pillay et al. (2016:34) adds that researchers “engage in personal history self-study is for self-knowing and the development of their professional identity...and to progress towards their self-understanding, a central area of focus is their home culture and the influence it has had on who they become”.

It is important to describe my upbringing under apartheid South Africa and in so doing highlight my culture, and the sparks that this context ignited in me as a writer-director. I also highlight the gender roles, gender violence, racism, education, and class status that impacted on my Indianness. To do so I must reflect on my upbringing, role models, and surroundings, as well as the impact that political shifts had on my cognitive

processes. I will present my own artistic style and others that I am drawn to in order to generate data to examine.

Kassu Sileyew (2019:2) states that, research methodology is “the path through which researchers need to conduct their research. It shows the path through which the researchers formulate their problem and objective and present their results from the data obtained during the study period”.

There are several methods through which data may be collected. Some of these include primary data collection through, inter alia, “desk review, data collection through questionnaires, data obtained through expert opinions, workplace exposure measurement” (Sileyew, 2019:2), and secondary data analysis through qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Gill et al. (2008:1) also state that, “there are a variety of methods of data collect in qualitative research, including observations, textual or visual analysis (e.g., from books and videos) and interviews (individual or group) and focus groups”. For the purpose of this thesis, I used interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions to collect data. My primary data collection was conducted through the script analysis and the play *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019).

Interviews, according to Gill et al. (2008:2), may take the form of “[s]tructured interviews [which] follow specific questions while unstructured interviews as open-ended questions that lead to a discussion”, while “semi-structured interviews ask key questions that help to define the area explored”.

Gill et al. (2008:3) state that interviews aim to “explore the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on specific topics”. Data collection for this thesis was collected through structured interviews as one of topics was the exploration of Bollywood-styled theatre in Durban, South Africa. Interviews were best conducted in locations that were isolated from distractions, as was the case with Ashwin Singh, where leading questions were asked to secure data about his writing and directing approach and his encounters with Bollywood-styled theatre.

Even though it was not my initial intention, I also adopted the questionnaire format for Vivian Reddy as he was ill and could not facilitate a structured interview. Questionnaires are more common in quantitative research and offer less depth in the

data than an interview does (Gill et al.,2008:5). Jack and Clarke posit that a questionnaire is a “cost-effective research tool and pilot sample should be checked for reliability and validity” (I found that the data was much more substantial in an interview than it was in the questionnaire response).

The third method of data collection used was focus groups, which are similar to less structured interviews and entail a group discussion on a particular research topic (Gill et al., 2008:6). The topic discussion is facilitated by the researcher and to ensure quality of research this discussion is recorded by the researcher. One of the main reasons that focus groups are used to collect data is that they offer a collective view (Gill et al., 2008:7). This was an important data collecting tool as this thesis aimed to understand why South African Indians are drawn to Bollywood cinema, and more specifically the representations of Indianness and archetypal characters evident in both Bollywood cinema and *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019). Focus groups offer valuable insight into the participants’ experiences and beliefs on a certain topic. For the purposes of this thesis the focus group participants were the cast and crew of *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019). There were 15 participants in total, and they offered valuable data in relation to my directing style, the script as an example of Bollywood-styled writing, and the play as an example of Bollywood Theatre.

Data in this autoethnographic research study was also collected from my own reflections on my personal context and history, as well as my encounters with political situations and institutions. Michael Humphreys (2005:1), “advocates for the use of autoethnographic vignettes as an alternative approach to representation and reflexivity in qualitative research”. Reflexive research is part of the interpretive research paradigm. Hella von Unger (2021:2) states that, “methodological reflexivity asks what needs to be done according to the respective theoretical and methodological assumptions of a given study in an effort to generate valid results”. Unlike reflexive research, autoethnographic data collection uses stories of the self, that is, first person accounts and that may take a narrative form (sometimes autobiographical and personal essays) that places the self within a social context (Humphreys, 2005:3). This chapter provides my personal accounts of my social contexts and the impact that they have had on me as a writer, director, performer, and researcher. The following stories include members of my family, my religion, educational experiences, and the shaping

of my world views through the shifting political climates in South Africa.

6.1 Mixed Masala with Durban Halala, I Emerge...

I was born in Chatsworth at RK Khans Hospital (one of the best hospitals at the time), on 21 December 1980, to parents Raymond and the late Musnoona Munsamy. I am the grandson of the late Peter Ebrahim and Gava August (on my maternal side) and the late Chinna and Poobathi Munsamy (on my paternal side). My maternal grandparents, both Muslim Coloureds, came to Durban from Kimberley in the 1940s. They resided in a few areas around Durban, including Clairwood, before they were allocated a flat in Austerville Wentworth, which sits in the South Basin of Durban. The air was polluted and always smelled of rotten tomatoes and gas as it was surrounded by factories, the harbour, and at that time, Durban Airport. We constantly heard planes taking off and landing, but it was here that my grandparents had and raised 11 children, my mom being their seventh born. I used to dread visiting them on the weekends as the smells and sounds were almost unbearable and their living conditions were dismal. The three-bedroomed flat housed 13 individuals and various other people. The streets were rowdy, and gangsters ruled the street corners. Bronwynne Anderson (2009:v) states that, “simply put, weekends in Wentworth signified hard drinking, aggressive behaviour, fighting and sexual promiscuity”. The documentary film-maker and photographer Peter Mckenzie (2017) produced a documentary on the gangs and violence in Wentworth.

Wentworth is a predominantly Coloured township located in the South Basin of Durban, near industrial areas and an oil refinery pumping pollutants into the air. I remember a tomato factory that also emitted a stench that polluted the air, this coupled with the pollutants emitted by the oil refinery, made the air quite impossible to tolerate, but Wentworth was a designated Coloured area, under the Group Areas Act, with council flats and small houses. Paddy Harper (2020:1) writes for the Mail & Guardian after a question and answer session with Desmond D’Sa, who was a young boy when “the Durban Corporation’s municipal police, the blackjacks, bulldozed his family home at Cato Manor in terms of apartheid’s Group Areas Act in 1966. They were dumped in Wentworth, a new township in South Durban’s industrial wasteland, where D’Sa is still fighting for a decent living environment for its residents, half a century later”.

The economic situation was stifling for many residents. The flats where my grandparents lived was a three-bedroomed, one bathroom, kitchen, and a living room abode where my mom's immediate family lived in quite cramped, unspeakable living conditions. The unpaved area outside the flats allowed the red sand to blow and taint all the surfaces in the modest apartment.

My Uncle Budrudene was seriously injured in a gang fight that left his speech and physical appearance impaired. My mother's eight surviving siblings were forced to leave school prematurely in order to work to support the family. The flats were always noisy and unruly with people drinking in the corners, causing fights, and behaving vulgarly. As much as my granny tried to keep us safely indoors, the overcrowded flat-dwellers were kept awake with breaking bottles, knife fights, and police sirens.

My paternal grandparents began their relationship in Tongaat, a predominantly Indian and African Township North of Durban. My grandfather's family arrived on the Truro (one of the original ships that arrived in Durban carrying indentured labourers) and eventually owned a farm in Tongaat after they had served their term as indentured labourers. The farm was subsequently lost to as my grandfather's father was illiterate and unknowingly signed the farm away. When my grandfather (Thatha) was arranged in marriage with my grandmother (Aiya), they moved around to several Indian townships like Clairwood, until they were relocated and settled in Chatsworth in the 1960s, following the Group Areas Act of 1956. They had eight children together, my father being the seventh child. This working-class family, who started as farmers, were employed in the textile industry and furniture sales stores and, once again, none of them were able to complete their schooling. I lived in Chatsworth for the first 10 years of my life, and amidst the semi-detached homesteads, hilly background and close-knit families, I developed certain prominent traits.

Growing up in these two areas resulted in a unique childhood, especially in the latter days of apartheid. When I was a toddler, we had to sneak into Wentworth from Chatsworth as these were segregated areas, based on race. We were covered with blankets in the boot of the vehicle so that we could visit our gran and grandpa. Racial tensions were rife at the time and there was always the threat of injury with every visit. Most people in both communities were openly disgruntled by the fact that two different

races had made us 'mixed masala'¹⁹ kids. We were a threat to the practiced culture of segregation and other cultural practices.

When my parents named us, they went against Hindu tradition and gave us English names that were distinctly different to the traditional names, which were typically drawn from alphabets given to you by a Brahman from a temple. Although my mom was Muslim, after marrying my father in the Tamil traditioned, she abandoned her faith and learned about Tamil through the family that she had married into, but she refused to give us typical Tamil names. She compromised by using the alphabet that was selected from the astrological chart but used English names: Kelvin Raymond (my brother and eldest born who bears my father's name) and Verne Rowin. My initials were 'VE' thus leading to the name Verne. We were often teased at school for not having traditional Indian names and the pronunciation of my first name took many forms, so I opted for the easier second name when I was introduced to people. I was teased a lot because I was overweight, so I avoided further bullying by answering to a first name that was different to those of my peers. Additionally, Tamils consider it 'bad luck' to use your first name so in school I was always known as Rowin, my second name, which was quite unique until I got to high school where there were two of us with the same name and so I had no choice but to return to introducing myself by my first name.

My Gran was outspoken and a progressive thinker as she was always actively engaged in reading with us, she was the only person in my family at the time who had a matric certificate. She played cards with us and later on moved in with us when we moved to Shallcross. She was a strong disciplinarian while my Grandpa was calm and reserved. He developed emphysema while working on the ships as a painter and died when I was only seven years old, of the disease, but I recall many weekends spent with him in Wentworth walking around the streets and going to the only beaten down park at the flats.

On the weekends I spent there, I was exposed to the gangs and violence that plagued the flats. I learnt at an early age that while some Coloured men and women consumed

¹⁹ Masala is mixture of ground spices that is used in Indian cuisine.

alcohol and tended to be loud and vulgar in personality, there were also individuals who were educated beyond high school and employed in top management posts. My Aunt Rugaya August, for example, was head of management at Pick 'n Pay. My grandmother was one of the first non-white females to represent South Africa at tennis in the 1940s before becoming a homemaker. She did, manage to finish school before getting married. However, the stereotype of the Coloured woman with rollers in her hair and her night gown wrapped around her, walking the streets was prevalent.

My mother (affectionately called Mommy) and a few of her siblings never finished high school as money was scarce because Grandpa worked sporadically as a contract worker, and so the work force beckoned my mother. She started working at Pick 'n Pay and later moved to the clothing industry where she worked her way up to the role of quality supervisor. Although Wentworth is only a 20-minute drive from Chatsworth, the culture displayed amongst the two different races that inhabited these areas was quite obvious. I remember being smuggled into Wentworth to visit my grandparents, as we kids were classified as Indian. As mentioned, the flats were violent places and drugs were sold on the street corners, which was quite different to where I grew up; drugs were also sold in Chatsworth, just not so openly. I was never allowed to stray beyond my Gran's flat or the stairs that led to it. As my Grandpa was well-known in the community, we were always safe from harm, even after we had lost him in 1987, people still referred to us as the August grandkids and allowed us to roam freely when we visited.

We were taught, as kids, to deny our Coloured heritage for our safety and because of the upbringing that our parents wanted for us. In Wentworth we tried to blend in as Coloured children, but at home in Chatsworth we were taught to deny our Coloured heritage. Coloured people were treated as inferior by the government and thus by Indian people alike – although in terms of apartheid hierarchies Coloureds and Indians were on par. Even as Indian children we were tormented by our Coloured cousins who saw us as snobbish and privileged. I developed a perception that I was better if I denied my Coloured half and developed a strong Indian identity instead. I was taught to hate a part of myself, and this impacted the way my identity developed. We had blood ties but were culturally and physically different. My Gran and Grandpa were staunch Muslims, but most of their eight surviving children abandoned this faith in favour of

Hinduism and Christianity. It was quite confusing at times being exposed to all these different practices and religions. There were days that I went to mosque, church and temple all in the same week just to appease our elders.

My paternal grandparents moved their eight children to Chatsworth in the 1960s into a three-bedroomed, semi-detached house on Road 706, House 115, Montford. The houses were moderate in size with a yard, but our home sat below road level, so vehicles parked on the pavement and when it rained the house flooded. Families would grow in size and often live in the same house, raising new cousins and siblings of mine, all in this moderate abode. The property was large enough for an outbuilding to be erected with an additional two bedrooms, a toilet-come-shower, and a kitchenette. This structure was able to accommodate the ever-growing size of our family which includes 24 cousins and seven sets of aunts and uncles.

When my father met and married my mother in 1976, they too made a home for themselves here in Chatsworth. They occupied a single room, which was their own space amongst the other family members each living in a room, typically with two children sleeping on the floor. It was not too cramped as two of my father's sisters and his eldest brother had relocated to Phoenix, when housing developments began there in the early 1980s. Phoenix, like Chatsworth, began as an all-Indian area with semi-detached homes, flats, and self-standing houses. Our home was considerably more spacious in comparison to other family members' homes. As my Father was one of the youngest of his siblings, my brother and the four other cousins still residing in Rd 706, were the last to leave. We grew up as siblings rather than cousins as we all shared the same surname. We ate together, played together, and even took a spanking together.

My Aiya cared for us while our parents worked. I often heard stories of their struggle to get to where we were, and these shared experiences and stories helped me to grasp our history. Aiya and Thatha, were humble folks making minimum wage. Aiya worked as a domestic worker and seamstress, grew her own vegetables, and had a fowl run in our back yard. She was timid natured but fierce-mannered, so we knew not to agitate her. She taught all her daughters-in-law her style of cooking and passed on our family's religious beliefs.

Thatha was a retired waiter who spent most of his career at Blue Waters Hotel on the beachfront, but I knew him in his retirement when he sold vegetables and odd bits until he lost his legs to gangrene and a stroke. He was strong in will, belief, and actions, but I also relished the stories he told me about life on the family farm in Tongaat and the stories of him and his 10 siblings. He was the second of my grandparents to die when I was 12 years old. Thatha was a strict man that was tough on everyone, but I was his favourite, so he was gentler with me. He was hard on his kids and (for the most part) treated my Aiya with love. His verbal and physical abuse, when it did occur, was normalised and no one questioned it. He taught me how to play chess, and as the patriarch of the family he was the first one to whom I handed my school report for inspection. I always got a chocolate for A's on my report. From him I learned that men are superior to women, and I witnessed him pass this belief down to my dad, uncles, brother and cousins. I always felt like I did not want to be that way. I felt sorry for my Aiya and mother and in turn developed an anger towards my male family members, and thus developed a softer masculine identity. When Thatha's leg was amputated he became a shell of the man that he used to be. Once standing proud and tall he found it difficult to adjust to his situation and this brought out a great deal of anger. This anger was never directed towards me, his pet, and until his dying day he always left a little of his food for me and my large appetite. He disciplined other grandkids and me when needed but preferred a softer approach with us as opposed to the more aggressive and violent temper he took out on my aunts, uncles, and his wife. Thatha instilled discipline and taught us that hard work is rewarded. Everyone listened to him because he was the patriarchal figure. His bellicose nature is present in many of his sons.

With both parents employed in minimum wage jobs, I went to day-care up the road at a neighbour's house when Aiya, who could not read, was unable to prepare us for school. Aunty Molly, a family friend, was the caregiver and teacher. She was boisterous and had a great singing voice, and on the weekends she and her husband sang us songs in Tamil and English, while they drank. When Aunty Molly found a job in the factories, we were moved to what we commonly called Vegetable Auntie's house, the Raju family home. Here I learnt to write the alphabet and pronounce them in preparation for my primary schooling. Many backyards were transformed into day-care facilities, which eased the burden on parents and built community solidarity.

I spent my childhood in Chatsworth, finishing primary school at Pinewood Primary, situated about 200m up the road from where we lived. Pinewood Primary School was attended by kids from the road and provided education from Class 1 to Standard 5, now known as Grades 1-7. My cousin-sister was the same age as me (three-months difference), so we were in the same class. The school was adequate at best with textbooks and sporting equipment and had a playground and a tarmac-come-parking-lot, on which sports were played. I played tennis, volleyball, soccer, cricket, and was the school's shot-put champion. I was also third in the class by Grade 7 and had been deputy head prefect in Grade 6 and head prefect the following year. I had been groomed for leadership from an early age, both at home and at school.

My teachers were dedicated and always pushed us not to rest on our laurels. My science teacher, Mr. P Naidoo, always encouraged me to participate in sports even though I was overweight; he was also the cricket coach. When I was 10 years old, my Afrikaans and woodwork teacher, Mr. Moodley, introduced me to ballroom dancing in an attempt to get me to shed some pounds. Mr. Moodley was not shy to dish out six-of-the-best (a caning) when we were out of line. Morrell (2001:1) states that, "the South African education system historically has used corporal punishment to maintain discipline. Criticism of its effects led, in 1996, to the banning of this form of punishment". While it did teach us discipline, it also made us fear our teachers. I remember being too scared to do anything wrong at school, a fear that was compounded because my parents gave teachers permission to hit me and my family members. As my brother and cousins attended the same school, we received a discount on school fees, so by 1992 when I was in Grade 7 my parents still only paid R2.

Money was different in 1985, literally and figuratively, as I remember using half-cent coins, which would buy me four Chappies bubble-gums. We seldom had luxuries as money was tight and typically spent on essentials, yet despite this, there was always alcohol for the men. Our school uniforms and clothes had to last so they were bought two sizes too large. We were not accustomed to many holidays unless we travelled to visit family in Johannesburg. We were allowed only four pieces of meat each, when it was prepared in a meal on a Friday, which was payday. Admittedly we had more than most who lived on our road as we often went to the movies and supper-clubs on the

weekends, and our parents owned cars, but we were still not wealthy. To earn pocket money, we had to perform well in school.

My father pushed me to be top of the class academically and to participate in sports, as this was the only way to succeed in a career. We were drilled daily on our homework, and we were not allowed to sleep if we got a pop-quiz question wrong. I remember waking up early in the mornings, around 5am to study and to go swimming at the Unit 10 swimming pool or running to the Unit 6 grounds and back home. We trained or played sports every afternoon, and on Sunday mornings my uncle took us to the beach to run; us being my brother and four cousins. My father was relentless; I could not play a sport for fun, I had to be the best at it. Although we shared the same upbringing, we all reacted to this tyranny in different ways; I ate my way through it to deal with the emotional trauma. When we celebrated it was together and when we were punished it was 'all for one and one for all'.

Discipline was particularly important and when the rules were bent it meant that six parents were responsible for dishing out the punishment, which ranged from a reading session to a beating with some sort of object. This instilled fear in me and I developed a punitive mindset, believing that wrongful actions deserved punishment, often through violent abuse. As an adult I made a conscious decision to move away from such violence. The options for the method of punishment included hidings with a wooden spoon, a shoe, the nearest cutlery, or a whip. I remember being reprimanded for laughing at the Kitchen English that Aiya spoke, breaking some plant or other in the garden, making too much noise, if I had not read the newspaper before 5 pm, when our parents arrived home from work, or if we were not presentable in our pajamas. Mothers often opted to hit us with a kitchen utensil, while the fathers inevitably used a belt or whip. After the punishment had been meted out, we were often rewarded with a hearty meal to console us. Food was prepared by my Aiya while both my parents were at work.

Before I started school, my mom had taken time off from work in the Playtex factory and was responsible for cooking and looking after us kids. When I entered Grade 1 and the family required an additional income again, my mom re-joined Playtex to work in the factory and worked her way up to Quality Supervisor. She was determined to

further her education as she had not completed matric and acquired the necessary qualifications to succeed in her line of work. I remember her salary going up to just over R1000 a week by the time she retired in early 2000. My mom was a poorly educated woman who had a basic grasp of English grammar, but she demonstrated a willingness to improve herself while always remaining devoted to her family responsibilities. She always put us, her children, first and catered for our desires the best she could. She had the dual role of running a household and earning a wage, but my dad remained the patriarch of the family.

Like most men in my family and in my neighbourhood, my father spent his days at work and when he came home, he was the disciplinarian. On the weekends the men consumed alcohol and entertained themselves with football, either live in the local stadiums or on television, and card games. I remember playing card games and gambling from about the age of three, and as we grew older the card games included money; we played games called Brag (a card game that was similar to poker but with only three cards), *thunee* (a card game played in many South African Indian households with trumps and partners), rummy, and poker. The women spent weekends cooking and catching up with each other, bonding indoors. Most weekends were spent together as a family; my uncles and aunts would arrive with my cousins on Friday afternoon and would only leave on Sunday evening to ready the children for school on Monday. This sense of family and community-building is still practiced today, albeit not as often as was the case growing up.

In the time leading up to my teenage years I spent every weekend in Phoenix at my Bigdaddy, Benny Munsamy, my eldest uncle's house. He was a man of strength and confidence and, like most men in my family, had a violent streak towards his wife and children. Most men in my family drank on the weekends, often drinking with their siblings and extended families rather than friends. The women were prevented from consuming alcohol as this would destroy the image of not just the woman, but the family as a whole. Women were expected to cook, clean, and nurture the children, while the man's role was to discipline but also to enjoy his leisure time. Most family units consisted of four to six family members including both parents. My Aunty Luxmi, married to my second oldest uncle, was the exception, she did a sterling job raising her two daughters alone after my uncle was when a police officer mistook him for a

suspect and shot and killed him in 1977.

Families stood together no matter what, and we were loyal and devoted to each other. This tight-knit family structure stems from being a minority group and having to stand together to face racial discrimination, riots, and attacks, and economic instability. The apartheid laws necessitated families staying close to each other and even after the freedom to relocate outside of Chatsworth, familiar habits forced us to remain close and loyal. In this current context, we are still family-orientated and try to rely on one another for support and celebration. My generation of siblings and I have had to re-evaluate what the ideal family unit should look like as several have been divorced, which was considered taboo in the previous generation, even though it existed. My parents met in 1975 and were married in 1976 after my brother was born. As mentioned earlier, they lived in Chatsworth with my grandparents and two of my father's brothers and their families. They were working class individuals, but my father was allowed to succeed more than my mother. This is the result of patriarchy where men were encouraged, more so than women, to work and advance in their careers so that they can hold more power over women due to their economic success. My mother had to stifle her educational and career goals as a result of her expected role as a woman at home. The women in my family occupied a submissive position. As a young boy I felt that it was my duty as a male to educate myself to the highest level so as to be considered powerful and successful. From an early age I considered treating women as inferior, wrong, as I saw the pain that it caused in those nearest and dearest to me. I would throw myself on family members who were being beaten and try to stop the beating. Aunty Molly was the only exception as a loud-and-out-there character who often had a few drinks with the men and was different to the other women in our family. She smoked openly and preached equality amongst the sexes and thus she was often chided by both men and women alike for her behaviour. To me she was a role model of power. She was a large woman with an even larger personality, which was in contrast to the mild-mannered subjective position held by many of the women in my family and displayed in her free speech. I also, unknowingly, challenged status quo.

The three months prior to starting school in 1986 were spent on holiday in Johannesburg. Aiya and Thatha travelled to Johannesburg by minibus taxi to visit my Uncle Sagren, a pastor, who was settling there for a while. The taxi ride was the first

time that I had seen a Black person other than our 'maid', Joyce, and the gardener, John, both of whom worked for my family²⁰. I was scared because of all the stories I had heard, and the fear instilled in me towards Black people, but the conductor looked at Aiya and said to her that he will look after us, in isiZulu – my grandparents understood the language. This was reassuring, but Aiya still held on to me very tightly all the way to Johannesburg: an eight-hour bus ride. At the stops, everyone would get out but us. I was too naïve to grasp the race politics of the time. When we arrived, we stayed in a one-bedroom flat that my uncle was renting in an apartment block. It was a mixed-race apartment building, and it was the first time that I had met and befriended a white child. Christopher lived across the hall with his mom and dad. At first, we met secretly on the staircase knowing that we were doing something taboo, but not fully understanding the magnitude of our actions. Eventually, we found a playground for ourselves on the roof of the building where we imagined ourselves in alternate worlds being various characters. To us, we were just kids of the same age playing games. Although Christopher was white, I was not afraid like I had been in the taxi to Johannesburg, as whites were viewed as more trustworthy and (ironically) non-violent in the stories that I had heard from my elders. Even at this early age I had been taught the difference in race and skin colour. Christopher and I were the same in our minds and it was only when we tried to go to the public park that our differences were highlighted.

On the way to the park, we found it difficult to catch a bus as the giant double-decker buses were full except for the 'white' section on the bus. My innocent mind failed to comprehend that there was segregation taking place. My Thatha walked us all the way to the park only to discover that only Christopher would be allowed in as it was a 'whites only' park. On the long walk back home, disappointed with the day, I kept asking my Thatha, "Why we couldn't go in?", and after a long silence and out of clear frustration he responded with, "It was full!". I said, "But there were only four children inside", to

²⁰ I acknowledge that it might seem lavish to employ two domestic workers, but the pay was not below minimum wage. The garden 'boy' (although a grown man) would work once a week earning up to R30 a month, and the 'maid' worked three days a week for R30 a week. This is a result of the apartheid system that placed Black people at the bottom of the hierarchy, thereby facilitating the poverty that forced Black people to work for little income. Both John and Joyce worked for several houses in the road just to make an affordable income.

which he replied there were things I would only understand once I grew up. When I returned to Durban at the end of the three months, Christopher's parents gave us a lift home, but they would only take us as far as the outskirts of Chatsworth, as they were not going to enter an Indian location out of fear. I never saw him or his family again. It was during this time in Johannesburg that I became consciously aware of the lack of as well as the privilege that I had. This was the first of many instances.

When I was eight years old, I went to holiday to Bigdaddy; this was our only vacation destination. He owned a minibus and would cart several of us cousins around on trips to the beach. On one such day, like any other, we packed our picnic bags and headed to North Beach to fish and swim. We were isolated for a while and after an hour or so police arrived to evict us from the beach. Bigdaddy furiously resisted, even when the sign 'Whites Only' sign was pointed out to him. The officer called us 'coolies' and said that we 'charous²¹' must stick to our locations. Half-dressed and cold from swimming we were forcibly removed. Had it not been for the fact that Bigdaddy and his fishing friend, Uncle George, were responsible for getting nine kids safely home, he would have been arrested for using a public space dedicated for the use of one race only. After that instance, our beach trips were confined to South Beach in Addington. We were raised to fear the police, but at the same time to fight for what is right, and to know when to back down. We were always reminded of how my uncle lost his life with a bullet meant for someone else; the police shot first and asked questions later.

6.2 Sounding the Sirens, School is in Session

As relayed earlier, we attended primary school at Pinewood Primary conveniently situated up the hill from our home. When I started in 1986, my brother and five cousins were still enrolled in the school. Most families tended to send their children to the same school, not just for the family discount that was given to large families, but also for the sense of unity. Each child was to be awarded the same opportunity in terms of education, and it also helped knowing that there was family close by. To be on my own is a strange sensation for me as there were always siblings around me. Older siblings

²¹ 'Coolie' and 'charou' are derogatory terms used on South African Indians.

were handy when fights broke out in school, but they also firmly put us back in line if teachers complained about our behaviour or grades. We always lived in fear of fights and to a larger extent riots and police raids in the community. All the children walked to school as a group, picking up one another as we passed their homes on the way to school and back home again. We always stopped for treats like sweets and fresh vegetable pickles on the way, careful not to stain or tear our uniforms as we climbed up trees to collect fresh fruit. We would be in a heap of trouble if anything happened to the two uniforms that we were allowed a year.

I enjoyed all sports but particularly tennis. Rubendren and I were a dynamic duo as we held the tennis doubles title. Academically I was as driven as I was on the sports field, making my way to the top of my class. In our household we were denied the option of achieving mediocre results. This high standard of achievement was due to several factors. One was the stern discipline instilled in us as children. The second was the use of studying as a disciplinary tool. The third was the fact that we never missed a day of school. Neither illness nor the death of a beloved family member deterred our parents from sending us to school.

I was always writing as a child. I kept a notebook in which I would scribble my feelings and thoughts and found my writing time to be most precious as I got to be alone in a house full of people. I welcomed the silence and solitude. It is on the page that I allowed my imagination to roam freely, concocting fantasy lands far away and characters that morphed out of traits found in many of my family members. Fights with siblings and cousins often manifested themselves in the stories that were conceived, with the endings that I had hoped would be the results of actual fights.

My best friends and I were always adventurous during the time we spent together after school. As boys we were allowed to leave the yard and wander wherever the wind blew us, but we never strayed too far from home. We had stumbled upon a cave in one of the many bushy crevasses that lay on either side of the river that ran behind our house and through many of the units in Chatsworth. Here we would light fires to cook potatoes and such that we had pillaged, practice songs for the boy band that we had started, singing mostly Boyz 2 Men songs, and discussing how we were turning from boys into young adolescents. We would discuss changes in our bodies as most

of us in the group found it awkward discussing this with family or feeling we had no one at home to talk to about these changes. This sharing of difficulties was vital to our curious and confused minds as it was this shared sense of ignorance that bonded us, creating unforgettable memories of adventure in Chatsworth.

In 1990 when I was 10 and in Grade 5 our schools in Chatsworth were selected for trial runs at integration between race groups. Eighteen African learners arrived at our school at various levels of study. When the first Black student arrived, he was placed in my class. Although five years older than the rest of us, he became my first 'Black' friend. As with Christopher, we soon realised that we were just children with the same needs and desires, and that skin colour did not matter to us as much as it did to the generation before us. The age gap between my friend and me indicated the lack of resources that was experienced by each race group living in segregated areas, but also that these disadvantages were endured to varying degrees in both race groups, and within each group there were further disparities. James was not allowed to compete in sports with us as his age bracket did not exist at a primary school level; his football skills were sorely missed on the team as he would show them off to us during lunch breaks.

Our schools vaccinated us against polio and other diseases in order to prevent outbreaks. This of course did not repel mumps, chicken pox, and other childhood diseases from the community with poorly ventilated and overcrowded homes. My cousin Twiggy died of chicken pox as he went without diagnosis until it was too late. The medical care that was offered to us was mediocre at best, with doctors doing the bare minimum, or lacking the facilities to do more; and since money was scarce, doctor's trips were only for last minute emergencies. My parents decided to leave Chatsworth for better housing and better schooling opportunities.

My teachers in primary school, resolute individuals, were all Indian and mostly women. Teaching was seen as a noble profession and many Indians sought this as a viable career choice. Medicine, law and accounting were also extremely popular avenues of study for Indian households. Most families aspired to send their children to university, a choice that was not available to all Indians with low economic statuses and due to the lack of educational resources. From as far back as I can recall, my dad wanted me

to go to medical school and become a doctor. Hearing it so often it became my ambition also and thus my drive to attend medical school spurred my drive to acquire knowledge. My teachers were knowledgeable, and I found myself becoming teacher's pet in order to maintain this knowledge exchange. Books were an important aspect of my life but not the only part as I also gravitated towards performance.

As a budding performer I was always involved in school concerts and plays, poetry recitals, speech writing, and debate club. I took ballroom dancing lessons in school as an extracurricular activity, and this love for dance was later reignited at university when I studied contemporary dance. My ballroom teacher was the strictest teacher in school, Mr. SK Moodley. He was the Prefect Master when I was in Grades 6 and 7 when I was Deputy Head and Head Prefect, respectively. Mr. Moodley was militant in his teaching methods and would often use one of the seven canes at his side to punish any wrongdoings. I still remember the names for them as he had named them after snakes, the Blood Sucker is the first that comes to mind, aptly chosen because if you received six of the best from it, it would draw blood. When I was in primary school corporal punishment was still permitted. The male teachers were always sterner than the female teachers. The female teachers opted for a more verbal onslaught. Home was as stringent with rules similar to those at school.

My father never allowed me to play on the streets in Chatsworth, which was the norm for most children in the neighbourhood as the yards were underdeveloped and below or above road level. My brother would sometimes sneak me away to the game shop at the entrance of our road. The shop had a reputation of attracting the notorious in the area and my parents did not want that kind of stigma following us home. Only my brother and I were allowed to walk to the shops alone. My female cousins who lived with us were only allowed as far as the gate at the front of our house. Trouble would have inevitably ensued if one of my 18 female cousins tested this boundary. The boys were treated differently and groomed to play distinct roles in society. As children we are conditioned into the roles that we were expected to play as adults. I shared a home with my two female cousins, from my father's third brother. Reflecting on our childhood, I realise that we were raised differently. While we followed the same rules and regulations as our parents, the boys were allowed to stay out later and venture further

out, even taking public transport like buses, while the girls were restricted in their movements. When we moved to Shallcross my brother and I were allowed to still finish our schooling, primary for me and high school for my brother, in Chatsworth, but my female cousins were forced to register in new schools in the district of Shallcross, for fear that something might happen to them while traveling on the bus. Our parents were less restrictive than the generation before them.

6.3 Crossing Lines in Shifting Times, Leaving Behind the Childhood Mind

When my parents gathered the children for a meeting to tell us that we would be moving to Shallcross, I shuddered at the thought of leaving my grandparents and the life that I had known for my first 10 years. I relished the teachings that they had instilled in me and the determined spirit that they nurtured. I would miss this in years to come, especially when Thatha passed away the following year and Aiya when I was in Grade 11. Aiya would walk me to the municipal library twice a month. Reading was an important aspect of life, and it was not limited to academic literature. We read the newspaper daily and I recall that the newspapers were often blacked out when the government deemed content inappropriate. Sometimes only the title and a few lines of content were left to read. I found this quite absurd and wondered why the entire article was omitted and something more politically correct replaced it. I was too young to understand the political climate, but I did understand that we were different because of our race.

Thatha, taught me to learn an unfamiliar word every day, a habit I still practice today, he also taught me how to be strong in character and consistent. He fed my thirst for knowledge, and it was he who consoled me during my many childhood traumas. Aiya introduced me to Tamil and Hindi movies and sparked my understanding of and love for Bollywood movies and afternoon soap operas, the latter habit I am proud to have broken free of. I was in turmoil over the thought of leaving Thatha who relied on me significantly to carry him and assist while bathing, after he had a stroke. These were not the only people I would be leaving behind. Our neighbours were more than just acquaintances, they were part of our extended family.

Aiya was very religious, and her prayer and social gatherings were frequented by my

family and the entire neighbourhood as we would go for their gatherings which included weddings, birthdays, and funerals. Immediate and extended neighbours were always on hand to help with cooking, cleaning, erecting tents, and even slaughtering of animals, from dawn until well beyond sunset. Their involvement in our lives was significant, more so than some family members who had moved away. The Pillay home, our immediate neighbours, where I spent most of my childhood afternoons, was a place of freedom where my friend Denver and I would play and make up imaginary worlds; our families were and still are closely knit.

My friend Denver and I did our homework together as we were born four days apart and were in the same standard. I tutored him with his schoolwork as he was more social and wasn't interested in schoolwork, but we were also childhood best friends. His Aiya, commonly known as Murku aunty (*murku* is a savoury snack), was a widow and mother to 11 children. After becoming a widow at an early age, she sustained her family by selling *murku* and cleaning sheep heads. This made her popular in our neighbourhood but for me her devotion as a mother and her drive to put food on her table made her an exceptional example of a single mother struggling to survive. She was my Aiya's best friend, and it is no wonder that both women displayed bold strength as the matriarchs of their families. They were more than just gossipers; they were the last of a generation that still spoke the vernacular fluently. This friendly family environment would be missed in my teenage years living in Shallcross. Not only were we moving away from my grandparents, but my pet dog Scruffy would remain with my grandparents. Sasha, my second dog, and three of the seven cats that were still around went with us to Shallcross.

There was space on our Chatsworth property to have many pets; dogs stayed outside and we had trained them to guard the property. I also had a chicken and duck habitat, which gave us fresh eggs every morning. Aiya and I were tasked with maintaining and feeding the animals. In total I raised seven cats, three dogs, and a dozen or so poultry. This farming and self-sustainable lifestyle was part of Aiya's upbringing and something that she passed on to me. I left this lifestyle and had to adapt to a different one in Shallcross.

Shallcross lies on the outskirts of Chatsworth and with the construction of the link road,

the traveling distance from my old home and my new one was only 10 minutes, but an hour by bus, which was my daily commute for two years as I travelled home from primary school in Chatsworth. The community was mostly South African Indian and the housing in most areas was remarkably similar to Chatsworth with flats, small single-unit, two- to three-bedroomed houses, and where we built our house larger three- to five-bedroomed houses that were bigger than the previous housing structures permitted by housing regulations. Growing up as South African Indian, although I am mixed race, I was exposed to Indian culture and practiced it for about 80% of my upbringing. The 20% exposure to Coloured culture in Wentworth is something that I understand, but do not practice as I saw my Gran practice this culture in her home.

When we moved to Shallcross my Gran moved in with us until I matriculated. Her influence is also evident in my actions. Shallcross was the second home that my parents built for our family and invited my Gran to leave Wentworth and live with us. This move was sparked by the release of Nelson Mandela and this transitioning time in our history allowed for the disintegration of boundaries that the apartheid government had established. No longer where we confined to just one area, we were able to disintegrate our previous family lives, in Chatsworth and start over with bigger land space afforded to us Indians to purchase and fewer restrictions on the size of property that we could build. The move also signified the new class bracket that we now belonged to with my father becoming a manager and then director where he worked.

This status was also reflected in the BMWs that my father drove and the lifestyle that we were becoming accustomed to. My father's friends frequented our home, which now had an entertainment area with a pool table, dartboard, and an open bar. Our home was always full on the weekends and holidays with family members from both sides of the family visiting and staying over. My brother and I also had our friends regularly visiting our home. My mother was the graceful and dutiful host to all these spontaneous visitors. In hindsight, I too perpetuated the stereotyped roles that were allowed to exist. It was not until I started university that I began to question these gendered roles.

It was at family functions that these roles were most evident. Weddings and funerals

are very family orientated; the entire family and community are involved in the planning the execution of these functions. For family weddings, the family gathered at least a week prior to its commencement. The women spend this time preparing food and meals for the night before the wedding celebration as well as meals for after the wedding, as the practiced rituals for departing from your old home and arriving in your new one requires servings of food. The men discussed the distribution of money while enjoying a drink and a game of cards.

The *nellungu*, a cleansing ritual for brides and grooms, is performed on the day of a wedding or a day before. The *nellungu*, the night before, and even the wedding ceremony are often accompanied by a dance item taken from Bollywood movies. While these rituals resemble those conducted in India, there are also resounding differences between them. The men in the family are most often only seen as drinkers and the ones enjoying the fun. The best car in the family is chosen to drive the bride or groom to the wedding and thus a tussle of words begins as the men start debating who has a bigger income and higher status. Funerals also bring the family and community together.

This somber atmosphere brings the grieving together so that their pain may be shared and elevated to some degree. It has been my experience with the death of all four grandparents, my mom, uncles, and aunts that neighbours bring food to the home of the grieving family to remove the burden of cooking and to feed the streams of people coming to pay their respects. These final rituals are conducted differently depending on the family's religious persuasion. Religion played a vital role in my life; as a child living in Chatsworth in Aiya's house, we followed Tamil rituals and prayer although my mother was born a Muslim. Aiya had a small temple in our yard, and she conducted ceremonies for the Porridge and Luxmi prayers in our garden and back yard, which led to a river. I remember the house always being abuzz with sounds and people, family would travel from Pietermaritzburg to Chatsworth to join these religious ceremonies as Thatha was one of the family elders. My father's extended family is quite large as Thatha had nine siblings. Even these grand uncles frequented these ceremonies with their families. We fasted every Monday for Lord Shiva, annually for Kavady festivities, and daily we lit a lamp at home.

I was exposed to many religions as a child. I spent many Sundays in Sunday school and Friday nights at youth camp with my uncle Sagren. I also went to mosque a few times with my Muslim cousins, but this had a negligible impact on my faith, except to create an awareness of these other religious practices. In my teenage years I returned to Hinduism as a religious marker and guide. Hinduism taught me kindness and patience, but I also questioned some of the unequal gender practices and I was allowed to in an open environment. I learned how to cook when I was about nine years old and my mother often relied on me to help with the household duties like cooking and cleaning as well as gardening and washing the cars, as my grandparents were no longer around to assist her. I would finish meals that my mother had started at 4 am before she left for work, or I would make meals from scratch if she had no time to do so in the morning.

I used to wash cars in the neighbourhood to earn pocket money and to raise funds for school projects. Many of my schoolfriends, even in primary school, had afternoon and weekend jobs to help alleviate the strain of pocket money on their parents. Many of these friends were from working class hostels typically only had one working parent, usually their fathers. Maids were a vital factor in many Indian homes, especially if there were no grandparents to provide support and where both parents were working. My parents employed several African women as maids, who had to leave their families to help raise ours – from tying our babies on backs to be soothed, to assisting with meals and housework; maids provided a prominent service to our house and my extended family. I never met their children or families and often wondered how it was that they could be apart for so long; I did realise their absence in their families' lives. A maid was often shared amongst family members throughout the week. My parents had separate dishes for the maids, they were not allowed access to the crockery and cutlery that we used, which irked me greatly. We were taught to spit at Black people, a habit of which I was not too fond. This type of behaviour was entrenched in us from an early age, and it became normalised in our practices rather than challenged. These teachings were as a result of the hatred that was nurtured under apartheid. The one time that I did it, our maid Joyce saw me. It was the look of disappointment in her eyes that shamed me. No matter how much I apologised, the damage had been done. It was then that I decided that not all that we were taught was fair and just, and some of it was downright

rude. I could not rely on childish naiveté as an excuse as I was approaching young adulthood and I needed to become wiser about the world and the person I wanted to be in it.

6.4 The Song of Adulthood Approaches Steadily but First I Must Discover the Medley

I attended Shallcross Secondary School. While Shallcross was an area populated with slightly wealthier Indians, this community also practiced the working-class lifestyle that Indians were now accustomed to. While the homes in Shallcross were detached they were still small. Many people in the area lived in flats similar to those in Chatsworth. My high school was populated by those living in the flats and in these humble two-bedroomed dwellings. The families were of middle to lower class, but there were many wealthy families too, who came from Burlington Heights, where there were plenty of doctors and lawyers. This mixed class of people brought about much friction at school. My family was middle-class, and our expected behaviour was that of middle-class Indians. This status impacted the way that I and my friends spoke.

The English dialect that we developed was different to other Indians from the flats. Ours was a dialect that sounded more like the accent of the white person. This posh sound attracted much ridicule and assumptions about inclusions and exclusions in school, and playground tiffs were frequent. Considered as snobbery, it created conflicts in schools. Often thuggery was associated with flat life and this stereotype remained uncontested. The teachers at high school were less enthusiastic about education than those that I had in primary school. Many teachers drank during lessons and left us to teach ourselves.

Numerous 'chalk downs' and 'go slows' interrupted our studies. There were, however, exceptional examples of educators, like our form-room mistress and geography teacher, Ms Nadar. She and others remained steadfast in their quest to share knowledge. They recognised the varying levels of learners and their economic statuses. At the time I lived in a newly developed section of Shallcross. Our home had six bedrooms, vastly more spacious than the small, detached homes and flats. To get to school we had to take a bus or endure a forty-minute walk. Even in high school my parents pressurised me to achieve academically and pursue a medical degree. To

Show my commitment to achieve this goal, I sat on the School Governing Body as the Learner Representative. My sporting accolades include being shotput district champion and aiming for provincial colours in volleyball. The lack of facilities prevented us from enjoying any other sporting activities besides soccer, cricket, and athletics. I had to give up tennis as the courts were not fit for play.

Although my report card showed an A aggregate all the way through to matric, I failed to learn any vernacular languages, I was fluent in Afrikaans. My Gran, who spoke fluent Afrikaans as it was her first language, used to help me with my Afrikaans set works. She loved reading the stories and tutored us. We did, however, take advantage of our parents' absence with only the watchful eyes of a 70-year-old to monitor us. We often sneaked out of the house to join other kids at discos and Friday matinees. Here we consumed alcohol, smoked cigarettes, and sneaked back into the house before our parents returned. We took taxis to where we sometimes got into more trouble than we anticipated. This rebellion was due to the pressure placed on us to succeed. It was not merely a teenage phase, but an active revolt to the tyranny of our parents. My Father insisted on sending me for tuition in maths and science to ensure I secured a spot in medical school. However, my own desires superseded those of my father's, and thus I explored a law degree while simultaneously studying Drama and Performance Studies.

The high school that I attended was also stifling in terms of developing curiosity and critical thinking. I remember leading several standoffs between students and staff. Staff would neglect their duties and ask us to teach ourselves. The A students were tasked with compiling notes and distributing them to others. We were driven in our quest for knowledge and protested outside the Truro House, in Central Town, for a better quality of education and the acknowledgement of our rights as learners. My most rewarding revolt was the School Assembly that my class held in order to demonstrate our reluctance to be treated as second class citizens despite the Constitution that was passed in 1996.

6.5 Out of the Fryer and into the Deep End, Swimming in Theory my Mind goes Blurry

University was a revelation for me. I was challenged culturally and academically.

Culturally I was awoken to a multicultural way of life that was quite different to the one with which I was familiar. I began to question my own practices in terms of religion, gender, class, and creed, in relation to a broader context, much more expansive than what I was used to on the streets of Shallcross and Chatsworth. I was made aware of many inequalities in my own practices and also with the education that I was gaining, so I adapted my own cultural practices. I was exposed to differences economically, culturally, and racially. This multicultural milieu forced me to reach beyond my understanding of the world.

The law courses that I read developed critical thought that was necessary to challenge and resist discriminatory practices. I was never quite prepared for the level of study and the demands of full-time academia. University was the first time that I had learned how to use a computer as it was only reserved for the eight students in my matric class who took computer studies. I started a law degree so that I could practice law with my brother, but as an uncertain 18-year-old, I found myself questioning this choice. I chose drama as an elective and managed to fit it into my exhaustive law schedule. By my third year of studies, I knew that the legal route was not what I wanted for my future and so I pursued an honours degree in drama, much to the dismay of my father. I had to carry the language requirement of a bachelor's degree into my honours year and graduated with both degrees simultaneously.

The decision to research a master's degree was one made out of the sheer fear of unemployment but proved rewarding, as it led me to lecturing as a career path. Throughout my studies I held on to any and all jobs that came my way: firstly, to pay for outstanding fees that my scholarships did not cover; and secondly, to acquire work experience in the field of drama and performance. I worked in a bar for five years to pay for my undergraduate and post-graduate degrees as my father did not agree with my choice to study performance, and also to relieve the financial burden placed on the family by having a second child enter university. Previously less than a handful of family members had ventured into tertiary education, opting instead to enter the work force. While completing my Master's degree I began my career as a lecturer and drama practitioner. I started my own production company, ScruffySession Productions, and discovered a niche in theatre, writing, directing, and performing in my own plays. This was because there are few roles written to be performed by Indian

men as lead roles, except for plays written by Indian writer-directors like Ronnie Govender, Vivian Moodley, and several others. I began lecturing in my first year of Master's. It was not my chosen path, but something that seemed like it would satisfy my need for a full-time income and still allow me to work as a theatre practitioner and entertainer. My parents were baffled by my decision to abandon the law and pursue a career in the arts. This choice was unaligned with the expectations of an Indian man; I had deviated from the paths of medicine and law, and their hope of me then becoming at least either an accountant or engineer were long gone. My father refused to talk to me for four years and it was only when I told him I would teach that friction was dispelled. My drama and legal studies undergraduate degrees opened my mind to the humanities.

This clash between the being and the law would bear fruit in the style of theatre that I make, which also drew influences from shows like *Saturday Night Live*, *Will and Grace*, and several others that explored topical and current themes. This exposure came from DSTV; my middle-class status was affirmed by my family's buying into this satellite television, then a class symbol. By the time I had graduated from university, I was fairly confident of my path, and it is only when I am writing and directing that I truly feel at home with myself. It is from this rich and colourful upbringing that I draw inspiration for plots, themes, and characters. My Indianness which has been nurtured in Chatsworth and Shallcross is evident through my plays and they challenge and uphold values that have been instilled in me. My interactions with the world and global shifts witnessed through the media and television manifest themselves in the stories that I choose to narrate.

6.6 Conclusion

As an autoethnographic research, this thesis sought to examine my own context and history to understand how and why I write the types of plays that I do, and how I represent characters in the roles that they play. This chapter reflected on my own experiences, beliefs, and practices and how these beliefs and practices are aligned with or challenge cultural norms (Adams et al., 2017). This chapter revealed my own experiences and social interactions, and the people that molded me and the interactions that made me question my lived reality (Jones, 2013). I presented my

interactions with different authority figures in my life such as the patriarchal figures of Thatha and my father, and my rejection of their abusive teachings. I also looked at the gender roles that were assigned to men and women, for example men being free to do whatever they wanted, and women being confined to the home and kitchen. I also looked at the shifts in cultural practices that have gone against those stereotypes of a nuclear family unit, such as divorce and new roles for women in my family, such as becoming breadwinners and being career-driven. I highlighted the different teachings that took place for boys and girls in my family and the responsibilities attached to each gender. For example, I had to tend to the garden while my female cousins worked inside the house. I reflect on these roles when I write characters for stage, such as the housewife Mrs. Naidoo in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019), and the stern figure of the coach who runs her own dance school thus usurping the expectations of old stereotypes and showing modern representations of women. Owing to the violence endured by the women in my family and the hardships that they had to overcome, I choose to write women in the role of the protagonist, such as the hero Jessica in *JOURNEYING HOME* (2009) and Priya in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019).

I reflected on the development of our economic status from basic wage earners to company director salaries for my father and many other male family members. I described the stifling effect that patriarchy has had on female members of our family in terms of achieving an elevated level of education. I journeyed through my own educational experience and the importance placed on studying to achieve a better standing in life in comparison to our parents and even grandparents.

I reflected on my experiences with racism both as a victim and a perpetrator of discrimination. I looked at how I was taught to accept white people as friends and Black people as enemies and the role that our maids and gardener had on my adult decision-making process, choices that went against the norm. The apartheid

legislation aimed at causing a divide between the races, and this was ever present but in small ways, I began, from an early age, to unknowingly challenge these practices.

I further reflected on the diverse cultural experiences that I experienced in Wentworth and Chatsworth and the Coloured half of my identity was silenced. I admitted my hatred for a part of myself that was natural but governed by the race politics of the

apartheid era. I described my own ambiguous teachings where I cooked yet lived the responsibilities of a boy. My passion for performance and theatre-making were presented as this passion is what drives me to make theatre that is evocative and entertaining, in a Bollywood style. This chapter navigated my own process of becoming and the factors that have shaped this change and agency.

Chapter 7: Delhi to Durban: The Influence of Bollywood on South African Indian Culture

My thorough interrogation of Bollywood Theatre, an adaptation of Bollywood cinema, sought to look at the representation of Indian culture and identities that are embodied within a South African context. In order to adapt Bollywood cinema, a Hindi cinematic genre from India, for the stages of Durban, South Africa, it was imperative to define Bollywood cinema, and establish the reaches of Bollywood, its connection with Indian diaspora, and its ability to represent Indianness. I further established whether these representations are somewhat universal. Therefore, this chapter examines the connections between Indian cinema and the Indian diasporic culture, looking specifically at the influence that Bollywood cinema has had on Indian culture in Durban, South Africa, if any, and the similarities and differences that these representations of Indianness assume.

Bollywood cinema is the largest film industry in the world. Bollywood is a moniker for this popular Indian cinema from Mumbai. It includes subtitles; comprises several genres; dance and song; colourful costumes; and multiple locations; and most importantly it centres around a love triangle, with conflicted love (Desai, 2004:2). It has great appeal within Indian diaspora audiences as it is seen as an exporter of Indian culture from India to its diaspora all across the world, including South Africa. Bollywood represents and has become part of public culture, creating a sort of homogenisation of Indian culture; it is in this homogenisation that Indian culture may be questioned and examined (Desai, 2004:4). This chapter further investigates the consumption of Indian culture, Indianness, through Bollywood cinema. Vijay Mishra (2002:3) informs us that Bollywood connects with its national community and the abstract 'national' subject

(diaspora), communicating with subjects who identify with the culture represented. Lastly this chapter examines the influence that Bollywood cinema has had on SAIT.

South Africa has the largest population of Indians outside of India, and Indian cinema, amongst other things, has been a big part of this Indian diaspora and its culture (Dudrah, 2006). Jen Dickenson (2014:32) states that the term 'South African Indian' "expresses a positionality that constitutes a multiplicity of competing identifications and expresses and negotiated in a diverse range on interconnected transnational spaces".

South African Indians construct this concept of identity from within South Africa's borders, cultures, and socio-political contexts, while simultaneously drawing influences from the motherland. Desai (2004:5) supports the fact that this diaspora is still very much connected to India, through Bollywood and other global cultural and spiritual practices.

7.1 Setting Sail along The Indian Sea Trail, Settling with The Setting Sun on Shores of African Pun

The term 'diaspora' refers to a dispersed group separated from their ancestral motherland (Kadekar et al.,2009:1). South African Indians are one such diaspora, separated from India. South African Indians first arrived in South Africa in November 1860, on the SS Truro, followed by the SS Belvedere, from Madras India, as part of the Indentured Labour Programme that The British Empire had already implemented in other countries (Zaloumis, 1995 & Dickenson, 2014:42). Vashna Jagarnath (2017:5) elaborates that a key feature of empire-building was the production and movement of labour forces. The indentured system in South Africa was introduced to create a workforce that was contracted for agricultural use in the sugarcane fields. After their period of indenture had ended some Indians opted to remain and develop the land, which they could then purchase (Kadekar et al.,2009:3). Over 150 000 Indians were transported to Natal, South Africa and became part of the indentured labourer system over a period of 52 years (Jagarnath, 2017:2).

By 1911 thousands had returned to India because of the intolerable conditions, low wages, and poor housing facilities (Zaloumis, 1995:43). Those who remained either

bought or leased land to farm and sustain themselves. Many opened up small market businesses and small stores to compete with the Merchant Indians. Free Passenger or Merchant Indians ventured to the shores of the then, Natal, at their own expense and were not bound to Natal like the Indentured Labourers. They held on to the caste system and established themselves as an upper caste of Indians in South Africa (Jagarnath, 2017:4). These and other cultural practices lingered in the Indianness that developed on South African shores.

Within a South African context, Bhat & Narayan (2010) examines the notion that Indians have maintained their cultural identity throughout their history in their new 'homeland' and that this is revealed through creative outputs such as theatre and dance; however, while theatre reaches an audience of a few hundred, cinema reaches millions (Desai, 2004). Bollywood seems to have great appeal within the Indian diaspora as it is considered an exporter of Indian culture from India to its diaspora all across the world, including South Africa. Part of the interest here is to ascertain why South African Indians, post-apartheid, have identified with this form to the extent that they have.

The diasporic Indian identity in South Africa, was developed in response to exclusionary and racist national narratives. Desai (2004:5) states that where "the political terrain can neither resolve nor suppress inequality, it erupts in culture because culture is the contemporary repository of memory, of history, it is through culture rather than government, that alternative forms of subjectivity, collectivity and public life are imagined".

This developed into an Indianness that was viewed as an inferior minority culture in comparison to white hegemonic culture. This subjugated position was reflected in theatre. It is these cultural representations that are of interest to this study. Theatre is culture and simultaneously a representation of culture; it too can aid in finding a collective voice.

"Communities are created through a social relationship based on the subjective feelings of belonging to the same community" (Patel & Uys, 2012:79). South African Indians, based on our history are connected to India, the motherland, since our arrival in this country in 1860. One connecting factor is Bollywood, it was an index of many

senses of Indian identity that identified with the transnational community in many countries with Indian diaspora, including Durban, South Africa. Political transformation in South Africa demanded a re-imagining of identity and community (Anderson, 1983). For the Indian community in South Africa this required rethinking and re-situating themselves in the concept of diaspora and diasporic identities (Kral, 2009:6). The Indian community developed under diverse circumstances in South Africa, yet this culture remained fluid amidst stringent apartheid rule.

Sujatha Patel and Tina Uys (2012) claim that South African Indians have new identities in this post-apartheid context, but it is steeped in the history of our memories of oppression. Nalini Moodley (2012) reminds us that we stage what is home to us and at the same time what is not. Moodley (2012:xxi) further states that, “displacement from [a] putative homeland unites many diasporic writers”. These remaining Indians in South Africa used theatre to remain connected to their Indian ancestry and culture. Hansen (2005) points out that diaspora associations draw upon classical Indian music and dance, for example, and fuse it with dilemmas surrounding South African Indian ethnic politics, which are subsumed within South African socio-political and cultural happenings. Kadekar et al. (2009:70) denotes that, “Indians have maintained their cultural identity, and this has been facilitated by apartheid regulations that required Indians to perform their ethnicity”. This performance of Indian culture aimed to resemble what was portrayed in Bollywood cinema, as it was imported locally.

7.2 Bedazzling and Bold, for the Romantics it is Sold- Bolly-World Gold!

Haseena Ebrahim (2017:1) describes Bollywood as “a specific set of industrial practices, a particular manifestation of the star system (that includes primary actors) but also producers, directors, playback singers and choreographers. It has a distinctive aesthetic, Pan-Indian cultural values, an overall entertainment ethos, and an ideological investment in a conservative Hindu nationalism”.

The Indian film industry is the largest film industry in the world producing between 200-300 movies a year, in over 20 languages in India, with Hindi being the dominant language choice (Ganti, 2004:2). Bollywood is inclusive of picturisation – melodramas with shared distinctions between good and evil, loaded with moral conflicts, and involving a love triangle or conflicted love (Desai, 2004:6). The goal of the narrative is

to resolve the disruption caused by the villain in the world of the hero and heroine.

Bollywood is a combination of Bombay and Hollywood, which refers to the prolific box-office oriented Hindi language film industry located in Mumbai, originally Bombay (Ganti, 2004:2). It is a cinematic style that is different to Hollywood, which is Western; it is thematically and structurally different and presented as a form of escapism (Dudrah & Jigna, 2008:7). Bollywood has its own conventions for credibility, the narratives are predictable and in the form of melodrama with exaggerated, stylised acting that appeals primarily to an Indian audience. Bollywood has a broad spectrum of genres, archetypes, influences, and reaches (Dudrah, 2006; Ganti 2004; Vasudevan, 2000 & Vijay Mishra, 2002). It is a spectacle in form; it is multilingual in nature with elaborate costume changes representing Indian culture and rituals, songs are mimed, and extravagant dance routines are performed (Dudrah & Desai, 2008 & Kaur & Singapore, 2005).

In context, Dudrah (2006:28) further explains that Bollywood centres on family and family values and connects the diaspora to the motherland, India. Dudrah (2006:29) states that “Bollywood is seen as a social, cultural and media phenomenon... Contrary to beliefs that Bollywood is based in Myth and is unrealistic, is the view that it comprises of several genres of films”. Tejeswini Ganti (2004) adds that remakes and adaptations are a common source of inspiration for plots and that lip-syncing is a common feature. “Once the song starts, the man begins to mouth the words so perfectly that he appears to be singing it himself” (Ganti, 2004:1). The lip-syncing is accompanied by dance routines that help further the storyline. There are two opening and closing sequences due to the intermission (Ganti, 2004:2). In Bollywood’s early days, theatre groups were assimilated into the industry, and it resembled Parsi theatre which was populated with song and dance (Ganti, 2004:3). Songs play a vital role in depicting the passage of time, intimacy, conflict, and emotion.

Most Bollywood movies comprise two halves. The first half establishes characters and their contexts, and usually contain more songs than the second half. Unlike Western film genres, Bollywood can have action, romance, musical, comedy, and love-story all in one performance (Ganti, 2004:84). Item numbers are a popular feature as famous stars are brought in for once-off appearances. Good stories feature multiple

generations, family relationships, consequences of past actions, and sacrifice. Vasudevan (1989:4) supports the thought that, how and why something happens is more important than when and what happened. Stories must have highs and lows and take the characters out their comfort zones. The story must also completely involve the audience with its subplots and nonlinear, disrupted narrative (Ganti, 2004:86). There is no place for realism in this style, and it is saturated with colour (Ganti, 2004:141). “The plot is often predictable and characters are stereotypical, with jealousy and conflict between the lovers” (Kaur & Sinha, 2005:241). The acting style is exaggerated with overblown dialogue and preposterous storylines (Dudrah & Jigna, 2008).

7.2.1 The Early Days in Bollywood Ways

Film was introduced to the Asian continent in the late 1890s and as technology, politics, and culture evolved, so too did Bollywood (Ganti, 2004). The first feature film, by Dhundiraj Govind Phalke (1870-1944) was based on a stage play, and it used easily accessible locations like rivers, mountains, and shrines, and the context around it was heavily laden with anti-colonial struggles against the British; therefore, many argued that the actual first feature film was released in 1913, based on *The Mahabharata*, an epic poem, which was made by Raja Harischandra. This silent era brought the stories of Hindu Gods and Goddesses to life represented the culture of the time (Ganti, 2004:11). The silent era gave way to the talkies when sound was introduced to movies in 1931.

Music and musical instruments were used to great effect, but language choice was a problem as there are so many languages in India and with a language like Hindi, there are various regional differences, therefore only 20 languages are used today (Gangar, 1945:80). Ganti (2004) goes on to explain that actors and actresses represented the communities, cultures, and beliefs. “Courtesans were used in the industry. Skilled with various Arts, classical dance, literature, poetry and manners” (Ganti, 2004:12), unlike the image exploited by British Soldiers which was of a prostitute (Ganti, 2004:13).

The studio era was brief, but it offered movies like *Amritmanthan* (1934), meaning *The Churning of the Oceans*, where the famous director V. Chantaram openly depicted a people’s revolt against the Empire (Ganti, 2004:17). Post-independence, Indian

filmmaking, like other art forms, also saw a shift due to the socio-political shifts in the country; however, some universal themes remained (Ganti, 2004:23).

A second era in filmmaking emerged in the 1970s due to growing political unrest caused by disaffection for the government, and this impacted how the hero and villain were portrayed (Ganti, 2004:24). Independence saw the removal of Western influence on classical forms. The 1990s saw further shifts in cinema-making as television had to be considered. The state outlawed vulgar entertainment, thus shaping the nation through cinema (Ganti, 2004:46). Kissing scenes were considered taboo, as was nudity. The government mandated that a good, family-valued culture be exemplified through Bollywood. Equal rights movements, which were won through democracy, were also resonating in Bollywood cinema.

Ravi Vasudevan (2000:17) introduces us to the aspects of Bollywood that are contrary to the male gaze – a Bollywood that sees the heroine that is subject to a formal exercise of power, questioning female subjectivity. *Mother India* (1957), directed by Mehboob Khan, tells the story of a mother struggling to raise her sons on her own, but in spite of her hardships, remains true to her morals and Indian culture. This movie symbolised the socio-political era of independence and the new roles that Indian women now faced. Vasudevan (2000:19) further mentions the fluid nature of Bollywood aesthetics and the mediation of marginalisation through the ‘angry father’ archetype.

A prime example of Bollywood’s ability to represent this archetype of the father as well as challenge the formulaic leading male as Hero, is *Dangal* (2016), meaning wrestling competition. Here director and actor Aamir Khan presents the true-life story of a world-class wrestler who trains his daughters to become world champion wrestlers. Not only do we find two females in the lead, heroine roles but the film also challenged the stereotype of a male-only wrestling world. Stuart Hall (1992:277) outlines the concept that cinema characterises societies into distinct categories, describes a set of images, provides a model of comparison, and functions as ideology. Bollywood represented this potential for social change. The scenography was more realistic, the themes explored material beyond religion and family values, and culture was closely examined. The archetypes evolved to present a role that was more relatable to the

current context.

Bollywood is an index for varying Indian identities and is a conveyor of Indianness to diverse audiences around the world, and lastly it is a means to negotiate Indianness and its transformation, particularly when being received by diasporic populations (Kaur & Sinha, 2005:16). It served as a nostalgic nexus between the diaspora and the motherland (Ganti, 2004). The various migrations from the motherland lead to cultural flows between East and West, and South and North, including the flow between motherland and diaspora is evidenced in similar cultural practices. Indian cinema is still a principal element that links diasporas to Indian culture (Kaur & Sinha, 2005:19). Migrants, especially indentured labourers, became key spectators of films relating to India (Chowdhry, 2000:21). Bollywood has reached many parts of Africa, not only South Africa.

Part of its appeal is that an “Indian audience has specific needs and requirements redefined all the time” (Dudrah & Desai, 2008:25), and Bollywood delivers because of its fluid nature. Bollywood represents and has become part of public culture, creating a sort of homogenisation of Indian culture (Desai, 2004). Vijay Mishra (2002) posits that Bollywood connects with its National community and the abstract ‘national subject (diaspora), communicating with subjects who identify with the culture represented, Indianness. Sociological imagination may be applied to Bollywood. Rajinder Dudrah (2006:24) explains that “[s]ociological imagination is one that intervenes in the modern cultural and social spheres of life by questioning the common-sense areas of activity and probing them further”. Thus, Bollywood could be interrogated further than just at its surface entertainment value.

Studies of Indian cinema in the 1990s present a far more complex relationship between the cinema, filmic text, and its audience. Bollywood’s audience was spread across the globe, not just national to India (Dudrah, 2006). Ganti (2004:3) stipulates that, “the Bombay film industry plays an important role in constructing and defining dichotomies like traditional/modern, global/local, Western/Eastern and categories such as ‘culture’, ‘nation’ and ‘Indian’”.

These social imaginations further revealed that there was more to Bollywood than just the “fluff masala and escapist movies” (Dudrah, 2006:28). Its viewing brought with it

the consumption of other cultural products in the form of music, posters, dances, and cards. Bollywood songs are featured on local radio stations across the globe, including South Africa, such as Lotus FM, Capital Radio, and Hindivani FM (three local radio stations in Durban that are primarily dedicated to an Indian audience). “Communities are created through a social relationship based on the subjective feelings of belonging to the same community” (Patel & Uys, 2012:79). Bollywood appeases this need for a global community of Indian descent. What was once romantic fluff evolved into a social weapon challenging Indian culture and politics, even highlighting the poverty that sweeps through India.

“Indian popular cinema can be viewed as a slum’s eye view of politics” (Dudrah & Jigna, 2008:29), although slum life in India was seldom shown; however, this is something that has shifted over time with some more modern movies delving deeper into the real social issues in India. Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s *Goliyon ki Rasleela Ram-Leela* (2013) is an adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* that examines family, caste, and the role of women in modern India. “Such cinema is both a romantic attempt to reconstitute an increasingly imaginary village, and a dialogue with the compacted heterogeneity of urban industrial India” (Dudrah & Jigna, 2008:80). Bollywood, through its adaptations, achieves the desired effect of using familiar storylines, reinvented to serve the desires of an Indian community, both nationally and internationally.

Dominant cultural narratives are produced in the “[h]omeland and passively consumed by the diaspora” (Dudrah & Jigna, 2008:235). This idea of encoding and decoding meaning into a text is supported by Stuart Hall (1980) who states that, the ‘non-dominant position’ reads meaning in relation to the dominant systems of representation (in Dudrah & Jigna, 2008:235). Vijay Mishra (2002) elaborates that Indianness is continually produced by the people as a national community, or is transformed, as is the case in South Africa, into the ‘abstract national subject’. Bollywood is received in Durban South Africa because of other specific codes embedded in it that are decoded by the Indian diaspora that resides here (Dudrah & Jigna, 2008). Stuart Hall (1980) explains that with this theory of codification, texts (Bollywood) may be encoded with denotative and connotative meaning, which is then translated by the intended audience.

7.3 Embracing Bollywood while Facing Solitude

This last section reflects on the impact that this type of commercialised cinema has in Durban, South Africa. South Africa is one of the largest consumers of Bollywood (Desai, 2004:40). Dickenson (2014:34) points out that although India is materialised in the lives of many South African Indians through performing arts programmes, Bollywood, food, clothing, festivals, and tourism, most of them do not think of themselves as belonging to the Indian diaspora, as we are South Africans first. For most of us, India is where our ancestral roots began, but that connection has faded over the 160+ years spent making a homeland here. Dickenson (2014:34) claims that the sanctions placed on South Africa during 1963-1993, owing to apartheid, caused a further rift in this connection, during apartheid imports from India into South Africa, including movies, dwindled.

In the latter stages of apartheid some Indian groups tried to shed their Indianness in favour of a broader Black liberation struggle (Desai, 1996), this was done to unify the fight against a white government. The government went as far as to classify all non-whites as Black. Therefore, this Black force united in the struggle for freedom. Although labelled as one, the many races remained separate in culture. Bollywood, although less so, was still smuggled into the country to be enjoyed secretly.

Perceptions of Bollywood are mediated through generation and class in South Africa. The new generation revered this form of dance and song and pursued it with more vigour than its classical counterpart. Bollywood was seen as less 'real' a representation of Indian culture than classical dance (Dickenson, 2014); however, its popularity grew as this cinematic style permeated into the mainstream. Jagarnath (2017:12) adds that an "important contributor to the development of Indianness as well as imaginings of India was Indian film. Visual entertainment was and is an integral part of the South African Indian community".

Bollywood films are ever prevalent in South Africa and have permeated into mainstream culture with movies and shows being screened at movie houses and on television.

7.3.1 From Humble Beginnings to Opulent Endings

Indian film, as it was originally named, reached South Africa a few years after its advent in the late 19th Century. In Durban, the city with the largest South African Indian population, films were screened in large, grand cinemas, like Shah Jehan, a 200-seater (Ebrahim, 2017). Films would also be screened on walls of classrooms and community halls, and in temples for religious ceremonies (Jagarnath, 2017:16). Later on, demand for them grew and cinemas were formally established in Clairwood and Mayville, areas that mostly house Indian people. The first was Avalon Cinema, established by Kajee and Moosa in 1940 (Jagarnath, 2017:17). In 2002 Ster-Kinekor projected Indian films onto its screens, moving Bollywood out of the community halls in Indian communities and into the mainstream box-office. Ebrahim (2017) elaborates that in April 2004, the SABC started screening Bollywood series and movies with DSTv, ZeeTV, and SaffronTV in close pursuit. This meant that Bollywood had expanded its viewership and thus its influence. Although Tamil, Gujrati, and Telegu language movies are screened, Hindi remains the most popular language in South Africa (Jagarnath, 2017). Tamil language films are slowly increasing in favour as the Tamil community is largest in Durban.

Several South African Indian Hindu societies relished in the idea of nurturing old ties back to life and one of these connections promoted was Bollywood. *Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), meaning *Something or Other is Happening*, was the first Bollywood, subtitled movie to be screened at Musgrave Centre, Durban, formerly a white area (Kaur & Sinha, 2005:239). Hansen (2005:257) argues that the Bollywood film *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998) gave South Africans “a glimpse of being a modern ‘diasporic Indian’ in contemporary South Africa” by providing, it seems, “a fantasy India widely held among Indians in South Africa” (2005:256) - one devoid of squalor and poverty. This reflects a similar view to that of Ravinder Kaur (2002) who argues that the shift seen in Bollywood’s themes and protagonists reflect the emergence of a globalised Indian middle-class.

There are many elements pertaining to this Bollywood phenomenon in South Africa. Haseenah Ebrahim (2017:1) notes that “Indian Cinema switched from the ‘ghetto’ market, made up of people of Indian descent in South Africa to a crossover market which was mainstream cinemas, television and pay-TV broadcasters”.

The popularity of this genre multiplied due to its entertainment value and became a cultural conduit between India and South Africa (Jagarnath, 2017:20). Further crossover occurred within South African culture when South Africa became a source for location shoots for Bollywood, Bollywood concerts became increasingly popular, magazines like *SAINDIA*, devoted their pages to all things Bollywood, and there is even a Miss Bollywood IPL SA beauty pageant. Newspapers reporting on actors and actresses as well as magazines such as *StarDust* and *Filmfare* were solely dedicated to bringing its audiences in South Africa the latest news about favourite stars, like Amitabh Bachan, an icon of Bollywood cinema.

The fashion worn by these stars became trendy in South Africa. Every fashion change, saris, jewellery, and make-up that appeared in India was communicated to us in South Africa via Bollywood and thereafter emulated (Jagarnath, 2017:22). South African Indian fashion began to resemble that of Hollywood, which in itself was a representation of Indian culture. Cheaper versions of the saris and outfits worn on screen were suddenly appearing in South Africa along with the style of draping. Thick kohl (eyeliner) and skin lightening products also increased in sales as women began to imitate the looks of the Bollywood stars. Women in films were mainly fair-skinned and this added to the Indian cultural perception that fairer complexions are more beautiful.

Another key area of impact was on South African Indian culture and religion. The screening of religious movies in the 1930s led to a direct increase in cultural programmes, festivals, and religious ceremonies in South Africa (Jagarnath, 2017:24). The deities represented in films became more popular than those not mentioned, for example Lord Ganesha, Saraswati, and Lord Rama. Part of Indian culture and religious activities are festivals. Bollywood's depiction of festivals like *Raksha Bandan*, *Holi*, and *Garba* during Navaratri and Luxmi pooja were only introduced into our country after its glamorous depiction on screen (Jagarnath, 2017:25). These festivals are still celebrated today, even though something like *Holi* is a harvest festival specific to India.

Locally, wedding celebrations, dresses, and ceremonies resembled those performed by movie stars in the films. The music and dance from films quickly replaced the live,

local Chutney music that had previously entertained the attendees at these ceremonies. Sangeets, the night festival prior to the wedding, is specifically dedicated to song and dance from films (Jagarnath, 2017:25). With this demand for Bollywood, local businesses selling movies, songs, and other Bollywood paraphernalia also flourished. Jagarnath (2017:26) highlights the fact that, “[n]ot only did the cinema industry allow for the growth and development of an upper class within the community in the form of cinema, or large shop owners such as *Roopanands* but it also created jobs and business among many people within the lower income brackets. For example, many record stores opened in Durban selling Indian music... and employed many young men”.

Women gained from the economic boost by working in sari shops, the hair and beauty industry, or importing clothing from India. The sari designs were mainly borrowed from the film industry along with *mehendi*²² and bridal make-up. Bollywood is still very much a part of South African Indian culture; however, its role has shifted.

7.4 Knotting the Nexus between and amongst Indianness

These shifts in Indian culture matched the socio-political change taking place in South Africa. Jagarnath (2017:29) emphasises that Bollywood promotes, in this post-apartheid context, a space where people create and fit into a global Indian identity. Bollywood rekindled the link that was lost between South African Indians and India. Bollywood’s influence in theatre is seen worldwide, not just in South Africa, but elsewhere in London, The United States of America and Canada. Andrew Lloyd Webber took Bollywood theatre to the Westend in London. Bollywood theatre uses the format, structure and devices of a Bollywood film (Indian cinema) and transforms it for stage. Bollywood theatre, or something similar, has had appearance where there are large groups of Indian diasporas. Bollywood styled theatre, or rather elements of it, became evident in the early 2000s in Durban with shows like *Bombay Crush* (2005) which made use of the Bollywood dance, costume elements, music and narrative style.

²² Mehendi is a temporary henna tattoo that is draw on the hands and feet.

Theatre in many ways, may be viewed as cultural practice (Degenaar, 1991). Other practitioners like Patrice Pavis (1992), a French theorist, expands that theatre is a product of its context. This thesis is premised on the idea that Bollywood theatre in Durban encapsulates South African Indian culture but accesses and adapts the 'formula' of Bollywood cinema into Bollywood theatre, a separate genre in theatre and one that noticeably represents South African Indian culture.

Bollywood-styled theatre is further evidenced in *Chalo Cinema* (2002), which made use of Bollywood dance, costume elements, music, and style, but similarly drew on culture that is typically South African Indian. A contributing factor is that Bollywood is a major shaper of Indian culture and subjectivity; it seems to transcend class and linguistic differences by focusing on mythology and Indian social order (Mishra, 2002). This combined with Bollywood's ability to adapt and shift, allows for its 'formula' to be adapted to stage and reflects the dominant and non-dominant representations of Indianness.

In December 2005, *Bombay Crush* opened at iZulu Theatre, Sibaya, and ran for six weeks. Written and directed by Junaid Ahmed and choreographed by Jay Pather it starred Kajal Bagwandene and Gaurav Chopra. It was filled with Bollywood-styled song and dance routines and used title songs from current movies of the time, like *Main Hoon Na* and *Dil Mange*. The scenes were located in the *Pavilion* shopping mall, in Durban and at a college. The demands on the actor-cum-dancers were exacting as they were expected to act, dance, and mime the songs (IOL, 2005). This was the first of its kind in Durban. In 2011 director Caroline Smart explored the Bollywood genre in the form of the theatrical show *Bollywood Doll*, produced by Imagination Unlimited. It was a tale of friendship, support, and belief in life written by Yarisha Rajcomar. Award winning Indian choreographer Nitin Das was brought in from India to add to the Bollywood flare. The show represented local life in a Bollywood style. For many of the actors this was a new experience (Smart, 2017).

I wrote, directed and performed in *CONSENTING SILENCE* (2013), a Bollywood-styled theatre show that was a tribute to Damini, a young girl gang raped on a bus in India. Latoya Newman (2013) writes for the Daily News that the Bollywood form allows us to weave heavy content into the threads of something extremely sensitive. The

structure and plot followed that of a Bollywood narrative but was adapted for theatre to depict the constraints of theatre in comparison to cinema. The piece has plenty of songs and dance routines, which, like its cinematic counterpart, assist the unfolding of the story. The show reflected South African Indian culture and a view of India as seen through the Bollywood lens. In true Bollywood fashion, all narratives have happy conclusions.

7.5 Conclusion

Bollywood or Indian cinema is one of the largest film industries in the world (Desai 2004). It is fair to say that Bollywood is a popular, colourful, and a diverse style of Indian film-making. It is popular not only within the boundaries of its homeland, India, but reaches far beyond its borders to many countries across the globe. Mishra (2002) reminds us that Bollywood creates a connection between the Indian homeland and the diaspora. Indians arrived as indentured labourers during British rule in 1860 and as free/merchant Indians. Indian identities developed under exclusionary practices, segregation laws under apartheid, and were considered an inferior minority in South Africa (Desai, 2004); however, in this post-apartheid context Indians have developed new identities, but throughout their presence and existence in South Africa, have maintained their culture (Kadekar, 2009).

Bollywood is particularly captivating for Indian diaspora who seem to connect strongly with the form and the content. The genre captures and represents Indian culture and socio-political climate shifts, as well as entertains through its narrative structure and formula (Ganti, 2004; Dudrah & Jigna, 2008; Mishra, 2002). The history of Bollywood, from black and white cinema, talkies, and the modern era is presented by Gangar (1945) and Ganti (2004). Vasudevan (2000) claims that Bollywood was capable of shifting focus from a male gaze-driven format to one that focused on more political correctness. There have been several shifts in Bollywood but through its fluid nature it has maintained its appeal with a global audience in several diasporas around the world (Dudrah and Desai, 2008). Dominant Indian cultural narratives are consumed by the diaspora (Dudrah & Jigna, 2008)

Bollywood has a far-reaching influence in several countries where there is a large Indian diaspora. Bollywood's influences in South Africa are clearly visible in the South

African Indians' cultural practices, despite apartheid sanctions (Desai, 1996), in terms of dress, songs, dances, and make-up (Jagarnath, 2017). Not only is there evidence of Bollywood in cultural aspects like religious and cultural ceremonies, but also in theatre, which in itself may be viewed as culture. Bollywood seems to have found a new home on the stages of Durban in the form of *Bombay Crush* (2005), *Bollywood Doll* (2011), and in my own theatre-making contribution in *CONSENTING SILENCE* (2013) and most recently, *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019).

CHAPTER 8: DATA DENIED AND DATA SUPPLIED: COALITION OF THE VOICES OF PERSUASION

The aim of this thesis is to exemplify South African Indianness through Bollywood Theatre with the parallel aim of how this style of theatre may be written, directed, and staged. To conduct the qualitative, autoethnographic, practice-based research I relied on focus groups and questionnaires to gather information from the South African Indian cast members and crew to determine the approach, method used to direct the rehearsals and what script and performance aspects helped to achieve this thesis's main aims and objectives. This chapter summarises the cast and crew's perceptions of my directing style and their evaluation of the success of this Bollywood Theatre genre as it resonates mostly with an Indian diaspora (Desai, 2004). The information gathered through these focus groups and questionnaires determined what Chandler (1997), in Chapter 1 of this thesis, describes as a genre, specifically Bollywood Theatre. The chapter considers the success that my directing has had in transforming dancers and actors into Bollywood archetypes. I will recount the highlights from the three focus group sessions that were scheduled at different points in the process to gather information and assess performance levels at the beginning, middle and end of the process, as this supports what Gannon and Davis (2017) say about poststructuralism providing a space for micro and macro texts to be analysed.

8.1 Dictating Thought from the Novice Sought

To get feedback about my directing style, I conducted focus group discussions with

most of the cast and had some of the cast members, who were not present at the time, answer a questionnaire. To start the process, it was necessary to establish the knowledge levels existing in the cast regarding Bollywood Theatre, with which we were experimenting. It was quite evident from the discussions that all 15 participants were knowledgeable about Bollywood, its origins, melodramatic style, its larger-than-life characters, and the expansive storylines as they had watched numerous Bollywood movies. It was clearly understood that this was a film medium that borrowed from elsewhere, like Hollywood, and fused storylines with dance and colourful costume changes (Desai, 2004 & Mishra, 2002). The knowledge that they had from watching Bollywood movies consistently throughout their lives is supported by Desai (2004) who states that the Indian diaspora is drawn to Bollywood. It is not surprising that they were familiar with Bollywood as most had performed a dance at the auditions, with songs selected from Bollywood movies. The choreographer and co-producer were most detailed in their responses, reiterating that this Hindi language film medium is the largest producer of movies per year on average, thus supporting what Desai (2004) stated.

The dancers were most familiar with the songs and dances as it spoke to them directly, as they had danced to these songs and even used the choreographed dances at events. The actors, on the other hand, were more forthcoming about their attraction to the clichéd storylines of the love triangle, break-up, and make-up of the hero and heroine, the overly dramatic characters, like Mrs. Naidoo, and expressive, melodramatic language (Dudrah, 2006). It was encouraging that they understood the genre and the expectations that needed to be met as we tried to adapt this medium to stage. Bollywood movies had infused our childhood experiences and resulted a strong, long-term influence that was strengthened with every outfit that we purchased in an attempt to emulate or resemble the films' costumes and the songs that we listened to on the radio, to the movies and series on television and the big screens (Dudrah, 2006). I probed the participants to understand what it was that sparked their interest and kept them returning to watch this genre.

Many were entertained by the diverse styles that exist within the genre and the sheer ridiculousness of some storylines and actions. The Bollywood superstars have

become international icons, and this inspires young performers. The extensive costume changes and the bright colours attract audiences (Desai, 2004). The noticeable consistent change of the style keeps audiences glued to their seats. The 'feel good' endings are always revered in films. What stood out for some was the representation of Indian culture, which motivating a desire to replicate it in a Durban, South African context, and thus many of them incorporate music, attire, specific phrases, and physical gestures into their everyday lives (Dudrah and Desai, 2004). In contrast, many felt that Bollywood's appeal was reduced by some overtly silly acting and rehashed storylines borrowed from Hollywood, but this appropriation of storylines is a feature that is currently diminishing. Participants disapproved of films that shied away from the classic conservative nature of the culture being exemplified. This could be because South African Indians try to emulate the culture depicted in Bollywood movies, and thus a departure from the known might cause them to rethink their Indianness.

The lengthy films that exceed two and a half hours are also less attractive. These responses were useful as they provide guidance when I tried to determine which avenues to pursue when building this show. As dancers, most participants enjoyed the lyricism of the songs and the meaning embedded in them and appreciated that the songs carry the story forward. Songs capture the emotional tension building up in characters, much like the purpose of a monologue. The music is expressive and entertaining. Bollywood has the capacity to idolise Indian culture and be impactful to the diaspora while simultaneously exemplifying the evolution of said culture (Desai, 2004). We are all drawn to the razzle-dazzle factor of this form that amplifies life experiences in an exaggerated way and one that fuses music, dance, and dialogue, and is ever-changing and escapist in nature. To deliver characters that were suitable for this genre I felt it important to determine the participants' understanding of archetypes evident in Bollywood and identify their ability to relate them to their own characters.

While a few were unfamiliar with the term 'archetype' and needed further explanation, many perceived it to be an amalgamation of familiar traits that one type of character represents, such as the doting mother, the redeemable villain, and the young, besotted

lovers (Rogers & Armstrong, 2009). It was interesting that they were able to list characters and movies that resembled their own, which was vital as they would use this as a catalyst to construct their own characters. Much of Bollywood's success is reliant on these identifiable archetypes and storyline structures. Each style within Bollywood has their own favoured archetypes; we used the doting mother, stern teacher, flawed hero, pure heroine, loyal best friends, devious villains, fumbling goon, the nerdy girl who sets things right, and a narrator who guides the audience through the action and storyline, as discussed in Chapter One (Rogers & Armstrong, 2009).

The Bollywood musical style that we explored offers those characteristics, as listed in the character profiles in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017).

Characters:

Ganesha/Narrator

Muruvan the annoying older brother.

Thiesen the young, flawed hero.

Shiva/Coach Singh the authoritative, stern figure.

Priya the innocent, pure, educated heroine.

Mrs Naidoo- Priya's overbearing, doting mom.

Support cast: Ravi (the anxious dance captain), Arjuna (the sporty, loyal best friend of Priya), Mikhail (the weird, loyal best friend of Thiesen), Nishaani (the tomboyish, loyal best friend of Priya), Mahi (the young novice in the group).

Two female dancers/extras: Bhavna and Bhavika – sisters from India, the obvious distraction and interruption to the lovers. Bhavika is the third point in the love triangle.

Two male dancers, from India. Vedarsha and Rhithik. Vedarsha is the goon while Rhithik is the hated villain.

Extras: dancers.

Our challenge was to locate these archetypes within a Durban context but instead of film archetypes we drew on stereotypes that are clearly embodied in our own families and communities like the loud housewife, the studious Indian girl, the gay male for Ravi, and the tomboyish girl from Phoenix, Durban. We also reflected on local social media personalities for inspiration, like Maeshnie. Our discussions unearthed some examples that could be compared to the infamous Bollywood archetypes, and certain accents, language, and behaviour were recognisable for Bhavika, Bhavna, and Rhithik. The doting mother could be compared to some of our own mothers and grandmothers. For our play we needed to build a mother who was overbearing and loud with a lower-class education and bold in action, much like my Aunty Molly.

The villain was likened to the corrupt gangsters and drug dealers that parade in our neighbourhoods and thrive on instilling fear like the Dre Boys. Other archetypes include the shrewd Indian businessman, the comedic politician, the diligent and studious young girl, and the drunk uncle who is a gambler. The archetypal behaviour that was familiar to all provided the foundations on which to build the characters we needed for this Bollywood show. Needless to say, Bollywood is an extremely popular film genre that reflects life's lessons in a magical and mystical way. The participants were quick to notice similarities and differences between the archetypes depicted in Bollywood and those evident in the characters that I wrote who represent identities from Chatsworth, Durban.

The obvious similarities are race and certain family values that unite the two. The outspoken aunty is common as a form of comic relief (Rogers & Armstrong, 2009), and Mrs. Naidoo ticks this box. The concept of a patriarchal domestic situation is evident in all of them (Rogers & Armstrong, 2009 & Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). This character evolved as a result of the single parent homes that I had experienced. In addition to these similar archetype characteristics, there are also numerous differences. The contexts are different, so the identities are fostered and developed differently, and the stereotypes are not all the same. For example, the inebriated character who exists for different effect in different contexts, is used in Bollywood for comic relief, but in South Africa it is more likely to have a villain component. The corrupt politician could also be said to have the exact effect in opposing contexts, but the

reverse is also evident. The villains in Bollywood were defined as ruthless gangsters and thugs and these were similar in both contexts. The stern patriarchal figure is identified as being male in both contexts; however, the power inherent in this archetype could also present itself in a female character in our context, as many Indian women were forced through circumstance to be the sole breadwinners. The first focus group session was informative and reaffirmed my belief that we were on the right track as the Bollywood genre was obviously familiar and the different archetypes were identifiable.

8.2 Spot the Bollywood Dots that make up the Plots

The second focus group session took place in the middle of the rehearsal process after we had discussed Bollywood and the path that we were exploring quite extensively, once we had analysed the text and rehearsed extensively, as Stanislavski (in Blumfeld, 2008) suggests. This session served to establish the participants' knowledge about Bollywood Theatre and if or where they had encountered it. Some participants had never heard of Bollywood Theatre, as the term wasn't commonly used in Durban Indian theatre scenes, this assertion is supported by Singh (2019) who stated that he did not think that he was making Bollywood Theatre. Several of the cast had encountered what they assumed to be Bollywood Theatre through performances in dance shows, but these lacked the acting component. The instances that were seen on Durban stages were not faithful interpretations of the film medium, as most shows only borrowed elements from the genre for visual effect (Singh, 2019), such as dance, song, and costume components.

Some of the performances included costume changes, melodrama, and dance, but none of them fully portrayed this medium on stage, like creating a storyline that was melodramatic, using multiple locations, using a narrator, or including extravagant costume changes. Four participants were familiar with Bollywood Theatre, as they performed in or worked on my first production, *CONSENTING SILENCE* (2013). The Indian choreographer had witnessed this form of theatre extensively, but in her own context, India. Locally the emergence of this style began around 2010. Ashwin Singh (2018) assists in recounting the list with shows like *Chalo Cinema, My Fair Lady in Bollywood* (2012), *Dance with Me Baby* (2013), *Hum Tum* (2013), *Bollywood Goes South* (2014), *Mystic Bollywood* (2014), *Show Me Your Jalwa* (2015), *Once and for All*

(2016), and *Kuch Kuch Happens* (2016-2019), as well as comedy skits and dances at annual Eastern Evening performances. These listed shows borrowed songs and dance routines from Bollywood; some even attempted to tack on live acting but fell short of fully embodying the style's structure and finesse.

The dance component has always been favoured over the acting element, with some shows miming the acting to voiceovers, like *Kuch Kuch Happens* (2016-2019). Several of those participating in the study agreed that this style of theatre is physically taxing as it requires peak fitness levels and physical representation of the extraordinary characteristics embedded in an archetypal character. The archetypes may be constructed in many ways as they comprise a variety of stereotyped features and behaviours (Rogers & Armstrong, 2009 and Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). Bollywood theatre's dance elements are fused with live acting and boisterous energy. Each archetype has its own energy and goal, which are predetermined by the archetypal identity. Of course, these goals may be achieved differently, depending on the style and writer. The archetypes are universal in their function, but specific in their roles (Rogers & Armstrong, 2009 & Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). Indian audiences connect with these archetypes owing to their "organic relation with the world of film, actors and producers" (Sinha, 2023:5). Rana Sinha (2023:3) further explains that there are six distinct archetypes in Indian cinema including the hero, the mother, fraternity (including non-blood related), family, the holy man, and external conflict that exists between the binaries of good and evil. The participants all agreed that "these archetypes are evident in *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019), and we recognise them because we have seen it in Bollywood movies growing up". Arjun Appaduri (in Athique, 2011:1) states that, "consumption by migrants of media artefacts addressing their own ethnicity during the 1990s was providing the catalyst for the imagining of 'diasporic public spheres'. These social bodies are imagined in the form of mobile post-national communities constituted by globally dispersed ethnic networks linked through electronic media".

The Indian diaspora in South Africa is connected to Indian culture through the wide reach of Bollywood cinema. The participants all agreed that they were exposed to Bollywood from an early age and felt a connection with Indian culture. This connection

was explored through costume, dance, and song. One participant added that, “the archetypes of Family are deeply seeped into South African Indianness as nuclear family structures were exemplified from Bollywood”.

Song choice was also top of the list as it drives the play and dances’ rhythm, tone, and energy. An outrageous fight scene representing the physical manifestation of the conflict and tension must be included. Bollywood Theatre must exemplify South African Indian culture, practices, and identities. And lastly it should be led by a gripping, melodramatic script with the necessary happy conclusion (Desai, 2004). These elements are all featured in the script on which we were working. The characters were constructed in line with the archetypal goals of each role, and the melodrama was clearly evident in the script through elevated emotions and multiple twists and turns, such as Bhavika’s overt flirting and the fight that Rhithik starts in the club scene in Act II.

8.3 Hitting the Mark on The Voyage We Embark

The third focus group session interrogated the resemblance of *BOMBAY CHACERS* (2017/19) as a script and show to its famous, inspiring genre, Bollywood cinema. Participants agreed that the script resembled a Bollywood script, as the themes embodied love, hatred, betrayal, and climaxes well within the spectrum of Bollywood, as well as a happy conclusion where all conflict resolves amicably. The script has ample conflict with plot twists that fuel the rising action and keeps the audience in suspense. There are Hindu life lessons exposing themselves through the Narrator's monologues (Dudrah & Desai, 2004). While it resembles Bollywood cinema in structure and themes, the content is very much South African Indian.

Language is typically South African with multiple references to South African Indian culture and dialects, thus representing the hybrid form of language and culture that Bhabha (2013) and Frenkel (2010) describe. These peculiarities appear in colloquial banter in words like 'skraal', 'larney', and 'strik', words that are representative of South African Indian slang that developed in this post-apartheid context, and these words appear in the breakfast scene in Act II. The references are uniquely Durban Indian in terms of relationships, mannerism and speech patterns.

Mrs. Naidoo: (*Talking to her husband who is off stage*) The garden and the plants h'inside must be watered, don't use too much water, there's a drought. I've cooked all your favourites and left them in the freezer, tripe, trotters, tongue and all. I even turned the h'oven to the right settings and time, so all you have to do is put the main switch h'on and h'off...oh and turn the timer on every time. All the stuff in the freezer will cook in 20 minutes. And dare I smell cigarittes smoke in this 'ouse, when I come back, there will be war. OK now let me see, toothpaste and brush, socks, h'underwear, blouses, passport that goes in 'and luggage.

Mrs. Naidoo speaks like a typical housewife – middle-class, Chatsworth, Durban woman, with a low level of education. She ends a sentence with “and all”, drops the ‘Hs’ and adds them to words beginning with a vowel. She also pronounces cigarettes with an ‘l’ sound, so ‘sigrittles’. The mother-daughter relationship is a reinterpretation of a Bollywood classic. Mrs. Naidoo is overtly nurturing, yet there is an inconsistency between her words and actions, typical of Durban Indian parents. The police officers are comical in nature, and embody the iconic archetypes depicted in Bollywood. There are several identifiable characters who exemplify archetypes through South African Indian stereotypes, like Nishaani and Muruvan.

As mentioned earlier, the lovers are exemplified through the flawed, introverted hero who had to win his love back, and the heroine who is innocent and well-mannered, both characters being loyal to the conventions required of Bollywood protagonists. The sporty and the tomboyish best friends appear to support the heroine, and they typify sidekick roles in Bollywood cinema. An iconic Durban politician, Logie Naidoo, appears for comic relief, and the notorious drug addicts feature to heighten the action. The last identifiable archetypes are the intellectually challenged vixen who is an antagonist along with the devious villain - the mastermind and his bumbling goon. These archetypes connect the audience to the action as they are relatable to a South African Indian context. They use Indian dialects, phrases, and actions exemplifying Durban Indian culture and community such as ‘Hell Bra’. South African Indian culture, Indianness, is ever present in the play's themes and ideology, such as family unity, drive for education, religion, and sport. The humour is derived from familiar stereotyped speech, Kitchen English and scenarios that Indian households are accustomed to. Indianness is further exemplified in the breakfast scene where we see

the importance of food in Indian households. The culture permeates the familial bonds that are recognisable and the religious teachings that are ever present.

The archetypes both challenge and observe stereotyped behaviour in characters. For the most part, they offer little challenge as a challenge often leads to unsettled responses from audiences. They offer challenge by placing the patriarchal father figure in a dance school, as theatre and dance are viewed as less masculine activities. The female archetypes are placed in positions of leadership and power and not just exemplifiers of the innocent heroine and the sporty best friend. Sinha (2023:5) states that, “in *Mother India* [directed by Mehboob] the strong female mother role is portrayed through the movie which subverted the norm”. These roles represent a shift in ideology and way of thinking about our current context. While representatives of known stereotypes, the characters still exemplify the diversity of the Indian community in unique roles.

8.4 Captain o Captain, how was my Direction?

The fourth and final focus group session asked the participants to openly address and discuss my directing method to ascertain whether it was identifiable or vague and if it was effective in developing performances that were Bollywood in nature. My directing style was identified as professional, and the training of performers was acknowledged. The training that performers received inspired confidence and challenged their skillsets, enabling them to deliver characters that were fully established. I created an environment where knowledge could be absorbed easily, using references that were familiar to them as well as using videos of larger than life, well-known iconic personas like Bash with Tash and Maeshnie, two well-known local, Indian personalities. These examples were supplied to assist the actress playing Mrs. Naidoo.

According to one of the participants (2019) I, “give strong ideas for characters but still left ample space for the performers to earn their keep and be creative in the role”. The sessions spent on character development and textual analysis were valuable to novice and veteran performers alike. We used the Stanislavski system (in Blumfeld, 2008) to understand and establish the character’s intentions and the text, subtext, and beats. Participants (2019) agreed with a participant who said that my “style employs a creative approach that establishes a hospitable environment where performers feel at

ease and relaxed enough to be equally creative”. The musical genre of Bollywood presents performance that is physically poetic – the actions must tell their own story, hence the silent movie exercise, where I asked the cast to perform without words in order to encourage physical action that was larger than life, and I also used Brecht’s teachings on *gestus* (Willet, 1959). The performers need full control of every action that takes place on stage. Most participants agreed that “the way in which you would demonstrate the action to the performers in order for us to identify the basic action but asked us to personalize it for our specific character development, and draw from own experiences, and accents that were had heard, was most useful”.

Additionally, most participants (2019) enjoyed “the learning manner in which direction was delivered. The directing vision was evidently clear from the initial process of rehearsals”. Some participants (2019) did find the process demanding as they “had never been challenged mentally and physically in this way, prior to this” but such demands are necessary for a performance of this nature, a Bollywood Theatre Musical. “Direction was clear and concise and led the performers to a very high standard and quality” as I offered specific examples and referred them to videos, or I would act it out for them. The influential directing was evidenced through warm-up and character-building exercises that were derived from various aspects from Stanislavski (2008), Brecht (1959), and Grotowski (2002). All participants (2019) felt that “the positive reinforcement helped to thrust performance levels up in every rehearsal”. I tried to be approachable and friendly during rehearsals, which resulted in a positive and creative rehearsal space; there was extensive resistances and challenges offered to each performer, depending on their strengths and weaknesses, for example the actress playing Nishaani was an award-winning actress, but the dances challenged her more than she expected.

There were, of course, moments of tension, which resulted in me having angry outbursts, but this happened during performance week when kindness seemed to fail some and the stress of too little time on the stage, to get the technical aspects sorted before the show opened to the audience, showed. I had a screaming match with the producer, choreographer, and stage manager, due to the extreme stress of the costumes not arriving from India, and the two-day get-in time, which was remarkably

insufficient, and the extended time spend on spacing the dances, which seemed to take precedence over the acting scenes. A few of the participants (2019) felt that “the acting component took a back seat in the theatre during the get-in which left the actors uneasy, like the seasoned actresses playing Bhavika and Nishaani”.

The positive aspects of the show lay in the success of it achieving its goals. The participants (2019) said that “the story was new and told in a very unique way. The show was of a professional standard in spite of the initial lack of skilled actors”. This assertion was supported by the media, specifically the *ArtSmart* review online. The growth in the performance levels were tremendous, as the novice actors managed to create believable characters on stage and physicalise and/or vocalise the archetypes that they represented. As a director, I felt that the archetypes were portrayed with remarkable success, given the audiences’ standing ovations. However, in an ideal world we would have rehearsed for eight hours a day and in the theatre for two weeks, which would have allowed for more time to boost these performances, alas this was not the situation. Participants agreed that “two more weeks of rehearsals would have proved beneficial to all”.

As a director I felt that what was inadequate in the directing process was that there was insufficient time to train these performers to the standard required, but the journey was 80% complete, and as stated, a week or two more of rehearsals would have solved this problem. The dance rehearsals took up more time than provided for in the scheduled rehearsal breakdown, resulting in dance items being cut. The participants felt that “what was confusing at times were all the additional lines that had to be learned as the process evolved and in turn the added blocking”; this would have been easy for a trained cast, as was the case in previous shows on which I was writer-director. These extras would have been easily incorporated into performance by trained performers, but these first-timers did extremely well under the circumstances. The participants (2019) felt stressed by, “the lack of men in roles as scenes were only finalised late in the process. Some as late as two weeks prior to opening night”. They also stated that, “the dance element overshadowed the acting, but this was by no means a failure in this area, the popularity of the songs and dances was extraordinarily received by the audiences”. As a director I noticed that technically there were sound problems due to

a lack of microphones in the theatre, and audience members and family members both noted the lack of audibility from some actors on stage. Some of these issues were resolved by actors sharing microphones but certain lines were lost to the audience. It became too much for a novice to remember when delivering lines, that they had to stand close to an actor with a microphone headset. We had to hire microphone packs to cover all cast members in a scene.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to analyse if and how the show *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017/2019) exemplifies South African Indianness, if the archetypes present were identifiable, if my directing style was evident, and whether this show was an example of Bollywood Theatre. To gather micro data, I conducted focus group discussions and questionnaire responses with fifteen participants. The first focus group established that Bollywood was well-known to the participants and that this adaptation of the genre for stage required melodramatic acting, multiple costume changes, good song selection, energetic dance routines, and a gripping storyline with a happy ending. The archetypes were clearly identifiable, and the participants were able to draw comparisons between Bollywood movies as well as their own contexts to understand their characters' goals. There were similarities and differences in the archetypes present in Bollywood cinema and the show *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2017/2019).

The second focus group discussions revealed that the script was successful in portraying South African Indianness through the language used, the characters selected, and the religious undertones. We further ascertained that the term Bollywood Theatre, while new to some, had been present in this context for some time. The influence of Bollywood cinema on SAIT has been seen in several shows since early 2000 with elements like dance, song, melodrama, and costumes exemplified to varying degrees. The more popular elements included song and dance that supported a complicated love story played out by larger-than-life characters.

The third focus group solidified the intended resemblance of the script to Bollywood cinema in terms of structure, storyline, and archetypes, thus affirming that these Indian archetypes may be found in different contexts, have similar intentions, but reflect the goals in a uniquely South African way. The language and Indianness exemplified

reflects a hybrid form that is unique to Indians situated in Durban, South Africa.

The fourth focus group highlighted my directing style as being professional with undercurrents of teaching. My directing style was considered demonstrative and supportive of the actors' own processes. While there was a carefully planned process sometimes errors occurred and there were cases of time mis-management. The script analysis was important, as it guided the performers through the context of the play and established each character's intentions, and the show's aim on which characters could base their performances became clearer.

The participants were united in saying that the direction led to a play that achieved great success. The Bollywood style was evident in the stage performance and proved to be extravagantly entertaining. The feedback in the form of standing ovations and social media responses from audiences was remarkable in respect of both the storyline and the dance spectacle. The media also responded favourably to the show, with glowing reviews that described the show as Bollywood, in *ArtSmart*. All the elements of text, dance, music, costumes, lighting, AV and staging were meshed together well to exemplify Bollywood Theatre and South African Indianness as the actors imbued the characters with their own know circumstances. The unique use of properties and set make for entertaining Bollywood Theatre. The participants in this research confirmed that *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) had succeeded greatly in typifying this genre of theatre. There is an enormous demand for it, which bodes well for its survival. The large Indian community in Durban was a supportive, receptive group for this theatre as well as allowing them to emerge heroic in the context. The play showcased Durban Indianness in a vastly different manner in terms of showing characters that broke away from stereotypes resembling known local types and identities like the gangsters, innocent heroine, sporty support roles, and stern female characters like the coach. This new direction in SAIT is measurably appealing. *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) is most definitely an example of Bollywood Theatre. The last chapter provides detailed examples to support the previous statement.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION: DURBAN INDIANNESS THROUGH A BOLLY-WORLD THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE

This research sought to interrogate SAIT, with a specific interest in the adaptation of Bollywood for the stage. In summary, this research investigated Bollywood Theatre and the representations of South African Indian culture as well as the identities represented within it. It further investigated my staging, writing, and directing of the said Bollywood Theatre play, and how I represented Indianness in my writing and directing. The similarities and/or differences that existed between the archetypes present in Bollywood cinema compared to those in the Bollywood-styled play were also of interest as they related to possible connections between South African Indians and motherland Indian identity. Opening night of any show is exciting and filled with mixed feelings, as I feared the *kibitz* from the critical eyes of the audience, and relieved that seven weeks of tenuous work had finally ended and that my work as writer-director had finally ended. The show then lay in the hands of the performers, stagehands, crew, and technicians and I was confident that their hard work would offset any negative press and/or feedback. I was proud and hopeful because I felt that the constantly aimed for precision in actions and power in acting and dance would allow the audience to experience our desired goals. This conclusion now reviews each chapter and connects the theory with the desired outcomes of this thesis. It will look at my own journey in my specific context, namely Durban, South Africa, and determine the inspiration for the archetypes that were woven into theatre practices. The conclusion will reiterate the qualitative design that was followed in order to obtain data for analysis. Lastly this conclusion will analyse the final play's success as a theatre show that exemplified South African Indianness through the medium Bollywood Theatre, a sub-branch of SAIT. To achieve this, I will examine the writing, direction, costumes, dances, characters, language, AV effects, and music as evidence of its success and shortfalls. The performances took place from Friday to Sunday, 17-19 May 2019. The high-octane show was taxing on the performers' bodies but rewarding in the end. The show was a smashing success in many aspects, with some critical feedback from both reviews and audience members.

The script and video footage are attached as reference points as Appendix A.

9.1 Recapping the Pieces that make up this Thesis

Chapter One: Introduction. This chapter introduced the topic and area of research, my passion for Bollywood, and my early encounters with SAIT. The aims were highlighted, and the theoretical framework was established. The poststructural framework was defined by Derrida (2001), Foucault (2005), and Gannon & Davis (2017). This framework established why I have agency in this new South African context and explained government policies that determined my relationship with power. As this research is practice-based, I relied on Smith and Dean (2009) for a definition. This is a qualitative methodological approach, which was grounded in autoethnographic data collection as well as interviews, focus groups, and video footage, and thus Jones (2016) and Zenya (2017) were referenced for support and definitions. As Bollywood Theatre is a popular theatre form that connects with audiences as it is made by the people for the people, and includes multiple genres, I relied on Barber (1997) for reference. Lastly, I offered definitions of archetypes as this research looks at the archetypes in both Bollywood cinema and Bollywood Theatre in South Africa. For this, Rogers and Armstrong (2009) and various other researchers were referenced.

Chapter Two: Threading the Theory to Understand My Mystery. This chapter described the theory that grounded the research in theoretical knowledge around poststructuralism (Butler, 1993 & Gannon and Davis, 2017), cultural theory (Hall, 1996/7 & Butler, 1999), (Grossberg, 1996; Erasmus, 2000; Bhat & Narayan, 2009 & Patel and Uys, 2012), identity (Connell, 2000), and performance or theatre theory (Stanislavski in Blumfeld, 2000) and laid the foundation for analysis. It extended the theoretical argument started in Chapter One. This theory chapter served to support or justify my theatre-making process, establish how cultural theory explains my South African Indianness, and how my identity is examined under a theoretical lens.

Chapter Three: Stages of Changes: Writing, Directing and Staging Bollywood theatre was an autoethnographic glimpse into my own first-hand experiences with making theatre within a South African context, looking specifically at Bollywood Theatre. This methodology chapter analysed the play *BOMBAY CHASERS* (2019) and several of

my earlier plays. This qualitative research design established itself in the interpretive paradigm. This research was subjective in nature. Stacey Holman (2016:1), defined the parameters of qualitative research, which this thesis relied on.

Chapter Four: Chili Bites and Breyani Delights was the literature chapter and provided a glimpse into South African Indianness pre- and post-apartheid (Vahed, 2013; Gopal, 2013; Desai, 2013; Nutall, 2005; Patel an& Uys, 2012 & Frankel, 2010). The post structural theoretical framework was evidenced in the shifts that were marked in theatre-making, making it possible to reflect on the identities that were developed during different political contexts and how these identities were then represented on stage.

Chapter Five: Texting That is Contexting: Reflections on the History of South African Indian Theatre. This additional literature chapter reviewed the history of SAIT and considered the political shifts that caused this theatre to advance (Zaloumi, 1995 & Annamalai, 1998). In this chapter, cultural and theatre theory were examined in relation to political shifts that were witnessed in SAIT. The autoethnographic component of my research was further witnessed in discussions of my own experiences in theatre and my personal style of theatre-making.

Chapter Six: Pinewood Hills and Chatsworth Thrills to the Cultural Spills and the Shoes that I Must Fill: Unpacking I. This chapter looked at how my choices were crafted and nurtured by socio-political and economic advantages and disadvantages that were dictated by government policies. It further discussed the influential people from my community and family who had impacted my way of life, thus shaping my Indianness. This chapter represented my autoethnographic history and experiences in my social context, reviewed the identities that I witnessed, and discussed the impact that democracy had in my life, offering me agency. This, like Gannon and Davis (2017) suggest, promoted close textual analysis. I interrogated my own encounters with power and the journey to my own agency.

Chapter Seven: Delhi to Durban: The Influence of Bollywood on South African Indian

Culture navigated the reach of Bollywood cinema and also looked at why this popular Indian cinema has influenced Indian diaspora communities globally. Bollywood served as a cultural connection, a nexus between the motherland and the diasporas of Indian communities all over the world, not merely South Africa. Thus, this chapter defined Bollywood cinema to understand why it is one of the largest movie industries in the world (Dudrah, 2006). Nalini Moodley (2012), Ashwin Desai (2004), and Vijay Mishra (2002) described the above-mentioned nexus.

Chapter Eight: Data Denied and Data Supplied: Coalition of the Voices of Persuasion was an analysis of the data and noted the effectiveness of this style of theatre and the overall level of engagement of the cast with this style of theatre. Furthermore, it determined the outcome of the grueling rehearsal process. I also looked at the success of the archetypes exemplified by the actors and how they were 'South African Indian'. This chapter was an extension of my qualitative methodology that reflected on micro texts such as interviews and focus groups to gather information.

9.2 The Epic Tale that Went on Sale

The storyline, besides spanning 100 minutes without the dances, was epic in nature as are most Bollywood cinema shows (Desai, 2004). The plot revealed the love story of Thiesen and Priya in true melodramatic fashion, with expected obstacles and tension (Dudrah, 2004). The subplots of betrayal, friendship, religion, and sportsmanship provide ample situations in which the love story can develop. The plot consists of twists and unexpected moments, like Rhithik being the mastermind puppeteer pulling Bhavika's strings, and the arrest of the hero that creates greater suspense to keep the audience engaged for the entire two hours and twenty minutes show (Dudrah, 2004). The narrator's monologues, while imparting religious knowledge and life lessons, allowed for sufficient time between scenes and dances for costume changes to appear natural and swift, to dazzling effect.

The language of the play is primarily English with hints of Hindi. While Bollywood is known for its poetic Hindi language (Desai, 2004), to speak to a Durban Indian audience like this, was not possible. The language had to translate to a local audience

and thus the dialect of English was very much Durban Indian (Hall, 1996). Nevertheless, it was image full, metaphorical, rhymed at times, poetic in places, and comedic, the narrator and Thiesen's love monologues are evidence of this (see Appendix A). The language explored and exemplified Durban Indianness through directed accents and content as heard in the Car guard characters' lines that typified Chatsworth slang speech. The humour is typically Indian in nature, commenting on lifestyle, stereotypes, and behaviour that exemplify this Indian diaspora (Hall, 1997). There is reference to our practiced religion in the form of our faith in Lord Ganesha. Cultural practices like the important pursuance of family values, education, passion for sport, the IPL Cricket, and community are revealed. The quick rhythm of the language is customary to Indians, matched with a sharp, biting wit, and mixed with words from other South African languages. The language also transports itself via lyrical phrases (Dudrah, 2004).

The romance is conveyed through poetic references to celestial bodies and many references to nature. This allows Thiesen and Priya to explain their love in ways that are beyond human limits, thus melodramatically exclaiming their love (Desai, 2004). The language of the Narrator's monologues are constructed differently to the dialogue scenes, as this needs to be extravagantly extraordinary. To achieve this, the language plays with numerous rhyming couplets and puns. The direction unveils itself through blocking that boosts the physical story of romance in the love scene, tension in the nightclub scene, and release when all obstacles have been overcome.

The shapes and patterns begin like a flower in bloom, first tight and compact when we meet the dance troupe and opening gradually to full bloom in the climactic nightclub scene, and then shriveling into itself for the resolution, as is the case with the tighter look and feel of the scene in the jail cell, Act II, Scene xi (refer to Appendix A, video footage). The stage and the auditorium are explored to maximum effect, throughout the show, for scene placement and dance routines as is evidenced in video footage of the show. The auditorium stairs and walkways are used to draw the audience's attention to divert from witnessing scene changes and set pieces moving on the stage, a tool derived from Brechtian practices. This also serves to immerse the audience in the action making them feel like they are a part of the escapist world (Desai, 2004).

The rhythm of the play is well navigated as the play unfolds itself in just over two hours, as is the norm for a Bollywood show. The build-up is steady and considered the music and dance simultaneously to lead to the climactic moment in the night club scene. The relationships between characters too, are evidently directed.

The male support characters are steadfast in their growth as they assist Thiesen in his quest for his true love while the female support characters build on their relationship to nudge Priya towards her destiny (Dudrah & Desai, 2004). The friendships between all strengthens as the story unfolds. The relationship between the devotees and Ganesha is ever present and manifests itself in the character embodying the role of Lord Ganesha to advise and lend a hand in the removal of obstacles that arise, reference is made specifically to Act II Scene xi. The sibling relationship between both Thiesen and Muruvan, and Bhavna and Bhavika are turbulent at first but recover for smooth resolution at the end, this is symbolic of most siblings in Durban Indian homes, including my own, as described in Chapter Five. There is a sense of rivalry and comradery that bonds these siblings. There is always competition but still we love, as our family values dictate (Desai, 2004).

The relationship between Coach and Mrs. Naidoo is one similar to parental figures clashing but rising together to bring their opposite energies together for the sake of prosperity (Sinha, 2023 & Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). They find common ground in their interests to keep the troupe performing, safe, and fed. The individual characters also realise their goals. The Coach, the archetypal authority figure, was well played by the female actress in this role (Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). The level of stress and tension was enough to motivate the character's actions and intentions. She represented a modest upbringing from Chatsworth but who was ambitious in actions and education. Her accent was situated in Chatsworth with refined educated twangs (Hall, 1997). I did think that there was room for growth in terms of vocal range and character work, but the role was constructed in the light of many frustrated female dance academy owners and instructors who struggle to keep their studios operational.

The tension in this character is opposed by Mrs. Naidoo whose archetypal behaviour is that of a boisterous, overbearing, but nurturing mother (Sinha, 2023 & Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). The choice to make her larger than life in action and size

was a stereotyped one but a rather effective one as audiences were drawn to her bumbling actions and caring, albeit unwanted advice dished out to everyone. Audiences can relate to this character on many levels, especially the overt Chatsworth accent, of someone of lower educational standing (Butler, 1997). Her mannerisms and behaviour are typical of Indian aunties who stand on the roadside gossiping across fences with exaggeration in voice and action. The lovers are predictable in their character development but effective in capturing the audience as their unique love story develops (Sinha, 2023 & Prospect Theatre Company, 2016).

Priya is a beautiful, smart, family-orientated young girl who toughens up to claim the love of her life. She has to undergo turmoil in the relationship in order to transform into the heroine she is destined to become. Through it all she remains firm in her beliefs and morals (Desai, 2004). Her archetype (Sinha, 2023 & Prospect Theatre Company, 2016), is exemplified through stereotypes of Indian girls who dote on family values and community while at the same time show off their wealth as displayed by Indians from Umhlanga Rocks (this area was devoid of Indians during apartheid). Thiesen on the other hand is the shy, clumsy hero (Prospect Theatre Company, 2016), who discovers his confidence through his love for Priya, but it is this same confidence that lands him in hot water as he uses it to encourage the flirtatious offerings of Bhavika. He has to yield to the pressure of his flaws in order to ascend and rebuild himself. He is the type of Durban Indian boy who is quietly confident but who needs a little nudge to break out of his shell and resides on the outskirts of Phoenix, a predominantly Indian area. While the lead actor was a little soft spoken and shy in his mannerisms, the experience of the lead actress balanced this well. The lead roles are typical of Bollywood heroes and heroines who must fight for their love to succeed and together they complement each other's shortfalls (Dudrah & Desai, 2004).

The support characters are also fully rounded as archetypes of fraternity that the Bollywood style relies on but exemplify Durban Indianness. The male support characters like Muruvan, show reform from a notorious older brother, who drinks, is outspoken and overtly ambitious, into a sincere and caring older brother (Sinha, 2023 & Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). These traits are evident in many Durban Indian boys who spend weekends at night clubs and at the Blue Lagoon, playing loud music

from their cars. Muruvan's dialect is specific to someone residing in Phoenix, Durban and his mannerisms are those of an outrageous, streetwise hooligan (Morrell, 2001). The archetype of the irritating but loving older brother is exemplified well here, while that of the supportive best friend is shown through Mikhail. He is the culmination of Indianness that has reached a higher level of wealth and education (Connell, 1995). These Indian traits exist in areas like Effingham Heights and further north of central Durban, in Umhlanga. The accent, while Indian, is a little posher than its Phoenix counterpart. His video games and clothes represent a wealthier sector of Indians that have withdrawn from sports. The character of Ravi is firmly placed in Chatsworth, south of Durban. The archetype is based on the ever-present eunuch or Hijrah that is found in Bollywood movies, and this adaptation unravels itself in the form of a flamboyant, uptight, attention-hungry role; he is feminine in mannerism and boisterous in speech (Morrell, 2001 & Desai, 2004).

The female support roles further exemplify Durban Indianness through Bollywood archetypes. The character of Nishaani, represents the supportive best friend who is a tomboyish and tough girl who evolves into a more delicate version of herself (Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). Her actions and mannerisms are rougher than those of the other females in the cast, and her dialect is located in a Phoenix accent of someone of lower class but not in education. Her middle-class upbringing and location help develop her mindset and dialect (Hall, 1996). She is outspoken and places no restrictions on herself or actions based on sex and gender; she drives a car and is driven in ambition. Arjuna is also a major supporting character and represents the supportive best friend with softer, more nurturing qualities (Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). This character exemplified the sporting, outgoing but more feminine type of individual. Her education is prominent in her dress, her speech, and behaviour, as she is always doing yoga. She can afford more in life but is located on the outskirts of Phoenix, Ottawa. The minor supporting role, the newcomer archetype, is represented by Mahi, the young, unknowing, newcomer to the group who must find a space in the mix (Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). She too exemplifies an upper-class Indianness, one with a good level of education, and she resides in the wealthier, northern suburbs of Durban (Butler, 1997). She is the little sister that everyone has to shelter as she learns the ropes. Her youthful essence and demeanour are an example

of many of the young developing identities of this context.

The villains also evolve in similar fashion throughout the show but are examples of Bollywood archetypes with no connection to South Africa, thus highlighting the pull towards the cinematic genre. Bhavna is the unbeknownst villain by association (Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). She is nerdy and determined and just wants to do right and have fun while assisting the team. Bhavika, on the other hand, is the evil vixen who uses her feminine beauty to seduce the hero away from his heroine but is a little dim-witted which leads to humour (Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). Both of these archetypes are located in Bollywood and for the purposes of this play were transformed for stage through a typical India English accent. These sisters are easily forgiven for their mishaps as they are themselves manipulated in these circumstances. The mastermind behind the tragic situation is Rhithik; he is the ultimate bad guy with flashy outfits and aggressive talk (Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). His deep voice and stern physical appearance are manifestations of Bollywood actors who have evolved the archetype before him. His sidekick goon is the ever-present Vedarsha, who is more brawn than brain (Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). These roles are exemplary of characters seen in several movies but subverted from the norm as this role was played by a woman and not a man. This is an idolised version of what we assume reality to be like.

The Narrator speaks with an Indian English accent as this symbolises the connection that we perceive to India through a religious icon (Sinha, 2023 & Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). He and the extras appear in several forms, in different scenes, speaking in a few accents from Durban and India. The infamous car guards from Act I are representative of the car guard boom in Durban as well as the uptight hostess in the hotel mess hall. These adages help to solidify the scene's location and buffer the ambiance with interjections. The ambiance is further enhanced through the show's technical aspects.

9.3 Visual Spectacle That Made It Magical

The AVs are successful in achieving a Bollywood feel. The multiple location shots that are prevalent in the cinema (Desai, 2004), are effectively replaced with a visual spectrum that incorporated stills of household locations, a hotel, the dance studio, King

Shaka International airport, a jail, and a cricket stadium, as evident in the attached video footage. The dance routines are the foreground for the visually spectacular backdrop. These moving images of lights, dots, lines, and hearts combined with the routines, provide the third dimension that is required for theatre, while still dazzling with a colourful explosion, as is the case with Bollywood cinema. This combination of still pictures fused with moving images creates a continuous visual flow that is present as a backdrop throughout the entire show. The lack of a set (Grotowski, 2002) is forgiven, as the visual aesthetic shifts from scene to scene and is diverse in depictions. The open space is needed for the numerous extravagantly choreographed dance routines, so the absent set is then ideal. There are of course set pieces like tables and chairs that fill up space in scenes, but these are removed through distraction and sometimes in full view of the audience. The set change is then directed to the on-stage action. With so many dance pieces interspersed between scenes, the set changes must be quick and seamless. The tight space backstage did not allow for extravagant set pieces, so the biggest set change was in Act II, Scene ii, the breakfast scene, where there were four tables with six benches and four chairs to set up and clear; the set changes are seen in the video.

To set the scene the Narrator's monologue provided ample time to divert attention because it was placed in the auditorium, breaking the fourth wall, the audience's focus was distracted from the stage and the set-up. The strike, however, had to start before the scene had ended as the dance followed directly after. The Brechtian device of incorporating the strike into the action proved quite useful, and it also added physical humour into the section, which had seated blocking for most of the scene (refer to the video). For the remaining scenes, the set pieces were kept to a minimal, as were the teachings of the poor theatre genre. Ottomans, chairs, and open spaces were utilised to create levels and diverse shapes in the aesthetic and were easily removed. Properties (props) played a significant role in layering a different dimension into mannerisms, subtext, and even dance spectacles.

The opening dance incorporated the use of *laziums* (folk-dances), flags, and Ganesha masks to add flare to the dance (Blumfeld, 2008). The characters' backpacks were used during the opening scene to demonstrate urgency, fatigue, and of course to carry

other necessary props. A red sweat towel was used for the moment of first contact between the lovers (refer to the video footage); red to signify the love, heat, and passion between the two, as was my directorial choice. Scene II had clothes scattered around and suitcases to indicate the expected departure to India. The bold choices in garment colour and size played on the humour of the large-sized mother (Sinha, 2023 & Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). The scene in India was devoid of set, but used books to signify the nerdy Bhavna, while a mirror and outfit selections introduced the audience to Bhavika's vanity. The scene where Thiesen confesses his love, had the two friends use props to reveal distinct locations. Thiesen made use of the same red towel and a backpack while waiting for the bus, and Mikhail used a Gameboy controller to show he was at home, not reliant on public transport like Thiesen, thus depicting status and class (Hall, 1996). The airport scene made use of luggage and bags to create the departure lounge feel. Act II opened with food props, which were served and eaten on stage. The rest of the act incorporated few props, as the urgency of the play increased the props decreased so as not to distract and to ensure that the crew had less to clear off the stage. The props were used to enhance actions and attire but with the dance routines and costumes, the action was sufficiently enhanced.

The costumes are central, not just to dress the character but also to magnify the spectacle of a play. Bollywood is renowned for its numerous costume changes and profligate outfits and so I needed to detail the costumes to indicate character, location, mood, and atmosphere (Dudrah & Desai, 2004). I started with the costuming for scenes and then moved on to the costuming for the dances. The scenes were costumed with everyday clothing such as jeans, T-shirts, dresses, and tights, symbolic of the western influence on Durban Indianness (Desai, 2004). The look was casual as the characters were young dancers beginning in a dance studio and so the outfits were sporty, please refer to the video. In Scene i the cast wore gym sweatpants and shirts, the same outfits worn during rehearsals. The scene in India had a more traditional look with the actresses wearing Indian wear, *lenghas*, and *punjabis* (Eastern outfits) that were gaudy and bright to exemplify their higher caste status, and to exemplify my understanding of Indian culture, as I have witnessed it in Bollywood movies. The servant girl wore a plain and dowdy sari to signify her low status, as is the frequent depiction in Bollywood movies I have watched.

The scene in Priya's home sees her return in the same outfit from Scene i to signify the same day, but time has passed, as revealed by the sweater that she has. Mrs. Naidoo was dressed in layers of brightly coloured clothes to represent her bold personality and the juxtaposition of her character. The bus stop scene had Mikhail looking relaxed and homely with him in boxers and a T-shirt, while Thiesen, who was still traveling via public transport, was still in his rehearsal kit with a jacket over it. The spying Kapoor sisters were styled as two car guards and vagrants in typical leather jackets, jeans, and T-shirts, as seen in people working in Durban parking lots. The choice of colour scheme was plain and neutral in browns, black, and white as the 'love seed' had not yet burst into colour.

The airport scene and the split scenes had the same costuming. The feel was comfortable for some and more glamorous for the wealthier and snobbish, like the Kapoor sisters. Now we start to see more colourful costumes in characters like Priya and changes in style to symbolise growth and development in characters like Nishaani. Nishaani was more feminine in attire while Priya's outfit was a soft pink. The Kapoor sisters were lavishly dressed to show their wealth during the cameo appearance of politician, Logie Naidoo. Mrs. Naidoo's outside wear was even brighter than her outfit in the previous scene, the look was youthful and fresh.

My costume choices for Act Two included more bursts of colour. Act II, Scene i is a short rehearsal scene before breakfast and sees the lovers dressed in rehearsal wear but with more splashes of colour in greens and pinks. The waiter, representing the working class, was dressed in neutral grey and black formal attire. The breakfast scene and the travel dance shared the same costumes as these scenes are consecutive. The aesthetics were vibrant and youthful, but the styles were comfortable enough to dance in. The look was a fusion of western and Indian attire. There were more punjabis and Eastern wear to indicate India locations. The rehearsal scene thereafter had the cast shed some layers to suit the situation, which is a final rehearsal. The shedding process takes place on stage as the scenes run into each other, as suggested by Brecht.

Bhavika was clothed in bright, neon colours to attract attention, while Bhavna remained in dowdy tones to seem unassuming. The rest of the troupe have grown in confidence, which was amplified by the costume choices. Nishaani has emerged as less

tomboyish, while Arjuna's anxiety has manifested in a compulsive eating habit; her outsides are more curvaceous, and padding was added to her costumes for humour. The coach's look was more disheveled, and Ravi was more flamboyant in costume, which was now tighter fitting. The lovers were adorned in shades of pink and red as can be seen in the video footage.

The characters in the Nightclub Scene and dance were outfitted with smart casual outfits with sparks of silver and blue, indicative of the look of night clubs in Durban. The outfits were tight and sexy for both the men and women. The police officers wore khaki uniforms, as is the custom in Bollywood movies. The villains also resembled typically Bollywood attire, wearing black leather and sharp waistcoats like that worn by the character Sunil Puri in *Rocket Singh* (2009). To contrast with the energetic look and feel of the scene, with the ultimate moments ending in doom and gloom, Mrs. Naidoo presented an end-of-the-day look with her nightgown and slippers as the doom of the night's events clouded the air. The temple scene had the cast styled in traditional Indian wear as the location demands it. The jail scene returned us to a simple, neutral colour palette to exemplify the empty feelings as all hopes were lost at this stage. There were a lot of black, brown and grey tones, with Mrs. Naidoo appearing in a more downsized kaftan that was black and brown to represent her troubled state.

The dances, however, were spectacular from start to finish, increasing in dazzling effects. The dance sequences were costumed with more extravagance to best resemble Bollywood's style and flare. The opening dance was warm and inviting and dancers wore garments in tones of orange and red on top, with white bottoms for the boys. Lord Ganesha is often dressed in shades of orange, and as the opening dance is an invocation to the deity and the lessons attributed to him, the colours were symbolically fitting; this is seen in Bollywood movies like *ABCD* (2013). The dance outfits resembled a more traditional dance aesthetic in terms of style. The love dance had the heroine in a green mini-dress to indicate birth and freshness, and the other female dancers wore pink dresses in the same V-neck cut. The top half of the dress was sequined to reflect the lights, creating a dazzling effect. The boys wore silver sequined pants and pink shirts to match their partners, and the hero wore the same green as his love interest. These costumes were more modern and fresher. The airport

dance saw the actors costumed in silver pants and blue tops, and they carried glow slicks, which were symbolic of the blue skies that are about to be travelled and airport workers who direct planes after landing.

Act II begins with a stick dance in India and so the outfits were more traditional again in orange, white and green, the colours of the Indian flag. The boys wore waistcoats and black palazzo pants while the girls were adorned in more traditional dresses and skirts with blouses. The double-sided sequin waistcoats were silver and a rainbow colour, and were used effectively in the finale number that had a silver aesthetic. This costume choice provided two distinct looks and feels, and actors turned their waistcoats inside out from silver to the rainbow-coloured side in the last dance, as there was no time to change out of the outfit completely. The actors danced in the silver sequined pants from earlier for the reprise, but silver vests were added to create for a glittering, glamorous effect. These dance costumes exemplified the aesthetics of Bollywood with their bright colours and numerous changes, and also had symbolic connotations. The technical aspect was equally effective in resembling a Bollywood feel.

9.4 Finding the Beat so the Action is Complete

Technical aspects of the lighting, AV effects, and sound were specifically designed to enhance the Bollywood aesthetic, and these are witnessed in the attached video footage. I designed the lighting in the initial stages of the creative process. Each scene and dance were lit with detailed colour combinations to enhance the scene's mood. My choices for the house lights and pre-set were an amber wash with blue undertones, which was warm and inviting. The opening dance lighting had shades of orange and red amidst open white parallel can theatre lights (parcans); house lights were on in the beginning as the female dancers entered from the auditorium. The lights then focused on just the stage when the dancers approach the wings. The narrator's speeches were all isolated in a spotlight in various locations on and off the stage to create a focal point and to contain the action. The first scene was lit in an open white general to reflect the lighting in a dance studio. A special spotlight with a pink wash was introduced at the moment when the love interests first connect. The rest of the stage was dimly lit, which returned to a general wash once the moment had passed and was maintained for the

rest of the scene.

For the India pop-up scene, I chose a warm feel and used amber lighting and no profiles. This signified the heat of the climate as well as the characters' fierceness on stage. The lighting in the scene in the Naidoo residence returned to a warm general state that included profile lights. This created a facade of great space, which coincides with their wealth. The love dance was presented through lighting with magenta, green, and blue tones to highlight the costumes' colours. The scene where Thiesen confesses his love to his best friend was challenging as the theatre was ill-equipped to handle an isolation in lighting, but nonetheless partial isolation was achieved that hinted that these two friends were in separate locations, one being at home and the other at a bus stop at night. The airport scene was brightly lit in open whites to represent the inside of a departure gate. The split scene in the male and female toilets was also an isolation staging in two locations where the lights jumped from location to location, depending in which location the dialogue being narrated. The lighting in this scene had dim profiles with a pink wash for the girls' toilets and a blue for the boys' toilets. The airport dance used DX10 moving heads with spots and a yellow and green colour wash to suit the excitement and expectations built up in Act I. During intermission, the lights were returned to the pre-set state.

Act II began with the stick dance, which was lit in orange, green, and open white to represent the colours of the Indian flag. It also added a warm and nestling atmosphere to the dance and situation. The narrator's monologues, like the first half, were placed in various spotlights. The intimate scene between Thiesen and Priya was suggestively lit in an isolated block, centre stage, like a bubble containing their young love. This then faded into a general wash with open whites and profiles for the breakfast scene, which takes place in a hotel dining hall. The dance that depicted the adventures of the sightseeing day was lit in a warm amber wash with open white profiles, resembling the brightness of the sunny day and the excitement of the troupe. The split scene that followed used the same isolating pattern as the first one for the boys and the girls, that then faded into an open white general wash from parcans and profiles, for the rehearsal scene. The nightclub dance, opened with a three-song medley. The first song was seductive and thus the stage was illuminated in a red hue. The second song

was more playfully explored a pink, green, and yellow haze. And the third song was lit in a magenta and blue mix as is often seen in nightclubs. Moving heads were used to create special effects, along with floor lights, which lit the silhouette well for dances.

The parcans intensified the scene lighting while still allowing the lighting to be dim enough for a nightclub ambiance and to disguise the fight that ensues. The brightness gradually increases towards the end of the scene as if the house lights had been switched on in the club at the end of the night. The temple scene was lit with hues of yellow and orange to indicate the warmth of the new day and also to tie the symbolic representation of these colours to Lord Ganesha. The jail scene started with isolated lighting that grew in intensity and scope as the hope progressed and more of the cast entered the scene. The last three dances were lit in an array of colours, patterns, and special effects to bring a spectacular closure to the show, including an ultraviolet state for the 'glow-in-the-dark' costumes.

The sound and AVs were synchronised as they were cued simultaneously for effect, and they complimented each other. The pre-show selection of music included a mixture of upbeat modern and old school Bollywood music. The five-song medley was sufficient to fill the space and time for when the doors opened until the start of the action, and to transport the audience into the intended genre. The AVs rotated with images of our sponsors' logos, news clips about current events that were mentioned in the show, cricket match highlights, and our production companies' logos, ScruffySession and GET. The opening dance medley of Ganesha invocations, *Jai Devi* by Ajit kadhade and Anuradha Paudwal (2005), *Deva Shree Ganesha* by Ajay Gogavale (2011) and *Sada Dilvidu* by Hans Raj Hans (2017) was overshadowed by a picture of Lord Ganesha in the centre and lines moving on the outer screens. The sound faded allowing the narrator to be heard, as the still image of Lord Ganesha remained centre stage without the side screen. During this monologue, the screens displayed images of areas in Durban, flowers in bloom, and of Lord Ganesha, while the monologue contextualised the events and plot that was about to unfold.

The opening scene has a dance studio wall projected across the stage to represent the first location. In this scene the lovers make first contact, and this moment is underscored with the romantic song, *Yeh Jaana Sanam* (Jatin-Lalit, 1995), a popular

song choice in several Bollywood movies, performed with the same intention. The Narrator's second monologue included a moving image of cosmic stars and universes to tie in with the words and lesson taught. The song *Kalibali* (Shail Pathak, 2018), with menacing and suspenseful tones, was used to underscore the monologue's rising intensity, halfway through the song. The elevated sound segued into the next scene set in India. To set the scene there were projections of the Himalaya mountains and the river Ganges. The first soundscape presented the sound of peacocks and then of Indian traffic played for the beginning four beats of the monologue. The Narrator's monologue was underscored with joyful instrumental music. The AV was populated with stills of Rama and Sita in the forest. Sound faded into the scene at the household while the AV showed a still image of the inside lounge area of a well-styled, lavish home. The AV and sound effects were used to enhance the emotional impact of the words and actions on stage, and to provide a visual image for the audience to engage with to indicate shifts in locations.

When Priya confesses her attraction to Thiesen, hearts flew across the screens and the instrumental version of *Mere khwabon Mein* (Lata Mangeshkar, 1995) fused romance into the beat, as it did in the movie *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995). The AV of stars and hearts continued into the love dance with the addition of pink swirly lines in a kaleidoscope effect. The love song medley included *Lag ja Gale* by Lata Mangeshkar (1983) from the romantic movie *Woh jo Hasina* (1983), *Tere Bina* by A.R Rahman and Chinmayi (2007) and *Chogada Tara* by Asees Kaur and Darshan Raval (2018), from the hit movie *Loveyatri* (2018). These love songs were suitable to carry the storyline forward as they were a lyrical representation of the love that was blossoming between the love couple. For the narration that relates the infectious nature of young love I chose a volcano erupting in the background as a metaphor. The following scene, in two locations, had the screens split in half. One half was set against a still picture of a posh home, representing Mikhail's wealthier status, while the opposite half was set against a video of a bus rank, representing Thiesen's lower economic status. The sound effect of buses hooting was followed by a romantic instrumental when Thiesen begins his monologue and bursts into confessing his love for Priya; the song was taken from the popular movie *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998).

The airport scene began with the sound of a phone ring tone of *Mousi Rasou Hai* (Shay Ramji, 2017), a popular Chutney song in Durban, as the coach takes call, there were also airport announcements and boarding call notices to signify an airport location. When the hero entered late, the famous heartbeats from the popular song *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), from the movie with the same name, was played. The split scene in the toilets were underscored with *Baawre* (Loy Mendonsa and Shanar Mahadevan, 2008) played in the boys' toilet, a song about being lucky in love, and *Cham* (Monali Thakur, 2016) played in the girls' toilet, about a young girl in love, in the girls', to match the groups' dialogues as well as their goals. The AV projected was the inside of an airport and ended with the sound of a plane taking off. Act I concluded with a dance, so we hear a plane taking off during the songs *Jaanu Mere Jaan* from the 1980 Movie *Shaan*, about love on a plane, and *Mere Wala Dance* (Nakash Aziz and Neha Kakkar, 2018) taken from the box office Bollywood chart topper, *Simmba* (2018). The AV started with a plane taking off, clouds, a landing, Indian traffic, and ended with the picture of a hotel in India to reference the journey that was being travelled. During intermission the show's logo, *BOMBAY CHASERS*, was displayed on the screens.

The opening dance of Act II, *Dholida* (Neha Kakkar, Raja Hasan, Udit Narayan, 2018), synonymous with a wedding celebration, is the soundtrack for the movie *Loveyatri* (2018), and explosions of powder like Holi, was projected onto the screens, to further exemplify an Indian celebration. For the narration that followed we depicted sights of India, like the seaside and bridges in order to create a context. Scene I was an intimate rehearsal moment between the lovers who have snuck away into the hotel and found a conference venue, as displayed on the screens. At the height of their romance in the scene we played *Deewani dil Deewani* (Udit Narayan, Amit Kumar, Jatin-Lalit, 2016), taken from the love story *Kabhi Haan kabhi Naa* (2016), which amplifies the intimacy of the moment. The breakfast scene was set against the screened backdrop of a dining hall. The Coach's dramatic outburst in the scene was underscored with equally dramatic instrumental music, *Nimbooda* (Karsan Sargathiya and Kavitha Krishnamurthy, 1999), taken from the romantic comedy *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam* (1999). The entrance of Bhavika was marked with the same menacing music that was identified with her in Act I, Scene ii, in this way the audience recognised the villain, and sides with the lovers. The music was repeated when Bhavika corners Thiesen for a

private moment on stage.

As the plot tension built and we had almost reached the climax, the Narrator's monologue prior to that scene refers to the heavy monsoon rains and bellowing winds. The AV depicted a monsoon rain and storm while the gushing winds and thunder sounds added to the stormy atmosphere. The travel routine was danced to *Dhadak* (Udit Narayan, 2005), a famous song from a hit Bollywood movie with the same name, which also has the stars traveling and touring. The AV showed the cast in pictures at markets, on trains, sitting in traffic, shopping, and river-rafting, and then returned to the previous conference venue, and back to a rehearsal scene. The split scene dialogue had a similar style to the first one. These split dialogues were underscored with *Ghoomar* (Shreya Ghoshal, 2018), a song taken from the then popular all-female lead movie *Padmaavat* (2018) for the girls, and *Tu Meri* (Vishal Dadlani, 2014), from the male lead movie *Bang Bang* (2014) for the boys. The songs enhanced the boys' excitement and the girls' jealousy, respectively. Soft, soothing instrumental music was played at the end of the scene when Mrs. Naidoo comforts and encourages the Coach, almost like the calm before the storm. A different thunderstorm was shown during the Narrator's speech that talks about the impending doom.

The nightclub medley included *Aashiq Banaya Apne* (Himesh Reshammiya and Shreya Ghoshal, 2018), from the movie with the same name, which is a seductively sultry song, *Tana Din* (Alka Yagnik and Udit Narayan, 2011), which is known for its dance routine, and *Rangataari* (Dev Negi and Yo Honey Singh, 2018), which opened the scene. These enormously popular dance tracks were selected for their popularity at the time and their upbeat tempos. Music played throughout the scene's dialogues, until the mastermind villain appeared to thwart the fun, he too had his own evil music to announce his presence. The fight in the scene was masked by music from the soundtrack of *Dabangg* (2010), where there are many outrageous fights and chases. Police sirens could be heard at the peak of the fight. The AV was the still of the inside of a club with all florescent lights off and one where they are on. This depicted the club being open and closing after the fight; the last still was of the outside of the club, where the final dialogue took place. Outside the club we heard traffic, hooting, and the same soothing music that Mrs. Naidoo was associated with, which was played during her

conversation with Priya.

The temple scene has the sounds of chanting, bells chiming, and the *Shiva Tandav Stotram* (Shankar Mahadeva, 2012), which is a devotional song to Lord Shiva, from the movie *Bahubali* (2012) as these bells are synonymous with Hindu temples. The AV presented us with a temple and several deities in a still, including Lord Ganesha. The jail scene was visually represented by an image of jail cell bars. When all seemed lost, the moment was underscored by the sad song *Khabi Kushi* (2001), taken from a movie with the same name, which is often used in other movies for its sad connotations. The underlying music became more joyous and hopeful towards the end of the scene. The AVs in narrator's final monologue included cosmic stars and the bowling of a cricket ball which led us into the dance, *Aank Marey* (Kumar Sanu, Mika Singh and Neha Kakkar, 2018). This song topped the charts locally and internationally and every Durban Indian radio station gave it plenty of airtime. During the dance fireworks were displayed on the screens. The logo returned as if the show had ended and then switched to a palace setting for the reprise number or encore. The AV ended on the *BOMBAY CHASERS* logo. The reprise, song *First Class* (2019), was from the number one Bollywood show at the time, *Kalank* (2019), which is set in an Indian palace. The AV and sound selections created a nexus between the theatre and film. The AV helped to identify locations and enhanced the moods while the music was a direct link to the cinemas, as the songs were old and new Bollywood hits.

9.5 Following the Count that Bollywood Must Mount

The show's nine dances were necessary for a Bollywood musical and an essential element in communicating this genre. They conveyed not only the genre's essence, but also plugged the gaps in the storyline. The opening dance served as an invocation to Lord Ganesha as the god of protection, and since the play aims to enlighten, through the narrator's monologues, it was only fitting. The song selections for the opening medley: *Jai Dev*; *Deva Shree Ganesha*; and *Sada Dilvidum*, invited the choreography to salute and pay homage to this deity, and in traditional dance practice, to ask permission to dance these stories. The love dance, as named, showed us the passion, excitement, and butterflies-in-the-tummy beginning stages of romance. The colourful costumes and the use of the oversized fans as props depicted the elevation of this

love. The love songs *Lag ja Gale*, *Tere Bin*, and *Chogada Tara* softened the tone of the play, leaving a romantic scent in the air while the choreographed movement had duets and lifts with still pictures of rippling hearts. The travel dance at the end of Act I helped the story to segue from South Africa to India and leaves the Act at a high energy performance level, allowing for audiences to expect more in the Act II. The songs played were *Jaanu Meri Jaan*, a song about traveling and following your destiny, and *Mere Wala Dance*, the fierce tempo number that acts as a cliff-hanger.

The second half presented itself with twice the amount of dance routines than the first, but this included the finale and reprise. The stick dance, which opened the second half, was inspired by traditional stick dancing found in classical Indian dance routines and tweaked to be more contemporary. The style and costumes lent themselves to lunges and twirls. The opening set the tone for the new context in which the storyline was now placed, India. The plot included a sightseeing and shopping dance routine, the travel dance, firstly because you cannot go to India and not indulge in a few purchases, and secondly, it would be too much to dialogue these activities, thus making the play unbearably wordy – in essence it replaced the flashback element that is customary in Bollywood. The dance was a perfect resolution to this, and thus the choreography showcased travelling, and the song choice, *Dhadak Dhadak*, was suitable as it was made famous by a Bollywood movie about traveling across India.

The next section that needed dance was the nightclub scene. The medley revealed the relaxation moment that the cast needed and the impending crisis and climactic moment of the script. The medley consisted of *Ashiq Banaya*, a sultry tune with choreography to match, *Tan Tana Din*, *Rangatari*, and *Zingaat* that are ferocious club beats, and mimicked the Bollywood custom of the inclusion of an ‘item number’, a famous person. The dance had the majority of the cast in it as the scene followed directly and it created a club atmosphere. I found that including a club scene allowed for the much-needed dance numbers to fit in naturally. The dance at the opening ceremony of the IPL, as scripted, was the end of the storyline. *Aank Mare*, which was extremely popular on the charts at the time was used for the same reason. The routine was glittery and celebratory; it included all the hints that were dropped during dialogue in lifts, duets, and shapes; it exceeded expectations with the glow-in-the-dark

costumes and ultraviolet lighting in sections.

The finale and curtain call routine were high octane and power-packed. It capped all the dances of the evening with a medley of *Baapa Moriya* and *Moriya*, which was a farewell salute to the audience and Lord Ganesha, and lastly *Shambu Sutaya* that ended the show in a curtain call format choreographed into the dance routine, leaving the audience calling for the encore or reprise. The songs *First Class*, the number one chart-topper in its first week of release two weeks before opening night, and *Ghar More Pardesiya*, from the number one Bollywood movie at the time, provided the ideal sounds for the final send-off. In total the show had an hour's worth of dance scattered intermittently throughout the play, with the longest medley lasting for 12 minutes, being performed during the nightclub scene.

9.6 Speaking the Rhymes in Bollywood Chimes

The acting component of a musical styled show is vitally important. A major portion of the storyline was conveyed through words and the emotions that they reveal. While the dance did the same, the acting captivated the audience through the live performance of the turbulent love story, the friendships that emerged, and the faith that is placed in God and religion. Audiences were very receptive to the romance and exaggerated Bollywood style. The melodramatic acting satisfied the spectators as they found themselves immersed in the dance troupe's desperate attempt to achieve their goal of dancing at the IPL's opening ceremony. The heightened emotions on stage ranged from hope in the beginning with the emergence of love, to the excitement and enlightenment when they reach India, despair when the romance crumbles and the hero is imprisoned figuratively and literally, to celebrations at the end, as is Bollywood custom (Desai, 2004); comedic undertones elevated the audience's reception of this show.

The characters created were noticeably inspired by the bold nature of Bollywood archetypes (Sinha, 2023 & Prospect Theatre Company, 2016). The coach exemplified the archetype of the stern parental figure – the person with the authority and the stress that comes with it. She was determined to maintain control by multi-tasking during an uncontrollable situation. The nurturing parental figure was captured in Mrs. Naidoo. Her oversized personality was matched by her physical appearance, vocal quality, and

the costumes she wore. She provided the much-needed balance required between the cast's performance energies. The romantic young lovers suitably filled the shoes of these roles as they whisked us along on a journey of love conquering all. Priya is innocent and studious and devoted to family values, and Thiesen is a hesitant young man with foiled intentions. The sidekick or fraternity roles were plentiful in the show. As is custom, the hero and heroine each have their own best friends who serve in the roles of the sporty girl, the tomboyish girl, the young newcomer, the tormenting older brother, the eunuch (here the flamboyant gay), and the supportive best friend. The archetypes of the comedic police officers, the looting beggars (here the car guards), the subservient maid, the spy, and the snobbish wealthy person were played by the extras in the show. The villain, the vixen, the nerd and the henchman do well to stir things along in the plot in order to thwart the plans of the dance troupe. The final archetypal role is the narrator, whose job it is to relate the story to the audience. This direct interaction with the audience closed the gap between the action on stage and the audience who were now fully immersed in the happenings of the show. These archetypes revealed themselves through detailed character work in terms of physicalising their performance, which is necessary for this exaggerated style of acting.

Physicalising the character is important for any role, but in a Bollywood Musical it becomes central to the action. A tremendous amount of meaning is conveyed through the body (Stanislavski in Blumfeld, 2008), and this amplified version needs to be choreographed precisely. The physical shape mimicked the finesse and flare of the dances, as is the nature of the musical genre. The characters' bodies were suitably tailored to suit their archetypes. The lovers' gestures and movements were infused with enormous amounts of youthful energy and vernal springs in their steps. Arjuna embodied the spritely sporty person who is also exercising and eating healthy, while Nishaani exemplified the rough and tough type of girl with her broad shoulders and fists full of energy. Mahi was the shy introverted young girl who learned to let her inner light shine in the group. Their male counterparts Muruvan, the annoying older brother with a vicious temper and actions that are hurtful and overbearing; the overly supportive Mikhail, who spends too much time with video games but is trying to find a girl and whose demeanour is sloppy and slouching; and the flamboyant drama queen

that is Ravi, with ever-growing flamboyance in gesture, were equally astute with their actions and mannerisms. The sexy, sultry vixen, Bhavika, exemplified these traits through her unwanted sexual attempts at Thiesen, as did her nerdy sister, Bhavna, exemplifying a clumsier demeanour. Rhithik, the villain, was more poised and confident in stature while Vedarsha, the Goon, was portrayed as a simpleton. The physical shape of each scene followed on from the action in the previous scene or dance.

9.7 Facing the Actions that are Racing to Factions

The show's rising action was steady and consistent, even with the dance routines spaced throughout (Stanislavski in Blumfeld, 2008). The images created by the body, the flowing blocking, rollercoaster of emotions, and actions arising out of nervous, eagerly awaiting characters to becoming celebratory victors in the end. Each scene ended on mini cliff-hangers with foreshadowing moments like the telephone conversation between Bhavika and the unknown assailant. The plot and subplots unfolded in actions and reactions, with the entire body expressing subtext. The action built effortlessly to the climax in Act II (Stanislavski in Blumfeld, 2008), manifesting itself in an outlandish fight sequence, as is typical in Bollywood dramas, followed by the resolution delivered through divine intervention for the eagerly anticipated happy ending, where characters dance in unity, the lovers are reunited, and the wrongdoers seek penance for their actions. Through the attainable goals of each character, the themes emerged strongly.

Priya and Thiesen prove that young love conquers all while the support that they receive from friends and family evidence the theme of friendship. Priya exemplifies a studious, family-driven young woman, while betrayal is portrayed by Thiesen in order to create conflict in the rising action, as well as from Bhavika, whose intended goal is to create obstacles. Mikhail exemplified the theme of loyalty with his drive to assist his best friend and Muruvan showed us that family ties run deep and that in times of crisis these bonds prevail. Bhavna brings about the theme of forgiveness through her actions, while Nishaani and Ravi represent acceptance of who we are. They all show us that dedication, hard work, and faith is rewarded. The religious theme was consistent from start to finish through the Narrator's monologues, as well as the divine intervention offered for the resolution. Mrs. Naidoo best typifies the nexus between the

motherland and the diaspora, and the longing to travel to the home country. This live performance medium had the same escapist effect as the cinema, with elevated interest and appeal due to its local relevance and Durban Indianness, as opposed to that of India.

While Indian cinema remains a part of our culture, we have evolved into separate cultures as a diaspora living in South Africa, and some of these differences and similarities are captured in this play. Accents and language are the first identifiable differences. Our Indianness is exemplified primarily through English, with a mixture of colloquial slangs that incorporate Afrikaans and IsiZulu words and phrases. The accents emulated typical Phoenix and Chatsworth accents with quick rhythms and the Durban Indian twang. They revealed a variety of class and educational backgrounds, representing the monumental, diverse nature of Durban Indianness, but also a unified race in terms of cultural and religious practices. Nishaani, Thiesen, and Muruvan were vocally identified as individuals who would reside in Phoenix, a predominantly Indian suburb, north of Durban. These characters were rough and tough, displaying more street smarts than book knowledge. The Kitchen English they spoke was recognisable to the audience.

These characters and their demeanours exemplified individuals on the lower spectrum of wealth, which was contrasted by Priya, Mikhail, and Mahi who exemplify wealth and a tertiary level of education and ambition. The latter mentioned characters are more refined in mannerisms and speech and their English sounds more like what is taught rather than street slang. They exemplify post-apartheid individuals who have left the designated Indian areas, and emerged in areas that exemplify a more diverse cultural and racial mix. This mixing of cultures brought about a rise of Indianness that resembles less and less their Indian counterparts still residing in Indian communities like Chatsworth, Phoenix, Stanger, Tongaat, and Verulam. Ravi and Arjuna speak in an upper middle-class accent reminiscent of Chatsworth. Their accent, while similar to that of Phoenix, is slightly altered in terms of inflections and stresses, as well as their choice of slang. Ravi is flamboyant in nature, with many feminine nuances, while Arjuna exemplifies a more forceful young woman, the sporty stereotype. The Coach speaks in an accent that exemplifies an individual living in a more rural setting like Tongaat.

The rhythm is slower and the pronunciation of words different. She is the typical dance instructor with bite in her words and stress in her mannerisms and actions.

Bhavika, Bhavna, Rhitik, Vedarsha, and the Kapoor sisters speak with an Indian accent in English that incorporates Hindi phrases. They exemplify the typical goons and villains that are carbon copies of numerous Bollywood movies. They exemplify our desire and the constructed expectations of Indian culture and tie us into their archetypes as evil doers who stray from religion and family values but return to these values in the end. The narrator is a physical manifestation of our beliefs and speaks in an Indian English accent similar to the villains. This highlights the notion that our Hindu religious practices began elsewhere and while remaining similar, are exemplified differently here in South Africa. The narrator's speeches incorporate the use of alliteration and poetic nuance. The play's dual contexts allow for several locations to be used in the storyline.

The Durban scenery was depicted in the opening shots on video before the show began, establishing the play's context. The dance studio was a random space highlighted, but the dialogues assisted the still picture on the screen to locate it in Durban. The Naidoo residence was of a posh manor in Umhlanga, revealed through AV and dialogue, attesting to their wealth. The bus stop scene had video footage of the recognisable Durban bus rank in the central business district. Thiesen's poverty is revealed through the contrasting images of the bus stop and wealthy Mikhail's house that represents refinement and class, much like the Naidoo residence. The last location in Durban is the renowned King Shaka International Airport. For these stills of the airport's interior and exterior, and the flight announcements during the scene, established the context further.

Act II is set in Mumbai, India and this was thus the second location. To achieve this location, the costume changes, the diverse accents, and the AVs included pictures of Mumbai and travels through several other locations in India. The importance of the two locations lies in the idea that Durban Indians are always connected to India in some way, not just through ancestry, but through Bollywood movies. Mumbai is the home of Bollywood movies; therefore, it is prominently referenced in the show.

9.8 Durban Indianness Revealed through Stage Business

The language used was uniquely South African Indian. Each performer portrayed the characters, deciphering the words in isolation of the character's own desires and contexts; the performer interpreted and spoke lines with direction as to what type of accent was needed for the character, dependent on the characters' history and context, as can be heard in the video footage attached. The lines were intended to engage with a Durban audience, and as such, they are delivered in colloquial slang, with words like *haibo*, *skraal*, *ek sê*, *larnie* and so forth being used. The tone and the stresses were Durban Indian, not intended to denigrate but rather to engage the diversity of what it means to have and exhibit Durban Indianness. The body language was equally as expressive as the words. The Coach, Priya, Arjuna, and Mikhail spoke in a refined manner with a wider vocabulary than Nishaani, Mrs. Naidoo and Muruvan, who all have a limited vocabulary. Mrs. Naidoo exemplifies someone who did not have wealth or formal education growing up, but she is kind-hearted and down to earth, and her wisdom shines through in her thoughtful and caring metaphors. The Narrator had a very poetic style of language with metaphoric speech and rhyming words that drew the audience into the action.

The storyline is uniquely South African Indian, as it tells of the triumph of our faith and our belief that good will overturn evil. It exemplifies the sanctity of family values and the jubilations that accompany strife, much like our journey through South African history. It tells of a unique experience as Indians, we get to live out our fantasies to act in a Bollywood-like show and visit the land of our ancestors. The storyline fulfilled the desire to become famous while at the same time remain rooted in our unique religious and cultural experiences. The characters, while they represent the archetypal roles seen in Bollywood cinema, were very much exemplifiers of Durban Indianness. Mrs. Naidoo is the loud, overbearing mother, who speaks with an uneducated but experienced tongue. Priya is the attractive, light-skinned beauty that is adored by everyone. Thiesen is the enthusiastic hero that is determined to prove himself. His competitive relation with his brother Muruvan represents the bond shared by many Indian boys. Muruvan exemplifies the typical, streetwise, ambitious person that we see in many tough neighbourhoods in Phoenix and Chatsworth. Ravi is the stereotypical gay Indian boy who is outrageously fabulous. Nishaani is the tomboyish lesbian in the

group who is hiding her true feelings. Mikhail is the stereotyped rich, privileged kid that has luxuries to spare, but is humble. The coach was typical of a stressed authority figure who is feared by everyone.

The villains, while not South African, exemplified what we perceive as Indianness via a Bollywood lens (Dudrah and Desai, 2004). The play exemplifies the beliefs of this Indian diaspora with regard to community-building in Durban while simultaneously holding on to traditions and practices of our ancestors. The belief in family values is evident in the relationships between Mrs. Naidoo and Priya, Thiesen and Muruvan, and Bhavika and Bhavna, respectively. We cherish the religious teachings that have passed down from generation to generation with translations along the way, as we pay homage to Lord Ganesha. The play upholds our beliefs in love marriages as opposed to arranged marriages, with a remarkably smaller percentage still practicing arranged marriages in South Africa. Sport has always been a variable in my life, I played several and excelled at a few, and sport as a cultural practice, as opposed to an institution, is saluted in this play.

My own Indianness permeates the writing that details my own cultural practices and religious beliefs and is populated with characters that I have encountered throughout my life, living in Indian suburbs. Mine and many of our upbringings are evidenced in the play with reference to our support of sports such as soccer and cricket, and this devotion was exemplified through the storyline that tells of these dancing stars who are featured at the opening ceremony of a cricket tournament. Educational achievement is a dominant pursuit for most Indians, as we are drilled throughout our upbringing to gain knowledge and secure high-status jobs. The play depicts this ambition through several of the characters, namely Priya, Arjuna, Mikhail, and Bhavna.

Although South Africa avoids a caste system culture, there are still class differences present and these were explored in the show, which was an exemplification of the diversity in Indianness in Durban, South Africa. Cultural attire fused with a western influence is what differentiates us from our Indian ancestors, and this was highlighted in the costume choices. The play displays our passion for spicy foods and our need to help when someone is in need, and this was portrayed in the supporting cast's actions. We delved into the value placed in tradition as well as the modern adaptations of

religious practices, and showcased job opportunities as opposed to merely limiting professional studies that contribute to becoming traditionally venerated doctors, lawyers, accountants, engineers, and teachers. This post-apartheid context has given rise to many anxieties within our minority Indian group, and thus we strive to claim our place as Africans of Indian descent. Our lifestyle is South African, as we identify with our place of birth as well as the motherland, India. This play identified the knowledge that is spread through Bollywood cinema, and how culture is transported via this medium to us in South Africa. We incorporated elements of what we see and hear in costumery and music.

9.9 Cinema to Stage the Action Leaps off the Page

How is the show an example of Bollywood Theatre, and thus an extension of SAIT? The show promotes much of the aims and values of SAIT by conforming to its practices of locating and portraying values of family and community unification. It also exemplifies theatre practices structurally and the use of monologues and comedic undertones present in the 1990s. The storyline targets an Indian audience, and the show is produced by Indian artists. The traditional usage of dance routines amidst the dialogues remains a pertinent feature, evolving into the implementation of a Bollywood styled and structured medley of dances with the infusion of classical styles. Bollywood is infamous for borrowing storylines from Hollywood, its western counterpart, and so too have we borrowed this cinematic genre and adapted it for a South African stage.

The costumes in its myriad colours and frequent changes were aesthetically rewarding in the show, as they supplied the dazzle in dances and also exemplified the characters' social status.

The show's soundtrack was taken directly from Bollywood smash hits. These were used effectively to underscore the scenes and highlight moments of peak emotion, as would a Bollywood movie. The soundtrack was important in setting the tone, and also for the ever-popular dance routines that accompany some of them. The melodramatic acting style, alas not in Hindi but English, reflects the SAIT pre-1960s, however, the form has changed to suit an audience, who themselves have undergone change and who prefer to relate to genuine characters as opposed the stereotyped, exaggerated characters with no substance. The drama of the story deviated from this path,

grounding it in a farcical comedy with heightened dramatic flare. The archetypal characters were robust and larger than life but were individually identifiable to the audience. Bollywood offers a musical genre that has no singing, rather the dance routines overshadow the lip-syncing, and this show was no different.

The romantic love triangle was ever present in the play and drove the action forward to the classic resolution where all plots and subplots resolve amicably (Desai, 2004). There were several dramatic twists and extended pauses to emulate Bollywood's cinematic style that highlight each character's facial expressions in cannon effect. The first scene in Act I and the breakfast scene in Act II were loaded with these stylised reactions. The writing is reminiscent of the poetic nature of a Bollywood show, with metaphoric references made to natural elements and celestial bodies. The AV effects offered a similar experience of the two-dimensional cinematic genre infused with live performance. It further enhanced the action on stage by providing the illusion of multiple locations on one stage. The LED screens proved to be an important contributing factor to the Bollywood experience on stage. Thus, live medium then becomes an adaptation of Bollywood cinema, making it Bollywood Theatre that is able to exemplify South African Indianness in its expanding form, and thus amplifying the parameters of SAIT. South African Indian theatre has had an evolutionary journey and still continues to mark paradigm shifts in its content and style and this post-apartheid era is no different. There are many deviatory paths to this medium of theatre, one of them now being Bollywood theatre, an adaptation of Bollywood cinema. This style emerged in the early 2010s and has now become a fully formed style. It was allowed to develop in this post-apartheid era due to the freedoms that exist and the rights that one is afforded, coupled with a more integrated multiracial community. The Indian community has flourished and emerged out of its cocooned education, uprooted from their allotted locations, and these shifts have been marked in theatre, Bollywood Theatre now being one of them. I have since the performance of this play, restaged it with an all African cast at DUT and have written and directed the sequel with a similar, all African cast at the Courtyard Theatre. My aim is to write one more play in this style to complete the trilogy. This style of theatre is not just popular with South African Indians but with all South African audiences.

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Appendix A

Title: Bombay Chasers

Setting: The story unfolds in two locations, South Africa – Durban, and India. Scenes occur in dance studio, households, airport, breakfast hall, nightclub, hotel room, cricket stadium. All locations revealed through projections on tall screens on wheels with sari draped on the reverse.

Characters:

Ganesha/Narrator

Muruvan the annoying older brother.

Thiesen the young, flawed hero.

Shiva/Coach Singh the authoritative, stern figure.

Priya the innocent, pure, educated heroine.

Mrs Naidoo- Priya's overbearing, doting mom.

Support cast: Ravi (the uptight dance captain), Arjuna (the sport, loyal best friend of Priya), Mikhail (the weird, loyal best friend of Thiesen), Nishaani (the tomboyish best, loyal friend of Priya), Mahi (the young novice in the group).

2 female dancers/extras: Bhavna and Bavika – sisters from India, the obvious distraction and interruption to the lovers. Bhavika is the third point in the love triangle.

2 male dancers, from India. Vedarsha and Rhithik. Vedarsha is the goon while Rhithik is the hated villain.

Extras: dancers.

T20 cricket in India, projector for scenery

Act I

Dance 1 classical to introduce the players, sticks...

Prologue

Narrator: Sometimes life throws us the unexpected, and we find ourselves spiralling in turmoil. Just when it seems that there is no hope; faith throws you a rope for you to pull yourself out of the depths of disparity. Often, we feel ourselves at battle with the world and ourselves and just like a 20 20 Cricket match, we need a third empire to decide. But instead of waiting for the screen, we need to look at other signs that have been sent from...a higher authority, to guide our way. Our story is both familiar and unfamiliar. We are about to take you on a journey of self-discovery, faith and most importantly, our love for Cricket...or rather the love for the sport that is shared by seven, very lucky cricket fans who get the opportunity of a lifetime; to live out their dreams and learn of the wonder and mystery that is faith. Unlike a five-day test match, we gonna keep this short! Our story begins in South Africa, let us meet the players... *(EXITS)*

Dance 2 that bring them on, 30 seconds, they are rehearsing.

Scene i – Youth talk about trip going dance at IPL

Coach Singh: You guys look tired, maybe take a break. I think I've been working you too hard. You need to listen to the music more. Some of you are creating your own rhythm, which is delightful if this were an improv class, but it isn't! As dancers your job is to learn steps and sequences and at the moment some of you look as if you are stepping in front of a bus! I'd better go call India, tell them what time to expect us, if we ever get there, and Priya, confirm with your mother that she is still a chaperone for this trip, but if it's too much trouble, we can find someone else. If only someone else had volunteered...*she mumbles off.*

Priya: She's packed already.

Arjuna: Of course, she is...*laughs.*

Ravi: Guys, we leave for India in two days. We have to blow them away at the opening ceremony and show them that they weren't mistaken in giving us this slot. We are going to dance our asses off at the IPL opening ceremony, even if it kills us!

Nishaani: Just chill dude, #wegotthis. We also need rest and I still have to pack!

Ravi: No point in packing if we aren't perfect!

Thiesen: Maybe we should get some rest...

Muruvan: If anyone needs the extra practice, it's you. We keep repeating it because you keep messing up the same section.

Thiesen: I'm sorry, I know the choreography, I promise.

Ravi: What's the point of knowing it, if you aren't going to dance it?

Priya: I think we should just cool it for a bit...

Arjuna: Or at least take 5!

Nishaani: Guys, I understand that we have a lot riding on this, but it doesn't help to bite at each other.

Muruvan: We are only as strong as our weakest link, and right now that weakest link is Thiesen, I have to be blunt at this stage.

Mikhail: Dudes, we have done this routine a million times, *(to Muruven)* your brother, and the rest of us, just need sleep. Give the little man a break, give us all a break.

Priya: We have been rehearsing for 5 hours a day for the past 3 weeks, we are all exhausted.

Ravi: You always take his side, he will never learn if we ease up on him, even if he isn't doing his best.

Arjuna: Guys, we are forgetting that we are the best! We wouldn't have been chosen as the group that represents SOUTH AFRICA at the IPL in India, if we

weren't. From all the dance schools who entered, we were the best! Let's remember our strengths and...

Mikhail: Exactly, I'm confident that we will kick some butt out there.

Ravi: We have to prove that we are better than any Local squad in India.

Nishaani: #pressure!

Arjuna: Let's just go out there and have some fun.

Mikhail: Do we all have our passports and IDs in order?

All: Yes!

Ravi: As the dance captain, I will hold on to our tickets and the cricket tickets, no choreography no HOW'S HE? That way, I know that they will be motivated, and they will be at the airport even if one of you doesn't make it. Don't be late!

Priya: That's not fair. We aren't kids you know!

Nishaani: Please remind me, who made you dance captain?

Ravi: We voted the day that you missed rehearsal to shave your moustache.

Nishaani: Shut up...Convenient.

Thiesen: Guys, what time is our flight again?

Muruvan: Don't worry retard, as usual, just move when and where I move. You can do that at least? And if I miss any matches because of you, we might misplace you in India. Brush up on your Tamil.

Priya: Flight is at 7p.m. Thiesen.

Arjuna: Yes, and if you are early then maybe the 2 of you will be lucky enough to sit next to each other...

Priya: Don't be ridiculous.

Nishaani: What's ridiculous is that you 2...

Mikhail: Are none of our business.

Muruvan: Oh, little Bro, you best close the deal soon, before someone else beats you to it.

Thiesen: There's no deal to close!

Arjuna: Is that why you rushed to volunteer for the lifts? (*Laughs*)

Nishaani: Dude that wasn't subtle at all!

Mikhail: Maybe we should all meet at one spot and go together.

Nishaani: Yeah, that spot is the airport.

Mikhail: I mean somewhere in the district.

Muruvan: You only say this because your car less, broke ass needs a lift.

Arjuna: My dad can drop us both of Miks, you live two doors away from me anyway.

Nishaani: Gosh, not you too.

Thiesen: Get your mind out of the gutter Nish, it's just a lift.

Muruvan: Them or you two?

Ravi: OK guys and girls, break is over, we do this twice flat out and then we can call it a day...NO MARKING!

They all turn to Thiesen

Thiesen: Why is everyone looking at me?

Music start again, they exit, except Priya and Thiesen.

Priya: Thiesen, you got this, you just need to focus more. You have more talent at your age than any of us do, just learn the steps.

Thiesen: It's hard to focus when there is...are so many distractions.

Priya: If you want, we can meet early, before rehearsals, and work on it.

Arjuna pops back in.

Arjuna: Will you too hurry up. Ravi says, "We don't have all night!"

Priya: Coming, relax!

Thiesen: I would like that, thanks.

They exit.

Narrator: Sometimes siblings can be so cruel in the way they love us. I remember a time in my own life, when my brother and I used to fight, and I always thought that because we are family, we had to be on each other's side, but sibling rivalry is as old as time, Cane and Abel, and even my brother and I, Karthik. He teased me all the time. I remember this one time, we wanted to see who was faster, so the only way to see was to compete. Till today, he holds on to the story that I cheated, but I was closer to my world than he was. I didn't have to look beyond my mother and father to find my world.

Dance 3 the birth of Ganesha and the race around the world.

Scene ii – India

Bhavika: Don't worry yaar, I remember what you said. It's not surgery...what are you saying about my brain?... I will meet you after my sister and I go to fetch the South Africans...I agree yaar... I saw the videos, they have some talent...no, no, no one is as talented as you. I can't wait to see you! You better not be late yaar. We can plan when I see you, also then I will have a good idea of where the chain is weakest. You know I can spot a flaw a mile away. Not everything that sparkles is a pure, solid diamond... she will drop me off, she doesn't know about us...ok bye, I hear her plodding along.

Bhavna: We have to leave soon. We don't want to be late fetching them, that would be very disrespectful. You know what traffic can be like Bhavika.

Bhavika: Listen here, it takes time to make all of this happen we all don't have the luxury and skill of pulling off that 'just woke up look'. You do it so well, it must be nice being you, with all this, 'I don't care time' on your hands.

Bhavna: Sometimes a can't believe that we shared a womb.

Bhavika: We aren't conjoined, we don't share anything...but if we do, I'll need to use it if one of them is cute. *Rubs belly*

Bhavna: Not even common sense. Let's just get going, we could go around in circles!

Bhavika: We must avoid the traffic circles if we are late.

Bhavna: Thank God you are pretty!

Bhavika: You aren't so bad yourself, you just...

Bhavna: Oh gosh, just get in the car.

Bhavika: Shotgun.

Bhavna: It's only the two of us.

Narrator: Sometimes accidents may seem like a spanner in the works. Like these two, Bhavika certainly seems like an accident waiting to happen. It reminds me of my youth, I was told to carry this pot of water, suddenly a kamikaze bird fell into the pot and all the water fell out. I was so furious that I cursed and stomped around but when the water fell to the ground, it created the rivers and flow and quenched the thirst of the earth that was dry and the people nearby. So sometimes, accidents can lead to something greater than what we expected. No path is walked by us that won't lead us to splendour, we just have to look past the fury.

Scene iii Priya's House

Mrs Naidoo is packing

Mrs Naidoo: (*Talking to her husband who is off stage*) The garden and the plants inside must be watered, don't use too much water, there's a drought. I've cooked all your favourites and left them in the freezer, tripe, trotters, tongue and all. I even turned the h'oven to the right settings and time, so all you have to do is put the main switch h'on and h'off...oh and turn the timer on every time. All the stuff in the freezer

will cook in 20 minutes. And dare I smell cigarette smoke in this 'ouse, when I come back, there will be war. OK now let me see, toothpaste and brush, socks, h'underwear, blouses, passport that goes in hand luggage.

Priya: Mom, I thought that you were done packing!

Mrs Naidoo: I am, I was just triple checking my list. I don't want to leave anything behind.

Priya: Mummy, I think we need to talk about this trip.

Mrs Naidoo: Oh, I'm so excited, it's my dream to go to India. One foot on the mother soil and I know all will be better. It will be just like home but instead of 1million we'll be 1billion.

Priya: What next ma, bath in the Ganges...

Mrs Naidoo: From your mouth to God's ear.

Priya: Anyway, mum, um ... I need, can you be different on the trip?

Mrs Naidoo: Different how? What's wrong with who I am?

Priya: Nothing ma, but...

Mrs Naidoo: But what?

Priya: It's just sometimes, you can be a bit loud and too excited.

Mrs Naidoo: Are you saying that you are embarrassed by me?

Priya: No mummy, it's just...

Mrs Naidoo: Krish, come 'ear this, your daughter is h'embarrassed by us.

Priya: No mummy, I just mean, all my friends will be there, and, and ...

Mrs Naidoo: H'and h'and what? Talk before I call daddy for real.

Priya: OK. There is this one, friend of mine. He's...

Mrs Naidoo: He? Oh, pause we need tea for this story but. (*Screams to kitchen*)
Krish, put the kettle on, and you better not be digging in the freezer. I'm not gone yet.
OK, carry h'on.

Priya: Oh mummy, maybe later.

Prior: It means so much to me that you can confide in me with anything that you desire, that's what a mother is for, to make all your desires a reality.

Priya: You know him, Thiesen.

Mrs Naidoo: Oh, he's the 'andsome one.

Priya: I think so too.

Mrs Naidoo: OK, if he makes your heart flutter, then I'll be a little reserved on the trip. Let's go make some tea and we can plan your outfits...

Priya: Mommy, oh gosh, I can see that I'm gonna regret this...

Dance 4...love dance

They exit and the narrator appears. In disguise.

Narrator: Young love is so infectious. It fills the air like the scent of a rose in bloom, attracting the nose of strangers and forcing them to admire of its magnificence. It reminds me of my love for both my wives. Yes, both, back then, times were different, 2 wives were too little. But you think one wife is a lot to handle, try 2! You duck one, you find the other, and if you've made them both angry a once, then run for the hills, or stand under their noses, they'll never find you there.

Scene iv two spotlights, telephone conversation

Mikhail: Dude, I hope your brother gets off your back a little.

Thiesen: He's just being a big brother. He's also stressing about the dance, and I don't blame him. I have doubts about myself too.

Mikhail: You shouldn't though. Remember what we used to learn in the services, Ganesha injured himself when he tortured the cat.

Thiesen: Bru, you lost me. You know I never paid much attention.

Mikhail: Ja, Always with your earphone in one ear. But it means our own actions can let us down dude. Don't torture yourself, just focus your energy where it is needed.

Thiesen: That is some wise words but, Guruji. *(Laughs)*.

Mikhail: Scriptures aren't just there for you to doodle on and write choreography. There are important messages.

Thiesen: That's why I have you. You are my second brother.

Mikhail: Well then as your brother, I demand to know what's going on with Priya.

Thiesen: Hell, I thought that it wasn't any of your business.

Mikhail: The rest of them, no, your best friend, it is!

Thiesen: I don't know dude, when I'm around her I can't focus on anything else. Instead of being drunk on love, I get dumb on love.

Mikhail: So now you love her?

Thiesen: My young mind is too simple to find the big adjectives to describe her or the way I feel for her. All I understand is that when I'm near her, I can guess what the earth's water feels like when it sees the moon, it swells with emotion. So giddy with excitement and yearning that I am drawn to her and nothing else. She eclipses my heart with her beautiful aura. I barely listen to a word she says because I am so captivated by her rosy cheeks and glistening smile. The glow of her eyes could melt

icecaps, just like they have melted their way into my heart and her face infectiously haunts my every thought.

Mikhail: Thies, my bru, that is love! Wow! You have been bitten, hard ek sê. Well, what is the plan?

Thiesen: Plan?

Mikhail: Dude, we have to plan your moves. OK, we have this trip to make something happen. Stick with me, I got you covered bru.

Thiesen: Says the Single guy.

Mikhail: Not for long and by choice, not from wetodation. Um, ooooh, ahhhh...

Thiesen: OK, fine, some advice wouldn't hurt.

Mikhail: Tomorrow, we put this plan into action. We will...*mumbles off*

They exit

Scene v Airport

Coach Singh: (*On the phone*) We are boarding soon, so we should be on track to land by 6p.m. ma. Thank you once again Bhavna, you have been absolutely superb... OK, see you when we land... I'm also excited... the dancers are excited too. *Hangs up.* If only they would bloody get here already. I should've fetched them myself, put leashes on them. Running a dance troupe, you sometimes have to hose them down like dogs, if you don't watch them all the time, they will chew your favourite shoes and shit all over the place. I tell you, there raging hormones are enough to make you want to klap someone.

Ravi: Who you klapping now coach, mam?

Coach: You! Everyone is late!

Ravi: No Coach, you are at the wrong gate. It's a good thing Mrs Naidoo spotted you.

Coach: I was just...looking for the toilet. I knew it was gate....um...

Ravi: 11.

Coach: Don't be a smart ass with me my boy.

Mrs Naidoo: GOOD MORNING COACH!

Coach: There's no need to shout, you might alert airport security, if they aren't already screening you for that outfit.

Priya: Mommy, remember what we talked about.

Mrs Naidoo: I was h'only greeting. And you didn't say anything about attire (*she is very bright in her choices*).

Coach: Where are Muruvan and Thiesen?

Nishaani: I think he sent a message saying that he et (*ate*) something funny and needed the lavatory.

Ravi: Everyone suddenly needs the toilet.

Mrs Naidoo: They must be nervous flyers like me. If anyone needs h'imodium, I have plenty.

Priya: MOM, I don't think that will be necessary.

Coach: I think that this story needs the toilet, sounds like a bunch of...

Arjuna: I see them running guys.

They race towards the group, Thiesen trips on luggage as he gets there.

Mikhail: When I said make an entrance, I meant something a bit more glamorous and graceful.

Coach: You boys are late. We almost had to delay the flight for you. One more mess up of tardiness and you are h'off, I mean off the squad!

Mrs Naidoo: Is he the one?

Priya: Sshhhhhh

Muruvan: Y'all can stop worrying. Sorry Coach, someone overslept. Went to bed late.

Thiesen: Sorry Everyone. Running choreography till late.

Mrs Naidoo: (*Offering him a hand up.*) Well, you are here now, and I hope your bowel movements 'ave settled also.

Priya: MA!

Arjuna: And we still have a few minutes, so if anyone needs the loo, now is the time!

Nishaani: I think I need to swaz. Girls...

Mikhail: We should go, just to be safe. (*They clear*)

Mrs Naidoo: That leaves just the 2 of us. You don't need to shoo shoo?

Coach: Um, I'm fine, but I think I might need a book.

Mrs Naidoo: Oh, good idea. I'll join you.

Coach: If you must.

Split Scene vi

Boys

Ravi: Better enjoy the toilet mense, before the thigh torture of a long drop (*he disappears into a stall*).

Muruvan: What are you two retards snickering about?

Mikhail: We weren't snickering guzzy, but if you must know...

Thiesen: Let's just get back guys.

Girls

Arjuna: So, you like the klutz?

Priya: He's not a klutz, anyone could trip over luggage.

Nishaani: Only he did but...

Priya: He's cute and adorable.

Boys

Muruvan: If yall tell me, I promise not to make fun.

Mikhail: We have a plan to win him his Love.

Thiesen: Dude!

Muruvan: A plan?

Thiesen: I told you he wouldn't...

Muruvan: Bro, chillax, if you are in love, then your bro has you sorted for all the advice you'll need. I do have a girlfriend and all.

Girls

Arjuna: Hopefully the last 4 months of flirting will end on this trip and become something more.

Priya: Guys let's just focus on the show.

Nishaani: You only say that because you skrik he won't make his move.

Priya: Well, he hasn't yet, what's taking him so long?

Arjuna: Patience girl, and if you are so ready, then why did you bring your mother?

Nishaani: If anything is going to block you, she is, with her bold...personality.

Boys

Mikhail: So, you will help then?

Muruvan: Little bro needs all the help he can get ek sê. I hope the entrance wasn't part of your strategy.

Thiesen: No, but I think we need to rethink this, especially since we need to distract a big obstacle, Mrs Naidoo.

Mikhail: I've got that sorted. She loves food, I'll keep her busy by asking for recipes, draw on the fact that I have no dad and mum works late hours, so I cook. Ask for obstacles to be removed and so shall it be granted. I have a way with Aunties.

Muruvan: Is she going to be your blessings. That's the flight sorted and in India, I will ask her to help me shop for my girlfriend and mum and dad and all. That should buy you some time. Now to work on how to chune...

Girls

Priya: She knows already. But she's chilled.

Nishaani: I hope you chuned her not to...

Arjuna: Nishaani!

Priya: It's OK, I asked her to tone down a little.

Nishaani: Oh, when is she starting but?

They laugh.

Mrs Naidoo and Coach burst into each toilet.

Together: We are boarding!

They all rush off.

Ravi: *(Pulling up pants)* Wait for me guys, I have the tickets.

Dance 5 the flight and arriving in India.

Narrator: *(Dressed as pilot)* Friends and family are like Ganesha, they can help, where I can't, to remove obstacles on our path. With the help of their friends, our hero and heroine, find themselves closer to each other, thanks to a long

uninterrupted flight and nowhere to run. Poor girl would have had no escape, if her heart didn't desire this beckoning towards our little Hero. But before we get to the end of this green relationship, let's take a break. All this scribing, recording and talking has made me quite thirsty. Let's pause so we can also use the toilet.

Intermission

Act II

Dance – laddoo sellers, stick fight

Narrator: I don't know about you, but I had to shoo shoo like and elephant. Too many fizzy drinks before the show. In case you forgot, I never forget, we find our young travellers in India, the motherland. Everyone has their own expectations: to dance, to see the cricket, to find our roots and to discover love. With over one billion people and so many languages let's hope that our troupe don't lose their way or their wits. Will this be all that they dreamed of, or will they return home defeated and deflated?

Scene i – Priya and Thiesen are rehearsing before everyone meets

Priya: See you got this in the bag, you just have to rinse and repeat what you did here.

Thiesen: It's only coz I have a good teacher...

Priya: Don't be ridiculous.

Thiesen: I'm completely ridiculously mad about you! And I want to write it in the sky with the brown water from the Ganges...

Priya: Dude, I can't believe that people bath in the water. It's not like the Bollywood movies.

Thiesen: We are just going to have to write our own Bollywood romance. Filled with all the colour, mystery and intrigue but without the drama.

Priya: Then we should've left my mom at home!

Thiesen: She's not so bad, she just cares...and wants everyone to know that she does...EVERYONE...

They laugh

Thiesen: And I can't be too upset with her, she gave me you.

Priya: I see you like a lot of Jam on your bread, you are laying it on thick.

Thiesen: I can't help myself when I'm around you. You make my head spin and my heart sing.

Priya: Please don't sing now, I beg you please...

Thiesen: You'd best get used to this singing; it's going to happen every day that you are with me.

Priya: I love that you are so romantic and that we get to start our relationship here in India.

Thiesen: Is that all that you love?

Priya: Well, I also love... Burfi.

Thiesen: That's not what I meant.

Priya: I know what you meant but let's just take it one step at a time into the ocean, we don't want to be swept away by the strong current only to find that we can't swim.

Thiesen: I understand...I'm just going to have to build our love a boat...no a yacht!

Priya: (*Giggles*) I can't stop this tsunami...

They kiss and exit

Scene ii – buffet breakfast, Ganesh is serving.

Ganesha enters in apron to serve food. Enter Coach

Coach: I reserved a table for 10 people...10!

Ganesha: No need to shout and sign saab, I understand Englis' vell.

Coach: Oh, that's terrific, so where is the table?

Ganesha: Saab, it's an open buffet with enough seating for all our guests. But if you hurry you can secure that table in the corner.

Coach: You don't have anything like a long table so that I can place myself as far away from Mrs Naidoo as possible. She only comes in 2 settings, loud and deafening!

Ganesha: Who is Mrs Naidoo?

From off stage

Mrs Naidoo: Good Morning Coach!

Ganesha: I see what you mean...

Coach: And that's the soft setting.

Mrs Naidoo, Arjuna and Nishaani.

Mrs Naidoo: Good morning, Coach, I see the boys are late...h'again! I don't mean to question your methods as a chaperone, but I find it best if they are h'always near you.

Coach: So you can smother them...

Mrs Naidoo: I beg your pardon.

Coach: Ummm, so you can Mother them, that's very good advice.

Nishaani: So, Coach, aren't you lucky, surround by all these beautiful people.

Coach: I see two girls and their dragon, don't put words in my eyes... I mean mouth.

Mrs Naidoo: You must be nervous that is why you are lashing out la dat. I think it's going to be smooth sailing. Just relax and calm...

Coach: If you were me, would you be calm? These boys are always late! Who knows what choreography Thiesen remembers, if Nishaani doesn't stop laughing in the lifts she is going to fall and if Arjuna doesn't put down the ladoos, she'll never get lifted. Where is Priya, and where are those girls I'm supposed to meet at breakfast?

Mrs Naidoo: Mr Coach, you need to breath and get some fresh air, all this stress isn't good for your health, you look like you going to burst a blood vessel in you neck...it the same one travelling to your forehead.

Coach: Oh, how I wish for a time less complicated?

Arjuna: Like when coach? You seem like you have always been stressed.

Nishaani: Hell man, has Coach dropped strands of his hair to lead her back to those uncomplicated times... *(the girls all laugh)*.

The boys arrive.

Ravi: Ek sê, share the joke.

Coach: Shut up!

Muruvan: Larnie, we were just running choreography.

Mrs Naidoo: I was thinki'g that we should do some sight-seeing, see the Taj, visit the Bollywood studio, maybe someone famous will be shooting and we can get h'autographs. Then we can go get our measurements taken....

Coach: OMG! That's a lot of material.

Mrs Naidoo: Yaa I want lots h'of different colours...

Coach: I'm grateful Mrs Naidoo for all the thought that went into your schedule, but I have my own schedule and one that doesn't include much sight-seeing. We are here to work after all.

Mrs Naidoo: We can't bring these childrens all this way to the motherland and not allow them taste and relish h'in the origins of their culture. I'll tell you what, I'll compromise, we can scratch h'off tour to Bollywood studio and maybe seeing the

Taj, that's long trip from here but, I thought it would be like driving to Maritzburg...but we must visit one temple and visit the markets... and sari shops.

Coach: We have tickets to the cricket and perhaps we can do a temple trip...some of these kids need prayer. Where are Thiesen and Priya?

Mikhail: Just tidying up a few loose ends mate (*turns around and mimes kissing*).

Mrs Naidoo: I see them coming. We can talk about this more after breakfast. I'm sure h'even your cold 'eart wants to bask in some of this India warmth.

Ravi: Guys, we need a good solid breakfast so that we have enough energy to get through the day. Please make sure that you have enough fluids so that we don't have to pick anyone up off this almost swept floor.

Muruvan: Chillax dude, your mouth is just as busy as the traffic guzzy. It's not our first dance tour.

Ravi: You think it's easy being a leader when there are people like you that I have to captain!

Muruvan: Exse, I don't need a glorified sitter!

Arjuna: Don't hold grudges because no one voted for you, not even your own brother.

Mikhail: People like leaders and not bullies.

Coach: Where are Priya and Thiesen?

Mrs Naidoo: Priya said that they were getting in an early morning rehearsal before breakfast.

Nishaani: Hell, is that what we are calling it now?

Arjuna kicks her under the table.

Arjuna: Put something in your mouth girl, try the chepati.

Nishaani: No thanks, I'm still tasting last night's naan.

Muruvan: Sho sho sho, check out the 2 hotties walking towards us.

Ravi: You mean Bhavna and Bhavika, calm yourself.

Muruvan: I think she's smiling at me.

Arjuna: You think that every girl is smiling at you.

Muruvan: Only the pretty stekkies, this isn't a kennel.

Nishaani: Wow, you think a lot of yourself. I wonder what Saj is doing right now at home, maybe I should give your gf a call.

Muruvan: No need to call the k9 unit, I'll behave.

Bhavna: Good morning eweryone. I hope you slept vell.

Bhavika: I know I got enough beauty sleep.

Muruvan: Oh, it shows...

Ravi: Nish why don't you move down one and let Bhavika have a seat.

Mikhail: Or you could just sit next to me.

Mrs Naidoo: Down boys, you acting like she's a bags of Lays chips and you haven't eaten in days.

Bhavna: I vouldn't mind a seat...

Muruvan: The waiter will bring you one now.

Bhavika: Where are Thiesen... and Priya?

Arjuna: The love birds are still rehearsing.

Bhavika: A lot can happen from rehearsal to performance...

Nishaani: Their rehearsal is locked, no need for extra... choreography!

Bhavika: Sometimes a last-minute lift can add such excitement to the piece.

Nishaani: No bra! Chopping and changing stuff around will lead to chaos.

Mikhail: Are we still talking about choreography?

Arjuna AND Nishaani: YES!

Coach: I'm very impressed with the way you two girls have learnt the choreography and were ready to slot into the piece.

Mrs Naidoo: Yaa, it's like yall were there from the big'ning.

Bhavna: We take our dancing very seriously. We are just grateful to be given a second chance to dance at the IPL. You guys deserved to win, your routine was outstanding. And you guys mean business.

Coach: After breakfast we can go over some of the lifts that we left out last night.

Enter Thiesen and Priya

Muruvan: Finally, they emerge for air and sustenance.

Thiesen: You guys barely saved us some chow.

Coach: That's what happens when you are late to a buffet.

Priya: I'm skraal, I could eat a horse!

Bhavika: What is chow and skraal?

Ravi: Chow means food and skraal is to be hungry.

Bhavna: Some of the stuff you say sounds very weird.

The all laugh.

Priya: That's like the pot calling the kettle black.

Bhavika: Are you calling me dark?

Bhavna: Not dark but dumb, it is an expression. Like (*in Hindi*) aabhaaree ho (*count your blessings*).

Arjuna: We don't speak much Hindi; you have to explain what it means.

Bhavna: It means count your blessings.

Coach: Any food not fortunate enough to bless the inside of your stomach will have to be left or carried; it's time for rehearsals.

Priya: I'm gonna grab some fruit.

Mrs Naidoo: Remember what we were talking about h'earlier... I really believe that we can reach a compromise. What are your thoughts on firewalking?

They all get up to leave and Bhavika stops Thiesen. Bhavna hovers around and Priya watches from a distance Bhavika gets flirty with Thiesen.

Bhavika: I just wanted to ask you if you could be my partner in the lifts today. I don't know why but I just feel safer with you.

Thiesen: I'm not sure, Coach usually does the pairing.

Bhavika: Oh foh, it would mean so much to me if you would suggest it to her. We can use it as an opportunity to... to get to know each other better. I would love to hear about your home and your hobbies even. We can swap stories and you can tell me how you became this amazing dancer.

Thiesen: You think that I'm amazing? Wow, I thought that I was just average.

Bhavika: Oh my gosh! You are terrific. I've never met someone with so much natural ability.

Thiesen: Everyone else thinks I'm a swak.

Bhavika: I don't understand this swak.

Thiesen: Most people don't...it means stupid...um ... pagla.

Bhavika: Oh...but you are simply magnificent in my eyes. You were born to dance. And you need someone just as strong to partner would you. You don't get better than me. So please ask Coach Saab to partner us.

Thiesen: I will certainly try.

Priya returns

Priya: I got you some fruit love.

Thiesen: Thanks, maybe later.

Bhavika: You are such a doting girlfriend. Even in our culture we dote on our husbands and boyfriends.

Priya: But you won't find me throwing myself on any fires. Let's get back to practice.

Bhavika: Maybe the 2 of us could do some travel after rehearsals.

Priya: He can't! We have plans.

Thiesen: I suppose we could postpone our plans...I mean...like you said, we are in India after all. Let's make the most of it.

Bhavika: Shabash, I'll go home and get ready and then pick you up.

Bhavna returns Thiesen and Priya exit.

Bhavna: Will you cool it with Thiesen, it is clear that he is with Priya. And besides, you could have any one of those other drooling mongrels, you always like the one that can't have. Is it really worth it to break them up just for a fling that will end when they return to their homeland?

Bhavika: This is why none of them are drooling over you. No one wants to be around someone who is so serious all the time. And besides I'm not forcing him to talk to me. I'm securing our place on that platform and my spot in front, position 1 so that the selectors will see me, and I will be discovered. Every year at least one dancer

gets a movie contract, this year it will be me! You have to have the drive and the stomach for it, clearly you don't.

Bhavna: I want this just as much as you and that is why I am grateful for this second chance year, after our squad wasn't selected.

Bhavika: I should be dancing with Rhithik, but I suppose this Thiesen will have to do.

Bhavna: Just don't play silly games, you are already on the squad, a full python shouldn't still be hunting.

Bhavika: I don't get full on rats.

They exit.

Narrator: The bellowing winds have picked up, sweeping emotions of the ground and plucking leaves out of the shelter of a mound. Trouble seems to follow young Thiesen like ravenous hounds to a rotting carcass.

Scene iii

Dance to show what they have seen...locations. trains etc

REHEARSAL VENUE Split scene. On one end is Nishaani, Arjuna and Priya; the boys; Coach, Bhavna and Bhavika.

Nishaani: What kind with her, she is just everywhere!

Arjuna: The way that she's so nice to everyone is enough to make you vomit!

Priya: Guys she's just...nice...

Arjuna: No, you are just nice hun.

Nishaani: Bra, I don't have your patience. I want to grab her...

Boys

Muruvan: By the arm ekse, and push into the waist and that should give you height.

Mikhail: Suddenly you are very alert in rehearsals, nothing like a little competition to get the sparks flowing.

Muruvan: I can't work out if you are stupid enough to flirt with someone in front of your girlfriend or you are brave enough to try to tease her with jealousy.

Ravi: Little man is finally all grown up with not one but two hold chics after his attention. If I...

Girls

Arjuna: Were you, I would be over there telling him not to strain his eyes.

Nishaani: Typical, spend all the effort on the chase and then shut down and park the car off coz it's overheating.

Arjuna: It sounds like you are talking from experience, or frustration that your chase ended before it began.

Priya: She is like a new loud motorcycle that revs and the boys get excited but Thiesen is a young man who would rather steer a classy S series Mercedes, good for all weather...

Boys

Thiesen: He agrees or not is up to him.

Ravi: You can't go behind the captains back to get to Coach. You should've run it by me first!

Mikhail: That move is incredibly stupid, if he agrees you are dead, if he doesn't and she finds out you requested it, YOU ARE DEAD!

Muruvan: This is an amateur move by any standards.

Coach and the girls return, followed by Mrs Naidoo.

Coach: Will everyone gather around. I want to try something different. After today's rehearsal I have decided to change partnerings...

Ravi: But Coach it's a day before the opening...

Coach: I am well aware of the time and date, as sure as I am that I know what is best for the routine. I am the Choreographer after all!

Ravi: Sorry Coach.

Mikhail: What are the changes? Maybe I can lift Bhavika and not Arjuna's fat ass.

Nishaani: You are such a pig! Actually, that's an insult to pigs.

Mrs Naidoo: Kids, calm down. I'm sure Coach has a good plan and a good reason for causing all this disturbance.

Coach: We are going to try pairing Ravi with Nishaani, Mikhail with Bhavna, Muruvan with Arjuna and Thiesen with Bhavika who will dance position 1, Priya you will dance solo. Good suggestions Thiesen.

Muruvan: This is your doing! I dance position 1!

Nishaani: Used to...

Ravi: Thanks Brutus, let me just remove this dagger from my back.

Arjuna: I didn't expect this from you. Your Bro yes, but all those rehearsals playing dumb and innocent and then you pull the wax strip and sting us with this.

Priya: Guys whatever happened it's Coach's final decision and he knows best.

Mrs Naidoo: Things aren't so bad you all doing the same lift and my daughter gets a solo.

Bhavika: Thank you, Coach, for trusting us with your vision, I value your expertise.

Ravi: She's such a sick up.

Nishaani: For you to notice, then she must be wedged far up in there.

Ravi: What's that supposed to mean?

Priya: Not you two also, please can we just focus on the new roles.

Muruvan: You are taking this very well, not too long ago he was volunteering to rush to your side and sweep you off your feet, now he swoons over her.

Thiesen: Our dancing isn't our relationship!

Bhavna: It's been a very long day; we should probably all get some rest.

Bhavika: Nonsense, we should go celebrate and unwind. There is this very nice nightclub, not far from the hotel. Why don't we meet there? Please Coach saab, we won't be too late.

Muruvan: And we promise to behave.

Nishaani: I think we all need it after today's curve balls.

Mrs Naidoo: Go on Coach, they deserve some fun.

Coach: Fine, but I expect you home by 1.

Bhavika: Thank you, Coach.

Coach: I don't want to hear of any misbehaviour or tears and drama. You better play nicely and be home by curfew.

They all exit except Coach and Mrs Naidoo

Mrs Naidoo: Thank you for giving them some much needed time to relax. They starting to get cabin fever; one of them is about to erupt like a suicide bomber on a plane. I don't think that your decision to reshuffle the deck has helped defuse any tension.

Coach: I don't like my decisions being questioned.

Mrs Naidoo: And I'm not questioning, I'm just highlighting. I just don't understand why he wouldn't want to partner with Priya, after all he's...

Coach: It wasn't a choice of the heart but one of the head. Thiesen suggested that we integrate the dancers more as a group and still have one of our own shine as a soloist. He suggested that Priya hog the limelight and it only makes sense to partner their heights together.

Mrs Naidoo: Oh, he is the one who named Priya for the solo.

Coach: Besides, Arjuna needs to be lifted by someone with more...

Mrs Naidoo: You better not finish that sentence or I'm gonna finish you. I don't care if you the coach...

Coach: Patience...I was going to say patience.

Mrs Naidoo: You better mean patience; to make it up to me, you can take me to dinner and a Bollywood movie.

Coach: Can't I just get you the dvd back home?

Mrs Naidoo: No!

They exit

Narrator: This evening looks like it's about to be a turbulent ride for the Coach, I don't mean the beans and puree he's about to eat. That aunty can talk the ear off an elephant. Aunties have that gift, the subtle manipulation that gets you to do what they want and will have you believe that it's your idea. As for Bhavika, she's like a monsoon rampaging through the rice fields, you won't know the strength of her down pours until it's too late.

Scene iv

Nightclub dance medley.

Bhavika, Bhavika, Rhithik, Vivek and Ravi go to the toilet and to get drinks.

Thiesen: Guys this club is off the charts.

Mikhail: I know dude. And it's packed wall to wall with hot babes.

Arjuna: And hot guys!

Nishaani: If you dance the sequence like you are in a night club we will have now worries.

Mikhail: It must be the extra practice he's been getting in.

Arjuna: You mean the private lessons.

Priya: Grow up guys.

Muruvan: (*Mocking*) Grow up guys.

Priya: Very mature Muri.

Muruvan: Very mature Priya. Just enjoy the moment with us. Why are you so tense...you have your perfect Bollywood romance? The hero has his heroine. Play the wedding tubulars.

Bhavika and Bhavna return.

Bhavika: Who's getting married? I hope not anyone here...we are too young to be tied down. There is still so much to experience.

Priya: You can experience it with that special someone.

Muruvan: Are you saying that you are ready for marriage.

Priya: That's not what I am saying.

Bhavika: So, you agree...let's live a little.

Ravi returns with a tray of Shooters.

Ravi: Guys against my better judgement I've bought the round odd Shooters but just the one round.

Muruvan: Ease the reigns a little captain. It's our day off tomorrow.

Ravi: But Coach still give us a curfew.

Muruvan: We know, and we still have few hours so drink up friends...see tomorrow at the bottle of the glass.

Arjuna: Cheers to a fantastic experience dancing at the 20 20.

They all drink and start dancing but are interrupted by Vivek and Rhithik.

Rhithik: *(On a mic)* Ladies and gentlemen, we are very honoured tonight to have with us the winning dance team that will dance at the opening of the 20 20 IPL series...they've come here thinking that they are better than us. They laugh at the way we talk but they don't understand us when we talk... *(says it in Hindi)* when there is no much difference between us, they dare to believe that we with our strict culture are inferior to them and worst of all that these insignificant grains of rice can dance Bollywood better than us! That's like saying that the pebble is mightier than the rock!

Vivek: They only look like us but, in the end, we will crush you on the dance floor.

Thiesen: Why waste time waiting, you are very good at making long speeches, let's see if you can back it up with actions.

Muruvan: Exactly, what are you waiting for?

Ravi: Remember what Coach said about trouble...

Thiesen: We cannot let them insult us and an insult to us is an insult to Coach, our teacher.

Priya: Ravi is right guys, time to go home. Thiesen please, let's just go.

Bhavika: Are you going to let them threaten your honour Thiesen? These hooligans should be taught a lesson.

Nishaani: #timetogo!

Muruvan: If we walk away now, they will think that they won!

Thiesen: Bhavika is right, they need schooling.

Vivek: Now whose wasting time?!

Priya: Thiesen please, I beg you not to do this.

Thiesen: We have to defend our honour! *(He pushes her out the way)*

Ravi: Why do I feel like I'm going to be sort tomorrow?

The boys start fighting. The girls try to break it up.

Arjuna: *(On the phone)* Hello Mrs Naidoo, please can you come quickly, everything is going wrong all at once. Please don't tell. Hello...hello...oh gosh, bloody reception!

Bhavna: Just cool it guys. You are behaving like a bloody pack of wolves tearing at flesh, trying to get the lion's share of the meat. What difference does it make where we come from? Destiny brought us together and now you want to rip us apart.

Rhitik: Hey pagli, you also betrayed your own kind. We were supposed to be on that stage.

Chaotic fight scene with props flying etc is interrupted by the police. The girls are separated from them in the fight. Last 3 to be seen fighting are Vivek, Thiesen and Muruvan.

Vivek: Officers Saab, arrest them, under the guise of sport and unity, they have come here to cause turmoil and trouble.

Thiesen: It was him and his master who started the fight.

Ganesh: All I see is the 2 of you fighting.

Muruvan: But officer...

Ganesh: No buts, just get in the van.

They exit and the rest appear.

Arjuna: I'm not going to be the one to explain this to Coach.

Nishaani: #notme, in fact let's just go straight to the temple and wait for our cremation.

Priya: How do you know those guys?

Bhavna: We are...were part of the same dance crew.

Bhavika: There is no connection between us now!

Ravi: I'm going to take the blame, Coach can rake me over the coals, I'm dance Captain.

Nishaani: #no1cares. Oh, my word, you are hurt!

Ravi: I'll be okay.

Nishaani: Don't act all macho, it doesn't suit you. (*She places a tissue on his bleeding forehead*).

Mrs Naidoo enters

Mrs Naidoo: Oh God, what happened? You are bleeding, are you OK Pri, where are the boys? Will someone give me an answer!

Priya: I'm OK mommy...

Arjuna: The boys were in a fight.

Bhavika: We tried to stop them.

Nishaani: I beg your pardon?

Bhavna: The boys have been taken to jail.

Mrs Naidoo: What?!

Nishaani: No thanks to them. It was their friends who started the fight, members of their dance crew (*turns to them*), can you deny it...I didn't think so, #guilty!

Bhavna: We had nothing to do with it.

Bhavika: You must believe us yaar.

Nishaani: I think that you have helped enough, why don't you just leave!

Mrs Naidoo: It has been a long day, why don't we all get home, tend to the tormented and deliver the news to Coach Singh. Oh, I fear the ground might shake like an earthquake tonight.

They all exit except Priya; Mrs Naidoo returns to her.

Mrs Naidoo: There's nothing we can do now lovey, let's get some rest.

Priya: He was so violent and out of control. He wouldn't even listen to me. She whispers in his ear and he's rearing to go.

Mrs Naidoo: What's upsetting you more, that he was out of control or under her control?

Priya: Both!

Mrs Naidoo: You are young in love; you will learn that sometimes boys are stupid.

Priya: I know that already.

Mrs Naidoo: Sometimes loves is like the moon, controlling the tides, when the moon is full the tides are high but even when the moon appears to have vanished there is still a ripple in the water...waiting in anticipation for the tide to rise again. She's young and foolish but he knows how to love, forgive his foolish actions for he too is waiting in the ripples now. Come we'll draw straws to tell Coach, let's let him sleep till morning.... *(they start to exit)* ... Ravi should tell him, he's the Captain after all...and he's already bleeding.

End scene

Scene in temple

Coach: *(On the phone)* I'm at the temple Mrs Naidoo, I left early so that I could avoid you... I mean avoid the crowds here at the Ganesha pooja...No, no, no I can't talk now, I have to observe silence... something beyond your grasp...The boys are what? Hold on Mrs Naidoo, let me clear where it's quiet...ok, yes...who...What! For a

second, I thought that you said that the boys were arrested...oh, it's not a joke, that was going to be my next question...I'm on my way... (*hang up*) oh lord Ganesha, help me with this one...bloody fools. (*He exits*)

Bhavika enters

Scene Ganesha and Thiesen in jail

Ganesha: You seem very tense.

Thiesen is silent.

Ganesha: What is your name, let's start simple?

Thiesen: Thiesen. Where is my brother?

Ganesha: He's fine, another officer is questioning him. You don't sound like you are from here, although you look it.

Thiesen: I'm from South Africa.

Ganesha: I've always wanted to go there. They say I'll feel like I'm in India.

Thiesen: It's similar but very different. But you will still feel at home because the people are friendly.

Ganesha: Are you saying that if I come there, I can stay with you?

Thiesen: Well, I live with my parents and my irritating older brother but if they say it's ok, then I don't see why not.

Ganesha: You would offer a stranger a place in your home, that's very generous of you; but then you fight with your own brother.

Thiesen: How do you know that we fight?

Ganesha: Oh, let's just say I know a little about sibling rivalry and besides, you referred to him as irritating.

Thiesen: I did...

Ganeshha: I also arrested you on charges of public disturbance. It seems like you like fighting with your kin, your kind and your conscience. You are far too young to be carrying around all this frustration and violent energy. You need some peace of mind and actions.

Thiesen: I am truly sorry for fighting. I don't know what's happening to me.

Ganeshha: You seem to be envious of everyone that you wish you could be and all that you wish to possess. Remove the blinkers that your jealousy becomes, and you will realise that all that you desire is in you already. While our stories speak similar narratives, we are each embedded with our unique gifts. I know I sound like a postcard or what you call a meme, but at least I'm sitting on this side of the table.

coach gets him out, all love stories tie up. Happy ending. Shop for wedding.
Ganeshha gets them to the 20 20 opening.

Narrator: As we are journeying through life we sometimes stumble over obstacles. It is like when we are sailing the seas, we have to first weave our way over the rocky shores. But once we have navigated our way around life's boulders the four corners of the earth are our boundaries. It is in the picking up and gathering of ourselves that we demonstrate the prowess our spirit and not forgetting our faith. Even a humbling love story like that of Rama and Sita wasn't void of a few bumps along the road. True love will brave the roughest seas and highest squalls knowing that together all devastation will be overcome.

Finale dance

Blackout

Appendix B
Please request permission to view the video footage.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QsmpFHPliTjvYOxDkierZYSRsxkenTKk/view?usp=sharing>

Appendix C

Interview with Ashwin Singh 22 July 2018, Avoca. 1.30p.m.

Ashwin: You must interview Ronnie Govender as one of the leading Indian theatre-makers in South Africa. Annamalai is vital to read and refer to. Pranav Joshipura is writing a book at the moment. (pranavjoshipura@hotmail.com). English lecturer at Mahilla College in Gujurat. His expertise is South African Indian Theatre. Call all over the world to speak about it. Presented on my work here, in Brasilles, Durban and in Gujurat and in America.

Rowin: I'm going to mention people like Rajesh Gopie because he brought us the Coolie Odyssey, Out of Bounds.

Ashwin: It would be good for you to get a hold of him.

Rowin: I could compare notes, travel to him...the academic way to see the world.

Ashwin: Another person that is specialising in Indian Ocean writings that you could get hold of is Felicity Hat. She doesn't deal specifically with South African Indian drama, but she is someone who long term wise could open doors. Working in Barcelona. Interested in Indian writing. Then there is Copland Rose he has done stuff on broader South African theatre and not South African Indian Theatre. Analysed to House in his PhD, looking at laughter and Satire in the 2nd tritium which is the period post Nelson Mandela's reign as president, where a vacuum existed. Pranav would be the best recommendation to speak to. He is a friend of mine. Vice Principal of the college.

Rowin: Ok so let's start with your name, age, when did you start making theatre, when did you find your interest in theatre, writing and directing specifically?

Ashwin: Ashwin Singh, I am 46 years old now. Which doesn't show I know (laughs). Basically, I started in terms of my interest in theatre and in film especially in sort of the mid-90s. I was always interested in film, theatre and literature but I became interested in terms of my own capacity as a writer in the mid-90s. My initial foray into theatre was with PRAVESH HERMAN, I don't know what he is doing now by the way he was the guy that was doing a lot of theatre in education in about the early to mid-90s and he wanted me to do a show with him, a collection of sketches and I wrote some of those sketches which was a satire on South Africa at the time. We impersonated various celebrities, politicians like that and this was done in the old Ashoka Theatre [Westville Campus] in 1996. It was kind of like a professional production but for me it didn't for me seem like the real theatre world just a smaller version of it. And then I was interested in, which little people know in Stand-up/ sketch comedy with John Vlismas and the late Shaun Griggs, when they were unknowns here. We did quite a bit of sketches together um over like a 2-year period. And a comedy festival called Fred which was at Batcentre, a couple of Private gigs as well. The 2 of them moved to Joburg and said that I must come to Joburg. I, however, and I'm telling you this is that I was using it as an entry into the professional world of live Art. I enjoy Stand-up and Sketch comedy but only to a point. After a while it does begin to bore me, doesn't challenge me enough intellectually, emotionally, and I always intended on getting into more serious playwriting even if that involved comedy as well. So, then I decided that I must complete my Law degree, my professional qualifications as an Attorney, which I was away from for about 3 years then, 2000...2001. I didn't do any theatre then, no comedy as well. And then I came back into it in 2001 where I did something with Joe Carrol and Ivan Boniaschic call The Rainbow Indignation. It was also a satire on South Africa.

Rowin: Ivan and I were at University together.

Ashwin: Is it? Nice guy but he isn't s great Actor, but you know he is a nice guy. I think he was in some ways negatively influenced by Joe. Who is a deeply disturbed man (laughs). I think he was misled by him at times. But I had to move on from them. I don't feel any regret from them at all, but I felt a little bit sorry for Ivan. Coz I feel that he could've been something, and I'm not say that he's not now, coz being a teacher is a good thing, but he didn't really make it in theatre coz I think he was too much like Joe, Joe's younger brother. It was very popular the show, it was well reviewed. It was just the beginning though. I don't think I'd rate that as a very memorable experience, but it was fun and it drew crowds to the old Kwasuka Theatre, the beginnings of Catalina Theatre as well at the time. Then I did a comedy festival with Themis Venturus. It was first big venture, it was all the well know Stand-up and Sketch comedians in Durban and Johannesburg as well with headliners being John van de Ruit and Ben Voss, Alan Adams and Krijay Govender. With Keseran Pillay and myself, Joe was in it and Ivan and a number of others. Gavin Simpson was there, hi first major gig, Gavin the comedian and radio DJ. It was called the Catalina Comedy Collective, in 2003. At the same time or round about the same time I wrote my first play *To House*. I mean I will be honest with you, the first play that I wrote was called *Silhouettes of the South*, which was an attempt to write everything I wanted to say about the work (both laugh). And so, it really was a piece of shit because at the end of the day it was saying far too much. I only showed it to a few people, and they all said that it had potential but that I was saying too much and there are too many characters, too many subplots, I mean what is it really about? And in said that this is ridiculous really and I relooked at it, and I told myself that I need to actually, and it's a big lesson I learned early on, that it all needs to smaller, more focused, fewer characters, develop those characters thoroughly. Not try to be too invested in the message. Tell the story and if there is something of substance in the story, the message will emerge, which the audience will discover.

Rowin: While you are on it, what is your writing style or process?

Ashwin: Initially I felt the style included that after writing a little bit, discussing it with too many people and I changed that completely. So, what I do know is I stew an idea in my head and often there is a character that springs up that interests me, it might even be an event or something that I saw on television or the news or something that I read in the newspaper but usually it comes from deeper inside. I want to say things about the world, I'm interested in the world. As you know I'm a big talker as well (laughter) so I share things, but I also dissect things and it's in my nature to be focused in that way. And obviously socio-political contexts interest me very much. Law and politics were my main interest through most of my life so obviously that has to have a proper socio-political context. So, a character ma stew in my head a context...

Rowin: I see that relationship comes out in *To House*.

Ashwin: (Laughs) Yes, yes yes. Of course, of course, but it just might be a character that started it or maybe it's an event or maybe it's just something...thematic exploration that I want to undertake. I will use examples in a little while. Then um that stews with

me for a while, I dissect it and analyse it but don't overdo the analysis, let in play in my head for a week or two; then I begin, I sit down clearly saying that this is the germination of an idea which I want to explore and I write...roughly write out a more detailed synopsis, a kind of treatment almost of the bits of story making it a whole. I don't always have the ending immediately, but I have a pretty good idea of where I want to go. I might not have the most effective beginning, but I have an idea of the outline of the story and the main character. I write biographies for the characters. Then I let that stew a little bit and make sure that the plot from that that drives the plot is without flaws. Then I begin the writing process. I don't workshop ever with anybody! Except myself may I put it that way, because when I am writing each scene, after I have finished, I read it out aloud in dramatic form to see if it sounds real which of course is not right in fiction. So, I have to...this conversation is all dialogue and monologue so I have to read it out aloud to see if it sounds dramatically real and engaging, powerful and that it will entice an audience. Then there are usually three people that I will go to at the end of that process, which is the end of the first draft of the play, in no particular order it would be... my sister because she is like the first editor of my play, and she shares this passion with me. Then I go to Thayalan Reddy, haven't done that in the last three years but always before that I used to go to Thayalan and ask him what he thought about it and then a testing the audience, I used to do this because this guy is someone who loves theatre and film but or was someone coz he's passed on now, loved theatre and film but he's no expert, it's just about whether you can tap in to his emotional interest which was completely different to the intellectual response you get from my sister and Thayalan. They're giving an emotional response obviously because they human beings, you wouldn't get as obvious an emotional response as you would from this guy and that is former legal colleague Nirej Mothilal, he passed on in 2011. So, I stopped asking him coz I couldn't, he was gone. Then there were other people later on when I do my second draft, coz I do do a second draft then normally the second draft doesn't take me too long at all and whatever feedback they gave me I consider, sometimes I incorporate sometimes I don't, but I always consider it seriously. Then that second draft is done and then I show it to people like Betty Govin um and Themis at various times, Ralph Lawson nowadays and depending on what type of process if following I might show it to an actor to see how interested they are but really, I don't think, at this point, too much at its production value. Just whether it can capture a readership and potentially an audience. I'm not thinking about who is going to play this and stage it completely...

Rowin: And do you think that your writing process influences your directing of it?

Ashwin: To some degree I think so, but I am happy to say that I can completely cut myself off from the writing as a director as far as that is humanly possible. Obviously, you can't completely separate yourself coz you the same person. Um but I really have been hard at times...certain aspects of the writing when I'm directing saying I'm cutting that that doesn't quite work as I thought it would as a playwright. And it wouldn't be a whole scene it would be a few lines in the scene or moments that the playwright might have regarded as very important, but the director feels differently because now you

totally stepping in the shoes of that person. A director is there to present the best possible interpretation for an audience and you gotta think of that play and you got to aid the actor to give the best performance. So, it is different roles, and you must try to be as independent as possible. Recently I have hired Ralph, I've hired Themis, I've mentioned to you that I want you to direct, prof Lutge has directed one as well because I do think I mustn't direct all my works. I must get independent third eyes to do that at times. And also, to just get a different perspective. Mahesh Didi the great Indian playwright, the one who's the most famous in India for writing in English language, his attitude is that you must always direct the first version...the first staging of his play because what he does then is add a bit of notes to it, publishes it and also his perspective. Then he will never direct it again. He gives it to other people to direct. Lilette Dubay is his stand in director. She directs regularly, differing from him, although she loves his work, differs from the way he staged it, but she also finds it useful that she staged it.

Rowin: What do you think are the positives and negatives of writing and directing your own work?

Ashwin: The positives is, I think, quite an obvious one is that you are as true as possible to the original view of the writer because you are the same person. And you know in that sense if you truly believe in your writing and your writing has been successful and people have told you that and you've staged work in the past then it's a very good thing to direct the first version of your play because you can make sure that you complete the artistic process by putting your director's hat. So that's the positive, the negative is that you can become far too close to the work emotionally so that you are unable to see its flaws. And sometimes those flaws simply involve some hard but sympathetic cutting of words. Plays are driven by words so sometimes you have to cut some words. It could also be that this is something that people ignore, that you are actually maybe more skilled in one area of theatre than another. Not everyone is equally skilled in everything. I don't know anyone who is as good a writer as they are an actor as they are a director. I don't know anyone like that in the world. Somebody is a director first then they also a playwright, they might even be a good actor to but they not equally good at everything. So, I think that um...if you don't recognise that you might actually become a terrible negative because you not getting the very best director to direct this very good play you wrote. Um and so you denying quite frankly the work its best opportunity for exposure. So, I think also you must consider that you must be able to step out that and put ego aside and say, for this particular...say it's a very technical one and I'm more an actor's director. I'm saying this not as an example but because it is true, I am more an actor's director and less of a technical one. I see someone like Ralph Lawson is equally skilled in both perhaps coz that's where his area is, his directing. And for example, with Reoca Light, I thought I should step away from that because the play is very tightly written and it's a performance driven work, especially being a one person play but I felt it'll be interesting to see a different eye come in as a director, an independent director, to see especially using lighting design and set design to make it even more interesting and that's what

Ralph Lawson did. A slightly different version from the one that I would've done but I thoroughly believed. So, I think that the negative is that your um become so close to it that you can't potentially see its flaws, you can't let it breath with somebody else's vision because it is all you and so you never get another perspective. Not the main negative, the other thing, potential negative is that if you are writing it, and people say this all the time, my words never sit in the way that I envisioned it, by the actors. You might battle to give your very best to it coz you think, aah that's not quite right but it might be a good interpretation from the actors but it's not your interpretation. You wrote it like this, you had this in mind when you were reading it out aloud, especially if you are an actor yourself you might have the skill to do it properly, you not just shooting in the dark like an amateur actor and yet there are different ways of doing it. You may not be the best at doing it, the actor that is giving his version may be doing a really good version that the audience appreciates but you can't quite see that because you are still too much the playwright and not enough the director.

Rowin: Yes.

Ashwin: And also, you, you just can't let go of the precious word. So, I think sometimes that also could be an issue, it can become very stressful for you and therefore bugger the production up, because you doing everything now. And now you battling to work with the actors, you battling to accept their interpretations so that can be another negative as well I think. And then the other negative potentially is that you doing too much, it's just too much stress and you battle to handle it and you muck up.

Both laugh

Ashwin: Because inevitably, as you know, even when the Playhouse takes on work or the Catalina, Theatre on the Square, Market theatre, they not actually real producers. They have a marketing department to assist you, they have an admin department, they have a legal department so but essentially you gotta do most of the work. And so inevitably when we are doing co-productions with Market, with Playhouse, with whomever, we are doing the actual day to day producing as well. So now we playing the role of Producer. So now you are Producer, Director and you also wrote the play and you might even be acting in it.

Rowin: I've seen you do everything all at once.

Ashwin: Yaa, and I don't know if those were the most successful things I did because maybe it was too much to do. But it's also depending on what play, I would never direct To House and act in it. I would never do that would Spice and Stuff or Into the Grey, really demanding plays. But with PopCom I think I can do it um because I don't think that it is a demanding for me as an intellectual work, now intellectual work um or it's not even a demanding it's a technical one. So maybe somethings to do that you can do...

Rowin: But you've written like a different variety of theatre, different genres, you're very eclectic with your style you know.

Ashwin: Yeah, in fact if I can turn that around to you and say to you that before I get to that, you say that I'm eclectic, would you say though that I have a clear, strong voice and that those other things are variations from that.

Rowin: Oh yes, you definitely have a voice and even in that style you have a very distinct way of writing.

Ashwin: Right.

Rowin: You know you have a lot of long monologues.

Ashwin: Yeah.

Rowin: It's a very stylised way of writing.

Ashwin: No, I think that that has come through.

Rowin: Yes, you are very clear, very clear.

Ashwin: So definitely that's what I wanted to do, so that's coming through, others have said that too so that's great. But yes, there is a variety of work, ah and, let me put it this way, there are variations to that dominant style. Ah, but that dominant style is there.

Rowin: Yes.

Ashwin: The dominant voice is there.

Rowin: Would you call yourself ... or say that it was [South African] Indian Theatre? (23:19)

Ashwin: Yeah see this is the thing about what is Indian Theatre and it's a debate I had with Pranav Joshipura as well, um he's been going around the world now, various places as I've said, talking about South African Indian Theatre because he feels he needed to contextualise this specific theatre since it was done mainly by people of Indian origin, dealing with a community that is the largest outside of India as a diaspora. So, he felt that you can't just call it South African theatre about Indian people, it had its own identity. Um, and I'm not sure if that's true or not true because I just like to say that I write about human beings, I recognise their culture and their histories obviously. (24:00) And so obviously their histories are influenced by Africa and it's influenced by the Indian subcontinent particularly. Um but I don't want to say that I'm writing about Indian people or it's Indian Theatre, I'm writing about human beings whose cultural influence is drawn from this continent and the Indian subcontinent. And their history is a unique one because they came here as slaves and then had an incredible journey that has brought them to the forefront of South African society yet they are still put into this bracket of Indian. Why aren't they just called South Africans of Indian origin or South Africans with connects with the Indian subcontinent? I would rather call them that than say that they are Indian. Having said that, one of the well know former journalists, um I won't mention his name now, coz he hasn't given me the authority. He was a great journalist and a great editor as well. He's retired. He said,

he now calls himself, more than ever, Indian coz everyone calls him Indian. And he feels closest in soul to the Indian continent while fully acknowledging the African influence and therefore he is happy to call himself Indian. (25:00). It doesn't mean that he doesn't want to live here, doesn't mean he won't contribute fully to this continent, doesn't mean he doesn't respect the continent, he is happy to live here but, in the end, he feels that his identity is constructed within that 'Indian' word. And what that means which is a very huge thing. I would rather say I'm writing about human beings and nothing else for 2 reasons. 1 because I don't like labelling at all...um, I think that where ever you came from, things can be fully acknowledged without putting you into a pure bracket of being Indian. The political meaning to Indian now, or it suggests to the majority, the dominant majority here, that perhaps we are a strange minority with no real place in this country and I find that very problematic. You playing into that game by saying in Indian, I think you giving them more fuel to stir the fire. Then the other reason why I don't like doing it, the category, is that I don't only write about Indian people. I write a lot about Zulu people, a reasonable about, especially lately, about a mixed-race Durban community. (26:05) And a little about white people but a lot about Zulu people. Think about it, you've been in one of the works as well (To House), where the Indian characters dominant? I wouldn't say, they were as important as the white man, to the Zulu characters. And there have been others as well, and that's another reason, so if you say you are writing Indian Theatre then how do you explain the existence of, in dominant form, of some of the Black characters, some of the white characters and some of the Coloured characters. So, I would just... (he places us in marginalisation also...)

Rowin: So, you are just writing South African plays.

Ashwin: Yaa, you could say that or be even more specific, I'm a Durban playwright!

Rowin: You're a Durban play.

Ashwin: Like Fugard said, he's generally regarded as our greatest ever playwright, um he said that all these labels they put on me, I don't want any of them except I'm happy to acknowledge one, I'm a Port Elizabeth playwright. I know people in Port Elizabeth, I know the aunty in a sari in the corner shop, I know the tired old white man who walks up and down these streets complaining about how miserable his is when he actually doesn't have the right kind of family he's connecting with, I know the old Black man pushing the cart up and down every single day. He carried on in his explanations of all the characters he recognised every day in Port Elizabeth because he knew the rhythms of the city and its people. I know my city well and that's why I've never left here. Because I know it well and it's so flawed to me in many ways, it also like most of the world is flawed, but it is also unique and its cultural melting pot really excites me as well is that it's an African city in the broader sense and people of Indian origin are here as well, and that what excites me as well. Sometimes when it doesn't work like Cape Town or Joburg I still love the cultural melting pot and the fact that you can see the whole world walking down one street in Durban.

Rowin: Yeah.

Ashwin: And that's what I've written about and that's what I'd like to be know as. So, if you say I'm a Durban playwright, I think you eat that you are a playwright who is diverse.

Rowin: Yes.

Ashwin: Yeah.

Rowin: Ok let's focus more on your directing method or style or whatever you want to call it. Taking the page, paper and bringing it to life on the stage. (28:14)

Ashwin: So, I mean as I said I don't like workshopping when I write coz I just feel I'm a playwright, trained as a playwright, know how to construct a play. Audiences, I'm quite happy for them to criticise it and find its flaws so and so, nothing is flawless, but I don't particularly like the idea of collaboration I writing. Now I'm saying this only because theatre is a collaboration. And the director is always collaborating. As a Director I'm very much in for collaboration with the actors. I call myself an actor's director because that's what interests me. Bringing the page onto the stage with the actors. And so, there is always a consultation with the actors. I do detailed script analysis, Ralph does this as you know, we only started rehearsing in the second week. Themis does so little so 2 very different well-known directors but 2 very different approaches. I tend to do a lot of script analysis before we rehearse as well because I think it's so important and go understand what the writer put down. Remember I have only directed one or two that are not my own, the rest have been mine and so I always tell the actors that the writer will leave us after the first 4 days. He'll leave for Cape Town on holiday and you won't see him again and I always get a laugh but I actually mean that. Because then I have to play both roles as writer and director. And it's very important to interrogate the page, get the actor's interpretation and to read it out aloud and after out aloud ask them what they feel about it. Get them to understand their characters and to do research. So, I make them do research as well. I like to ideally meet for 3 to 4 days, read the story, analyse the characters, get them to give their views. (30:00). Play some games with them like Ralph did as well. Get them to improvise, then make them do research, make them do full character biographies, understand the socio-political context of the work, and I make them go out there and interview people as well, whom they think might resemble my characters in some way or with similar life experiences. And I do this as often as I can, it's not always possible, because you have to work to a very strict deadline and actors are not available early on but then I interview and they sit on the chair, the famous thing...

Rowin: Hot seating...

Ashwin: Yaa.... I do the whole thing; then only do we begin the process of blocking. Obviously, that's the next thing. I found that over the years, young directors think that blocking is where you stand and where you move. And I always found that, yes essentially it is to master the movement but the movement has to have the full range

(31:00) of the play in it. Oh, um, this thing about, you can move now, stand there, you've been too long in the same place...there's no context to it. There has to be reason why you moving, why you sitting, where you are...and that comes from the play.

Rowin: Yes, the subtext.

Ashwin: Yeah. So, I think the exploration of the subtext is part of the blocking process. It's not just be technical now and just sit there for that long.

Rowin: Can I asked then, is this choice influenced by the fact that you were a lecturer?

Ashwin: Probably, yaa. Like you yourself I presume.

Rowin: I am, even in a professional show I'll hot seat and I'll ask them for a character biography, not for me but for them...I won't even look at it. And I think that it comes from the fact that you know...

Ashwin: I think that is great.

Rowin: I think so too. Sometimes in a rehearsal you don't get anything. You just get, "here are your lines, do you know them or get moving, and he gives you a pay check at the end, and you learn nothing.

Ashwin: Absolutely! It definitely comes from that and that's a massive advantage that you have that I don't have. I've not coming with as much theatre background and academically as you but it's still the academic approach. So, I think that um, that's a big advantage. As long as it doesn't cloud the person and become a purely interpretive study coz at the end of the day it has to be a piece of entertainment.

Rowin: Yes!

Ashwin: And if you wrote the play as well, so then you gotta bring that out but then the whole thing has to be seen holistically. And it has to be done like that, there has to be the subtext inside the blocking. There must be motivation, everything has to have motivation. So I do feel at times that Michael was over complicating things in To House. You know I mean like and Ralph told him the one time, "Michael I just need you to move off the chair now!". He was a little bit irritated, I mean it happens to all of us, there was no long-term issue. He just said, "I just need you to not be in the chair for that long now." Coz in the end, what he was suggesting was, look go home and look at your motivation for this coz now you just delaying the process. So ultimately you can get irritated as well, and you can say we over analysing this, too much subtext is happening and all you need is a person not to be sitting in one place for 12 minutes.

Rowin: Yaa, it's like not all about the actor's coz visually also, what is happening?

Ashwin: Exactly. I'm aware of it but I don't want to over analyse, make it too academic, too esoteric. I don't do that, but I think that the proper approach would try to explore as much as possible before it becomes tedious. So that would be the next thing and then after that, um, I like to get to an actor mastering the words completely as soon as

possible. I tell people to learn their lines by the end of the first week because you cannot establish anything in a production without rhythm and that's the key thing, most important thing, rhythm. As it's the director's greatest task to get a rhythm of a play right. I don't know if you agree but I think rhythm...

Rowin: Yes, rhythm is very important.

Ashwin: So, you can't get rhythm without the words spoken.

Rowin: Yaa if you not flowing lines and holding things in you had then you don't get to know what your body is doing...

Ashwin: Exactly! It doesn't work and thus is a performance medium, film is a director's medium, this is a performance on the stage. So, we need that to happen as soon as possible so that is a very strict rule. I must insist by the end of the first week maybe they can use the first week to learn it but beyond that is crazy. I want to get the rhythm early because I also like to do run through a fairly early. Um, I always find that's it's very tight to do this, some directors like to do only 3 runs before they get into the theatre and then they do another 3 there. I like more than that actually. I think that when actors are become bored with running it that it's a good thing because it will never be mechanical on opening night, human emotion will be its not so you won't (34:38) ever become mechanical or become mechanical to me...it's supposed to become mechanical. That means that you did its enough times now really so that you bored with it and then you get excited again when you feel an audience. So, I think I like to do at least half a dozen run throughs but maybe even 10 would be very nice. There's also this idea that they get to learn their words early so I can get closer to runs. Then obviously you would do your feedback and put it right, whatever you need to fix.

Rowin: So, do you do like full runs with costumes, obviously not with costumes...

Ashwin: I wish we could do that but in South Africa, apart from maybe at times when doing a show at the Playhouse or Market Theatre, you don't get to get into the theatre until the week of the FDR. So where as elsewhere in the world, they get in 2 weeks and they rehearse in the same space, so we are never in there so things like costume becomes more complicated simply because you have to go to wardrobe...argh you know how it goes (35:36). I wish we could be in costume early or even the theatre. Um then you get into costume the last week of rehearsals.

Rowin: And do you do your own lights and sound or who designs your lights and sound?

Ashwin: I mean, again that's a cost. Yes, there are lighting designers but they sometimes very expensive. There are very few who are good and available, so you gotta know as much as possible about it. I'm not a lighting or set expert but obviously I've learnt about it over the years because I had to. I think when you writing the play as well if you know nothing about set and lighting then you not writing a play. This is fiction so in the writing process I'm thinking about the technical first then I write it down and I think about it all the time. It's in my head when I write, I write the set first. It's in

my head what set design I want. And lighting design as well, I have a central plot and I write that down immediately. Essentially, lighting is key in theatre. And in some plays but not all, if it is important then I must do a sound design as well. When you at the Playhouse, and even the Catalina, I did consult the expertise available in the area. Sometimes they were part-time, sometimes they were full time lighting designers. I mean Themis, for example, was purely the lighting designer and set designer for Shooting while I was the director. (37:00). He came on by default and he too learnt about set and lighting design. He rated himself in lighting design too but not like others. But he also had that skill. I think Ralph is less interested in that in comparison. He's not an expert in that but he knows very much what he wants and he lets the expert do it and the same with set. And at the Playhouse Greg will assist with set as well. CAROLINE, for example, she doesn't know much about lights and sound, she's not a technical director at all so you kinda shooting in the dark (37:43) at times because there was no budget to get the person in full time., but she did consult with other people also. So, I think yes, it's very important for the director to know lights and sound and set, but it should only be by default that you do all of it, there should be experts that really should be doing it.

Rowin: Ok. So, tell me what do you know about South African Indian Theatre after 2000?

Ashwin: Well what I know is that basically in South Africa that South African Indian theatre is that it is almost exclusively or entirely done by people of Indian origin and the focus on the Indian community in South Africa. The biggest Indian community in South Africa remains in Durban, so I think that most of these stories have, in its heart, the Durban Indian stories but some of it has spilled over to Johannesburg and I don't think that anything of significance is in Cape Town, there might be or some people have written it but there isn't really a Cape Town Indian story. But there is a Joburg Indian story now that's different from the Durban Indian story. You will agree, even though some of them are former Durbanites. And that's growing in momentum to, people like Gropie for example, but most of it, the heart, is the Durban Indian story. And so that's what I think it is. I also think it's a big theatre, it's a fairly loud theatre, it's a vibrant and colourful theatre, and its characters sometimes may be larger than life, sometimes very real as well, but essentially, it's about community (39:04). I have not seen many, or any, Indian Theatre works in South Africa that is not about family, or the broader community. It's not about two individuals, stuck in a room debating something that is largely philosophical, that seems more a European tradition. The Indian theatre tradition seems to be about the family unit at the centre, sometimes a broader community and sometimes about community driven issues rather than individual concerns.

Rowin: And off the cuff of your head, what can you recall from writers and directors that you've worked with or shows that you have seen?

Ashwin: Yes, um, obviously I played Ronnie Govender in THUNSIL. And that's the highlight of his career (39:46) so a lot of his plays were depicted in it. And he walked

me through how he wrote his plays and I've seen many of his plays. I've seen *At the Edge* and *Flight 49*. Different versions of *at the Edge*. I saw Jailoshni do it, I saw Leeandra, I even saw Pat Pillay do *At the Edge* and those were very good plays because they told important stories about the Indian community and its evolution, apartheid and post-apartheid society. And it captured some of the history of the Indian community also. It was interesting also coz he clearly works shopped those plays were the actors played as big a role as he did. It's interesting coz I don't take that role, rather as a director or a playwright. He is very much a director by default. He's not really a director. He just workshops the thing. Why I mention it is coz even though it has a workshop feel to it, but it works. Then of course Larnie's *Pleasure* I saw years ago. So, I've seen quite a bit of Ronnie's work, quite a bit of his lighter works as well that weren't so impressive like, *31 Million Rand Robbery* and *Too Mucked Fuch*. Then I've seen Rajesh Gopie, 2 of his versions of *Coolie Odyssey* and *Out of Bounds*. *Out of Bounds* is a terrific work, he performed it really well, although I think he's over rated. I do think that he did that really well. *Coolie Odyssey* is one of those ones that shows in some ways that Indian Theatre can stumble when you try to put everything in it.

Rowin: I wrote my honours paper on *Out of Bounds*.

Ashwin: And that is an epic story too. It did fit in well. Although he played many characters, 27 I think, it really felt to me like they were well rounded and he played them really well.

Rowin: Yes.

Ashwin: And different voices. But in *Coolie Odyssey* it seemed to be all over the place. He wanted to say too much about too many things. (41:42) Especially in his latter version. When the Gods became play things as well. And you are watching cinema and realism is blurred. I didn't think it was as good as the earlier version of it. But even that I think is trying to say too much. It skips long periods so the context isn't there. He played too little attention to character I feel. But, it was visually very impressive at times. And certainly, some innovative stagings of it. Some of the set design used in 2006 or 2005 was very good, I think. Then there is some Indian Theatre that I shouldn't mention because it is too awful. Like Pranesh Maharaj's show, I forget the name, but it was a musical with Indian and Black people. Like everything got messed up and the evening set joined the day set and the set broke and people were covering up in the weirdest ways and they forgot their lines, that was terrible. Some of the stuff that claims to be Indian Theatre isn't really theatre. It's more a collection of sketches and moments of Stand-up.

Rowin: Yes.

Ashwin: And I suppose...

Rowin: Yes, coz what I'm looking at is that there is more to Indian Theatre than just realism or satire.

Ashwin: Yaa, sure, sure.

Rowin: I mean, there is like the drama or like the Bollywood and there is the magic realism.

Ashwin: Yaa definitely. There is certainly a variety. There is certainly depth to it but I'm saying honestly, you know this yourself...

Rowin: What do you think is the most popular? In your experience, in your encounters, what do you think is the...

Ashwin: If you want to call it theatre, I would suggest the most popular is the lighter comedy show. They either are collections of moments of Stand-up and Sketch comedy combined or just Sketch comedy, or they are comedy plays, mainly farce and farce about the Indian family. So, like the weirder situation that happens and the family is in a tiff about this now and then they have to find their way out of this crazy situation they find themselves in. And they do in time find that there is a happy ending and that there is reconciliation and the family bond is seen as the most important thing. And there is Bollywood, which is a little farfetched. It is farcical, which is a theatre tradition but I don't think that it neatly covers farce as much as it is farcical.

Rowin: It's like slap-stick.

Ashwin: Yaa. And too much reliant as well on the stereotypical characters and of course laughter at accent.

Rowin: Yes...

Ashwin: Which I can never get. Some people do talk like that but why are you laughing at them then? (44:30)

Appendix D

Vivian's Response

- In excess of 30 years. Started out in the 80's when in the height of apartheid, it was necessary to use the arts as a cultural weapon. I wrote, sometimes co-wrote works that were of social relevance. These productions addressed issues that affected the general population especially African, Indian and coloured peoples.
- The early works included *COAST OF DREAMS*, that dealt with the group areas act and its impact on the cosmopolitan people that lived in the Warwick

Avenue Triangle, obviously included South Africans of Indian origin. Of course, the press of the day relegated it to just “Protest Theatre” and Indian. Another production “Hamba Kahle Moodley” that dealt with issues of racism between Indian and African people was branded as same. Needless to say, there were some ruffled feathers in the security establishment as well people who considered themselves “Indian”. The writer who did most of the major work on these productions is Farouk Hoosen Sayed, a fellow actor, writer and director, who recently featured in *SANDS OF PALESTINE*.

- South Africa is indeed a very complex country given our history. The arts scene was also segregated by law. Theatre especially was in the forefront of the struggle to change the status quo. The early productions were very political in nature and some were even banned *ITS A COLOURFUL WORLD* was one such play. The play was written by an Indian and performed by actors from the same community. Although the audience was mixed it was largely Indian in composition. There were other plays like *STABLE EXPENSE*, *LAHNEES PLEASURE* etc. that made waves and created a moderate interest within the Indian community. These plays were not as sustainable as the producers would have liked, there were many reasons for this, apathy playing a big part. I found that the audience didn’t want to be challenged. So, to be successful at the box office I was forced to, much against my will, to write and produce what one might term as “ETHNIC FARCE”. Suddenly people were flocking in to see “Comedy” which I really felt is mindless banter. On the positive side it paid the rent. But I regret that I contributed to perpetuating stereotypes and that serious theatre has no way back with this community.
- I am lucky in that I started out as an actor and it was said that I took direction very well. So, directing was the natural progression I guess. I have always been writing and telling stories so that was a plus also.
- The approach, manner and style vary, depending on the content of what I want to write. I sometimes would write for the actors at my disposal. This is especially true for comedy. I believe I am more of an actor’s director.
- I am fortunate in that I have had the benefit of having lived from the 50’s and as such I have lived through a rich history. I write largely from my experience of those times. My colleague Farouk Hoosen and I sometimes workshopped ideas and came up with plays. I would recommend this method especially with actors. Most times I am driven by issues facing society and create works from that perspective. But as I said earlier our present-day audience do not want to be challenged so that is a difficulty I faced especially at the box office. So, it is going to be a long haul for writers and directors to create an audience that appreciate theatre in the true sense and to move away from “comedy”
- I have produced some comedy or more like ethnic farce like *HANGED BY THE THALI* which appealed to a largely “Indian” audience. The theme was

marital non-bliss which I found has a huge appeal with this audience. I introduced some Indian music and dance for variety. These productions toured nationally and played mainly in Indian areas.

- *BHAGWAN GAVE ME THIS LIFE* was nominated for a few awards. It was written and performed in Hindi, a first I am told.
- Not sure exactly what “Bollywood” theatre is but I have used some music, and dance routines in the past. *SHADY LAGOON* was a spoof on TV and film. It was in this production that melodrama came into play
- I found that anything associated with Bollywood is bound to be successful. People pay to go to venues that have shown with a Bollywood flavour. You will often hear members of the Indian community declare “That is our culture”
- *ITS A COLOURFUL WORLD, LAHNEES PLEASURE, STABLE EXPENSE, COAST OF DREAMS, HAMBА KAHLE MOODLEY AND JAMES COMMISSION*, were productions that resonated with people of Indian audiences. These were plays that challenged the Apartheid regime. People identified with the political content and the social relevance. This would be the highlight of the theatrical experience of the time. That I am afraid is where it’s going to end. I hope I am wrong.

Appendix E

Actor Questionnaire

1. What do you understand by the term Bollywood?
2. How much do you know of it?
3. What do you like most about it?
4. What do you least like about it?
5. Are you drawn to the form and style and why?
6. What is your understanding of archetypes and the function that they play?
7. Can you define and South African Indian archetypes?
8. Are there any similarities between Bollywood archetypes and South African Indian archetypes?

Focus group questions in 3 sessions

- 1.1 What are your ideas and feelings about Bollywood?
- 1.2 Any ideas as to what goes into a Bollywood play?
- 1.3 Have you heard of Bollywood theatre before, if so when?
- 1.4 Can you name some shows that have occurred in Durban?
- 1.5 What do you understand about the archetypal roles represented by South African Indian Theatre?
- 2.1 Does the script resemble a Bollywood script?
- 2.2 What South African icons, in terms of language and archetypes, are present?
- 2.3 What functions do these archetypes serve?
- 2.4 Do these archetypes challenge and stereotypes dominant in South Africa, if so in what way?
- 3.1 How did you find the directing process?
- 3.2 Do you think that the play was successful and why?
- 3.3 What are some of the positives and the negatives from the process?
- 3.4 What of the directing methods worked best for you to deliver your character and tell the story? What didn't work?
- 3.5 What are your thoughts on Bollywood theatre, do you find it appealing and think it has a place in Durban, South Africa?

Questionnaire for Directors of South African Indian Theatre

1. How long have you been directing writing and directing South African Indian Theatre?
2. What South African Indian theatre do you produce?
3. How long have you been making theatre? What forms are most popular in your opinion and why?
4. Can you identify any shifts in South African Indian theatre and what caused those shifts? I.e. context...
5. How challenging is this dual role of writing and directing your own work?
6. What is your process and can you evaluate that process?
7. What style of Indian Theatre do you employ?
8. Have you Directed Bollywood theatre or used any of its elements in your theatre projects?
9. Does Bollywood theatre have a place in South Africa and why?

Questionnaire on myself

1. Where did you grow up and when?
2. What was your early socio-political climate, how aware of it were you?
3. What is your religion?

4. What is your culture?
5. When did you start writing?
6. What influences your writing in terms of style, language, character archetypes content and themes?
7. When did you start directing?
8. How do you direct a play, is it the same every time?
9. Why write and direct your own work, what are the advantages and disadvantages?
10. Why Bollywood theatre?
11. Do you think that it has appeal and popularity in Durban, South Africa?

Appendix F

Ethical Clearance Form

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION FORM: March 2014
(HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE)

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN TYPED SCRIPT. HANDWRITTEN APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED

SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAIL

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------------|
| 1.1 | Surname of Applicant : | Munsamy |
| 1.2 | First names of applicant: | Verne Rowin |
| 1.3 | Title (Ms/ Mr/ Mrs/ Dr/ Professor etc) : | Mr |
| 1.4 | Applicant's gender | Male |
| 1.5 | Applicant's Race (African/
Coloured/Indian/White/Other) | Indian |
| 1.6 | Student Number (where applicable) | 993217994 |

- Staff Number (where applicable) _____
- 1.7 School : Arts
- 1.8 College : Humanities
- 1.9 Campus : Howard College
- 1.10 Existing Qualifications : Masters Degree
- 1.11 Proposed Qualification for Project : PhD
(In the case of research for degree purposes)

2. Contact Details

Tel. No. 0837636292
 Cell. No. 0781796064
 e-mail rodauwg@gmail.com
 Postal address (in the case of Students and external applicants) : 37 Naran Place,
 Harinagar, Shallcross
 Durban, 4093

3. SUPERVISOR/ PROJECT LEADER DETAILS

NAME	TELEPHONE NO.	EMAIL	SCHOOL/ INSTITUTION	QUALIFICATIONS
3.1 Miranda Young-Jaha	0312603133	Youngm1@ukzn <u>.ac.za</u>	Arts: Drama and Performance Studies	Doctorate
3.2				
3.3				

IISECTION 2: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please do *not* provide your full research proposal here: what is required is a short project description of not more than two pages that gives, under the following headings, a brief **overview spelling out the background to the study, the key questions to be addressed, the participants (or subjects) and research site, including a full description of the sample, and the research approach/ methods**

2.1 Project title

Exemplifying South African 'Indianness' through a Solly-World Experience: Staging Bollywood Theatre in Durban, South Africa.

2.2 Location of the study (where will the study be conducted)

The research will be located in Durban, South Africa. Desai (2004) supports the fact that South Africa has the largest Indian population outside of India and that this diaspora is still very much connected to 'the motherland', through Bollywood and other global cultural and spiritual practices. This marks a shift in South African Indian Theatre making and the politics involved therein. In a time where theatre practices are shifting from a more narrative western practice (Vasudevan, 2000), to a more melodramatic, storytelling structure, it becomes imperative to assess the alternatives emerging, one of which is this fairly new form, Bollywood Theatre.

2.3 Objectives of and need for the study

(Set out the major objectives and the theoretical approach of the research, indicating briefly, why you believe the study is needed.)

This research investigates Bollywood Theatre and the representations of South African Indian culture and identities embodied within it. It further investigates my staging, writing and directing of said Bollywood Theatre and how I represent 'Indianness', through my writing and directing.

Objectives of this research are to:

1. To create a Bollywood Theatre production to be performed for a Durban audience and to posit Bollywood Theatre as a new genre in South African Indian Theatre.
2. To examine how/ if Bollywood Theatre represents South African Indian culture and identity; and in so doing, reflect on my own history and identity via these theatrical expression.
3. Lastly to examine the concept of 'Indianness' post-apartheid.

2.4 Questions to be answered in the research

(Set out the critical questions which you intend to answer by undertaking this research.)

For the analysis perused there are certain key questions which will be interrogated:

1. How does Bollywood Theatre represent South African Indianness in a post apartheid context?

2. Why is this style of theatre popular amongst Indians in South Africa?
3. How and why do I adapt Bollywood cinema for the stages of Durban, South Africa, how does my socio-political context shape my writing and directing?

2.5 Research approach/ methods

(This section should explain how you will go about answering the critical questions which you have identified under 2.4 above. Set out the approach within which you will work, and indicate in step-by-step point form the methods you will use in this research in order to answer the critical questions - including sample description, sampling strategies, data collection methods, and data reduction strategies.

For a study that involves surveys, please append a provisional copy of the questionnaire to be used. The questionnaire should show how informed consent is to be achieved, as well as indicate to respondents that they may withdraw their participation at any time, should they so wish.

For a full Doctorate with a practical component. This thesis will have a two part structure, the first being an autoethnographic exploration that will examine the culture and socio-political context surrounding my South African, Indian identity and how cultural and political practices have shaped my development and identity. Central to this is the phenomenon diaspora, and how it both uses and generates cultural forms to connect across space and time. Hamid Naficy (2001) states that, "Within every transnational culture beats the heart of multiple displaced but situated cultures", South Africa is no different. Further, this thesis will interrogate how South sAfrican Indian identity is placed or located within the post-apartheid South African context and displaced in an imaginary relationship with an ancestral home.

The second part of the thesis will engage the practical component of a written, directed and staged Bollywood play. This will allow us to examine how South African Indian culture is fused into this Bollywood genre in terms of language, culture, dress, archetypes and plot, while still resembling the Bollywood genre. For this component to be achieved successfully, Bollywood, its structure and narrative will need to be defined. Through the practice-led example, I will offer a means to adapt this form for stage. I will further examine my particular writing style, method and process and what, if any, impact this has on my directing. Further analysis of my directing style and approach seeks to evaluate how my cultural practices and identity impact on writing and directing choices. Through an interrogation into culture, identity and theatrical manifestation this thesis, aims to identify and discuss shifts in South African Indian Theatre and establish writing and directing patterns and processes that go along with these shifts.

This investigation and data collection is based in qualitative methodology as such the research will be based on data expressed mostly in the form of words-descriptions, accounts, opinions and feelings (Williams, 2011). The research is located within the interpretive paradigm. Within thus paradigm it is acknowledged that research is subjective in nature. "Researchers describe themselves, their values, ideological biases, relationship to the participants and closeness to the research topic. Common designs include ethnography, phenomenology, ³³³ biography, case study and grounded theory" (Chilisa & Preece, 2005: 30).

The methods of gathering data will be twofold: practice based research, autoethnography and theory derived from secondary sources. Practice - based research has 2 folds, either the act is researched or there is research around the act. To this Johannes Sjoberg (2013:1) adds, "Practice as research denotes a research process that leads to an arts-related output, an arts project as one element of a research process drawing on one range of methods...". Hazel Smith and Roger Dean (2009: 5) categorise practice as research as either 'practice-led' or 'practice-based'. Practice-led implies that research is about practice leading to research insight whereas practice-based refers to research where the creative work acts as research

(6). I will use a practice-led approach. For my thesis the act of writing and directing a specific Bollywood Theatre show will be analysed as well as the final performance and representations of 'Indianness' that may emerge. The primary research will evolve out of the Bollywood Theatre play that will be written and staged.

Autoethnography offers the second method for collecting and analysing data. Autoethnography makes the personal political. In her chapter in the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Stacey Holman Jones defines it as "personal text as critical intervention in social, political, and cultural life" {2016: 763}. My own personal experiences with South African Indian Theatre, Indian culture and politics and Bollywood will be described and analysed.

Interpretive method offers the following ways through which data may be collected for analysis: through observations, interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, photographs, personal documents and visual recordings. To document the process and the product the following methods will be used: I will keep a journal which documents the writing playmaking process and recollect from photos and memory my observations, experiences and encounters with South African Indian theatre, my culture, my writing style, directing choices and adaptation techniques.

There will be focus group interviews with the participants (actors, stage crew, technicians and producers) at the beginning of the process, the middle and the end to establish if there are similarities or differences in their own thinking and their views on what they observe about South African Indian culture as 'performed' in every-day life and on stage.. The similarities and/or differences that may exist between the archetypes present in Bollywood cinema compared to those evident in the Bollywood play they are performing (yet to be titled) is also of interest as it relates to possible schisms between South African Indian and 'motherland' Indian identity.

The final performed theatrical event will be recorded so as to analyse and record the product, and to establish themes and patterns that may exist. Rehearsals and the finished product will also be video recorded for analysis.

I will also be conducting face to face interviews and emailed questionnaires to the following writers and directors in Durban, producing South African Indian Theatre.

- Ashwin Singh and

- Vivian Moodley

This will offer insight into writing Indianness and directing Indian theatre, for example: Singh's *Popcorn* (2014), which uses elements of Bollywood.

All participants will do so voluntarily. Consent forms will be signed for both interviews and filming. All data gathered will be kept in a password protected computer and pseudonyms will be used in the thesis.

A list of questions is attached in appendix A.

2.6 Proposed work plan

Set out your intended plan of work for the research, indicating important target dates necessary to meet your proposed deadline.

STEPS	DATES
1. First draft of proposal and ethical clearance	1. August 2016
2. Second draft of proposal	2. September 2016
3. Final draft of proposal and ethical clearance	3. October 2017
4. Final draft of written play	4. May 2017
5. Ethical clearance application	5. November 2017
6. Performance of play	6. May 2018
7. Interviews and data collection	7. January 2018- May 2018
8. First chapter	8. October 2017
9. Revised first chapter	9. November 2017
10. Second chapter	10. January 2018
11. Revised second chapter	11. February 2018
12. Third chapter	12. March 2018
13. Revised third chapter	13. April 2018
14. Chapter 4	14. May 2018
15. Revised 4 th chapter	15. June 2018
16. Chapter 5	16. July 2018
17. Revised chapter 5	17. August 2018
18. Chapter 6	18. September 2018
19. Revised chapter 6 and chapter 7	19. October 2018
20. Chapter 7 revised and chapter 8	20. November 2018
21. Revised chapter 8	21. December 2018
22. Full thesis	22. January 2019

SECTION 3: ETHICAL

ISSUE



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or staff is bound by the same ethics framework. Each member of the University community is responsible for implementing this Policy in relation to scholarly work with which she or he is associated and to avoid any activity which might be considered to be in violation of this Policy.

All students and members of staff must familiarise themselves with, AND sign an undertaking to comply with, the University's "Code of Conduct for Research".

QUESTION 3.1

Does your study cover research involving:	YES	NO	MAYBE/ UNKNOWN
Children		X	
Persons who are intellectually or mentally impaired		X	
Persons who have experienced traumatic or stressful life circumstances		X	
Persons who are HIV positive		X	
Persons highly dependent on medical care		X	
Persons in dependent or unequal relationships		X	
Persons in captivity		X	
Persons living in particularly vulnerable life circumstances		X	

If "Yes", indicate what measures you will take to protect the autonomy of respondents and (where indicated) to prevent social stigmatisation and/or secondary victimisation of respondents. If you are unsure about any of these concepts, please consult your supervisor/ project leader.

QUESTION 3.2

Will data collection involve any of the following:	YES	NO
Access to confidential information without prior consent of participants		X
Participants being required to commit an act which might diminish self-respect or cause them to experience shame, embarrassment, or regret		X
Participants being exposed to questions which may be experienced as stressful or upsetting, or to procedures which may have unpleasant or harmful side effects		X
The use of stimuli, tasks or procedures which may be experienced as stressful, noxious, or unpleasant		X
Any form of deception		X

If "Yes", explain and justify. If appropriate, indicate what steps will be taken to minimise any potential stress/harm.

QUESTION 3.3

Will any of the following instruments be used for purposes of data collection:	YES	NO
Questionnaire	X	
Survey schedule		X
Interview schedule	X	
Psychometric test		X
Other/ eEquivalent assessment instrument		X

If "Yes", attach copy of research instrument. If data collection involves the use of a psychometric test or equivalent assessment instrument, you are required to provide evidence here that the measure is likely to provide a valid, reliable, and unbiased estimate of the construct being measured. If data collection involves interviews and/or focus groups, please provide a list of the topics to be covered/ kinds of questions to be asked.

QUESTION 3.4

Will the autonomy of participants be protected through the use of an informed consent form, which specifies (in language that respondents will understand):	YES	NO
The nature and purpose/s of the research	X	
The identity and institutional association of the researcher and supervisor/project leader and their contact details	X	
The fact that participation is voluntary	X	
That responses will be treated in a confidential manner	X	
Any limits on confidentiality which may apply	X	
That anonymity will be ensured where appropriate (e.g. coded/ disguised names of participants/ respondents/ institutions)	X	
The fact that participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences to themselves	X	
The nature and limits of any benefits participants may receive as a result of their participation in the research	X	
Is a copy of the informed consent form attached?	X	

If NO to any of the above: (a) please justify/explain, and (b) indicate what measures will be adopted to ensure that the respondents fully understand the nature of the research and the consent that they are giving.

QUESTION 3.5

Specify what efforts have been made or will be made to obtain informed permission for the research from appropriate authorities and gate-keepers?

Not applicable

QUESTION 3.6

STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF RESEARCH DATA:

Please note that the research data should be kept for a minimum period of at least five years in a secure location by arrangement with your supervisor.

How will the research data be secured and stored? When and how (if at all) will data be disposed of?

Data will be stored on USBs and paper. VIDEOS will be stored on laptop hard drives. Copies will be shared on Google drive to my supervisor.

Video footage and data will be stored for 5 years before they are shredded, destroyed and disposed of.

QUESTION 3.7

In the subsequent dissemination of your research findings - in the form of the finished thesis, oral presentations, publication etc. - how will anonymity/ confidentiality be protected?
How will you give feedback to your research participants?

The identity of each participant will be protected. Participants will not be referred to by their given names in the body of the thesis or in the appendices. They will be allowed access to my findings prior to submission, should they wish, to avoid misrepresentation. They will also have access to any publications should the thesis be successful, either in the library or online.

QUESTION 3.8

Is this research supported by funding that is likely to inform or impact in any way on the design, outcome and dissemination of the research?	YES	NO X
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If yes, this needs to be explained and justified.

If yes, please indicate what the conditions are.

QUESTION 3.10

Do you, or any individual associated with or responsible for the design of the research, have any personal, economic, or financial interests (or any other potential conflict of interests) that could reasonably be regarded as relevant to this research project?

NO

If you answered YES to Question 3.10 please provide full details:

SECTION 4: FORMALISATION OF THE APPLICATION

APPLICANT

I have familiarised myself with the University's Code of Conduct for Research and undertake to comply with it. The information supplied above is correct to the best of my knowledge.

NB: PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE ATTACHED CHECK SHEET IS COMPLETED

DATE: 10/01/2018 SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: [Redacted]

SUPERVISOR/PROJECT LEADER/DISCIPLINE ACADEMIC LEADER

NB: PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE APPLICANT HAS COMPLETED THE ATTACHED CHECK SHEET AND THAT THE FORM IS FORWARDED TO YOUR SCHOOL RESEARCH COMMITTEE FOR FURTHER ATTENTION

DATE: 10/01/2018 SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR/PROJECT LEADER/DISCIPLINE LEADER: [Redacted]

[Redacted] SUPERVISOR/PROJECT LEADER/DISCIPLINE LEADER

The application is (please tick):	
/	Recommended and referred to the Human and Social Sciences Ethics Committee for further consideration
	Not Approved, referred back for revision and resubmission
	Other: please specify:
NAME OF CHAIRPERSON:	
<u>1>R G.P. MA.?.tSwro</u>	SIGNATURE: <u>0 pb</u>
DATE ,1±.Y:~.1..J.\.. - J.....	

RECOMMENDATION OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES)	
NAME CHAIRPERSON: _____	SIGNATURE _____ OF
DATE	

CHECK SHEET FOR APPLICATION

PLEASE TICK

1. Form has been fully completed and all questions have been answered	/
2. Questionnaire attached (where applicable)	/
3. Informed consent document attached (where applicable)	/
4. Approval from relevant authorities obtained (and attached) where research involves the utilisation of space, data and/or facilities at other institutions/organisations	/
5. Signature of Supervisor/ project leader	/
6. Application forwarded to School Research Committee for recommendation and transmission to the Research Office	/

Appendix A

Actor Questionnaire

1. What do you understand by the term Bollywood?
2. How much do you know of it?
3. What do you like most about it?
4. What do you least like about it?
5. Are you drawn to the form and style and why?
6. What is your understanding of archetypes and the function that they play?
7. Can you define and South African Indian archetypes?
8. Are there any similarities between Bollywood archetypes and South African Indian archetypes?

Focus group questions in 3 sessions

- 1.1 What are your ideas and feelings about Bollywood?
- 1.2 Any ideas as to what goes into a Bollywood play?
- 1.3 Have you heard of Bollywood Theatre before, if so when?
- 1.4 Can you name some shows that have occurred in Durban?
- 1.5 What do you understand about the archetypal roles represented by South African Indian Theatre?
 - 2.1 Does the script resemble a Bollywood script?
 - 2.2 What South African icons, in terms of language and archetypes, are present?
 - 2.3 What functions do these archetypes serve?
 - 2.4 Do these archetypes challenge and stereotypes dominant in South Africa, if so in what way?
- 3.1 How did you find the directing process?
- 3.2 Do you think that the play was successful and why?
- 3.3 What are some of the positives and the negatives from the process?
- 3.4 What of the directing methods worked best for you to deliver your character and tell the story? What didn't work?
- 3.5 What are your thoughts on Bollywood Theatre, do you find it appealing and think it has a place in Durban, South Africa?

Questionnaire for Directors of South African Indian Theatre

1. How long have you been directing writing and directing South African Indian Theatre?
2. What South African Indian theatre do you produce?
3. How long have you been making theatre? What forms are most popular in your opinion and why?
4. Can you identify any shifts in South African Indian theatre and what caused those shifts? I.e. context...
5. How challenging is this dual role of writing and directing your own work?
6. What are your process and can you evaluate that process?
7. What style of Indian Theatre do you employ?
8. Have you Directed Bollywood Theatre or used any of its elements in your theatre projects?
9. Does Bollywood theatre have a place in South Africa and why?

Questionnaire on myself for journal entries

1. Where did you grow up and when?
2. What was your early socio-political climate, how aware of it were you?
3. What is your religion?
4. What is your culture?
5. When did you start writing?
6. What influences your writing in terms of style, language, character archetypes content and themes?
7. When did you start directing?
8. How do you direct a play, is it the same every time?
9. Why write and direct your own work, what are the advantages and disadvantages?
10. Why Bollywood Theatre?
11. Do you think that it has appeal and popularity in Durban, South Africa

Consent Form for Participation in Phd Research

Conducted by Verne Rowin Munsamy (993217994) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus, College of Humanities. Contact details 0837636292/ rodauwa@gmail.com

Supervisor: Miranda Young-Jahangeer (0312603133)

Title: Exemplifying South African 'Indianness' through a Bally-World Experience: Staging Bollywood Theatre in Durban, South Africa.

What is the research About?

I am a South African Indian theatre practitioner and drama lecturer with a passion for writing and directing. Theatre has had a great impact in my life not just as mere entertainment but also as a space where culture, religion and community may be challenged, examined and represented as evidenced in my productions, *Consenting Silence* (2014), *Reality Bytes* (2008), *No Added Charges* (2013) and *No Contest* (2015) to name a few. I enjoy making theatre that serves a greater social function as well as entertain. My first recollection of theatre was watching Indian folk dance performed at the Arayan Benevolent Homes' theatre in Cshats worth, where I grew up. This performance represented a part of Indian culture and served to entertain simultaneously. It was here that my passion for theatre, specifically South African Indian Theatre evolved. Over the decades I have witnessed this form of theatre evolve to encompassing one of my other pleasures, Bollywood cinema and herein lies my interest for research.

Indian Theatre has had a long history in South Africa, beginning with the arrival of Indentured labourers and their recited, memorised versions of sacred Indian mythological texts like *The Ramayan* and *Mahabharata* (Zaloumi, 1995). It has since evolved, in response to the changing cultural, social, political and economic context in South Africa. Today, while many forms of South African Indian Theatre remain, like the Eisteddfod, festivals and family oriented dramas, the transforming socio-political context, post-apartheid, has brought with it interesting new directions in South African Indian Theatre, one being Bollywood Theatre. Bollywood styled theatre is yet to be defined in South Africa as it is a fairly new phenomenon that is adapted from the very popular cinematic genre, Bollywood.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number _____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions, you may contact my supervisor, Dr Miranda Young-Jahangeer on 0312601144 or via email at younam1@ukzn.ac.za

If you would prefer to contact UKZN directly, the contact details are as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email:

HSSREC@ukzn.ac

za Please also note

that:

- The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed.
- A few photographs will also be taken, and permission to use them will be obtained. However, participation as an interviewee is not contingent on this and should you not wish to be photographed, there will be no pressure to do so.
- The data (audio and print material) will be stored in a secure location for 5 years and thereafter be incinerated and shredded, unless they are still of use, in which case, new permission will be obtained.
- You may choose to answer or not answer any of the questions posed to you.
- You will be allowed access to the thesis material and you will have the opportunity to correct or respond to any commentary that includes your name, prior to the final submission of the thesis.
- You can choose, at any time, to withdraw from participating and being interviewed for this research.
- Your involvement is for academic purposes only and there are no financial benefits involved.

_____ hereby give consent to the researcher, V.R Munsamy (993217994) a Phd Student registered at University of KwaZulu-Natal, to be interviewed voluntarily and recorded for research on his PhD thesis. I fully understand the nature of the research and understand that the data collected will be analysed and thereafter destroyed after a period of time. I am a willing participant in this research and know that no money or honorariums will be given to me for my participation and knowing that my responses will remain confidential. My Anonymity will be ensured. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any point of the research, but not within the last month of the writing process.

Sign

Name of Interviewee

Sign

Name of Interviewer

Date

APPLICANT

I have familiarised myself with the University's Code of Conduct for Research and undertake to comply with it. The information supplied above is correct to the best of my knowledge.

NB: PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE ATTACHED CHECK SHEET IS COMPLETED

DATE: 11/01/2018 SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: [Redacted]

SUPERVISOR/PROJECT LEADER/DISCIPLINE ACADEMIC LEADER

NB: PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE APPLICANT HAS COMPLETED THE ATTACHED CHECK SHEET AND THAT THE FORM IS FORWARDED TO YOUR SCHOOL RESEARCH COMMITTEE FOR FURTHER ATTENTION

DATE: 11/01/2018

[Redacted] SUPERVISOR/PROJECT LEADER/DISCIPLINE LEADER